



AGENDA FOR SYNOD 2002



CHRISTIAN
REFORMED
CHURCH



AGENDA FOR SYNOD 2002

June 8-15, 2002
Fine Arts Center Auditorium
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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2850 Kalamazoo Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49560 U.S.A.
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Synod 2002 begins its sessions on Saturday, June 8, at 9:00 a.m. in the Fine Arts Center of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. Chrisitan Oh, minister of Han-Bit Korean CRC, Rochester Hills, Michigan, will serve as president pro tem until Synod 2002 is duly constituted and its four officers have been elected.

A Service of Prayer and Praise will be held Sunday, June 9, 2002, at 3:00 p.m. in the Calvin College Campus Chapel, 3201 Burton Street, SE, Grand Rapids. The service will be a combined service with the Multiethnic Conference. Rev. Christian Oh will officiate at this service.

The congregations of the Christian Reformed Church in North America are requested to remember the synodical assembly in intercessory prayers on Sundays, June 2 and 9. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will equip the synodical delegates to serve in faith and obedience and will lead the Christian Reformed Church into new and challenging areas of ministry. May we together experience the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as we strive to know and to do the will of the Lord.

David H. Engelhard
General Secretary
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49560

I. Note to delegates

A. Delegates who travel by car are urged to carpool, if possible, to save on travel costs.

B. Plane travel is the most economical for delegates traveling long distances to synod because it eliminates lodging and meal expenses en route. Synod will pay the lower amount of the cost of airfare for one round trip or the cost of driving with the reimbursement rate of 36.5 cents per kilometer/mile.

C. Synod provides accidental death and dismemberment insurance (up to \$125,000) for delegates to synod. While there are exclusions and restrictions identified in the policy, travel and activities that are related to participation in synod are covered. Synod does not provide health insurance. Canadian delegates may wish to review their policies and purchase additional health insurance for the time they are at synod if their present policies do not provide adequate insurance outside of Canada.

D. Delegates should bring with them to synod their copies of the *Agenda for Synod 2002* and all supplementary materials.

E. Please direct any questions regarding synod to the office of the general secretary by calling 616-224-0744.

II. Confidentiality of the executive sessions of synod

The Board of Trustees calls the matter of confidentiality to the attention of Synod 2002 and urges that all necessary precautions be taken to prevent violations of confidentiality.

Synod 1954 stated that “the very principle of executive sessions, or sessions that are not open to the public, involves the practical implication that reporters may not ‘report’” (*Acts of Synod 1954*, p. 15). If reporters are not permitted to report on executive sessions of synod, it is certainly a breach of confidentiality also for delegates to the synodical assembly to report—publicly, privately, orally, or in print—on the discussions held in an executive session of synod (cf. *Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 16).

III. Audio and video recordings of synod

Synod 1979 authorized the making of an official audio recording of the entire proceedings of the general sessions of synod as a way to verify the written record of the synodical proceedings. Although the general sessions of synod are recorded, executive sessions are not taped. Delegates to synod are informed at the opening session of synod that all the general sessions are being

taped. Synod has designated that the office of the general secretary be responsible for the use and storage of these materials.

The following regulations were adopted by Synod 1989 concerning audio and video recordings of synodical sessions by media representatives and visitors:

A. Representatives of the media are permitted to make video recordings of synodical proceedings provided they observe the restrictions placed upon them by the synodical news office under the direction of the general secretary of synod.

B. *Visitor privileges*

1. Visitors are at liberty to make audio recordings of the public proceedings of synod provided they do so unobtrusively (i.e., in no way inhibiting or disturbing either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons).
2. Video recordings are permitted provided the following restrictions are observed:
 - a. Video cameras are permitted only at the entrances, not backstage or in the wings.
 - b. Auxiliary lighting is not permitted.
 - c. Videotaping is to be done unobtrusively (i.e., in such a way that it in no way inhibits or disturbs either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons).

(*Acts of Synod 1989*, p. 445)

IV. Proposed daily schedule

Synod 2000 adopted several recommendations regarding the scheduling of future synods in a one-week format. Although each new assembly is free to alter the schedule, the following general schedule is tentatively in place for Synod 2002:

Opening Saturday

9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Opening session of synod

Election of officers

Finalization of committee assignments

11:00 - 12:30 p.m.

Lunch and orientation of committee chairpersons and reporters

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Joint meeting of synod and the Multiethnic Conference – College Chapel

3:00 - 3:20 p.m.

Break

3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Advisory-committee meetings

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Dinner

6:45 - 8:15 p.m.

Advisory-committee meetings

8:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Joint meeting of synod and the Multiethnic Conference – College Chapel

9:30 p.m.

Ice Cream Social – Chapel plaza

Sunday

3:00 p.m.

Synodical worship service – College Chapel

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Dinner

Evening

Free time for fellowship

Monday

8:15 - 8:30 a.m.	Opening worship
8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	Brief plenary session
9:15 - 11:45 a.m.	Advisory-committee meetings
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 - 5:00 p.m.	Advisory-committee meetings
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Advisory-committee meetings

Tuesday – Friday

8:15 - 8:30 a.m.	Opening worship
8:30 - 11:45 a.m.	Plenary session
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 - 5:00 p.m.	Plenary session
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Plenary session

Saturday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	Opening worship
8:45 - 11:45 a.m.	Plenary session
(Final adjournment by 11:45 a.m.)	

DELEGATES TO SYNOD 2002

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Alberta North		
Ministers.....	Philip Stel James E. Pot	Ministers.....Raymond A. Blacketer William D. Nieuwenhuis
Elders.....	William Wildeboer Arnold R. Abma	Elders.....Jack H. Hunt Bert Schouten
Alberta South/Saskatchewan		
Ministers.....	John H. Noordhof John R. Huizinga	Ministers.....Philip F. Reinders Andrew G. Vander Leek
Elders.....	Hank Puurveen Tony H. Vandekraats	Elders.....Durk De Jong Rick Esselink
Arizona		
Ministers.....	Frederick J. Walhof Jeffrey A. Dykema	Ministers.....Paul J. Van Dyken Estaban Lugo
Elders.....	Kenneth L. Rindels Wayne D. Ribbens	Elders..... _____
Atlantic Northeast		
Ministers.....	Verlan G. Van Ee Christopher Mitchell	Ministers.....Brent A. Averill Karl H. Bratt
Elders.....	Kenneth Prol Bruce Dykstra	Elders..... _____
B.C. North-West		
Ministers.....	Walt Brouwer James R. Poelman	Ministers.....Thomas Bomhof Pieter Hendriks
Elders.....	Bill Wikkerink Ev Vroon	Elders.....Allan Smit Robert VanderVeen
B.C. South-East		
Ministers.....	Henry Steenberg Rudy Ouwehand	Ministers.....Herb de Ruiters Sid Couperus
Elders.....	Harro van Brummelen Dick Van Reede	Elders.....Ken Byl Ron Frans
California South		
Ministers.....	Charles C. Oh Cornelius Pool	Ministers.....Neville L. Koch Peter Y. Shin
Elders.....	Phil Du Bois Henry C. De Jager	Elders.....Jim Hannink Dirk Jasperse
Central California		
Ministers.....	Gerard L. Dykstra Philip J. Kok	Ministers.....David G. Zandstra Adrian Dieleman
Elders.....	David G. Renaud John W. Tos	Elders.....Adrian Van Houten Bill Brouwer

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Chatham		
Ministers	Peter Nicolai Ralph S. Wigboldus	Ministers
Elders.....	George H. Douma Fred A. Rekman	Elders.....
		Dirk Miedema Rich De Lange Martin P.J. Bosveld Henry Mulder
Chicago South		
Ministers	Calvin J. Aardsma Julius T. Medenblik	Ministers
Elders.....	Leon Harts Harold Van Kley	Elders.....
		Timothy Howerzyl John M. Ouwinga Steven C. Vryhof Randal S. Barton
Columbia		
Ministers	Perry J. Tinklenberg Carl J. Leep	Ministers
Elders.....	David A. Hitt Harry Visser	Elders.....
		Ken Van Schelven Donald L. Recker Leo Van Bergeyk _____
Eastern Canada		
Ministers	Gerald van Leeuwen Bart van Eyk	Ministers
Elders.....	James Kooistra Frank Folkema	Elders.....
		George J. Rowaan Clarence H. Witten _____ _____
Georgetown		
Ministers	Terry J. Lapinsky David E. Den Haan	Ministers
Elders.....	Robert D. Wolters Paul H. Tameling	Elders.....
		Marvin W. Heyboer Marvin J. Vander Vliet Harold Postma Donald W. Van Hook
Grand Rapids East		
Ministers	David H. Kromminga Morris N. Greidanus	Ministers
Elders.....	Harry W. Lew James R. Talen	Elders.....
		James A. Molenbeek George F. Vander Weit Ed Rusticus John Van Oene
Grand Rapids North		
Ministers	Moon Bae Kim Jerry Blom	Ministers
Elders.....	Mark A. Witte Donald F. Oosterhouse	Elders.....
		Gerald A. Koning Henry Admiraal Burton J. Breuker Don Vander Mey
Grand Rapids South		
Ministers	Robert D. Bolt William R. Sytsma	Ministers
Elders.....	Albert W. Bytwork Carl T. Mulder	Elders.....
		John J. Steigenga George R. Mossel Bernard L. Scholten William Talsma
Grandville		
Ministers	Kent A. Rottman Archie L. Vander Hart	Ministers
Elders.....	Herbert M. Marsman Terry J. Kimber	Elders.....
		Daniel B. Mouw Douglas A. Kamstra John Link _____
Greater Los Angeles		
Ministers	Gilbert Varela Brent A. Wassink	Ministers
Elders.....	Frank De Haan Marvin J. Struiksma	Elders.....
		Moses Chung John Choi Howard Tazelaar _____

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Hackensack		
Ministers	Joel E. Kok Andrew R. Sytsma	MinistersEzequiel N. Romero Ricardo E. Orellana
Elders.....	Stephen F. Jefferson Ramon L. Orostizaga	Elders.....Eric B. Verhulst Hernan Zapata
Hamilton		
Ministers	Gordon Pols H. Ray Vander Kooij	MinistersAndrew Zantingh Jeff P. Janssen
Elders.....	George Elzinga Arie G. Van Eek	Elders.....Al Martens John C. Gilson
Heartland		
Ministers	M. Dale Fopma Duane Tinklenberg	MinistersJeff L. Sajdak Carl Klompfen
Elders.....	Irv Woudstra Byron Noordewier	Elders.....Verlyn Schaap Rick Vander Berg
Holland		
Ministers	Marvin J. Hofman Douglas R. Fauble	MinistersKeith M. Doornbos James M. Boer
Elders.....	Bill Sytsma Calvin J. Hoogstra	Elders.....Gustave J. Van Den Berge David W. Smits
Hudson		
Ministers	John J. Hoogland John C. Fisher	MinistersKenneth J. Verhulst Leonard A. Kuyvenhoven
Elders.....	John L. Steen David Lowe	Elders....._____
Huron		
Ministers	Peter Janssens Michael Winnowski	MinistersJack De Vries Jack Vande Hoef
Elders.....	Peter Kingma James Visser	Elders.....Hilbert Rump Hans C. Vera
Iakota		
Ministers	Stan R. Scripps Roger W. Sparks	MinistersCharles J. DeRidder John L. Witvliet
Elders.....	Merle Meyerink Tom Vanden Bosch	Elders.....Abe Bos Jay H. Van Engen
Illiana		
Ministers	Tom Kok E. Robert Tigchelaar	MinistersJoel Zuidema Calvin R. Hoogendoorn
Elders.....	Roger Triemstra Ronald T. Holwerda	Elders.....Peter Schurman Norb Fisher
Kalamazoo		
Ministers	Robert L. Boersma Jay R. Pruijm	MinistersDale Slings Albert J. De Vries
Elders.....	Leonard D. Klok Charles F. Block	Elders.....Louis J. Meinema Thomas M. Kakebeeke
Lake Erie		
Ministers	William C. De Vries Robert A. Arbogast	MinistersRandall D. Engle Stanley Sturing
Elders.....	David Vander Haagen James C. Grit	Elders.....Wesley D. Van Houten _____

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Lake Superior		
Ministers	David A. Zylstra Jeff Vanderhoof	Ministers
Elders.....	Henry Westervelt James Kamp	Elders.....
Minnkota		
Ministers	George Koopmans Bernard Dykstra	Ministers
Elders.....	Paul C. Ward James Wassenaar	Elders.....
Muskegon		
Ministers	Gerald D. Postema Richard Vanderwal	Ministers
Elders.....	John Kleinhorsman Cecil E. Bradshaw	Elders.....
Niagara		
Ministers	Andrew E. Beunk Henry Vander Beek	Ministers
Elders.....	Ben Van Hoffen Len Dykstra	Elders.....
Northcentral Iowa		
Ministers	Thomas J. Niehof Frank E. Pott	Ministers
Elders.....	Paul Delger Wayne E. Graves	Elders.....
Northern Illinois		
Ministers	Jake A. Ritzema Merle DenBleyker	Ministers
Elders.....	Donald R. Vos John R. Huizinga	Elders.....
Northern Michigan		
Ministers	Thomas A. DeDoes Merlin N. Buwalda	Ministers
Elders.....	Raymond G. Brinks Richard G. Oberg, Jr.	Elders.....
Pacific Hanmi		
Ministers	Seung Jai Kang In Chul Kim	Ministers
Elders.....	Jin Choi Sung Joo Kang	Elders.....
Pacific Northwest		
Ministers	David N. Snapper Timothy B. Toeset	Ministers
Elders.....	Sherwin Van Mersbergen Douglas R. Slager	Elders.....
Pella		
Ministers	Douglas M. MacLeod William D. Zeilstra	Ministers
Elders.....	Kenneth E. Slagter Earl Dykema	Elders.....

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Quinte		
Ministers	Jake Kuipers Karl J. House	Ministers
Elders.....	Abel Zwart Okke Bouma	Elders.....
		John Veenstra Ed Visser Ralph Tukker Marten H. Van Harmelen
Red Mesa		
Ministers	John J. Greydanus Anthony Begay	Ministers
Elders.....	Kennedy R. Phillips John D. Kostelyk	Elders.....
		Raymond Slim Michael J. Meekhof Charles Damon
Rocky Mountain		
Ministers	Thomas E. Dykman Paul Jorden	Ministers
Elders.....	Tom Meuzelaar Dave Wondergem	Elders.....
		Mark R. Van't Hof Mark D. Timmer Daniel M. Mulder Neal J. Afman
Southeast U.S.		
Ministers	Vern Vander Zee Manny Bersach	Ministers
Elders.....	Charles H. Korringa Donald R. Vande Polder	Elders.....
		Robert E. Van Hofwegen Douglas L. Alderink Lee Klen
Thornapple Valley		
Ministers	Ben J. Ridder Norman L. Meyer	Ministers
Elders.....	Peter D. Van Vliet Julius Kuiper	Elders.....
		Paul R. De Vries Roger D. Bultman Robert D. Vanden Toorn Cornelius Korhorn
Toronto		
Ministers	John Tenyenhuis Jack Kerkhof	Ministers
Elders.....	Joseph Koole John Meiboom	Elders.....
		Harry D. Zantingh Mark A. Davies Andrew de Boer George W. Lubbers
Wisconsin		
Ministers	Daniel J. Roeda Leslie J. Kuiper	Ministers
Elders.....	Anton G. Vermaak James L. Hendrikse	Elders.....
		Robert A. Sizemore Edward J. Laarman Robert M. Brenton Howard J. Joling
Yellowstone		
Ministers	Jack A. Huttinga Thomas Vander Ziel	Ministers
Elders.....	Howard H. Kamerman Dick C. Flikkema	Elders.....
		Jake Weeda Wayne A. Knight Harry Faber
Zeeland		
Ministers	Ronald D. De Young James E. De Vries	Ministers
Elders.....	Adrian J. Molendyk Jerry Wallinga	Elders.....
		Henry Lengkeek Paul R. Hoekstra Philip Pleune Robert Hassevoort

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

Joint-Ministries Management Committee

Christian Reformed Church in North America-Michigan Corporation
Christian Reformed Church in North America-Canada Corporation
Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (the Board) presents this report as a summary of the activities carried out on behalf of synod during the interim between Synod 2001 and Synod 2002.

I. Introduction

A. General

The governing Board of the Christian Reformed Church is organized as two legal entities, one in Michigan and one in Canada. Together these legal entities form the Joint-Ministries Management Committee (JMMC) and are known as the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The mandate given by synod to the Board is found in its constitution and bylaws, which were recently revised and received approval at Synod 2001 (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 519).

The Board has met two times since Synod 2001 (October and March) and is scheduled to meet again in May. At its meetings, the Board often divides into two standing committees (Ecclesiastical Life and Practice Committee and Program and Finance Committee) for consideration of agenda material. The Ecclesiastical Life and Practice Committee considers matters that formerly were assigned to the Synodical Interim Committee (SIC) as well as the work associated with the office of the general secretary. The Program and Finance Committee deals with matters that arise out of the ministries of the agencies and the work associated with the office of the executive director of ministries.

The Executive Committee of the Board meets as needed. Canadian trustees meet separately to consider Canadian issues. This arrangement complies with Canadian regulations governing Canadian registered charities and provides a helpful way to consider and recommend solutions to issues unique to the Canadian churches.

Though the Board deals with many ecclesiastical matters as well as required corporate issues, a central focus of its work is to enhance the ministries of the whole church, especially those that are carried on through the agencies of the CRC. It is a privilege to see how many wonderful ministries the Lord is pleased to accomplish through the membership and organizations of the CRC. The work of education, relief and development, radio and TV, care and compassion, and missions at home and abroad have been blessed by God.

The Board, as synod's agent, is grateful for the opportunity to serve the whole church in these challenging times.

B. Membership

The members of the Board from the United States are Rev. Henry Admiraal (Region 11), Mr. Paul Dozeman (member-at-large), Rev. John P. Gorter (Region 11), Rev. Alvin L. Hoksbergen (Region 10), Mrs. Gail F. Jansen (member-at-large), Mr. Kenneth Kuipers (Region 10), Rev. W. Wayne Leys (Region 9), Rev. Al Machiela (Region 5), Rev. Raymond Slim (Region 7), Mrs. Mamie Thomas (member-at-large), Rev. Robert J. Timmer (Region 8), Mrs. Jane Vander Haagen (Region 11), Dr. Tom Van Groningen (Region 6), Mr. Harold Van Maanen (Region 8), and Rev. Stanley J. Workman (Region 12).

The members of the Board from Canada are Mrs. Sarah Cook (member-at-large), Rev. Edward Den Haan (Huron), Mr. John Harris (Lake Superior), Mrs. Verney Kho (member-at-large), Mr. Hessel Kielstra (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Mr. Enno Meijers (Toronto), Rev. Peter Nicolai (Chatham), Mr. Ralph Pypker (Quinte), Mr. Andrew Schaafsma (Hamilton), Rev. Bert Slofstra (B.C. South-East), Dr. William H. Vanden Born (Alberta North), Mr. Edward Vanderveer (member-at-large), Rev. Michael Van Hofwegen (B.C. North-West), Mr. Leo Van Tuyl (Niagara), and Rev. Norman J. Visser (Eastern Canada).

The general secretary (Dr. David H. Engelhard) and the executive director of ministries (Dr. Peter Borgdorff) serve *ex officio* as corporate trustees and members of the Board of Trustees.

1. Board officers: Rev. S.J. Workman, president; Rev. P. Nicolai, vice president; Dr. D.H. Engelhard, secretary; Mrs. G.F. Jansen, treasurer.
2. Corporation officers: Rev. S.J. Workman, president; Rev. P. Nicolai, vice president; Dr. D.H. Engelhard, general secretary; Dr. P. Borgdorff, executive director of ministries; Mrs. G.F. Jansen, treasurer; Mr. Kenneth J. Horjus, director of finance and administration.
3. Ecclesiastical Life and Practice Committee: Mrs. S. Cook, Rev. E. Den Haan, Rev. J.P. Gorter, Mr. J. Harris, Rev. A.L. Hoksbergen, Mrs. G.F. Jansen, Mrs. V. Kho, Mr. E. Meijers, Rev. P. Nicolai, Mr. R. Pypker, Rev. R. Slim, Rev. R. Timmer, Rev. M. Van Hofwegen, Mr. L. Van Tuyl, Rev. N.J. Visser, and Dr. D.H. Engelhard (adviser).
4. Program and Finance Committee: Rev. H. Admiraal, Mr. P. Dozeman, Mr. H. Kielstra, Mr. K. Kuipers, Rev. W.W. Leys, Rev. A. Machiela, Mr. A. Schaafsma, Rev. B. Slofstra, Mrs. M. Thomas, Dr. W.H. Vanden Born, Mrs. J. Vander Haagen, Mr. E. Vanderveer, Dr. T. Van Groningen, Mr. H. Van Maanen, Rev. S.J. Workman, and Dr. P. Borgdorff (adviser).
5. Executive Committee: Rev. S.J. Workman, Mrs. G.F. Jansen, Rev. W. Leys, Rev. P. Nicolai, Dr. W.H. Vanden Born, and Mr. L. Van Tuyl. Dr. D.H. Engelhard and Dr. P. Borgdorff serve *ex officio*.

C. Salary disclosure

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
19	1	3rd quartile
18	2	3rd quartile

Salary ranges within which the agencies will be reporting actual compensation for the current fiscal year are as follows:

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
2002 SALARY RANGES

Level	U.S. 2002 Range			Canadian 2002 Range		
	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
20	\$76,494	\$95,618	\$114,741	\$98,535	\$123,168	\$147,802
19	\$69,597	\$86,995	\$104,395	\$85,481	\$106,851	\$128,222
18	\$63,786	\$79,733	\$95,679	\$74,484	\$93,105	\$111,727
17	\$58,884	\$73,606	\$88,327	\$65,208	\$81,510	\$97,812
16	\$54,782	\$68,477	\$82,173	\$57,444	\$71,805	\$86,165
15	\$51,344	\$64,181	\$77,016	\$50,938	\$63,672	\$76,406
14	\$45,070	\$56,336	\$67,604	\$45,440	\$56,798	\$68,158
13	\$39,807	\$49,758	\$59,709	\$40,822	\$51,027	\$61,233

Note: The shaded areas are not currently in use.

II. Activities of the Board

A. Polity matters

1. Introduction

The delegates to synod may be interested in knowing that the office of general secretary is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2002. Synod 1902 adopted the recommendation to initiate the office of stated clerk (now general secretary) and to appoint Dr. Henry Beets to that position. Dr. Beets served as stated clerk from 1902 to 1942. Since 1942 five additional persons have occupied the office: J. De Haan, Jr. (1942-45), R.J. Danhof (1945-70), William P. Brink (1970-82), L.J. Hofman (1982-94), and D.H. Engelhard (1994-present). The position of stated clerk became a fulltime position in 1956.

2. Interim appointments

On behalf of synod, the Board has ratified the following appointments made by classes:

Board	Classis	Member	Alternate	Term
Synodical Deputies	Alberta South/ Saskatchewan	Rev. Andrew G. Vander Leek		2005(1)
	Hackensack		Rev. John A. Algera	
	Lake Erie		Rev. Robert De Vries	
	Lake Superior Muskegon		Rev. David A. Zylstra Rev. Allen Petroelje	

CRC			
Publications	Eastern Canada	Ms. Nettie Pye	2004(1)
	Hackensack	Rev. Norman B. Steen	2004(1)
	Hamilton		Mr. Fred VanderVelde
	Heartland	Mr. Jack Schreurs	2004(1)
	Kalamazoo		Rev. Robert D. Ritsema
	Minnkota	Ms. Laura Van Beek	2004(1)
	Pacific Hanmi	Mr. Timothy Won	Rev. Young M. Kim
	Toronto	Ms. Irene Simpson	2004(1)
Home			
Missions	Central California		Rev. Kevin J. Adams
	Grand Rapids		
	East	Ms. Mary Buteyn	Rev. Jack Kooreman
	Hackensack		Rev. Andrew R. Sytsma
	Northcentral Iowa		Ms. Marcia Allspach
	Northern Michigan	Rev. Peter R. Byma	2004(1)
	Pacific Hanmi	Rev. Jin Choi	Mr. Theodore Lin
	Pacific Northwest	Ms. Janette Kok	Ms. Eleanor Rietkerk
Quinte	Rev. C.J. De Vos	Rev. N.A. Sennema	
Red Mesa		Rev. Michael J. Meekhof	
World			
Missions	California South	Mr. Dick Jorritsma	2004(1)
	Central California	Mr. Ray Hayes	2004(1)
	Eastern Canada	Mr. Peter Mostert	Mr. Elva MacDonald
	Hackensack		Rev. K.J. Vander Wall
	Illiana	Rev. Ildefonso Torres	Rev. Eric Schering
	Lake Superior	Rev. Alfred Van Dellen	2004(1)
	Northcentral Iowa		Rev. Frank Pott
	Pacific Hanmi	Mr. Ji Neung Jun	Rev. David Chong
	Thornapple Valley		Rev. Edward P. Meyer
	Wisconsin		Rev. Timothy Hull
CRWRC	Grand Rapids South		Mr. T. Buit
	Heartland		Mr. Tom Knapper
	Lake Superior, U.S.		Mr. Marlin Breens
	Muskegon	Mr. Fred Visser	2005(1)
	Niagara		Mr. Ben VanHoffen
	Northcentral Iowa	Mr. Dick Werkman	2004(1)
	Northern Illinois		Mr. George Andringa
	Pacific Hanmi		Rev. Sung Chang Choi
	Quinte	Mr. Frank Westerhof	2004(1)
	Southeast U.S.		Mr. Jeff Brouwer
Zeeland	Mr. Joel Ploegstra	Mr. Al Dannenberg	
		2004(1)	

3. Classes that have declared the word *male* inoperative in Church Order Article 3-a

In accordance with the instructions of Synod 1995, the general secretary keeps a list of those classes that declare the word *male* inoperative in Church Order Article 3-a. Although some of these classes have developed their own regulations regarding the permissibility of women officebearers participating in classis meetings, the following classes have adopted a decision to declare the word *male* inoperative in Church Order Article 3-a:

Alberta North
Arizona (deacons only)
British Columbia South-East
Chicago South
Florida
Grand Rapids East
Greater Los Angeles
Hackensack
Holland
Huron

Kalamazoo
Lake Erie
Muskegon
Northern Illinois
Pacific Northwest
Quinte
Red Mesa
Rocky Mountain
Toronto

4. Ethnic advisers to synod

The position of ethnic adviser was approved by Synod 1995 and reaffirmed by Synod 2000. Ethnic advisers first served at Synod 1996. Guidelines for the position were approved by Synod 1996 and incorporated into the Rules for Synodical Procedure.

The Board has appointed the following ethnic advisers for Synod 2002:

Rev. Jerome Burton
Rev. Victor Ko
Mr. John Szto
Rev. Carlos G. Tapanes
Mr. Houa (Nathan) Vang
Ms. Mattie Young

5. Board nominations

a. Regional members

Whenever a new Board of Trustees member is needed from a region or when a member's first term is completed, each classis in the region is requested to submit or approve names for the position. When a slate has been prepared by the Board, the nominations are forwarded to synod for election. All first-term elections are from a slate of two nominees and all second-term elections are from a slate of single nominees (see Rules for Synodical Procedure, VI, D, 2).

The following slates of names from various geographic regions are coming to synod for election of a first term:

Chatham

Mr. Jack Geschiere, a member of Second CRC, Sarnia, Ontario, is a retired terminal operator and safety inspector for Shell Canada. He has served six terms as elder and has served as church visitor and as classical home missions committee member. He has served as a delegate to the Home Missions Board, serving on its executive committee and two years as its vice president. He has also served as president of the Canadian Home Missions Board. He has served as member of the Home Missions educational task force for the restructure of funding for the Christian school system in Rehoboth. He has been a delegate to synod four times. He presently serves as an alternate on the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

Mr. Patrick McNamara, a member of Grace CRC, Chatham, Ontario, is a sales representative. He is a graduate of Calvin College. He has

served as elder, Sunday school teacher, young people's leader, and on the worship committee. He presently is a member of the Chatham Christian School Society and serves on the school's Long-Range Planning Committee. He is serving as a volunteer track and cross country coach.

Lake Superior – Canadian

Rev. James C. Dekker is the pastor of Hope CRC, Thunder Bay, Ontario. He is a graduate of Calvin College, obtained a masters degree from Ohio State University, and an M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary. He has served on the Committee for Contact with the Government (Canada) and as alternate to the Calvin College Board of Trustees. He has served as a delegate to synod three times. He presently serves on the Coordinating Council of Church in Society and as chair of the classical interim committee.

Rev. William C. Tuininga is the pastor of Covenant CRC, Winnipeg, Manitoba. He has served as chair of the classical home missions committee, a member of the Committee to Study Structure for Ministry in Canada, and as stated clerk of classis. He presently serves on the classical home missions committee.

Quinte

Rev. William T. Koopmans is pastor of Cephass CRC, Peterborough, Ontario. He has served on the Reading Services Committee and the Committee to Review the Decision re Women in Office for Synod 2000. He has served as a delegate to synod five times. He presently serves as synodical deputy.

Rev. Jake Kuipers is pastor of Ebenezer CRC, Trenton, Ontario. He has served on the Home Missions Board, the classical interim committee, and the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA. He has served on the People for Sunday Association and served as synodical deputy. He presently serves as a trustee of the Canadian Minister's Pension Fund and as church visitor.

Region 6

Rev. Moses Chung is minister of discipleship at First CRC, Bellflower, California. He is a graduate of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. He presently serves on the Sesquicentennial Committee.

Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra is pastor of Faith Christian Fellowship CRC, Walnut Creek, California. Previously he was the president and general manager of Brinderson De Laval. He has served as YCF SWIM coordinator, on the church loan fund board, and as delegate to synod four times—three years as reporter or chair of the finance advisory committee. He presently serves as the reporter of the Smaller Churches Compensation and Subsidy Review Committee and serves on the classical administrative ministry team.

Region 7

Mr. Walter F. Ackerman, a member of Crestview CRC, Boulder, Colorado, is a revenue agent for the Colorado Department of Revenue. He is a graduate of Calvin College and received his master's degree from the University of Colorado. He has served on the classical finance

committee, Denver Deaconal Foundation Board, and the Boulder Shelter of the Homeless Board. He has served numerous times as elder and deacon. He presently serves on the classical interim committee, as alternate on the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA, and as stated clerk.

Mrs. N. Theresa Rottschafer, a member of Maranatha Fellowship CRC, Farmington, New Mexico, is an elementary school teacher. She is a graduate of Calvin College and received her master's degree from Northern Arizona University. She has served on the CRC Publications Board, and is presently an alternate on the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

Region 8

Mr. Lane Bonnema, a member of First CRC, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is a team leader of the executive response team for Gateway Computers and a former school teacher and administrator. He has a master's degree in education and administration. He has served as a delegate to synod two times and as elder and catechism teacher numerous times. He presently serves on the Long-Range Planning Committee and on the search committee.

Mr. Marion D. Van Soelen, a member of Hope CRC, Hull, Iowa, is a district coordinator-director for Christian Schools International. He has served as a delegate to synod two times and has served on a classical study committee, CSI International board, and the local hospital board. He has served as elder three times and as chair of the pastor search committee. He presently serves on the Elim Christian Services Board, the Committee to Study Church Education, the Siouxland Diaconal executive committee, and is a catechism teacher.

Region 11

Mrs. Kathy Steenwyk, a member of Grace CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a secretary at Potter's House Christian High School. She attended Reformed Bible College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. She presently serves as an elder.

Mrs. Beverly A. Weeks, a member of Oakwood CRC, Belding, Michigan, is a homemaker. She attended Grand Rapids Junior College and Butterworth School of Nursing. She has served as director of Oakwood CRC Coffee Break for ten years, as secretary-treasurer of Faith Community Christian School Boosters Club for five years, and as a member of outreach, worship, and property committees. She presently serves as secretary of the classical home missions committee.

Region 12

Mr. Cornelius J. Bushoven, a member of Cedar Hill CRC, Wyckoff, New Jersey, is a retired CPA. He is a graduate of Pace University and Rutgers University. He has served as treasurer of The Back to God Hour Board, chair of the Christian Health Care Center Board, and vice president and president of the Eastern Christian School Board. He has served as vice president of council and two terms as elder. He presently serves as treasurer of classis.

Mr. Dan Cooke, a member of New Hope Community CRC, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is a partner in Omega Engineering Consultants

and a part-time high school computer teacher. He is a graduate of Calvin College and received a master's degree from Nova University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He has served as an elder, Sunday school teacher, and Bible study leader. He also has served as a member of the Home Missions Board and executive committee, and on various classical committees. He presently serves as stated clerk.

The following slate of names from Classis Huron is coming to synod for election of a second term:

Huron

Rev. Edward Den Haan (incumbent), a member of First CRC, Guelph, Ontario, is campus minister at the University of Guelph. Before becoming campus minister in 1977, he served Charlottetown, PEI, CRC and Maranatha CRC, Calgary, Alberta. He served as chairperson of the executive board for the Institute for Christian Studies. Rev. Den Haan served on the 1994 search committee for general secretary. He has served on the World Missions Board, the Calvin College Board of Trustees, and the CRC synodical Youth-Ministry Committee.

Rev. Gerrit J. Bomhof (alternate) is pastor of First CRC, Drayton, Ontario. He has served as stated clerk of Classis Chatham and Classis Alberta South. He has previously served as stated clerk and has served on the Canadian Structure Committee. He presently serves on the classical home missions committee, the classical ministries committee, and the chaplaincy advisory committee.

b. At-large member

At-large members for the Board (total of six) are also chosen directly by synod. This year Mrs. Sarah Cook completes her first term and is eligible for reelection. At-large positions exist to help create balance and/or provide expertise on the Board.

The following slate of names for an at-large position is coming to synod for election of a second term:

Canada

Mrs. Sarah Cook (incumbent) is a member of Calvary CRC, Ottawa, Ontario, where she serves as deacon. She serves as program manager with the Ottawa Center for Research and Innovation in Ottawa. She attended Trinity Christian College for two years and furthered her studies for three years in the Netherlands in youth work. She is a member of various professional organizations. She previously served on the Judicial Code Committee, the synodical Committee on Headship in the Bible, and on the CRC Publications Board. She has also served on both the elementary and high school Christian school boards in Ottawa.

Mrs. Martha Kouwenhoven (alternate) and her husband have lived in several places in Canada, including Vancouver, Edmonton, and Toronto, and she is familiar with the work of the churches and ministry needs throughout Canada. She previously served on the Interchurch Relations Committee for the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada and in various capacities within the local church, including Coffee Break and Calvinettes.

6. Women advisers to synod

Synod 2000 adopted the following recommendation regarding women advisers to synod:

That until the review [of the women in office decision] in 2005, synod make provision to have up to seven women from various regions in the CRC serve as advisers to synod.

(*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 699)

Synod 2001 adopted a set of guidelines to regulate this advisory position (see *Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 493).

On the basis of the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001, the Board appointed the following women advisers for Synod 2002:

Mrs. Sharon Jim
Mrs. Carol Kramer
Rev. Thea N. Leunk
Mrs. Jacqueline Timmer
Mrs. Char Uken
Mrs. Vicky Van Andel
Mrs. Jean Weening

7. Response to Overture 4 (Synod 1999) re policy for short-term disabilities for ministers

Overture 4 was submitted to Synod 1999 and that synod “instructed the Board of Trustees in consultation with the pension funds trustees to examine the requests of this overture and report back to Synod 2000.” The Board was unable to complete the assignment in 2000, but submitted its report to Synod 2001. Synod 2001 received the report as partial fulfillment of the mandate given the Board but referred the matter back to the Board for further exploration and development (see *Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 454-55).

A subcommittee of the Board has been working on this matter but has not yet completed its work. If the work is completed before the May meeting of the Board, it will be presented to synod in the Board’s supplementary report.

8. Church Education Committee

Synod 2001 appointed the Committee to Study Church Education. Two of the members appointed were unable to serve (Mrs. Carol Bremer-Bennett and Dr. Robert De Vries). Mr. Keith Knight was named as an alternate member, and he was able and willing to accept the appointment to the committee. The committee membership is as follows:

Mrs. Mary Bouwma, chair
Rev. Robert De Moor
Mrs. Eldean Kamp
Mr. Keith Knight
Dr. John Van Schepen
Mrs. Karen Wilk
Dr. David H. Engelhard (ex officio)

9. Christian Day School Committee

Synod 2001 appointed the Committee to Study Christian Day School Education and asked the Board of Trustees to appoint “not less than two members with financial expertise.” The Board appointed Dr. John Visser from Dordt College and approached five additional appointees who declined to serve. Since the committee is scheduled to complete its work by September 15, 2002, the addition of another member after the committee had completed more than half of its work did not seem wise. The committee has made good use of outside financial consultants as it carried out its assignment.

The composition of this committee is:

Dr. John Bolt
Mrs. Karen Gerritsma
Mrs. Sharon Jim
Mr. James Jones
Mr. Herman Proper
Mrs. Sherry Ten Clay
Rev. Ildefonso Torres
Mr. Marion Van Soelen
Dr. Dan Vander Ark, chair
Dr. John Visser
Dr. David H. Engelhard (ex officio)

10. Adoption of change in Church Order Article 55

Synod 2001 proposed to Synod 2002 that the following changes be made in Article 55 of the Church Order (additions underlined; subtractions struck through):

The sacraments shall be administered upon the authority of the consistory in the public worship service by a ~~the~~ minister of the Word, an evangelist, or, in the case of need, an ordained person who has received the approval of classis, with the use of the prescribed forms or adaptations of them that conform to synodical guidelines.

Grounds:

- 1) The gifts of the sacraments are an integral part of the relationship between Christ and the church and should not be denied to a congregation because it is unable to support clergy.
- 2) Approval and supervision of the exercise of these gifts by the classis will promote consistency of practice and good order in our churches.

(Acts of Synod 2001, p. 508)

These changes are being submitted to Synod 2002 for adoption. Church Order Article 47 states that “no substantial alterations shall be affected by synod [in the Church Order] unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes.” The Church Order Supplement, Article 47 (section c) specifies further that:

- c. If the churches and classes have not had prior opportunity to consider a substantial alteration, it must be submitted to a following synod, which will consider its advisability. The first decision shall be understood as a decision to propose; the action of a following synod shall be understood as a decision to adopt.

(Church Order Supplement, Article 47)

In keeping with Church Order Supplement Article 47 (section e) Synod 2001 designated Dr. Clayton Libolt and Dr. Robert De Vries and/or Dr. David Holwerda to represent this proposed change to Synod 2002. These persons have “the rights and privileges of . . . representatives of a synodical study committee” (Church Order Supplement, Article 47-e).

11. Church Order Article 13-a and cooperative supervision

The Board of Trustees appointed a committee following Synod 2001 to review the denomination’s at-will employment policy and to explore the implications of Church Order Article 13-a for cooperative supervision of missionaries and ordained denominational staff members. The result of that study and its recommendations are found in Appendix A.

12. Convening churches of synod

The following churches have been designated as convening churches of synod:

2002 – Han-Bit Korean CRC, Rochester Hills, Michigan

2003 – First CRC, Orange City, Iowa (synod will be held at Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa)

2005 – Palos Heights CRC, Palos Heights, Illinois (synod will be held at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois)

13. Committee to Examine Life Issues Raised by Bioscience and Genetic Engineering

Synod 1999 appointed the Committee to Examine Life Issues Raised by Bioscience and Genetic Engineering and ordinarily this committee would have submitted its report to this synod for adoption. For a variety of reasons the committee has not been able to complete its work. The Board of Trustees has granted the committee an extension for one year with the understanding that the report will be submitted in the fall of 2002 and sent at that time to the churches for consideration. The Board also accepted the resignation of Dr. Hessel Bouma III, who asked to be relieved of his assignment on this committee. No replacement was appointed.

14. Judicial Code Committee nominations

The Judicial Code Committee is scheduled to meet on April 12-13, 2002. At that time they will process a slate of nominees for the positions that need to be filled due to completion of terms. The names and biographical information will be included in the Board’s supplementary report.

15. Publications and services

a. *Yearbook*

The *Yearbook*, published annually by the office of the general secretary of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, serves as a denominational directory and as a resource for statistical information. In addition to information about classes, congregations, ministers, and agencies, it contains a historical sketch of the life of the church during the previous year and provides obituary information about pastors who died during that year.

Each year, the *Yearbook* is published with greater facility than the year before because of technological refinements. The October deadline for *Yearbook* information allows us to publish in January rather than later in the year as was previously the custom. Thus, the book reflects denominational and local-church information up to a given point (August 31) in each calendar year.

The statistics printed beneath the congregational information in the 2002 *Yearbook* in each instance show the total number of souls (baptized and professing members) in a local congregation. By instruction of synod the following membership totals are listed in the Classical Information: number of families, number of professing members over eighteen years of age, total number of professing members, total number of baptized members, and total number of members. In addition, the Classical Information includes the total number of inactive members, total number of members leaving for other CRCs, and total number of members received from other CRCs through evangelism and from other denominations.

The Directory of Churches and Ministries in the *Yearbook* includes organized churches, emerging churches, newly planted churches (not yet having statistics), and other ministries, for a total of 996 active ministries. The return rate for questionnaires was at the 81 percent level this year so that the *Yearbook* includes current statistics for 797 ministries.

We acknowledge with gratitude the excellent services of Mrs. Nancy Haynes, *Yearbook* manager, and Mrs. Diane Recker, Mrs. Alice Damsteegt, and Mrs. Jan Ortiz, who assisted in gathering information, entering it into the database, copy reading, editing, and carefully attending to the myriad of details involved in publishing the *Yearbook*. The same hearty gratitude needs to be expressed to our computer staff who diligently provide the necessary support services for this exacting task.

b. *Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure*

An updated *Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure* was printed, incorporating the changes adopted and ratified by Synod 2001. These booklets are updated by the general secretary and reprinted annually, when necessary, and a copy is sent to each church.

c. *Agenda for Synod and Acts of Synod*

The publication of the *Agenda for Synod* and *Acts of Synod* is the responsibility of the general secretary. This would not be accomplished by established deadlines without the invaluable assistance of Mrs. Diane Recker, administrative assistant; Mrs. Jan Ortiz, copy editor; and Mrs. Nancy Haynes and personnel from CRC Product Services.

As in previous years, some decisions needed to be made about which material properly belonged in the *Agenda for Synod*. Erring on the side of grace seemed more appropriate than erring on the side of rigid regulation. Synod itself will finally decide in all cases whether the material is properly on its agenda.

d. *Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church*

During the past year, the Board of Trustees has again sent to all CRC councils updated materials for the *Handbook of the Christian Reformed*

Church: Your Church in Action. Several councils ordered new notebooks because the old ones had been lost or misplaced. This binder should be kept available in every council room.

The *Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church* contains the following sections:

- 1) Ministry Shares and Offerings—This section contains financial data and a description of the programs carried on by all CRC boards and agencies as well as by accredited outside agencies. It gives assistance for scheduling special offerings and suggests announcements to be made prior to receiving such offerings.
- 2) Denominational Insights—After a brief statement on the nature of the church and on some of the principles of Reformed church government, this section provides information about the nature of our assemblies, the function of major assemblies, the agenda for synod, and the denominational program structure.
- 3) Congregational Helps—This section contains helps that are available for councils and congregations; suggested rules of procedure and model agendas for council, consistory, and deacons meetings; suggestions for congregational committees; helpful information on the use of members' gifts; and other useful information.
- 4) Ministers' Compensation Survey—By mandate of synod, a survey of ministers' compensation has been prepared each year for use by our pastors and by finance committees of the church councils. The 2001 survey will be presented to Synod 2002 and later mailed to the churches for inclusion in the *Handbook*. It is intended to be a helpful guide in the setting of salaries and other position-related reimbursements. Because the survey is also used by our pension committees, Synod 1988 passed the following recommendation:

That synod remind the churches that Synod 1982 adopted a recommendation to "require that all ministers complete the salary questionnaire annually to enable the pension committees to accurately calculate the average cash salary as a base for computing ministers' pensions."

(Acts of Synod 1982, p. 51; Acts of Synod 1988, p. 574)

- 5) Doctrinal and Ethical Decisions—This section is indispensable for all who wish to know the position of the CRC on various matters of doctrine and ethics. Recently updated, it will be sent on request to any church (or individual) who asks. It can also be found on the CRC web site at www.crcna.org/cr/crbe/crbe_pos.htm. An abbreviated version can be purchased through CRC Publications by calling 1-800-333-8300.
- e. *Index of Synodical Decisions*

Previous editions of the *Index of Synodical Decisions* have been valuable aids for those who need to research the decisions of synodical assemblies. The updating of the index was mandated by Synod 1995. The staff has worked steadily on this project but with limited time and resources to devote to it. The previously published index needed to be redone in a completely different software system; the indexing standards and practices needed rethinking and, in many instances, needed altering; and

the *Agenda* and *Acts* of subsequent years needed to be seamlessly inserted into the older index. We are pleased to report that the index was recently published and is available in both book format and electronic (CD ROM) format through CRC Publications (1-800-333-8300).

f. *Manual for Synodical Deputies*

This manual is distributed to synodical deputies, their alternates, and stated clerks of classes. The manual, originally prepared by Rev. Leonard J. Hofman, was revised in 2001 by the general secretary and distributed to those mentioned above. Anyone needing a copy of the manual may receive one from the office of the general secretary.

B. *Program and finance matters*

The year has been dominated by a globally significant event. September 11, 2001 marks one of those moments in history when everything changes. This is likely to be especially true in our international work. It is too early to say with certainty what the precise scope of the changes will be, but there is broad consensus that Muslim countries will be increasingly reluctant to admit our missionary personnel in years to come. We will need to become more proficient at training national church leaders so that the ministry of the gospel will continue to advance even though North American missionaries will experience more restricted access to many places around the globe. This is but one example of the change that is ongoing.

Changes in North America are equally profound. While secularization moves as an irresistible force in our society, people are searching for spiritual meaning and direction. Our task as a church, and the task of every Christian Reformed congregation in Canada and the United States, is to proclaim, exhibit, and live the gospel we believe. The Reformed faith has as much relevance for our time as it did in ages past. The agencies and educational institutions of the Christian Reformed Church are committed to be true to that heritage of faith and to bring honor to the Lord as we seek to reflect the coming of his kingdom.

1. *Canadian ministries*

The year 2001 has been a year of transition for Canadian Ministries with the arrival of a new director, the Rev. William Veenstra, formerly of Maple Ridge, British Columbia.

Decisions of Synods 1997 and 2000 regarding Canadian Ministries came into clearer focus during the year. Across Canada, fifteen regional conversations were held in preparation for the Canadian Ministry Forum. These classis-based conversations asked churches to identify areas of their ministry that God has blessed. Delegates also were asked to look ahead and to focus on what they would seek to "Achieve, Preserve, and Avoid." The intent is to listen, to learn, and to be renewed.

A national conversation will be held on May 30-June 1, 2002 to consider the input and to formulate recommendations to the CRCNA-Canada Corporation. It is anticipated that subsequent action by the Board will set priorities for Canadian Ministries for the next three to five years. In all of this, deliberate efforts are being made to keep the Denominational Ministries Plan in focus.

Canadian Ministries is governed by the CRCNA-Canada Corporation. These same board members also serve as trustees of the denominational binational Board of Trustees. Included on the agenda of the Canadian corporation are the urban aboriginal ministry centres located in Winnipeg, Regina, and Edmonton. These ministry centers continue to have significant impact on their communities. Not only is the gospel shared, there is also a focused concern on community development and pursuing justice and helpful intervention for individual families and communities that are often at high risk.

Social justice also comes to expression in other venues. The Committee for Contact with the Government is focusing on the issues of poverty, homelessness, and assisted reproductive technologies. The work of the Committee for Contact with the Government has been significantly curtailed during 2001 due to a lack of staff support because of illness. It is anticipated that a new research and communication coordinator will be in place by early spring.

In previous years, Canadian Ministries have participated in a number of social justice task forces. Due to financial restraints faced by many partner denominations, a restructuring of these task forces took place effective July 1, 2001. The task forces were collapsed into six program committees under an umbrella organization called Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. Currently, a CRC delegate serves on each committee (Mr. Wayne deJong, Global Economic Justice; Rev. Arie Van Eek, Canadian Social Development; Mr. Rick de Graaf, International Human Rights; Ms. Sandra Elgersma, Education/Animation; Ms. Janet Wesselius, Environmental/Ecological Justice; Mr. Harold Roscher, Aboriginal Peoples). Rev. William Veenstra serves on the Kairos board. We anticipate that these committees will mature and effectively engage in their areas of ministry during the coming year.

Canadian Ministries watched with interest the development of Diaconal Ministries Canada. Previously, diaconal ministries were regionally focused and governed. On July 1, 2001, the national organization came into being. On November 5, 2001, Hans Kater began his tenure as executive director of Diaconal Ministries Canada.

The CRCNA-Canada Corporation has initiated a discussion with Diaconal Ministries Canada to explore the working relationship between them. This discussion will need more attention in the near future.

About thirty-five people work in the Burlington office, providing the general ministry coordination and needed support services to maintain efficiency and effectiveness in our Canadian ministries. World Relief, World Missions, Home Missions, Faith Alive Resources, The Back to God Hour, and the Denominational Office all maintain a staff presence in Burlington.

2. Report of BOT ministry programs

a. The Office of Abuse Prevention

The Office of Abuse Prevention was established by Synod 1994 and relates directly to the Board of Trustees within the organizational framework of the Denominational Office. Abuse Prevention director

Ms. Beth Swagman's report on the activity of the past year is contained in Appendix B.

b. The Office of Chaplaincy Ministries

Reverend Jacob P. Heerema retired from the position of director of Chaplaincy Ministries on January 18, 2001. The Board of Trustees, on behalf of synod, recognized Reverend Heerema's years of service at a Board dinner at its February 2002 meeting. Reverend Herman Keizer, recently retired from the active Chaplaincy in the United States Army, is serving in an interim capacity as the director in Reverend Heerema's place. Reverend Siebert Van Houten continues as the Canadian director.

Synod 2001 received a report, and various other communications, concerning the placement of Chaplaincy Ministries within the denominational structure. Synod was also informed, and endorsed the intent, that the Board of Trustees commission a study to review the principles and practice of Chaplaincy Ministries. That study is currently under way and is unlikely to be completed prior to Synod 2002. In the meantime, the work of caring for people in specialized settings goes on. Nearly one hundred chaplains perform that ministry on a daily basis, a force that is remarkable for a denomination the size of the CRC.

A report of the activities of the Chaplaincy Ministries office is contained in Appendix C.

c. The Office of Disability Concerns

The office of Disability Concerns was established by Synod 1984. This office relates directly to the Board of Trustees within the organizational framework of the Denominational Office. Disability Concerns director Dr. James Vanderlaan's report on the activity of the past year is in Appendix D.

d. The Office of Pastor-Church Relations and Ministerial Information Services

The Pastor-Church Relations ministry was initiated by Synod 1982. Because this ministry provides advice both to the congregations of the Christian Reformed Church and to the agencies, it has been placed under the administration of the Denominational Office and under the governance of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA. The report of Rev. Duane Visser, the director of Pastor-Church Relations, can be found in Appendix E.

e. The Office of Race Relations

The ministry of Race Relations was reorganized during 1999 after the Pastoral Ministries Board was dissolved. It was decided, in consultation with a variety of ethnic-minority representatives, that Race Relations be decentralized and that the three-member staff live and work in various regions of the denomination. Rev. Norberto Wolf was appointed as the director of Race Relations in September 1999. His report is contained in Appendix F. Rev. Wolf continues to live in California and performs his executive responsibilities and his regional activities from his office in Bellflower, California.

The Race Relations staff, in consultation with all of the agencies and educational institutions of the CRC, is providing the leadership for the antiracism initiative within the agencies and institutions. This effort seeks to implement the values articulated in the 1996 synodical report “God’s Diverse and Unified Family.” Specific plans are in place to continue the journey so that the sin of racism, both personal and institutional, is addressed and eradicated to the extent possible in a fallen world. This continuing journey will be shared with interested congregations of the denomination inasmuch as the Board of Trustees approved Phase II of this initiative.

f. The Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action

The ministry of Social Justice and Hunger Action has its origin in the world-hunger reports of 1979 and 1993. Mr. Peter Vander Meulen, who serves as the coordinator for this ministry, submits a report in Appendix G.

g. The Denominational Ministries Plan

Synod 1997 approved the mission and vision statements for the ministries of the denomination and endorsed the goals and strategies that are part of the plan. After working with the plan for three years, it was decided to rewrite major portions of the plan, incorporating some of the lessons learned. That effort has resulted in a rewritten Denominational Ministries Plan that can be found in Appendix H. Synod is requested to endorse the Denominational Ministries Plan as presented.

Mr. Michael Bruinooge is the ministries plan director. Having worked for twenty years with CRWRC in various capacities, Mr. Bruinooge is excellently qualified to provide the leadership for this effort.

3. Agency presentations at synod

Synod 1995 adopted a three-year rotation cycle for agency presentations at synod. The following roster for agency presentations is proposed for Synod 2002 on a schedule of synod’s choosing:

- Canadian Ministries
- CRC Publications
- Home Missions

4. Program evaluation

The Ministries Administrative Council (MAC) last year communicated to the Board of Trustees (BOT) its support for “a board-initiated ministry-program review encompassing all of the agencies and institutions of the CRC.” The review is being conducted this year with broad participation by members of the CRC, Board members, and staff. The primary purpose of such a review is to identify those areas in which greater effectiveness and efficiencies can be achieved. It is hoped that this review will also facilitate the setting of ministry priorities in years to come.

5. Ministry-share reallocation

Setting ministry priorities is an important part of allocating financial resources in support of the chosen priorities. In a time when the agencies and educational institutions are financially struggling to keep pace with ministry opportunities, priority-setting becomes mandatory so that the

Board of Trustees can make appropriate recommendations to synod for the allocation of resources. Priorities are established and based on program considerations and sound fiscal factors. During the recent downturn in agency income, it became necessary to make some financial adjustments in the ministry-share allocation for the current year. Such reallocation is based on several interfacing considerations that need to be understood and will be explained in greater detail to the Financial Matters advisory committee of synod. However, a brief summary is provided here so that all of synod's delegates may have an accurate view of the Board's recommendation on this subject.

Each year synod approves a "bottom line" ministry-share amount in support of the ministries that are supported by ministry shares. The amount assigned to each receiving agency is determined by the Board and provided as information to synod to explain how the total amount of the recommended ministry-share is arrived at. When the Board deals with agency budgets (and the allocation of ministry shares) it must deal with the following realities.

- a. Agency budgets under consideration are for the fiscal year of July 1 to June 30 of the following year.
- b. Ministry shares are set for the next calendar year (January 1 to December 31).
- c. Ministry shares are actually received at the approved level April 1 to March 31.

Therefore, when budgets are approved and ministry shares are allocated, the Board must anticipate a number of unknown factors. It is not surprising that this past year has been especially difficult given the events that shaped our world and influenced the income for denominational ministries. Not only were we impacted by the events of September 11, but the sluggish economy was also a factor. More important, we think, are the fundamental shifts in our culture that make ministry-share participation a more elusive goal. The fact is that as a support system for denominational ministries it is still marvelously effective in that it generates over twenty million dollars of support each year.

The problem side relates to the fact that two agencies in particular faced special challenges that needed to be addressed. Therefore, upon the recommendation of the Ministries Administrative Council, the BOT adjusted ministry-share allocation to more closely reflect the need of the denominational ministry at this point in time, and therefore recommends the reallocation to become effective July 1, 2002. Each of the agency boards affected by the reallocation of ministry shares acquiesced to the BOT decision, though some asked the BOT to declare the reallocation to be for a specified period. The BOT received these comments with appreciation but also felt that it was not in a position to make such commitments that would restrict its future options. The BOT requests that synod also recognize that budgets and ministry-share allocations are decided on an annual basis and that commitments for specific future actions are best avoided.

In the light of the foregoing, the BOT recommends to synod the reallocation of ministry-share amounts in favor of the Seminary and CRC

Publications in the amount of approximately \$577,000 beginning July 1, 2002 (and including 2002 ministry shares collected through March 31, 2003). These amounts will be taken from 2002 ministry share income that would otherwise have been received by The Back to God Hour, Calvin College, Home Missions, and World Missions, in proportion to their ministry-share participation before any reallocation. The following is a summary of the reallocations:

Reduced	Current	Change	Revised
BTGH	\$44.96	-1.48	\$43.48
Calvin College	27.00	-.89	26.11
Home Missions	52.37	-1.72	50.65
World Missions	51.23	-1.68	49.55
Increased			
Calvin Seminary	24.68	+3.38	28.06
CRC Publications	5.96	+2.39	8.35

6. Appointments and personnel matters

- a. As of August 15, 2001, Dr. Duane K. Kelderman is the vice president for administration at Calvin Theological Seminary.
- b. As of August 15, 2001, Dr. Henry De Moor is the vice president for academic affairs at Calvin Theological Seminary.
- c. As of September 1, 2001, Dr. Gary J. Bekker is the executive director of Christian Reformed World Missions.
- d. As of January 1, 2002, Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. is the president of Calvin Theological Seminary.
- e. As of March 15, 2002, Rev. Herman Keizer is the Chaplaincy Ministries director for an interim period not to exceed two years.

7. Consolidated Group Insurance

The denomination offers a health and dental insurance program for employees of Christian Reformed congregations and the employees of the denominational agencies. Supplemental insurance is also available to retirees who were part of the denominational insurance program during their years of active service. The program is self-insured and is governed by the Board of Trustees through its Compensation Administration Committee. Health and dental insurance has become a major part of compensation in all of society, and it is no different for the CRC. Due to changing circumstances in the market, and because of escalating costs, it became necessary to revise the benefits of the plan as of January 1, 2002. Details of the changes made, and the reasons for the changes, will be available upon request, and will be presented to the Financial Matters advisory committee at the time of synod's meeting.

8. Denominational survey

Every five years since the 1980s a denominational membership attitudinal survey is conducted by Calvin College's Social Research Center. The latest survey is currently underway. Dr. Rodger Rice, who retired from the faculty of Calvin College last year, is the project manager. Dr. Rice has been part of this project from the beginning and renders

outstanding analytical and interpretive skills in discerning the trends that affect our life as a church and denomination.

9. Financial matters

Most of the financial information will be included in the *Agenda for Synod 2002—Financial and Business Supplement*. This supplement is distributed to all the delegates at the time of synod. The financial information contained in this printed *Agenda* is the condensed information mandated by Synod 1998. The condensed financial statements (Appendix J of this report) reflect pertinent information for all the agencies and institutions of the CRC. The information provided seeks to strike an appropriate balance between too much and too little information.

As is evident from the financial statements provided to synod, the regular and faithful contributions by the membership of the CRC is astounding. These gifts enable a global ministry that is truly reflective of the opportunities God is providing for the CRC.

The consolidated financial services that have been operative since July 1, 1997 continue to be refined through the work of a tremendously dedicated staff. In addition to such financial services, the director of finance and administration also oversees, on behalf of the executive director of ministries, Product Services (graphic design, printing, mailing services), Information Services (computer and communication technology), and Building Services.

10. The CRC Foundation

Several years ago synod authorized the formation of a foundation to serve the Christian Reformed Church. The functions of the foundation are the following:

- a. Manage the investments of all the agencies except those of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary.
- b. Receive and invest estate gifts and bequests for the benefit of the denomination or one of its entities.
- c. Solicit annual gifts in support of the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, especially such gifts that are given to support creative and cooperative ministries as represented and approved in the Denominational Ministries Plan.

The Foundation trustees meet twice per year to transact the business of the CRC Foundation. The management of the investments is accomplished through an investment committee that works with professional investment advisers. Since the adoption of the denominational investment policy by Synod 1998, this arrangement has worked very well.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Jack De Vos are the directors of the CRC Foundation and represent the Foundation to potential donors. Their services are invaluable to the ministry of the Foundation. The Foundation solicits funds primarily in support of the agencies of the CRC but also in support of the interagency ministries that are part of the denominational ministries plan. All distributions in excess of \$5,000 need the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Finally, the Foundation trustees are continuing the process of developing a long-term vision for the Foundation. This vision needs to reflect the

values of the Christian Reformed Church in terms of “endowments for ministries.” As the trustees see it, one of these values is some degree of financial stability for the future. However, such provision should not be so great that future generations will be denied the privilege and responsibility of supporting the denomination’s ministries.

11. Compensation for international staff

At the March meeting of the Board of Trustees, a report was presented explaining the denominational compensation plan’s application to international staff. Agency executive personnel have been compensated according to such a plan since the late 1970s when synod adopted it for such purposes. The compensation plan was implemented for all North America-based personnel in 1994. At that time, World Missions requested that the implementation of the plan for international staff be delayed until a study could be conducted to determine the “appropriateness and applicability” of the compensation plan to persons serving in international settings. CRWRC functionally used the denominational plan all along, but for World Missions the matter was more complex. After several studies, numerous conversations, and substantial negotiation, both the CRWRC Board and the World Missions Board have approved the plan that is being implemented July 1, 2002.

The plan is in principle the same as that which has been in use in North America for about twenty years. One significant difference in the salary grid is that the international grid is exclusive of housing and utilities. In other words, missionaries will be paid a salary according to their placement on the salary grid. In addition, missionary personnel will be provided housing and utilities. This is being done because the cost of housing and utilities vary a great deal depending on where one is located. Having the agency provide this benefit will do much to equalize compensation, regardless of the location of service. The international salary grid, for purposes of information, is reproduced below.

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
THE INTERNATIONAL 2003 SALARY RANGES

Level	U.S. 2003 Range			Canadian 2003 Range		
	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
14	\$35,398	\$44,246	\$53,096	\$35,688	\$44,609	\$53,532
13	\$31,264	\$39,080	\$46,896	\$32,062	\$40,077	\$48,093
12	\$27,769	\$34,712	\$41,654	\$28,996	\$36,245	\$43,494
11	\$24,838	\$31,048	\$37,257	\$26,425	\$33,031	\$39,637
10	\$22,395	\$27,995	\$33,594	\$24,282	\$30,352	\$36,423
9	\$20,329	\$25,411	\$30,494	\$22,469	\$28,086	\$33,703
8	\$18,563	\$23,204	\$27,845	\$20,920	\$26,149	\$31,379

12. Heritage Church Guidelines

Synod 2001 mandated the development of qualifying guidelines for churches that petition and desire to become a heritage church. Synod instructed Home Missions to develop such guidelines, submit them to the Board of Trustees for approval, and then present them to Synod 2002 for ratification.

Home Missions did develop proposed guidelines and presented them to the Board of Trustees for approval at the February 2002 meeting of the Board. The Board sent the proposed guidelines back for reformulation and revision. Appendix I reflects the changes that will be submitted to the Board of Trustees at its May 2002 meeting. The judgment is that since Home Missions is responsive to the Board's concerns in this revised document that the Board will approve the guidelines as attached hereto. It is desirable that potential heritage churches and classes, as well as the delegates coming to synod, see this report in the printed Agenda for Synod 2002 rather than having to wait until after synod has acted on the report. The specific action and recommendation of the Board will be submitted to synod by way of the supplementary report.

III. Recommendations

- A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Stanley J. Workman, chairman of the Board; Dr. David H. Engelhard, general secretary; Dr. Peter Borgdorff, executive director of ministries; and Mr. Kenneth J. Horjus, director of finance and administration, when matters pertaining to the Board of Trustees are discussed.
- B. That synod approve the interim appointments made by the Board to the agency and institution boards (II, A, 2).
- C. That synod by way of the printed ballot elect members for the Board of Trustees from the slate of nominees presented (II, A, 5).
- D. That synod adopt the changes in Church Order Article 55 (II, A, 10).
- E. That synod receive the report re Church Order Article 13-a and adopt its recommendations (II, A, 11 and Appendix A).
- F. That synod endorse the Denominational Ministries Plan as presented (II, B, 2, g).
- G. That synod approve the reallocation of the year 2002 ministry shares as proposed (II, B, 5).
- H. That synod encourage churches to celebrate All Nations Heritage Week from September 30 to October 6, 2002, with an invitation to celebrate All Nations Heritage Sunday with special services on October 6.

Grounds:

1. The struggle against the sin of racism needs to be balanced with a celebration of God's gift of unity in diversity through Jesus, the Messiah. The congregations that wish to celebrate World Communion Sunday can find a meaningful Christian Reformed way of doing it by combining both celebrations.
2. The financial support that is received when congregations celebrate All Nations Heritage Sunday dramatically increases Race Relations' ability to award scholarships and grants to promote greater leadership of people of color in the life of our denomination.

I. That synod receive as information the condensed financial statements for the agencies and educational institutions (Appendix I).

J. That synod approve a time for presentations by Canadian Ministries, CRC Publications, and Home Missions.

Board of Trustees of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America
David H. Engelhard, general secretary
Peter Borgdorff, executive director of ministries

Appendix A

Church Order Article 13-a Report

I. Introduction

In May 2001, the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America received a request from the Board of World Missions to appoint a committee to study the implications of Church Order Article 13-a and the supervision provided ministers of the Word who work for agencies of the church. This request was occasioned by the fact that an ordained employee of World Missions had resigned from his position and the supervising church council said it was unaware of any difficulties and that it had not been sufficiently informed of the situation.

The classis of the supervising church council mentioned above submitted an overture to Synod 2001 requesting a review of the CRCNA's "at-will employment policy." Synod did not accede to the request, in part, because it was informed that the Board of Trustees was intending to study the matter. The Board was instructed by synod to report its findings to the classis that submitted the overture (see *Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 522).

In August 2001, the executive committee of the Board appointed a committee with the following mandate:

To study the implications of Church Order Article 13-a with reference to the involvement that calling churches have in the supervision of ordained missionaries and/or ordained denominational staff members.

(Executive Committee Minute #13 of August 28, 2001)

Those appointed to serve on the committee were:

Dr. Henry De Moor

Dr. David H. Engelhard

Rev. Carel Geleynse

Rev. Alvin L. Hoksbergen

Mr. Gary Mulder

Rev. Kathleen Smith

Rev. Ed W. Visser

Staff support: Rev. Arthur J. Schoonveld

Advisor: Dr. Peter Borgdorff

At its first meeting, the committee reviewed its mandate in comparison with the decision of Synod 2001 and discovered that its task needed to be expanded. The decision of Synod 2001 reads as follows:

That the BOT be encouraged to inform Classis Grand Rapids South of their intention to study the relationship between Church Order Article 13 and the denominational employment policy, and that they will report their findings back to Classis Grand Rapids South upon completion of their study.

(Acts of Synod 2001, p. 522)

The committee's mandate, therefore, was to clarify the implications and implementation of Church Order 13-a with respect to ordained denominational employees as well as to study the relationship of that article to the denomination's "at-will employment policy." This report and its recommendations to the Board of Trustees constitutes the committee's fulfillment of its mandate and the Board of Trustees' response to the mandate given it by Synod 2002.

II. Report proper

A. Church Order Article 13-a

Church Order Article 13-a reads as follows:

A minister of the Word is directly accountable to the calling church, and therefore shall be supervised in doctrine, life, and duties by that church. When his work is with other than the calling church, he shall be supervised in cooperation with other congregations, institutions, or agencies involved.

The wording of Article 13-a has led to various interpretations and expectations regarding the supervision of ministers working in noncongregational ministries. The first sentence articulates the general principle that applies to all ministers. The second sentence introduces the idea of cooperative supervision when the minister is serving in a ministry outside of the congregation.

There are at least two approaches regarding the implementation of the second part of this article. One approach works on the assumption that the church council supervises doctrine and life and that the agency or institution supervises the minister's duties. The other approach assumes that the wording of the text (both sentences taken together) means that the minister is to be supervised in all three respects (doctrine, life, and duties) by the church that called him or her. This second approach acknowledges, however, that with respect to the minister's duties the supervision is done "in cooperation with . . . the agency] involved."

The church needs to glean some truth from both approaches. Since one's doctrine and life seriously impact not only one's ministerial credentials but also one's duties, an agency or institution cannot ignore a person's doctrine and life and only focus on the duties. On the other hand, the calling church is concerned and responsible for its associate minister's well being and therefore cannot be left uninformed if its minister is not performing well. Furthermore, the calling council is almost completely dependent on the employing agency's procedures and methods for evaluating the performance of its associate minister. Therefore, cooperative supervision should not be compartmentalized to such an extent that doctrine, life, and duties are divorced from each other.

When all is going well, there is no problem in a cooperative arrangement. The potential for tension, miscommunication, and misunderstanding, however, between agencies and church councils in times of dismissal of an ordained minister from his or her position should not be underestimated. Church Order Article 13-a states a general principle regarding cooperative supervision but provides no substantive advice regarding specific expecta-

tions and responsibilities of each party. Therein lies the problem that has given rise to this reexamination of Church Order Article 13-a.

B. At-will employment policy

In addition to the ambiguity inherent in Church Order Article 13-a, the at-will employment policy of the CRCNA since 1995 has provided a new dimension to the issue. “At-will” employment is distinguished in U.S. jurisprudence from “just-cause” employment. The term *at-will employment* suggests to many that persons may be dismissed at the whim of an employer even though good reasons for dismissal are lacking. While that may be true in some examples of employer-employee relationships, that is not the essential distinction between at-will and just-cause employment policies.

Both at-will and just-cause are legal categories regarding employment matters and not first of all descriptive phrases identifying methods of dismissal. Just-cause employment is based on the notion that employer-employee disputes or grievances may be settled by the standards of and with the involvement of the civil courts. At-will employment is based on the notion that employer-employee disputes or grievances will be settled by means of internal procedures established for such resolution purposes.

Dismissal from employment happens in any organization whether it is an at-will employer or a just-cause employer. The difference is that such dismissals are handled in different ways. An at-will employer may establish internal procedures by which an employee can appeal decisions of dismissal or it may decide to leave all dismissal decisions to the judgement of supervisors without any possibility of appeal.

The CRCNA and its various agencies are at-will employers. They have, however, established careful processes and procedures that permit employees to appeal their dismissal if they believe that the termination of their employment was inappropriate or wrong. Synod 1995 approved the “Employment Termination Appeals Procedure” that protects all employees against all forms of capricious or arbitrary decision-making on the part of their supervisors regarding job performance and/or termination from employment. The internal procedures include both an administrative appeal route as well as a board or governance appeal route.

The CRCNA Employee Manual informs employees about the appeal procedure (both the administrative and governance routes) and also reminds them of the relationship of the internal appeals policy to the “external” appeals policy contained in Church Order Article 30 and its supplements. The Manual includes the following in section 702.2:

This procedure does not effect any right of appeal provided in Church Order Article 30 and Church Order Supplements 30-b and 30-c. With respect to employment termination which is covered by this procedure, this procedure must be exhausted before an appeal may be taken under Church Order Article 30 and Church Order Supplements 30-b and 30-c.

Even though the CRCNA is legally described as an at-will employer, it has provided its employees adequate appeals procedures that protect them from capricious and arbitrary decision-making regarding their employment future. There is no inherent conflict between the Church Order provisions regarding the supervision or dismissal of ordained ministers and the at-will employment policy in effect within CRCNA agencies as it is articulated above.

III. Recommendations

The ambiguity inherent in a cooperative supervision situation cannot be avoided completely. Nonetheless, slight alterations in Church Order Article 12-c and Church Order Article 13 may ease the tensions and clarify the expectations and understandings between a church council and an employing CRCNA agency.

A. The Board recommends that Synod 2002 propose that the following changes be made in the Church Order and that a *new* Church Order Supplement, Article 13-b be adopted (additions in italics; deletions struck through):

Article 12-b

b. A minister of the Word who (1) enters into the work of missions, (2) is appointed directly by synod, or (3) whose appointment is ratified by synod shall be called in the regular manner by a local church, which acts in cooperation with the appropriate committees of classis or synod.

Article 13

a. A minister of the Word *serving as pastor of a congregation* is directly accountable to the calling church, and therefore shall be supervised in doctrine, life, and duties by that church. ~~When his work is with other than the calling church, he shall be supervised in cooperation with other congregations, institutions, or agencies involved.~~

New: b. A minister of the Word whose work is with other than the calling church shall be supervised by the calling church in cooperation with other congregations, institutions, or agencies involved. The council of the calling church shall have primary responsibility for supervision in doctrine and life. The congregations, institutions, or agencies, where applicable, shall have primary responsibility for supervision of duties.

New: —Supplement, Article 13-b

c. (The current Article 13-b and its supplement would become Article 13-c and Supplement, Article 13-c.)

The proposed wording of the *new* Supplement, Article 13-b:

If any council, agency, or institution of the CRC involved in the cooperative supervision of a minister of the Word learns about significant deviation in doctrine, life, or duties, it shall officially inform in writing its partner(s) in that supervision about such deviation before any action is taken that affects that minister's status and future. A similar communication officially informing its partner(s) in supervision is expected from an agency or institution when a minister's status is altered at a time of downsizing or position elimination.

Provisions for cooperative supervision of ministers of the Word working for agencies and institutions not directly under the authority of the synod of the CRCNA are to be formulated and processed according to the regulations contained in Church Order Supplement, Article 12-c and the provisions regarding chaplains adopted by Synod 1998 (see Acts of Synod 1998, pp. 391-92, 457-60).

Grounds:

- a. Assigning primary responsibility for each aspect of supervision eliminates the ambiguity and clarifies the expectations for both the calling church and the agency.
 - b. Prior to the revision of Article 13 in 1984, the Church Order required the calling church “to supervise in doctrine and life” and said nothing about cooperative supervision of duties. The proposed new wording provides a good solution by assigning primary responsibility to each party within the relationship of cooperative supervision.
 - c. Informing in writing the other partner in the supervision prior to any action that affects a minister’s status or future takes seriously the relationship and precludes precipitous action.
- B. The Board recommends that the proposed changes be sent to the churches so that they may have ample opportunity to consider the advisability of the changes.

Ground: This is the procedure required by Church Order Article 47 and its Supplement when the churches have not had sufficient prior opportunity to consider a change in the Church Order.

Appendix B

Abuse Prevention (Ms. Beth Swagman, director)

The Office of Abuse Prevention was established by Synod 1994, and its mandate is to provide educational resources, policy guidelines, and training events for the purpose of preventing the occurrence of abuse in the church. This office also encourages the formation of abuse-response teams (ART) and provides the needed training for the teams. The training is important so that reported occurrences of abuse, especially when an accusation involves a church leader, are adequately responded to and processed.

I. Work accomplished during the past year

- A. Conducted forty-three (43) seminars, training sessions, and/or conferences for church audiences; Calvin College students; Calvin Theological Seminary students; small-group leaders; elementary, junior, and senior high teachers; World Missions missionaries; classes delegates; Christian school administrators; abuse-response team members; and attendees at a Day of Encouragement.
- B. Distributed one-hundred and eight (108) sample child-abuse prevention policies to U.S. and Canadian CRC congregations as requested. This is a decrease of ninety-one (91) policies sent in the year 2000 (down 45%). In the most recent *Yearbook* survey, two hundred and nine (209) churches indicate that they have an abuse-prevention policy.
- C. Disseminated to churches in seventeen (17) of the forty-seven (47) classes information about shaken baby syndrome (SBS). Churches were given the opportunity to order posters and brochures to create awareness of this form of abuse. This project began in 2000. In total, 12,400 English brochures, 554

Spanish brochures, and 345 posters were distributed. A total of 319 churches responded to the project.

D. Consulted with pastors, church leaders, classes representatives, school personnel, and agency staff about incidents of abuse or misconduct. Supported and advised persons who experienced abuse themselves or experienced it in the family. In 2001, 643 requests for assistance were received from 595 individuals; 96 previously unreported cases of abuse were reported. The 5 categories of assistance requested most often were consultation, advice/support, training/seminars, resources, and abuse-prevention polices.

E. The five categories of individuals who requested assistance most often were pastors, survivors of abuse, elders and deacons, church leaders, and church members. *Note:* These figures underrepresent the actual requests for assistance and the individuals making them. Busyness as well as requests made while the director was traveling or requests in the context of training or seminars prevents some requests from being recorded.

F. Offered resources to the churches through Abuse Awareness Week. Two hundred thirty-three churches participated by requesting 20,354 bulletin covers, 20,295 inserts, and 191 packets of information. The theme of Abuse Awareness Week for 2001 was "Hands Shouldn't Hurt." The intent was to address physical violence in personal relationships. Sixteen churches and organizations purchased 731 booklets on elder abuse and family violence.

G. Sponsored a conference on child abuse for Classes Columbia, Pacific Northwest, British Columbia South-East and North-West. One hundred twenty-five church leaders and parents attended a conference in April 2001 that offered thirty-one workshops that focused on healing child victims of abuse and preventing children from turning to abusive behaviors in adolescence or adulthood.

II. Challenges to the ministry

A. Previous reports have highlighted several problems related to the development and implementation of classical abuse-response teams. The issues involved are the resistance by classes to form a team and have it available; denial that a team is needed to respond to abusive activities in the church; inactivity among abuse-response team members; and small teams covering large areas, which leads to inactivity. The advisory committee for abuse prevention, at the request of the Executive Director of Ministries, began an evaluative process to explore the feasibility of the abuse-response teams in concept. To date, feedback indicates there are few problems with the advisory panel process per se. However, the climate of resistance and denial, combined with a lack of knowledge about abuse dynamics, contributes to small teams, too few teams, and even denying individuals the use of a team when one is in place.

B. Of the forty-seven classes, only sixteen have trained teams. Of those sixteen, ten can clearly be described as inactive, i.e., the team members have not conducted any activities for the churches. Most of these teams were formed before 1999. Of the six remaining, five have conducted education and support activities, and one is actively trying to initiate such activities.

C. Concerns from ART members include a lack of training to conduct mandated activities, lack of support by churches, mandate is too broad, small team size, and a reluctance to offer education and support in the churches.

D. There remains a paucity of resources for pastors, church leaders, and family members to use regarding issues of healing, restoration, reconciliation, mediation, and forgiveness.

E. Most published resources deal with abuse after it has happened. Development of resources and/or programs that address biblical, healthy male-female relationships, family relationships, and a biblical understanding of power in relationships are essential for preventing abusive behavior. These materials also should be developed for adolescents and younger children.

Appendix C

Chaplaincy Ministries (Rev. Herman Keizer, Jr., interim director; Rev. Siebert A. Van Houten, Canadian director)

I. Introduction

Chaplaincy Ministries is the ministry of the denomination that encompasses nearly one hundred full-time chaplains and twenty part-time chaplains serving throughout North America and in several places worldwide.

Chaplains serve in such places as the military, hospitals, nursing homes, youth centers, correctional institutions, hospice centers, counseling centers, veterans' medical facilities, and more recently in a several workplace settings. Models of community chaplaincy are emerging wherein a chaplain's ministry will consist of contracts with diverse groups, such as local businesses, social-service centers, court programs, and nursing homes. Ministry in such settings provides expanding opportunities in the future.

The staff members work with prospective chaplains to review their training, certification, and application for endorsement. We offer personal and professional support through keeping in touch, periodic site visits, newsletters, regional cluster meetings, and an annual conference. Staff also works jointly with the calling churches to provide ecclesiastical supervision. Through the generosity of the churches, the denomination is able to assist prospective chaplains with training stipends and salary subsidies. The denomination has in place a process that encourages high quality chaplaincy ministries. Many of our chaplains are in leadership positions because of our educational and training standards.

New chaplains will be needed to replace those who will leave this specialized ministry. We encourage pastors to prayerfully consider this vital and rewarding form of ministry and also encourage pastors to hold before their congregations the importance for the church to provide a ministry of pastoral care to those who for various reasons are unable to be a part of congregational life.

An important role for the staff is their participation in governmental and professional organizations. In these organizations, standards for the practice of chaplaincy are discussed. Decisions made have an impact on the level of training required for chaplains and the development of chaplaincy programs within institutions.

We note with gratitude the retirement of the following chaplains: Rev. Jacob Heerema, Rev. Nick Vander Kwaak, Rev. Ron Peterson, and Rev. Harry Faber.

The following chaplains were added to the roster during the past year: Rev. Dirk van der Vorst, Rev. Michael Dadson, Rev. Harry Vriend, Rev. Tom Haan, Rev. John DeVries, Rev. Corky DeBoer, Rev. Betty VanderLaan, Rev. Scott Koeman, Rev. Ralph Mueller, Rev. Erika Dekker, and Carol Robinson.

II. Noteworthy events

A. Rev. Jacob Heerema, director of Chaplaincy Ministries, retired from active ministry in January. In his ministerial career, he served in various congregational and institutional chaplaincy ministries. Since 1994, he has provided compassionate and capable denominational leadership during a time of transition and ministry review. He has been an effective ambassador for the denomination by representing the church on various national governmental and chaplaincy organizations. We acknowledge his life of service with gratitude and express appreciation for his ministry as director.

B. Rev. Herman Keizer, Jr. has been appointed as interim director for a period of up to two years while the Board of Trustees reviews the ministry and mandate of Chaplaincy Ministries. Herm has enjoyed a distinguished and varied career as an army chaplain since 1968 with the last several years on special assignment to the Office of Religious Freedom. He retired from military chaplaincy in March when he took up his duties as director. He brings a wealth of experience to his new position as he assists in developing the future of chaplaincy within the denomination.

C. In response to the September 11, 2001 events, staff have worked closely with Disaster Response of CRWRC providing pastoral support and input. Several military chaplains were called upon to minister at Ground Zero. Several institutional chaplains worked with churches and community recovery teams. Past experience has demonstrated that there will be continued pastoral needs for the foreseeable future. The staff will continue to work with CRWRC and local response teams to facilitate chaplain involvement. New opportunities are emerging for chaplain involvement in providing pastoral care to victims of disasters.

D. Chaplaincy Ministries celebrates sixty years of denominationally supported ministry. Although several chaplains had been appointed prior to 1942, it was in that year that synod approved the formation of a chaplaincy committee to endorse and support chaplains and chaplaincy ministry. Since 1942, more than three hundred clergy and unordained persons have served in chaplaincy ministries. By the end of World War II almost 10 percent of active CRC pastors served in chaplaincy. During the intervening years that number decreased, but today chaplains again represent about 10 percent of all active pastors. While the early focus was on military chaplaincy, today chaplains work in a variety of settings. One of the earliest-endorsed chaplains stated, "Chaplaincy taught me to meet the needs of many people." Today, while chaplains are endorsed by the denomination, they minister on behalf of the universal church. We request that synod acknowledge with gratitude the ministry of chaplaincy and the many chaplains who have served in such a vital denominational outreach.

E. The Board of Trustees committee appointed to review the ministry and mandate of Chaplaincy Ministries has begun its work. At the time of this writing, it is not known precisely when it anticipates completion of its work. If synodical action is required on any of the recommendations advanced through the Board of Trustees, such will likely be presented to Synod 2003.

III. Challenges to the ministry

A. Chaplaincy Ministries seeks to encourage younger persons to enter chaplaincy and requests that synod encourage younger pastors to consider entering such ministry.

B. Chaplaincy Ministries continues to examine and evaluate matters related to the endorsement of nonclergy persons for chaplaincy in light of synod's accepting the usage of the office of evangelist for nonclergy pastoral positions.

C. The staff continues to seek out opportunities to work collaboratively with other agencies and ministries in developing wholistic ministries.

D. The staff will need to implement the recommendations of the review committee.

In 1942, the denomination was concerned about providing ministry to "our boys." Today, chaplains reach beyond the denomination and often minister to people who think of God as a distant stranger with no apparent interest in their lives. As the church continues to be present in institutions and moves into the marketplaces of society, there are many opportunities for the gospel to touch the lives of those who feel hurt, alienated, and, in some cases, abandoned. This is often the population that chaplains are called to serve. Chaplains help people come to grips with the many vexing questions around suffering and the meaning of life. Our chaplains represent the church in many diverse settings to bring samplings of Christ's love and hints of hope.

Both Rev. Herman Keizer and Rev. Siebert Van Houten are available to meet with the advisory committee reviewing the Chaplaincy Ministries report, and we request that both be granted the privilege of the floor when these matters are discussed by synod.

Appendix D

Disability Concerns (Dr. James Vanderlaan, director)

I. Activities

Disability Concerns continues to develop the following:

A. *Regional disability concerns committees*

The eastern Canada committee is the oldest and still functions well. The Chicago committee is three (3) years old and is struggling along since its chairperson has been ill. The southern California committee is dormant and the Grand Rapids committee is just beginning.

B. *Regional cross-disability conferences*

The eastern Canadian annual conference continues to be held. We had hoped to help bring CRC people to the Joni and Friends Ministries conference

in Wheaton Illinois, but due to the local committee chairperson's illness little came of it, though the conference did take place.

A Grand Rapids ecumenical disability conference is being planned that will involve our participation.

C. Regional disability consultants

All Canadian classes are being served by a consultant except Alberta South/ Saskatchewan. In the United States, twelve classes, mainly in the far West, are not yet served by a consultant.

D. Church contact people

We have not recorded the number of church contact people we have at any given point in each of the past years and we cannot plot the increase, but the number rises roughly in tandem with the number of consultants. At present, 333 CRCs receive bulk orders of *Breaking Barriers* and 270 of these have church contact people. The other 60 churches ask us to send the bulk order to the pastor, clerk, deacons, or secretary of the church.

E. Breaking Barriers

The circulation of the newsletter *Breaking Barriers* continues to increase. The summer 2001 issue was sent to 38,500 persons. By the fall of 2001, the circulation had increased to 43,000.

F. Agency contacts

Class lectures and conversations about fieldwork assignments are held at Calvin Seminary. Conversations with agency personnel to raise awareness of disability issues in their agencies are also conducted.

G. Participation in ecumenical and interfaith disability organizations

We participate in the following: National Council of Churches of Christ Disability Committee, Christians Concerned for People with Disabilities, and Pathways to Promise (mental illness and communities of faith).

H. Personal contacts

There is a constant flow of conversations by e-mail, letter, phone, and face-to-face meetings with individuals about disability matters. A log is kept and numbers can be provided if needed.

II. Church survey

Synod 1993 adopted the following: "That synod heartily recommend full compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act PL 101-336 and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada" (*Acts of Synod 1993*, Art. 65, p. 539). Disability Concerns is responsible to synod for monitoring denominational progress in achieving this compliance. The CRC *Yearbook* questionnaires, sent annually by the general secretary to all councils, provide the data. The results for 2002 are as follows (the database contains 996 churches):

A. Barrier free – 394

B. Partially Accessible – 528

1. Worship Area – 482
2. Fellowship areas – 446

3. Classrooms – 365
4. Restrooms – 396
5. Pulpit area – 68
6. Main entrance – 421

C. Signing for the deaf – 45

1. All services/programs – 6
2. When requested – 40

D. Aids for hard of hearing and deaf – 459

1. Special hearing aids – 368
2. Captioned video screening – 23
3. Printed texts of the sermons – 63
4. Other– 40 (they consist of Power Point presentations, overheads, sermon outlines, sound system and loops, wireless hearing aids, tapes, and video tapes)

E. Aids for the visually impaired – 480

1. Large-print bulletins – 209
2. Large-print songbooks – 327
3. Large-print bibles – 280
4. Braille when requested – 28

F Special Programs – 244

1. Friendship classes – 183
2. Fellowship activities – 108
3. Christian housing assistance – 26
4. Respite care – 27
5. Other – 17 (care to shut-ins, one-on-one for children with mental impairments, special programs as needed, GEMS counseling, attention-deficit education, children’s school for autistic and mental impairments, support network for special-needs children.)

G. Transportation – 334

1. In a lift-equipped church vehicle – 15
2. In an ordinary church-owned vehicle – 75
3. In a privately owned vehicle – 321
4. Weekly – 187
5. When requested – 274

This year we reproduce the questionnaire results in more detail, so the format is different from past reports. Nevertheless, the questionnaire has remained unchanged from year to year, and the reader can gauge denominational progress in including people with disabilities by comparing the numbers this year to those of past years as printed on the next page.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Barrier-free access	394	368	365	318	383
Partial accessibility	435	459	470	417	481
Signing for deaf	32	31	29	35	44
Providing aids for hearing impaired	455	190	185	437	479
Providing aids for visually impaired	305	346	364	284	444
Providing special programs	245	240	244	225	254
Providing transportation	276	292	324	346	399

The final question on the questionnaire asks about participation in church activities. The data generated by the answers to this question are not shown in the *CRC Yearbook* but are helpful to Disability Concerns in tracking denominational progress in bringing people with disabilities more fully into church life. This question was first included on the questionnaire in 1997. The answers for this year (2001) are as follows:

Participation of members with disabilities serving in staff or volunteer positions in the congregation (278 churches responding).

1. Paid staff – 21
2. Officebearer – 61
3. Church schoolteacher – 49
4. Usher/greeter – 155
5. Committee member – 128
6. Other – 106 (classroom attendant, friendship staff, choir, sound-booth operator; most did not state what position the person held.)

The numbers for previous years are as follows:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Paid staff	14	9	23	20	13
Officebearer	28	32	26	34	48
Church schoolteacher	24	36	29	42	42
Usher/greeter	81	102	108	116	120
Committee member	57	78	94	99	108
Other	56	66	72	70	90

Appendix E

Pastor-Church Relations (Rev. Duane A. Visser, director)

In the *Agenda for Synod 2001*, Pastor-Church Relations reported the concern that the primary focus of work with pastors and congregations continues to be a response to problems and crises. While this is an important service to the church, it becomes problematic when there is not at least as much attention given to prevention—education, support, and planning. In this year’s report, I am pleased to be able to report that the CRCNA has been responsive to this concern, and we are in process of finding another staff person for PCR—one who will be focussed on the preventive aspects of working with pastors and congregations.

I. Activities

Pastor-Church Relations is active in a number of areas:

A. Synod 2000 encouraged congregations to assist ministry staff in taking opportunities for continuing education. Since that time PCR has been active in promoting this program

- Thanks to the CRC Foundation, money was made available immediately to assist in providing grants to ministry staff who applied for funds for educational activity.
- Synod 2001 approved a ministry share and the process for applying for financial assistance for continuing education.
- A committee from Pastor-Church Relations processed twenty-one applications in August and November 2001 and granted nearly \$7000 in assistance.
- We encourage ministry staff to take part in continuing education and to apply for necessary funds to make this possible.
- We also want to thank the CRC Foundation for the seed money to begin this program.

B. As mentioned above, Synod 2001 also approved the hiring of a second professional staff person for Pastor-Church Relations. A search committee was set up to define the position of Prevention and Education Specialist and proceeded with the process of finding a person for this position. By July 2002, we hope to have this person on staff.

C. There are sixty-one regional pastors serving fellow pastors in the forty-seven classes of the CRCNA. We greatly appreciate their efforts to minister to colleagues. In October 2001, a number of regional pastors met in Michigan for the biennial conference.

D. Many experienced pastors serve as mentors to new candidates and individuals entering CRC ministry from other denominations. This is a crucial opportunity to assist in supporting those at the beginning of their ministry.

E. The Ministerial Information Service maintains about 650 pastor profiles and congregational profiles of those looking for pastors (there are 130 vacant churches). During this year, we have sent over 2000 profiles to pastors and search committees. Ms. Laura Palsrok is the Pastor-Church Relations administrative assistant who maintains this information system and efficiently responds to requests for assistance.

F. There are still six trained interim pastors serving throughout the denomination. Their current placements are:

- Rev Allan Groen – Covenant CRC, St. Catherines, Ontario
- Rev. Peter Mans – Trinity CRC, St. Louis, Missouri
- Rev. Melvin Pool – Sunrise CRC, Ponoka, Alberta
- Rev. Larry Slings – Forest Grove CRC, Forest Grove, Michigan
- Rev. Leonard Troast – Bethany CRC, Holland, Michigan
- Rev. Robert Walter – Christ’s Community Church, Chandler, Arizona

There continue to be more requests for trained interim pastors than we can fill. The current interim pastors have been well received and provide a

valuable service to churches in transition. We also want to give credit to the many retired pastors who serve congregations in transition for shorter periods of time. They all provide a valuable service to the denomination.

G. PCR has been involved in approximately twenty-five interventions and numerous consultations in 2001. It is a challenge to respond to the conflicts and crises in congregations.

II. Challenges to the ministry

With the addition of the Prevention and Education Specialist, Pastor-Church Relations will have an opportunity to fulfill its mandate of both intervention and prevention in service to the church.

The continuing-education support process has had a positive beginning. Pastor-Church Relations faces the challenge of encouraging ministry staff and councils and of providing necessary financial resources.

Collaboration with other programs that seek to support pastors and congregations is a continuing challenge. The challenge of changing demands and expectations requires a unified response.

III. Pastor-Church Relations—staff addition

A. Introduction

The advisory committee for pastoral ministries at Synod 2000 recommended and synod adopted the following:

That synod ask the Board of Trustees to address the problem of inadequate staffing in the Pastor-Church Relations office and formulate a solution.

Ground: Due to the amount of crisis and intervention ministry, the intended work of this office (training and prevention) is often more dream than reality.

(Acts of Synod, 2000, p. 621)

Pastor-Church Relations (PCR) presented a proposal for an additional staff member, along with specific recommendations for the parameters of this position. Because PCR has a high profile in the denomination, and because this additional staff position was suggested by synod itself, the BOT judges it best that the following be presented to synod as information.

B. Background

Since its inception in 1982, Pastor-Church Relations has continued to evolve and focus according to the demands of CRC congregations. The initial mandate of the director of Pastor-Church Relations involved assisting congregations in setting up pastor-relations committees with the assistance of regional pastors, who also help in selecting mentors for ministry candidates. Setting up programs for the prevention of conflict between pastors and congregations and the training of pastors were also encouraged as part of the task of this ministry. By 1986, the regional pastor role was refocused to being a supportive resource to pastors and congregations. The regional pastors have become a key component of the PCR program, and regular contact with them is important for the director of PCR.

There have been other changes in emphasis and additional responsibilities given to Pastor-Church Relations:

1. In 1986, synod gave the responsibility of the Ministerial Information Service to the PCR office, and added a 2/3-time assistant to work with this program.
2. In 1988, synod expanded the mandate of PCR to include ministry to staff ministers (not ordained). This was done because of the growth of staff ministries in the denomination.
3. During its history, the director of PCR has increasingly become a resource for dealing with crises and has done direct consultation with pastors and congregations.
4. In 1999, synod approved a program of Trained Interim Ministry to be supervised by PCR. There are six pastors serving in this capacity.
5. Synod 2000 recommended that the PCR office help coordinate scholarship grants for continuing education of pastors and ministry staff.

All of these changes have given the PCR office a strategic role in the support and assistance of pastors and congregations. The concern has been that with the increasing demand for intervention and changing programs, current staffing is not sufficient. This conclusion is drawn from two different sources:

1. Experience of the PCR staff that we are not able to respond adequately to all the requests for service.
2. In specific programs there is feedback from recipients that PCR should upgrade, train, and facilitate more effective delivery.

Synod itself also recognized the concern that the demand for services is greater than PCR can respond to without additional staffing. The fact that synod recognized the need for additional staff is testimony to the fact that pastors and elders of the congregations of the CRCNA are recognizing, from their experience, that there is not sufficient staff to supply needed assistance according to the mandate of PCR.

In 1982, PCR began with a director and an administrative assistant. There have been times when an additional staff person helped out (e.g., 2/3-time staff for Minister's Information Services [MIS] tasks), and more recently a ten-hour per week assistant for responding to the needs of nonordained ministry staff. However, presently the office is again functioning only with the director and one administrative assistant. It is apparent that there is a need for additional staff, and we are proposing that this staff be a professional staff person who can not only work interchangeably with the director in several areas but also provide leadership in the area of prevention, which has been inadequately served.

As has been mentioned, there are a number of programs in PCR for which the director could use assistance in providing necessary accountability, training, and communication. These programs include:

1. The network of regional pastors serving the various classes—there is a need for increased communication, training, and accountability as is indicated by concerns expressed by both regional pastors and other pastors.
2. Mentoring of recent candidates for ministry and those entering the CRC ministry from other denominations—there is a need for more concrete

programming and goals, formation of programs, and accountability. Again, the data for this comes from concerns voiced by pastors, new candidates, and others involved in formation.

3. Congregational pastor-relations committees—the PCR office serves as a resource to congregations, though it could be more proactive in this supportive program. It also assists in the formation of more active personnel committees in church councils.
4. Trained interim pastors—this program has been well received but requires time for coordination and supervision.
5. Consultation, intervention, and conflict management with pastors and congregations—the volume of requests and responses demanded throughout the United States and Canada continues at a high level. Such crisis response requires both expertise and availability.
6. Interaction with classes—attend classis meetings where appropriate and provide training

All of these areas are presently served, but the frustration is that there is not always adequate communication, accountability, and program development with those involved. This conclusion comes from PCR staff experience and feedback from pastors and councils.

The area of major need, however, is with the development or expansion of programs mandated for PCR—programs dealing with preventative activity. These are:

1. Increased training and prevention programming for pastors, councils, and congregations—since its inception, the PCR office has experienced demands for intervention beyond that which the original synodical study committee expected. Prevention programming has been inadequately responded to—both in cooperation with other agencies and in those areas in which PCR takes initiative.
2. Assistance for those churches who have staff ministry—providing resources and consultation (multiple-staff ministries are one of the fastest growing changes in CRC congregations). This is another of those areas of need for expertise and input—an area that is not addressed in CRCNA history or Church Order.
3. Setting up a program of support and training for nonordained ministry staff similar to that which is supplied for ordained pastors.
4. Support of the continuing-education programs for pastors and ministry staff—in the short time since synod has been given responsibility for assisting in the continuing-education programs, the PCR office has received many requests for guidance, policy, and financial support. This is obviously an area of concern and need that will demand support and coordination.

These are the ministries that have been mandated for PCR but have received insufficient attention due to limited staffing and available time. For the reasons and rationale stated above, the BOT has approved, and made

provisions in the budget for, an additional person to be added to the staff of PCR during the next fiscal year.

The recruitment process is presently in the final stage. If finances permit, the Board hopes to make an appointment to this second position at its meeting in May 2002.

Appendix F

Race Relations (Rev. Norberto Wolf, director and regional director for southern California; Ms. Yvonne Rayburn-Beckley, regional director, Great Lakes; Mr. Peter Szto, regional director, Michigan and East Coast)

The mandate of Race Relations is “to design, organize, and implement programs which the denomination, churches, and members can effectively use to eliminate racism, both the causes and effects, within the body of believers and throughout the world.”

Race Relations uses five strategies to dismantle racism, promote reconciliation, and celebrate diversity:

1. Raising awareness of personal, cultural, and institutional prejudice and racism through the use of educational resources;
2. Developing leadership by offering scholarships, grants, and mentoring relationships;
3. Providing consultation and/or intervention when requested by congregations or classes;
4. Advocating on behalf of people of color who are members of the CRCNA;
5. Exercising leadership in the development of the antiracism program. This last strategy has been especially successful in raising awareness of the historic, institutional, and systemic underpinnings of racism and in promoting the organizing of teams both in our agencies and among interested congregations who work to uproot all forms of racism.

A Race Relations Advisory and Review Council has been appointed to oversee and report to the Board of Trustees the progress of this initiative. The appointed members of this Council are Mr. Ted Charles, Mr. Tim Nguyen, Ms. Joyce Jackson, Mr. Bradley Breems, Ms. Mattie Young, Ms. Cindy Vander Kodde, and Mr. Francisco Golon.

A. Key activities of the Race Relations team

1. Presented eleven seminars, conferences, and workshops on cultural diversity, facility sharing, and dismantling racism.
2. Led a two-week course on race relations in conjunction with Calvin College's interim program.
3. Recommended the dates for the celebration of All Nations Heritage Week, promoted the event among CRC congregations, and prepared and distributed all the liturgical aids for that celebration.

4. Co-chaired twelve meetings of the team in charge of coordinating the work of antiracism among CRC agencies and interested congregations.
5. Organized five, 2 1/2-day Crossroads training events; four of them in Grand Rapids and one in Los Angeles.
6. Provided important input to the synodical committee, Alternate Routes to Ministry.
7. Visited thirty-three leaders of color in our denomination in order to provide advice, support, encouragement, or training as needed and to receive advice from them.
8. Organized and led two middle-school multicultural camps to create brotherly attitudes among this group of youth, some of whom will be leaders in the future.
9. Attended twelve classical meetings in their respective regions.
10. Organized three large regional celebrations of God-given diversity.
11. Advanced in their professional capacity by taking three, 2-day intensive courses.
12. Managed the Multicultural Scholarship and Multicultural Grants funds and designated recipients as shown below.

B. Scholarships and grants given toward leadership and congregational development

Race Relations reports that the following twenty-four multicultural scholarships were awarded to qualified recipients, for a total of \$19,700.

Recipient	African-American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American
Calvin College		6	1	2
Calvin Seminary	1	1		
Dordt College		1	1	
Reformed Bible College		6	1	1
Trinity Christian College	1	1	1	
Total	2	15	4	3

The following ministries have received multicultural Race Relations grants in the total sum of \$11,500:

- Coit Community CRC - Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Camp Koinonia - Chicago, Illinois
- Applewood Ministry - Muskegon, Michigan
- Los Angeles Community CRC - Los Angeles, California
- Camp Dunamis, Classis GLA - Bellflower, California

Race Relations requests that synod encourage churches to celebrate All Nations Heritage Week from September 30 to October 6, 2002, with an invitation to celebrate All Nations Heritage Sunday with special services on October 6.

Grounds:

1. The struggle against the sin of racism needs to be balanced with a celebration of God's gift of unity in diversity through Jesus, the Messiah.

The congregations that wish to celebrate World Communion Sunday can find a meaningful Christian Reformed way of doing it by combining both celebrations.

2. The financial support that is received when congregations celebrate All Nations Heritage Sunday dramatically increases Race Relations' ability to award scholarships and grants to promote greater leadership of people of color in the life of our denomination.

Appendix G

Social Justice and Hunger Action (Mr. Peter Vander Meulen, coordinator)

The office of Social Justice and Hunger Action implements the synodical report on world hunger as well as sections of the outreach and justice goals of the Denominational Ministries Plan.

The 1993 synodical report, "Free to Serve: Meeting the Needs of the World," essentially calls for infusing the mission and ministry of the Christian Reformed Church—at all levels—with a deeper and more effective concern for the poor, the hungry, and the powerless. This includes a commitment to confronting root causes of hunger and poverty—the tough issues.

The office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, with two full-time staff in the United States and one part-time staff in Canada, acts in three ways: (1) through congregationally based justice groups, (2) through organizing collaborative efforts with existing denominational agencies and institutions, and (3) through ecumenical efforts. This often includes participation with a wide variety of like-minded organizations and denominations outside of the CRC. In short, this office aims to be a catalyst that energizes and organizes our denomination for more appropriate, effective, and efficient action on behalf of the poor and the oppressed.

This office recommends strategies and sets priorities based on the needs of existing ministries to the poor and the judgments of the Coordinating Council for Church in Society (CCCiS)—a group of representatives from each CRC agency and institution. CCCiS identifies three broad arenas of activity: We are going deeper, working broader, and working smarter.

A. Going deeper

The office of Social Justice and Hunger Action continues to develop a ministry of advocacy principally through:

1. Work in Washington (and through coalitions in Ottawa) on behalf of refugees, on behalf of believers under pressure in Cuba, in matters pertaining to religious persecution, and in efforts to ban the trade in "conflict diamonds." We are also working for continued implementation of debt relief.
2. Our signature educational and advocacy campaign featuring Sierra Leone and the international trade in "blood diamonds." Our work with Partnership Africa Canada, World Vision USA, and others is aimed at stamping out this major cause of hunger and fuel for terrorism through an international agreement effectively banning trade in these diamonds.

B. Working broader

The CRC is deeply involved in service work with the poor, which has earned us the right to stand with them in order to advocate for systemic justice. Our involvement in the Call to Renewal movement in the United States and, recently, the Kairos coalition in Canada is important to this effort. So, too, is our goal of helping to identify and organize social-justice groups or contacts in 50 percent of our churches.

1. We are identifying, gathering, and connecting small groups of justice and service folk who already exist—often in isolation—in many congregations. We believe that with connections, care, and nurture, these small groups will become salt and light for social justice.
2. This year, in the United States, we have joined forces with Bread for the World and a broad Christian coalition to produce and distribute a six-session educational packet called Hunger no More. This biblically based material serves as a thoughtful introduction to welfare-reform issues being considered by the U.S. government.

C. Working smarter

There are many areas of collaboration to celebrate, and more are just beginning.

1. The antiracism program, jointly promoted by Race Relations and the office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, is now a complete collaborative effort of eight agencies and institutions under the leadership of CRC Race Relations. In addition, we have begun a stage-2 pilot project in which we will contextualize a CRC antiracism program through work with fifteen interested congregations.
2. A critical component of this denominational collaboration is the Coordinating Council for Church in Society. This representative group plays an increasingly important role in determining agendas, strategies, and priorities for the office of Social Justice and Hunger Action.
3. Our newsletter's circulation and reputation is growing. The Advocate is now distributed to almost five hundred persons and is available both electronically and on paper. Our new web site www.crcjustice.org is also becoming a major tool in the work of network building among CRC social justice groups.
4. In Canada, with the addition of a coordinator for Social Justice-Canada, we have increased our participation in a new and more efficient coalition of denominations called Kairos.

The office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, now with a binational staff and in collaboration with all the agencies and institutions of the CRC, looks back with gratitude on a productive year. In spite of reduced budgets for 2002-2003, we look forward to continued progress in assisting our denomination to become salt and light in the service of Christ's kingdom.

Appendix H

Denominational Ministries Plan for Agencies and Institutions of the Christian Reformed Church

*Created, redeemed, called
to serve God in the church and the world.*

I. Introduction

Over the nearly 150 years of the Christian Reformed Church's existence, God has blessed the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) with many opportunities for united ministry through its denominational agencies and institutions. Since its creation in 1991, the Board of Trustees (BOT) of the Christian Reformed Church has been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing, coordinating, and integrating the work of its diverse denominational ministries.

In 1997, the BOT adopted, and synod endorsed, a Denominational Ministries Plan, which responded to the ministry visions and ideas of church leaders and local congregations from across the denomination. That plan, which was a product of two extensive listening tours, focused on detailed goals and objectives. This revised ministries plan focuses more upon the CRC's theological identity and core values and arises out of the BOT's growing conviction that the church as a whole, and its agencies and institutions in particular, need greater clarity about the CRC's identity and purpose. Various factors contribute to this conviction:

- Many CRC members, including elders, deacons, pastors, and other church leaders, have difficulty articulating what it means to be a Reformed Christian and Reformed church in a North American religious environment of declining biblical and theological literacy.
- As the CRC becomes more diverse in culture, education, ethnicity, and the religious background of its members, the CRC needs a positive biblical and theological vision that communicates across these and other differences.
- Clarity regarding the church's identity and purpose is necessary in order for the church to set precise goals and develop effective ministries.
- The CRC is often uncertain how to view itself in relationship to the broader church. At times, the CRC is too self-congratulatory, failing to appreciate the richness and diversity of the broader Christian church. At other times, the CRC is too apologetic, even embarrassed that it has a particular theological identity.
- The CRC often has difficulty in dealing with change. At times, the CRC is too resistant to change, unnecessarily rigid and inflexible. At other times, the CRC is too quick to change, lacking discernment about what has enduring value and significance.

Given these concerns, the BOT offers a ministries plan whose primary focus is the CRC's biblical and theological identity.

After setting forth a **vision and mission statement** and a **core values statement** and clarifying the church's current **context for ministry**, this plan sets forth several **strategic values and ministry priorities** to guide CRC

agencies and institutions in fulfilling their particular synodical mandates through fiscal year (FY) 2005-2006.

This ministries plan, then, articulates an **identity statement** titled “Central Affirmations of the Christian Faith from a Reformed Perspective.” The purpose of this identity statement is to offer to all agency and institution personnel, board members, CRC leaders, and CRC members (1) a concise statement of what it means to be a Reformed Christian and Reformed church in North America today, and (2) an expanded biblical and theological foundation for the vision and mission and core values statements in this ministry plan.

Finally, this ministries plan includes the respective **ministry plans of the CRCNA agencies and institutions**. Although these plans currently exist in a variety of formats and are not reproduced here, the agencies and institutions are expected to implement the vision and mission, core values, and strategic priorities found in this document.

II. Vision and mission statement

The Christian Reformed Church seeks to proclaim and live out the reality that God’s people were created by God the Father, fell into sin, have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, and are called by the Spirit to serve God in the church and the world. The agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church exist to support and unite the efforts of CRC members and congregations to implement this vision of kingdom service.

III. Core values

The core values that guide the ministries of CRC agencies and institutions are:

A. *Scripture as interpreted in the Reformed tradition*

Scripture and its message of God’s redemption of the world through Christ are the church’s authority for faith, life, and ministry. The Reformed confessions are the historical and theological lens through which Scripture is interpreted.

Regarding this core value, CRC agencies and institutions will

1. Affirm and carry out their ministries in line with the grand themes of Scripture.

These themes include but are not limited to

- the sovereignty of God
- a historical-redemptive understanding of God’s Word and history
- God’s mission to save the world and the church’s key role in that mission
- the dignity and worth of all human beings as image bearers of God
- salvation by grace alone through faith
- the Holy Spirit as the giver and sustainer of spiritual life
- the Lordship of Christ over all of life
- the unity and diversity of the body of Christ
- justice and reconciliation as key manifestations of God’s kingdom
- word and deed as inseparable parts of our obedience
- prayer as the most important expression of our thankfulness to God
- Word and sacrament as central in Christian worship
- Christian vocation as encompassing everyday life and work
- the hope for a new heaven and new earth

2. Provide leadership and programming that will nurture church members of all ages in this biblical vision. Such nurture entails but is not limited to
 - the strong teaching, preaching, and discipling ministries of local congregations
 - the recognition of home, church, and school as three strategic institutions for the nurture of youth in the biblical vision
 - the support of Reformed higher education as a strategic means for advancing this biblical faith and equipping students for lives of kingdom service
 - the support of creative endeavors to bring the Reformed faith into the public sphere, including Reformed campus ministries at public universities, Reformed political-action organizations, and broader community coalitions
3. Ground the church's life in this biblical vision so that the church's way of life, including its ecclesiastical structures, policies, decision-making processes, and relationships, reflects these Christian excellencies and gives glory to Christ.

B. A kingdom perspective

The kingdom of God is the reign of the triune God over all things and God's overarching purpose to unite all things in Jesus Christ. In this age, Christians pray, "Thy kingdom come," painfully aware of the continuing antithesis that the battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil is not yet over but confident that Christ's victory is secure.

Regarding this core value, CRC agencies and institutions will produce servants and structures of ministry that

1. Proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord of all of life, thereby rejecting the false divisions of modern life into "sacred" and "secular."
2. Address a Christian world-and-life view to all spheres of society, including government, politics, economics, education, media, entertainment, the arts, and recreation.
3. Support and advance Christian education and Christian schools at all levels.
4. Strive for peace in the world.
5. Work for justice and reconciliation in a world of alienation.
6. Defend the dignity and worth of all human beings.
7. Show special concern for those who are disabled, vulnerable, weak, or poor.
8. Respond generously and with compassion to those who suffer hardship.
9. Exercise stewardship of, and care for, the earth and physical environment.

C. The church as God's new community

The church is the fellowship of those who confess Jesus as Lord. Joined and knit together by Christ himself, the church in its life and fellowship embodies the presence of Christ in the world, proclaims the gospel message of love and reconciliation, and makes disciples of all nations.

Regarding this core value, CRC agencies and institutions will be servants of God in building a church that

1. Obeys Christ's mission command to "make disciples of all nations."
2. Sees itself in unity with the one, holy, catholic church.

3. Engages in Christian worship where God's name is praised, God's Word is proclaimed, and God's way is taught; where sins are confessed, prayers and gifts are offered, and sacraments are celebrated.
4. Equips believers for discipleship as the Holy Spirit gives gifts to each member for ministry and service.
5. Builds and nurtures strong community in family relationships and in the fellowship of the church.
6. Practices hospitality toward all people.
7. Extends community across cultural barriers, including those of ethnicity and race.
8. Nurtures children and youth in the faith in ways appropriate to each stage of faith development.
9. Reaches out to those beyond this new community through all its ministries.
10. Works collaboratively through classical and denominational ministries
 - to engage in united ministries of word and deed beyond the local congregation;
 - to develop common resources for the church's ministry;
 - to assist and strengthen local congregations in their ministry, including the development of new churches and ministries.

D. Christian vocation

The entire life of the Christian—not just Sunday and not just church life—is a divine vocation, in which God calls believers to follow Christ. In a world where all things hold together in Christ, Christians offer every part of their lives—their time, their work, their giftedness, their creativity, their wealth, their recreation—to God as an offering of thanksgiving and obedience.

Regarding this core value, CRC agencies and institutions will foster a strong sense of Christian vocation in CRC members and their partners in ministry, which will lead them to

1. See their life's work—whether one calls it a job, a career, or a calling; whether it is high-powered or simple, high-paying or nonpaying—as a response to God's call.
2. Use all of the gifts God has given them, including the gifts of time, talents, and treasures, to glorify God and build his church and kingdom.
3. Encourage all creativity as a positive act of Christian vocation. From music-making to woodworking, from art to athletics, from gardening to story writing, Christians advance the kingdom of God as they create and celebrate beauty and excellence in God's world.
4. Model Christian vocation in ways that enable children and young people to be inspired by Christians who live with a compelling sense of Christian vocation.

IV. The context for ministry

A. The external environment

Understanding the current cultural context in which the church does its ministry is important for the church in determining priorities and approaches to ministry. This ministries plan observes the following external forces at work in the world:

1. **The pace and scope of change:** People are being pressured by rapid changes in almost every area of life. Church ministries must be flexible in order to deal with the new calls for service these changes produce.
2. **New forms of spirituality:** People are seeking meaning in their lives. Their search takes place in the context of the forces of globalization on the one hand and the fragmentation of society on the other. Many people are reaching out for something lasting and fulfilling that transcends their daily lives.
3. **Self-centeredness:** A proliferation of choices within a consumer-oriented society is fueling the drive toward individual survival and personal fulfillment. However, when people put themselves at the center, they often use or ignore others, exploit creation, and dishonor God. In a climate of shrinking denominational loyalty and widespread mistrust of authoritarian institutions, the church must find new ways to promote God-centered, other-oriented ways of living.
4. **Globalization and the influence of technology:** Technological advances are making national economies interdependent and are bringing about rapid cultural change. They are influencing employment, communication, lifestyles, medical, and other choices. The opportunities and difficulties afforded by these changes require informed pastoral care, diaconal responsiveness, and a dedication to justice by the church.
5. **New groups in society:** While the values of the marketplace are gaining influence, there are misgivings about their adequacy as guideposts for society, especially in light of the growing gap between rich and poor. At the same time, people are losing faith in the capacity of governments to solve their problems. Instead, they are looking to groups that are separate from both government and the marketplace. Christians can play a vital role in such civic organizations by influencing their values, plans, and actions.
6. **Violence:** Political, social, and religious grievances, both real and imagined, are causing groups to lash out with campaigns of violence—killing and maiming the innocent. Meanwhile, violence as a way of dealing with everyday conflict is encouraged by stories and images from the news and entertainment industries that seem to condone it. Governments must uphold high moral standards and practice statesmanship and justice in confronting evil and violence. Christians, as agents of reconciliation, are called to model forgiveness and to demonstrate respect for the God-given value of every person.
7. **Coherence in Christian witness:** There is a growing convergence between branches of the Christian church that emphasize personal conversion and morality and those that emphasize social outreach and a Christian worldview. The CRC has been shaped by both views, equipping it to play an important role in the witness of the larger Christian community. By encouraging members to participate in ecumenical initiatives, we can be yeast and salt in the world.
8. **Shifts in worldwide Christianity:** The population center of Christianity is moving. Increasingly, Christian beliefs are expressed through a multitude

of cultural contexts instead of being dominated by Western culture. Intentionally working for diversity within the CRC will enable it to respond to initiatives from members of other cultures in North America and around the world.

B. The internal environment

It is also important for the institutions and agencies of the Christian Reformed Church to understand their internal denominational context as they plan their ministries and determine their priorities. This ministries plan observes the following internal forces at work in the denomination:

1. **Congregational emphasis:** Congregations are increasingly focused on local ministries. Churches work with other churches, organizations, or individuals, regardless of denominational affiliations, to achieve their ministry goals. Denominational affairs hold less interest than local church affairs. Denominational agencies and institutions must provide ministry resources that congregations see as relevant and useful.
2. **Church shopping:** People tend to join churches that meet their personal and family needs rather than focusing on doctrinal positions. In addition to seeking inspiring worship and pastoral care, people are looking for churches that enable them to develop and use their gifts.
3. **Demography:** The demographics of the CRC are changing.
 - The CRC has increasing material abundance. Demographic analysis of the CRC shows that *real* household income of CRC members continues to grow more rapidly than that of average Americans.
 - The CRC is an aging church, with the median age of members rising from 44 years in 1987 to 50 years in 1997.
 - The CRC is becoming more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity.
4. **Diversity of ministry:** The CRC is becoming increasingly diverse in its styles of worship, in the range and scope of its ministries, and in the background and training of its leaders.
5. **Ministry planning:** Many congregations are engaging in strategic planning and the development of vision and mission statements as a basis for ministry. Some are doing so as a matter of survival while others use the planning process to promote growth by identifying and responding to ministry opportunities.
6. **The Reformed perspective:** There is growing confusion, and sometimes apathy, about being Reformed. Although most CRC members claim to appreciate the church's creeds and confessions, their knowledge of the creeds and their ability to apply them to today's world and in their own lives are declining. The CRC is in significant transition—from a church in which much of the glue that held it together was a strong ethnic identity, to a church held together and guided by a positive biblical and theological vision that communicates across lines of culture, education, and ethnicity.
7. **Agency collaboration:** Agencies and institutions are increasingly aware that they can empower the church for ministry most effectively when they work together, with each contributing what it does best. However, current

organizational structures and cultures do not lend themselves well to joint planning and action.

- 8. Leadership and decision-making:** Incorporating more persons of ethnic minority and more women at every level of denominational leadership and decision-making is a continuing challenge. Efforts to make all levels of denominational ministry more inclusive and accessible must continue.

V. Strategic values and ministry priorities

In light of the vision and mission statement and core values above, and in view of the particular challenges and opportunities presented by the current context of ministry, the Board of Trustees identifies the following strategic values and ministry priorities that should guide all agencies and institutions as they set goals and propose programs. Although they impact each agency or institution differently, depending upon its particular mandate, the board identifies the values and ministry priorities below as ones that all agencies and institutions must support and share as they plan for and conduct their ministries and work collaboratively with one another.

A. Values

1. Collaboration

By acting collaboratively, our denomination strengthens and makes more effective its own ministries and those of its Christian partner organizations.

2. Justice

By acting justly, our denomination affirms the dignity and gifts of all people as God's image bearers and works to shape societies of righteousness and peace.

3. Stewardship

By acting stewardly, our denomination acknowledges that the earth is the Lord's and we are caretakers of his resources.

CRC institutions and agencies will place a high priority on collaboration, justice, and stewardship in their ministries and organizational life.

B. Ministry priorities

1. Church development ministries

Healthy congregations are deeply rooted in the Word of God and committed to vital worship, prayer, fellowship, service, and outreach. CRC agencies and institutions will use their resources to help local congregations to develop their own ministries and to establish new congregations.

2. Leadership development

The vitality and growth of the church and its witness require the development of effective servant leaders—ordained and unordained, paid and volunteer—at all levels of church life. CRC agencies and institutions will cultivate, appoint, and train such leaders at home and abroad, including an increasing number of leaders who are women and members of ethnic minorities, and ground them in a Christian understanding of vocation.

3. **Integrated ministry to children and youth**

It is essential that we nurture in our children and youth—the leaders of tomorrow—the zeal, knowledge, experience, and disciplines necessary for service to Christ in the church and the world. CRC agencies and institutions will develop ministry resources that integrate children and youth into the full life of the church.

4. **Outreach and discipling**

God calls us to reach out energetically to neighbors around the world with the good news of life in Christ and to disciple believers in the faith, overcoming the barriers of race, culture, and class. CRC institutions and agencies will provide the personnel, programs, and resources that make this possible, committing themselves to the transformation of lives, institutions, and communities through word and deed.

VI. Identity statement

A. Central affirmations of the Christian faith from a Reformed perspective

The purpose of this identity statement is to answer the question: What does it mean to be a Reformed Christian? Many Christians in North America, including members of the CRC, may question the value, even the appropriateness, of asking such a question. The emphasis in North American Christianity today is upon finding those things that unite Christians with, not distinguish them from, fellow Christians.

B. Why bother with Reformed identity?

In many ways, the impulse to focus upon what Christians have in common with one another is exactly the right one. The CRC often has spent too much time and energy on matters that divide the CRC from, instead of unite it with, other Christians. Jesus himself prayed that the church would be one (John 17:27). Paul makes a great deal of the fact that the body of Christ is one (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:4-6). What better mission and vision statement could any church want or need than Paul's great call to "come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13)? It's hard to put too much emphasis upon what unites Christians with one another.

Moreover, the enemy of the Christian church today is not other Christians, whether Lutherans or Methodists, Roman Catholics or Pentecostals. The primary enemy of the North American church is a deadly secularism that threatens all Christians and against which they should stand together in common faith and action. Indeed, in many ways, the CRC already joins hands with other Christians. Local congregations often work together with other churches in setting up food banks and tutoring programs. Denominational agencies often do their worldwide ministry in collaboration with other churches and religious organizations.

So why does the CRC continue to spend time and energy articulating what it means to be Reformed?

C. Everyone has an accent

All Christians speak with what one person has called "an accent," a particular theological accent. There is no such thing as pure, Christian speech. Imagine trying to get people from New Orleans, Boston, Brooklyn, and Omaha to all

speak with the same accent. It doesn't work—not because these people dislike each other but because language by its very nature develops locally. Particular people living together develop particular ways of expressing themselves. “Culture” is the accumulation of these particularities, including shared experiences, shared meanings, and shared ways of life. The particularity of human community is actually part of the marvelous diversity of God's creation.

In the same way, Christians, as they work and worship together, develop particular ways of speaking. There is no such thing as pure, theologically neutral, Christian speech. Particular people who have had common experiences of faith and life develop particular ways of understanding Scripture, expressing their faith, and worshipping God. To be sure, when these differences lead to conflict and alienation, then healthy differences have become sinful divisions, but Christians will always speak with particular theological accents.

Indeed, this particularity is also deeply biblical. The 1 Corinthians 12 image of the church as a body highlights both the unity of the church (one body) and the diversity of the church (hands and feet and eyes). The teaching of this great chapter is clear: The biblically healthy church has deep unity *and* rich diversity. Indeed, one of the deep biblical truths is the truth of the one and the many. The triune God himself is one and three.

There's nothing inherently sinful or divisive when Reformed Christians or other groups of Christians try to understand and develop their own theological accents. In fact, such self-understanding, as it strengthens the particular hands or feet or eyes of the body, strengthens the whole body in its united witness to the world.

D. The Reformed accent

Sometimes people use the term *Reformed* or *distinctively Reformed* as though it's a theological accent spoken by only a few people, and as though it's an accent that has little in common with the broader Christian church. Neither of these is true.

The Reformed accent is much larger than the CRC and the CRC's particular history. It thrives in countries around the world, including Hungary, Korea, Indonesia, Scotland, and Madagascar. The Heidelberg Catechism, only one of many Reformed confessions, has been translated into thirty languages. Moreover, the CRC itself is increasingly diverse. On a given Sunday, members of the CRC worship in at least fourteen different languages!

Moreover, Reformed Christianity has much in common with the universal Christian church. Reformed Christianity is squarely anchored in that broad Christian orthodoxy that goes back to the New Testament church. Reformed Christians share with all other Christians a common faith in the triune God who created the heavens and the earth, whose second person became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, and whose third person has indwelt the church by the Holy Spirit. Reformed Christians join with Christians in all times and places in affirming the saving purpose of God to unite all things in Jesus Christ, the mission of the church to proclaim this good news, and the hope of Christ's return in glory to usher in the new heaven and the new earth. Reformed Christians confess their faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed along with the church universal.

This identity statement seeks to articulate some of the particular accents of the Reformed tradition but in ways that are accessible across many ethnic,

denominational, and generational lines. In fact, such an inclusive expression of the Reformed perspective is not just desirable but essential—if the Reformed perspective is to provide ongoing sources of unity and purpose for the CRC.

E. The family tree

One way to explain the Reformed tradition is to locate the Reformed family in the broader family tree of the Christian church. The following simple chart shows how the Christian church has developed over the centuries.

MAJOR BRANCHES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1st to 11th century	The Christian Church		
11th century	Roman Catholic	Eastern Orthodox	
16th century	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Eastern Orthodox

Note: In the following, the farther to the left, the more radical the break from the Roman Catholic Church.

Protestant Churches

16th century	Anabaptist	Reformed	Lutheran	Anglican
17th century	Quakers	Puritans		
18th century	Methodist			
19th century	Free Church			
20th century	Pentecostal			

The Christian church was united until the eleventh century when the western church (the Roman Catholic Church) split from the eastern church (the Orthodox Church). In the sixteenth century, new winds of the Spirit blew through the Roman Catholic Church, and the Protestant Reformation was underway. Christians discovered anew the central message of the Bible—that we are saved by grace alone through faith. Out of the Protestant Reformation came four major branches—the Anabaptist, Reformed, Lutheran, and Anglican. The order in which these four branches are listed from left to right is significant. The further to the left one goes, the more radical was that church’s break from the Roman Catholic Church. In terms of formality of worship, this chart moves from less formal (left side) to more formal (right side); in terms of sacraments, from less central in worship to more central in worship; in terms of church government, from less hierarchical to more hierarchical. In this family of European-based churches, the Reformed perspective often represents a broad middle ground.

As Reformed Christians seek to locate themselves in the North American Protestant family tree, it’s tempting to think that the Reformed perspective as found in the CRC represents a middle ground between present-day liberalism and fundamentalism. After all, Reformed Christians do share with fundamentalism an unapologetic belief in supernaturalism and with liberalism a desire for the Christian faith to be culturally engaging.

But the Reformed tradition as that has evolved in the CRC doesn’t really fit on a continuum between these two North American extremes. Most Reformed Christians strongly distinguish themselves from liberalism, with its inadequate view of Scripture’s inspiration and authority, its anti-supernaturalism, and its wariness of talking about personal sin and the need for repentance and

faith in Christ for salvation. Furthermore, Reformed Christians also strongly distinguish themselves from fundamentalism, with its anti-intellectualism and suspicion of science and learning that arises from a lack of emphasis upon the doctrine of creation; its lack of cultural engagement; and its tendency to emphasize the rule of Christ in the world to come rather than in this world, a tendency that arises from a dispensational understanding of history in which the kingdom of God is still a future reality.

Traditionally, the Reformed perspective has represented a third way that is quite distinct from both liberalism and fundamentalism and that does not define itself in terms of this North American struggle. Reformed Christians are “confessing Protestants” whose posture is not first of all defined polemically (against liberals or against fundamentalists) but is defined historically by a theological tradition that goes back to John Calvin and the Reformers and to St Augustine.

One helpful way to locate the Reformed branch in the North American family tree is in relationship to evangelicals. The term *evangelical* is used differently by different people. When evangelical Lutherans, of whom there are eight million in North America, use the term *evangelical*, they mean orthodox and Christ-centered theology. For them it is quite possible to be part of a mainline, historic Protestant denomination *and* be evangelical and feel no tension between those two. Others use the terms *evangelical* and *fundamentalist* synonymously, which is quite a different meaning.

The term *evangelical* is most often used by those who wish to distinguish themselves from fundamentalism and often for many of the same reasons that Reformed Christians wish to distinguish themselves from fundamentalism. Furthermore, evangelicals themselves often see significant overlap in the terms *evangelical* and *Reformed*. Institutions such as Fuller Seminary, Gordon Conwell Seminary, Wheaton College, *Christianity Today*, and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, and persons such as John Stott, J.I. Packer, and Chuck Colson would describe themselves as evangelical. Also while they are not *confessionally* or *denominationally* Reformed, they would consider themselves *theologically* Reformed in much of their teachings. In the same way, many Reformed folks positively (and rightly) identify themselves as *evangelical*.

E. Three approaches to being Reformed

Observers of the Reformed tradition have identified three major Reformed emphases or “minds” that have flourished in the North American cultural context.

The first emphasis or mind is the *doctrinalist*. Here Reformed refers primarily to a strong adherence to certain Christian doctrines as taught in the Scriptures and reflected in the confessions of the church. The question for doctrinalists is: What do we believe? Doctrinalists especially appreciate Louis Berkhof, a Reformed theologian whose *Systematic Theology* is a thorough summary of Reformed doctrine.

The second emphasis or mind is the *pietist*. Here Reformed refers to the Christian life and to one’s personal relationship to God. The question for pietists is: How do we experience God in our daily walk of faith? Pietists especially appreciate Hendrik de Cock, a pastor in the Netherlands who led the Afscheiding, a breakoff in 1834 from the Dutch state church that had lost its theological and spiritual vitality.

The third emphasis or mind is the *transformationalist*. Here Reformed refers to the relationship of Christianity to culture, to a world-and-life view, and to Christ as transforming culture. The question for transformationalists is: How do we relate the gospel to the world? Transformationalists especially appreciate Abraham Kuyper, a pastor, scholar, and prime minister of the Netherlands who led the Doleantie movement in the Netherlands in the 1880s, a movement that stressed the development of a Christian culture and had a very direct impact upon the CRC in North America.

Obviously these three emphases or minds are overlapping. No hard and fast line can be drawn between them. They also represent three distinct approaches, both historically and conceptually, and provide the framework for presenting sixteen key words or phrases that summarize the Reformed accent.

G. What we believe (*The doctrinalist emphasis*)

1. Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16)

Reformed Christians have a high view of Scripture. They believe that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God. Two passages of Scripture illumine Scripture's nature and authority:

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

Inspired, infallible, and authoritative are three words Reformed Christians frequently use in explaining their view of Scripture. Inspired has in view the source of Scripture: God himself speaking by his Holy Spirit through human authors. Infallible means that the Scriptures are true and absolutely unailing in matters of faith and practice. The Bible is true and trustworthy in all that it intends to teach. Authoritative refers to the claim of God's Word upon believers' lives. Believers live "under," and are called to obey, God's Word.

During the Reformation, Reformed Christians asserted *Sola Scriptura* (only Scripture) to distinguish themselves from the Roman Catholic Church, which asserted that Scripture, tradition (the teachings of the church), and the official pronouncements of the church were all equal in authority. To this the Reformers responded that only Scripture is our authority for faith and life.

Today the strongest threat to a high view of Scripture is not from those who would try to *raise up* church teaching to a level of authority equal to Scripture. Rather, it's from those who would *pull down* Scripture and say that Scripture is not the Word of God at all, that it's not from God, that it's not historically accurate, that things like the resurrection are just myth, and that it certainly isn't authoritative for our lives. Christians counter that no matter how foolish it may look to the modern, enlightened mind, Christians believe this book is the means by which the God of the universe has communicated with human beings, his image bearers. Christians believe that this book is the Word of God.

Another threat to a high view of Scripture today is what might be called the God-told-me-this view of revelation. Many Christians testify that God

has revealed himself to them personally, inwardly, and uniquely. While Reformed Christians fully embrace the work of the Holy Spirit, they also insist that the Spirit and the Word work together. As Henry Stob, past Calvin Seminary professor, has succinctly stated it, “The Spirit always rides the back of Scripture.” Or as Bernard of Clairvaux said it, “Scripture is the wine cellar of the Holy Spirit.”

Finally, a word about the Bible’s message. It’s possible for Christians to become so absorbed in debates about the Bible’s nature and authority that they miss its positive message. The Bible is not first of all a set of problems to be solved; it is a dramatic story of God’s salvation of the world. The main character in the story is Jesus Christ. The climax of the story is his death and resurrection. All this and more is what the church has in mind when it says that the Bible at its core is “redemptive revelation.”

2. Creation-fall-redemption (Colossians 1:15-20)

Creation-fall-redemption is a basic Reformed way of organizing and understanding the Bible and its message, and of understanding history. God created the world; the world fell into sin; God has redeemed and is redeeming the world through the work of Christ, a redemption that will one day be complete when God creates a new heaven and new earth.

Pastors and elders are always delighted when young people come forward to make profession of faith. In the course of the interview, the young person is usually asked, “What does it mean to be a Christian?” Pastors and elders are pleased with any answer that includes a clear reference to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and his death and resurrection for our eternal life. Reformed pastors and elders are doubly pleased when a young person begins the answer to that question, “Well, Christians believe that in the beginning, God created everything. And then, the world fell into sin. . . .” Creation-fall-redemption is the way Reformed people tell the story. It’s the story line of history and of Scripture.

More will be said later about the importance of the doctrine of creation. Here, however, the critical importance of the biblical teaching that human beings are *image bearers of God* must be noted.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:26-27)

The biblical teaching that human beings are image bearers of God is pivotal for knowing ourselves and knowing God. Human beings image God as they exercise their God-given mandate to rule over all things (v. 26) and as they live in loving communion with each other.

As John Calvin says at the beginning of his *Institutes*, human beings come to know more about themselves as they learn more about God, and they come to know more about God as they learn more about themselves. This is so because human beings, in fact, *bear God’s image*.

The truth that human beings are all image bearers of God has implications for nearly every ethical position the church takes, including those on abortion, sexuality, marriage, abuse, capital punishment, war, race, and

disabilities. Few biblical doctrines cast a longer shadow over the church's ethical discourse than the doctrine of humanity's creation in the image of God. Indeed, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

3. Grace (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Grace is the unmerited favor of God toward those who do not deserve it. Grace is the unconditional and freely given love of God to people who can do nothing to earn it but can only accept it as a gift. Grace is the love of the father in the parable of the prodigal son that moves him to welcome and accept the lost son, not because the son finally did this or that but simply because the father loved his son unconditionally. Grace is the astounding truth that nothing we *do* can make God love us more or less. God loves us because he loves us. God loves us because he is rich in love.

Historically, when Reformed folks have talked about grace, they have stressed how much salvation is a gift of God, not a human achievement. Indeed, as Paul says,

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. (Eph. 2:8-10)

The "five points of Calvinism" refer to Reformed doctrines that underscore the radical nature of God's grace. They have often been summarized with the acronym TULIP (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints). As an acronym, TULIP is often misunderstood as focusing on human failings. But, in fact, its central thrust is the graciousness of God, and the biblical teachings that lie behind it are some of the richest teachings in all of Scripture:

- Every human being and every part of human existence is corrupted by sin, leaving humanity helpless and hopeless except for the grace of God. Paul says, "You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once lived" (Eph. 2:1). In their fallen condition, human beings are not just weakened, sick, or at a disadvantage. They're dead, unable to do anything, unable to believe, and without God's help.
- In his divine mercy, God has chosen believers and called them to himself in love even before they were born, indeed, before the world was even created. "[God] chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4-5). God did not elect his children based upon his foreknowledge of who would believe but did so "according to the good pleasure of his will."
- God's saving grace is not universal, but particular, given only to those whom God has chosen from eternity.

For those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified. (Rom. 8:29-30)

- God's grace, not human decision, is the decisive factor in salvation. Believers do not choose God so much as God chooses believers. Jesus taught that "no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (John 3:5) and "no one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me" (John 6:44). Certainly, faith is a human act and decision. But even this faith is a gift of God.
- By his power, God holds believers securely in his grasp and will not permit anyone or anything to separate believers from himself. Jesus said,

"My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28)

Believers are held securely in God's grip. Believers do not hang onto God so much as God hangs onto believers. This has been called the eternal security of the believer; the perseverance of the saints. As Paul says at the end of Romans 8,

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?... I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (vv. 35-39)

When Calvinists talk about their salvation, they become speechless at how thoroughly their salvation is the work of God—from beginning to end, God's gift and God's grace, expressed the words of the hymn, "Nothing in my hands I bring, only to thy cross I cling."

4. Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Covenant is one of the richest biblical concepts for describing God's relationship to his people. Covenant means partnership, an agreement between parties that entails promises and obligations. It's significant that the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, again and again portrays God as one who binds himself to his people in promise, in obligation, in covenant. God doesn't have to promise anyone anything. Again and again, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and to David, God promises to love them and be with them.

The whole Bible is suspended on the great covenants God makes with all these people and others. Furthermore, the Bible is unified around this *one* covenant of grace. One of the reasons one tends to hear more Old Testament preaching in Reformed churches than in many other churches is that Reformed preachers don't set the Old Testament against the New Testament but see the Old Testament and the New Testament as revealing one covenant of grace—a single covenant beginning with God's promise to Adam and Eve that he would crush the head of the serpent and spanning to the new city of God described in Revelation 22.

The concept of covenant—God binding himself to his people in promise and commitment—is a rich concept for understanding God's saving activity today. In worship, God renews his covenant promises to us, and we renew our covenant vows to God. Preaching declares and offers the covenant promises of God. The Lord's Supper is a sign of God's new covenant. In baptism God promises to be faithful to our children. Fellow members of the church make promises to God and one another.

Together these promises form a thick web of commitments, of communal connection that we know as the body of Christ, the church. Church membership is very important because when someone joins the church, she is not just putting her name on the membership list of an organization but is entering into covenant with God and with other believers. In this covenantal understanding of the church, leaving one congregation for another is a very weighty matter because it tears at this rich web of covenantal connections and commitments made at the congregational level.

Covenant is an important and strategic emphasis for the church in this individualistic culture. In a time when society is desperately trying to figure out how morality and character are developed, Christians understand the key role of promise-making and promise-keeping. Our society needs communities of promise. The church needs an emphasis today upon covenant in our understanding of God and the church.

5. Common grace (Matthew 5:43-48)

God's common grace, in distinction from his saving grace, refers to that attitude of divine favor that extends to humanity in general; to believers and unbelievers alike. The church has observed three distinct evidences of common grace in the world. First, God gives natural gifts to unbelievers as well as believers. One doesn't have to be a Christian to be an excellent pianist or attorney or scientist. Second, God restrains sin in all people. Because of sin, human beings are not as good as they could be; but because of common grace, they are not as bad as they could be either. This is why unbelievers at times actually seem to be better people than believers. Virtues such as patience, courage, and compassion never totally lose their resonance in any image bearer of God. Third, God enables unbelievers to perform positive acts of civic good. God preserves a basic sense of civic justice that enables human societies to function in an orderly way. Common grace prevents society, marred and distorted by sin and evil, from totally disintegrating.

The teaching of common grace has many implications for how Christians live and serve in the world. God's common grace is a model of grace that Christians should embody not just within the church and toward believers but in the world and toward all people. Common grace encourages believers to develop positive points of contact with unbelievers as they live in the world together and seek common ends. Christians should give their attention to not just what divides them from, but what unites them with all people. Common grace is the reason Christians can appreciate movies or novels or works of art produced by unbelievers, viewing them as God's good gifts, and at times even seeing in such works the allusions of transcendence or grace. Common grace reminds Christians that the conflict of this age (what Abraham Kuyper called the "antithesis") is between God and Satan, not between Christians and non-Christians. The battle is not between two groups of people but between two spiritual powers, which, significantly, reside in and cut through every person.

The teaching of common grace calls the church to have multiple purposes in her ministry that correspond to multiple divine purposes. The deacons' food pantry, the chaplain's hospital ministry, and the pastor's marriage counseling are all part of the mission of God to save the world,

even though the receivers of these ministries may not be believers or become believers. The Christian's deep desire is that every person in the world will bow to Jesus Christ, but within that overarching mission of God, the church ministers in multiple situations with multiple purposes. It does not subordinate the value of one ministry to another. God is glorified in many different things, and all these ministries have their integrity and purpose in the overarching mission of God to save the world.

H. How we experience God in our daily walk of faith (The pietist emphasis)

It's important to point out once again that the three approaches (doctrinalist, pietist, and transformationalist) overlap. Christians may not separate what they believe, how they experience God in their daily walk of faith, and how they relate the gospel to the world. Even so, these three approaches do capture different emphases not only within the CRC but also in the broader Christian Church.

1. Personal relationship to Jesus (Romans 8:38-39)

When Christian Reformed people are on their deathbeds, their pastors often use the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism to remind them of the heart of their faith: "What is your only comfort in life and in death? That I am not my own, but belong, body and soul, in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ." The heart of our faith is our personal relationship to Jesus Christ. As Paul says in Romans 8,

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (vv. 8:38-39)

At times, the Reformed tradition has been misunderstood as emphasizing too much the "head"—knowing the correct doctrine—and not enough the "heart"—our personal relationship with Christ. However, the Heidelberg Catechism, the CRC's most used and most loved confessional statement, is filled with references to one's personal relationship to Jesus Christ, and is a deeply pastoral and personal statement of faith. However, more important than vindicating the catechism, the Christian faith, at its heart, is the story of God's restoring sinners into a right relationship with him through Christ.

Not all Christians and faith traditions are as open and ready to talk about their relationship to Christ in this way. In fact, as was pointed out in the brief explanation of the pietist approach, the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, the CRC's mother church, actually started as a breakoff from the state church because the state church had become very liberal and was embarrassed by such "heart talk." Many churches today are also reluctant to call people to this most personal encounter with Jesus Christ. While Reformed Christians always see the work of Christ as encompassing more than the believer's personal relationship to Jesus Christ, they never see it as less than this personal union with Christ.

Reformed Christians do have concerns about American evangelicalism's tendency, at times, to talk about one's relationship to Jesus in a way that unduly narrows the scope of the Christian life. The Christian life is more than my interior affections, my inner feelings about and toward Christ. The

inner state of the believer may, but also may not, be the best reference point for Christian obedience. Especially in a therapeutic age, dominated by the quest for inner happiness and self-fulfillment, Reformed Christians are rightly concerned that the language of “personal relationship to Jesus Christ” not overshadow other equally important and often more comprehensive ways of understanding and enacting the Christian life.

2. The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-17)

The Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the holy Trinity of God. Biblical Christians seek a proper and balanced appreciation for the work of all three persons of the Godhead. Moreover, Christians not only stress the work of each person of the Trinity—the work of God the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit in sanctification—they also stress the unity and fellowship of the divine life and the way that Scripture has revealed God as a divine community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Indeed, in the very life and fellowship of God himself, Christians see modeled the communion and self-giving love for which they were created and redeemed.

Within this Trinitarian fellowship, the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier of the people of God and of the church’s life and witness. The work of the Holy Spirit is all-encompassing. The Holy Spirit is the giver of spiritual life; the one who is renewing believers to be like Christ; the one who gives believers his fruit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control; and the one who gives gifts to the church to empower ministry.

John Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism both offer a rich and vibrant theology of the Holy Spirit. (One nineteenth-century theologian referred to John Calvin as “a theologian of the Holy Spirit.”) The Reformed confessions especially emphasize these works of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit gives the believer saving faith and new spiritual life.
- The Holy Spirit assures the believer of eternal life.
- The Holy Spirit renews the believer to be like Christ (the work of sanctification).
- By God’s Word and Spirit (an important combination for Reformed Christians), Christ gathers his church. The Holy Spirit builds it.
- The Holy Spirit is active in the sacraments, uniting us to Christ’s body and blood, washing away our sins by Christ’s blood, effectuating the real presence of Christ in both baptism and holy communion. Indeed, Christian worship is only possible because of the Holy Spirit’s life and work in the church.

Too often people associate the Holy Spirit with particular kinds of piety or with particular, extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit (healing, speaking in tongues, prophecy). The teaching about the Holy Spirit set forth above makes clear that the work of the Holy Spirit is comprehensive, that it encompasses every aspect of the believer’s life, of the church’s ministry, and of God’s redemptive program.

It’s important to say a word at this point about the role of prayer in the Christian life and in the church. According to the Heidelberg Catechism, prayer is the centerpiece of the Christian life of thankfulness. Christians

pray both to thank and to ask God for the gifts of his grace and the Holy Spirit (Q. and A. 116). The Holy Spirit is both the subject and the object of Christian prayer. The Holy Spirit empowers Christians to pray and is the gift that comes to those who pray. A rich and lively understanding of the Holy Spirit will be accompanied by a rich and lively understanding and practice of prayer.

Finally, a rich and lively engagement with the Holy Spirit is virtually inseparable from Christian worship. Worship as an engagement of God and his people is, from beginning to end, empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is central in the Reformed understanding of the real presence of Christ in the sacraments and preaching as Spirit-charged encounters with God. Worship renewal, wherever it takes place, is the work of the Holy Spirit.

3. Gratitude (Colossians 3:15-17)

A very important question in the Christian life is: What motivates the believer? What is the root disposition that empowers everything one does in the Christian life? The Bible's answer, and a Reformed emphasis, is gratitude—not guilt, not fear, not the obligation of law, but gratitude. The whole Christian life is an acting out of one response: Thank you!

In Colossians 3, where Paul lays out the basics of our new life in Christ, he mentions thankfulness three times:

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And *be thankful*. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another with all wisdom; and *with gratitude* in your hearts sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks* to God the Father through him. (vv. 15-17, italics added)

It's ironic that Christians who emphasize gratitude as the energizing source of all Christian disposition and action could still be seduced by legalism—external conformity to dos and don'ts—for legalism cuts believers off from Christ. Legalism preoccupies people with how their religious life looks to other people, not how it looks to God. A legalistic spirit is far from a grateful spirit, far from a heart of thanksgiving.

Such legalism at times has infected CRC piety and must be acknowledged for what it is: a perversion, a failure, a sin to be confessed, and a contradiction of a central biblical teaching, namely, that all obedience flows out of a heart of gratitude.

One of the most significant features of the Heidelberg Catechism is the placement of its teaching on the Ten Commandments. Of the three sections of the catechism—Our Guilt, God's Grace, Our Gratitude—the Ten Commandments are placed in the section on gratitude. Christians don't obey God *in order to* get rid of their guilt or *in order to* earn their salvation. They obey *because* God already has removed their guilt and given them the free gift of salvation. Obedience is the Christian's way of saying thank you for the gift of salvation, not the way of earning salvation.

Linking obedience to gratitude doesn't mean that obedience is less important, that Christians should only obey God on days when they feel especially grateful. Duty, discipline, calling, and obligation are still important marks of Christian piety. But guilt, fear, and moralism have limited

value as motivators for the Christian life. All obedience ultimately must flow from the deep wellspring of gratitude, from the thankful heart.

4. The church (Ephesians 4:1-16)

When Reformed people talk about the Christian life, they very quickly begin talking about the church. Reformed Christians hold strongly that *to belong to Christ is to belong to those who belong to Christ*. Many Christians have the false notion that one can be a Christian but not have any connection to the church, the body of Christ. It's already been noted that one tendency in much of North American Christianity is to unduly narrow the scope of the Christian life to one's personal relationship to Jesus, and to one's interior affections and feelings. Such a narrow focus quickly becomes too inward and subjective, and often unconnected to the church. While a personal relationship to Jesus Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit are an important part of the Christian experience, that relationship with Christ and the Spirit is fleshed out *in the church*, the covenant community of believers, the children God has gathered and is gathering.

The church as the body of Christ is strategic in God's great mission program. Far from existing for itself and unto itself, the church exists to proclaim the gospel to the nations and to call people to faith and discipleship. Peter clearly links the church's identity to its purpose:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

When churches live for more than their own institutional security and give themselves in faith and obedience to God's mission, they experience the blessing of God. Jesus' teaching that "those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25) applies to the church as well as to individuals. Churches that lose their lives for Christ's sake and dedicate themselves to the mission purposes of God will in the end find their lives.

It's also important to understand that the church to which believers are organically connected is a *worldwide church* in all its history and diversity. To be in Christ is to be reconciled with one another as a community of racially and ethnically diverse people of God. Justice and reconciliation work is not simply an option for churches that choose to pursue it, it is a foundational mark of the church as God's new community.

For [Christ] is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. (Eph. 2:14-18)

North American Christians today tend to minimize the importance of their identification with the worldwide church. "Who cares about the church of history or the worldwide church?" But the church wasn't invented in the 1980s in Southern California or in the nineteenth century in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The church must remind itself of its deep solidar-

ity with the church of all times and places. A much-needed corrective to the extreme individualism of our age is for Christians to see the project of personal sanctification less as an inward, individual project, and more as a journey in connecting one's self to the universal practices and habits of Christians everywhere and from throughout history.

Such solidarity with the universal church and appreciation of tradition does not inhibit change and innovation in the church. A key Reformed principle is that "a Reformed church is always to be reforming." The Reformation itself was a radical reforming and renewing of the church, and thus, the church is always reforming and renewing, dying and rising again. The church as a living organism, vitally connected to Christ as the branch to the vine is, by definition, ever growing and changing.

5. Word and sacrament (Romans 10:14-15; Matthew 28:16-20; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Public worship is one of the main ways Christians nurture their faith and their relationships with God. For Reformed Christians, the heart of Christian worship is the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. It's significant that ministers in the CRC are ordained to *the ministry of Word and Sacrament*.

Reformed Christians have a high view of preaching. Preaching is not just a lecture in which the preacher talks *about* God; it is a Spirit-charged encounter with God in which the preacher, in the reading of Scripture and in preaching, proclaims the Word of God. Reformed Christians actually speak of the sermon as *the Word of God* to highlight the revelational significance of preaching in the context of public worship. In this connection, it is significant that in Reformed worship the Holy Spirit is traditionally invoked not only in the context of the sacraments but also in the context of the reading and preaching of the Word (the prayer for illumination).

As worship renewal takes place around the world and within the CRC, there is also a renewed interest in the sacraments—holy communion and baptism. It's important to note two particular emphases of Reformed Christians when it comes to the sacraments. First, Reformed Christians seek to recognize and celebrate *all* of the biblical themes associated with each sacrament. Just as a diamond has many different sides and angles from which to view it, each sacrament is viewed in Scripture from many different angles.

For example, baptism is bound up with the call to discipleship (Matt. 29:19), the gift of salvation (Mark 16:16), the reception of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16; Acts 8:16; 10:44-47), new birth (John 3:3), forgiveness and washing (Acts 2:38; 22:12), dying and rising with Christ (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:8), incorporation into the church (1 Cor. 12:13), the new clothing of Christ (Gal. 3:27), and the unity of the body (Eph. 4:5).

The Lord's Supper is also bound up with many Scriptural themes, including covenant renewal (Ex. 24:8), thanksgiving, forgiveness, the eschatological hope of the heavenly feast (Matt. 26:26-29), atonement (Mark 14:12), spiritual nourishment (John 6:35), remembrance (1 Cor. 11:24), and proclamation (1 Cor. 11:26). The Reformed tradition seeks to recognize and celebrate all of these biblical dimensions to the sacraments.

A second Reformed emphasis with respect to the sacraments is the accent it places upon God's action. Each sacrament involves both God's action and our action. But Reformed Christians emphasize God's action in both sacraments: the way in which God, in his grace, is promising, proclaiming, nourishing, sustaining, comforting, challenging, teaching, and assuring.

Put another way, the sacraments are more than just an exercise on the part of the worshiper. They are celebrations through which *God*, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is present among us and actively nourishes our faith and draws us closer to himself. They are the means by which God actually comes to us in grace.

People around the world today are hungry for mystery and transcendence, spawning many new forms of spirituality. Many Christians themselves long for more awe and transcendence in worship; they long to see the power of God in worship and experience his divine presence in real and powerful ways. In such a world, Reformed Christians have in their own worship tradition an emphasis upon Word and sacrament that highlights the great engagement between God and his people that takes place in Christian worship in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I. How we relate the gospel to the world (The transformationalist emphasis)

In this emphasis, Reformed refers to a certain view of the relationship of Christianity to culture, to a world-and-life view. The question for transformationalists is: How do Christians relate to the culture around them? More specifically, how do Christians promote the Lordship of Christ in culture and society? How does the church address the gospel to the world around it and avoid the isolationism that so often has characterized the church? Six words or phrases help in understanding this dimension of being Reformed.

1. Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:11)

These words, of course, come straight from the Bible. Paul concludes that great hymn of praise to Christ, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). Another biblical phrase that Reformed Christians use to make the same point is "Our God reigns."

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (Isa. 52:7)

This affirmation that Jesus is Lord takes on particular significance in the modern world where we are plagued by *dualism*, the devastating split between the sacred and the secular. The secular worldview, which is the air one breathes today in North America, would have Christians believe that the world is really split in two, split between the *sacred* and the *secular*. It's fine for Christians to have their little Jesus in their little sacred world, but whatever claims Christians make about Jesus apply only to that little world called "the sacred."

When Reformed Christians hear such sacred-secular talk, they remember the words of Jesus: "All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18), and the teaching of Paul that God "raised [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above

every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come” (Eph. 1:20-21).

Under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper, Reformed Christians strongly reject this sacred-secular dualism and declare that Jesus is Lord of all things. If the most well-known passage of the Heidelberg Catechism is Q. and A. 1 (“What is your only comfort in life and death? That I belong . . .”), then the most well-known quotation of Abraham Kuyper is, “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”

2. Kingdom (Matthew 6:10)

The concept of Christ’s lordship over all things is closely related to the biblical and Reformed emphasis upon the kingdom of God. Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe the good news” (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus taught many parables of the kingdom. Jesus taught Christians to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

The kingdom of God is the rule of God over all things. God is king. He is sovereign. He reigns. God always has ruled, but his rule has been vindicated and established once and for all in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15-20; Eph. 1:15-23).

The kingdom is both a present and a future reality. It is “already now” and “not yet.” Jesus said the kingdom is at hand; he also prayed for the kingdom to come.

One can see the fruit of this already-now kingdom concept in ministries throughout the CRC. The list below is only a small sample of such kingdom endeavors:

- Christian colleges and Christian schools across the United States and Canada
- Elim Christian School for children with physical and mental disabilities in Chicago
- Citizens for Public Justice in Toronto
- Cary Christian Center, a community development association near Jackson, Mississippi
- Center for Public Justice in Washington, D.C.
- Beginnings Counseling and Adoption Services of Ontario
- Pine Rest Christian Hospital of Grand Rapids, Michigan

These are all kingdom endeavors. These institutions are bigger than the church, God’s gathered people. They are the fruit of Christ’s reign in the world. They are part of that new order of peace, justice, and healing that Christ has ushered in.

Christians live in hope because the kingdom is also not yet. Christians look forward to not just the defeat but the banishment of Satan, to Christ’s glorious return, and to a new heaven and the new earth where there will be no more tears or brokenness or death and where, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Closely related to an emphasis upon the kingdom is a commitment to seek justice in society. Many passages of Scripture call for Christians to seek justice, but none is more eloquent than Micah’s call to Israel:

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic. 6:8)

It follows from an emphasis upon the lordship of Christ and the kingdom of God that Reformed Christians would be strong promoters of involvement in the broader society. And *justice* is generally what Christians seek as they work in these broader areas. Theologians and philosophers talk about the relationship between love and justice. Generally speaking, Christians construe God's call to *love* as applying to the personal relationships Christians have with people within the communities in which they live; whereas *justice* is something that Christians can seek for all people everywhere. Some examples of seeking justice are:

- Fighting against laws or practices that cause racial discrimination or economic inequities.
- Promoting a proper balance of punishment, rehabilitation, and restoration in the criminal justice system.
- Promoting policies that alleviate human suffering, poverty, and hunger and that give hope and opportunity to the weaker members of society.

One important caveat is in order here. Biblical justice and the idea of justice as it is used in North American political discourse often have quite different overtones. Justice in North American society tends to focus upon personal rights, what one is entitled to, what is due an individual; whereas justice in the Bible, while it certainly includes a concern for personal rights rooted in the human person's exalted status as God's image bearer, upholds the notions of righteousness, obedience to God's law, the restoration of relationships, and the righting of wrongs that leads to righteousness and peace. Justice in the Bible is fully bound up with the kingdom of God and God's new order of righteousness and peace.

3. Word and deed (James 2:14-17)

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (James 2:14-17)

Just as a biblical understanding of the Christian life quickly leads to the church, so a biblical understanding of the church quickly leads to the word-and-deed nature of the church's mission. The church's mission has a *word* (proclamation) component; it also has a *deed* (action) component.

- The church proclaims that Jesus is Lord *and* mentors those on public welfare.
- The church calls people to faith in Jesus Christ *and* helps refugees resettle.
- The church builds the body of believers *and* promotes justice in society.
- The church has elders *and* deacons.

Word and deed go together in the Christian life and in the church's ministry. The church cannot divide the ministry of word and deed, and it certainly cannot choose between them.

4. The cultural mandate (Genesis 1:27-28)

Cultural mandate is a term one hears frequently in Kuypertian, Reformed circles. The cultural mandate refers specifically to Genesis 1:27-28:

So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

This is a mandate, a job description that God gave Adam and Eve at the very beginning of the world in the Garden of Eden. God gave Adam and Eve a position of dominion over the whole earth, a position that included the power to name, which, in significant ways, is the power to create. Human beings rule the world with God!

You have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet. (Ps. 8:5-6)

The point here is not that human beings are in control and can do anything they want. The point is not that people can dominate and exploit. It's quite the opposite. Human beings are appointed stewards; they are responsible to make the most out of this great world God has created. Human beings are builders, designers, creators!

The cultural mandate accompanies a strong emphasis upon creation. One of the things that flows directly from a strong doctrine of creation and the cultural mandate is an appreciation of science. Reformed Christians don't have a deep suspicion of science (or of the rest of learning, for that matter) the way some Christians do. God has revealed himself through two books: the book of Scripture and the book of nature. Of the latter book, the psalmist says, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Science is a systematic way to "read" the book of nature. When the book of science appears to conflict with the book of Scripture, Reformed Christians reread and study both books to see where they are misreading. Ultimately, these two books can't contradict each other because God is the author of both.

Environmental stewardship is another strong implication of the cultural mandate and its emphasis upon creation. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" (Ps. 24:1). Christians are to be caretakers of the earth and the environment. This world is not ours to do with as we please. It is God's world, and he has appointed human beings to be stewards, guardians, and caretakers.

5. Christian education (Proverbs 9:10)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Prov. 9:10)

Reformed Christians share with all Christians a strong emphasis upon Christian education. Historically the CRC in particular has emphasized the importance of Christian education not only in home and church but also in educational institutions—elementary, high school, college, and university. Because Christ is Lord of all of life, including all spheres of learning, all

education must be God-centered. In this understanding of the integration of faith and learning, God should not be left out of education at any level.

The biblical mandate for Christian education, for integrating Christ into all facets of life and learning, perhaps can be seen most clearly and beautifully in Colossians 1:15-17:

[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Therefore, the Christian schools started by Reformed Christians are built upon a positive vision: Learning is rooted in Christ. At the same time, they are not opposed to public education. As public citizens, Reformed Christians are typically very supportive of the local public education system; they support Christian schools *and* vote for school millages. Many CRC congregations have teachers and students in Christian schools *and* public schools. Though Christian schools sometimes have isolated the Christian school community from its broader community, such isolation is not the goal and in fact must be resisted at every turn. All the world, not just the church, is God's; and God, in his common grace, cares for all people, even those who don't acknowledge him. Reformed Christians have strong convictions about Christ-centered education; they also have a strong interest in all people's well-being.

6. Christian vocation (Ephesians 4:1)

"Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1). The entire life of the Christian—not just on Sunday and not just church life—is a divine vocation, a response to God's call to follow Christ. In a world where all things hold together in Christ, Christians offer every part of their lives—their time, their work, their giftedness, their creativity, their wealth, their recreation—to God as an offering of thanksgiving and obedience.

Many people who hear the word *Calvinist* immediately think of "the Calvinist work ethic," an ethic of working hard, working honestly, and taking pride in one's work. That work ethic is rooted in the Calvinist conviction that all human work—whether one calls it a job, a career, or a calling, whether it is high-powered or simple, high-paying or nonpaying—is a response to God's call and is part of fulfilling God's mandate to rule the earth and Christ's command to follow him.

Beyond our daily work, this all-embracing understanding of God's *call* upon our lives produces strong and conscientious kingdom servants in business, professions, labor, homemaking, civic community organizations, volunteer organizations, education, science, industry, farming, and government. This emphasis upon Christian vocation is one of the reasons the CRC has had a special love for Christian liberal arts education in which every area of learning, from philosophy to physics, biology to business, is a response to God's call. This healthy sense of Christian vocation also fosters a strong sense of stewardship—a commitment to use wisely the time, talents, resources, and wealth that God has entrusted to us.

J. Putting them all together

It was pointed out earlier that these three emphases—doctrinalist, pietist, and transformationalist—often have functioned as distinct approaches or minds in the CRC. It’s important to observe that a well-balanced Christian life and theology need all three of these integrated emphases. The doctrinalist emphasis by itself can lead to exclusivity and inaction. The pietist emphasis by itself can lead to individualism and nondiscernment of broader dimensions of Christianity. The transformationalist emphasis by itself can lead to an overstated inclusivity that softens the antithesis between Christ and the evil one. Each emphasis, by itself, tends toward pride and an uncharitable devaluing of the other two emphases. One key to healthy ministry lies in living with an integrated, whole vision of the Christian life.

Finally, one might very well ask whether this identity statement is descriptive or prescriptive. Does this identity statement *describe* what the CRC is or *prescribe* what the CRC should be? The answer is both. This identity statement should be viewed as a description of the Reformed faith at its best as well as a fervent call to live more fully into this biblical vision.

May God grant the church, as Paul prayed, “a Spirit of wisdom and revelation as [we] come to know [Christ]” (Eph. 1:17).

*Now to him who by the power at work within us
is able to accomplish abundantly far more
than all we ask or imagine,
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*
(Eph. 3:20-21)

Appendix I Heritage Church Guidelines, Clarifications, and Frequently Asked Questions

I. Mandate

Synod 2001 requested

Christian Reformed Home Missions to develop clear operational guidelines for heritage churches, along the lines of decisions made in 1987 (cf. *Acts of Synod 1988*, pp. 568-73), 1999 (*Acts of Synod 1999*, p. 593), and other synods. They should also clarify whether churches that have not previously received FSC funding can qualify for heritage church designation. These guidelines and clarifications should be presented to the Board of Trustees for ratification by Synod 2002.

(Acts of Synod 2001, p. 510)

In fulfillment of this mandate to provide guidelines and clarifications, we present the following.

II. Background

Support for smaller, needy churches has been part of our history since 1936. Until 1958, the administration of this support came under the auspices of Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM). Synod 1958 established a separate committee to administer this support. Before this transition took place, synod urged “that recipient congregations become self-supporting as soon as possible,” and “that recipient congregations which have no promise of

future growth merge with neighboring congregations wherever possible and feasible.”

In 1986, synod adopted new rules for the Fund for Needy Churches, noting that “long-term dependency is injurious to congregations.” This synod also stated that “good stewardship demands that assistance end at some point,” and “a full time ordained pastor is neither necessary for, nor the right of every small congregation.”

In 1995, synod established a termination point for the funding of all congregations supported by the Fund for Smaller Churches (FSC). It mandated a reduction schedule that would end funding in ten years except for a handful of churches. Synod 1999 gave these the name “heritage churches” and took the step of dissolving FSC. It also returned support of smaller churches and administration of the declining FSC program to CRHM (see *Acts of Synod 1999*, p. 593).

III. Guidelines and clarifications

A. Definition and process

A congregation may be designated a heritage church and receive salary support when the following conditions are met (see *Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 509-10):

1. The classis in which the congregation is located declares the ministry to be of a crucial nature or of historical significance.
2. The classis in which the congregation is located contributes at a rate of at least one dollar for every two dollars contributed by Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM), apart from exceptional circumstances.
3. The ministry is recommended by the classical home missions committee (CHMC) and is approved by CRHM.

B. Eligibility

1. “Criteria for judging the nature of the ministry may include such things as: distance from other Reformed churches, character and need of the community, the extent of the congregation’s ministry and witness within the community, level of congregational leadership, and congregational stewardship” (*Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 509-10; see also *Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 748 and *Acts of Synod 1999*, p. 593).
2. Under these criteria, the fifty-professing member or twenty-family minimum adopted by the synods of 1987 and 1990 does not apply to the heritage designation. (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 510)
3. Designation as a heritage church is not limited to churches that have received FSC funding. A church that has not previously received FSC funding may also qualify for designation as a heritage church if it meets the conditions and criteria listed above.

C. Subsidy

A heritage church subsidy is to be computed using the principle long utilized by the Fund for Smaller Churches: Congregations with fewer members receive a larger subsidy while those with more members receive less.

Note 1: These guidelines and clarifications regulate the heritage church program. The section on frequently asked questions describes the process that is ordinarily followed. This arrangement provides both a clear framework and appropriate flexibility to address the needs of the churches.

Note 2: The funding implications, especially of point III, B, 3, are not yet known.

IV. Frequently asked questions

A. What are the steps by which a congregation is declared to be a heritage church?

1. A church contacts either the classical home missions (or similar) committee of its classis or CRC Home Missions to receive an application form. An application can also be downloaded from the CRHM web site (<http://www.crcna.org/hm/hmec/hmecsmch.htm>).
2. The church completes the application form and submits the application to its CHMC.
3. The CHMC contacts CRHM to arrange an on-site ministry review together with the council and the congregation.
4. The CHMC and CRHM on the basis of their review make their recommendation to classis.
5. The classis in which the congregation is located then judges whether the ministry is of such a crucial nature or of such historical significance that it is willing to contribute at a rate of at least one dollar for every two dollars contributed by CRHM.
6. If classis so declares and CRHM concurs, the congregation is designated as a heritage church.
7. CRHM then arranges for funding to begin.

B. By when must a church apply?

There is no fixed date by which application must be made. However, because of the many steps involved—(1) the church council must complete an application and submit it to its CHMC, (2) the CHMC must complete an on-site ministry review, (3) the CHMC must make its recommendation to classis, (4) the classis must judge the historical significance, (5) the CHMC must concur, and (6) Home Missions must approve—one would expect that a number of months might pass between the time of application and final approval.

C. If a congregation is designated a heritage church, how much financial support would a church receive from classis and CRHM?

The amount would vary greatly depending on the number of professing members over age 18. For example: Using the annual survey of ministers' compensation, a church with forty professing members over age 18 could expect to receive an amount equal to about 70 percent of the average salary amount; a church with sixty professing members over age 18 might receive approximately 50 percent, while a church with eighty professing members over age 18 might receive approximately 20 percent. A church with over ninety professing members would receive very little.

D. How is the amount of subsidy computed?

1. Synod approved a formula and accompanying regulations for the setting of minimum compensation by smaller churches receiving denominational financial assistance. This stipulates that the average salary amount being paid in all classes in Canada, and the separately calculated average for the churches in the United States, as determined by the annual survey of ministers' compensation, be used as a benchmark for minimum-salary levels in smaller churches (*Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 519-20).
2. The details and subsidy formula are clearly spelled out on the Heritage Church Application form. In short, the amount of subsidy is computed by taking a percentage of the benchmark salary, adding an amount for Social Security and insurance then subtracting the congregational contribution toward the pastor's salary. (That congregational contribution is computed by multiplying the number of active professing members age 18 and over by an amount equal to 1.25 percent of the average cash salary.)
3. Beginning in 1996, the FSC subsidy was decreased by 10 percent per year. The heritage church subsidy, however, will be paid at 100 percent of the calculated amount. At least one-third of the subsidy will be contributed by the classis in which the church is located; the remainder will be contributed by CRHM.

E. How long does a church keep its designation as a heritage church?

A congregation keeps its heritage-church designation until it no longer meets the initial criteria. To that end, the church will be asked to provide reports on its ministry and plans. A ministry review will be done collaboratively by CRHM and the classical home missions committee (or its equivalent) normally every three years or during a pastoral vacancy.

F. What about churches that don't meet the criteria, initially or later on?

1. These congregations may be eligible to receive other grants and assistance from Home Missions. These currently include:
 - a. Easy-to-apply-for grants (for program support, technology updates, and continuing education for pastors and leaders);
 - b. On-site, no-charge, or minimal-cost consultation with Home Missions personnel, especially the Smaller Church Specialists;
 - c. Networks of smaller churches gathering regularly for encouragement and renewal;
 - d. Seminars, retreats, and specialized workshops geared to smaller congregations;
 - e. A twice-yearly newsletter (*Thrive!*) to connect smaller churches with each other and a variety of resources.
2. CRHM and their CHMC can assist them in exploring alternative ways of providing pastoral leadership. Some of these are new to us in the CRC, but the Lord has used these throughout the history of his church. Synod has also encouraged congregations to make use of these options. Examples include:

- a. A part-time pastor. Service may be provided by a schoolteacher, college or seminary student or faculty, military or institutional chaplain, or a retired pastor.
- b. A bi-vocational (sometimes called “tentmaking”) pastorate. A pastor serves a church part-time and also works in some form of other employment to supplement his or her income.
- c. Yoked congregations. Two churches may share a pastor. The churches worship separately but join together to provide a more solid base of financial support for securing long-term, full-time pastoral leadership.
- d. Shared ministry of an associate pastor. The pastor is on the staff of a larger neighboring church and also works part-time with the smaller church.
- e. Raising additional salary support from outside the congregation. This could be from nearby congregations, extended family, those who have grown up in the congregation and moved away, and others who have been blessed by the church’s ministry over the years.
- f. Elders of the congregation. In particular cases, the door is open for elders to preach and provide the sacraments as well as help provide congregational care. (See the *Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 502-8; especially p. 506, C, 2, e, 4).

G. What if the pastor of a heritage church leaves?

The church is to notify CRHM and its classis of the date of farewell of its pastor. Normally financial support will cease when a pastor leaves and will resume when a congregation’s compensation responsibility begins for their new pastor, intern, summer seminarian, or stated supply. In unusual circumstances, CRHM and the CHMC will make a case-by-case judgment.

H. If a heritage church is “of a crucial nature or of historical significance,” is reporting and mutual accountability really necessary?

1. Financial support for the ministry of heritage congregations is given in trust to CRHM and classis. Mutual accountability is a necessary part of keeping faith with the churches of the denomination.
2. Reporting and ministry reviews can be a helpful part of partnership and effective ministry.
3. A congregation’s designation as a heritage church is intended to continue indefinitely. However, if its ministry or viability declines significantly, good stewardship demands that at some point assistance come to an end.

I. Who will decide when or if a congregation’s heritage church designation is to be terminated?

The classis and CRHM will collaborate on the decision after an on-site ministry review together in consultation with the congregation.

J. What responsibility does a congregation have in seeking to remain a heritage church?

1. Participate in a ministry review—normally every three years.
2. Complete the Ministry Review Form and submit that to its CHMC.

3. Host a ministry review team from CHMC and CRHM.
 4. Develop and implement a workable ministry plan to move the church toward increased health and self-sufficiency.
 5. Report on its ministry to the CHMC and CRHM every six months.
 6. Evaluate its ministry and update its ministry plan each year.
 7. Actively seek to enhance and expand its ministry.
 8. Utilize the CHMC and CRHM as resources.
 9. Consider alternative models of ministry and pastoral leadership.
 10. Make use of conferences and other resources to develop additional leadership and vision.
 11. Continue to meet the eligibility criteria established by synod (see the guidelines and clarifications section above).
- K. What responsibility do a classis and its CHMC have in this heritage church program?**
1. Have on file the appropriate forms so it can provide them to its churches.
 2. Actively become involved with those churches seeking to become heritage churches.
 3. Collaborate with CRHM as part of a ministry review team to evaluate a ministry for possible designation as a heritage church.
 4. The CHMC and classis evaluate each request for heritage church designation and then send a copy of its decision and grounds to CRHM seeking concurrence.
 5. Partner with CRHM to assist the congregation in developing and implementing an annual ministry plan to move the church toward increased health and self-sufficiency.
 6. Encourage and maintain partnership and accountability with each heritage church.
 7. Process semiannual reports, annual evaluative summaries and ministry plans, and then forward a copy to CRHM.
 8. Assist the church in evaluating other ministry models and finding alternatives to a full-time ordained pastor.
 9. Every three years collaborate with CRHM as part of a ministry review team to evaluate renewal of its heritage-church designation.
- L. What responsibility does CRHM have in this heritage-church program?**
1. Provide forms for the initial application, semiannual reports, annual evaluative summary, ministry plan, and ministry review.
 2. Annually update the subsidy formula in compliance with decisions of the Board of Trustees and synod.

3. Collaborate with the CHMC for all ministry reviews.
 4. Evaluate heritage church applications recommended by classis.
 5. Partner with the CHMC to assist the congregation in developing and implementing an annual ministry plan to move the church toward increased health and self-sufficiency.
 6. Process the semiannual reports, annual evaluative summaries, and ministry plans.
 7. Actively seek to resource heritage churches in gathering and sending: seeking the lost and discipling the found—all for God's glory.
 8. Where appropriate, work with the CHMC and the congregation to implement an alternative model for ministry and pastoral leadership.
- M. Is there an appeal process if a congregation believes designation as a heritage church has been wrongly denied or terminated?
1. Yes, a church has the right to appeal. If it believes an injustice has been done, it must first submit a request for reconsideration to its classis and CRHM giving written reasons for reconsideration. Classis and CRHM shall reconsider each request and inform the church of the decision within ninety days.
 2. If the church remains unsatisfied, it shall have the right of appeal in accordance with the Conflict Resolution Policy adopted by the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

Appendix J

Condensed Financial Statements of the Agencies and Institutions

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Back to God Hour/CRC-TV

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 2,271	-	-	-	2,271	\$ 1,294	-	-	-	1,294
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	1,775	2,367	-	100	4,242	1,979	2,321	-	100	4,400
Receivables & Advances	81	-	62	-	143	111	-	67	-	178
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	281	-	-	-	281	28	-	-	-	28
Partnerships	285	-	-	-	285	245	-	-	-	245
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	1,157	-	-	-	1,157	1,088	-	-	-	1,088
Other	277	-	-	-	277	295	-	-	-	295
Total Assets	6,127	2,367	62	100	8,656	5,040	2,321	67	100	7,528
Accounts Payable	337	-	-	-	337	433	-	-	-	433
Notes/Loans Payable	593	-	-	-	593	523	-	-	-	523
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	1,511	-	-	-	1,511	1,576	-	-	-	1,576
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	2,441	-	-	-	2,441	2,532	-	-	-	2,532
Net Assets	\$ 3,686	2,367	62	100	6,215	\$ 2,508	2,321	67	100	4,996
Footnotes:	<p>Note 1: List details of property not in use.</p> <p>Note 2: List details of designations.</p> <p>Note 3: List details of restrictions.</p> <p>Note 4: List details of restrictions.</p>					<p>Funds relating to annuity contracts are segregated. The income from these funds is used for payments on annuity contracts.</p> <p>Board Restrictions: 2,367,360 Estate</p> <p>In process church programs with Home Missions</p> <p>Permanently restricted endowment funds.</p>				
	<p>Funds relating to annuity contracts are segregated. The income from these funds is used for payments on annuity contracts.</p> <p>Board Restrictions: 2,321,071 Estate</p> <p>In process church programs with Home Missions</p> <p>Permanently restricted endowment funds.</p>									

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Back to God Hour/CRC-TV

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 4,414	\$ 4,449	\$ 4,353	\$ 4,351	\$ 4,316
% of Total Income	49.6%	48.9%	51.5%	49.5%	48.6%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 3,399	\$ 3,301	\$ 2,997	\$ 3,171	\$ 3,274
Estate Gifts	\$ 1,030	\$ 1,202	\$ 667	\$ 737	\$ 885
Total Gift Income	4,429	4,503	3,664	3,908	4,159
% of Total Income	49.8%	49.5%	43.3%	44.5%	46.8%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants-Animation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 59	\$ 141	\$ 436	\$ 526	\$ 407
Total Other Income	59	141	436	526	407
% of Total Income	0.7%	1.6%	5.2%	6.0%	4.6%
TOTAL INCOME	8,902	9,093	8,453	8,785	8,882

EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):

Program Services:					
English	\$ 2,473	\$ 2,481	\$ 2,603	\$ 2,783	\$ 3,017
FTEs	5	5	5	5	5
International	\$ 2,460	\$ 2,592	\$ 2,287	\$ 2,586	\$ 2,826
FTEs	13	13	13	13	13
Television	\$ 2,003	\$ 649	\$ 1,312	\$ 2,193	\$ 2,509
FTEs	6	6	10	10	10
Television - Animation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 437	\$ 499	\$ 331
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 6,936	\$ 5,722	\$ 6,639	\$ 8,061	\$ 8,683
Total Program Service FTEs	24	24	28	28	28
% of Total \$	87.0%	82.9%	84.5%	85.3%	86.0%
% of Total FTEs	75.0%	75.0%	80.0%	77.8%	80.0%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 378	\$ 406	\$ 468	\$ 538	\$ 599
FTEs	4	4	4	4	3
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ 660	\$ 777	\$ 751	\$ 850	\$ 819
FTEs	4	4	3	4	4
Total Support Service \$	1,038	1,183	1,219	1,388	1,418
Total Support Service FTEs	8	8	7	8	7
% of Total \$	13.0%	17.1%	15.5%	14.7%	14.0%
% of Total FTEs	25.0%	25.0%	20.0%	22.2%	20.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 7,974	\$ 6,905	\$ 7,858	\$ 9,449	\$ 10,101
TOTAL FTEs	32	32	35	36	35
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 928	\$ 2,188	\$ 595	\$ (664)	\$ (1,219)

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 343	-	-	-	343	\$ 856	-	-	-	856
CDs, Time Deposits	100	-	-	-	100	100	-	-	-	100
Marketable Securities	11,236	-	-	-	11,236	10,355	-	-	-	10,355
Receivables & Advances	26,699	-	1,411	1,255	29,365	22,317	-	1,122	1,224	24,663
Inventory	701	-	-	-	701	622	-	-	-	622
Prepays & Advances	926	-	-	-	926	833	-	-	-	833
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	8,325	-	-	10,996	19,321	29,972	-	-	10,559	40,531
Equities	21,992	-	-	35,954	57,946	27,039	-	-	35,087	62,126
Partnerships	-	-	-	6,967	6,967	-	-	-	4,692	4,692
Property (non-operating)	13	-	-	1,956	1,969	133	-	-	1,374	1,507
PP & E	93,242	-	-	-	93,242	98,447	-	-	-	98,447
Other	2,604	-	3,457	1,767	7,828	3,967	-	5,080	2,382	11,429
Total Assets	166,181	-	4,868	58,895	229,944	194,641	-	6,202	55,308	256,151
Accounts Payable	2,809	-	-	-	2,809	3,416	-	-	-	3,416
Notes/Loans Payable	30,896	-	-	139	31,035	55,278	-	-	160	55,438
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	5,531	-	-	-	5,531	4,937	-	-	-	4,937
Deferred Income	608	-	-	-	608	566	-	-	-	566
Other	21,498	-	-	-	21,498	26,136	-	-	-	26,136
Total Liabilities	61,342	-	-	139	61,481	90,333	-	-	160	90,493
Net Assets	\$ 104,839	-	4,868	58,756	168,463	\$ 104,308	-	6,202	55,148	165,658
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.										
Note 2: List details of designations.										
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Over 500 accounts for instruction, scholarships, grants, research, public service, student services, etc., funded by outside sources					Over 500 accounts for instruction, scholarships, grants, research, public service, student services, etc., funded by outside sources				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	endowed gifts					endowed gifts				

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Calvin College

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 2,801	\$ 2,927	\$ 2,931	\$ 2,856	\$ 2,806
% of Total Income	4.4%	4.3%	4.1%	3.7%	3.6%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 3,061	\$ 3,082	\$ 2,845	\$ 3,114	\$ 2,601
Estate Gifts	\$ 20	\$ 29	\$ 23	\$ 17	\$ 31
Total Gift Income	3,081	2,814	2,868	3,131	2,632
% of Total Income	4.6%	4.1%	4.0%	4.1%	3.3%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ 56,505	\$ 61,483	\$ 64,567	\$ 68,395	\$ 71,256
Grants	\$ 258	\$ 503	\$ 475	\$ 313	\$ 360
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,103	\$ 1,133	\$ 1,198	\$ 1,698	\$ 1,804
Total Other Income	57,866	63,119	66,240	70,406	73,420
% of Total Income	91.0%	91.7%	92.0%	92.2%	93.1%
TOTAL INCOME	63,560	68,860	72,039	76,393	78,858
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Education	\$ 56,162	\$ 58,418	\$ 60,916	\$ 63,298	\$ 66,628
FTEs	456	486	471	490	535
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 56,162	\$ 58,418	\$ 60,916	\$ 63,298	\$ 66,628
Total Program Service FTEs	456	486	471	490	535
% of Total \$	87.9%	87.6%	87.4%	87.1%	87.0%
% of Total FTEs	80.4%	81.3%	80.9%	80.4%	81.3%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 4,397	\$ 3,806	\$ 3,863	\$ 3,456	\$ 4,284
FTEs	49	50	49	47	50
Plant Operations	\$ 2,183	\$ 3,363	\$ 3,726	\$ 4,425	\$ 4,382
FTEs	46	46	46	54	53
Fund Raising	\$ 1,120	\$ 1,104	\$ 1,222	\$ 1,486	\$ 1,276
FTEs	16	16	16	18	20
Total Support Service \$	7,700	8,273	8,811	9,367	9,942
Total Support Service FTEs	111	112	111	119	123
% of Total \$	12.1%	12.4%	12.6%	12.9%	13.0%
% of Total FTEs	19.6%	18.7%	19.1%	19.6%	18.7%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 63,862	\$ 66,691	\$ 69,727	\$ 72,665	\$ 76,570
TOTAL FTEs	567	598	582	609	658
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$ (302)	\$ 2,169	\$ 2,312	\$ 3,728	\$ 2,288

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Calvin Seminary

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 672	-	-	-	672	\$ 150	-	401	-	552
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	1,759	-	-	14,189	15,948	-	-	1,318	13,821	15,139
Receivables & Advances	1,321	-	28	2	1,351	69	1,188	7	-	1,264
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	176	176	91	-	1,391	-	1,481
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	692	-	-	-	692
Equities	-	-	-	-	-	692	-	-	-	692
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	5,236	-	-	-	5,236	-	-	-	5,399	5,399
Other	382	-	865	63	1,310	-	185	1,639	-	1,824
Total Assets	9,370	-	893	14,430	24,693	1,695	1,373	4,757	19,220	27,045
Accounts Payable	574	-	-	-	574	738	-	6	-	744
Notes/Loans Payable	1,146	-	-	-	1,146	-	276	-	807	1,083
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	450	450	-	-	-	315	315
Deferred Income	89	-	-	-	89	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1,310	-	-	-	1,310	703	-	408	465	1,576
Total Liabilities	3,119	-	-	450	3,569	1,441	276	414	1,587	3,718
Net Assets	\$ 6,251	-	893	13,980	21,124	\$ 255	1,097	4,342	17,633	23,327
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.										
Note 2: List details of designations.										
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	scholarship and grants					scholarship and grants				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	endowment and annuity					endowment and annuity				

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Calvin Seminary

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 1,900	\$ 1,995	\$ 2,213	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,170
% of Total Income	52.3%	51.8%	54.3%	52.1%	50.5%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 468	\$ 604	\$ 561	\$ 606	\$ 589
Estate Gifts	\$ 145	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	613	604	561	606	589
% of Total Income	16.9%	15.7%	13.8%	14.3%	13.7%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ 878	\$ 988	\$ 983	\$ 1,055	\$ 1,061
Grants	\$ 170	\$ 164	\$ 210	\$ 200	\$ 286
Miscellaneous	\$ 74	\$ 101	\$ 108	\$ 163	\$ 194
Total Other Income	1,122	1,253	1,301	1,418	1,541
% of Total Income	30.9%	32.5%	31.9%	33.6%	35.8%
TOTAL INCOME	3,635	3,852	4,075	4,224	4,300
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Instructional	\$ 1,820	\$ 1,777	\$ 1,924	\$ 1,909	\$ 2,154
FTEs	24	24	23	24	25
Public Service	\$ 58	\$ 68	\$ 96	\$ 87	\$ 91
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Academic Support	\$ 379	\$ 474	\$ 527	\$ 533	\$ 582
FTEs	3	3	3	4	4
Student Services	\$ 230	\$ 260	\$ 330	\$ 338	\$ 422
FTEs	1	1	1	1	4
Student Aid	\$ 168	\$ 258	\$ 289	\$ 283	\$ 254
FTEs	2	2	2	2	2
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 2,655	\$ 2,837	\$ 3,166	\$ 3,150	\$ 3,503
Total Program Service FTEs	30	29	29	31	35
% of Total \$	78.2%	76.6%	76.9%	76.1%	77.0%
% of Total FTEs	84.4%	84.2%	76.3%	77.5%	77.5%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 403	\$ 476	\$ 553	\$ 564	\$ 711
FTEs	4	4	4	4	5
Plant Operations	\$ 185	\$ 207	\$ 216	\$ 211	\$ 228
FTEs	-	-	3	3	3
Fund Raising	\$ 154	\$ 182	\$ 184	\$ 212	\$ 184
FTEs	2	2	2	2	2
Total Support Service \$	742	865	953	987	1,124
Total Support Service FTEs	6	6	9	9	10
% of Total \$	21.8%	23.4%	23.1%	23.9%	24.3%
% of Total FTEs	15.6%	15.8%	23.7%	22.5%	22.5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 3,397	\$ 3,702	\$ 4,119	\$ 4,137	\$ 4,627
TOTAL FTEs	35	35	38	40	45
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 238	\$ 150	\$ (44)	\$ 87	\$ (327)

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Canadian Ministries

INCLUDED IN DENOMINATIONAL SERVICES

Agency: Canadian Ministries
Revenue and Expense Reports (000s)

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 592	\$ 560	\$ 530	\$ 549	\$ 975
% of Total Income	89.6%	88.7%	88.0%	95.1%	95.7%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 16	\$ 17	\$ 11	\$ 27	\$ 41
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	16	17	11	27	41
% of Total Income	2.4%	2.7%	1.8%	4.7%	4.0%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ 48	\$ 51	\$ 52	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 5	\$ 3	\$ 9	\$ 1	\$ 3
Total Other Income	53	54	61	1	3
% of Total Income	8.0%	8.6%	10.1%	0.2%	0.3%
TOTAL INCOME	661	631	602	577	1,019
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Govt. Contact/Church in Soc.	\$ 40	\$ 37	\$ 48	\$ 40	\$ 38
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Indian Ministries	\$ 319	\$ 328	\$ 305	\$ 303	\$ 307
FTEs	3	3	3	3	3
Electronic Media	\$ 112	\$ 133	\$ 142	\$ 121	\$ 77
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Canadian Ministry Forum	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 27	\$ 27
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Other	\$ 48	\$ 48	\$ 27	\$ 22	\$ 20
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 519	\$ 546	\$ 522	\$ 513	\$ 469
Total Program Service FTEs	4	4	4	4	4
% of Total \$	81.6%	87.6%	75.8%	89.5%	93.1%
% of Total FTEs	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	80.0%	80.0%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 117	\$ 77	\$ 167	\$ 60	\$ 35
FTEs	2	2	2	1	1
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	117	77	167	60	35
Total Support Service FTEs	2	2	2	1	1
% of Total \$	18.4%	12.4%	24.2%	10.5%	6.9%
% of Total FTEs	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	20.0%	20.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 636	\$ 623	\$ 689	\$ 573	\$ 504
TOTAL FTEs	6	6	6	5	5
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 25	\$ 8	(\$ 87)	\$ 4	\$ 515

	December 31, 2000					December 31, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 683	-	-	-	683	\$ 1,242	-	-	-	1,242
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	38	-	-	-	38	42	-	-	-	42
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	2,102	-	-	-	2,102	2,300	-	-	-	2,300
Equities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	2,823	-	-	-	2,823	3,584	-	-	-	3,584
Accounts Payable	115	-	-	-	115	56	-	-	-	56
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	705	-	-	-	705	505	-	-	-	505
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	820	-	-	-	820	561	-	-	-	561
Net Assets	\$ 2,003	-	-	-	2,003	\$ 3,023	-	-	-	3,023
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.										
Note 2: List details of designations.										
Note 3: List details of restrictions.										
Note 4: List details of restrictions.										

Agency:
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

Consolidated Group Insurance - U.S.

	1997 Actual	1998 Actual	1999 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Actual
ADDITIONS:					
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:					
Participant Premiums	\$ 5,427	\$ 5,505	\$ 6,380	\$ 6,403	\$ 6,928
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 357	\$ 148	\$ 36	\$ 227	\$ 295
Total Other Income	5,784	5,653	6,416	6,630	7,223
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	5,784	5,653	6,416	6,630	7,223
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Claims Expense	\$ 5,131	\$ 5,144	\$ 5,238	\$ 5,063	\$ 5,395
FTVolunteer(s)	-	-	-	-	-
Insurance Premiums	\$ 500	\$ 363	\$ 385	\$ 339	\$ 358
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
TPA & PPO Fees	\$ 274	\$ 314	\$ 342	\$ 312	\$ 251
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 5,905	\$ 5,821	\$ 5,965	\$ 5,714	\$ 6,004
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	97.5%	95.6%	96.6%	96.5%	96.8%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 154	\$ 265	\$ 208	\$ 206	\$ 199
FTEs	3	3	3	3	3
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	154	265	208	206	199
Total Support Service FTEs	3	3	3	3	3
% of Total \$	2.5%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 6,059	\$ 6,086	\$ 6,173	\$ 5,920	\$ 6,203
TOTAL FTEs	3	3	3	3	3
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ (275)	\$ (433)	\$ 243	\$ 710	\$ 1,020

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 631	265	169	-	1,065	\$ 191	141	149	-	481
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	615	-	-	-	615	692	-	-	-	692
Inventory	2,402	-	-	-	2,402	2,332	-	-	-	2,332
Prepays & Advances	129	-	-	-	129	117	-	-	-	117
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	158	-	-	-	158	117	-	-	-	117
Other	312	-	-	-	312	212	-	-	-	212
Total Assets	4,247	265	169	-	4,681	3,661	141	149	-	3,951
Accounts Payable	434	-	-	-	434	509	-	-	-	509
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	611	-	-	-	611	505	-	-	-	505
Other	157	-	-	-	157	154	-	-	-	154
Total Liabilities	1,202	-	-	-	1,202	1,168	-	-	-	1,168
Net Assets	\$ 3,045	265	169	-	3,479	\$ 2,493	141	149	-	2,783
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.										
Note 2: List details of designations.	Proceeds from sale of Tell property designated for Spanish.					Proceeds from sale of Tell property designated for Spanish.				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Language and special project use - eg, PH supplement; Russian lang.					Language and special project use - eg, PH supplement; Russian lang.				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.										

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

CRC PUBLICATIONS

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 249	\$ 243	\$ 246	\$ 247	\$ 252
% of Total Income	4.0%	3.9%	3.8%	3.8%	4.5%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 99	\$ 128	\$ 121	\$ 129	\$ 50
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	99	128	121	129	50
% of Total Income	1.6%	2.0%	1.8%	2.0%	0.9%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ 5,800	\$ 5,691	\$ 5,792	\$ 5,780	\$ 5,138
Grants	\$ 8	\$ 76	\$ 134	\$ 137	\$ 119
Miscellaneous	\$ 134	\$ 152	\$ 252	\$ 124	\$ 90
Total Other Income	5,942	5,919	6,178	6,041	5,347
% of Total Income	94.5%	94.1%	94.4%	94.1%	94.7%
TOTAL INCOME	6,290	6,290	6,545	6,417	5,649
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Banner	\$ 1,479	\$ 1,276	\$ 1,360	\$ 1,320	\$ 1,211
FTEs	8	7	7	7	6
Education	\$ 3,577	\$ 3,752	\$ 3,757	\$ 3,663	\$ 3,681
FTEs	22	22	22	23	24
World Literature	\$ 502	\$ 632	\$ 884	\$ 766	\$ 711
FTEs	4	4	4	5	5
Agency Printing (PS)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 5,558	\$ 5,660	\$ 6,001	\$ 5,749	\$ 5,603
Total Program Service FTEs	34	33	33	35	35
% of Total \$	90.8%	91.0%	90.7%	89.3%	88.3%
% of Total FTEs	94.4%	94.3%	94.3%	94.6%	94.6%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 566	\$ 561	\$ 612	\$ 686	\$ 742
FTEs	2	2	2	2	2
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	566	561	612	686	742
Total Support Service FTEs	2	2	2	2	2
% of Total \$	9.2%	9.0%	9.3%	10.7%	11.7%
% of Total FTEs	5.6%	5.7%	5.7%	5.4%	5.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 6,124	\$ 6,221	\$ 6,613	\$ 6,435	\$ 6,345
TOTAL FTEs	36	35	35	37	37
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 166	\$ 69	\$ (68)	\$ (18)	\$ (696)

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Denominational Services

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ (139)	-	324	-	185	\$ 691	-	410	-	1,101
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	1,199	-	-	-	1,199	1,228	-	-	-	1,228
Inventory	360	-	-	-	360	376	-	-	-	376
Prepays & Advances	151	-	-	-	151	170	-	-	-	170
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	7,702	-	-	-	7,702	8,099	-	-	-	8,099
Equities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	5,957	-	-	-	5,957	5,698	-	-	-	5,698
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	15,230	-	324	-	15,554	16,262	-	410	-	16,672
Accounts Payable	536	-	-	-	536	628	-	-	-	628
Notes/Loans Payable	10,606	-	-	-	10,606	10,503	-	-	-	10,503
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	349	-	-	-	349	304	-	-	-	304
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	11,491	-	-	-	11,491	11,435	-	-	-	11,435
Net Assets	\$ 3,739	-	324	-	4,063	\$ 4,827	-	410	-	5,237
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property currently in use.	Canadian Cash Concentration and Netting for Interest Program					Canadian Cash Concentration and Netting for Interest Program				
Note 2: List details of designations										
Note 3: List details of restrictions										
Note 4: List details of restrictions										

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Denominational Services

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 1,523	\$ 1,520	\$ 1,717	\$ 1,933	\$ 1,873
% of Total Income	19.4%	15.6%	16.6%	17.9%	17.9%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 8	\$ 1	\$ 2	\$ 5	\$ 2
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	8	1	2	5	2
% of Total Income	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ 4,847	\$ 4,362	\$ 5,239	\$ 5,236	\$ 4,828
Grants	\$ 73	\$ 703	\$ 308	\$ 671	\$ 388
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,414	\$ 3,156	\$ 3,071	\$ 2,939	\$ 3,370
Total Other Income	6,334	8,221	8,618	8,846	8,586
% of Total Income	80.5%	84.4%	83.4%	82.0%	82.1%
TOTAL INCOME	7,865	9,742	10,337	10,784	10,461
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Synodical Services & Grants	\$ 736	\$ 785	\$ 826	\$ 984	\$ 888
FTEs	5	5	5	5	5
Education/F-T-Serve/Commun.	\$ 950	\$ 126	\$ 287	\$ 187	\$ 379
FTEs	4	1	1	1	2
CRCPlan	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 122	\$ 233	\$ 287
FTEs	-	-	1	1	1
CS/PS Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 4,715	\$ 4,630	\$ 5,346	\$ 5,260	\$ 4,876
FTEs	39	39	35	34	34
Finance/Payroll Services	\$ 41	\$ 1,030	\$ 1,160	\$ 1,393	\$ 1,486
FTEs	1	17	17	17	17
CSIS	\$ 530	\$ 685	\$ 809	\$ 645	\$ 562
FTEs	5	5	5	8	7
Personnel	\$ 96	\$ 107	\$ 126	\$ 119	\$ 107
FTEs	2	2	2	2	2
Total Program Service \$	7,068	7,363	8,676	8,821	8,585
Total Program Service FTEs	56	69	66	68	68
% of Total \$	84.1%	86.0%	87.4%	87.4%	87.4%
% of Total FTEs	84.8%	90.8%	90.4%	90.7%	90.7%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 549	\$ 411	\$ 434	\$ 469	\$ 470
FTEs	6	3	3	3	3
Plant Operations/Debt Serv.	\$ 752	\$ 752	\$ 771	\$ 751	\$ 716
FTEs	3	3	3	3	3
Fund Raising/Development	\$ 38	\$ 36	\$ 47	\$ 47	\$ 55
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Total Support Service \$	1,339	1,199	1,252	1,267	1,241
Total Support Service FTEs	10	7	7	7	7
% of Total \$	15.9%	14.0%	12.6%	12.6%	12.6%
% of Total FTEs	15.2%	9.2%	9.6%	9.3%	9.3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 8,407	\$ 8,562	\$ 9,928	\$ 10,088	\$ 9,826
TOTAL FTEs	66	76	73	75	75
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ (542)	\$ 1,180	\$ 409	\$ 696	\$ 635

	December 31, 2000					December 31, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ -	-	-	-	-	\$ -	-	-	-	-
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	214	-	-	-	214	229	-	-	-	229
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	1,891	-	-	-	1,891	2,171	-	-	-	2,171
Equities	8,189	-	-	-	8,189	7,759	-	-	-	7,759
GICs / Stable Asset Fund	5,647	-	-	-	5,647	5,554	-	-	-	5,554
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	15,941	-	-	-	15,941	15,713	-	-	-	15,713
Accounts Payable	3	-	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	3
Forfeitures Due Agencies	187	-	-	-	187	17	-	-	-	17
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	190	-	-	-	190	20	-	-	-	20
Net Assets	\$ 15,751	-	-	-	15,751	\$ 15,693	-	-	-	15,693
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.										
Note 2: List details of designations.										
Note 3: List details of restrictions.										
Note 4: List details of restrictions.										

Employees' Retirement Plan - United States
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

	1997 Actual	1998 Actual	1999 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Actual
ADDITIONS:					
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:					
Employer Contributions	\$ 777	\$ 749	\$ 791	\$ 809	\$ 840
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,758	\$ 1,342	\$ 1,026	\$ 3	\$(464)
Total Other Income	2,535	2,091	1,817	812	376
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	2,535	2,091	1,817	812	376
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Distributions	\$ 1,744	\$ 1,190	\$ 877	\$ 1,226	\$ 394
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program-service \$	\$ 1,744	\$ 1,190	\$ 877	\$ 1,226	\$ 394
Total Program-service FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	97.5%	94.9%	94.8%	96.5%	91.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 45	\$ 64	\$ 48	\$ 44	\$ 39
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support-service \$	45	64	48	44	39
Total Support-service FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
% of Total \$	2.5%	5.1%	5.2%	3.5%	9.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 1,789	\$ 1,254	\$ 925	\$ 1,270	\$ 433
TOTAL FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 746	\$ 837	\$ 892	\$(458)	\$(57)

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Fund for Smaller Churches

	-----June 30, 2000-----					-----June 30, 2001-----				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 572	-	-	-	572	\$ 1,191	-	-	-	1,191
CDs, Time Deposits	540	-	-	-	540	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	1,112	-	-	-	1,112	1,194	-	-	-	1,194
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Net Assets	\$ 1,112	-	-	-	1,112	\$ 1,192	-	-	-	1,192
Footnotes:										
	Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.									
	Note 2: List details of designations.									
	Note 3: List details of restrictions.									
	Note 4: List details of restrictions.									

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Fund for Smaller Churches

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 913	\$ 904	\$ 788	\$ 650	\$ 469
% of Total Income	98.9%	98.0%	91.8%	93.0%	89.2%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 1	\$ 3	\$ 37	\$ 1	\$ 1
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 34	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	1	3	71	1	1
% of Total Income	0.1%	0.3%	8.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 9	\$ 15	\$ -	\$ 48	\$ 56
Total Other Income	9	15	-	48	56
% of Total Income	1.0%	1.6%	0.0%	6.9%	10.6%
TOTAL INCOME	923	922	859	699	526
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Subsidy Requests	\$ 718	\$ 594	\$ 468	\$ 403	\$ 288
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Auto & Moving Expenses	\$ 58	\$ 47	\$ 34	\$ 31	\$ 23
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Small Church Specialists	\$ 14	\$ 14	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ 36
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Education	\$ 5	\$ 4	\$ 6	\$ 6	\$ 8
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Small Church Technology Upgrade	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Small Church Program Support	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 58
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 795	\$ 659	\$ 512	\$ 440	\$ 433
Total Program Service FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
% of Total \$	98.5%	98.2%	97.7%	95.9%	98.9%
% of Total FTEs	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 12	\$ 19	\$ 5
FTEs	1	1	1	1	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	12	12	12	19	5
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1	1	1	-
% of Total \$	1.5%	1.8%	2.3%	4.1%	1.1%
% of Total FTEs	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 807	\$ 671	\$ 524	\$ 459	\$ 438
TOTAL FTEs	2	2	2	2	1
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 116	\$ 251	\$ 335	\$ 240	\$ 88

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Home Missions

	-----June 30, 2000-----					-----June 30, 2001-----					
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	
Cash	\$ 2,200	1,242	19	-	3,461	\$ 1,289	-	225	-	1,514	
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Receivables & Advances	1,190	1,635	-	16	2,841	3,170	-	-	-	3,170	
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Prepays & Advances	56	-	-	-	56	49	-	-	-	49	
Investments (note 1):											
Bonds	-	1,441	-	531	1,972	435	1,117	-	548	2,100	
Equities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Partnerships	-	2,995	-	-	2,995	-	2,982	-	-	2,982	
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	32	-	-	-	32	
PP & E	601	-	-	-	601	129	-	-	-	129	
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Assets	4,047	7,313	19	547	11,926	5,104	4,099	225	548	9,976	
Accounts Payable	373	-	-	-	373	721	-	-	-	721	
Notes/Loans Payable	210	421	-	-	631	460	-	-	-	460	
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Annuities Payable	295	-	-	-	295	319	-	-	-	319	
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Liabilities	878	421	-	-	1,299	1,500	-	-	-	1,500	
Net Assets	\$ 3,169	6,892	19	547	10,627	\$ 3,604	4,099	225	548	8,476	
Footnotes:											
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.											
Note 2: List details of designations.	Fac Grants: \$115	Loan:\$2668	Endow:\$1775								
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Trng:\$591	Hawaii:\$1743			Trng:\$536	Hawaii:\$1750					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	NA Trng: \$19				Estate/Endow: \$1813						
	Loan:\$505	NA Trn:\$27	Trust:\$15								
					NA Trng: \$14	Fac Assist: \$211					
					Loan:\$504	NA Trn:\$29	Trust:\$15				

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Home Missions

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 5,292	\$ 5,307	\$ 5,264	\$ 5,084	\$ 4,968
% of Total Income	51.0%	65.8%	62.6%	55.8%	62.6%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 1,701	\$ 1,712	\$ 1,480	\$ 1,629	\$ 1,702
Estate Gifts	\$ 313	\$ 212	\$ 174	\$ 382	\$ 366
Total Gift Income	2,014	1,924	1,654	2,011	2,068
% of Total Income	19.4%	23.9%	19.7%	22.1%	26.1%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ 1,868	\$ 317	\$ 194	\$ 188	\$ 257
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,204	\$ 513	\$ 1,295	\$ 1,833	\$ 645
Total Other Income	3,072	830	1,489	2,021	902
% of Total Income	29.6%	10.3%	17.7%	22.2%	11.4%
TOTAL INCOME	10,378	8,061	8,407	9,116	7,938
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
New-Church Development	\$ 4,717	\$ 4,888	\$ 5,437	\$ 5,007	\$ 4,897
FTEs	11	11	11	11	13
Established-Church Develop.	\$ 1,887	\$ 2,362	\$ 2,109	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,263
FTEs	19	19	17	16	17
Campus/schools	\$ -	\$ 74	\$ 109	\$ 1,046	\$ 1,517
FTEs	-	1	1	2	1
				\$ -	-
				\$ -	-
				\$ -	-
				\$ -	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 6,604	\$ 7,324	\$ 7,655	\$ 8,453	\$ 8,677
Total Program Service FTEs	30	31	29	29	31
% of Total \$	85.9%	86.6%	84.9%	86.1%	86.8%
% of Total FTEs	77.1%	82.9%	78.4%	78.4%	81.6%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 610	\$ 679	\$ 868	\$ 829	\$ 785
FTEs	5	2	4	4	3
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Raising	\$ 476	\$ 457	\$ 496	\$ 533	\$ 532
FTEs	4	4	4	4	4
Total Support Service \$	1,086	1,136	1,364	1,362	1,317
Total Support Service FTEs	9	6	8	8	7
% of Total \$	14.1%	13.4%	15.1%	13.9%	13.2%
% of Total FTEs	22.9%	17.1%	21.6%	21.6%	18.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 7,690	\$ 8,460	\$ 9,019	\$ 9,815	\$ 9,994
TOTAL FTEs	39	37	37	37	38
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 2,688	\$ (399)	\$ (612)	\$ (699)	\$ (2,056)

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Loan Fund

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 2,466	-	-	-	2,466	\$ 4,486	-	-	-	4,486
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	11,100	-	-	-	11,100	12,100	-	-	-	12,100
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	25	-	-	-	25	91	-	-	-	91
Total Assets	13,591	-	-	-	13,591	16,677	-	-	-	16,677
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Notes/Loans Payable	9,835	-	-	-	9,835	12,763	-	-	-	12,763
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	24	-	-	-	24
Total Liabilities	9,835	-	-	-	9,835	12,787	-	-	-	12,787
Net Assets	\$ 3,756	-	-	-	3,756	\$ 3,890	-	-	-	3,890
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.										
Note 2: List details of designations										
Note 3: List details of restrictions										
Note 4: List details of restrictions										

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Loan Fund

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 857	\$ 925	\$ 970	\$ 1,009	\$ 1,096
Total Other Income	857	925	970	1,009	1,096
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL INCOME	857	925	970	1,009	1,096
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Loan Interest	\$ 541	\$ 597	\$ 631	\$ 627	\$ 765
FTEs	2	2	1	1	1
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 541	\$ 597	\$ 631	\$ 627	\$ 765
Total Program Service FTEs					
% of Total \$	70.4%	75.3%	83.8%	79.7%	80.5%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 227	\$ 196	\$ 122	\$ 160	\$ 185
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	227	196	122	160	185
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
% of Total \$	29.6%	24.7%	16.2%	20.3%	19.5%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 768	\$ 793	\$ 753	\$ 787	\$ 950
TOTAL FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 89	\$ 132	\$ 217	\$ 222	\$ 146

	-----December 31, 2000-----			-----December 31, 2001-----		
	Pension	S.A.F	Total	Pension	S.A.F	Total
Cash	\$ 1,364	156	-	\$ (56)	149	-
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	211	-	-	49	-	-
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):						
Bonds	9,547	-	-	9,832	-	-
Equities	14,143	-	-	13,250	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	25,265	156	-	23,075	149	-
Accounts Payable	410	3	-	163	-	-
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	410	3	-	163	-	-
Net Assets	\$ 24,855	153	-	\$ 22,912	149	-
Footnotes:						
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.						
Note 2: List details of designations						
Note 3: List details of restrictions						
Note 4: List details of restrictions						

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - Canada
Changes in Net Assets (000s) in Canadian \$

	MPF			SAF		
	1999 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	1999 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Actual
ADDITIONS:						
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31	\$ 3	\$ -
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	81.6%	30.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:						
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ 3,094	\$ (187)	\$ (1,139)	\$ 7	\$ 7	\$ 5
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:						
Participant Assessments	\$ 923	\$ 1,543	\$ 970	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,094	\$ (187)	\$ (1,139)	\$ 7	\$ 7	\$ 5
Total Other Income	4,017	1,356	(188)	7	7	5
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18.4%	70.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	4,017	1,356	(188)	38	10	5
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):						
Program Services:						
Distributions	\$ 1,274	\$ 1,362	\$ 1,492	\$ 15	\$ 14	\$ 9
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 1,274	\$ 1,362	\$ 1,492	\$ 15	\$ 14	\$ 9
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	86.0%	83.3%	84.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-	-	-
Support Services:						
Management & General	\$ 208	\$ 274	\$ 283	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	1	1	1	-	-	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	208	274	283	-	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1	1	-	-	-
% of Total \$	14.0%	16.7%	15.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	-	-	-
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 1,482	\$ 1,636	\$ 1,775	\$ 15	\$ 14	\$ 9
TOTAL FTEs	1	1	1	-	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 2,535	\$ (280)	\$ (1,943)	\$ 23	\$ (4)	\$ (4)

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States

	-----December 31, 2000-----			-----December 31, 2001-----		
	Pension	S.A.F	Total	Pension	S.A.F	Total
Cash	\$ 2,133	268	-	\$ 2,077	199	-
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	767	1	-	550	-	-
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):						
Bonds	31,441	-	-	30,984	-	-
Equities	62,239	-	-	57,518	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	96,680	269	-	91,129	199	-
Accounts Payable	143	7	-	79	-	-
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	143	7	-	79	-	-
Net Assets	\$ 96,437	262	-	\$ 91,050	199	-
Footnotes:						
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.						
Note 2: List details of designations						
Note 3: List details of restrictions						
Note 4: List details of restrictions						

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

	-----MPF-----			-----SAF-----		
	1999 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	1999 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Actual
ADDITIONS:						
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55	\$ -	\$ -
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	78.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:						
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:						
Participant Assessments	\$ 2,530	\$ 1,770	\$ 2,591	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 9,370	\$ 1,032	\$ (2,103)	\$ 15	\$ 17	\$ 10
Total Other Income	11,900	2,802	488	15	17	10
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	21.4%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	11,900	2,802	488	70	17	10
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):						
Program Services:						
Distributions	\$ 4,663	\$ 4,685	\$ 5,340	\$ 16	\$ 28	\$ 73
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 4,663	\$ 4,685	\$ 5,340	\$ 16	\$ 28	\$ 73
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	89.1%	88.1%	90.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-	-	-
Support Services:						
Management & General	\$ 570	\$ 633	\$ 536	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	2	2	2	-	-	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	570	633	536	-	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	2	2	2	-	-	-
% of Total \$	10.9%	11.9%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	-	-	-
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 5,233	\$ 5,318	\$ 5,876	\$ 16	\$ 28	\$ 73
TOTAL FTEs	2	2	2	-	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 6,667	\$ (2,516)	\$ (5,388)	\$ 54	\$ (11)	\$ (63)

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

Pastoral Ministries

INCLUDED IN DENOMINATIONAL SERVICES

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Pastoral Ministries

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 1,153	\$ 1,121	\$ 1,039	\$ 1,013	\$ 1,202
% of Total Income	85.1%	85.8%	84.2%	84.9%	83.1%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 187	\$ 176	\$ 186	\$ 126	\$ 137
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	187	176	186	126	137
% of Total Income	13.8%	13.5%	15.1%	10.6%	9.5%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ 2	\$ 1	\$ 2	\$ -	\$ 2
Grants	\$ 3	\$ 2	\$ 7	\$ 46	\$ 93
Miscellaneous	\$ 10	\$ 7	\$ -	\$ 8	\$ 12
Total Other Income	15	10	9	54	107
% of Total Income	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%	4.5%	7.4%
TOTAL INCOME	1,355	1,307	1,234	1,193	1,446
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Chaplaincy Services	\$ 418	\$ 302	\$ 222	\$ 277	\$ 327
FTEs	2	2	2	2	2
Race Relations	\$ 270	\$ 262	\$ 240	\$ 266	\$ 326
FTEs	3	3	3	3	3
Pastor-Church Relations	\$ 80	\$ 101	\$ 131	\$ 200	\$ 380
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Abuse Prevention	\$ 55	\$ 92	\$ 91	\$ 100	\$ 181
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Disability Concerns	\$ 121	\$ 97	\$ 102	\$ 112	\$ 162
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 944	\$ 854	\$ 786	\$ 955	\$ 1,376
Total Program Service FTEs	8	8	8	8	8
% of Total \$	78.1%	70.3%	68.5%	78.9%	97.8%
% of Total FTEs	66.7%	61.5%	61.5%	66.7%	88.9%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 198	\$ 296	\$ 277	\$ 235	\$ -
FTEs	3	4	4	3	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Raising	\$ 67	\$ 65	\$ 85	\$ 21	\$ 31
FTEs	1	1	1	1	1
Total Support Service \$	265	361	362	256	31
Total Support Service FTEs	4	5	5	4	1
% of Total \$	21.9%	29.7%	31.5%	21.1%	2.2%
% of Total FTEs	33.3%	38.5%	38.5%	33.3%	11.1%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 1,209	\$ 1,215	\$ 1,148	\$ 1,211	\$ 1,407
TOTAL FTEs	12	13	13	12	9
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$ 146	\$ 92	\$ 86	\$ (18)	\$ 39

Agency:
Balance Sheets (000s)

World Missions

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 1,050	607	97	51	1,805	\$ 784	19	209	2	1,014
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	869	20	-	2	891	645	24	-	3	672
Inventory	370	-	-	-	370	448	-	-	-	448
Prepays & Advances	8	-	-	-	8	9	-	-	-	9
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	309	3,118	18	493	3,938	491	3,918	31	640	5,080
Equities	192	1,936	12	377	2,517	38	356	9	260	663
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	70	-	70	-	140	37	-	70	-	107
PP & E	660	-	-	-	660	647	-	-	-	647
Other	105	-	-	-	105	93	-	-	-	93
Total Assets	3,633	5,681	197	923	10,434	3,192	4,317	319	905	8,733
Accounts Payable	513	109	-	-	622	580	114	-	-	694
Notes/Loans Payable	123	-	-	-	123	103	-	-	-	103
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	361	-	26	-	387	360	-	24	-	384
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1,071	-	-	-	1,071	1,142	-	-	-	1,142
Total Liabilities	2,068	109	26	-	2,203	2,185	114	24	-	2,323
Net Assets	\$ 1,565	5,572	171	923	8,231	\$ 1,007	4,203	295	905	6,410
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.	Land contract given in legacy \$70 - Restricted Land Gift \$70					Land contract given in legacy \$37 - Restricted Land Gift \$70				
Note 2: List details of designations.	Japan Capital Funds \$3,557 - Legacy Fund \$726 - Insurance Reserve Funds \$393 - Endowment/Annuities \$346 - Other \$550					Japan Capital Funds \$2,697 - Legacy Fund \$757 - Insurance Reserve Funds \$222 - Endowment/Annuities \$267 - Other \$261				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Restricted Gifts \$85 & Unitrust					Restricted Gifts \$204 & Unitrust				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Endowments					Endowments				

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

World Missions

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ 5,052	\$ 5,070	\$ 5,030	\$ 4,943	\$ 4,932
% of Total Income	38.1%	36.4%	38.8%	38.0%	38.7%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 4,975	\$ 5,168	\$ 5,265	\$ 5,296	\$ 5,404
Estate Gifts	\$ 309	\$ 844	\$ 372	\$ 686	\$ 690
Total Gift Income	5,284	6,012	5,637	5,982	6,094
% of Total Income	39.9%	43.2%	43.5%	46.0%	47.8%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ 972	\$ 1,060	\$ 1,016	\$ 996	\$ 1,085
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,950	\$ 1,774	\$ 1,282	\$ 1,093	\$ 630
Total Other Income	2,922	2,834	2,298	2,089	1,715
% of Total Income	22.0%	20.4%	17.7%	16.1%	13.5%
TOTAL INCOME	13,258	13,916	12,965	13,014	12,741
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Africa	\$ 2,855	\$ 2,926	\$ 2,846	\$ 3,062	\$ 3,471
FTEs	44	43	42	43	44
Asia	\$ 3,989	\$ 3,677	\$ 4,228	\$ 4,887	\$ 4,908
FTEs	29	28	27	30	32
Latin America	\$ 3,283	\$ 3,107	\$ 3,432	\$ 3,523	\$ 3,461
FTEs	42	39	37	34	39
Europe	\$ 446	\$ 477	\$ 653	\$ 671	\$ 694
FTEs	12	11	12	16	15
Education	\$ 505	\$ 517	\$ 498	\$ 531	\$ 558
FTEs	6	6	6	6	6
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 11,078	\$ 10,704	\$ 11,657	\$ 12,674	\$ 13,092
Total Program Service FTEs	134	125	122	127	135
% of Total \$	87.4%	86.4%	87.5%	88.4%	90.0%
% of Total FTEs	86.6%	86.7%	86.4%	87.8%	91.4%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 851	\$ 929	\$ 919	\$ 932	\$ 737
FTEs	13	12	12	11	6
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ 743	\$ 749	\$ 741	\$ 739	\$ 723
FTEs	8	8	8	7	7
Total Support Service \$	1,594	1,678	1,660	1,671	1,460
Total Support Service FTEs	21	19	19	18	13
% of Total \$	12.6%	13.6%	12.5%	11.6%	10.0%
% of Total FTEs	13.4%	13.3%	13.6%	12.2%	8.6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 12,672	\$ 12,382	\$ 13,317	\$ 14,345	\$ 14,552
TOTAL FTEs	154	144	141	145	148
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 586	\$ 1,534	\$ (352)	\$ (1,331)	\$ (1,811)

	June 30, 2000					June 30, 2001				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 1,187	\$ 1,983	\$ 529	\$ -	3,699	\$ 888	\$ 1,630	\$ 356	\$ -	2,874
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	120	-	-	-	120	164	-	-	-	164
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	518	-	-	-	518	1,073	-	-	-	1,073
Investments (note 1):										
Bonds	-	984	-	-	984	-	1,268	-	-	1,268
Equities	-	836	372	23	1,231	200	725	411	23	1,359
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	188	-	133	-	321	154	-	131	-	285
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	2,013	3,803	1,034	23	6,873	2,479	3,623	898	23	7,023
Accounts Payable	647	-	-	-	647	1,380	-	-	-	1,380
Notes/Loans Payable	10	-	-	-	10	10	-	-	-	10
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	270	-	-	-	270	278	-	-	-	278
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	927	-	-	-	927	1,668	-	-	-	1,668
Net Assets	\$ 1,086	3,803	1,034	23	5,946	\$ 811	3,623	898	23	5,355
Footnotes:										
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.										
Note 2: List details of designations.	7-year term endowments as stipulated by Board = \$1,966 Disaster relief gifts for specific sites = \$1,837					7-year term endowments as stipulated by Board = \$2,817 Disaster relief gifts for specific sites = \$806				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Mission home = \$133 Gift rec'd for subs years = \$569 7-year term endowments as stipulated by donors = \$332					Mission home = \$131 Gift rec'd for subs years = \$410 7-year term endowments as stipulated by donors = \$357				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Pure endowments					Pure endowments				

Agency:
Operating Budget (000s)

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

	Fiscal 96-97 Actual	Fiscal 97-98 Actual	Fiscal 98-99 Actual	Fiscal 99-00 Actual	Fiscal 00-01 Actual
INCOME:					
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:					
Above Ministry Share	\$ 8,581	\$ 8,185	\$ 11,998	\$ 10,498	\$ 10,146
Estate Gifts	\$ 176	\$ 895	\$ 371	\$ 879	\$ 1,570
Total Gift Income	8,757	9,080	12,369	11,377	11,716
% of Total Income	79.2%	81.7%	90.9%	85.3%	85.8%
Other Income:					
Tuition & Sales	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ 2,160	\$ 1,926	\$ 1,028	\$ 1,570	\$ 1,587
Miscellaneous	\$ 139	\$ 107	\$ 215	\$ 397	\$ 358
Total Other Income	2,299	2,033	1,244	1,967	1,945
% of Total Income	20.8%	18.3%	9.1%	14.7%	14.2%
TOTAL INCOME	11,056	11,113	13,613	13,344	13,661
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):					
Program Services:					
Overseas programs	\$ 5,548	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,551	\$ 6,320	\$ 6,672
FTEs	47	36	53	47	49
No America programs	\$ 815	\$ 778	\$ 947	\$ 1,053	\$ 1,185
FTEs	11	10	6	10	9
Disaster relief programs	\$ 1,674	\$ 1,822	\$ 2,370	\$ 3,214	\$ 3,528
FTEs	5	5	8	6	7
Education	\$ 190	\$ 94	\$ 196	\$ 260	\$ 326
FTEs	1	1	1	3	3
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	8,227	7,694	9,065	10,847	11,711
Total Program Service FTEs	64	52	68	66	68
% of Total \$	81.1%	77.5%	79.8%	80.7%	82.2%
% of Total FTEs	75.3%	72.2%	77.3%	77.6%	75.6%
Support Services:					
Management & General	\$ 932	\$ 1,183	\$ 1,152	\$ 1,231	\$ 1,092
FTEs	11	10	8	8	7
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Raising	\$ 983	\$ 1,053	\$ 1,144	\$ 1,363	\$ 1,448
FTEs	10	10	12	11	15
Total Support Service \$	1,915	2,236	2,296	2,594	2,540
Total Support Service FTEs	21	20	20	19	22
% of Total \$	18.9%	22.5%	20.2%	19.3%	17.8%
% of Total FTEs	24.7%	27.8%	22.7%	22.4%	24.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 10,142	\$ 9,930	\$ 11,361	\$ 13,441	\$ 14,251
TOTAL FTEs	85	72	88	85	90
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 914	\$ 1,183	\$ 2,252	\$ (97)	\$ (590)

REPORTS OF AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

Each year the Board of Trustees submits a unified report to synod composed of individual parts provided by the agencies and educational institutions of the Christian Reformed Church. The individual reports appear in alphabetical order using the agency's name. Supplementary reports may be provided, if needed, at the time that synod convenes.

Writing these reports is an exercise of accountability that is appropriate in our life together as a denomination. Much of what is written is provided as information for synod. Some of the material provides a background for decisions that synod will be asked to make. In either case, these reports really are the story of what God is pleased to do through the agencies of the church. As you read the material, we invite you to join us in thanksgiving for ministry opportunities and for the many fine people who serve on your behalf at home and around the world.

Peter Borgdorff
Executive Director of Ministries
Christian Reformed Church in North America

I. Introduction

The Back to God Hour, the electronic media ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, fulfills a mandate to:

give leadership in media missions and to supervise the production of denominational radio, television, and other electronic programs, which express the Reformed faith in response to . . . need for conversion, edification, and cultural direction . . . and it is required to give leadership to the denomination as a whole and its congregations in the use of available communication media.

II. The board of trustees

A. Function

The Back to God Hour is governed by a regionally representative board that meets three times a year to set policy and to evaluate the work of the staff.

B. Officers of the board

The officers of the board are Rev. Scott Greenway, president; Rev. Richard Williams, vice president; Ms. Willa Beckman, secretary; Mr. Marten Van Huizen, treasurer.

C. Nominations for board members

Region 2 (three-year term)

Mr. Peter De Boer is a self-employed, semiretired businessman from Calgary, Alberta. He has served on the board of The King's University College and The King's Foundation Board, as well as church council and various committees in the local church and Christian school.

Mrs. Rose Olthuis is a homemaker and therapist. A member of Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church, she has served on various church committees and currently serves as The Back to God Hour regional and church representative for the Alberta area.

Region 5 (three-year term)

Rev. Mark Van Haitzma is pastor of the Olympia, Washington, Christian Reformed Church. Previously he served the Christian Reformed Church in Paw Paw, Michigan. He has had extensive experience in the local church.

Rev. Jake Weeda is pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Manhattan, Montana. He has been a delegate to synod several times, and served classical positions as stated clerk, synodical deputy, regional pastor, and classical interim committee chairperson. Previously he served churches in Michigan and Alberta.

Region 7 (three-year term)

Mrs. Kathryn DeBoer of Chandler, Arizona, is a member of Palm Lane Christian Reformed Church in Phoenix. She is vice president of market research at Westgroup Research, a company that works with media research and opinion and marketing strategies. She is a leader in local church activities.

Mr. Henry W. Rottschafer of Farmington, New Mexico, is a member of Maranatha Fellowship Christian Reformed Church. He is a funeral director who has served several terms on his local church council.

Region 10 (three-year term) (both incumbents to be ratified)

Mrs. Willa Beckman (incumbent) is a homemaker from Holland, Michigan, where she is a member of Park Christian Reformed Church. She has served on many church and Christian School committees and boards. She is currently secretary of The Back to God Hour Board.

Rev. Allan Petroelje (incumbent) has been pastor of First Christian Reformed Church in Fremont, Michigan, since 1996. He has served other churches in Indiana, Washington, Montana, and Michigan. He currently serves as regional pastor of Classis Muskegon (north).

Region 11 (three-year term) (incumbent to be ratified)

Rev. R. Scott Greenway (incumbent) currently serves as president of The Back to God Hour Board. He is pastor of the Caledonia, Michigan, Christian Reformed Church and also served a church in New Jersey.

D. Salary disclosure

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
18	1	2nd quartile

III. Back to God Hour ministries

The Back to God Hour proclaims the gospel in nine languages, using radio, television, telephone, and the Internet. The commitment to the Reformed faith, the choice not to solicit funds on the air, and the use of secular stations to air its programs whenever possible distinguish it among religious broadcasters.

People respond to the various presentations of the gospel by phone, mail, or increasingly by e-mail. Some object to the claims of Jesus; others want to know more about him and how to serve him. Trained volunteers and staff persons respond appropriately to those listeners. Back to God Hour representatives supply literature, help people find a church home, refer people to Christian counselors, and pray with and for people. Prayer requests are sent to a network of partners who covenant to pray regularly. The church is encouraged to remember all of The Back to God Hour ministries in prayer.

A. Arabic-language ministry

The Back to God Hour maintains a cooperative ministry agreement with Words of Hope (Reformed Church in America) and Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) for electronic media ministry to Arabic speaking people. This venture pools the resources of three reformed groups to provide a diversity of program formats, greater listener appeal, more negotiating leverage when purchasing air time, and a better follow-up system than any one organization could achieve by itself.

B. Chinese-language ministry

Back to God Hour broadcasts in Cantonese and Mandarin cover all twenty-six provinces in China, which is home to over 1.1 billion people. These broadcasts are aired on seven super-powered stations located outside the country.

In China, listener follow-up is difficult because of government imposed restrictions. Alliance Radio staff in Hong Kong work with The Back to God

Hour to provide follow-up and listener contact for the sixteen programs produced each week.

Rev. Jimmy Lin gives direction to this crucial ministry.

As a result of alliances with local congregations in Australia and New Zealand, Back to God Hour Chinese programs are heard in major metropolitan areas in each country. These congregations take advantage of government regulations with a result that the programs are aired with very limited cost to the agency.

Significant Chinese-language ministry also takes place in some major metropolitan areas in Canada, the United States, Panama, and Belize, in which concentrations of Chinese-speaking persons are found. In some of these areas the programming is bilingual.

C. English- language ministry

1. "The Back to God Hour" is a weekly, half-hour radio program heard on every continent in the world. Rev. David Feddes continues to proclaim the historic Christian faith to contemporary society. The Back to God Hour English-language ministry has shifted some of its resources to international broadcasting. For instance, the program is now heard in over twelve major metropolitan areas in Nigeria. This year the Family Radio network of over forty stations in the United States dropped The Back to God Hour radio program from their broadcast schedule because of theological objections to Back to God Hour's affiliation with the organized church.
2. The news-magazine format television program, "Primary Focus," airs on Vision TV throughout Canada and on CTS in Ontario. It is also carried on Odyssey and Fam-Net in the United States as well as on over eighty local stations. The potential viewing audience is nearly one hundred million persons. Responses from the target audience of nonbelievers and the unchurched have been very positive. Primary Focus was honored with a Clarion award for one of its programs on domestic violence.
3. "Insight" is a four-and-a half minute commentary heard weekdays on approximately eighty radio stations. Dr. Joel Nederhood, although retired from The Back to God Hour, continues to host this program.
4. The Voice of Life radio station, located on the island of Dominica, covers the eastern Caribbean Islands and carries all of our English programs.
5. The English language literature ministry includes the publication of over four hundred thousand copies of each issue of *Today* (a bimonthly devotional), and over thirty-five thousand printed copies of *The Radio Pulpit*, as well as printed transcripts of "Insight."
6. "The First Easter," an animated television special, aired throughout the English-speaking world during the Easter season of 2001. It addressed the largest audience of any Back to God Hour program in history.
7. "Kids Corner" radio program seeks to call children to a life of discipleship in Jesus Christ. This program is now heard on over 250 stations in North America as well as throughout the eastern Caribbean islands.

D. French-language ministry

The focus of the French-language ministry is Africa and Haiti. Rev. Paul Mpindi, a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo, gives leadership to this ministry. In August of 1999, Rev. Mpindi and his family moved to Banqui, Central African Republic, in an attempt to set up the Back to God Hour French-language ministry office there. We will be evaluating this decision during the course of this year in light of concerns for the safety of the Mpindis who have moved back to the States following an outbreak of violence and a coup attempt this past year. Rev. Mpindi has been overwhelmed by the response to his programming *Perspective Reformees*. A program devoted to a biblical perspective on womens' issues in the African context is now heard once a week in fourteen English-speaking African countries.

E. Indonesian-language ministry

Rev. Dr. Junus Atmarumeksa retired at the end of 2001. His successor, the Rev. Untung Ongkowidjaja, was nominated by the Indonesian Advisory Committee and was installed by the Christian Church of Indonesia in January 2002. The nation totters near chaos. Economic crisis, political upheaval, and religious animosity all impact this ministry. Over five hundred churches were burned in the last year.

Indonesia is an island nation with the largest Muslim population in the world. The Back to God Hour ministry encourages Christians who live under oppression, announces a Savior to those outside Jesus Christ, and proclaims hope to the downcast and oppressed.

F. Japanese-language ministry

Rev. Masao Yamashita gives leadership to the electronic media ministry in the Japanese language.

Electronic media that allow a person to listen to the gospel in private, without risking the loss of face that a more public listening to the gospel might entail, are very valuable ministry tools in this country. The Back to God Hour ministry has developed both land-based and cell-based web sites for the internet ministry. These sites allow persons to obtain information about the Christian faith in a quiet unobtrusive way. Many Japanese have taken advantage of this opportunity to learn more about Jesus. Each year the Reformed Church in Japan baptizes believers who first became acquainted with the gospel through electronic media.

G. Portuguese-language ministry

Radio, television, and telephone are components of the media ministry in Brazil directed by Rev. Celsino Gama. The Presbyterian Church in Brazil is a significant partner in this ministry. This has been evidenced in the fact that over 180 local congregations have leased telephone equipment to assist in the follow-up ministry. We thank God for the desire of this denomination to partner with us in this ministry.

H. Russian-language ministry

The Back to God Hour ministry to the Commonwealth of Independent States is part of a coordinated effort of Christian Reformed agencies to minister in this area of the world. Much of the follow-up ministry is carried on through the library-bookstores established by this collaborative effort.

Mr. Serguei Sossedkine serves as the speaker for the Russian language broadcast. A native of Moscow, Mr. Sossedkine received his theological education at Calvin Theological Seminary.

The Back to God Hour carries on its ministry through a variety of local stations in select metropolitan areas.

I. Spanish-language ministry

Nearly 250 radio stations and 30 television stations carry Back to God Hour Spanish-language programming. This ministry reaches Central, North, and South America, as well as Spain.

The Back to God Hour is also committed to reaching the large Spanish-speaking population in the United States. Much of this population is located in major metropolitan centers or along the Mexican-U.S. border. The radio ministry features multiple formats to speak to a variety of different kinds of audiences.

Rev. Guillermo Serrano gives leadership in this ministry. Back to God Hour Spanish television is produced in Campinas, Brazil, in conjunction with the Portuguese television ministry.

J. Cooperative organizations

1. The Back to God Hour works closely with Admark, an advertising agency, and RACOM, the public-relations agency dedicated to support the ministry of The Back to God Hour.
2. The Back to God Hour contracts with CRC Product Services for publication of selected materials.
3. The Back to God Hour and Christian Reformed Home Missions work together in a campaign to raise the visibility of selected developing church plants through the use of media.
4. The Back to God Hour partners with Crossroad Bible Institute, which provides a correspondence program as part of a follow-up ministry. This program has been very effective in the English language. Explorations are underway to expand this into the French language as well.
5. The Back to God Hour and the education department of the Board of Publications are collaborating on an educational video series based on selected "Primary Focus" programs for adult-educational programs.
6. The Back to God Hour sustains relationships with a variety of churches, agencies, and organizations to provide broadcasting or follow-up in each of the nine languages.

V. Recommendations

A. That Rev. Scott Greenway, president; and Dr. Calvin L. Bremer, executive director, be given the privilege of the floor when Back to God Hour matters are discussed.

B. That synod elect board members from the nominations presented.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees.

The Back to God Hour
Calvin Bremer, executive director

I. Introduction

This report reflects information derived from, as well as actions taken at, the October 2001 and the February 2002 meetings of the Calvin College Board of Trustees.

For the October 2001 meeting the 31-member Calvin College Board of Trustees met on campus. The plenary sessions were devoted to information exchange, including committee reports and a discussion of the new Calvin College Strategic Plan. The board enjoyed a reception with the first thirty-seven recipients of the new Board of Trustees Scholarships, a new fund established last year. The thirty-seven recipients are receiving over \$100,000 in scholarship monies from the board.

At the February 2002 meeting, the board reviewed a “self-evaluation” process by its members—this self-evaluation is conducted every other year and indicates a high level of agreement by the board members on the mission of the college, support for the president and for college programs and services, fund raising, fiscal management, and strategic planning.

Board officers elected for 2001-2002 are: Mr. Milton Kuyers, chair; Rev. Charles DeRidder, vice-chair; Rev. Edward Blankespoor, secretary; Ms. Darlene K. Meyering, assistant secretary; and Dr. Henry DeVries, treasurer.

II. General college matters

The board received a final report on the new Strategic Plan at the February 2002 meeting and approved the motion that the revised Strategic Plan 2001-2006, be implemented in the fall of 2002.

III. Faculty**A. Faculty interviews**

Faculty interviews were the highlight of the February meeting. The board interviewed ten faculty members for tenure appointments (see Recommendations) and eleven for two- or three-year regular reappointments.

B. Presidential Award for Exemplary Teaching

Dr. Larry Nyhof, professor of Computer Science, was presented the tenth annual Presidential Award for Exemplary Teaching. This award is given to a tenured professor whose Christian commitment is readily apparent in exemplary teaching in the classroom. In addition, a cash award is provided for educational opportunities and life experiences that will enrich the recipient's career.

C. Administrative appointments

The college made the following administrative appointments:

1. Joy DeBoer Anema, M.S.W., Associate Registrar for Academic Advising, continuing appointment
2. Jane E. Hendriksma, M.A., Dean of Residence Life, continuing appointment
3. Cynthia J. Kok, Ph.D., Counselor, Broene Center (75%) and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology (25%), two years
4. Thomas L. Steenwyk, M.A., Registrar, two years

5. Randall L. Wolthuis, Ph.D., Director, Broene Center, two years
6. Lavonne M. Zwart, Psy.D., Counselor, Broene Center (75%) and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology (25%), two years

IV. Finance

The board approved the 2002-2003 budget of approximately \$70.5 million. Tuition was set at \$15,750 and room and board at \$5,485. This represents a 5.9 percent increase in both tuition and room and board over 2001-2002.

V. Recommendation

That synod ratify the following reappointments with tenure (*italics indicate promotion to that rank*):

- A. Randall J. Buursma, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences and Student Academic Services
- B. Mark T. Gustafson, Ph.D., *Professor* of Classical Languages
- C. Susan S. Hasseler, Ph.D., Professor of Education
- D. Clarence W. Joldersma, Ph.D., *Professor* of Education
- E. Robert J. Keeley, Ph.D., Professor of Education
- F. Douglas L. Koopman, Ph.D., *Professor* of Political Science
- G. W. Harry Plantinga, Ph.D., *Professor* of Computer Science
- H. Otto H. Selles, D.de l'U, *Professor* of French
- I. Frans A. van Liere, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of History (reduced load)
- J. Katherine E. van Liere, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of History (reduced load)
- K. John D. Witvliet, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Music

Calvin College Board of Trustees
Edward Blankspoor, secretary

The seminary board of trustees presents this report to Synod 2002 with gratitude to God for his provision this past year. This past year has been marked by significant changes in the leadership of the seminary, significant financial challenges, and a major building program. Through all these changes the seminary has experienced God's faithfulness and looks toward the future with great hope and anticipation.

I. Board of trustees

The board met in plenary session in May 2001 and January 2002. The executive committee met in September and November 2001 and in January 2002. The board officers are Rev. Norman Meyer, chair; Mr. Mark Muller, vice-chair; Mr. Sidney Jansma, Jr., secretary.

The board is in the process of implementing a committee system that is comprised of three standing committees: Personnel and Program Committee, Officers Committee, and Development and Finance Committee.

The first meeting of the board of trustees where Dr. Plantinga was serving as president of the Seminary was held January 31 – February 2, 2002. Dr. James A. De Jong was honored as the outgoing seminary president at a banquet January 31, 2002. This board meeting included a board faculty retreat in which matters of seminary direction as well as board faculty relationship were discussed.

Openings on the seminary board will be filled by regional elections and reported to synod for ratification in our supplementary report. The board recommends that the following seminary trustees and alternates who have completed one term of service and are eligible for reappointment be approved:

Mr. Will Byker (trustee) (alternate position open)	Region 10
Mr. Willem Hultink (trustee) Mr. Jack De Waard (alternate)	Region 4
Rev. Ricardo Orellana (trustee) (alternate position open)	Region 12
Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis (trustee) Rev. Philip F. Reinders (alternate)	Region 2

II. Administration

Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. began his work at the seminary in August 2001 and officially became president January 1, 2002. Dr. Plantinga is served by Rev. Duane Kelderman as vice president for administration and Dr. Henry De Moor as vice president for academic affairs. Dr. Ronald Feenstra serves as the director of the Ph.D. program; Rev. Don Byker as the director of field education; Mr. Philip Vanden Berge as chief financial officer; Rev. Richard Sytsma as dean of students, director of alumni relations, and international student advisor; and Mr. David De Boer as director of recruitment and financial aid.

III. Faculty

The seminary's faculty continues to serve the church in numerous ways. Although teaching and preparing students for various forms of ministry continues to lie at the heart of their work, members of the faculty also provide education and counsel to many local congregations and broader assemblies, preach regularly, publish scholarly books and articles, attend significant conferences, and in various ways seek to stay attuned to developments in ministries in the Christian Reformed Church and the church of Christ worldwide. We are grateful to God for each and every one of these persons who contribute so much to the health and welfare of our denomination.

This year the board conducted two very successful interviews with professors Lyle D. Bierma and Michael J. Williams since both were eligible for reappointment with tenure. The reappointments are now presented to synod for ratification:

Lyle D. Bierma, Professor of Systematic Theology, with tenure;
Michael J. Williams, Associate Professor of Old Testament, with tenure.

The board also acted to reappoint two administrators with faculty status and presents their reappointments to synod for ratification:

Donald E. Byker, Director of Field Education for two years, 2002-2004;
Lugene L. Schemper, Assistant Library Director, Seminary-Related Matters and Theological Librarian for two years, 2002-2004.

In addition, the board reports that in view of his reappointment as director of the Hekman Library, it, as is customary, renewed the seminary faculty status of Mr. Glenn A. Remelts.

The board approved a number of part-time teaching arrangements for the 2002-2003 academic year after noting that in view of financial restraints these are being kept to an absolute minimum.

The board reports for information that the following leaves have been granted:

Lyle D. Bierma, sabbatical leave for the spring quarter and summer of the 2002-2003 academic year;
Carl J. Bosma, sabbatical leave for the spring quarter and summer of the 2002-2003 academic year;
Calvin P. Van Reken, sabbatical leave for the winter quarter of the 2002-2003 academic year.

The seminary community was enriched during the fall and winter quarters of the 2001-2002 academic year by the presence and services of Mr. Calvin T. Hofland, missionary to Guinea, while he awaited his return to West Africa. The generous "gift" of those services by Christian Reformed World Missions made it possible to experiment with a missionary-in-residence program that may eventually be formalized as a more permanent feature of seminary life. The board is grateful for his contributions and for CRWM's willingness to allow him to serve in this capacity.

Dr. David M. Rylaarsdam began serving as assistant professor of historical theology on August 1, 2001. He is not ordained to the ministry of the Word due to his choosing to enter into a Master of Arts and Ph.D. program, then into a teaching career. At the time of his appointment by the board of trustees and

Synod 2001, no plans for his ordination were presented or approved. It appears from the record that such plans were not presented because the judgment was made that Dr. Rylaarsdam met all the requirements for a declaration of candidacy and no further steps of personal preparation toward that goal needed to be taken. Dr. Rylaarsdam received a Master of Divinity degree from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1993. Since that time, he has served as an interim assistant pastor, a lay evangelist, and a guest preacher in numerous churches. In order to accommodate further experiences in official proclamation of the Word, the Executive Committee of the board of trustees acted on October 4, 2001 to grant him licensure to exhort until September 30, 2002. The time has now come formally to initiate a process for Dr. Rylaarsdam's ordination. Accordingly, the board is presenting, with grounds, a recommendation to Synod 2002 to declare Dr. David M. Rylaarsdam, appointee to the seminary faculty in 2001, eligible for call as a minister of the Word.

IV. Curriculum and programs

Providing a classical theological education for contemporary Christian ministry in a global context necessitates an annual review of courses offered at Calvin Seminary. Again this year the faculty has identified courses no longer to be offered and therefore to be dropped from the catalog, it has reviewed existing courses and, in some cases, suggested changes in titles and descriptions. It has also identified new needs to be addressed by offering new courses. The board approved thirteen new courses and seven revisions in course titles and descriptions.

Two minor changes in program requirements were approved. These involved adjustments in the New Testament department to aim advanced reading courses more directly to students in different programs as well as course requirement changes made as a result of having earlier reduced the number of core course hours in the historical theology department.

Distance learning has become a reality at Calvin Seminary. After a somewhat dysfunctional beginning in September, the Master of Arts in Missions Program (New Church Development track) is increasingly and quite successfully incorporating distance learning courses using the original Blackboard server acquired from Calvin College. Students admitted to the M.A. program register at the seminary, and our professors become the professors of record. For those who do not qualify for admission at the masters level, the seminary has reached a consortium agreement with Reformed Bible College whereby students register at that baccalaureate-level institution and have a professor of record there while making use of our courses. It is our intention to keep building upon this foundation every quarter until the entire program (except for mandatory in-residence components) can be offered at a distance. In addition, we hope soon to seek approval from the Association of Theological Schools to depart from standards that require a more significant in-residence component based on our unique situation as a denominational seminary needing to respond positively to denominational needs. It should be noted that distance learning is currently limited to the M.A. in Missions Program (New Church Development track). Depending on how successful we can become, we may eventually be able to incorporate elements of distance learning into other programs.

In October of 2001, the faculty approved a “Statement of Ministry Skills and Corresponding Field Education Requirements.” This marked the completion of a two-year effort to make requirements of field education more explicit and more obviously related to the whole spectrum of ministry skills we may reasonably expect students to develop. The document will serve the faculty by more clearly focusing skill development portions of course offerings. It will serve the director of field education and the many supervisors of internships and summer assignments by lending clarity to the training process. It will also serve the students by clearing up any confusion in expectations and providing them with a current list of expected ministry skills. The board took note of the document and of the faculty’s willingness to consider incorporating any suggested revisions that may come its way in the future.

V. Students

The composition of the seminary’s student body indicates a growing national and ethnic diversity. The following statistics suggest the impact our school is having beyond the Christian Reformed Church.

Christian Reformed students: 178

Non-Christian Reformed students: 96 (46 denominations)

International (does not include Canadian students): 54 (19 countries)

Programs:

M.Div.: 126

M.A.: 33

M.T.S.: 27

Th.M.: 37

Ph.D.: 33

Unclassified: 18

Male students: 212

Female students: 62

VI. General matters

The seminary’s building program will be nearing completion as the synod of 2002 convenes. Additional space will include a student center that will include offices for those engaged in student services and for distance learning, an expanded computer laboratory, two elevators, four administrative offices, and a board-faculty conference room. Funds for this 4.6 million dollar building program have been totally pledged and are coming in on schedule.

The seminary faces acute financial challenges in its general operating budget. These financial challenges are due to a combination of increased operational costs, less than anticipated gift revenue, and less than anticipated ministry shares. The seminary is grateful for the commitment of synod and of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to the seminary in this challenging time.

The “Facing Your Future” program for high school juniors and seniors again generated wide interest in the spring of 2001. One hundred twenty-four nominations were received from local leaders, and thirty-five students participated in the month-long program last summer. The funding provided by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. will cover the costs of the program for the coming summer. Additional grants from other sources will enable the semi-

4. Precedent exists in the case of other regular faculty appointments of non-ordained persons (Professors Bierma, Cooper, Feenstra, and Williams).

F. That offerings for general operations and for the International Student Subsidy Fund and Facing Your Future program be approved.

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees
Sidney Jansma, Jr., secretary

I. Introduction

The ministry of publishing is becoming an ever-greater challenge as we work in a contemporary world that reflects trends such as the following:

- increasing anti-intellectualism
- decreasing loyalty to institutions generally, including denominations
- increasing expectations of “choices” in all areas of life
- increasingly diverse denomination
- explosion of new technology
- increasing needs for Christian literature throughout the world

As a result of trends such as those identified above, CRC Publications has been facing an increasingly difficult financial situation. Sales for a variety of our product lines are down, while costs continue to increase. These trends have led to extensive discussions on the part of the CRC Publications Board and staff regarding the role of a denominational publisher for a small denomination such as the CRC. The current scope of the denomination’s publishing program will probably need to change as we react to these developments.

The mission of CRC Publications, as adopted by the CRC Publications Board in 1998, is:

To provide resources that help followers of Jesus Christ to understand, experience, and express the good news of God’s kingdom.

The core values that we have identified for our work are the following:

- Our resources are biblical, relevant, high quality, and stewardly.
- Our resources will faithfully reflect the worldview and interpretation of Scripture that are articulated in the Reformed confessions and expressed in the Contemporary Testimony.
- We will treat each other and those we serve with love and respect.
- Our organizational structure, working environment, and resources will consistently reflect an anti-racist perspective.

These statements undergird our work as we attempt to develop and distribute resources that serve the Christian Reformed Church and the church of Jesus Christ worldwide.

The following is a summary of the work, governance, and administrative duties of our ministry during the past year and our future plans as we work to achieve this mission. We look to synod for suggestions that may help us provide better service to CRC churches so that they can enhance their ministries.

II. Board organization, membership, and governance and other administrative matters**A. Organization**

A board of fifty (50) delegates, one nominated by each of the forty-seven (47) classes and three (3) at-large delegates elected by synod governs CRC Publications. The board ordinarily meets annually in February.

Between board meetings, an eighteen (18) member executive committee (elected annually by the board) normally meets three (3) times to supervise the ongoing work of the agency. Each member of the executive committee serves

on one of four (4) subcommittees: administrative, Faith Alive, periodicals, or World Literature Ministries.

B. Officers

The officers of the CRC Publications Board through June 2002 are as follows: Mr. Fred Herfst, president; Ms. Winnie Klop, vice president; Ms. Carol Veldman Rudie, secretary; and Mr. Dennis Bergsma, treasurer.

C. At-large members

The second term of one of our at-large board members, Mr. Dennis Bergsma, will be completed on June 30, 2002. As required by synodical guidelines, we are submitting two nominees for this position, which is designated for someone with finance expertise. The CRC Publications Board nominates Mr. Eric Van Namen and Mr. Tom Vryhof for a three-year term as at-large member with finance expertise.

Mr. Eric Van Namen is currently program finance manager of Glass Corner Greenhouses. He is a 1996 graduate of Hope College with a bachelor's degree in accounting; formerly a certified public accountant for Deloitte & Touche LLP, his position was that of a lead senior auditor for CRCNA. He is a member of Fairway CRC, where he currently serves on the Finance and Stewardship Committees. He and his wife, Kimberly, are the parents of two children.

Mr. Tom Vryhof is currently accounting manager of Monarch Hydraulics. He earned an associates degree in accounting from Davenport College in 1977. He later returned to Davenport College in 1985 where he earned a bachelor's degree in business and administration. He is a member of Westview CRC, where he presently serves as elder and assistant clerk, and previously as deacon. He and his wife, Mary Jo, are the parents of two teenage children.

The first terms of two of our other at-large members are also ending this year. The CRC Publications Board asks synod to appoint the following two people to a second term as an at-large member with the expertise needed as noted:

Mr. Richard Bandstra – legal

Mr. Antonio Romero – business

D. Size of CRC Publications Board

At its September meeting the CRC Publications executive committee decided to appoint a task force with the following mandate:

Develop pertinent information pertaining to the advantages and disadvantages of a fifty-member board and develop a proposal for consideration by the Executive Committee and Board.

A task force was appointed and it developed a proposal that the CRC Publications Board become a regionally based smaller board of sixteen (16) delegates from the twelve (12) regions designated by the Board of Trustees, and an additional four (4) members at large. The executive committee of our board recommended approval of this proposal to the full board.

After a lengthy discussion, the board defeated this proposal at its annual meeting.

E. Long-range planning

The CRC Publications Board discussed the annual edition of CRC Publications' long-range plan, developed by staff. The board offered sugges-

tions to the staff in the various areas of CRC Publications' ministry. The plan incorporates, where appropriate, strategies necessary to implement the denominational long-range plan.

F. Relationship with the denominational structure and denominational plan

CRC Publications has been a strong supporter of the Denominational Ministries Plan. Staff members from our agency have been heavily involved in the various cross-agency groups that have been appointed to carry out the plan.

Perhaps more importantly, as staff does its planning for new resources, it does so with careful attention to the strategic priorities and goals incorporated in the Denominational Ministries Plan.

In addition to this work directly associated with the denominational plan, CRC Publications works closely with other CRC agencies and related organizations to assist them in their ministries. Examples of this include the following:

- The Faith Alive Department provides all the CRC-developed English publishing resources needed by Home Missions to carry out its ministry. During the past year, a policy statement was adopted whereby we do the same for all the other CRC agencies.
- The World Literature Ministries area of CRC Publications works closely with the mission agencies to provide publishing support for their foreign-language literature needs. Most of this work is focused on Spanish language resources.
- *The Banner* regularly publishes information about the ministries of the various CRC agencies and institutions.

G. Relationships with other organizations

During the past few years, CRC Publications has placed an increased emphasis on developing relationships with other Christian organizations in an effort to increase the impact of our ministry and to enable us to broaden the range of resources we offer. Many of these relationships have proven to be very helpful. Some of the more significant relationships are as follows:

- Youth Unlimited – We meet regularly with the staff of Youth Unlimited to discuss how we might better cooperate in ministry. We are now the exclusive distributor of their materials. We also copublish a variety of resources with Youth Unlimited.
- GEMS – We meet regularly with GEMS staff to discuss possible cooperative efforts. Each year our two organizations provide the lead in putting on a Children's Ministry Conference in West Michigan.
- Reformed Church in America – The LiFE curriculum was developed cooperatively with the RCA. They also provide staff input into the new curriculum that we are developing. We have an exclusive arrangement with the RCA whereby it carries and promotes virtually all our resources to RCA churches.
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church – Our entire catalog, along with an endorsement letter from the stated clerk of the denomination, as well as numerous other promotional materials, are sent to the churches of this denomination.
- Christian Schools International – We meet regularly with staff members from this organization to discuss shared resources, plans, and other pertinent issues.

H. Proposal to synod regarding classical responsibilities for ministry to youth

Partially as a result of our ongoing discussions with Youth Unlimited, CRC Publications staff persons were invited to several meetings called by representatives of the synodical Youth Ministries Committee to refine a document that deals with the responsibilities of the classis to provide greater assistance for the youth ministry work of our churches.

The board reviewed this document and agrees that the proposals in it would be of benefit to the churches and to the publications ministry of the denomination. Therefore the CRC Publications Board recommends adoption by synod of the recommendations of the proposal to synod by the Youth Ministries Committee. This proposal can be found in the report of that committee.

I. Use of CRC Publications resources by CRC churches

Most CRC churches make extensive use of the many resources offered by CRC Publications. In fact, about 90 percent of CRC churches are on our customer list. Furthermore, in response to a survey by the Protestant Church-Owned Publishers Association several years ago, 94 percent of the CRC church leaders responding to the survey agreed with the statement that “the resources from my denomination have improved in recent years,” the highest percentage of all the twenty-nine denominations surveyed.

However, there are several trends that do provide cause for some concern. For example,

- The percentage of CRC churches that use our children’s curriculum has declined in recent years.
- Many churches seem to make decisions about resources without thinking about whether they are written from a Reformed perspective.
- Many churches are hiring staff for children and youth ministry positions who have little or no background or appreciation for a Reformed view, for example, of interpreting Scripture.
- Many pastors, who might be more appreciative of this issue, have delegated to their staff or appropriate committees the selection of resources for use in their church school.

In light of these trends, last year’s synod passed the following motion:

Synod urges the churches to use the resources of CRC Publications for their ministries.

Grounds:

- a. These resources have been developed for and specifically targeted to Christian Reformed Churches using the unique capabilities of Reformed authors and editors.
- b. It is especially important that the uniqueness of the Reformed interpretation of Scripture be integrated into the curriculum offered to the children and youth of our churches.

The board recommends that synod remind the churches of this action of last year’s synod.

J. Recycling

At its 1990 meeting, the CRC Publications Board adopted a report of the task force on CRC Publications and the environment. That report contained several goals regarding CRC Publications’ use of recycled paper. About 98

percent of CRC Publications' materials were printed on recycled paper during the past year.

K. *Antiracism*

CRC Publications has been an active participant in the effort of the Ministries Policy Council to respond to synod's directive to initiate a significant response to the issue of racism in the CRC. Several years ago the CRC Publications Board approved an extensive antiracism plan that was developed by staff. That plan is being implemented by staff.

During the past year, the CRC Publications Board president appointed a board task force to develop a plan identifying how the board could become an antiracist board. The report of that task force was approved by the board at its February meeting. The vision approved by the board is as follows:

The CRC Publications Board covenants to become an antiracist community by respecting and valuing cultural diversity as God-given assets of the human family. The report approved by the board contained a number of strategies for helping the board achieve this vision.

L. *Salary disclosure*

CRC Publications, in accord with the action taken by synod, submits the following annual compensation data:

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
18	1	3rd
17	2	2nd
15	1	2nd

III. CRC Publications' ministry

A. *Periodicals Department*

1. *The Banner*

The synodically adopted mandate for *The Banner* is to "inform readers about what is happening in the CRC, as well as in the church at large, to provide articles that edify and encourage Christian living, and to stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and to the culture of which Christians and the CRC are a part."

This has been a paradoxical year for *The Banner*. On the one hand, the number of individual comments about the high quality of *The Banner* that the staff and board receives has never been higher. On the other hand, the number of subscriptions has declined precipitously during recent months—from almost 29,000 a year ago to about 25,500 currently. These two developments have been truly puzzling to the board and to staff as well as discouraging. In response to this subscription decline, *Banner* editor, Rev. John Suk personally called over one hundred CRC pastors asking them to participate in a special in-church promotion of *The Banner*. The results of this initiative, however, were far less than anticipated, even though all but one of the pastors enthusiastically agreed to support the promotion.

At its annual meeting, the CRC Publications Board reviewed these developments and discussed some options for how to respond. After

considerable discussion, the board agreed that *The Banner* should become a monthly magazine. The key rationale for this decision is as follows:

- a. Financial: Becoming a monthly magazine will produce sufficient cost savings so that *The Banner* can move to a solid financial basis for some time to come.
- b. Ministry: *The Banner's* ministry of informing, teaching, and critiquing will not be significantly affected by less frequent publication. The space given to feature articles and columns will decline only marginally because each issue will be larger.
- c. Culture: Whether one likes it or not, the truth is that within the church the demand for a magazine like *The Banner* has declined. The reasons for this are worth discussing, but the board believes that little can be done to change this reality.

Implementation of this decision will start in July 2002.

The board also noted that moving to a monthly *Banner* probably means a reduction of staffing for *The Banner*. It approved a motion that consideration be given to making the position of *Banner* editor a half-time position.

Some of the highlights of the last year for *The Banner* include the following:

- a. *The Banner* went through another minor “revamp” starting in January of 2002. New columnists and new contributing editors (Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Ms. Carol Rudie, Ms. Sylvia Keesmaat, Ms. Jennifer Parker, and Rev. Bruce T. Ballast) were added, a serialized novel was started, and the Worldwide News section was expanded.
- b. The October 8 issue of *The Banner* was quickly assembled but was a very appreciated issue that dealt with the September 11 terrorist attacks. The editorial “A Time to Weep,” the article by Dr. Clayton Libolt entitled “Where Was God?” and the article by Dr. Claudia Beversluis entitled “Talking to Our Children; Talking to Ourselves” were all appreciated by many. These articles were made available on the Internet several days after the attacks and were downloaded by many.
- c. Several articles that staff believes were particularly insightful include the following:
 - Nick Wolterstorff’s three articles on worship
 - Brian Walsh’s article “Subversive Preaching in a Postmodern World”
 - Irene Oudyk-Suk’s article entitled, “Not Tonight Dear”
 - Clay Libolt’s series on apologetics
 - Shiao Chong’s “Confessions of an Ex-Baptist”
 - The article “Stem Cell Research” by Robert Evans and Vincent Ling
 - The two editorials: “Left Behind Best Left That Way,” and “Let’s Talk About Science Friction”

The Banner news section continues to be a favorite of many readers. Most of the content for this section comes from a number of “stringers” around North America who have a talent for sniffing out and writing about newsworthy items from our churches. News editor Ms. Jennifer

Parker contributed several more-lengthy stories based on visits to Sierra Leone, Africa, and Rehoboth, New Mexico.

Other news stories of note include coverage of the controversy between members of the Muslim and Christian communities in Palos Heights, Illinois; reports on CRC community members responding to the September 11 attacks; and coverage of the Youth Unlimited convention.

Certainly the most controversial news story of the past year was Ms. Karen De Vries' feature news article on pastor abuse. Response to this article was quite balanced overall, although a number of people wrote in strongly protesting the opening story of the article. The board approved a motion to commend the *Banner* editor for the way he handled this matter.

2. Voice of the Reformed

For the past several years synod has helped fund the *Voice of the Reformed*, a monthly periodical published by the Korean CRC community through a ministry-share allocation to CRC Publications. The purpose of this publication is to provide a bridge between the Anglo and Korean CRC communities. Accordingly, the content of the magazine often includes translations of articles and news stories from *The Banner*.

During the past year a new editor, Rev. Bom-Su Kim, was chosen by the Korean Council. The council believes that Rev. Kim will continue the improvement of this magazine that has been going on for the past several years. Three thousand copies of this magazine are distributed to Korean CRC members each month.

B. Faith Alive Department

The new name for what used to be called the Education, Worship, and Evangelism Department is derived from the new brand name for all the resources of that department, Faith Alive Christian Resources. This name has been very favorably received by our churches.

With some exceptions, sales of resources from this department have continued the decline that has been the case for several years now. This is particularly true for core curriculum sales. More information regarding rationale for this development and the impact on CRC Publications' financial situation will be discussed under the Finance section of this report. One of the results of this trend that should be noted here, however, is that the breadth of resources offered by this department probably needs to be reduced. We have found that a publisher serving a denomination the size of the CRC cannot financially support the wide range of resources that we have been publishing in the past.

During the past year, this department focused some of its attention on implementing decisions made a year ago as a result of the sales downturn experienced last year. The most significant part of that work was the wrap-up of the Church Education Consultant Office and its network of Church Education Consultants.

1. Education Office

Developing and producing church-school curriculum materials (for Sunday school, catechism classes, youth groups, adult small groups, and so on) continues to be the major activity of this department.

a. For younger children

This office has been most impacted by the sales decline mentioned earlier. Currently, about seven hundred (700) CRC churches use either our LiFE children's curriculum (five hundred fifty [550]) or our Bible Way curriculum (one hundred fifty [150]). This is down from eight hundred seventy (870) CRC churches that used one of these curricula seven years ago. In addition, about eight-hundred fifty (850) churches from other denominations use these curricula (compared to 1350 seven years ago). See the Finance section of this report for further discussion of this matter.

Two years ago, the CRC Publications Board reviewed these trends and agreed that, if we were going to continue to serve the CRC churches with curriculum, a new curriculum should be developed. Accordingly, staff did extensive research, both formal and informal, of the churches' needs in the area of children's curriculum, and, based on the results of that research, developed a plan for a new children's curriculum. The ministry share approved by synod last year included an increase for CRC Publications that provided some funds for development of this curriculum.

During the past year, most of the editorial work of the Education Office of the Faith Alive Department has been devoted to the development of this new curriculum, tentatively called Walk With Me. A field-test was done of the new curriculum in the fall of 2001; results of the field-test are being used to enhance the usability of the curriculum. This curriculum is a massive project that will cost over \$2,000,000 for development alone. The curriculum will be for children from age 4 through the eighth grade. It is scheduled to be published in 2004.

Other products for children's ministry published by this office during the past year include the following:

- *Sunday School That Really Works* – a resource for Sunday school superintendents
- *Including Kids with Disabilities* – a resource for teachers that suggests how to include children with disabilities in Sunday school classes

b. For youth

The publishing work for this age group has been focused on an "overhaul" of several resources for high school students. For example,

- a total rewrite of our most important course for senior high students on the Heidelberg Catechism; a two-year course called *Questions Worth Asking* is being completed this year. The revised course is much more interactive than the former course called *Landmarks*. The first year was released last fall and is much appreciated by most churches that use it.
- A revision of the long-standing ethics course, called *Decisions* will be completed by fall. This course will be called *No Easy Answers: Making Good Decisions in an Anything-Goes World*.
- The long-standing Reasons course is also being revised. *Which Way To God* (a course on world religions) was released several years ago; *What's Up with the Church Down the Street* (a course on other Christian

denominations) will be released by fall. A course on the cults is being planned.

One other notable product for youth published during the past year is *Every Bit of Who I Am* – a devotional book based on the Heidelberg Catechism (copublished with Baker Book House).

c. For adults

Adult Bible studies on various levels of difficulty, issues studies, and studies on spirituality have long been a mainstay of our publishing efforts for adults. Several years ago, we modified the format of these studies to make them usable for small-group studies.

Unfortunately, there are several adult series that we will not be able to publish in the future because they do not cover costs.

Some of the more significant resources published during the past year, or to be published soon, include the following:

- *The Joy of Generosity: Stewardship Resources for Your Church*
- *Our Only Comfort: A Comprehensive Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* by Fred Klooster
- *Living Well; Dying Well: A Study of Euthanasia and End of Life Issues*, a resource requested by synod based on a synodical study.
- *Reformed: What It Means; Why It Matters*
- Several courses in the Word Alive Bible study series

d. For people with mental impairments

The Friendship Ministries board, an independent ministry, continues to raise funds for supporting development and marketing of resources for people with mental impairments. Significant developments during the past year are the following:

- We are now totally revising the basic three-year Friendship curriculum. The revised curriculum will be published in 2003.
- We are also translating this curriculum into Spanish. The Spanish edition will be called *Amistad*.

e. For people with visual impairments

Working with a ministry in Minneapolis, we continue to expand the list of resources available in Braille. A small ministry share is allocated for this work.

2. Evangelism Office

Our publishing partnership with Home Missions continues to provide the basis for most of the publishing we do in this area. CRC Publications and Home Missions staff meet regularly to chart our course together regarding resources that Home Missions needs to accomplish its strategies for serving the churches.

Much of the publishing work has been focused on developing the Bible studies needed to support the Coffee Break and Men's Life programs. In addition, some of the significant products released during the past year as a result of this cooperation are the following:

- *God's Message to You: A Six-Session Guide to the World's Greatest Book*
- *The Praying Church Idea Book*
- *Alpha from a Reformed Perspective*
- *Hard Questions People Ask about the Christian Faith*

3. Worship Office

The significant work of this office includes the following:

a. *Reformed Worship*

This quarterly periodical continues to be the principle resource published by this office. If subscriptions are a guide, it is increasingly appreciated by the churches. Over five thousand names are now on our subscription list, many of them from denominations other than the CRC.

b. *Sing! A New Creation*

This project was a copublishing effort with the Reformed Church in America and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. It was published last August. So far, sales are above projections. A leader's guide will be out by the time synod meets.

c. Sourcebook for Christian Worship

If budget constraints are not too severe, we plan to proceed with development of this product during the next year or so.

d. COLAM 2001

The Worship Office works closely with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in putting on this conference. The 2001 event was held in Wheaton, Illinois.

As closer cooperation with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship continues to develop, plans are being developed at the time of this writing for our worship editor, Emily Brink, to begin working for the Institute. She would continue to work part-time for CRC Publications to assist in our publishing work.

C. *World Literature Ministries*

1. Introduction and overview

World Literature Ministries supports the efforts of the various CRC agencies in publishing and distributing biblical Christian literature in a variety of languages. The literature is intended to introduce its readers to, and nurture them in, a Reformed view of faith and life.

With the enormous growth in population among Hispanics and other ethnic groups that the United States is experiencing, many publishers across the country have to strategize again their approach to publishing and marketing. Fortunately, World Literature Ministries has a head start, especially in the Spanish language. As the largest Reformed publisher of Spanish materials, we have many years' experience in publishing resources targeted especially for Hispanic Christian leaders in Spanish speaking communities around the world.

During the past few years, we have also initiated some publishing work in other languages as needs are perceived by the other agencies.

This department is heavily involved in collaborative planning with other agencies—especially the mission agencies. Much of this work also comes out of the implementation of the Denominational Ministries Plan.

2. The publishing work

a. Spanish literature

The Spanish publishing work, under the brand name *Libros Desafío* is, by far, the most significant publishing work of this department. Most of the resources are intended as theological or leadership resources throughout Latin America and North America.

Decisions about the resources that are to be published are made in conjunction with the inter-agency Spanish Literature Management Team. During the past year, a restructure of the CRC mission activity in Latin America, under the umbrella of the Latin American Administrative Council will also impact the publishing work of *Libros Desafío*.

Significant works recently completed or in process include the following:

- *Basic Ideas of Calvinism* by H. Henry Meeter
- *Manual of Christian Doctrine* by Louis Berkhof
- *Guiding God's People in a Changing World: A Handbook for Elders* by Louis Tamminga
- *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Little Kittel)* by Geoffrey W. Bromelly
- *Preventing Child Abuse* by Beth Swagman
- *New Testament Commentary: 2 Corinthians and Revelation* by Simon Kistemaker

b. Russian literature

Resources recently released or in process in Russian include the following:

- *Lectures on Calvinism* by Abraham Kuyper
- *The Bible and Islam* by Bassam Madany
- *Our World Belongs to God*

c. Korean literature

For a number of years, the primary work in Korean consisted of translations of Coffee Break materials. During the past year, we discovered that the materials needed significant revision if they were to continue to serve the Korean churches. Also, in cooperation with the Korean Council (made up of all Korean pastors) and Rev. Tong Park, the Home Missions Korean Multi-Cultural Coordinator, we began publishing a series of books on CRC church polity, Reformed doctrines, and so forth for Korean church leaders.

As we began to carry out this work, and as we examined the needed future work for church leaders, we, along with the Korean Council, came to the conclusion that, rather than CRC Publications building its staff to carry out this work, a better approach would be for the Korean Council to work with a local Christian publisher to respond to publishing needs in Korean. Accordingly, an agreement was drawn up whereby CRC Publications will grant the Korean Publications Team the rights to publish any and all CRC Publications materials in the Korean language.

d. Materials in other languages

Resources in other languages that have been published or are in process include the following;

- *The Heidelberg Catechism* (Vietnamese)
- *The Heidelberg Catechism* (Khmer/Cambodian)
- *Members of His Body* by Gary Teja (Laotian)
- *Leading Little Ones to God* by Marian Schoolland (Haitian/Creole)

D. Marketing Department

The functions performed by the Marketing Department include customer service, promotion, public relations and communications, sales of *Banner* ads and subscriptions, market research and analysis, and sales forecasting. The executive director has been serving as marketing director for the past several years.

As can be seen from the chart below, the CRC’s publishing ministry is much broader than our own denomination; more than half of CRC Publications’ accounts and sales for our English-language products are to non-CRC churches. This fact, we believe, speaks highly of the quality of the products produced by the Christian Reformed Church.

Denomination	Active Customers	%	Sales	%
CRC	870	18	\$1,316,000	44
Other churches	3007	64	\$1,362,000	45
Bookstores/schools/ distributors	87	18	\$340,000	11
TOTAL	4664	100	\$3,018,000	100

The Marketing Department uses a variety of strategies to promote the products of the Faith Alive Department to the churches. The chief vehicle is our annual catalog. Other important methods include several minicatalogs (youth, small group), flyers, displays at conferences, magazine ads, and “consultative selling.” Our website (FaithAliveResources.org) is getting an increasing share of our orders.

Most of the *Libros Desafio* products are sold through distributors throughout Latin America. Since they require a 60 percent discount and since most of the purchasers of these materials are pastors on low incomes, it is very difficult for these products to cover costs.

The Banner has traditionally been promoted through direct mail to nonsubscribers. However, this strategy seems to be increasingly ineffective. During recent years other strategies have been tried (including telemarketing, direct appeals to churches, and so forth) with limited long-term success.

E. Personnel matters

The CRC Publications staff team is made up of about thirty-five employees. Our staff is organized into five departments and an administrative office.

The staff council is a management group made up of the executive director, Mr. Gary Mulder, and the department heads—Dr. John Suk, Periodicals Department (*The Banner*); Rev. Robert De Moor, Faith Alive Department; Ms. Darlene Serrano, World Literature Department; Mr. Michael Dykema, Financial Services; and Ms. Ann Koning, Customer Service.

F. Finances

The CRC Publications Board remains firmly committed to the goal that CRC Publications' ministry should be, as nearly as possible, financially self-supporting. However, it recognizes that there may always be projects undertaken (either because our board believes they are necessary or because synod requests them) that cannot be financially self-supporting. As mentioned earlier, this situation is particularly true for our World Literature Ministries Department and for the new children's curriculum that we are developing.

As mentioned several times throughout this report, our financial condition continues to be of great concern to the board and to staff. Perhaps a brief review of some trends that have led to our current situation might be instructive.

For the past few years, CRC Publications has experienced a time of flat or declining sales—especially in the Faith Alive Department. Among the reasons for the decline in that department are the following:

- The number of children in the CRC, and other denominations that we serve, has declined rather dramatically in recent years. According to the baptism records in the *Yearbook*, the number of five-year-olds in the CRC has declined by over one-third in the past ten years. This is due to a declining birth rate as well as the fact that a number of CRC churches left the denomination in recent years.
- While the loyalty to our denomination remains high compared to other denominations, the denominational loyalty of our local church leaders continues to show some decline. Thus, churches are less concerned about whether the resources they use for their church's ministries are based on the Reformed perspective.
- The emphasis on church education on the part of our churches (and parents within the churches) has declined in recent years. Accordingly, fewer children who are of Sunday school age attend classes consistently.
- Partially due to the demands it places on teachers, a number of churches have dropped our LiFE curriculum (the financial base of the Faith Alive Department) and have adopted an easier-to-use curriculum.
- A number of new children's curricula have been released in recent years that directly compete with our curricula.
- A number of years ago, in an attempt to be responsive to changing needs within an increasingly diverse denomination, we greatly increased the number of our product lines. The result is that we began competing with ourselves, and we are finding that we cannot sustain all these new product lines.
- The traditionally low level of interest in CRC churches for adult education is declining even further.
- Although we have spent a great deal of money on marketing the past few years, we have not been able to arrest this trend.

As mentioned earlier in this report, this past year we also faced an increasing decline in *Banner* subscriptions. This is due to some factors similar to above (e.g., decreasing denominational loyalty) in addition to some other factors (e.g., postmodern trend toward questioning authority, institutions, difficult reading, and increasing diversity in the CRC).

All this is happening at a time when CRC Publications needs to be increasing our cash position to pay for a new curriculum that we are developing.

These problems became even clearer when we completed the budgeting process for next fiscal year.

Among our responses to these developments during the past few years have been the following:

1. Staff has been identifying product lines that do not recover full costs. We no longer add to these product lines. During the past few years, we have stopped publishing in almost twenty series from devotionals for all ages, to adult intensive Bible studies, to adult issues studies.
2. Restructure and downsize our staff. A number of positions have been eliminated during the past two years.
3. Eliminate our Church Education Consultant Program.
4. Ask for supplementary funding (via ministry share) from our churches for our new curriculum.
5. Establish a new half-time position of Church Relations Associate to try to increase sales to our large church customers.
6. Redouble our research efforts to make sure that we produce resources that meet needs.

Even with these changes, as we do our cash projections for the longer term, it becomes very clear that our current financial scenario is untenable.

The board discussed these developments at great length at its annual meeting. It became clear that, for our agency to be financially viable long-term, we need to focus our ministry on those resources that are most needed by the churches and that can cover all (fully loaded) costs.

The board approved a motion that the following areas be considered priority areas for continued publishing work if Faith Alive is to (minimally) fulfill its mandate:

- Sunday school curriculum for preschool through eighth grade
- Curriculum in church doctrine for teens
- Friendship curriculum for people with mental impairments
- Inductive Bible studies to support the Coffee Break program
- The *Reformed Worship* periodical
- Publishing capability for the denomination and other CRC agencies (for resources that fully recover costs)
- In addition to the above, we should continue to distribute resources from other publishers in the areas of church ministry not covered above

The board also concurred with the recommendation of the Ministries Administrative Council (made up of representatives from all the agencies) that, for the next few years, CRC Publications should receive an increased amount of ministry share to provide for the short-term cash flow needs while the new curriculum is being developed.

As of the time of this writing, staff is working out the long-term staffing and other administrative implications of this new direction for our ministry.

CRC Publications submits for synod information the audited financial statements for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2001, and budgets for the fiscal years 2002 and 2003. These reports have been submitted to the denomi-

national office for placement in the *Agenda for Synod 2000—Financial and Business Supplement*.

The CRC Publications Board formally requests synod to recommend Friendship Ministries (United States) and Friendship Series Charities (Canada) to the churches for financial support in 2003.

IV. Recommendations

A. The CRC Publications Board requests synod to grant the privilege of the floor to the following people when matters of CRC Publications are discussed: For the board: Mr. Fred Herfst, president; Ms. Winnie Klop, vice president; Mr. Gary Mulder, executive director. For *The Banner*: Dr. John Suk, editor-in-chief. For Education, Worship, and Evangelism: Rev. Robert De Moor, editor-in-chief. For World Literature Ministries: Ms. Darlene Serrano, director.

B. That synod elect either Mr. Eric Van Namen or Mr. Tom Vryhof to a three-year term as an at-large delegate to the CRC Publications Board with expertise in finance.

C. That synod elect Mr. Richard Bandstra and Mr. Antonio Romero to second terms as at-large delegates to the CRC Publications Board with expertise in legal and business respectively.

D. That synod remind the churches of its decision of last year that synod urge churches to use the resources of CRC Publications for their ministries.

Grounds:

1. These resources have been developed for and specifically targeted to Christian Reformed churches using the unique capabilities of Reformed authors and editors.
2. It is especially important that the uniqueness of the Reformed interpretation of Scripture be integrated into the curriculum offered to the children and youth of our churches.

E. That synod adopt the recommendations of the proposal to synod developed by the Youth Ministries Committee.

F. That synod recommend Friendship Ministries (United States) and Friendship Series Charities (Canada) to the churches for financial support in 2003.

CRC Publications
Gary Mulder, executive director

I. Introduction

A. Synod has mandated Christian Reformed Home Missions “to lead the church in its task of bringing the gospel to the people of Canada and the United States and drawing them into fellowship with Christ and his church.” The mandate is expressed in these three ministry activities:

- a. Encourage and assist churches and classes in their work of evangelism.
- b. Initiate, support, and guide new-church development in cooperation with local churches and classes.
- c. Initiate, support, and guide other evangelistic ministries (i.e., campus ministry and Christian-schools ministry in New Mexico) with local churches and classes.

(Home Missions Order, Art. 2, 1992, 1979)

B. Home Missions' transforming goals

*Gathering God's growing family –
loving and serving all our neighbors,
learning to follow Jesus together,
all for God's glory.*

Christian Reformed Home Missions, in partnership with congregations, classes, and others, serves the mission of God by way of these goals:

1. Prayer

Encourage Christian Reformed believers and congregations to pray persistently for the salvation of family members, friends, neighbors, and others; and for God's renewing grace in every area of life.

2. Missional established churches

Encourage and assist (support) established congregations and their leaders to:

- a. Witness for Jesus in every area of life,
- b. Disciple new believers and enfold them into God's church,
- c. Train and equip new leaders to help others follow Jesus, and
- d. Support a church planting movement and other missional ministries.

3. A church planting movement

Lead, encourage, and assist a denomination-wide church planting movement that starts and develops three hundred new congregations in this decade that:

- a. witness for Jesus in every area of life,
- b. disciple new believers and enfold them into God's church,
- c. train and equip new leaders to help others follow Jesus, and
- d. reproduce themselves by planting new churches.

4. Church-related missional ministries

Help initiate and support missional communities in educational institutions and other settings that:

- a. Witness for Jesus in every area of life,
- b. Disciple new believers to follow Jesus, and
- c. Mentor emerging leaders for God's church to serve Jesus everywhere.

5. Financial support

Develop financial partnerships among classes, congregations, members, and others to accomplish these mission goals.

C. *Core mission values*

The core mission values of Home Missions are anchored in the Word and works of God and are affirmed by our confessional statements. As Home Missions encourages God's people to gather God's growing family, these values capture our hearts and minds, and direct our passions and plans.

1. God's redeeming love for his world and its people inspires us to participate in his mission.
(*Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony* [CT], 19; John 3:16; Acts 7)
2. We dedicate ourselves to persistent prayer as essential to fulfilling God's mission to lost people.
(CT, 38; Acts 4:31; Col. 1:3-14)
3. Congregations and other missional communities are the primary agents of God's harvest in North America.
(CT, 37; 1 Peter 5:8-11; Matt.16:13-19)
4. Raising up missionary leaders from each generation is crucial for equipping God's people for God's work.
(CT, 6a, 36b; Eph. 4: 11-13)
5. We respond eagerly to the call of Word and Spirit, "Make disciples!"
(CT, 44; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)
6. Working for diversity, justice, and unity in Christ is critical to our witness in North America.
(CT, 43b; John 17:22-23; Rom. 15:7; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:15b)
7. When we step out in faith and witness, God provides abundant resources for his work.
(CT, 7; Ps. 24)

D. *Evangelizing progress in 2001 and denominational growth*

By God's grace, the Christian Reformed Church has grown through evangelism by 37,204 persons since the beginning of *Gathering God's Growing Family* in 1988. In the 2001 reporting period, 2,563 persons were added through evangelism (compared with 3,005 persons in 2000). In the decade of the 1990s, an average of 2,700 persons were brought in through evangelism each year, compared with an average of 2,000 persons in the 1980s and 1,500 persons annually in the 1970s. Since 1989, new congregations accounted for 8,607 persons added through evangelism. In 2001, at least 596 people were added through evangelism in new and emerging churches (based on reports of seventy-two churches).

The total membership of the CRC grew in 1999 and 2000. In 2001, the sum of individual congregation statistics shows an increase in total members, but the cumulative classis totals show a decrease of 134 members. General Secretary David Engelhard said, "This suggests that some congregations still find it difficult to designate all of their members under the existing categories and therefore underreport their membership."

II. Board and executive committee

A. Board

The Board of Home Missions is the agent of synod charged with guiding and carrying out the denominational home missions program. The board has fifty members. Forty-seven members are chosen by their respective classes; three are members-at-large who have special expertise. Twelve board members are from Canada and thirty-eight from the United States.

B. Board officers

The officers of the Board of Home Missions are Rev. Al Gelder, president; Rev. Evert Busink, vice president; Rev. John Rozeboom, secretary (executive director); Rev. Clair Vander Neut, recording secretary; and Mr. Harvey Jansen, treasurer.

The officers of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions of Canada are Rev. Evert Busink, president; Ms. Diane Proper, treasurer; Rev. Phillip Stel, assistant treasurer. The office of secretary is currently vacant.

C. Executive committee

The executive committee meets in May and September. It is made up of elected delegates from the following regions.

Region	Classes	Delegates
Western Canada	British Columbia NW, British Columbia SE-Alberta North, Alberta South and Saskatchewan	Rev. Phil Stel
Central Canada	Chatham, Huron, Niagara	Rev. Dan Tigchelaar
Eastern Canada	Hamilton, Toronto, Quinte, Eastern Canada	Ms. Diane Proper
Northwest U.S.	Pacific Northwest, Columbia, Central California, Yellowstone	Rev. Virgil Michael
Southwest U.S.	California South, Greater Los Angeles, Arizona, Pacific Hanmi, Red Mesa	Mr. Harvey Jansen
Midwest U.S.	Rocky Mountain, Iakota, Minnkota, Heartland	Rev. Clair Vander Neut
Central U.S.	Lake Superior, Northcentral Iowa, Pella	Rev. Evert Busink
Chicago	Northern Illinois, Chicago South, Illiana, Wisconsin	Rev. D.A. Crushshon, Sr.
Eastern U.S.	Atlantic Northeast, Hudson, Hackensack, Southeast U.S.	Rev. Al Gelder
Out-state Michigan	Northern Michigan, Muskegon, Kalamazoo, Lake Erie	Rev. Ed Visser
Ottawa County	Holland, Zeeland, Georgetown, Grandville	Rev. Jim De Vries

Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids North, Grand Rapids South, Thornapple Valley	Rev. Bill Vanden Bosch
Members-at-Large	For Finance For Advancement For Intercultural Ministry	Mrs. Lynne Heyne Rev. Jack Stulp Mr. Charles Brown

D. Salary disclosure

Executive persons are being paid within the approved salary ranges.

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (Includes housing allowance)
18	1	2nd quartile
16	1	1st quartile
15	2	2nd, 3rd quartiles

III. Home Missions' ministries

A. Established-church development

1. The ministry of Home Missions reaches into every congregation and classis and directly influences a majority of churches and classes as Home Missions seeks to assist churches in becoming healthy, missional communities so that seeking the lost and discipling the found are integral to the calling of every member, every church, and every classis.
2. This ministry in support of established churches is accomplished through:
 - a. Assisting and encouraging churches in praying (as a foundational element in *Gathering*) that the CRCNA may be increasingly and effectively used by God to reach the lost and to disciple the found.
 - b. Planning and consulting with churches and classes so that they effectively find the lost and disciple the found.
 - c. Developing leadership through networks, conferences, and teaching churches so that pastors and other church leaders grow in their ability to lead *Gathering* churches and classes.
 - d. Training in principle-based small groups that local churches use to facilitate needs-based ministry that reaches the lost and leads to authentic community.
 - e. Resourcing churches and classes with partnership grants and materials to help them become mission-shaped churches and classes.
3. The results prayerfully envisioned and worked for in established churches are:
 - a. A praying church: Members, churches, and classes are mobilized in prayer for the Spirit's blessing on the witness of the CRCNA to bring an increasing number of people to faith and disciple them as followers of Jesus.

- b. A focused church: Healthy churches and classes know their purpose and vision and are growing in every way—including size—while effectively ministering where God has placed them.
 - c. A committed people: They are part of God’s family, growing daily in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and contributing to and participating in the mission of God and the ministry of the church.
4. The strategies and activities used in working for these results may be summarized as follows:
- a. Mobilizing prayers for the lost: Implementing a plan for congregational and classical prayer leaders to encourage churches, classes, and denominational agencies to pray for effective *Gathering*. This includes *The Prayer Paper*, a newsletter to classical and congregational prayer coordinators; an annual training opportunity for classical prayer coordinators; training Christian Reformed participants at Willow Creek and Saddleback conferences; and regional prayer events.
 - b. Promoting ethnic (non-Anglo) ministries: Working with CRHM’s New-Church Development Department and three intercultural ministry directors to help the CRCNA grow in its multicultural, multiethnic character and ministry, including participation on the agency and denominational antiracism teams.
 - c. Collaborating (1) with Calvin Theological Seminary by participating in teaching courses on mission subjects; (2) with CRC Publications and GEMS by doing mutual planning for a children’s ministry conference and publishing evangelistic resources; and (3) with Youth Unlimited, CRWRC, and CRWM by providing a developmental pathway of ministry experiences for young people and providing short-term student volunteers for churches, community development ministries, and world-mission settings. In addition, representatives from the Established-Church Development Department serve on cross-agency teams that seek to implement the denominational vision and plan.
 - d. Focusing networks: Focusing networks continue to be used to develop congregational leadership and ministry focus. Previously, this ministry was coordinated through the central office. Now networks are coordinated and developed regionally in an effort to serve churches more effectively.
 - e. Ministry focusing: Helping twenty-five to thirty churches define their ministries and draw up specific ministry plans by means of several discernment processes, including merger planning, planning during a pastoral vacancy, and leading leadership retreats.
 - f. Promoting small-group evangelism strategies/ministries and providing resources: Two thousand thirty-two people participated in leadership training events and consultations in 2001, which includes small groups/Coffee Break/Story Hour/Little Lambs, evangelism, and prayer workshops. Small group representatives throughout the United States and Canada work with pastors, councils, ministry-team leaders, and a

variety of small-group leaders to model and promote renewed vision and relationship-based ministry. In addition to workshops, another 1,883 people participated in other events such as director days, rallies, and retreats. The combined number of people involved in both training and other events is 3,915. The biennial Coffee Break Convention has been expanded to include small-group leaders. The first Small Group Evangelism Conference for Women will be held in July 2002.

- g. Sponsoring Gathering conferences in connection with Willow Creek Community Church and Saddleback Community Church: Eighty-six leaders representing seventeen churches participated in the Willow Creek conference in October 2001, and 133 leaders representing twenty-five churches participated in the Saddleback conference in May 2001.
 - h. Partnership Assistance Grants provided financial grants for seventy established churches and classes to help them advance their ministries.
5. Assistance for smaller churches

In keeping with the decisions of Synod 1995, agreements with churches currently receiving salary funding from the Fund for Smaller Churches (FSC) will be honored as long as the churches qualify under the annually diminishing subsidy system. For the calendar year 2001, thirty-four churches received or were eligible to receive FSC salary subsidy for their pastor; thirty churches were approved for subsidy in calendar year 2002.

In addition, Home Missions has initiated a system of assistance for smaller churches (those with 150 members or fewer). In 2001, twenty-two churches received program assistance, twenty-six received continuing education assistance, and fifty-three churches received assistance for technology upgrades (computer and/or answering machines).

Note: Last year's synod request that Home Missions develop guidelines for Heritage Churches has been completed. The Heritage Church Guidelines will be submitted through the Board of Trustees.

6. Summary

Home Missions works with established churches to implement principle-based small groups; to develop, equip, and train leaders for the harvest; and to assist congregations in attaining church health. Prayer is foundational. In all of this there is a prayerful expectation that God will continue to build his church, use the gifts of his people, and add to the church daily those who are being saved (Acts 2).

B. *New-church development*

1. Why plant new churches?

Over the past decade, God has used the Christian Reformed Church to start approximately twenty new churches annually. With our denomination consisting of nearly one thousand congregations, this reflects a start rate of 2 percent annually. From an organizational perspective—although this may appear to strain our resources—this rate is needed simply to maintain our size and vitality as a denomination. However, from the perspective of reaching our unchurched and underchurched neighbors with the good news, we believe that God is calling the CRC to start even more new

churches annually. As illustrated in the table below, planting new churches still is an effective means by which the whole church helps bring others into a new relationship with Jesus Christ.

CRC Growth through Evangelism 1990-2002

Yearbook Year	All Churches	NCD Only
1990	2913	216
1991	2599	305
1992	2699	416
1993	2351	474
1994	2766	768
1995	2489	1102
1996	3170	890
1997	2846	1238
1998	2738	795
1999	2777	614
2000	2462	534
2001	3005	633
2002	2563	596*

*Based on seventy-two churches reporting as of 1/10/02

In support of this conviction, Home Missions eagerly embraces the proposed church-planting goal as articulated in the denominational plan and continues to commit its prayers and resources to the support of this goal:

Responding to God's call, CRC agencies and institutions will serve congregations and classes by encouraging and supporting a denomination-wide church planting movement that increases our capacity to plant up to thirty churches a year.

Note: A church-planting movement may be defined as a rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment (*Church Planting Movements* by David Garrison, 1999).

2. Agency support of the church planting goal

Various ways in which Home Missions and other agencies and institutions support the church-planting goal are summarized under the following key ministry objectives:

- a. Prayer and intercession for new and emerging churches is encouraged in a variety of ways, including the following:
 - Classical and congregational prayer coordinators provide leadership and assistance.
 - Parent churches and new churches are encouraged and helped to develop prayer strategies.
 - Home Missions regional and intercultural directors convene prayer retreats to encourage their leaders, ministries, and families.
 - Home Missions publishes *PowerLINK* to encourage church planters by sharing information that helps them pray for one another.
 - Congregations throughout the denomination are asked to join in *Prayer for Harvest Workers* during the month of January, with prayers centered specifically on church planters. Plans are underway, with

World Missions, for repeating this challenge in January 2003. More than forty-six thousand Lord of the Harvest bookmarks have been ordered in English, more than four hundred in Korean, and more than five hundred in Spanish.

- b. Home Missions works collaboratively with other agencies and institutions, as well as with classes and congregations, in visioning and planning for church planting.

During this past year the cross-agency team for church planting has formed the following church-planting goal teams: Prayer/Communications, Leadership Development, Ministry Resourcing, and Finance/Advancement. These teams have now begun their work with excellent cross-agency representation. A panel of church planters also is being brought together to meet with the entire cross-agency group to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the challenge and blessings of church-planting ministry.

In various ways, Home Missions, especially through its regional and intercultural personnel, assists classes and ethnic groups in their strategic planning for new churches. In March 2001, Home Missions' personnel assisted in convening a first-of-its-kind regional planning forum in the Los Angeles area. Five classical and intercultural teams came together for visioning and planning for new ministry in the region. A group of four from other locations observed the event, with a view to possibly convening a similar event at a later date.

In visioning and planning of a different variety, Home Missions also continues to partner with the Rehoboth-Red Mesa Foundation and a financial partnering task force to help the Red Mesa churches to envision and realize a future that is more self-expressing, self-governing, and self-supporting than in previous generations.

- c. One of the greatest challenges is in helping raise up leaders for new churches, and equip them through training, networking, and coaching. This challenge is supported in a number of important ways:
- More than a dozen leadership development networks, also called evangelist training programs, operate in English, Korean, and Spanish.
 - During the past two years, Home Missions has collaborated actively with Calvin Seminary in developing a masters in new-church development, particularly as a way to enhance the training of persons who would plant churches as evangelists.
 - The *Directions* program identifies potential church planters and helps them (and others) discern their passion and giftedness for new church leadership. Two major components of this process are the assessment center (a several-day event) and the assessment interview (a half-day interview with a trained team). As a general rule, Home Missions strongly encourages that every potential planter be assessed prior to committing to the work.
 - Many potential planters further prepare for church planting through serving in internships with church plants or other partner churches. We refer to *formal* internships for those in seminary training, and

nonformal internships for persons in an evangelist track or coming from some other denominational background.

- For identified planters who are (or are scheduled to be) ordained as ministers or evangelists, some of them benefit from a period of residency before launching into the actual church start.
- When new leaders are approved, placed, and employed with specific new church ministry, they are provided additional orientation and training as needed and feasible. This includes attendance at a week of visioning and training known as Boot Camp. Home Missions provides additional orientation regarding agency and denominational relationships either as part of this event, or as a separate event in the denominational offices.
- Whenever and wherever possible, each church planter has an experienced coach (in addition to the support of the regional and intercultural director). Recently Home Missions has convened several next-step forums for leaders of cell-based ministries, churches in their third to fifth year; and larger new churches. Their purpose is to encourage and challenge one another in the continuing development of their ministries.
- Also as an encouragement to new-church leaders and their partners, Home Missions offers a biennial retreat/conference with 100 to 150 in attendance. The most recent, The Edge, was scheduled for May 2-5, 2002, in Banff, Alberta.

Of all the leaders serving new-church ministries currently supported with Home Missions funding (church planters, staff, interns, and residents) eighty-seven are or will be ordained as ministers and thirty-five as evangelists. Approximately half of those starting new churches in the past five years served in an internship or residency prior to beginning as a planter.

3. New and emerging churches: August 2000 to January 2002

Home Missions partners financially with about 120 new and emerging churches annually. Approximately fifteen additional locations are approved for opening when suitable missionary pastors are available. New-church starts and funding conclusions for the following reporting periods are listed below.

a. New-church starts from September 2000 through August 2001

Location/Name	Personnel	Began
Ajax, ON/Real Life	John Wildeboer	3/01
Atlanta, GA/Comunidad San Pablo	Pedro Toledo	9/00
Barrow, AK/Barrow Korean NCD	Gui Je Park	9/00
Calgary, AB/Hillside Community	Geoff VanderMolen	3/01
Central Maine/Central Maine NCD	Bill Johnson	9/00
Chicago, IL/Living Spring Community	MunChul Kim	9/00
Crenshaw, CA/New Ground Harvest	Ron Black	9/00
Fairfax Station/Church of the Stable	Marty McGinn	7/01
Diamond Bar, CA/Body of the Lord	Myung Soo Lee	9/00
Grand Rapids, MI/Abundant Life	Arthur Bailey	9/00
Hamilton, ON/Hamilton Asian NCD	Salim Arthur	1/01
Hartford, CT/Christ Church Glastonbury	Will Gardner	3/01

Las Vegas, NV/Desert Harbor	John Wanders	9/00
Las Vegas, NV/Desert Streams	Bob Pollema	3/01
Los Angeles, CA/Journey Christian Fellowship	Charles Kim	9/00
Los Angeles, CA/Home Korean	Ken Choe	9/00
Mill Creek, WA/Garden of Grace	Gilbert Kim	9/00
Muskegon, MI/Applewood Community	Jeffrey Hough	9/00
North Natomas, CA/The Gathering	Ron Vanderwell	11/00
Novi, MI/Harvest	Vance Walker	7/01
Passaic, NJ/ Nuevo Horizonte	Marco Avila	3/01
San Diego, CA/Monte Sion	Jose Ybarra	9/00
Santa Monica, CA/The Talking Stick	Rich Braaksma	3/01
Sioux City, IA/Friendship Community	Verlyn Schaap	9/00
Williams Lake, BC/Cariboo Community	Paul Lomavatu	9/00

b. New-church starts from September 2001 through December 2001

Location/Name	Personnel	Began
Anaheim, CA/Grace Filipino #3	ETP Students	9/01
Cambridge, ON/River City Community	Darrell Bierman	10/01
Chicago, IL/Hermosa NCD	John Zayas	10/01
Chicago, IL/Rogers Park NCD	John Hoekwater	10/01
Danvers, MA/North Shore Chapel	Michael Laird	9/01
Frankfort, IL/Bridge Community	Nick Ahrens	9/01
Hialeah, FL/Iglesia Cristiana Vida Nueva	Juan Pablo Sanchez	9/01
Mt. Vernon, WA/Skagit Valley Hispanic	Joe Strong	9/01
Orlando, FL/Elohim (Haitian)	Raymond Clotaire	9/01

c. Current new-church residencies

Location/Name	Personnel	Began
Edmonton, AB/Edmonton NCD	Bruce Gritter	10/01
Grand Rapids, MI/Monroe Mall Ministries	Henry Schenkel	9/01
Los Angeles, CA/The Salt & Light	Jonathan Kim	5/01
Valparaiso, IN/Daybreak Community	Robert Knol	7/01
Vancouver, WA/River Rock	Byron Van Kley	7/01
West Kendall, FL/West Kendall NCD	Hector Garcia	9/01

d. Funding conclusions during MY2001

Ajax, ON/Crossroads Community
 *Durango, CO/Sunrise Community
 Durham, NC/The River
 El Monte, CA/Amor Viviente
 *Eugene, OR/Lasting Connections
 Fresno, CA/Love Song Community
 Garden Grove, CA/Orange County Calvary
 Garden Grove, CA/Korean American Central Presbyterian
 Grand Rapids, MI/Centre Pointe
 Hampton, NH/New Covenant
 Hayward, CA/Living Faith Fellowship
 Iowa City, IA/Chinese Church
 Ottawa, ON/East City Community
 Portland, OR/Zion Korean
 Ridgefield, NJ/Love Korean
 Seattle, WA/Emmaus Road

*Funding conclusions were occasioned by the conclusion of the ministries.

C. Other disciple-making ministries

1. Partnering with campus ministries

a. The *VISION* statement for CRC campus ministry states that

We see places of higher education
As institutions where people seek truth;
As providers of knowledge, discovery, and future leaders;
As centers that shape society's values, attitudes, and trends;
As gatherings of students, faculty, and staff
Who share in the brokenness of humanity
And who need God's Good News of
Wholeness, reconciliation, compassion, and community.

We gratefully and obediently pursue [campus] ministry
To listen on behalf of the church;
To extend God's reign of compassion, truth, and justice
In a broken and sinful world;
To proclaim God's word of reconciliation;
To gather people in community,
To be encouraged in the pursuit of truth,
To be nourished by the Word and Sacraments,
To be strengthened in faith, hope, and love.

The Christian Reformed Church is uniquely gifted for this work because of its theological heritage and educational fervor. Institutions of higher education are a primary means by which our culture claims the hearts and minds of the next generation. The power of the gospel to transform, redeem, and renew the world therefore needs to take root and flourish at this threshold of social and intellectual change.

Our campus ministries seek to influence the entire university. They encourage students, faculty, and staff to love God with heart, soul, strength, and mind. They challenge social and intellectual centers of power with a prophetic call to be merciful, just, and generous in their institutional habits and hopes. Recognizing that the church is made up of many denominations and traditions called together to herald the coming of God's reign, we celebrate our unity in Christ, partnering with others on campus who confess his name.

An expanding set of foundational documents outlines our understanding of and expectations for CRC campus ministry. To date, these documents include our Vision statement (1989), *To Pursue the Mission* (1995), *Guidelines for Campus Ministries* (1998), *Educational Requirements for Campus Ministry Personnel* (1998), *Making Disciples—Developing a Campus Movement: A Strategic Plan* (1999), *Stewards of God's Mysteries: Measuring Ministry Effectiveness* (2000), and *Ideal Campus Minister Profile* (1999). Currently being drafted are documents relating to an "ideal profile" for campus committee members, templates for a set of governing by-laws appropriate to U.S. and Canadian contexts, and a renewed set of missional goal statements. These documents have been compiled into a Campus Ministry Resource binder (available for purchase from the office of the Campus Ministry Director, c/o Christian Reformed Home Missions), and are also posted on our web site (www.crcna/hm/hmcm.org). In addition, our web site contains a

current listing of our campus-ministry locations and a listing of the personnel serving in those locations.

- b. The Christian Reformed Church is involved in campus ministry on more than forty campuses in Canada and the United States. As of September 2001, twenty-three campus ministries are supported by Home Missions partnership assistance grants. These are:

University of Alberta
 University of New Brunswick
 McMaster University
 Wilfrid Laurier University
 Ferris State University
 Iowa State University-Korean
 University of Iowa
 University of Toronto
 Eastern Michigan University
 Michigan State University
 Dalhousie University
 Passaic County Community College

University of Western Ontario
 William Paterson University
 University of Guelph
 Waterloo University
 Central Michigan University
 Iowa State University-Anglo
 Queen's University
 Brock University
 Fanshawe Community College
 Western Michigan University
 York University

In addition, Calvin Theological Seminary has once again joined Home Missions in supporting a campus internship for one of its M.Div. students. Journey Christian Fellowship, a multiethnic new-church plant seeking to serve the University of California-Los Angeles campus population continues to develop under the leadership of evangelist Charles Kim. A new campus ministry at the University of Northern British Columbia was previously approved, and it is actively recruiting a campus minister. This past year, seven "emerging campus leaders" tested their missional skills and calling (a part-time, internship model), expanding the missional reach of our campus ministries at Queen's University, Brock University, University of Toronto, Iowa State University, University of Illinois, and Eastern Michigan University.

Ongoing exploration and/or development toward new, refocused, and/or expanded campus ministry is currently underway at:

University of Calgary
 New Jersey City University (Hispanic)
 Chicago (downtown schools and/or black ministries at Chicago State University and Kennedy-King Community College)
 San Juan College, Fort Lewis College, University of New Mexico (Native American concentrations)
 Pennsylvania State University (Korean)
 University of Colorado (Korean/multiethnic)

The regular program of activities for our campus ministries includes weekly Bible studies for students and faculty, one-on-one counseling, large-group worship/teaching events, small-group discussions, social activities, leadership formation, special lectures and retreats, and occasionally a Sunday student worship service on campus. Though many of these gatherings are small, some swell to include hundreds of students. For each event, the goal is both to move people toward their baptism (make disciples) and spur people forth from their baptism (living for Jesus in every dimension of life).

c. The campus ministry director consults with Christian Reformed Church campus ministries across North America, administers partnership assistance funding, develops ministry standards and evaluation tools for campus ministries, and marshals denominational (and other) resources to further aid our campus ministries. Calvin College partners with CRHM-Campus Ministry to cosponsor an annual academic/missional lecture tour on major university campuses throughout North America. Calvin Theological Seminary's Mission Institute has partnered with CRHM-Campus Ministry to conduct a two-year consultation on evangelism (this work is in its final stages). Through the work of the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association, the campus ministry director's office supports a campus ministry journal (*Footnotes*), annual campus ministry conferences, regional campus ministry gatherings, and other leadership development activities. In conjunction with the association, the campus ministry director's office convenes, semiannually, a campus ministry planning team to track campus ministry trends, explore campus ministry issues and concerns, and help set the course for our ongoing mission in higher education.

The generous commitment of prayer, volunteers, and funding support of local congregations, classes, and the denomination for this vital mission is deeply appreciated. The grace and wisdom of God has been poured out on individuals and institutions alike with life-changing results.

2. Partnering with Red Mesa schools and the Rehoboth-Red Mesa Foundation

Home Missions also assists the Red Mesa Christian Schools Association. In addition to its role on the foundation, the association seeks to establish and foster mutually beneficial programs of support (internal and external—staff development, donor development, and so forth) for all of the Red Mesa schools. Mr. Dennis Van Andel is the executive director of the Association.

As the schools continue to renew and revise their missional and educational goals for this new millenium, Home Missions is privileged to continue to journey with them in missional partnerships that demonstrate declining denominational subsidies matched by increasing local ownership. This fall, the Association learned from the Gates Educational Foundation that it had successfully competed for a sizable grant (approximately \$400,000).

D. Finance and advancement

1. Resources

a. Financial resources

Overall, gift income in fiscal year 2001 (ending June 30, 2001) for Home Missions was sufficient for the operations of the ministry. Ministry share during that time declined from the year before by \$235,000, but strong giving from churches' above-ministry share and from individuals helped to make up for the decline in ministry share. In fiscal year 2002 (July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002) the budget has been reduced by \$700,000 due to less-than-budgeted receipts in both ministry shares and in above-ministry share income.

b. Personnel

Home Missions notes with gratitude that along with a gifted, paid staff a number of volunteers continue their support of God's mission in the central office and with funded ministries.

2. Communications

Nearly six hundred Christian Reformed churches included promotional material about Home Missions with their Easter celebrations. Many of these same churches had a special offering for Home Missions at that time. Nearly three hundred churches celebrated Reformation Sunday by using Home Missions promotional materials and by receiving an offering as well.

In January each year, Home Missions works with World Missions in promoting "Pray to the Lord of the Harvest" where people across the denomination pray that God will provide missionary pastors to lead his outreach efforts.

Home Missions with local churches and other denominational agencies provides speakers for the Women's Missionary Union tours. In Canada and the United States, we worked cooperatively with other agencies on *CRC Source*, volunteer projects, *Prayer Guide*, *Intermission*, and promotions at schools, seminaries, and universities.

Home Missions has several web sites to help people get involved and pray for missions. They are:

www.crcna.org – Christian Reformed Church in North America
www.crhm.org – Christian Reformed Home Missions
www.hmedc.org – Established Church Development
www.menslife.org – Men's Life
www.coffeekbreakministries.org – Coffee Break
www.koreancoffeebreak.org – Korean Coffee Break
www.newchurchnet.com – New Church Development
www.winhispano.org – Ministerio Hispano

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Alvern Gelder, Home Missions board president, and Rev. John Rozeboom, executive director, when matters pertaining to Home Missions are discussed.

B. That synod encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Easter Sunday and Reformation Sunday as significant opportunities to receive an offering for Christian Reformed Home Missions.

Home Missions is blessed, privileged, and profoundly challenged in serving the Lord and the church through *Gathering*.

Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions
John A. Rozeboom, executive director

I. Introduction

In the coastal town of Esparza, Costa Rica, a CRC pastor is doing something few pastors in this country are willing to do: counsel AIDS patients. In a remote tribal area of West Africa, not far from the edge of the world, a young man named Chido has come to Christ, one of the first among his tribe. On a tiny tropical island in the South Pacific, students are learning the Word in preparation for bringing it to people on other tiny islands scattered throughout Micronesia. In Ukraine, the clear message of salvation cuts through the murky haze of corruption, apathy, and atrophied religious traditions. In all these corners of the world, people are coming to faith. It is happening one person at a time as Christian Reformed missionaries work to tell the world about Jesus. The CRC—through World Missions—has been at it for over one hundred years.

Since 1888, World Missions has worked to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God and call people to repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to God in their personal lives and their societal relations. World Missions has worked to build the church of Christ. World Missions serves in multiple partnerships to provide for the fullness of God's grace in a broken world and to bring glory to God. World Missions is very thankful that the support for "Bringing Salvation to the Ends of the Earth" is a vision that has gripped many. With a world population of over six billion people, that vision continues to challenge us and give us focus.

World Missions is the agency by which the CRCNA administers the joint world missions work of Christian Reformed churches (C.O. Art.77). Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) seeks to fulfill the following mandate:

- A. Proclaim the Gospel of the growing kingdom of God.
- B. Call people of the entire world to repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to God in their personal lives and societal relations.
- C. Build the Church of Christ. Develop peoples who are gathered for worship, who train their own membership for leadership, and who are dedicated to service in and beyond the communities in which they live.
- D. Relieve suffering and minister to human needs through programs of Christian education and development, with the help of CRWRC and/or local diaconal organizations wherever possible.
- E. Encourage and enable the congregations of the CRCNA to call and commission missionaries and to provide cooperatively for their support.

(Missionary Manual, Section 109)

The tasks, however, are not ones to be done alone. Other agencies of the church have their church-given mandates. Many local CRC congregations have found opportunities to reach "to the ends of the earth" through short- and long-term outreach programs. In many of the far-flung reaches of the earth, World Missions joined company with Christian churches that are growing and developing their own programs of reaching the ends of the earth with the gospel. We have entered an exciting time, the task is one to be done in partnership with others. As a result, World Missions plans and implements its plans with a commitment to bring salvation to the ends of the earth in an effort characterized by partnerships, collaboration, and cooperation.

II. Changes and challenges

Synod 2001 appointed Dr. Gary Bekker as the seventh executive director of Christian Reformed World Missions. He began serving on September 1, 2001. He was joined by Mr. Joel Hogan, previously a long-term missionary in the Philippines, who assumed the position of director for resources, education, and training.

Missions has always brought challenges, and the Christian Reformed Church faces several challenges in its world missions efforts. First, two sets of events have led to increased concerns for the security of CRWM personnel and programs. The first of these was major violence in Jos, Nigeria, and its environs that began on September 7, 2001. The second has to do with terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001 and related events that have followed. In brief, CRWM has addressed security concerns as follows:

- Overall heightened attention to security concerns, including increased attention to warnings prepared by Crisis Consulting International.
- Coordinated efforts with CRWRC.
- Communication of specific concerns to churches through our network of regional representatives.
- Review and possible revision of evacuation plans by field directors and missionaries.
- Videos produced by Crisis Consulting International on risk-assessment and increasing security given to all field directors.

World Missions anticipates that for the foreseeable future greater attention to the assessment of short-term and long-term risks will be part of all CRWM planning and operating. World Missions intends to explore and respond to opportunities for new or reinforced ministry in the aftermath of these terrible events.

CRWM is engaged in a significant revision of its long-range plan. This effort is being undertaken not only as a normal part of good planning but also in light of new opportunities for ministry at a time of financial challenge and of a steady decrease over the past decade in the number of long-term missionary positions.

Fiscal Year	Positions
FY92/93	116.5
FY94/95	115
FY96/97	106.5
FY98/99	95
FY00/01	99
FY02/03	87

If effective ministry is being done, a decrease in the number of long-term positions by itself may mean little. However, such a decrease is cause for concern in an agency that has long seen itself as entirely or primarily a missionary-sending agency. While the increase in short-term missionaries is exciting and appreciated, long-term missionaries are needed for long-term change.

III. Elements in partnership

A. With the CRCNA

This plan and budget is built on the conviction that the most basic partnership exists with the congregations of the CRCNA. This plan calls for eighty-seven long-term missionaries (plus their spouses), 189 partners, volunteers, interns, and associate missionaries, all of whom find support from the congregations in North America. This support is measured in many ways, all of which are vital to the ongoing ministries represented in the fields and projects across the world. Currently, 80 percent of all the CRCs give direct above-ministry share financial support to one or more missionaries. If measured by ministry shares, then it can be said that nearly all CRCs financially support CRWM.

The plan calls for a network of twenty-four regional representatives who span the continent. These work with an even greater network of local, church-related representatives, whose task finally is to keep the outreach ministries before the church. The regions have been revised to better align them geographically with those approved by Synod 1999.

Likewise, partnership is seen in the form of the classically designated representatives who serve on the World Missions Board under the direction of the synod of the CRCNA. The plan is finally reviewed by the CRCNA and judged as to its consistency with the vision of the denomination.

B. With other agencies of the CRCNA

This plan reflects an increasingly positive and proactive partnering with the other CRC agencies. It contains program plans for joint efforts in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Central America, Nigeria, Philippines, and Eastern Europe. Cooperations are being formed in Mexico, Cambodia, and Bangladesh. These plans are coordinated at the field level and within the Ministries Administrative Council (MAC).

C. With churches overseas

In the past, church-planting ministries have included the establishment of CRC-like churches in many countries, especially within Latin America, Nigeria, and the Philippines. More recently the strategies for the agency have shifted to a church-development strategy with the recognition of a maturing leadership in partner churches. Likewise, these partner churches have a growing vision for outreach. Particularly, the partner churches in Mexico and the CRC-Philippines will figure in the development of the new ministries within Mexico and in southeast Asia respectively. The church-planting and development work in Nigeria includes staffing from partner churches.

IV. Report on mission fields and projects

During the past year, World Missions gave support to twenty-nine Reformed and Presbyterian churches, which are attended by approximately two million people. It also contributed staff and grants to twenty other agencies and leadership-training institutions. World Missions' activities in specific mission fields are herein briefly described.

A. Africa

1. *Sierra Leone.* After years of rebel conflict, 2001 was a year of progress in the disarmament effort. As the rebels laid down their arms, national staff

members were able to reestablish contact with twenty-two worship groups that had been cut off behind rebel lines. The groups not only survived, they urgently expressed the need for more biblical training.

2. *Liberia.* Though civil war forced the evacuation of missionaries from Liberia in 1990, ministry has continued through grants to our partner organization. Translators completed work on the Bassa Bible and submitted it for publication. Our partner organization also gives encouraging reports on their theological education by extension and health programs.
3. *Nigeria.* Through partnerships with churches in Nigeria, Nigerian evangelists worked with missionaries to extend witness in the Kambari region. The eleven young churches among the Kambari also decided to cancel services one Sunday each month so they could trek to other villages and share the gospel. Working jointly with CRWRC, the field initiated a new HIV/AIDS ministry that serves thirteen denominations.
4. *Mali.* Each missionary now works with individuals or small groups of believers in village settings and in Bamako, the capital city. The number of Fulbe Christians directly related to CRC ministry increased to nineteen.
5. *Guinea.* Team members participated in friendship evangelism, prison ministries and Bible studies. Missionaries also shared the leadership of Pular worship in the towns of Labe and Dalaba. There are approximately one hundred known Christians among the Fulbe in Guinea. Musicians in that group recently composed and recorded the first thirteen Christian songs in the Pular language.

B. Asia

With its enormous population, wealth of culture, depth of history, and variety in its religious heritage and practices, Asia offers a tremendous challenge to, and opportunity for, the Christian church. Increasingly, Asians are not only “out there” but are our fellow CRCNA members as significant numbers of Asians settle in North America and join the CRCNA. It is CRWM’s honor to have been given a small but important role to play in the extension of God’s kingdom and his church in Asia and in partnership with Asian churches and peoples.

CRWM’s ministries in Asia are focused largely on Bangladesh, Cambodia, China/Taiwan, Guam/Micronesia, Japan, and the Philippines.

1. *Bangladesh.* Our intent is to provide and send a faculty member to the College of Christian Theology in Bangladesh (CCTB) to enhance the development of Christian leadership in that country. Our personnel would work closely with the CRWRC team and partners by providing theological grounding for and training in holistic ministries by churches and Christian agencies. We also hope to provide short-term assistance to the development of CCTB’s library.
2. *Cambodia.* We will focus on working under the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC), of which CRWRC-Cambodia is a member. Our work will include developing Christian leadership training and education ministries. Also expected is a study of additional ministry opportunities that we may become involved in later. We are particularly interested in partnering with

the CRC in the Philippines in ministry in Cambodia. There may also be teaching opportunities at Phnom Penh Bible College. Short-term teaching positions for partners are also being planned.

3. *China/Taiwan.* CRWM ministries in China and Taiwan include many facets such as church-leadership development, organizational capacity building of churches and other Christian institutions, evangelism among university students and faculty, youth work development, and assistance in Calvin College's off-campus program. The primary focuses are on Christian-leadership training in China and on Taiwan and evangelism in China.
4. *Guam/Micronesia.* We own and operate two outlets of Faith Bookstore on Guam. The stores provide a variety of literature needs for the Christian community throughout Micronesia. The Christian Education Enhancement program provides resources to Christian schools on the islands in terms of qualified teachers, curriculum design, and administrative inputs. We work with approximately ten schools in the area
5. *Japan.* Our ministry focuses on planting churches in partnership with the Reformed Church in Japan (RCJ). We are currently involved with eleven mission congregations. We work closely with The Back to God Hour's Japanese ministries. We are also part owner of the Christian Academy of Japan (CAJ), a Christian school that many of our missionary children attend. We are expanding into involvement in youth ministries through the RCJ.
6. *The Philippines.* The focus in the Philippines is on Christian-leadership development, church organizational capacity building, and church-planting ministries. We work mostly in partnership with the CRC in the Philippines. We are also investing more and more in providing resources to the larger Asian community's need for leadership training and the CRC Philippines' desire to develop its own mission program.

C. *Europe*

1. *France.* Through an agreement with the Faculte Libre De Theologie, we placed a professor at this seminary in Aix-en-Provence to teach practical theology and administer an extension-training program for African church leaders.
2. *Hungarian Ministries.* Leadership training and placement of teachers in church-run schools has been CRWM's strategy in this field. We consider it a privilege to give support to the Hungarian Reformed Church as it continues to rebuild after years of communism. We have also responded to the church's request to work together in Russian-language outreach in Trans-Carpathia.
3. *Russia.* Our work is part of an interagency ministry effort. We have established three library/reading rooms that have more than three thousand registered users. One missionary also served as head of the theology department at Lithuania Christian College.

D. Latin America

1. *Costa Rica.* In Costa Rica CRWM is supporting the development of the Evangelical University of Latin America. The university specializes in missiological courses on the university level but also can strengthen programs of theological education on all levels both within Costa Rica and in other Latin American countries. From the Evangelical University of Latin America it will be possible to carry on part of the ministry of CITE (Cooperative International Theological Education). CRWM also strengthens the small CRC of Costa Rica.
2. *Cuba.* The Cuban church showed its vitality in the way that it responded to Hurricane Michelle. The hurricane hit a direct blow on Jaguey Grande and neighboring towns, which are the centers of the CRC of Cuba. Quickly, the church was using material resources available to it to help members of the communities where they live. They also gave a clear testimony of the faith that enabled them to continue on. One of the major programs of the church is the Christian education department, which has been developed with the counsel of Winabelle Gritter.
3. *Dominican Republic.* The Haitian majority in the church is taking more and more responsibility for all parts of its church life including theological education and diaconal ministries. The missionaries are supporting this growing maturity and encouraging efforts to reach out to neighboring Dominicans with ministries of evangelism and church planting. The Christian schools have over three thousand students in twenty-one schools. Partner missionaries strengthen the Santiago Christian School.
4. *El Salvador.* Ruth Padilla DeBorst brings her ten years of experience in student ministries in Latin America to her new responsibilities as CRWM missionary in El Salvador. Along with missionaries from CRWRC and The Back to God Hour, the country team has taken a new name, "Seeds of a New Creation." As a team they wish to support the Reformed churches and other Christians to be signs of God's kingdom in El Salvador.
5. *Haiti.* CRWM and CRWRC continue working together as Sous Espwa ("source of hope"). CRWM works with its partner, the Christian Training Center, to develop educational programs and materials to help participants attain a higher level of spiritual, social, and professional maturity in their ministries to their churches and communities. CRWM also encourages a growing, maturing CRC in Haiti. Partner missionaries teach in Quisqueya Christian School.
6. *Honduras.* One of the strongest CRC churches in Latin America is found in many regions of Honduras. It has suffered external destruction by Hurricane Mitch as well as internal divisions, but through them all it has grown vigorously in numbers and spiritual maturity. CRWM supports the theological education programs and evangelism ministries of the church and with CRWRC promotes diaconal ministries. Partner missionaries strengthen Academia Los Pinares by their teaching.
7. *Mexico.* In Mexico, CRWM focuses on church planting and development with a heavy concentration on church-leadership development. In partner-

ship with the Sunshine Community CRC in El Paso, Texas, and with CRHM and CRWRC, CRWM is developing a new ministry in the border city of Ciudad Juarez. Through grants and deployment of staff, CRWM supports leadership training and development of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Mexico and the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico. It also continues its support of a developing Christian school in Belize.

8. *Nicaragua*. CRWM has joined with CRWRC and Food for the Hungry to establish the Nehemiah Center. National staff members encourage Christian schools, evangelical churches, Christian-development organizations, and Christian businessmen to have a vibrant faith and use that faith in transforming the communities where they live. Hundreds have received blessings from the programs of the Nehemiah Center. The small CRC churches of Nicaragua are also starting to grow. As partner missionary teachers and board members, the CRCNA has had a profound influence on the development of Nicaragua Christian Academy.

V. Ministry in Canada and in the United States of America

While World Missions’ international plans are focused on field ministry, the plans of World Missions-USA and World Missions-Canada are focused on challenging the church to support a vision for worldwide missions. Developing a strong, prayerful, financial and caring connection with the church and its missionaries and fields/countries is integral to achieving that vision. Through e-mail and other technology, contact between the missionary and the church is greatly enhanced.

There continues to be significant variation in the level of passion for international outreach among our church members. Many of the elderly continue to be very loyal and very mission minded. The younger generation tends to be more supportive of ministry that they can be directly involved with; ministry that they perceive will make a difference. New avenues of partnering with regions and individuals and developing opportunities for ministry involvement are being explored to respond to that desire.

World Missions-USA and World Missions-Canada continue to support each other through a joint-venture agreement. Both agencies use a network of regional and local representatives to make the needs and opportunities for ministry known and to nurture the church’s passion for the lost and suffering of those outside our borders. These efforts are increasingly being conducted in collaboration with the other agencies and institutions of the denomination.

VI. Program report for recruitment and training

Training programs prepared approximately five long-term, fifty-five short-term, and thirty-two summer-mission-program participants.

	FY2000-2001 Actual	FY2001-2002 Plan	FY2002-2003 Plan
Long-term missionaries	99	94	87
Missionary spouses	<u>82</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>68</u>
TOTAL:	181	169	155

Partner missionaries	76	86	97
SMP volunteers	41	42	50
Other volunteers	25	20	18
Seminary interns	3	2	3
Associate missionaries	24	19	21
TOTAL:	169	169	189
GRAND TOTAL:	350	338	334

World Missions continues to need approximately \$76,240 to send and keep a long-term missionary family overseas for one year. About one-half of this support comes from denominational ministry shares. An average of eleven sending and supporting churches supply most of the other half through faith-promise and other above-ministry-share support. Individuals can also support missionaries directly rather than through their local churches. Short-term partner missionaries, associate missionaries, and summer-mission participants usually serve for one to two years and do not receive salaries from World Missions. They raise their own support (travel and living allowance) from churches and friends, support themselves, or, in the case of many partner missionaries, are supported by jobs in the countries to which they go.

All of World Missions' fields and projects and 96 percent of its three hundred missionaries are connected by way of the Internet to the office and to each other. This connection greatly increases the mission's capacity for communication and distribution of mission news.

The names and addresses of missionaries and regional representatives can be found on the back pages of the World Missions calendar. They are also listed in the Directory of Agencies and Committees in the CRC *Yearbook*, as are the names of World Missions' administrators.

Each year World Missions pays tribute to missionaries and office staff who are celebrating significant anniversaries of service. In 2001, World Missions honored the following for five to thirty-five years of service to the CRC through World Missions:

Susan De Haan	(Romania)	5 years
Henry and Judy De Vries	(Philippines, USA Pastorate, Guam)	30 years
Steve and Lori De Vries	(Dominican Republic)	15 years
John and Jerre De Young	(Mexico)	30 years
Roger Doornbos	(Mexico)	10 years
Patti Fisher	(Home Office)	5 years
Scott and Marcia Geurink	(Mexico)	10 years
Fran Karnemaat	(Nigeria and Home Office)	35 years
Mike Kiekover	(Nigeria)	10 years
Stan and Bessie Kruis	(Philippines)	15 years
Jon and Mary Mould	(Guinea)	10 years
Dick and Margaret Seinen	(Nigeria)	30 years
Howard and Ruth Van Dam	(Haiti)	10 years
Bill and Laura Van Tol	(Nigeria, Home Office, Mexico)	35 years
Mark Volkers	(Home Office)	5 years
Rhonda Whyte-Koster	(Guinea and Home Office)	20 years

VII. Collaboration with other CRCNA agencies

In the international outreach effort, World Missions collaborates with The Back to God Hour, CRC Publications/World Literature, CRWRC, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary. Especially noteworthy have been

the research efforts by all these agencies into new outreach in Latin America (Mexico) and southeast Asia. Calvin Seminary made a vital contribution in the orientation of new missionary candidates. All are working together in support of ministries in various parts of eastern Europe.

VIII. Governance and administration

The CRWM Joint International Committee held its annual meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, February 20-22, 2002. At that gathering, the Committees of World Missions-USA and World Missions-Canada met separately to attend to matters peculiar to the Canadian and the U.S. contexts. They met jointly to address the common task of governing and overseeing mission fields and projects. The executive committee meets jointly and separately in September, November, and April.

IX. Long-range plan and fiscal 2002-2003

World Missions' Long-Range Plan is available on request. This plan states our vision, mission, purpose, values, mission task, design of fields and projects, deployment guidelines and plans, strategic issues for effective mission, and the force for mission provided by the CRCNA. This plan is used to shape the annual plan and budget. As stated previously, we are currently engaged in a significant review of the plan to find ways of integrating it more closely with that of the CRCNA.

With the proposed budget for fiscal year 2002-2003, World Missions will support 87 long-term missionaries (plus 68 spouses who contribute much time to ministry) and 189 short-term missionaries (including spouses) for a total of 334 active missionaries, accompanied by many children. They will be supported by 20 full-time and 4 part-time administrative and program staff in Grand Rapids and Burlington. There are 24 regional representatives and their spouses based in North American who also offer much support.

The budget from July 1, 2002, through June 30, 2003, will be \$13,455,334. North American administrative and promotion expenses will be 12.3 percent of the budget. Budget details will be provided in the *Agenda for Synod 2002—Financial and Business Supplement*.

X. Salary information

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
18	1	2nd quartile
17	2	2nd and 3rd quartiles
16	3	2nd and 3rd quartiles

XI. Recommendations

World Missions-Canada and World Missions-USA respectfully recommend the following:

- A. That the president of World Missions-Canada, Rev. Ed Visser; the president of World Missions-USA, Rev. William Vis; and the World Missions executive director be given the privilege of meeting with appropriate advisory committees of synod and represent World Missions to synod when synod deals with matters related to this agency.

B. That the Board of Trustees and synod continue World Missions on its list of denominational agencies recommended to the churches for one or more offerings.

C. That the Board of Trustees and synod encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Pentecost Sunday as a significant opportunity to pray for and take an offering for Christian Reformed World Missions.

**Christian Reformed World Missions
Gary J. Bekker, executive director**

I. Introduction

CRWRC is grateful for the opportunity we have had this year to share God's love with people in need around the world! In 2001, CRWRC faced a revenue shortfall, and we were forced to restrict our program activities, evaluate our priorities, and limit our spending. It was painful to reduce spending, knowing that it decreased our potential positive impact on poor communities. At the same time, we were abundantly blessed to be able to continue our ministry with 216,067 people in 29 countries.

Your prayer and financial support allow CRWRC to help hurting families through a unique, six-tier approach that is developed here and exemplified below:

- We assist those in poverty through technical programs in agriculture, health, income generation, and literacy. Last year, these programs were carried out in partnership with 146 churches and nongovernment organizations around the world.
- We work with local churches and organizations to ensure that there is strong, Christian leadership at the community level. These programs include helping churches and organizations learn business and organizational skills. We also encourage biblical values such as honesty, transparency, respect, and humility. As a result, the capacity of these organizations increases, and they are better able to make a lasting impact in poor communities even after CRWRC's programs end.
- We maintain a strong evangelism and discipleship focus. Our programs aim to meet the physical and spiritual needs of those in poverty. We want our program participants to hear the Word of God preached and see it practiced in their daily lives. As a result of our programs, local churches around the world are growing.
- Because we believe that addressing the root causes of poverty is essential for making a long-term impact in communities, we also incorporate a justice component in our ministry. We work with our partners to address issues of injustice and oppression at the local and national levels. We also work with our constituency in North America to advocate for better public and foreign policy to serve the poor.
- We connect business and professional people in North America with emerging entrepreneurs in poor communities. Mentoring relationships are creating jobs and promoting long-term economic development alongside our other programs.
- The final area that we are involved in is relief. CRWRC responds to disaster situations around the world by providing emergency assistance and helping communities through long-term recovery. Our relief programs empower communities for the future and include programs for long-term development. Last year, carried on a wave of support from our constituency and sister organizations, CRWRC responded to earthquakes in El Salvador and India, flooding in Mozambique, and tropical storms here in North America. We are also responding to the situation in New York following the events of September 11. We expect to be involved in New York for the next five years.

Through you, CRWRC is bringing positive change—like improved health, reduced mortality, improved crop yields, higher levels of adult literacy, enhanced leadership skills, diversified income sources, and economic development—to communities around the world. Because our work is linked to churches at the community level, we are seeing stronger churches, increased discipleship, and a growing body of believers.

We praise God for every family, child, and community touched by these programs. We also praise God for every family, child, and organization that helped make these programs possible. We are thankful for commitments like these that make CRWRC's work possible.

II. Board matters

The primary function of the board is to provide direction for CRWRC's wholistic ministry program (as described in the previous paragraphs) and to encourage the vision of the organization as a whole.

The CRWRC governance structure is composed of representatives from each of the classes of the Christian Reformed Church and several members-at-large. The board is organized into two divisions, one for Canada and one for the United States. The officers for the respective boards are listed below:

A. Board leadership

1. Officers of CRWRC-Canada

Ms. Margaret Spoelstra, president
Ms. Barbara Hoekstra, vice president
Ms. Anna Feddes, secretary
Ms. Shirley Vandenberg, treasurer
Mr. Jack Feenstra, vice all
Rev. John Koster, pastoral advisor

2. Officers of CRWRC-U.S.A.

Mr. Randy Kroll, president
Mr. Roy Zuidema, vice president
Mr. Greg Geels, secretary
Mr. Paul Wassink, treasurer

B. Board nominees

CRWRC Canada requests Synod 2002 to elect one of the following two people to the board of CRWRC Canada:

Member-at-Large

Mr. Allen Brander, CHRP (Certified Human Resources Professional), recently retired from his position as Manager of Technical Training for Canadian Pacific Railways, where he had responsibility for all maintenance training in Canada and the United States. Most of his thirty-six years at CPR were spent in management of technical training, labor relations, and personnel. He and his wife Trynette have raised four sons and have five grandchildren. They are currently members of Emmanuel CRC, Calgary, Alberta. Al has served on church council there and in Montreal and was the Chair for one full term in both locations. He has also served on the board of Calvin Christian School in Winnipeg and was chairperson for two years. The Branders have

served one term with CRWRC Disaster Response Services in North Carolina and also volunteer at Camp Rehoboth, a Christian day camp serving the needs of the mentally challenged youth and adults. Al also volunteers with Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Bany Castellanos was born and raised in Venezuela where he went to university and later worked in drafting, marketing, and advertising. He was then called to work for Campus Crusade for Christ and was active in training young people for personal evangelism and discipleship. Following that, he volunteered for a year with Trans World Radio, which led into a two-year paid position with TWR as the ministry liaison to local churches. In 1988, he emigrated to Edmonton, Alberta, and joined Covenant CRC, Edmonton. He has served on the refugee committee of the church and was very involved in settling three refugees from El Salvador. He also has a lifelong music ministry, which he was able to continue in Edmonton with both the CRC and a Lutheran church. He is married, has two young children, and is currently working as an insurance adviser. He has a passion for outreach and evangelism and would love to be involved with CRWRC.

III. CRWRC's programs and ministries

The revenue shortfalls referred to in the Introduction are only one aspect of CRWRC's resource picture this year. We have also been blessed with faithful overseas partners and faithful CRC supporters who pray and work with us. Through God's continued blessings, CRWRC has been able to touch lives around the world.

The vision of the redeemed community, as pictured by Isaiah for example, calls us to bold hope and faithful obedience.

The dynamic of development is big and powerful as we see it expressed in prophetic vision and in the reign of Jesus. It includes God's passion for justice and for the poor. It includes care of the environment and economic renewal. It includes caring for dying children; responding to crises such as war, storms, or HIV/AIDS; and advocating for just policies and systems at corporate and national levels. It includes helping the denomination that supports us to engage with these issues in a whole range of ways that results in a church that is empowered, compassionate, and energized about its mission.

In all the countries where CRWRC works, we care about having staff who are competent, compassionate, and Christlike. We are committed to basic excellence in community development—from baseline studies, to participatory analysis and planning and evaluation. We look for real, demonstrated change in lives, in communities, and in systems. We are committed to learning—together in communities, with partners, with the church, and with the poor. We are passionate about developing transformed communities—among families, villages, organizations, and nations.

We are working to develop expressions of human community that are places of safety, healing, growth, and transformation—places that hum and sing while showing more and more clearly what God has in mind for his children.

A. *Development regions*

1. Asia

In Asia, CRWRC touched peoples' lives eighty thousand times! This number does not include the tens of thousands of people in Asia who received disaster response assistance while our regular programming continued. A "touch" is one person enrolled and being monitored in one of our programs; so our goal is that we can touch lives in many ways at once and multiply the impact of our programs. Political and religious conflict hamper community development in all too many places. We are delighted that our World Mission colleagues will be joining us in both Bangladesh and Cambodia.

2. Eastern Europe

In Romania almost fourteen thousand touches occurred. Civil society is still fragile, and the economy is very weak, but the churches are gathering strength and learning to respond to the needs.

3. Eastern and southern Africa

In eastern and southern Africa, we counted over sixty-eight thousand times that CRWRC engaged with a person's life in sustained program involvement to bring the community closer to the vision. In this region, the struggle against the ravages of HIV/AIDS is a significant factor in community development.

4. Latin America

In Latin America, there were fourteen thousand touches. Many of our partners in Latin America live and work in situations of severe political and social brokenness due to years of war, as well as suffering the effects of huge disasters in recent years.

5. North America

In North America, CRWRC touched lives in sustained and monitored ways over fourteen thousand times. The deaconal team works with deacons as well as with community-development organizations that partner with churches in service to their communities. Working on planning and funding for building the individual assets of the poor is a high priority for the North America team.

6. West Africa

West Africa counted forty-one thousand developmental touches. Conflict and HIV/AIDS are significant factors in West Africa. Staffing up for the opportunities, and to respond to staff turnover, is a big issue in this region, especially in the light of the budgetary constraints we face. We continue to put a very high value on sharpening our competence in nuts-and-bolts community development through partnerships; finding new ways to work with churches and our World Missions colleagues; and integrating justice, gender, and environmental themes into all our programming.

B. *Partners for Christian Development*

In 1996, CRWRC helped birth and form an affiliate organization, Partners for Christian Development (Partners). Partners is a membership organization

comprised of visionary Christian business and professional people. Its members want to make a serious and lasting impact on our world by bringing the unique skills and experience of business people into partnership with CRWRC in order to build healthy caring communities in Jesus' name.

Partners envisions a world where the love of Jesus is expressed through business and everyone has the opportunity for meaningful, productive employment.

1. Partners for Christian Development works toward this vision by:
 - a. Promoting, affirming, and celebrating business and entrepreneurship as an outstanding Christian calling—vital for God's kingdom to be fulfilled.
 - b. Networking together with our members to better develop God's resources and be faithful stewards of them.
 - c. Providing opportunities for our members to become personally involved in creating jobs and economic opportunities for the poor.
2. These three thrusts result in specific programs:
 - a. Partners for Christian Development sponsors an annual national business conference and local dinner programs that motivate, encourage, and refresh business professionals in their calling.
 - b. In 2001, Partners for Christian Development supported or added to CRWRC programs in the amount of \$1,081,672.
 - c. Partners for Christian Development currently has seven hundred dues-paying and active members in nearly forty business-building partnerships. These partnerships are built between North American business people and people in nineteen countries where CRWRC is working. Last year, these partnerships raised \$1.2 million and served twelve thousand people in need by offering them consultation, access to available markets and technology, capital, and encouragement.

We praise God for the way he is working in and moving among business people for his glory. He is truly bringing rich and poor together in ways that are transforming everyone.

C. Justice education, advocacy, and service learning

CRWRC's Justice Education and Service Learning program targets two strategic areas: (1) local communities around the world and (2) the members of the CRC.

In the communities that we serve, we work toward:

- Policy or behavior change: seeking to identify and promote public policies in a given country that create permanent, positive change in the lives of poor people and their communities.
- Civil society development: building local organizations and coalitions to collaborate to create change that benefits poor people and their communities.
- Community empowerment: working with local communities to organize and mobilize their own actions to create the change they seek.

With the church in North America, we provide:

- Opportunities to learn and act: educating and equipping the church in North America to be a catalyst to shape a just world through educational campaigns and through volunteers and discovery tour participation in the fields.
- Our focus for 2002: *How does CRWRC, working in rights education, help address poverty and hunger issues?*

At the local community level, CRWRC celebrates the expansion of justice programming to thirty-two projects in fifteen countries, working with forty thousand participants this year.

Our local community-based justice programs focus primarily in the area of rights—(1) constitutional rights for all, (2) land rights, and (3) the rights of marginalized people (e.g., women, girl children, displaced people, minorities). We also concentrate on conflict intervention, prevention, and peacebuilding.

CRWRC understands that creating changes in the lives of *individual* participants is important. However, *whole communities* can change for the good with the establishment of fair laws and fair practices or for the worse with the denial of these rights. Therefore, we have committed ourselves to work at macro issues with communities as well as for individual change.

In **Honduras** a community of indigenous people who have worked the same piece of land for generations can lose their land if they neglect to use the legal system to title it. If another person or group “titles” that same land, the original community will lose it. That is called land-grabbing. Land-grabbing is a common practice in many communities around the world. Entire communities are at risk. CRWRC and our partners are working with people throughout Latin America to assure land titling.

In **Cambodia**, we are working to protect fishery rights. CRWRC and our partner group CCDO (Cambodia Capacity Development Organization) found that local fishing villages were disintegrating. There was disagreement over fishing rights. Because of these disagreements, people were killed, people were unable to fish, and families were hungry. Many families left their local villages to seek income in other ways.

To respond to this situation, CRWRC and CCDO is beginning rights education and training in conflict-resolution techniques. As a result, we hope to see (1) agreements about fishing access in the community, (2) a decrease in violence, (3) more people earning their livelihood via fishing, and (4) families better able to feed themselves. In addition, we expect this program to rebuild the communities by encouraging more families to stay in their villages—now safe and secure places to live.

Access to the means of livelihood through land and fishing rights are just two ways in which justice programming increases the ability of poor communities to meet their own needs.

Each year, several hundred volunteers work in poor communities around the world through our service-learning program.

Discovery tours allow participants an opportunity to get close to CRC international programs, understand the issues that create poverty and hunger worldwide, and challenge themselves to take this learning back to their home churches.

CRWRC's yearly world hunger campaign and other educational materials bring important messages about poverty combined with actions North Americans can take to respond to what they have learned about structural causes of poverty and hunger.

Through these programs, the Christian Reformed Church is working to put things right for people around the world.

D. Disaster relief

In North America, CRWRC's Disaster Response Services (DRS) has been active in more than eleven communities during 2001. In three communities in North Carolina, DRS teams repaired and rebuilt houses after a devastating flood. In eight other U.S. communities, needs-assessment teams surveyed the needs of survivors. In many other disaster areas, volunteers went to the site to see how CRWRC could assist.

A total of 556 volunteers spent 110,000 hours reaching out to disaster survivors and keeping DRS in the forefront of Domestic Disaster Relief. Additionally, CRWRC worked out arrangements with the Christian Reformed Church in North America Chaplaincy Ministries to provide support for caregivers, particularly pastors, in disaster areas. Together with CRWRC Community Development Consultants, DRS worked with interfaith disaster committees to stimulate them in addressing long-term poverty issues.

Internationally, CRWRC responded to earthquakes in El Salvador and India. These responses included providing emergency food and temporary shelter to the survivors. Long-term rehabilitation programs in these areas concentrating on house rebuilding and community development are in full progress.

More than 30,000 survivors of Hurricane Mitch in four Central American countries were assisted with food, shelter, medicines, and permanent housing. This wonderful program, in which CRWRC received wide support from many international agencies and governments, was concluded in June 2001. A total of 213 volunteers traveled to Honduras and worked 14,362 hours.

CRWRC worked with Presbyterian and Reformed Relief Agencies on two projects in Mozambique. CRWRC provided leadership in this emergency response and rehabilitation program—providing seeds and tools, restocking goats and oxen, building homes, and rebuilding schools. Our involvement has been a great stimulant for the local Presbyterian and Reformed churches and their witness in the communities.

The Food Resource Bank (USA) saw some significant changes and improvements in their organizational approaches. We are thankful for the continued growth of the organization and the number of growing projects, mainly in the mid-western United States.

CRWRC continued its active leadership role within the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGFB). The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) recognized the effectiveness of CFGFB members in programming food and granted a new, three-year, \$48 million matching contract. During 2000-2001, CRWRC managed 10 programs for 3,686 metric tonnes reaching over 100,000 people using \$458,482 (Canadian).

CFGB Activity for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2001 (in Canadian dollars)

Location	Metric Tons	Project \$ Value	CRWRC's \$ Commitment
Ethiopia		239,719	45,394
Orissa, India	477	139,870	13,987
Kenya	315	218,839	43,768
Beira, Mozambique	28	46,278	9,256
Bangladesh	94	74,128	14,826
El Salvador	1,937	1,156,145	174,327
Sierra Leone Rice Seed	150	89,776	17,955
India - Orissa drought	<u>685</u>	<u>438,506</u>	<u>43,851</u>
Programs Managed by CRWRC	3,686	2,403,260	363,363
Supporting other CFGB partners		4,264,779	95,119

We thankfully acknowledge the contributions from our partners in CRWRC managed projects; Presbyterian World Service & Development (Canada); World Relief Canada; Christian & Missionary Alliance; Canadian Baptist Ministries; United Church of Canada; Evangelical Missionary Church; Mennonite Central Committee; the Salvation Army of Canada; the Church of Scotland; Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz, Switzerland; Presbyterian Church USA; Reformed Church of America; Canadian International Development Agency; Compassion Canada; Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund; and Dorcas Aid International of Andijk, Netherlands.

E. Community services

ServiceLink United States has been working in collaboration with ServiceLink Canada and also with DRS to provide a wide variety of opportunities for our constituency. One of the newest collaborations is an internship program with Calvin College. The program allows third and fourth year Calvin students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in community development. The pilot for this program will begin in fall 2002. We have also begun working on some interagency collaboration with Home Missions. As usual, we still continue to work on placing individuals in the areas of discovery tours, domestic and international internships, long and short-term opportunities, and work groups. Currently there are three regional coordinators of volunteers and a national coordinator (staff) who work to provide these resources to groups and individuals within the CRC.

During 2000-2001, 247 volunteers served with a combined total of 10,292 hours for CRWRC, World Missions, and Home Missions. From January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2001, ServiceLink United States responded to over four hundred inquiries for volunteer placement. We look forward to continued growth and to serving the constituency in 2002.

IV. Finance

A. Financial history

This table displays CRWRC revenues and expenses from 1994 to 2002 (projected).

CRWRC - CONSOLIDATED
REVENUE AND EXPENSE HISTORY/BUDGETS
(Including Disasters)

(B = Budget)

	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02B
Revenue	9,513	9,290	11,056	11,113	13,613	13,344	13,661	11,317
Overseas	5,977	5,491	5,548	5,000	5,551	6,320	6,672	7,041
North America	1,317	1,165	1,005	872	1,143	1,313	1,511	1,502
Dis. Resp. Serv.	1,849	876	1,674	1,822	2,371	3,214	3,528	764
Resource Devel.	1,086	1,026	983	1,053	1,144	1,363	1,448	1,048
Administration	987	894	932	1,183	1,152	1,231	1,092	867
Total Expenses	11,216	9,452	10,142	9,930	11,361	13,441	14,251	11,222
Net rev./ (exp.)	(1,703)	(162)	914	1,183	2,252	(97)	(590)	95

B. Salary disclosure

In accordance with synod's mandate to report the executive levels and the percentage of midpoint, CRWRC reports the following:

Job Level	Number of Positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
18	2	2nd quartile
16	1	1st quartile

C. Detailed financial information

Detailed financial information and budgets will be submitted to synod by way of the *Agenda for Synod 2002—Financial and Business Supplement*.

V. Resource development

CRWRC received loyal support from our constituents in 2000-2001. We are grateful to God for the way people—and the resources needed to support them—were made available to carry out ministry on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The largest percentage of CRWRC support (78 percent) comes from individuals and churches. Most of these supporters are affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church; however, individuals, schools, and congregations from outside the CRC are becoming a larger part of our constituency.

Other cooperating agencies continue to be important in the financial support of CRWRC. More than \$1.5 million (U.S.) was contributed by World Relief Canada (of Markham, Ontario), the Mennonite Central Committee, Partners for Christian Development (PCD), Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund, and Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation.

Government grants to CRWRC totaled \$833,758 (U.S.), with most of this income coming from the Canada International Development Agency. CIDA has been a very significant and consistent source of program funding for over two decades.

Estate bequests and planned gifts (usually stocks) are an increasingly important part of the resource base for CRWRC ministry. These gifts are placed in the Joseph Fund and are made available for programs over a seven-year period. More than \$760,000 (U.S.) was contributed to the 2000-2001

budget from this source. This represents a 59 percent increase over the previous year.

Bringing people together is a growing part of CRWRC's ministry to people in poverty and North American supporters. CRWRC personnel, along with staff from CRWRC's overseas partner organizations, made visits to North American churches and individuals to share about the work they do. In addition, North Americans are given opportunities to visit overseas programs, attend meetings, and/or participate in work teams. These interchanges encourage better understanding, more-informed prayer, and a greater commitment to the work of the church.

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to any of the following: Mr. Randy Kroll, president of CRWRC-U.S.A.; Ms. Margaret Spoelstra, president of CRWRC-Canada; Mr. Andy Ryskamp, director of CRWRC-U.S.A.; and Mr. Wayne deJong, director of CRWRC-Canada, when CRWRC matters are discussed and need to be addressed.

B. That synod commend the work of mercy carried on by CRWRC and urge the churches to take at least four offerings per year in lieu of ministry-share support.

C. That synod elect a member-at-large from the nominees provided to serve on the board of CRWRC.

D. That synod take time to praise God in celebration of CRWRC's forty years of ministry. From 1962-2002 CRWRC has been coming alongside communities in need to share God's love and create long-term solutions to poverty.

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Andy Ryskamp, CRWRC-U.S.A. director
Wayne deJong, CRWRC-Canada director

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. was organized by Synod 1983 with a directive to assist organized Christian Reformed churches in the financing of capital improvements. The Loan Fund operates exclusively in the United States; Canada having its own, similar fund. The board of directors, responsible to synod, oversees the loan approval process and the determination of interest rates. The board also establishes interest rates for securities sold—primarily to members, classes, and churches of the CRCNA.

II. Board of directors

The terms of Ms. Arlissa Joseph and Mr. James Fredricks expire on June 30, 2002. Ms. Arlissa Joseph has served on the board for two terms and is not eligible for reappointment. Mr. Fredricks has served for one term and is eligible for reappointment. The board requests synod to appoint two board members from the following nominees for terms as stated:

A. Position 1—select one for a three-year term through June 2005

Mr. Pedro Luis Fernandez is a member of the Buenas Nuevas CRC, Miami, Florida, where he has served as a deacon. He is the former co-owner of JP Mortgage, Inc. Mr. Fernandez is a graduate of Florida Christian School and the Florida School of Mortgage and is assistant baseball coach at Miami Christian School.

Mr. W. Brian Seo is a member of the Korean CRC, Wheeling, Illinois, where he serves as an elder and clerk of council. He also serves as treasurer of Classis Northern Illinois. Mr. Seo is a graduate of the University of Chicago and a sole practitioner CPA in Chicago, Illinois.

B. Position 2—ratify second-term appointment for a three-year term through June 2005

Mr. James Fredricks is a member of LaGrave Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he is an administrative elder. He is a graduate of Calvin College and is president of the West Michigan Community Bank. Mr. Fredricks has served on the Loan Fund Board for three years and previously served on the board of CRC Home Missions.

The remaining members of the board of directors are, Mr. Curtis Witte (2003), Mr. Arie Leegwater (2003), Ms. Diane Apol (2004), and Rev. Julius Medenblik (2004).

III. Growth of operations

A. The Loan Fund is qualified to sell notes to investors in twenty-eight states and in the District of Columbia: Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, and Washington. Efforts continue to add other states with CRC populations if cost of registration is reasonable. Florida has been added this year and Indiana is expected to be added as well.

B. At the close of the fiscal year (June 30, 2001), a total of \$12,763,511 of interest-bearing notes held by investors was outstanding. Maturities range from one year to ten years, and interest rates vary from 4.5 percent to 7.5 percent, with a time-weighted average of 6.4 percent. The variances in interest rates reflect market conditions at the time the notes were issued.

C. To date, over three hundred requests for loan information have been received from various Christian Reformed churches in the United States; more than one hundred loan applications have been approved. As of June 30, 2001, a total of \$12,107,423 was outstanding. Loan delinquencies do occur from time to time, but they are monitored and are minimal. As of June 30, 2001, two loans were seriously delinquent and could result in a loss to the Loan Fund. However, the Loan Fund maintains a loan loss reserve that is adequate to cover any potential losses.

D. Growth of operations is also reflected in the following data (U.S. and Canada consolidated):

	1999	2000	2001
Cash and equivalents	\$2,738,069	\$2,465,514	\$4,485,899
Loans and accounts receivable	\$10,410,442	\$11,099,78	\$12,148,118
Deposit on Software	\$15,995		
Equipment & software, less depreciation	\$25,619	\$19,214	
Total assets	\$13,164,506	\$13,590,919	\$16,653,231
Notes and accounts payable	\$9,630,286	\$9,835,018	\$12,763,511
Net assets	\$3,534,220	\$3,755,901	\$3,889,720
Total liabilities and net assets	\$13,164,506	\$13,590,919	\$16,653,231

E. An audited financial report as of June 30, 2001, appears in the *Agenda for Synod 2002—Financial and Business Supplement*.

IV. Sources of funding

Funds for the Loan Fund operations are derived from the following sources:

A. The sale of notes in those states where legal approval to offer has been obtained.

B. Gifts and bequests made to the corporation.

C. An unsecured line of credit with a bank that permits borrowings of up to \$1,000,000. The Loan Fund currently does not have any amounts outstanding on this line of credit.

V. Staff

The Loan Fund is served by Ethel Schierbeek (60 percent of full-time) and Carl Gronsman, who also provides support to CRC Home Missions as a member of the CRCNA Financial Services staff.

VI. Recommendations

- A. That the Loan Fund's executive director, or any members of the board of directors of the Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. be given the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to the Loan Fund are discussed.
- B. That synod elect two board members from the nominees provided to serve on the board of directors of the Christian Reformed Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.

Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.
Carl A. Gronsman, executive director

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church maintains employee benefit programs that provide retirement benefits as well as health, life, and disability insurance for employees of denominational agencies, local churches, and other CRC organizations.

Administration of these programs is handled jointly by the denomination's Office of Personnel and Office of Finance and Administration. The responsibilities of the Office of Personnel include communication, enrollment, and record keeping; the Office of Finance and Administration handles financial administration, accounting, control, and investment management.

II. Board matters

The ministers' pension plans, special-assistance funds, and the employees' retirement plans are governed by the U.S. Board of Pensions and the Canadian Pension Trustees. These boards meet two to four times each year, usually in joint session. Separate meetings of the boards are held as needed to address matters unique to the responsibilities of the U.S. or Canadian trustees. The U.S. Board of Pensions has five members and is chaired by Mr. Wilbert Venema. Similarly, the Canadian Pension Trustees are five in number and are chaired by Rev. Jake Kuipers.

The responsibilities of the boards include long-term planning, benefit-related decision-making, and policy definition, as well as oversight of fund assets and investment returns. The U.S. board monitors the investment activities of the funds through a subcommittee made up of trustees and additional members recruited for their special expertise in investment-related matters. The Canadian board provides investment oversight within the context of the full board.

Oversight of the denomination's U.S. Consolidated Group Insurance has been changed from the U.S. Pension Trustees to the Board of Trustees. This change is discussed in the group insurance section of this report.

III. Benefit-program activities

A. *Ministers' pension plans*

The ministers' pension plans are "defined-benefit" plans. This means that the benefits paid by the plans are defined (by formula) and the funding of the plans is determined by actuarial calculations of the amount of money needed to fund the defined benefit. Defined-benefit plans place market and mortality risk with the plan and the sponsoring organization. So, if markets fall and members live longer than expected, the plan and the sponsor pick up the cost. The defined-benefit form is preferred over the defined-contribution form by a significant majority of plan participants, as confirmed by a survey of all active and retired members.

In this connection, it is worthwhile noting that the trustees have compared the plans to twenty-eight other denominations in the United States and Canada. This disclosed that some form of defined-benefit design is used by approximately 60 percent of these organizations and that there is no discernable movement away from this form. It is also interesting to note that retire-

ment benefits received by CRC pastors retiring in the year 2001 and the average of benefits paid to all retirees were in the upper one-third of all the plans with which comparisons were made.

While the primary purpose of the plans is to provide retirement benefits, the plans also provide benefits to members who have experienced long-term disability, to the spouses of participants who die while in active ministry, and to the orphans of deceased members. Member surveys indicate that plan participants overwhelmingly support the inclusion of these benefits in the plans in spite of the fact that the cost of nonretirement-related benefits serves to diminish the amount of funds that might otherwise be available for payment of retirement benefits.

The following is a summary of participant counts as of December 31, 2001 for each plan and in total. Participants having an interest in both plans appear only once in the “total” column.

	U.S.	Canada	Total
Active ministers	877	236	1,113
Retired ministers	393	122	462
Spouses and dependents	132	23	148
Withdrawn participants with vested benefits	<u>75</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>86</u>
Total	1,477	392	1,809

Ordinarily, every three years independent actuaries are employed to do a valuation of the plans. The most recent valuation was performed as of June 30, 2000. This valuation was needed to understand the cost of the changes to the plans approved by synod in 2001 and effective June 30, 2001.

1. Basic assumptions and priorities.

- a. The denomination and the plans are binational. In 1982, synod indicated that the church’s total pension obligation to ministers and their dependents is an across-the-board denominational responsibility, requiring joint financing (*Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 50).
- b. The plans are to be administered on an actuarially sound basis and are not to be administered on a cash-in, cash-out basis. Synods of 1969 and 1979 affirmed the concept of advance funding. “An actuarially sound plan is based on the principle that the cost of funding a pension for a person is incurred while one is actively employed. Therefore, an amount is set aside each year during one’s career so that at retirement there will be sufficient monies to pay the pension benefits in accordance with the terms of the plan” (*Acts of Synod 1969*, p. 451).
- c. Synods, in their approval of the basic design of the plans, have thoroughly embraced the notion that all pastors retiring in a given year and having the same years of service should receive the same benefit regardless of differences in preretirement salaries. This notion of benefit equality is heavily supported by members, as established by a survey performed in connection with a review of the design of the plans.
- d. The value of housing, whether paid in cash or as a church-furnished home, is reflected in the design of the plans’ benefit formula. This is accomplished by including housing in an income-replacement target

that is made up of a combination of the amounts paid by the denomination's plans and by governmental plans—the Social Security Administration in the United States and Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security in Canada. Retirement income from the plans and from governmental plans was targeted at 60 percent in 1992 and was increased to 70 percent in 1999. The plans' benefit formulation reflects these targets.

- e. Currently, the formula for pension determination is 1.1 percent of the final average salary multiplied by the retiree's years of credited service for service through December 31, 1984, and 1.46 percent for service thereafter.
- f. The calculation of the funded position of the plans, including the actuarial accrued liability, is based on several significant, actuarial assumptions. These assumptions are reviewed and approved regularly by the U.S. and Canadian trustees and are based on historical data and expectations for future trends. Because pensions are based on the final average salary in the year of retirement, expectations concerning increases in salaries enter very significantly into the determination of the funded position of the plans.
- g. The trustees have placed high value on the availability of information concerning the plans and the interest of each participant. The plans' communication activities include the following:
 - Continuation of the practice of annually mailing statements of estimated pension benefits to all of the plans' active participants. These statements included an estimate of pension benefits based on actual years of credited service through December 31, 2001, and projected benefit amounts based on assumption of continued service to age 65. In addition, each participant was furnished a plan brochure containing information regarding the retirement and other benefits provided by the plans, examples of retirement benefit calculations, and other information of interest to plan participants.
 - Persons interested in the financial position and operations of the plans may consult the annual *Agenda for Synod* and the *Acts of Synod* for summarized information concerning the plans.
 - Each year classical treasurers are furnished copies of the complete audited or reviewed financial statements of the denominations' agencies and institutions, including those of the benefit plans, with the request that these be made available for examination by interested parties.
 - Representatives of the plans frequently are invited to make presentations to groups of members and classes, and, if possible, all such invitations are responded to affirmatively.
 - Finally, members of the plans and others have been invited by a variety of means to direct questions to the pension office. That office is able to furnish an informed response to nearly any question concerning the plans.

2. Changes to the plan

Benefits provided by the plans were enriched in 1999, and, effective July 1, 2001, were changed significantly. These changes enriched benefits paid to current retirees and made the service of currently active members more valuable such that their pensions at retirement will be significantly greater. The *Agenda for Synod 2001* contains a description of these changes and reference should be made to it for a full description of the recommendations approved that year.

3. Portfolio balances and performance

Plan assets are invested in balanced portfolios under the management of professional investment-management firms. These firms are required to adhere to the denomination's investment guidelines approved by synod in 1998, and their performance is measured against established benchmarks and regularly reviewed by the trustees. Their primary goal, set for them by the pension trustees, is to provide an above-average return and at the same time preserve principal. In significant part, the plans' financial performance and present financial condition have made it possible to enrich current and future benefits, including those proposed in the preceding section of this report.

The plans' actuaries have informed us that as of June 30, 2001, the actuarial liability totaled \$92,000,000 for the U.S. plan and \$29,200,000 for the Canadian plan. These amounts reflect the cost of the changes approved by synod in 2001 and represent the obligations that the plans have to over one thousand eight hundred active, disabled, and retired pastors, widows, and dependents.

Market value of the portfolios is summarized as follows:

	December 31, 2001	December 31, 2000
United States (U.S. \$)	\$90,765,000	\$95,800,000
Canada (Can. \$)	\$23,081,000	\$25,100,000

Total portfolio performance is summarized as follows:

Plan	2001	2000	1999	1998	5yrs	10yrs
Canada	-4.5%	-0.9%	13.6%	7.2%	6.9%	9.3%
U.S.	-1.6%	1.0%	10.7%	13.8%	8.7%	10.4%

Dividends, interest, and appreciation in the value of the plans' holdings are used to provide a significant portion of the resources needed to meet the plans' obligations to its active participants and to fund payments to retirees and beneficiaries. As portfolio performance statistics indicate, the plans have participated in market upturns and have not been immune to market downturns. On balance, the pension trustees are grateful for portfolio performance and are mindful of both the long-term nature of the plans' obligation to pay retirement and other benefits to participants and the long-term nature of investment policies and objectives.

4. Funding strategy

Through December 31, 1997, the plans were funded by a combination of ministry shares and direct billings. Ministry shares paid for the pension

benefits of ministers serving churches (one pastor in cases of churches having multiple-staff ministries). Synod 1997 approved a new method of funding the pension costs of all first/only pastors and chaplains. Under this method, pension costs associated with these pastors are funded by an assessment on each professing member of the denomination age 18 or older. The amount of the assessment for 2002 is \$20 per member in Canada and \$18 in the United States. These amounts are collected by means of quarterly billings to each church, based on each church's reported membership statistics.

As with ministry shares, this funding method spreads the pension cost evenly among all members of the CRC. The involvement of all members in the funding of the plans gives recognition to the fact that ministers serve several congregations during the course of their careers and in so doing serve the entire CRC. The cost of pension benefits for these ministers has been spread among all the members of the CRC. Regardless of whether one attends a large church or a small church, the pension cost to be paid by each member is the same.

Each ministry that employs a minister as a missionary, professor, teacher, or in any capacity other than first or only pastor is required to pay the annual cost of participation in the plan. These costs are billed quarterly, \$1,013 (\$4,052 annual) in the United States and \$1,248 (\$4,992 annual) in Canada, and cover the pension costs of approximately one-fourth of all active participants.

B. Employees' retirement plans

The employees' retirement plans are defined-contribution plans covering unordained employees of denominational agencies, committees, and churches. Contributions are paid to the plan on a quarterly basis by participating groups in an amount equal to nine percent of the compensation of the unordained employees who are participants in the plan. Each quarter, participants receive a statement indicating the dollar amount credited to their accounts, the total value of their accounts, and the vested percentage in their accounts.

Individual participants direct the investment of their account balances among eight investment alternatives in the United States and seven in Canada, including fixed-income and equity funds. The investment alternatives are currently managed for United States participants by Bank One, N.A. Trust Division, which also serves as custodian of the plan's assets, and for Canadian participants, by Clarica Life Insurance Company.

At December 31, 2001, the balances in these plans totaled \$15,506,000 in the U.S. and \$1,540,000 in Canada, and, as of that date, there were 394 participants in the U.S. plan and 81 in the Canadian plan, categorized as follows:

	U.S.	Canada
Active	265	59
Inactive	129	22

C. Consolidated Group Insurance

Consolidated Group Insurance is a denominational plan that offers life, health, and dental coverage in the United States and Canada to ministers and

employees of local congregations and denominational agencies. Currently there are 1,246 participants in the program. The most significant categories of participants include 565 pastors and employees of local churches, 353 employees of denominational agencies, and 328 retirees. The plan in Canada is a fully insured plan purchased through a major health-insurance provider. The coverage in Canada is supplemental to health benefits available through government health programs. In the United States a trust has been established to fund benefits and expenses of the plan.

In the United States, the plan has been significantly affected by increasing costs of health care and changes in systems available to self-insured plans for the administration of claims and for obtaining discounts through provider networks. During 2001, a change was made in the provider network and in the administration of claims. These changes were made necessary by a new and significant coverage gap in the plan's provider network and by a need to control the costs of the plan. Premiums charged by the plan are based on overall expectations of claims and administrative expenses. Due to constantly increasing costs of health-care services, it has been necessary to increase premiums in each of the three years through 2001. In 2002, premiums were increased for retired participants in order to contain the significant excess of claims over the premiums charged to this group.

The pension trustees asked the BOT to assume the governance responsibility for the medical plans in the United States and Canada by assigning such responsibility to its standing committee on compensation. The pension trustees made this request primarily based on their view that matters concerning the medical plans are more closely related to matters of compensation and employment than they are to matters concerning retirement, which is the primary focus of the trustees. The requested change was approved by the BOT in 2001.

D. Financial disclosures

Audited financial statements of the plans, and of all of the agencies and institutions, are sent each year to the clerk of each classis with the request that they be made available to any interested party. In addition, beginning in 1999, summary financial statements are included in the *Acts of Synod*. Individualized statements are furnished to members of the ministers' pension plans and the employees' retirement plans.

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to members of the Canadian Pension Trustees and of the United States Board of Pensions and to Mr. Kenneth J. Horjus when insurance matters and matters pertaining to pension plans for ministers and employees are discussed.

B. That synod designate up to 100 percent of a minister's early or normal retirement pension or disability pension for 2003 as housing allowance for United States income-tax purposes (IRS Ruling 1.107-1) but only to the extent that the pension is used to rent or provide a home.

C. That synod elect two members to the U.S. Board of Pensions and Insurance for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2002.

1. Rev. Edward Tamminga is completing his first term of office and is eligible to serve a second term. According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure his name is being submitted as a single nominee.

Rev. Edward Tamminga is the senior pastor of Second CRC in Grand Haven, Michigan. He has served on the Pastoral Ministries Board, the Christian Reformed Home Missions Board, and The Back to God Hour Board. Rev. Tamminga has also served a number of times as a delegate to synod.

2. Mr. George Vande Werken is completing his first term of office and is eligible to serve a second term. According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure his name is being submitted as a single nominee.

Mr. George Vande Werken is executive vice president of Sand Ridge Bank in northwest Indiana. He is a member of Second CRC in Highland, where he has served terms as elder and deacon. Mr. Vande Werken has also served as secretary of The Back to God Hour Board, a member of the board of Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services in Grand Rapids, and a member of the board of Highland Christian School.

D. That synod elect two members to the Canadian Pension Trustees for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2002.

1. Mr. Bruce Dykstra is completing his first term of office and is eligible to serve a second term. According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure his name is being submitted as a single nominee.

Mr. Bruce Dykstra is finance and development director for Hamilton District Christian High School. He is a member of Ancaster CRC and has served there as an elder. Mr. Dykstra worked for thirty-four years for the Royal Bank of Canada. He was a delegate to synod in 1999.

2. Mr. John Luimes is completing his first term of office and is eligible to serve a second term. According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure his name is being submitted as a single nominee.

Mr. John Luimes of North York, Ontario, is an actuarial consultant. He is a member of Willowdale CRC in Toronto and has served there as an elder. Mr. Luimes has served as a Cadet counselor and as treasurer for Willowdale Christian Schools.

Pensions and Insurance

Kenneth J. Horjus, director of finance
and administration

I. Introduction

This report gives an overview of youth ministry in the denomination in 2001 and provides a sampling of how the Youth-Ministry Committee (YMC) is supporting and encouraging the denomination's ministry to youth. The committee as a whole has met twice since its report to Synod 2001. The mandate of the YMC calls it to *be the denominational conscience continually emphasizing the paramount importance of ministry among our youth*, and the activities summarized below flow from this mandate.

II. Promoting the work of Dynamic Youth Ministries

A major part of our work is to embrace, affirm, and monitor the work of the three ministry divisions of Dynamic Youth Ministries (formerly known as United Calvinist Youth). The committee endorses the work of Dynamic Youth Ministries as the denominationally related youth ministry source and believes that all CRC churches could benefit from participation in Dynamic Youth Ministries' programs and resources.

III. Classical Youth Ministry Consultant/Coordinator

The committee's mandate also calls upon the committee to assist the Christian Reformed Church in implementing guidelines for youth ministry at the classical level by giving advice concerning the hiring of youth ministry staff at the classical level. Together with Dynamic Youth Ministries and CRC Publications, the committee has prepared a report for Synod 2002 that describes the shape of such ministry and provides specific recommendations to strengthen youth ministry at the classical level (Appendix A).

IV. Evaluations

The YMC's mandate requires biennial written reports of the programs of each ministry of Dynamic Youth Ministries. Evaluations of the ministries of GEMS and Youth Unlimited are attached as Appendices B and C to this report.

V. Nominations for Youth-Ministry Committee

Several committee positions need to be filled, for which the committee is pleased to present the following nominees:

A. New members—nominees for a first term**1. Calvinist Cadet Corps**

Dr. Marvin VanderVliet is the senior pastor at First CRC in Jenison, Michigan. He has served as a chaplain for the cadet corps and remains active in the cadet program.

Mr. Bernard Teeninga is self-employed in computer sales and services. He works part-time as the training coordinator of the Cadet Corps.

2. Central United States

Mrs. Diane Dykgraaf has been involved in children's ministry since 1980 as a Story Hour/ Little Lambs leader and coauthored a revision of all the stories for that ministry in 1998. Diane serves as the children's ministries

specialist for the Coffee Break Ministry of Christian Reformed Home Missions. Diane is a member of Kellogsville CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Mrs. Necia VanderWall has been involved in youth ministry for many years. She is presently the youth director at Pathway Ministries in Byron Center, Michigan.

3. Member-at-large

Mrs. Sherry TenClay, a member of Chelwood CRC, Albuquerque, New Mexico, is an educator and consultant. She has previously served on the board of CRC Publications—five years on its executive committee and one year as its president. She has also served on the Conference of Churches' Disabilities Concerns Committee, the Association of Presbyterian Church Educator board, and the local PTA. Mrs. TenClay has served as deacon several times as well as being an adviser to synod.

B. Returning members

The following committee members have completed their first term of service, and are eligible for and willing to serve a second term:

1. Western Canada

Mr. Rick Abma serves as youth pastor at Woodynook CRC in Lacombe, Alberta. He is a graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary.

2. Youth Unlimited

Ms. Dawn Ryswyk, a member of Bethel CRC in Edgerton, Minnesota, is the youth ministry coordinator for Classis Minnkota. She has served as local church youth leader and as chair of the Minn-i-kota League. She has also served on the Youth Unlimited Board as a regional representative, a league trainer, a SERVE projects coordinator, and a regular participant in the annual conventions.

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to the Youth-Ministry Committee chairperson, Dr. Syd Hielema, and the secretary, Mrs. Glenda Tebben.

B. That synod approve and adopt the recommendations in the report re classical youth ministry (see Appendix A).

C. That synod approve the work of the YMC re evaluations of the GEMS' ministry and Youth Unlimited (see Appendices B and C).

D. That synod select one of the nominees for the Cadet's position and one for the Central United States position to serve a three-year term on the YMC.

E. That synod appoint Mrs. Sherry TenClay to a three-year term for the member-at-large position.

F. That synod approve the appointment to second terms of Mr. Rick Abma and Ms. Dawn Ryswyk.

G. That the three divisions of Dynamic Youth Ministries—Cadets, GEMS, and Youth Unlimited—be placed on the recommended-causes list.

Youth-Ministry Committee
Syd Hielema, chairperson
Glenda Tebben, secretary

Appendix A

A Report from the Denominational Youth-Ministry Committee Concerning Classical Responsibilities for Ministry to Youth¹

I. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to develop proposals for strengthening youth ministry at the classical level of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Synod 1991 mandated the (then) newly formed Youth-Ministry Committee “to assist the Christian Reformed Church in implementing the approved guidelines for youth ministry.” On the classical level these synodically approved guidelines included:

- Appoint a classical committee
- Establish a budget to promote youth ministry
- Consider hiring a classical youth minister²

During the first five years of its existence, the Youth-Ministry Committee encouraged the development of the first of these three, the appointment of Classical Youth-Ministry Committees (CYMC). Approximately one-third of the classes now have such a committee. The denominational Youth-Ministry Committee is thankful for those classes that have established CYMCs, and would like to acknowledge the positive contributions that these committees are making to the effectiveness and depth of youth ministry in their classes.

The Youth-Ministry Committee recognizes that each classis is unique, and because of these uniquenesses a variety of support structures are needed to encourage youth ministry at the classical level. The CYMC is not the most appropriate support structure for each classis. During the past five years, a number of classes have implemented a version of the third synodical guideline by appointing a part-time classical youth ministry coordinator/consultant.³ This grassroots development revised the synodical guideline of hiring a classical youth *minister* by hiring instead a youth ministry *consultant or coordinator*,⁴ recognizing that ordination (as it has been traditionally understood) is not required for such a position. Furthermore, all of these positions are part-time, which is sufficient, but very few ordained ministers are available

¹The term youth is deliberately ambiguous, and can refer to children, teens, and young adults.

²See *Acts of Synod 1991*, pp. 739f.

³These classes include Alberta North, Chatham, Eastern Ontario, Niagara, Minnkota, and Zeeland.

⁴Throughout the rest of this report we will use the term consultant, but the appropriate term will depend upon the specific job description.

for this sort of work on a part-time basis. By means of this report, we wish to alert the denomination to this development, to recommend serious consideration of such an appointment in more classes, and to provide guidelines for implementing such an appointment.

The Youth-Ministry Committee also recognizes that youth ministry in the Christian Reformed Church occurs in a variety of settings, which include church education and youth programming (among others). In order to develop a more holistic approach to youth ministry, which respects the need to coordinate what occurs in these various settings, this proposal was prepared jointly by the YMC, the three ministries of Dynamic Youth Ministries (GEMS, Cadets, and Youth Unlimited) and CRC Publications (distributor of Faith Alive Resources).

The bodies that are presenting this report have also met with the Classical Ministries Renewal Team (CMRT), and discovered that our goals are completely in harmony with theirs. As a result, the main points of this report were presented at the CMRT conference held in November 2000 in Colorado.

II. The current picture of regional youth ministry

Historically, the CRC has not carried out youth ministry in a structured manner at the classical level. CRC Publications formerly provided regional trainers and held regional training events. It also has a board member from each classis. The three divisions of Dynamic Youth Ministries each have their own regional structures that do not correlate with the classical divisions of the denomination. DYM's three sets of regional structures operate independently from one another; the strength of these structures varies from region to region. In summary, the current structures are ones in which:

- Each ministering body seeks to provide resources at a regional level.
- Youth ministry is not incorporated into the wider picture of Christian Reformed ecclesial structure. Thus, developments in areas such as evangelism, diaconal service/outreach, church education, worship, and so forth are not coordinated with youth ministry at the regional level.
- A variety of regional configurations are employed.
- None of these agencies address youth ministry beyond high school.
- The regional representation is administered from the respective "head offices" in Grand Rapids and financed by head offices as well.

III. A Reformed vision for youth ministry

We are convinced that passing on the Reformed vision is central to youth ministry. Passing on a distinctively Reformed vision to our youth has become increasingly difficult for a variety of reasons. These difficulties include:

- The general decline of respect for heritage in our culture.
- The blurring of boundaries between ecclesial traditions.
- The proliferation of generic youth ministry resources that are now available.
- The inability of Reformed institutions of higher learning to prepare sufficient numbers of graduates to meet the demand for youth ministry within the CRC.
- Youth ministry leadership that is itself unclear concerning the Reformed vision.

In 1996, the Youth-Ministry Committee produced and distributed (as mandated and endorsed by synod) a relational, nurturing Reformed model for ministry to youth entitled *Walk with Me*. Although every congregation received a complimentary copy of the video and workbook, integrating this model into congregational youth ministry requires ongoing support structures, which are not currently in place.

The three ministry divisions of Dynamic Youth Ministries have made it a priority to strengthen the Reformed foundations of their work, and CRC Publications has consistently addressed this need as well. We believe that strengthening youth ministry at the classical level will encourage the development of Reformed foundations for youth ministry within a classis by increasing the links between the local congregations and DYM and CRC Publications, by increasing the presence of youth ministry concerns at the classical level, and by increasing the availability of training for those involved in youth ministry and/or church education.

IV. The need for expanding classical youth ministry

The rationale for this report is simple: There are many unmet youth ministry needs at the congregational level that can be properly addressed at the classical level. We will propose a variety of ways to expand youth ministry at the classical level, with the central proposal focusing on the hiring of a part-time classical youth ministry consultant. We believe that our proposals will help to meet the following needs.

A. Communication and networking

The trend toward hiring staff for congregational ministry to youth is illustrative of a growing sense that ministry is gradually becoming more challenging, and these challenges are due to a wide variety of sociological and ecclesiological factors. Local congregations are continually searching for programs and ideas that work, and this search is often carried out by each congregation on its own. In other words, each congregation is required to reinvent the wheel. Appropriate classical support structures will make resources and expertise available to local congregations in a more communal manner, thereby saving time and providing a strong foundation.

Currently, there are no structured mechanisms for reporting on youth ministry developments at the classical level. A classical youth ministry coordinator/consultant would be highly informed concerning the state of youth ministry within the classis and within the denomination as a whole, and regular reports at classis would alert the congregations to developments and needs in this important area of a church's ministry. Furthermore, by opening lines of communication among area ministries, burdens, joys, and programs can be shared. Leaders will be less likely to feel as if they are all alone. They will be more aware of and have better access to appropriate resources, programs, training, and support. More experienced and/or more trained youth leaders can mentor and walk alongside those who are just beginning. We can more fully benefit from the communion of the saints and the gifts of the Spirit.

Finally, larger, regional events are an important dimension of youth ministry. A classical youth ministry coordinator is well equipped to undertake the planning, communicating, and delivery of such events.

B. Church leadership support

Increased peer segregation is a clear sociological trend in North American society, and this trend is very evident in congregations as well. We believe that those in leadership roles in the church, including pastors, other ministry staff, elders, and deacons, can provide crucial leadership in reversing that unhealthy trend. Such leadership requires a basic understanding and awareness of ministry to youth. Classical support structures are one effective vehicle for informing and equipping congregational leaders in this way.

C. Support for smaller congregations

In the last fifteen years there has been a dramatic increase within the denomination in paid church-ministry staff at the congregational level whose job descriptions focus on ministry to youth. This trend, which is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, illustrates the need for strong leadership in congregations in these areas. At the same time, there are many congregations that are too small to hire staff in these areas.⁵ Appropriate classical support structures will allow certain of the benefits derived from paid ministry staff to flow to these smaller churches.

D. Wholistic youth ministry

Because youth ministry is an integral component of congregational life, it occurs in many different ways. In many congregations, these include corporate worship, children's worship, Sunday school, Story Hour/Little Lambs, catechism, GEMS, cadets, youth programs, young adult groups, service projects, congregational fund-raising events, and more. This wide variety of activities requires a vision of the whole picture, a vision for wholistic faith nurture and how each activity makes a unique contribution to that whole picture. It is difficult for each congregation to develop this sense of the whole picture alone. A classical youth ministry consultant, who functions as a link between the local congregation and Dynamic Youth Ministries and CRC Publications, is able to give guidance to each congregation concerning such coordination.

E. Young adult ministry

One area of ministry to youth that largely falls between the cracks in our current ministry structures is the area of young adult ministry.⁶ This area is of particular importance now because:

1. Historically our youth ministry models have assumed ministry through high school, shortly after which young people entered into marriage and participated in the congregation as a family unit. While the assumptions of this model have always been questionable, this weakness becomes magnified as the average marrying age continues to rise, thereby creating a ministry void for large numbers of young adults.
2. Ministry to young adults is extremely difficult on the congregational level. Many young adults leave their home communities after completing high

⁵Some congregations have overcome this problem by jointly hiring a person to minister to youth. However, there are many situations in which this is not an appropriate solution.

⁶The 1992 report to synod on Young Adult Ministry remains highly relevant.

school, and those who remain are often unsatisfied with group activity limited to their own congregation.

A structure other than the congregational one is usually required for young adult ministry. Classis provides the best structure within the CRC.

F. Denominational Ministries Plan

The recently adopted Denominational Ministries Plan, “Created, Redeemed, Called to Serve God in the Church and the World,” identifies five strategic goals for the denomination’s ministry. The third of these is entitled “Integrated Ministry to Children and Youth.” Concerning this, the plan states:

It is essential that we nurture in our children and youth—the leaders of tomorrow—the zeal, education, experience, and disciplines necessary for service to Christ in the church and the world. CRC agencies and institutions will develop ministry resources that integrate children and youth into the full life of the church. (p. 10)

This strategic goal identifies an area of profound need, a need that requires leadership at every level of denominational life. Thus, we believe that strengthening youth ministry leadership at the classical level will also contribute to addressing this goal.

In summary, there are significant youth ministry needs that can be supported by increasing the presence of youth ministry within a classis.

V. Incorporating the youth ministry consultant into the classical structures

A new position created within an ecclesiastical structure requires appropriate channels for reporting, accountability, and support. A look at the six classes that already have such a position is instructive. Most of the classes that have hired part-time youth ministry consultants have structured the position within the following parameters:

- Classis establishes a job description, usually with the understanding that this should be flexible and reexamined regularly as the youth ministry needs of the classis develop.
- Classis establishes a standing committee that serves as a youth ministry advisory committee to give and receive input from the consultant. On average, this committee meets six times a year. Some classes appoint a minister to this committee who then reports to classis on behalf of the consultant when the consultant does not attend a classis meeting.
- The consultant publishes a regular newsletter that is sent to each congregation in classis and distributed to the council and all those involved in youth ministry.
- The consultant submits a written report for each classis meeting and frequently (every time or every other time) presents an oral report and answers questions at the classis meeting.
- Most of the consultants serve in an official regional capacity with a denominationally related youth ministry agency, e.g., as Compass 21 facilitators, board members, regional trainers, members of the denominational Youth-Ministry Committee.
- Adjustments are made according to the geography of a classis. While in many classes the congregations are relatively close together, in some they are not. For example, Classis Eastern Canada has six maritime congrega-

tions that are 750 miles removed from the rest of classis, and its youth ministry consultant makes regular trips to the “eastern front” to serve these more isolated congregations.

Note: This report has been endorsed by CRC Publications/Faith Alive Resources, and written in consultation with the executive directors of CRC Publications, GEMS, Cadets, and Youth Unlimited.

VI. Recommendations

We believe that the classis is an important vehicle for encouraging congregations to be faithful in their ministries to their children and youth. Historically such ministry has been given a low profile at the classical level, and, as “the conscience of the denomination,”⁷ the Youth-Ministry Committee (together CRC Publications) wishes to challenge the classes to greater responsibility in this area. Therefore, we present the following recommendations to synod:

A. That synod give the privilege of the floor to Dawn Ryswyk and/or Karen Wilk when these matters are discussed.

Ground: These two women are both serving as classical youth ministry consultants, and are also very active in providing leadership in youth ministry at the denominational level.

B. That each classis give serious consideration to the appointment of a classical youth ministry consultant/coordinator to assist the member congregations of classis in their ministry to youth.⁸

Grounds:

1. The appointment of such a person is financially feasible on the classical level, particularly because in most cases such a position will be part-time (at least initially, and, in many cases, in the long-term as well).
2. The job description of such a person will address the issues raised in section IV above and will be adjusted to meet the specific needs of each classis. Job descriptions of those presently serving in this capacity include any or all of the following responsibilities:
 - a. Equip, encourage, and support all who are involved in youth ministry in any way in the classis: the teen and adult youth leaders, counselors, church education teachers, youth elders, youth councils, or youth and education committees.
 - b. Provide discipleship-training retreats for teenagers and young adults.
 - c. Create and maintain a classical youth ministry resource library.
 - d. Produce and distribute regular classical youth ministry newsletters.
 - e. Organize retreats and other events for young adults.
 - f. Report regularly to classis concerning the state of youth ministry in the classis.
 - g. Serve as a youth ministry consultant to the churches.

⁷Cf. from YMC mandate, article b, 1), in the *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 2001), p. 350.

⁸Christian Reformed Publications and Youth Unlimited have agreed to work together to develop a diagnostic tool that will help classes determine if they should hire such a person.

- h. Promote and advocate effective youth ministry throughout the classis.
- i. Work closely with Dynamic Youth Ministries and CRC Publications to promote their materials and programs and inform these ministries of the local needs.
- j. Work closely with the classical youth-ministry committee on which he or she serves as an ex-officio member.
- k. Be available as a speaker or leader for congregational youth events.

C. That Article 41 of the Church Order be amended by adding the following question to the Classical Credentials: “Does the council faithfully oversee and support the congregation’s youth ministry?”

Grounds:

1. The present set of questions affirms the importance of Christian education but, by omitting a reference to youth ministry, leaves the impression that Christian schools fulfil the church’s responsibilities to its youth.⁹ As we join in giving thanks for the wonderful benefits of Christian schooling, we also recognize that the school does not replace the responsibilities of the church.
2. Currently, there is no structured manner in which youth ministry issues regularly come to the floor of classis,¹⁰ and it is thus possible for a classis to meet regularly for years without discussing youth ministry at all. Such a question in the Classical Credentials allows each congregation to be held accountable by the other congregations in classis in this important area of congregational life. It will also—in a minor but important manner—keep this issue before the congregations as they meet as a classis.

D. That synod remind the classes to include the state of congregational youth ministry in its church visitors’ reports.

Grounds:

1. Ministry to youth constitutes an important part of a congregation’s task, and the state of such ministry is a significant marker of the congregation’s health.
2. The *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government* includes questions in this area in its outline of questions.¹¹

VIII. Conclusion

Ministry to youth in the Christian Reformed denomination is a highly dynamic area of ministry, changing more rapidly than our structures can handle. As a committee, we praise the Lord for innumerable developments that serve to strengthen our youth in their walk with him. As the synodically appointed denominational conscience, we wish to challenge the denomination to form ministry structures that address this rapidly changing area of church life.

⁹This problem is discussed at length in the 1991 synodical report on Youth Ministry.

¹⁰This is not the case if a classis requires that its church visitors report on the state of youth ministry in each congregation (see recommendation D).

¹¹Cf. p. 503, questions 5 and 16.

Studies consistently demonstrate that 95 percent of Christians make a commitment to Christ before leaving their teenage years. Noting this, and remembering the significance of our covenantal theology and our baptismal vows, we believe that youth ministry should be at the forefront of our church agendas at every level. We urge Synod 2002 to approve our recommendations, and we thank the delegates for their careful reflection and prayer regarding these ministries in the CRC at the turn of the millennium.

Appendix B

Ministry Audit of GEMS (completed October 2001)

I. Putting the mission into practice

Jan Boone, director of GEMS, sees the goal of GEMS as providing a place to establish and affirm the identity of girls as children of God. While other church ministry programs may have a similar goal, GEMS occupies the unique niche of being able to provide a safe place for girls to be with women who also function as mentors for them. Many counselors agree with Jan that providing this safe haven for girls to mature in their identity is crucial for faith development. GEMS provides a place for women to serve as mentors and role models to girls.

A second major goal of the GEMS program is to reach out to unchurched girls and bring the gospel to them within a caring environment. These two goals are carried out while responding to the following factors:

- The age span of girls involved in GEMS ranges from the primary grades to junior high, with unique demands at various levels along this spread.
- The experience of girls varies significantly in different areas of the continent, and in the differences between rural and urban contexts.
- GEMS ministers to churched girls who attend Christian and public schools and to nonchurched girls, and these differing contexts require a variety of approaches.

During the past five years, the GEMS materials have undergone significant revisions so that they more clearly reflect this goal and so that they also address the situations of girls in a rapidly changing social context. Badges have been reworked, and music, CDs, devotionals, and other materials have been developed to supplement the more traditional materials. The name change from Calvinettes to GEMS in 1995 also reflects a deep desire to shift the focus from a type of segregated identity (i.e., we are Calvinists, separate from others) to an inclusive identity with a clear focus on evangelism. The forthcoming (probable) renaming of the *Touch* magazine (a wise decision, to remove all possible sexual connotations) is also an important part of a significant retooling. Counselors expressed appreciation for the changes but also expressed a desire to stabilize at this point. As one said, “a great deal has changed in the past five years, and the changes have been good. I hope that during the coming five years we can work with the materials as they are now.”

The shift to an outreach focus is probably the most significant change. This shift is working out as follows:

- The Bible study lessons for the 2000-2001 season focus on the theme of evangelism. These studies use a unique format (letters from a sailor set about a century ago) and use a wide variety of Scripture references each time while focusing on practical life situations. Counselors report that these lessons work well.
- Counselors report that the emphasis on evangelism challenges them to grow as believers because many have not previously been challenged to develop this dimension of the Christian life. In turn, this growth is beginning to have a spillover effect upon congregations, challenging them to be more outreach oriented.
- The nonchurched girls attending GEMS come primarily through two routes: church girls who attend public schools invite school friends, and girls attending both public and Christian schools invite neighborhood friends (in addition, nonchurched girls have also become connected through VBS programs and Coffee Break programs). Clubs whose church girls entirely attend Christian schools tend to have lower numbers of nonchurched girls. Many of the clubs we interviewed have an average of one-third nonchurched girls within their clubs.
- Many clubs report that one of the growing pains associated with this emphasis upon evangelism is that it is difficult to conduct Bible studies that reach both the church and the nonchurched girls simultaneously. Clubs often integrate church and nonchurched girls well and also reach out to their families. One club indicated that they had dropped the program because the Bible study materials were too difficult for the nonchurched girls. While this response was unusual, clearly this is a challenge that needs to be addressed. GEMS recognizes this challenge, and has developed a board game called Bridges as one strategy for dealing with this. We suspect that this challenge has also been addressed by other outreach programs. We would recommend that GEMS consult with the Coffee Break program (and other similar ministries) to find other creative ways of resolving this tension.

This wonderful growth in outreach will require long-term followup activities of some kind that reflects a partnership between GEMS and other church ministries. It is not clear to us how the GEMS emphasis upon outreach partners with the emphases of CRC Publications, Cadets and Youth Unlimited, and local congregational life as a whole to enfold these girls into the fabric of congregational life over the long-term.

II. GEMS curriculum and materials

It was a privilege to review the GEMS curriculum and other materials. Everything is attractively packaged and very professional looking. The artwork is appealing and appropriate to the targeted age levels. A wide range of racial types are used so that any girl should find someone to identify with. More importantly, however, the content of the material was generally strong as well.

The GEMS program is divided into three levels: the Awareness level for grades 1-3, the Discovery level for grades 4-6, and the Advanced level for grades 7-8. Material for the Awareness level includes a Bible lesson booklet with a corresponding counselor helps booklet. Each lesson consists of a Bible story on one page with an activity on the adjoining page. The *Counselor Helps*

booklet provides a detailed lesson plan for each lesson with the lesson concept, aim, and scriptural background clearly laid out. Each lesson has a “grabber” to get the girls’ attention and focus them on the point of the story, questions about the story, personal application questions, and an assortment of options and activities related to the lesson. The Bible stories are well written at an age-appropriate level. The questions about the story are primarily factual and simply highlight the key points of the story rather than engage the girls in thought. The personal application questions, however, encourage the girls to take the principle of the Bible story and apply it to their own lives. The variety of activities provided at the end of each lesson give the counselor a wide range of options to choose from to meet the needs of her particular group. All in all, the Awareness Bible lessons are well done and easy for any counselor to pick up and use.

The themes for the various Bible lessons—such as the loving relationship between God and his people, love for ourselves and others, women of faith, and God’s kids—are well chosen and appropriate for the age level. One of the lesson series, “Clothes Designed by Jesus” centers around a paper doll who each week receives a new article of clothing such as jeans of compassion, belt of humility, and so forth. This doll, Amy Awareness, is central to all the lessons. Amy is a beautiful blond, blue-eyed Caucasian. GEMS has obviously tried to be sensitive to ethnic differences. Amy’s paper doll friend, included in the book, has straight dark hair and an ethnic name, Zia. The cover of the booklet portrays an African American girl dressing an African American doll. Despite these attempts, however, a club with non-Caucasian participants might need to avoid this otherwise wonderful lesson series. Although children may not mind playing with dolls that look very different from themselves, parents, particularly unchurched parents who may be hesitant about their child’s club participation to begin with, may be offended. A possible solution may be to offer booklets for sale with Amy dolls of different races.

The Discovery level is for grades 4-6. This is the most popular level of the GEMS program with most churches making use of this level even when they do not use the material for the younger or older girls. The Bible lessons for the Discovery level are included in the *Touch* magazine. Counselors can receive leader’s guides with supporting material for those bible lessons. The Discovery level also has a large badge handbook for each girl. Some of these are done as group projects and some are done independently. The badges are sorted into three categories: God’s Word, God’s World, and My Gifts. Each badge is separated into three sections: learning, doing, and challenge. There is a mixture of worksheet-type questions to answer and activities to do in order to earn the badge. The variety of badge topics are well-rounded and should be appealing to the girls. They fit well with the ministry mission of bringing girls into a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Advanced level is for girls in grades 7-8 or 9. This level is used by fewer churches than the Discovery and Awareness levels. Many churches are transitioning to mixed-gender groups at this age level. There are no specific merit badges for this age level, but girls may continue to earn badges from the *Discovery Badge Handbook*. Counselors agreed that the oldest girls in the clubs have unique needs. Several clubs have developed their own materials for working with these girls or have purchased supplementary materials from other youth ministry organizations. One counselor said, “We want to reward

these girls for being faithful to the program, so we arrange different outings and guest speakers for them every time.” With the average age for the onset of puberty steadily decreasing in our day, it is no surprise that ministry to the oldest girls in the GEMS clubs requires creative initiatives. It seems that the GEMS organization would best serve this age by providing a variety of options for counselors to choose from.

The lessons for the Advanced level are titled *Finishing Touches!* Each lesson comes on a full-colored sheet that can be added to an attractive binder. A *Counselor Helps* booklet is also available with full lesson plans based on each handout. The *Finishing Touches* curriculum alternates lessons focused on inner beauty (developing positive character traits) and outer beauty (specific grooming tips). Each lesson is well organized with an opening activity to hook the girls’ attention and focus them on the lesson topic, a story followed by discussion questions, and various activities related to the topic. The lessons focusing on inner beauty stress developing positive character traits based on biblical foundations.

Approximately every other lesson is based on outer beauty. Counselors are encouraged to bring in guest speakers and/or provide hands-on experience on topics such as makeup application, hair care, manicures, physical fitness, and proper posture. These lessons are organized in much the same manner as the inner-beauty lessons with an opening devotional followed by beauty tips and demonstrations.

Some young teens and their parents may be uncomfortable with the strong emphasis on outer beauty. Although many girls in this age group are very focused on their appearance and could benefit highly from the gentle advice of a loving Christian adult to help them make wise beauty choices, other girls are still cherishing their childhood and could feel pressured into using makeup when they do not feel ready. Furthermore, many parents do not allow their junior high girls to wear makeup and may not appreciate the church giving them lessons in how to do so. Although the lesson on makeup specifically addresses this concern and encourages the girls to respect their parents wishes, giving them a lesson anyway subtly undermines parental authority.

Young teen girls face a constant barrage from the media to look attractive, be sexy, and be thin. The inner-beauty lessons do a good job of attempting to put this into perspective by focusing on the development of character that really matters. However, this message is undercut by the outer-beauty lessons. Although the opening devotional seeks to keep the focus on God, the beauty tips in general buy into the prevalent cultural message that a great deal of time and money should be spent on one’s appearance. For example, the lesson on hands presents a time-consuming “13 Step Plan to Terrific Nails,” which requires the purchase of numerous beauty products. In the skin-care lesson, girls are also encouraged to use several different products and spend careful time daily in a beauty routine. Although there is certainly nothing wrong with women choosing to spend some time or money on a modest beauty routine, this is the approach girls are surrounded by in the media and at school. A girl who chooses to spend her time and money in other ways should feel supported in these decisions by her church.

A seven-lesson extension to the *Finishing Touches* series is called *On Guard*. The *On Guard* series encourages girls to be on guard against culture’s influences and stand up for the truth. The lesson topics include showing

respect, addictions, eating disorders, peer pressure, cliques, sexual purity, and preparing for the future. The structure of these lessons is similar to the inner-beauty lessons in the main course. They are well written and address important issues in a well-balanced manner.

A *Counselor's Manual* is available, and each counselor is encouraged to read through the manual. The manual provides an overview of the program; developmental characteristics of the girls at the different levels; discipline tips; an organizational plan for club coordinator; and the statement of faith, constitution, and bylaws. Each counselor is requested to complete a factual quiz at the conclusion of the manual and mail it back to the head offices in Grand Rapids for review. This may seem a little paternalistic to some counselors. The manual is a good resource for someone joining an established program or for someone starting a program in a church who already has some personal experience with or knowledge of the program. It may seem a little confusing to someone with no background in the program. One of the confusing aspects in the manual is the ordering information based on council and noncouncil clubs. This council structure is currently being changed and simplified by GEMS.

III. *Shine* magazine

Shine, the monthly (nine issues per year) magazine for GEMS, is an attractive and well-laid-out journal that intentionally seeks to appeal to all the age groups involved in GEMS. Every issue includes a welcoming editorial, three Bible lessons, feature articles (often narrative in nature), sidebars with specific suggestions for applying the articles, opportunities for pen pals, a question and answer section ("Dear Hope"), as well as jokes and announcements about upcoming events. The combination of all of these produces a colorful, reader-friendly magazine that has something for every age group involved with GEMS.

Some issues are focused on one particular theme. For example, the April 2001 issue is entirely geared to environmental issues. This is a difficult issue to address because many Christians assume that such issues are only the concern of New Age types and do not play an important role in the Christian life. It is not uncommon to hear Christians (also in the CRC) derisively speak of "tree-huggers" who do not have their priorities straight. This theme issue proactively and unabashedly invites girls to "hug a tree:" "recycling paper is like giving a tree a hug. And while you're hugging, thank God for the coolness of its shade, and the tasty fruit you can eat from it. He created trees for our use and enjoyment" (*Shine*, April 2001, p. 7). Such statements provide a solid foundation based on biblical principles that do not become sidetracked by the political controversies surrounding these issues in our culture. Perhaps this theme issue would be even stronger if occasionally an article would make explicit reference to the biblical basis for this environmental concern. For example, the theme of creation given for our use and enjoyment is clearly articulated in Genesis 2 and Psalm 104. Because almost all of the work with Scripture in *Shine* magazine relates to the theme of evangelism, girls may receive the impression that the Bible teaches us how to witness and does not directly shape our response to other areas of life. Furthermore, the skill of knowing how to work with Scripture so that we allow it to shape all that we do is a very difficult skill to learn and practice (also for adults!). Therefore, every opportunity to make this skill overt and intentional should be utilized.

The tone of the GEMS material is upbeat and positive overall, while also honestly facing significant struggles that girls face, e.g., divorce, academic difficulties, social disconnection, and depression. It is not clear how intentionally the GEMS material seeks to address the spiritual warfare that is involved in identity development. For example, the identity anxiety that the Serpent inculcated in Eve with his statement in Genesis 3 is exploited in our culture to manipulate girls and young men to be excessively anxious about their appearance, their clothing, and their body size. This anxiety is especially manipulated to further the god of consumerism. It is very evident that girls and young women in the CRC have been, and continue to be, severely wounded by this spiritual warfare. The reality of this spiritual warfare raises a faith-nurture question: Is such warfare best countered by an upbeat and positive tone that seeks to be proactive and does not specifically identify that this spiritual warfare is even taking place, or is this warfare so intense that its reality needs to be unmasked and addressed head-on? This question raises another, more fundamental, question: Is the absence of references to this spiritual warfare in the GEMS materials an intentional strategy to cultivate an upbeat and positive tone while addressing this struggle “between the lines” as it were, or do the faith-nurture strategies developed by GEMS not consider this struggle significant enough to address?

IV. Training events and special events

There are a variety of training opportunities for counselors, including an annual convention, two or three regional conferences, and various workshops held throughout the United States and Canada. Those counselors who attend these training opportunities are very positive about the experience. They find them uplifting, practical, and very encouraging. Those counselors who do not attend usually cite distance or the difficulty for working women to take the time away from family to attend as reasons for not participating. Furthermore, we noted that in quite a few clubs there is a sense that the congregation does not fully support the GEMS program, and this lack of support is partly evidenced by lack of funding to attend these training opportunities and special events. We believe that these opportunities are essential for equipping and encouraging volunteers involved in ministry to girls, and we (1) challenge congregations to find creative ways to give these women a break from other responsibilities to attend these events and to cover the expenses, and (2) we encourage the GEMS organization to challenge congregations to provide such support as well.

V. Conclusion

GEMS provides a strong ministry to girls, both church and nonchurch. The organization has undergone many changes during the past six years. These changes have strengthened the ministry, and they will provide a strong foundation for service in the years to come. This ministry is carried out through two powerful challenges. Because of its emphasis on evangelism, GEMS faces the wonderful challenge of reaching both those who are being raised in the faith and those who are unfamiliar with it. The success of meeting this challenge now brings about new challenges; we encourage the organization to consult with other Reformed ministries to develop strategies for dealing with these new challenges.

Second, this ministry takes place within the tension of being in but not of the world. Children and young adolescents are particularly vulnerable within this tension because they crave acceptance and the culture around them is very successful at defining the terms for such acceptance. We encourage GEMS to face this tension more directly—to be prophetic and bold in affirming God’s love for these young women while exposing the lies by which they are so easily entrapped.

We are thankful that the GEMS ministry is utilized by so many Christian Reformed congregations, and we challenge all these congregations to support this program and the many dedicated women who minister within it in every way possible—through prayer, encouragement, gratitude, and financial support.

VI. Additional materials from GEMS

A. Our mission statement

The ministry of GEMS Girls’ Clubs accepts the following statement as our primary mission: To bring girls into a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

The methodology used to fulfill our mission includes:

- In partnership with churches, to teach girls about the Savior and to model a dynamic faith walk for them.
- To provide biblically based, culturally relevant curriculum for girls in first through eighth and/or ninth grades.
- To train and encourage women to serve as effective club leaders to all girls.
- To promote the organization and growth of clubs

B. Our collective challenge

Our collective challenge is to first help each girl come to know Christ personally. Second, to help her develop spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and socially so that she will discover how God is at work in her life and in the world around her and what her role is in the world and in the church of today and tomorrow.

C. Our statement of belief and faith

1. We believe the Bible to be the infallibly inspired Word of God.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, 2; John 1:1-5, 14).
3. We believe that God created all things from nothing. He created men and women in his image and without sin (Genesis 1:27).
4. We believe that man rebelled against God and sinned. Therefore all humans are sinners (Romans 3:23).
5. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is truly God and truly man (Luke 1:35).
6. We believe that Jesus died on the Cross to pay the price of our sins. Those who accept him as Savior are justified by his blood (Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5:8, 9).
7. We believe that Jesus arose bodily from the grave and returned to heaven where he is our High Priest (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Hebrews 4:14-16).

8. We believe that the Holy Spirit bestows the gift of faith whereby humankind is born again in Christ and becomes a child of God (1 John 3:1; Romans 8:16, 17).
9. We believe that the Holy Spirit abides with and comforts us until Christ's return (John 14:16).
10. We believe that when Jesus returns from heaven all will be raised—those who believe will have eternal life in him; those who do not believe will be eternally condemned (John 5:28, 29).

D. Ministry goals

1. To bring girls into a living relationship with Jesus Christ
Strategies for accomplishing this:
 - Providing meaningful devotions, lessons, praise and worship experiences, and service projects
 - Offering badge work that builds on a biblical understanding of Scripture and shows how Scripture relates to our responsibility as heirs of the kingdom
 - Providing curriculum that helps teach the value of developing a disciplined devotional life in each girl
 - Equipping counselors to assist girls in making a personal commitment to Christ
 - Providing fun activities in a safe, healthy environment
2. To serve all girls regardless of church affiliation
Strategies for accomplishing this:
 - Promoting clubs through schools, church bulletins, local newspapers, VBS, and bring-a-friend programs
 - Making lessons and badge work applicable to all levels of Scripture knowledge
 - Maintaining consistency in the time and place of club meetings
 - Keeping Christ central in the ministry
 - Encouraging parental involvement
3. To foster a healthy interaction between girls and their peers and between girls and adults through a variety of social activities
Strategies for accomplishing this:
 - Planning parties, mixers, and outings
 - Participating in annual theme activities
 - Holding banquets
 - Participating in adopt-a-grandparent, secret pal, prayer partners, pen pals, and other relationship-building programs
 - Playing games
4. To provide a well-rounded, quality program relevant to the needs of girls today
Strategies for accomplishing this:
 - Regularly evaluating curriculum and program materials
 - Constantly seeking feedback from councils, counselors, and girls
 - Regularly reviewing materials from other ministries

- Evaluating staff effectiveness
 - Securing qualified board members who know and understand the ministry
5. To equip women of the church in their role as counselor, friend, and encourager
- Strategies for accomplishing this:
- Providing well-written, relevant, creative materials for counselors to use in club
 - Providing counselors with ongoing leadership training
 - Keeping counselors informed and updated on program changes
 - Encouraging counselor attendance at conventions, regional conferences, area workshops, seminars, conferences, and counselor meetings
 - Providing counselors with training to understand the different developmental stages of girls
 - Training club coordinators to act as shepherds or small-group leaders for the counselors in their club
6. To promote the ministry of GEMS
- Strategies for accomplishing this:
- Using display boards, videos, pamphlets, and word of mouth
 - Promoting the ministry at leaders' and pastors' gatherings
 - Providing information packets to all inquiries
 - Sending promotional mailings to churches without clubs
 - Promoting the ministry with displays at various children's ministries conferences
 - Using the ministry's website
 - Training board members, leadership trainers, area coordinators, staff, and other key volunteers to call on churches without clubs

VI. The recent history of GEMS

The following developments have occurred during the past seven years:

1. GEMS Girls' Clubs chosen by the GEMS executive board as the new program name for the Calvinette ministry.
2. A new logo for GEMS Girls' Clubs was adopted.
3. Finishing Touches!—Completed and approved to market outside for GEMS Girls' Clubs.
Touch magazine went to full color throughout
4. Merit Badges went from gray and blue to more colorful and a banner was introduced as an alternative to scarf and slide.
5. Held our first Get Connected! Camp with 160 girls attending.
Revised *Discovery Badge Handbook*
6. Copublished with CRC Publications two prayer journals – *Guess What Jesus?* and *It's Me, Jesus!*
Adopted *Protecting the Children . . . Protecting our Volunteers* as an abuse-prevention resource for clubs.

7. Kingdom Kids (curriculum for 4 and 5 year olds)—a joint venture with Cadets was introduced.

On Guard series – an addition to the Finishing Touches! for advanced girls.

8. Introduction of ACTS Program (Area Counselor Training & Support)—Restructuring of councils that are no longer effective in many areas due to lack of ability to recruit and train effective leadership at that level.

Thirty-four geographic areas were developed with a leadership trainer and an area coordinator for each area. They will conduct a minimum of two workshops annually and create opportunities for girls to participate with other GEMS in large-group events.

This fall we will be introducing the new name of *Shine* for our magazine.

VII. Membership statistics

Congregations participate in the GEMS programs as follows:

596	CRC churches as members
75	Reformed
20	Presbyterian
26	Uniting Reformed and Independent Reformed
26	Nondenomination and other denominations
2	Overseas

The majority of CRC churches have GEMS. Those who do not are mostly Korean, Chinese, and the small and senior congregations. As soon as we have time to compile a list of possible churches that could have GEMS, we will invite them to join us.

Appendix C

Ministry Audit of Youth Unlimited (completed October 2001)

“Youth Unlimited is a Christ-centered youth ministry organization that has been assisting churches across North America for decades. Our mission commits to support youth ministry efforts for high school and early teen youth in the local church. All of Youth Unlimited’s services are shaped through seeking God’s vision for ministry interpreted through a Reformed perspective in diverse social and ethnic contexts.”

I. Putting the mission into practice

Barry Foster, the executive director of Youth Unlimited (YU), has broken down the following Youth Unlimited goals into three main ministry types. The first, Contact Ministries, is the program that registers youth and their leaders with events sponsored by Youth Unlimited. The second, Support Services, enables and equips those working directly or indirectly with youth. Finally, the third, Operations, is the goals that drive how YU functions as a ministry. He shares that YU does not attempt to do the work that God has called his church to do; however, there are times when it is more expedient for one organization, such as YU, to do programming on behalf of, and for, the church. The goal is to support the work of the church, not replace it.

A. *Ministry goals part one: Contact Ministries*

1. Youth Unlimited will offer yearly gathering(s) for the purpose of challenging youth to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This will be done through praise and worship, small groups, and relationship building.
2. Youth Unlimited will offer yearly opportunities for teens and their leaders to participate in mission-service opportunities. The intended purpose of YU-sponsored service events is to challenge youth to know Jesus and grow in faith while learning to serve others in the name of Christ.
3. Youth Unlimited will offer yearly opportunities for teens and their leaders to develop ministry-leadership skills to use in his kingdom.

B. *Ministry goals part two: Support Services*

1. Youth Unlimited will offer yearly opportunities for youth leadership, both adult and student, to improve their youth-ministry skills.
2. Youth Unlimited will provide resources and services that will assist churches in their efforts to offer quality youth ministry.
3. Youth Unlimited will offer a support network for professional youth pastors who serve the church.
4. Youth Unlimited board, staff, and consultants will serve as advocates for youth ministry at the church and denominational level. They will give assistance to churches that desire to incorporate youth into the full life of the church.

C. *Ministry goals part three: Operations*

1. Youth Unlimited will transition from membership-based to ministry-partnership terminology.
2. Ministry funding sources will include (1) church-partnership funding, (2) individual gifts, (3) program-based revenue, (4) specific grants, (5) corporate gifts, (6) denominational program support, and (7) bequests.
3. Youth Unlimited will seek to serve denominations of the Reformed faith. We will, however, make our services and programs available to all Christian denominations upon request.
4. Youth Unlimited will maintain a staff of professionals committed to the mission of the organization.

In the information that follows, it will be evident how YU works out these goals. Through a random sampling of calls to youth leaders and pastors from Youth Unlimited member churches across the United States and Canada as well as discussion with YU's director, this audit report was made.

II. Service opportunities

A. SERVE provides one-week opportunities for youth to grow in their faith and demonstrate their faith through serving others across the United States, Canada, and overseas. They have opportunity to demonstrate God's love with disadvantaged, disabled, dying, hungry, and elderly people who need their

help. Opportunities for early teens are also available. Throughout the summer of 2001, there were nearly eighteen hundred participants at twenty-seven different sites.

In talking to youth leaders across the United States and Canada, SERVE was at the top of the list as being a strength of YU. Youth leaders promote service opportunities as being high priority. Many shared the SERVE experiences of their youth-group members and found them to be a valuable tool in the spiritual growth of teens and leaders. Many leaders and teens appreciated the hands-on work and ministry in the communities in which they served. We praise God for such opportunities and encourage YU to continue to expand its efforts in this area. We encourage churches to continue their involvement with, and support of, these wonderful opportunities.

B. Project Bridge is a two-week opportunity that challenges high school teens to put God's word of racial reconciliation into action in a cross-cultural setting. It is a ministry that is very intentional in breaking down the walls that divide us as races and bringing people together through the hope and freedom in Jesus Christ. From the Navaho Reservations to the inner city of Philadelphia to the Ukraine, over fifty teens and leaders participated in this ministry in the summer of 2001.

We encourage churches to motivate more teens to take this opportunity to be a part of understanding the need of racial reconciliation and manifesting Christ's love in a hurting society.

C. SWIM (Summer Workshop in Ministries) is a ministry where young people have an opportunity to share their faith through VBS, sports camps, and community outreach celebrations. In the summer of 2001, eighteen young people were sent to Honduras and forty-three others to sites across the United States and Canada.

In our contacts, this ministry has been a life-changing experience for many who have participated. We praise God for the many lives that have been touched through SWIM over the past forty years.

D. Encounters is a new student-development ministry that will replace SWIM and begin in the summer of 2002. Both Youth Unlimited and Christian Reformed Home Missions have joined with Christian Reformed World Relief and Christian Reformed World Missions in beginning this exciting new ministry. Encounters is a three-phase leadership program designed to give high school and post-high individuals experiences in a ministry atmosphere so their sense of mission and calling can be developed. Phase one—Encounter God's Mission—is a three-to-four-week event of working in a local church or ministry and focusing on that ministry and specific evangelism/community outreach skills. Phase two—Encounter God's Calling—is a five-to-six-week event also working in a local ministry but focusing on broadening the individual's understanding of ministry, developing his or her sense of calling, and building deep community with the team. Phase three—Encounter Commitment—is designed as a residency program for the participant and a ministry leader with the focus on the development of leadership goals in ministry. This will be developed in cooperation with college credit, internships, and ongoing ministry placement.

We celebrate this new vision for ministry and trust that young lives will be challenged to better discover God's mission and God's call in their lives. We encourage churches to challenge their high school and post-high individuals to become involved in this exciting ministry.

III. Events

A. YU Convention is a four-night, five-day inspirational worship event that seeks to challenge participants to experience God and results in a visible desire to live like Christ. The 2001 "Broken and Built Up" conventions were spiritually uplifting for the over 1900 who attended in Knoxville, Tennessee, and for nearly 250 who attended in Olds, Alberta. "Live On Location" in 2003 will be the first regional convention event in the United States.

In our contacts with the churches, the annual convention is a strong number two in the youth leaders' promotion of programs. Regional conventions were a plus to youth leaders due to geographical availability and travel costs. For those who did not promote the convention as much as they did SERVE, there were some concerns that teens might get "lost in the crowd." They were also afraid that the convention would have less impact on the teens compared to a mission/service event. However, the conventions have impacted many young people in their walk of faith and continue to be another wonderful opportunity for many teens.

B. Selah are spiritual retreats for professional youth workers and their spouses that are designed to refresh them in their spiritual journeys.

This is a relatively new YU venture that has been very well received. We challenge churches who have professional youth workers to send them to such a retreat for spiritual renewal.

IV. Leadership training

A. Compass 21 is a leadership self-discovery development process designed to empower and equip church leadership teams. Guided by a skilled Compass 21 facilitator, the teams work together to determine goals for their unique youth groups and larger church communities and to find the best resources and support for achieving those goals.

Compass 21 is catching on in a variety of churches. The process was completed in a few churches that we contacted. For those who were involved in Compass 21, many positive comments were made. They enjoyed the process and the results. However, the lack of using this tool was mainly due to the time commitment involved in processing it as well as carrying it out in their local church ministry. Most of these were churches with volunteer leaders.

This is a wonderful tool to be used by churches. We encourage YU to think about a possible less comprehensive form of this tool for the sake of the limited time commitment of volunteer youth leaders.

B. On The Road To . . . is a three-year journey through a series of leadership development seminars available to both adult and student leaders across the United States and Canada. This year's seminars focused on "On The Road To . . . Connecting—Reaching Friends Who Need To Know."

Those who attended these seminars had very positive responses; however, this did not seem to be a high priority among those leaders who were contacted for a number of reasons: geographical availability, leaders' time commitments as well as many other strong youth ministry organizations doing similar seminars. We encourage churches to support your youth leaders in getting involved in this YU leadership training opportunity in your areas.

V. Publications and other resources

A. Faith Alive Christian Resources

Youth Unlimited has developed several resources in partnership with CRC Publications, and these resources are available from CRC Publications.

B. Early Teen Resource Kit is a wonderful resource designed to encourage churches to begin an early teen ministry (ETM) as well as strengthen those that already exist. It includes lesson plans, game ideas, and a how-to book on building a Christ-centered ministry. Since many ETM programs are beginning across the country, this could be an excellent resource.

C. YoU CAN is a bimonthly newsletter that includes a short devotional, resource reviews, music reviews, lesson ideas, a calendar of events, and information about the events of Youth Unlimited.

Those we contacted who received this publication were appreciative of it, but many were not even aware of it. When sent to the various churches, it seems it does not get into the right hands. That comes as a challenge to the churches.

D. Youth Unlimited News is a quarterly publication featuring YU ministry updates, prayer requests, and a word from the executive director about a youth-ministry-related topic.

As mentioned above under the *YoU CAN* publication, the same is true here.

E. Youth Unlimited Monthly E-Mail is an important tool to keep youth leaders across the United States and Canada informed on the most current YU information.

Many of the youth leaders we contacted took advantage of this resource and found it to be an important tool.

F. Youth Unlimited Web site (www.youthunlimited.org) is available and used by many churches. More extended e-mail information and other important new items are found here.

Some youth leaders expressed frustration in getting to all the areas of YU's web site. There was confusion with the ID numbers and codes. With so many youth ministry sites available, easy access is key to its use. We encourage Youth Unlimited to address this concern.

VI. Professional Youth Pastors Association

Under the leadership of leadership development specialist, Mr. Kel Blom, YU is developing a network for professional youth pastors. At present there are fifty youth pastors involved. Through various focus groups and dialogue with denominational leadership, the following areas are being developed: a data bank with youth-pastor profiles, a special board to credential professional

youth pastors, continuing education credits, church consultation, staff placement and mentoring, intervention, and denominational advocacy for the professional youth pastor.

On behalf of youth pastors, this network is serving an overdue need. It has been very well received by youth pastors. We are grateful that YU is in the forefront in this important area, and we challenge youth pastors in the various churches to avail themselves of such an opportunity.

VII. Canadian Action Plan

This is a comprehensive report compiled throughout Canada that deals with the needs in the Canadian churches. A continued effort to look at these findings will help these churches.

VIII. Conclusion

The changes in Youth Unlimited over the past years have been God's tool in shaping and pruning the ministry through staff changes, ministry focus, structure, goals, and priorities. God has sent vision through these changes. The many changes and goals for the future of Youth Unlimited are (1) addressing the weaknesses that were mentioned from the churches in our audit that include putting a face on the ministry in all geographical areas, (2) meeting the needs of individual churches, (3) meeting the needs of the professional youth pastor, and (4) getting the needed information to the appropriate people. Youth Unlimited is setting a high priority in the near future on exploring opportunities for regional Youth Unlimited staffing. These positions would meet the needs of the churches in the areas of individual support and putting a face on the ministry. Possible new mergers with other ministries such as Student Dynamics of Western Canada and Eaglecrest of West Michigan would be instrumental in providing the structure for these positions and for the levels of service available to the individual churches. Developing new marketing and promotion tools will be key to communicating the ministry of YU to churches. These tools should also help in putting a face on the ministry.

The ministry and reputation of Youth Unlimited remain strong and viable to the churches who are willing to use the ministry programs. Youth Unlimited's unique ministry goal of assisting, equipping, and empowering the local church for youth ministry is a key difference that they offer compared to other youth-ministry organizations. With a Reformed perspective of ministry as its focal point, YU will serve as an advocate for youth ministry in the local church and denominational level. We are thankful to the executive director and staff of YU for their dedicated work. We again encourage YU to continue in its goals of regional staffing, new marketing tools, education and ease of web site development, Compass 21, service opportunities, regional conventions, Professional Youth Pastors Association, new forms of financial development, and possible new ministry mergers. All of these services come with cost. We challenge churches to rise to meet these needs. Finally, we praise God that Youth Unlimited is used by many Christian Reformed churches, and we challenge these and others to support this ministry and its staff, as well as dedicated youth leaders everywhere through prayer, encouragement, and financial support.

IX. Additional materials from Youth Unlimited

A. Mission statement

Youth Unlimited helps churches challenge youth to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and transform their world for him.

B. Statement of faith

We believe...

- The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, and it serves as our rule for faith and life.
- God has revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that in Jesus Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.
- God created the heavens and the earth, and humankind was created in the image and likeness of God. Because of Adam’s sin, humankind is separated from God and unable on its own to be reconciled to God.
- The sacrificial death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ has provided the only way of reconciliation with God, which is why we call him Savior.
- Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and now reigns at God’s right hand, which is why we call him Lord.
- Through Jesus’ redemption, all of creation can be claimed and restored through the Spirit. Therefore, we are ambassadors of Christ’s kingdom in all of society.
- Salvation is God’s free gift based upon the atoning work of Christ, and this gift is effected by the Son and by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people and received by faith in the Father.
- Jesus Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. The righteous—those who are justified by faith in Christ—will inherit eternal life, and the wicked—those who remain in their wickedness because they reject Christ—will be condemned eternally.
- We believe that the local church plays the central role in the fulfillment of the Great Commission and that the spiritual unity of believers comprise the one body of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- People who are apart from God matter to God and therefore matter to the church. For this reason, it is the individual Christian’s and the church’s responsibility to proclaim the gospel in work and deed, by every means possible, through a life of holiness, service, and love.

X. Ministry filters

The Youth Unlimited Board has adopted four key ministry filters that serve to guide our planning for the future. They are:

- A. What will this decision do to help youth know Jesus Christ and grow in faith?
- B. What will this decision do to support, encourage, train, and promote the work of the volunteer and professional youth worker in the local church?
- C. What will this decision do to connect youth with the local church?
- D. What will this decision do to support Youth Unlimited’s Statement of Faith and the biblical, Reformed vision that it promotes?

XI. Compass 21: Seven shared ministry values

Each of YU's programs has been assigned one (or more) of the following values that were developed for their Compass 21 leadership training tool:

A. An *APPROACH* to Youth Ministry that is:

- **Intentional**—Each program, event, and activity is guided by a clear statement of ministry intent.
- **Relational**—the aim is to help youth build a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ as well as spiritually supportive relationships with others.
- **Transformational**—A faith that is expressed through actively changing the society/world through service.

B. Youth Ministry *LEADERS* who are:

- **Exemplary**—Knowing their spiritual gifts and serving according to their giftedness, they model a Christian life that is both caught and taught.

C. Youth *PROGRAMMING* that is:

- **Developmental**—The goal is to guide each young person from one developmental stage to another.
- **Responsive**— The goal is to adapt to the constantly changing youth ministry needs and opportunities.
- **Evangelistic**— The goal is to equip students to share their faith through actions and words.

Dynamic Youth Ministries: Youth Unlimited

Youth Unlimited spring and summer programs have seen significant interest as reflected by the number of phone calls during the winter months. Five spring break SERVE projects are filled to capacity. Available summer SERVE spaces have increased to more than two thousand for the 2002 year. Churches can choose from over thirty locations for their church youth group service project. YU's one week SERVE projects are wonderful opportunities for youth and their adult leaders to learn the importance of serving others while deepening their faith. We hear of many teens who have pointed to their SERVE experience as a turning point in their spiritual growth. Not only are youth challenged to paint a house or build a wheel-chair ramp, they are also spiritually challenged each evening through group worship, challenging messages, and personal reflection time.

Youth Unlimited's yearly convention will be August 2-6, 2002, in Fort Collins, Colorado. Amidst the beautiful Rocky Mountains, youth will gather from all across North America to worship, to be spiritually challenged, and have a great time building memories for years to come. No other denomination offers such a high quality spiritual impact event at such a nominal price.

After forty-one successful years of SWIM (Students Working In Ministries), the transition has now taken place to Encounters. Encounters is a three-phase leadership-development program designed to give high school and post-high school individuals experiences in a ministry atmosphere in order to develop

their sense of mission and calling in life. We have already begun recruiting individuals from those who have participated in SERVE and who have attended the convention.

Step 1: Encounter Mission will help in developing the participant's sense of mission and giving of their talents to God, as they will spend three to four weeks working in a local church or ministry. They will have an opportunity to work with community development and low-income housing projects as well as drop-in centers, community outreach, vacation Bible school or day camps.

Step 2: Encounter Calling will focus on sharing their faith and building deep community within their team, including the importance of teamwork, conflict resolution, and communication. In this setting, they will also be mentored in identifying what their spiritual gifts are, what their passions are, and what age group they like best. This five-to-six week adventure will also include a one-week adventure opportunity, which may include hiking, backpacking, or experiencing a different culture or county.

Step 3: Encounter Commitment is a longer-term placement where students will be mentored and continually challenged to refine their leadership skills and gifts and to test God's call for them as they are placed into a key leadership role.

CRWRC, Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Youth Unlimited are cooperatively partnering together to make way for this wonderful adventure beginning the summer of 2002. With guidance and wisdom from the Lord, we pray for a tremendous impact in the hearts of young people and communities. Please join us!

Over twenty-five churches have taken a close look at their youth ministry efforts through the eyes of YU's Compass 21 process. Compass 21 is designed to empower a church to assess its strengths and weaknesses in its youth-ministry efforts and then proceed to set a course for quality improvement under the guidance of a trained YU Compass 21 facilitator.

Youth Unlimited continues to be challenged financially. Although approved for offerings by the Christian Reformed Church, we do not receive ministry shares. We depend upon church offerings, church ministry partnerships, and income from offered programs. We desire to keep costs down for programs such as Convention, SERVE, and Encounters in order to include as many youth as possible.

Youth Unlimited is a youth ministry of the Reformed faith. As a parachurch ministry, we offer services to all denominations, but churches rooted in the Reformed faith should be especially interested in the youth services offered by Youth Unlimited.

Youth Unlimited
Barry Foster, executive director

GEMS Girls' Clubs

God's hand of blessing continues to enable GEMS Girls' Clubs (Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior) to reach more girls—girls within our churches and girls within the communities around our churches.

The Perfect Nine! has been the annual theme, or spiritual emphasis this year. This theme study helped girls understand that we grow more Christlike in our thoughts and actions if we stay in step with the Spirit and allow him to grow love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our lives.

Our strong emphasis on training in ministry continues for our counselors and resulted in several good things this past year. The Annual Counselor's Convention was held at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario, this past summer, and 671 women registered for the convention making it the largest Canadian convention ever. In addition, a new system of delivering training to counselors in local areas was introduced, the ACTS Program—Area Counselor Training and Support Program—and resulted in more counselors attending training events than ever before in our history. This system involves identifying and training both trainers and event coordinators in areas across the continent.

The second Get Connected! Camp for early teen girls was also held in the summer of 2001. One hundred and eighty one girls from both the United States and Canada participated in this week-long, life-defining camp experience. College-age girls from churches across the continent were recruited and trained as TLCs or camp counselors, and high-school-age girls received leadership training as well by serving as CITs—Counselors-In-Training. The camp was held in Irondale, Ontario, at Bark Lake Leadership Conference Center. GEMS is committed to expanding the camping component of our ministry and is currently looking for property to develop into a year-round camp and leadership development center.

The ministry continues to develop new and culturally relevant curriculum each year in an effort to capture the attention of girls living in the twenty-first century. One of the many well-received products developed this past year was Bridges, a board game intentionally designed to foster community among girls and bridge the gap in relationships.

GEMS Girls' Clubs
Jan Boone, director

Calvinist Cadet Corps

The Calvinist Cadet Corps, at their annual board meeting, once again reaffirmed their commitment to helping boys to grow more Christlike in all areas of life and intentionally confirmed that the program is designed for and offered to churches with a Reformed theology. The churches that take advantage of the Cadet ministry come from a variety of denominations, but the majority of the 628 Cadet clubs—79 percent—are found in Christian Reformed churches.

The Spirit of the Lord was evident at the 2001 Cadet Counselors' Convention in Angola, Indiana, last summer as nearly three hundred counselors, wives, and children gained in education, fellowship, and inspiration under the theme, "Walking with God." The convention provided a good start to the season, and as the year progressed, Cadets, and eventually entire congregations shared in the "walking with God" message on Cadet Sunday and through Bible studies.

The international camporee is just around the corner, and registrations are coming in for the event, which occurs just once in three years. In 2002, the campers return to the naturally beautiful province of Alberta and the Canadian Rockies. The planners are anticipating at least one thousand five hundred participants, and it could well be more. Activities such as rock climbing, rappelling, archery, and riflery will be a draw, but the greatest blessing for an international camporee is the lasting spiritual growth and memories.

Please pray that God will continue to use the Cadet ministry and the camporee as effective ways to grow his kingdom.

Calvinist Cadet Corps

G. Richard Broene, executive director

I. Introduction

The Historical Committee is a standing committee of the Christian Reformed Church that oversees the work of the denominational archives and promotes publication of denominationally related historical studies. The committee's members are: Dr. Harry Boonstra, chair (2002), Rev. Michael De Vries (2003), Mrs. Janet Sheeres (2004), Dr. Robert Swierenga (2004), Dr. Richard Harms, secretary (ex officio).

II. Archives staff

Richard Harms is the curator of the Archives, which are housed in Heritage Hall at Calvin College. As archivist he serves the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin College. Other staff include: Mrs. Hendrina Van Spronsen, office manager; Mrs. Wendy Blankespoor, library assistant; Mrs. Boukje Leegwater, departmental assistant; Dr. Robert Bolt, field agent and assistant archivist; student assistants Ms. Nateisha De Cruz, Ms. Kristi Den Bleyker and Ms. Susan Potter; and volunteers Dr. Henry Ippel, Mr. Floyd Antonides, Rev. Henry DeMots, Mrs. Margaret Eshuis, Mr. Ed Gerritsen, Mr. Fred Greidanus, Mr. Hendrick Harms, Mrs. Helen Meulink, Mrs. Janice Overzet, Rev. Gerrit Sheeres, Mr. Ed Start, Rev. Leonard Sweetman, and Mr. John Hiemstra.

With sadness we report the deaths of Rev. Henry Baak (September 4) and Mr. Cornelius Van Duyn (November 25), two long-serving volunteers on the staff.

III. Archival work during 2001

A. We maintained contact with all forty-seven classes by means of regional representatives in forty-two classes (one more than last year) and with the stated clerks of the remaining five.

B. Archival records from eighty-three CRCNA congregations (eight more than last year) were received, microfilmed, and returned. We also microfilmed the records of six Christian school organizations. The microfilm copies are stored in our vault and are available only with the written permission of the individual congregation or school. The congregations in Classes Grand Rapids East, Hudson, Iakota, Minnkota, and Thornapple Valley have had all their minutes microfilmed. Given the frequency that the committee hears of missing records, these congregations and classes are to be commended for their total participation in this important work.

C. Official classical minutes were received from all forty-seven classes (an increase of four from last year). This year marks the first time in a number of years that every classis has sent minutes to the archives in a timely manner. Anniversary materials were received from nineteen Christian Reformed churches.

D. We published our twentieth newsletter, which was distributed to all regional representatives, stated clerks of classes, the Dutch American Historical Commission, relevant periodical editors, and other interested people in the denomination.

E. We continued adding data to a denominational historical directory that already contains entries for the 2,711 individuals who have served as ordained ministers in the denomination and the thirteen hundred plus congregations and missions that are, or have been, part of the CRCNA. We have added lists of chaplains, Back to God Hour staff, home missions personnel, foreign missions personnel, and evangelists and specialized ministers. We have sent this list to the respective agencies for review, amending, and correction. In addition, we have completed work on the Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin College administrative personnel and teaching faculty.

F. We continued the translation project for early denominational and congregational minutes. Projects now underway: Curatorium minutes, 1894-1906; minutes of CRC in Luctor, Kansas, and Central Avenue CRC Holland, Michigan.

G. Working with staff of the Hekman Library, we completed scanning frequently requested manuscript material into digital formats that will be made available via the internet. We are currently working with the library and *The Banner* to study the feasibility of making *The Banner* available in digital format.

H. We completed extensive service in the celebration of the 125th anniversaries of Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin College. This included hosting a conference of the Association for the Advancement of Dutch-American Studies, whose proceedings we are currently preparing for publication.

IV. Publications

For many years the Historical Committee has discussed the desirability and potential of a series of monographs on the Christian Reformed Church, including such subjects as immigration and settlement, histories of the denomination and congregations, theological issues, histories of related institutions and organizations, biographies of people important to the denomination, and other topics. A major impediment to such publication was the lack of funds because the Historical Committee has no budget. This past year has been significant because we were able to initiate such a series when the CRC Foundation provided a grant of \$20,000. Of this, \$4,415 was used for the production of *Our School*, a history of Calvin College. For this subvention, the committee received one thousand copies of the three thousand press run to distribute and sell. During 2002, the committee plans to publish a historical directory of the denomination that will contain entries for the 2,711 individuals who have served as ordained ministers in the denomination and the thirteen hundred plus congregations and missions that are, or have been, part of the CRCNA. It will also include a list of chaplains, Back to God Hour staff, home missions personnel, foreign missions personnel, evangelists and specialized ministers, and other useful historical data.

V. Historic sites

The congregation at Graafschap, Michigan, has dedicated its new facility, which includes space for interpreting the history of the congregation, the

denomination, and the community by way of three-dimensional displays. At this point, this space is not fully equipped because of lack of funds.

VI. Recognition

A. The committee welcomes Mrs. Janet Sheeres and Dr. Robert Swierenga to the committee and thanks them for their willingness to serve.

B. We acknowledge the following individuals who will celebrate significant anniversaries in the ordained ministry during 2002:

72 years	Gareth S. Kok
69 years	John Schaal
68 years	Morris H. Faber Richard H. Wezeman
67 years	Elco H. Oostendorp J. Jerry Pott John O. Schuring
66 years	George Stob
64 years	Henry De Mots
63 years	John Blankespoor Garrett D. Pars
62 years	Lambert Doezema Repko W. Popma
61 years	Eugene Bradford Harold Petroelje Gerrit H. Polman Gysbert J. Rozenboom Garrett H. Vande Riet
60 years	John A. Botting Harold Dekker Nicholas B. Knoppers John E. Luchies
55 years	Jacob H. Binnema Alexander C. De Jong John A. DeKruyter Jacob Hasper Herman Minnema Bernard E. Pekelder John H. Piersma Gerald J. Postma Robert R. Recker Clarence Van Ens

50 years

Leonard C. Bossenbroek
William D. Buursma
Harold DeGroot
Anthony DeJager
John H. Elenbaas
Raymond R. Graves
John M. Hofman
Fred H. Klooster
Herman Leetsma
Raymond Opperwall
Authur E. Pontier
John C. Ribbens
Chester M. Schemper
Richard D. Sytsma
Rits Tadema
Gerard H. Terpstra
Julius J. Vanden Hoek
Samuel Vander Jagt
Hilbert Vander Plaat
Peter Vander Weide
John Van Ens
Bernard A. Van Someren
Paul J. Veenstra
Benjamin Ypma
Martin G. Zylstra
Paul C. Zylstra

C. The committee also reports on the following anniversaries of congregational organization:

125 years

Rochester, NY

100 years

Byron Center, MI – First
Edgerton, MN – First
Holland, MI – Fourteenth Street
Hudsonville, MI – Bauer
Hudsonville, MI – First
Kenosha, WI
Kentwood, MI – East Paris
Oak Harbor, WA
Tracy, IA

75 years

Bellflower, CA – First
Grangeville, ID

50 years

Allendale, MI – Second
Blenheim, ON
Brooks, AB
Calgary, AB – First
Chilliwack, BC – First
Denver, CO – Third
Duncan, BC – First

Edmonton, AB – Inglewood
Grand Rapids, MI – Alger Park
Grand Rapids, MI – Cascade Fellowship
Hamilton, ON – Mount Hamilton
High River, AB
Kalamazoo, MI – Westwood
Lindsay, ON
Lucknow, ON
New Westminster, BC – First
Pembroke, ON – Zion
Peterborough, ON – Cephas
St. Thomas, ON – First
Sarnia, ON – Second
Saskatoon, SK – Bethel
Smithers, BC
Springdale, ON
Telkwa, BC
Terrace, BC
Victoria, BC
Williamsburg, ON
Wyoming, ON

25 years

Abbotsford, BC – Trinity
Alto, MI – Lakeside Community
Beaver Dam, WI – Faith Community
Goderich, ON – Trinity
Lake Odessa, MI
Mississauga, ON – Community of Meadowvale
Mount Pleasant, MI – Trinity
Tillsonburg, ON
Woodstock, ON – Covenant

VII. Reminders

A. We urge congregations that have observed, or soon will observe, anniversaries to send copies of commemorative materials (booklets, historical sketches, video tapes, photographs, etc.) to the Archives. This is a convenient means for keeping a duplicate set of such materials in a secure location.

B. Of the 824 organized congregations, 657 (80 percent) have sent their minutes to the Archives for microfilming. Due to the ongoing and frequent reports of lost or misplaced minutes, the committee urges the remaining 167 congregations to utilize this very inexpensive means to produce a backup copy that will be stored in a secure environment with absolute confidentiality.

VIII. Recommendations

A. The committee requests that Dr. Harry Boonstra and Dr. Richard Harms be given the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to its mandate come before synod.

B. The committee suggests that Dr. Harry Boonstra be reappointed to a second term as a member of the committee.

C. The committee asks that synod urge congregations to continue sending copies of minutes to the Archives, so existing gaps in the archival holdings may be filled.

D. The committee asks that synod urge all classes to add the Archives to their mailing lists (surface or electronic) as the most expedient means to prevent gaps from occurring in the future.

E. The committee asks that synod remind the stated clerks of each classis that the records of discontinued ministries are to be deposited in the Archives.

F. Due to the invaluable historical and genealogical research potential, the committee recommends that synod have the congregations send noncurrent membership records to the archives.

Historical Committee

Harry Boonstra, chair

Michael De Vries

Richard Harms, secretary (ex officio)

Janet Sheeres

Robert Swierenga

I. Membership

The members of the restructured Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC), along with the general secretary, Dr. David H. Engelhard, and the Canadian ministries director, Rev. William C. Veenstra (members ex officio), with the years in which their terms expire are:

- From Canada: Ms. Louisa Bruinsma (2004); Mr. Johannes De Viet (2002); Rev. Richard T. Vander Vaart (2003); Rev. Michael L. Veenema (2002); Rev. Michael Winnowski, president (2003); Rev. Simon Wolfert (2004).
- From the United States: Dr. Lyle D. Bierma (2003); Rev. Jason Chen, vice president (2003); Rev. Michiel M. De Berdt (2002); Rev. Philip V. De Jonge (2004); Ms. Teresa Renkema (2004); Dr. Henry Zwaanstra (2002).
- Rev. Leonard J. Hofman serves as administrative secretary.

The IRC has adopted the following *modus operandi*:

- That in electing officers for our binational IRC, the president be chosen from one country and the vice president from the other, with the understanding that the vice president will assume the office of president the following year.
- That the IRC meet four times each year—in September, December, February, and April.
- That the IRC (ordinarily) meet twice each year in Burlington, Ontario, and twice each year in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The IRC is reviewing the frequency of its meetings along with the possibility of meetings by conference call. This method of meeting is already employed by subcommittees from time to time.

II. Information regarding ecumenical relations

A. Fraternal delegates

The IRC appointed the following fraternal delegates to the assemblies of churches with which the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is in ecclesiastical fellowship:

1. To the Netherlands Reformed Churches (NRC) meeting in Hilversum, May 2001, Dr. David H. Engelhard and Rev. Richard T. Vander Vaart. Conversations were held also with representatives of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN/GKN) and the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CRCN).
2. To the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines (CRCP) meeting in Manila, June 16-19, 2001, Rev. Michiel M. De Berdt.
3. To the fifty-sixth General Assembly of the Reformed Church of Japan, meeting in Osaka, October 16-19, 2002, Rev. Lawrence K. Spalink.
4. A fraternal observer to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), meeting in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, July 14-20, 2002, Rev. Peter Brouwer.

5. To the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), meeting in Flat Rock, North Carolina, June 11-13, 2001, Rev. Jason Chen.
6. To the Reformed Church in America (RCA), meeting in Pella, Iowa, June 8-13, 2001, Rev. William Zeilstra.

B. Representatives and observers to ecumenical organizations

In accordance with the provisions of the Ecumenical Charter of the CRCNA, the IRC appointed representatives and observers to various ecumenical organizations. These appointees report to the IRC.

1. Dr. David H. Engelhard serves as the CRCNA's representative on the board of directors of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).
2. Dr. George Vandervelde serves as the IRC observer on the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches. He attended a Notre Dame conference re planning a Faith and Order Conference in North America in 2003. Consideration is being given to including Pentecostal and evangelical churches, African-American churches, and other North-American born churches not currently involved in ecumenical discussions. Discussion will be designed to focus on issues that unite and divide Christian communions.
3. Dr. Henry Zwaanstra serves as the IRC observer to the Theological Commission of the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Dr. Lyle Bierma has consented to attend the spring 2002 meeting of CANAAC while Dr. Zwaanstra is teaching in China.

III. Multilateral relationships—ecumenical organizations

A. North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)

The twenty-seventh annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) was held at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 13-14, 2001, hosted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The CRCNA delegates were Dr. David H. Engelhard, Rev. Leonard J. Hofman, and Dr. Henry Zwaanstra.

As a suspended member church, the CRCNA is permitted to send delegates to the meetings, and they may speak on matters being discussed by the council, but they may not vote. The CRCNA may not be represented on NAPARC's interim committee and is not expected to pay dues to the council.

In keeping with regular procedure, the delegates from each member church, as well as observers representing nonmember denominations, presented reports about the ministry of their churches and significant decisions made at their most recent synods or general assemblies. Prayer was offered for the ministry and needs of each church after its report was received.

The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) presented a rationale for their November 2000 motion to terminate CRCNA membership in NAPARC. The PCA document was presented in the form of a list of five charges (see Appendix A). The CRCNA delegation prepared a written response to the PCA charges and presented it at the meeting of the council (see Appendix B). Following extensive discussion, the member churches, by a unanimous unit

vote, adopted the following substitute motion: "That the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC be terminated no later than the 2004 meeting of NAPARC." Only two of the five grounds or charges presented by the PCA were adopted by a two-thirds majority of the NAPARC member churches. In keeping with the provisions of NAPARC's constitution, the matter is now referred to the assemblies of the member churches for adoption.

After the vote, the CRCNA delegation bade the council farewell and left the meeting.

B. Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC)

The IRC keeps in contact with the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) through its *REC News Exchange* and through its second clerk, Ms. Claire Elgersma, formerly a member of IRC. She recently reported to IRC on her contacts with churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCNA, as well as other REC member churches, with which she visited in her travels as an officer of REC.

C. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC)

An IRC delegation consisting of Rev. Richard Vander Vaart, Rev. William Veenstra, and Rev. Michael Winnowski attended the October 25, 2001, meeting of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) in Ottawa, Ontario. The EFC is currently involved in restructuring. Discussion focused on, inter alia, clergy care and the formation of an interdenominational support group. Cooperation was noted between the EFC and the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), especially in legal and/or ethical matters.

D. Canadian Council of Churches (CCC)

An IRC delegation consisting of Mr. Johannes De Viet and Rev. Michael Winnowski attended the November 16-18, 2001, meeting of the board of governors of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). Discussion centered on combating racism and on being a Christian in a pluralistic society.

E. National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) – United States

In June 2001, Dr. Kevin Mannoia tendered his resignation as president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). In the meantime, Dr. Leith Anderson of Minneapolis, Minnesota, accepted an interim appointment of the board of directors to that position. The NAE has experienced a crisis in leadership and money management. The annual NAE convention, normally scheduled for March, has been cancelled for 2002. A positive October 2001 meeting of the board of directors promises a brighter future for the NAE.

F. World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

Synod 1997 referred an overture of Classis Grand Rapids East to the IRC in connection with its review of the Ecumenical Charter (*Acts of Synod 1997*, p. 637). The overture asked synod "to instruct the IRC to develop a new strategy for ecumenical work that will enable us to minister to and with other denominations without expecting agreement on all points before joint talks or work can be carried out." The overture pointed out the inconsistency of our belonging to the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), "some members of which differ with us considerably on theology and worldview," while we have refused "to work with the historic Reformed churches in the World Alliance of

Reformed Churches because of theological differences, even though we share the same Lord and the common desire to serve him in public life nationally and internationally.”

The IRC has reviewed the documents of World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the history of the CRCNA's contact with that alliance. Discussions have been held with the leadership of WARC. As promised in its report to Synod 2001, the IRC is presenting a recommendation to Synod 2002 re membership in WARC (see Appendix C).

G. Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC)

A delegation of Dr. Lyle Bierma, Rev. Michael Winnowski, and Dr. Henry Zwaanstra attended as observers the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC), one of six area councils of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), meeting March 8-11, 2001, at the Crieff Hills Community Conference Center in Ontario. Their report was helpful to IRC as it considered applying for membership in WARC.

IV. Bilateral relationships—international

A. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN/GKN)

Synod 2001 instructed the IRC to do one of the following in its report to Synod 2003:

1. To recommend restoration of full ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCN/GKN and the grounds for such restoration; or
2. To provide synod with the reasons why full restoration of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCN/GKN would not be appropriate at this time.
(*Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 514-15)

In keeping with the instruction of synod, the IRC has appointed a subcommittee that is assisting the IRC in shaping a report and proposal for presentation to Synod 2003.

B. Netherlands Reformed Churches (NRC)

In May 2001, the Netherlands delegation (See II, A, 1 above) met with the national assembly of the Netherlands Reformed Churches (NRC) and also had a lengthy discussion with church representatives in Hilversum on such subjects as joint projects, missions, addressing secular society, inclusive language for God, and pastoral care for homosexual members. A healthy ecclesiastical relationship prevails between the NRC and the CRCNA.

C. Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CRCN)

The Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CRCN) severed ecclesiastical ties with the CRCNA in 1995. Since that time there has been an exchange of correspondence in which the IRC not only expressed its deep sadness and regret that the ties were broken but also suggested that a face-to-face meeting be held to explore the possibility of a relationship in the light the provisions of our new Ecumenical Charter. Their interchurch relations committee agreed to such a meeting, and in May 2001, our Netherlands delegation met with two representatives of the CRCN, Rev. Bort De Graaf, secretary of their committee, and Dr. Herman Zelderhuis, a church historian. Although the delegation was well received it was reported that establishing a new relationship would take some time. The IRC expressed appreciation for the meeting.

However, in October 2001, a letter was received from the CRCN stating that they had “found no reasons to enter into a new form of contact with the CRC.” The IRC expressed its disappointment, leaving the door open to future contact.

D. Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN)

In its supplementary report to Synod 2001 (See *Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 388-89) the IRC expressed its intent to work in the direction of establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN). The IRC has consulted with World Mission staff; Mr. Peter Vander Meulen, coordinator of social justice and hunger action; and Dr. Richard Van Houten, general secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, who believe that the *timing* of building a formal relationship with the RCCN is critical. Mr. Vander Meulen and Dr. Van Houten are scheduled to visit Nigeria in February 2002 as part of a peace and reconciliation team assisting the churches in building better relationships. Their report will assist the IRC in formulating its proposal to Synod 2002. In the meantime, the IRC has informed the RCCN that its desire to establish ecclesiastical fellowship between our two denominations has not been forgotten.

E. Expressions of sympathy and prayer support

Expressions of sympathy and prayer support have been received from a number of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship located in Europe, Africa, and Cuba in connection with the terrorist attacks on America September 11, 2001. These have been acknowledged with gratitude.

V. Bilateral relationships—North America

A. Churches in ecclesiastical fellowship

The CRCNA maintains ecclesiastical fellowship with four churches in North America. They are the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), the Reformed Church in America (RCA), and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA). Fraternal delegates are exchanged with these churches on a regular basis. Although the CRCNA is in ecclesiastical fellowship with the ARPC and the RPCNA, both churches are among those member denominations of NAPARC that voted to terminate CRCNA membership in NAPARC. Furthermore, the RPCNA has suspended fraternal relations with the CRC pending final action of NAPARC on the expulsion of the CRC from NAPARC.

From time to time, conversations are held with the EPC and the RCA. A meeting of IRC members is scheduled with representatives of the EPC on March 8, 2002. A meeting with the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCA is scheduled for December 2002. Matters of mutual interest and concern as well as areas of joint ministry and cooperation are subjects addressed in such meetings with churches with whom the CRCNA has a long and treasured history of ecclesiastical fellowship.

B. Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC)

Synod 2002 instructed the IRC “to review, in consultation with representatives of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC), our denomination’s relationship with that denomination with a view to establishing a relationship of fellowship” (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 481). A letter was sent to the Committee for Contact with Other Churches of the PRC inviting them to engage in conversa-

tions that may lead to an ecclesiastical relationship. A few days after IRC's meeting in February a letter from the PRC was received. It will be reviewed by IRC at its April 25-26 meeting. A subcommittee of the IRC has prepared a review of the history of our two denominations along with suggestions and/or advice designed to assist the IRC in implementing the decision of Synod 2001.

VI. Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church (RCC)

An ad hoc committee of the IRC has participated in a dialogue with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) for the past several years regarding the correct understanding of the Mass and the Heidelberg Catechism's teaching about it (Q. and A. 80).

Most recently, a meeting was held in August 2001 in Washington, D.C., with bishops from both Canada and the United States. Since that time, members of the ad hoc committee met to prepare a report for the IRC in December 2001.

A lengthy report was presented to the IRC. Questions were asked and observations were made. Further exploration was to be done as to whether or not the conclusions of the report constitute an accurate hearing of the RCC worldwide, or whether they have a North American spin. A final report was adopted for presentation to Synod 2002 by the IRC at its February 2002 meeting (see Appendix D).

VII. Nominations for IRC membership

Rev. Michiel De Berdt (U.S. IRC member) is completing his first term and is eligible for reelection. The following have completed their terms and have either chosen not to run again or are not eligible for reelection: Mr. Johannes De Viet, Rev. Michael Veenema (Canadian IRC members), and Dr. Henry Zwaanstra (U.S. IRC member).

The following names are submitted to Synod 2002 as nominees for IRC membership:

A. Canadian nominees

Position 1

Rev. Peter Schuurman (St. Catherines) is a graduate of Calvin College, Queens University, and McMaster Divinity School. He is currently a campus minister for the CRC in an ecumenical ministry at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. He has taught in public university and colleges, and is currently vice president of the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association. He also serves on the Niagara Classis Ministerial Committee.

Rev. Ralph Wigboldus was graduated from the University of Guelph in 1988 with a BSc. in Human Biology. He received an M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1999. In 1996, he was involved with the Clinical Pastoral Education program at Pine Rest Christian Hospital with pastors from various denominational backgrounds. He currently is a part of two ministerial groups—an informal gathering of pastors from various mainline denominations and the Sarnia Evangelical Fellowship, which works on the united witness of churches in the greater Sarnia, Ontario, community. He currently is pastor of the Second CRC in Sarnia, Ontario.

Position 2

Dr. Bertha Mook (Ottawa) is a member of the Calvin Christian Reformed Church in Ottawa, Ontario. She is a graduate of both Potchefstroom University for Higher Christian Education and the University of Ottawa where she received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Since 1987, she is professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa and actively involved in teaching, clinical training, and research. She is the author of two books, several book chapters, and numerous articles, mostly in the field of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and psychotherapy. She also holds a part-time private practice. She has served on the board of the Seaway Ministry in Montreal for six years ending in 2001.

Ms. Jenny Smit (Scarborough) is a member of Grace CRC in Scarborough, Ontario, where she is currently serving as an elder on executive council. Jenny is a graduate of Trent University (Peterborough, Ontario), the Institute for Christian Studies (Toronto), and Daemen College (Amherst, New York). She is a high school teacher at a multicultural and multifaith school in Toronto, teaching English and Civics. She has previously served as a deacon in her church, and is currently involved in the antiracism education program initiated by the Race Relations Committee of Classis Toronto and AWARE Toronto, a CRC-based group exploring inclusivity in the CRC. Jenny is committed to social justice and to honoring the diversity within our communities.

B. U. S. nominees

Position 1

Rev. Michiel De Berdt (incumbent nominee), a member of Neland Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, served Christian Reformed World Missions as a missionary to Japan for thirty-three years. He received his theological training in Louvain, Belgium, and was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church in 1955. He left the priesthood, studied Reformed theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, and was ordained into the ministry of the CRC in 1962. He served World Missions in Japan in areas north and east of Tokyo. After retirement in 1995, the De Berdts spent three years in Amsterdam, where Rev. De Berdt served as pastor of the Japanese Christian Fellowship.

Position 2

Mr. Charles Jansen was graduated from Calvin College in 1959 and the University of Missouri in 1969. After teaching for two years at the Children's Retreat, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, he accepted an appointment to Nigeria where he served in a variety of capacities for thirteen years. During his last four years in Nigeria, Mr. Jansen served as general secretary of the Nigerian mission ministries. Upon returning to the States, he became hospital administrator at Audrain Medical Center in Missouri for twenty-four years. While there, he and his family fellowshiped with the First Presbyterian Church of Mexico, Missouri, where he served as an elder. Currently the Jansens live in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and are members of Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church.

Mr. Abe Vreeke was graduated from Calvin College in 1968 with a degree in secondary education. He moved to Lupwe, Nigeria, in 1968 where he spent the next sixteen years serving in a wide variety of teaching and administrative assignments. While on home service in the early 1980s, he earned a M.C.E.

from Calvin Theological Seminary and then became the principal of the Community Christian School in Pease, Minnesota. In 1989, he became a training assistant for World Missions and was appointed Nigeria Field Director in 1992. He helped reorganize the administration of the Nigeria field and develop good relationships with the Nigerian churches as well as with CRWRC personnel in Nigeria. In 2000, he returned to the United States and is currently serving as principal of Lafayette Christian School in Lafayette, Indiana. He and his wife are members of Sunrise Christian Reformed Church, Lafayette, Indiana.

VIII. Representation at synod

Rev. Michael Winnowski (president), Rev. Jason Chen (vice president), and Rev. Leonard J. Hofman (administrative secretary) have been appointed to represent the IRC at Synod 2002, along with other IRC members as necessary.

IX. Recommendations

A. That Rev. Michael Winnowski (president), Rev. Jason Chen (vice president), and Rev. Leonard J. Hofman (administrative secretary), along with other IRC members as necessary, be given the privilege of the floor when matters relating to IRC are being discussed.

B. That synod authorize the IRC to apply for membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) (see Section III, F, and Appendix C).

Grounds:

1. The CRC meets all the requirements for membership in WARC, can subscribe to its basis, and affirm its purposes. Therefore, as a member of the Reformed family of churches, the CRC belongs in WARC.
2. Membership in WARC will provide the CRC with an avenue to meet its ecumenical responsibility to historically Reformed churches and, through it, to other Christian churches and communions with which WARC is in dialogue.
3. Membership in WARC would offer the CRC an opportunity to support and strengthen the Reformed witness of other member churches, which are also members of the REC or are in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC.
4. Membership in WARC would provide the CRC with an increased opportunity to assist struggling Reformed churches through the world in witness, work, and theological education.
5. Membership in WARC would enrich the CRC by enhancing its catholic Christian self-consciousness and its awareness of problems that globally confront Christians and their churches.
6. It may reasonably be presumed that the CRC can make an impact on WARC and, through it, on other churches of Christ.
7. Representatives of WARC and CANAAC have urged the CRC to become a full member and have said that the CRC both belongs in and can make a significant contribution to the alliance.

C. *Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church re its official doctrine concerning the mass* (See Section VI and Appendix D)

1. That synod receive the report as fulfillment of the mandate given by Synod 1998 to the IRC “to make an attempt to dialogue with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church to clarify the official doctrine of that church concerning the mass” (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 427).
 2. That synod submit the report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops requesting their agreement that the report gives an accurate presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist.
 3. That synod ask the IRC, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
 4. That Synod ask the IRC, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about the value of further dialogue between the CRC and the Roman Catholic Church.
 5. That synod send this report to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship and to the Reformed Ecumenical Council informing them of our study and inviting their response.
- D. That synod elect members for the IRC from the slate of nominees presented (see Section VII).

Interchurch Relations Committee

Lyle D. Bierma
 Louisa Bruinsma
 Jason Chen (vice president)
 Michiel M. De Berdt
 Philip De Jonge
 Johannes De Viet
 David H. Engelhard (ex officio)
 Leonard J. Hofman (administrative secretary)
 Teresa Renkema
 Richard T. Vander Vaart
 Michael L. Veenema
 William Veenstra (ex officio)
 Michael Winnowski (president)
 Simon Wolfert
 Henry Zwaanstra

Appendix A

Rationale for Action Regarding CRCNA Membership in NAPARC

Introduction

It should be noted that the PCA takes no delight in recommending that the Christian Reformed Church in North America’s membership in NAPARC be terminated. It grieves us that this action should be taken.

As background to this action, it needs to be noted that there is an underlying hermeneutical problem that goes back at least as far as 1972, culminating in the adoption of Report 44 by the Synod of the CRCNA (see pp. 493-546, *Acts of Synod, 1972*). The issue of hermeneutics was raised in NAPARC in the early 1980's when an Interim Study Committee on Hermeneutics was erected. This committee reported to NAPARC in 1983 (*NAPARC Minutes, 1983*, item 10, including Appendix J, "A Reformed Testimony on Hermeneutics"). The report outlines the issues, clearly expressing the concerns about views held on Scripture. It has been understood by most NAPARC Churches that these views represented a change of position within the CRCNA regarding the Word of God/The Holy Scriptures which has resulted in the ordination of women to the offices of ruling elder and minister. In 1996 the process was begun in NAPARC (initiated by the PCA) to suspend the CRCNA from NAPARC membership after CRCNA Synod 1995 had approved the ordination of women to the offices of ruling elder and minister. The underlying hermeneutical issue was cited by the PCA in correspondence between the two highest judicatories of the PCA and CRCNA (*Minutes of the 25th General Assembly of the PCA, 1997*, pp. 375-383). In 1998, the suspension from membership was effected. CRCNA Synod 2000 did not reverse but reaffirmed and approved the ordination of women to the offices of ruling elder and minister.

At the 2000 meeting of NAPARC, after consideration of the termination of the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC (initiated by the PCA), the matter was deferred to the 2001 meeting with the request that the Presbyterian Church in America delegation provide a specific rationale for the proposed action. The minutes record (XXVII. NEW BUSINESS),

In light of Communication 2 from the PCA General Assembly concerning the CRCNA, it was moved to terminate the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC since the CRC has not rescinded its position on the ordination of women to the office of ruling elder and minister.

The procedural motion was made to delay the vote on whether to terminate the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC until the meeting of 2001 and that the PCA be asked to formulate grounds for such an action. *Adopted.*

At the 2000 meeting the CRCNA delegation offered several reasons why the CRCNA should not be dismissed from NAPARC. As we recall, their principal arguments were 1) A Theological-historical Argument, based on the *Belgic Confession* Article 30, 2) A Constitutional Argument based on NAPARC's article II. Basis of the Council, and 3) Pastoral concerns regarding the past, present and future relationship of CRCNA churches, ministers, officers and members with one another should the CRCNA be dismissed from NAPARC.

The PCA offers the following rationale, in response to the request of the 2000 meeting of NAPARC. It is the general direction, i.e. the hermeneutical issue, we believe, that has resulted in the CRCNA's change of position on the particular issue of the ordination of women and has brought us to this lamentable juncture. That general matter has been addressed previously as noted above. There are three basic reasons why we believe that NAPARC should proceed with the proposed membership termination. These are, 1) Theological-Historical Considerations, 2) the Issue of Constitutional Integrity, and 3) Pastoral Concerns.

I. Theological-Historical Considerations

The Christian Reformed Church, by reaffirming its stand in favor of the ordination of women, has acted contrarily to Article XXX of the *Belgic Confession*, which states concerning the government of, and offices in, the church: "By these means every thing will be carried on in the Church with good order and decency, when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul to Timothy." Although the term for "faithful men" can be taken as generic ("tels personnages . . . fideles" in the French), the Scriptural reference to Paul's pastoral epistles (the footnote references are "1 Tim. iii. 1, etc.; Tit. i. 5, etc.") provide gender-explicit language ("mias gunaikos aner" = "husband of one wife") which confines the offices to men rather than women.

Historically the Reformed churches of the Reformation era restricted the offices to men, as shown in what John H. Leith termed "the most universal of Reformed Creeds" (CREEDS OF THE CHURCH, 1963, page 131), the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, which also has the largest section on the ministers of the church, their institution and offices. Chapter XVIII.8 says: "Not any one may be elected, but capable men distinguished by sufficient consecrated learning, pious eloquence, simple wisdom, lastly, by moderation and an honorable reputation, according to that apostolic rule which is compiled by the apostle in 1 Tim., ch. 3, and Titus, ch. 1" (translation of Arthur C. Cochrane in REFORMED CONFESSIONS OF THE 16TH CENTURY, 1966, page 271). Again, the expression "capable men" can be taken as generic ("homines idonei" in the Latin), but the Scripture references again lead to gender-explicit language.

Clearly, the intent of the Reformed confessions of the sixteenth century, and the practice of the Reformed churches, was to confine the offices of the church to men.¹

II. The Issue of Constitutional Integrity

We wish to call the attention of NAPARC not only to the constitution of NAPARC but also to the CRCNA's constitution as well. The NAPARC constitution states,

Confessing Jesus Christ as only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship in the nature of a council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, counsel and cooperate in various matters with one another and to hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches of like faith and practice. (II. Basis of the Council.)

We remind the council that the primary basis of our fellowship is the Bible and that our doctrinal standards are secondary to the Bible. Whether or not a

¹In Presbyterian circles, the ordination of women to the office of minister is of twentieth century origin as well. In 1956 Margaret Towner was the first woman to be ordained as a minister of the United Presbyterian Church. In 1965 Rachel Henderlite was the first woman ordained by the Presbyterian Church in the United States. (See "The Presbyterian Survey," Bicentennial Issue, June 1988, pp. 97, 98).

teaching or practice is consistent with the Word of God is of chief concern as a foundation for mutual theological accountability within the Council.

There is also the matter of the CRCNA's setting aside the explicit provision of its constitution by the action of Synod, without going through the constitutional process of actually amending the constitution.

A classis may, in keeping with its understanding of the biblical position on the role of women in ecclesiastical office and in response to local needs and circumstances, declare the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative and authorize the churches under its jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist. (See *Acts of Synod 2000*, pp. 687-95, 696-99, 706.)

We realize that the issue of the ordination of women is a controversial and emotionally charged matter. We also recognize that families and friends as well as churches and classes are divided on this matter. Some in our culture regard it as a civil rights issue rather than a theological issue. We understand that the CRCNA sought some solution to a controversial issue that many denominations face. We believe, however, that the CRCNA has disregarded its own constitution by the expediency of declaring a provision of its Church Order to be inoperative rather than going through the process of amending that article of the Church Order. No Reformed Church should resort to an expedient circumventing of its constitution in dealing with theological issues.

III. Pastoral Concerns

From the earnest discussion in the 2000 NAPARC meeting and from the printed materials the CRCNA delegation presented to the 2000 NAPARC meeting, it is clearly evident that the majority of classes, churches, and members do not favor the policy adopted by Synod 1995 and Synod 2000 to "declare the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative and authorize the churches under its jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist." The enactment of that policy has resulted in a number of churches leaving the CRCNA, and has divided churches, classes, and families.

NAPARC Churches have appreciated the fellowship and joint ministries between themselves and the CRCNA. The PCA churches and church courts have been happy to serve with our CRCNA brothers and sisters in mercy ministries such as Bethany Christian Services, pro-life advocacy, counseling and adoption ministries. There has been a transfer of ministers and members between the CRCNA and other NAPARC Churches. In churches where open communion is practiced, we have enjoyed fellowship at the Table of the Lord. Our young people have attended educational institutions within NAPARC constituency. There have been marriages within the NAPARC family. We treasure these relationships. Such associations may continue, in the event the CRCNA is no longer a constituent member of NAPARC. Local and individual fellowship may be maintained regardless of what action the Council and the General Assemblies and Synods of NAPARC take, just as many of us have fellowship with other Christian friends in churches and communions not associated with NAPARC. As Churches we are to "advise and counsel" one another. Since our advice and counsel, and subsequent suspension of the CRCNA from NAPARC did not have the desired effect of the Synod's reversing its position, we earnestly pray that the more serious action of dismissing

her from the council will have a pastoral influence to persuade the Synod to reverse her policy.

Conclusion

- We believe that the argument advanced that the Belgic Confession, Article 30 does not forbid and indeed allows for the ordination of women is theologically, historically, logically, and biblically inaccurate and that the CRCNA has acted contrarily to Article XXX of the *Belgic Confession* in adopting a policy of ordaining women.
- We believe that the CRCNA has acted contrarily to the NAPARC constitution (II. Basis of the Council) against the teaching of the Word of God and the Belgic Confession, Article XXX by declaring the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative and authorizing the churches under its jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist, thus circumventing her own constitution.
- We believe that the serious action of the Council's expelling the CRCNA may be used of the Lord to persuade the Synod to heed the teaching of the Word of God, the historic practice of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches, the majority opinion of the CRCNA's own members, and the concerted opinion of NAPARC denominations to reverse her actions on the women's ordination issue, and reconsider the hermeneutical process that led her to depart from her former position.

Resolution and grounds presented by the delegates of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) to the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) re terminating the membership in NAPARC of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

Resolved: That the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) initiate the process terminating the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC, and that NAPARC submit the matter to the general assemblies and synods for action on the following grounds:

Grounds:

1. We believe that there is an underlying hermeneutical problem that goes back at least as far as 1972 culminating in the adoption of Report 44 by the synod of the CRCNA (See Acts of Synod 1972, pp. 493-546). The issue of hermeneutics was raised in NAPARC in the early 1980s when an interim study committee was erected. The committee reported to NAPARC in 1983 (see NAPARC Minutes 1983, Item 10, including Appendix J, "A Reformed Testimony on Hermeneutics.") The report outlines the issue clearly expressing the concerns about views held on Scripture. It has been understood by most NAPARC churches that these views represented a change of position within the CRCNA regarding the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, which has resulted in the ordination of women to the offices of ruling elder and minister.
2. We believe the CRCNA has had opportunity over the last several years to reverse the controversial action of CRCNA Synod 1995 in response to NAPARC's suspension of the CRCNA from voting member status in NAPARC. In 1996 the process was begun in NAPARC (initiated by the PCA) to suspend the CRCNA from NAPARC membership after CRCNA

Synod 1995 had approved the ordination of women to the offices of ruling elder and minister. The underlying hermeneutical issue was cited by the PCA in correspondence between the two highest judicatories of the CRC [*sic*] and the CRCNA (Minutes of the 25th General Assembly 1997, pp. 375-383). In 1998 the suspension from membership was effected. CRCNA 2000 did not reverse but reaffirmed and approved the ordination of women to the offices of ruling elder and minister.

3. We believe that the argument [that] Belgic Confession, Article 30, does not forbid and indeed allows for the ordination of women to the offices of minister and elder is theologically, historically, and biblically inaccurate, and that the CRCNA has acted contrarily to Article 30 [of the] Belgic Confession in adopting a policy of ordaining women.
4. We believe that the CRCNA has acted contrarily to the NAPARC Constitution (II. Basis of the Council), against the teaching of the Word of God, and the Belgic Confession, Article 30, by declaring the word “male” in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative and authorizing the churches under its jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of ruling elder and minister, thus circumventing her own constitution.
5. We believe the serious action of the council’s expelling the CRCNA may be used to persuade the synod to heed the teaching [of] the Word of God, the historic practice of Reformed and Presbyterian churches, the majority opinion of the CRCNA’s own members, and the concerted opinion of NAPARC denominations to reverse her actions on the issue of ordaining women to the offices of minister and elder and to reconsider the hermeneutical process that led her to depart from her former position.

Appendix B

Response of the CRCNA Delegation to the *Rationale for Action Regarding CRCNA Membership in NAPARC*

November 14, 2001

Dear Brothers:

This is not a pleasant day for NAPARC or for the CRC. In 1975 there was considerable excitement about and high expectations for NAPARC and its role in North America. Today marks the reversal of the unity that was so much desired twenty-six years ago. For that we are sorry.

Introduction

Thank you for allowing us an opportunity to address some of the issues raised in the document distributed to this meeting entitled: “Rationale for Action Regarding CRCNA Membership in NAPARC.” We understand the document to constitute the grounds requested to support the recommendation made last year, namely that the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC be terminated. With that in mind we will address ourselves seriatim to the reasons adduced.

In the introduction it is alleged that hermeneutical problems in the CRCNA can be traced to the adoption of Report 44 (“The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority”) in 1972. It is implied that this report with its hermeneutic repre-

sented a change of position within the CRC regarding the Word of God, Holy Scripture. It is further alleged that the ordination of women to the offices of elder and minister resulted from this change. We take serious exception to the allegation that the CRCNA has changed its position on Scripture or has departed from sound Reformed hermeneutical principles in interpreting Scripture. Furthermore, we regret that no evidence is put forth to prove the allegation. We are left in the unenviable position of arguing against a shadowy figure without substance. All we can do is make a counter allegation and say that the decision of Synod 1995 to allow the ordination of women is not the result of a new view of Scripture and its authority or a new hermeneutic.

The CRCNA does and always has affirmed what the Belgic Confession says about the Bible and its inspiration and authority (Articles 3-7). The view of Scripture and the hermeneutical principles for its interpretation articulated in Report 44 are consistent with the teaching of the Belgic Confession and the conclusions of the 1961 synodical study report, "Infallibility and Inspiration in the Light of Scripture." Dr. John Cooper in his pamphlet, *A Cause For Division?*, demonstrated that on the basis of a Reformed confessional understanding of Scripture and the use of traditional Reformed hermeneutical principles a scriptural case can be made for ordaining women as elders and ministers (see Attachment A). This was further demonstrated by the committee that advised Synod 2000 regarding women in office when they set forth the biblical basis for the two positions on this issue within the church. The same committee, using the same view of Scripture and the same hermeneutical principles and practice presented the scriptural warrant for each of the positions. The differences in the CRCNA on women in office result from different interpretations of Scripture (exegesis), not from different views of Scripture itself and its authority, or from different hermeneutical principles and practice.

The idea that two or more persons using an identical hermeneutic can arrive at varying conclusions is supported by the data of public record presented to NAPARC in 1983. In that year NAPARC received a report from its Committee on Hermeneutics which included a cover letter from W.H.F. Kuykendall (convener of the committee), "A Reformed Testimony on Hermeneutics" (see Attachment B), and a set of minutes from the committee's April 15-16, 1983 meeting. The cover letter made two major points: (1) "Your committee discovered that at a certain fundamental level there seems to be encouraging agreement on hermeneutic principles" and (2) "though encouraging agreement is evident on basic principles, sometimes when these principles are put to work in specific areas varying conclusions are reached." That, we believe, continues to be the heart of the matter. For this "Rationale" to suggest that the CRC's view of the Bible is flawed, and not present one shred of evidence, except what might be called a "varying conclusion" regarding women in office, is unfair to the CRC.

NAPARC delegates need also to be reminded that the document "A Reformed Testimony on Hermeneutics" was as much the product of CRC input as it was the product of any other church here present. The CRC delegates to NAPARC in 1983 accepted the report and affirmed the truths just like the delegates from your churches. Furthermore, the two CRC signatories to the Committee on Hermeneutics report both served as members of the CRC committee that wrote the report on "The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority." To suggest then, that there is a fundamental hermeneutical

disconnect between your churches and the CRC cannot be substantiated with the data submitted to this meeting.

The “Rationale” presents three basic reasons why NAPARC should proceed to terminate the CRCNA’s membership: 1) Theological-Historical Considerations, 2) Constitutional Integrity, and 3) Pastoral Concerns.

I. Theological-historical considerations

The “Rationale” contends that the CRCNA by allowing the ordination of women acted contrary to Article 30 of the Belgic Confession. Even though the “Rationale” acknowledges that the article’s reference to “faithful men “ can be taken as generic, it goes on to assert that because the reference to the rule prescribed by St. Paul to Timothy is gender explicit the confession confines the offices to males. It is further contended that the intent of the Reformed confessions of the sixteenth century (presumably also the Belgic) and the practice of the Reformed churches was clearly to confine the offices of the church to men.

We agree with the judgment that historically it was the general practice of the Reformed churches to confine the offices to men. We, however, vigorously disagree with the judgment that it was the intention of Article 30 to limit the offices to men. If that had been the intention, it could have and would have been explicitly stated. Some of the French-speaking churches in the Low Lands where the Confession originated and was first adopted had women deacons. Moreover, the reference to Paul’s advice to Timothy does not warrant the judgment that the article has a gender-explicit intention. The scriptural references in the footnotes are later additions and not part of the original text of the Confession. The CRCNA has always confessed and continues to confess what is confessed in Article 30, namely,

“that the true church ought to be governed according to the spiritual order that our Lord has taught us in his Word, . . . that by this means true religion is preserved, . . . and that by this means everything will be done in good order when such persons are elected who are faithful and chosen according to the rule that Paul gave Timothy”.

The principles for orderliness and godliness that Paul was concerned about in giving the rule to Timothy are maintained in the CRCNA. The word translated above as persons (personages) is not gender explicit.

II. The issue of constitutional integrity

A. *The Constitution of NAPARC*

The “Rationale” calls attention to both NAPARC’s constitution and what it refers to as the CRCNA’s constitution. With respect to the Constitution of NAPARC we note that the “Basis of the Council” is identified as the following:

Confessing Jesus Christ as only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confessions of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of a council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, counsel, and cooperate in various matters with one another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice.

The CRC has in the past and does today commit itself “to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts, and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort”

The CRC affirms the NAPARC Constitution and attests that its own church life is in conformity to it. In the absence of credible evidence that the CRC has actually violated the “Basis of the Council” this body has no moral, theological, or legal grounds for dismissing the CRC.

B. The Constitution of CRCNA

The CRCNA recognizes various levels of authority in the church. Scripture is the highest followed by the church’s confessions, its Church Order and synodical decisions and in this order. Presbyterians historically have made greater claims scripturally for their polity, Books of Government, and Constitutions than have churches that stand in the continental Reformed tradition. Among some Presbyterians matters of church polity are viewed as virtually synonymous with confessional articles of faith. The CRCNA understands the issue of women in office as a matter of polity, not a doctrinal or confessional matter.

While shaped and informed by Scripture, the Church Order in the CRCNA is considered a servant of the gospel and the church’s ministry rather than a constitution or strictly legal document. The decision of the synod in 1995 to declare the word *male* inoperative under certain conditions was not a simple pragmatic or expedient decision. The church had struggled for a long time over the issue, and recognized that there were two views in the church both of which honored the authority of Scripture and followed sound Reformed hermeneutical principles. Out of respect for the scripturally informed consciences of those who believe that Scripture allows women to serve in the offices of elder and minister and in recognition of the needs and circumstances of local churches in carrying out their ministry, the synod made the declaration which allows for regional exceptions to the Church Order.

Christian Reformed synods have on other occasions permitted churches and classes to conduct their ministry in ways that were not entirely in agreement with the Church Order without first amending it. For example, already in 1890 the English-speaking churches of Classis Hackensack were permitted to sing hymns when the CRC Church Order allowed for Psalm singing only. Currently, some classes are permitted to delegate deacons to the classical assembly along with ministers and elders even though the Church Order prescribes that the assembly be comprised of elders and ministers (Church Order Article 40-a). In addition, exceptions have been permitted for Church Order Articles 4-a, 52-b, 52-c, and 53. A practice pejoratively referred to as “expedient” in the “Rationale” is actually an established and time-tested practice in the CRC.

III. Pastoral concerns

Most of what the “Rationale” says regarding pastoral concerns supports retaining rather than terminating the CRCNA’s membership in NAPARC. The only exception being the earnest prayer that dismissing the CRCNA from the council will have a pastoral influence on the CRCNA. In response to this we simply affirm the CRCNA’s agreement with the council’s basis, constitution and by-laws. We also believe the CRCNA’s life and practice conform to these

foundational documents and that therefore our church should not be dismissed from the council.

Conclusion

1. We have demonstrated that the allegations re problems in the CRC's Reformed hermeneutic are inappropriate and inaccurate. This ground cannot support the recommendation to terminate the CRC's membership.
2. We have demonstrated that the CRC has not acted contrary to the intention of Belgic Confession, Article 30. To assert that Article 30 theologically, historically, logically, and biblically forbids the ordination of women is to misconstrue and restrict the text and context of that Confession.
3. We have demonstrated that the CRCNA has not acted contrary to the Constitution of NAPARC and the "Basis of the Council." No credible arguments have been put forth that prove the CRCNA has misinterpreted its own Confession or wrongly handled the Word of truth.
4. We are in no position to know what good or bad results will follow from a decision of NAPARC to expel the CRCNA from membership. It seems strange to us, however, for this organization to use a hoped-for result as a ground for an action that in all other respects is groundless. This confuses purpose (reasons for acting) and result (hoped-for consequences), and indicates that the "Rationale" is operating with the idea that the end justifies the means.

D. Engelhard
L. Hofman
H. Zwaanstra

Appendix C Membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

I. Introduction

In 1997, Classis Grand Rapids East overtured synod to instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) to develop a new strategy for ecumenical work that would enable the CRC to minister to and with other denominations. The overture stated that the CRC needed to change its approach from looking for areas of disagreement to looking for ways to work and to witness together. It also observed that the CRC was not presently even-handed in that it worked ecumenically with some ecumenical organizations (NAE and NAPARC) whose member churches differ considerably in theology and worldview from the CRC but that it was unwilling to work with "the historic Reformed churches in the WARC because of theological differences." Synod referred the overture to the IRC.

At the time, the IRC was revising the Ecumenical Charter adopted by Synod 1987 in order to bring it in line with present realities and circumstances in interchurch and ecumenical relations. The charter is the chart and compass that guides the CRC and its IRC in interchurch (bilateral) and ecumenical (multilateral) relations. It sets forth biblical principles on church unity, pro-

vides guidelines for CRC ecumenical work, and elaborates the CRC's ecumenical task and responsibility. Synod 2000 adopted the revised charter proposed by the IRC. The revision took into consideration what Classis East requested in its overture. The IRC now presents a report and recommendations regarding membership in WARC.

In October 1998, observer delegates from the CRC (Dr. David Engelhard, Rev. Leonard Hofman, and Rev. Richard Williams) to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa met with representatives of WARC (Milan Opocensky, general secretary, Bukelwa Hans from the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, and Pieter Holtrop from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands). They discussed WARC and the possibility of the CRC becoming a member. The CRC representatives were favorably impressed with the WARC representative's presentation and their positive attitude toward CRC membership in the alliance.

From July 26 to August 4, 2001, WARC's Executive Committee met in Holland, Michigan. On August 1, six members of the IRC met with Dr. Setri Nyomi, now general secretary of WARC and with Dr. Andre Karamaga, a vice president from the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda. Once again, IRC members were favorably impressed with the confessional Reformed and ecumenical commitment of the representatives of the alliance, especially the general secretary. The CRC is one of the largest churches belonging to the Reformed family of churches that is not a member of the alliance. Both general secretaries, Opocensky and Nyomi, said that the CRC's nonmembership impoverished both WARC and the CRC. In their judgment, WARC and the CRC belong together.

II. Brief history of the relationship between WARC and the CRC

In 1898 the CRC was invited to join the Presbyterian Alliance. Four years later synod declined the invitation for two reasons. First, it seemed to the synod that the basis for admission was the Presbyterian system of church polity rather than a strict commitment to the Reformed confessions. Second, synod was not ready to assume the financial costs of membership.

Once again in 1922, synod was invited to affiliate with the alliance. Synod 1924 turned down the invitation because the alliance was revising its constitution and this fact made it almost impossible to know what the character of the alliance would be in the future. At the same time, the synod expressed an interest in the work of the alliance. The synod also said that it trusted that the revision to be proposed would clearly set forth what the aim of the alliance should be, namely, "helping each other maintain the historical Reformed faith" (*Acts of Synod 1924*, p.160).

For many years the CRC had no contact with the alliance. This situation began to change in 1951 when the synod decided to send an observer delegate to the next meeting of the alliance in order to "become better acquainted with its basis, purpose, objectives, and mode of operation. Dr. Jacob Hoogstra represented the CRC as an observer delegate at the next meeting of the alliance in 1954 at Princeton, New Jersey. In 1969, synod again authorized the sending of an observer delegate to WARC's general council meeting in Nairobi, Kenya (1970). Rev. Harold De Groot, a CRC missionary in Nigeria, was sent. Since then, the CRC has sent an observer delegate to all general council meetings.

In 1966, synod decided to send an observer to the meetings of the Theological Committee of the alliance's North American Area Council. Since

then, the CRC has always had a representative on this committee. The committee permits the CRC's representative to participate in the committee's work on an equal basis with representatives of member churches. Since 1966, the IRC has regularly sent observer delegates to the annual meeting of WARC's Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAAC).

Upon the recommendation of the IRC, Synod 1972 authorized the committee to investigate further the desirability of membership in WARC. Because of the IRC's pressing need to address problems in the CRC's relationship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) and because of racial issues in the Reformed churches in South Africa, the IRC postponed considering membership in WARC.

In 1985, the IRC recommended to synod that the CRC become a member of WARC. That year synod did not act on the recommendation. It decided rather to wait until after synod approved the Ecumenical Charter. The synod also requested the committee to provide more information on WARC's membership and its present activities. Two years later synod adopted the charter.

In 1988, the IRC again recommended membership in WARC (*Agenda for Synod 1988*, pp. 120-21). The IRC attached three appendixes to its report: (1) its 1985 report (pp.129-50); (2) additional information requested by previous synods (pp. 151-55); and (3) a supplementary report, clarifying and augmenting the reports to synods in 1985 and 1987 (pp. 156-61). The same year, the IRC recommended reaffiliation with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). The CRC had been a member of the NAE from the association's beginning in 1943 to 1951. By an overwhelming majority, the synod decided to reaffiliate with the NAE; by a narrow margin, it decided not to become a member of WARC. No grounds were given for the latter decision.

After the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) revised its Statement of Purpose, making the council primarily a forum for dialogue, the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) became a member of the CCC (1995). Through the CCC the CRC in Canada has had a relationship with some Canadian churches that are also members of WARC. In 2000, synod merged the interchurch relations committee of the Canadian Ministries Board (the successor to the CCRCC) with its own IRC. Since then, the synod of the CRC has had a relationship with Canadian churches that are also members of WARC.

III. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches

A. Brief history of the alliance

The Presbyterian Alliance was formed in London in 1875. It held its first assembly in 1877, and it is the oldest ecumenical organization. Soon after its founding, continental European Reformed churches joined the alliance. It moved its central offices from London to Geneva in 1949, and in 1954 changed its name to the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order. In 1891 also in London, Congregational churches formed the International Congregational Council. In 1970, in Nairobi, Kenya, the Alliance and the Council merged to form WARC. Today, the World Alliance consists of Reformed, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches having their historical roots in the Calvinian Reformation. More recently formed united churches are also members.

B. Basis, membership, and purposes of the alliance

The preamble to the Constitution (a copy of the Constitution is attached as Appendix C-1) defines WARC's **basis** as follows:

The one foundation of the church is Jesus Christ, the Lord, in whom God's Word became flesh and to whom the Scriptures bear witness; and the church on earth, though composed of many members, is one body in the communion of the Holy Spirit, under the headship of one Lord Jesus Christ.

WARC is an ecumenical organization. As an ecumenical organization, it is committed to recognize, seek, and promote the unity of Christ's church. To this end, it engages in dialogue with other church groups or families of churches. Early in its history, WARC, like other ecumenical organizations, put much emphasis on the quest for the organic union of Christ's church. Without surrendering this goal, ecumenical organizations, including WARC, have come to respect and honor confessional diversity. Consequently, the accent in ecumenicity has shifted from organic union to unity in witness and work (cooperation). WARC's primary objective globally is to promote Christian witness and cooperation.

Article II of the Constitution deals with **membership**. It says:

Any church which accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; holds the Word of God given in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the supreme authority in matters of faith and life; acknowledges the need for the continuing Reformation of the church catholic; whose position in faith and evangelism is in general agreement with that of the historic Reformed confessions, recognizing that the Reformed tradition is a biblical, evangelical, and doctrinal ethos, rather than any narrow and exclusive definition of faith and order shall be eligible for membership.

(A list of member churches is attached as Appendix C-2.) Membership in the alliance, the Constitution states, does not restrict the relationship of any church with other churches or with other church bodies.

WARC is a self-consciously confessional alliance. It believes that its confessional position does not hinder, but rather advances ecumenicity. In 1954, WARC "identified at least three reasons for the need for a strong and active Reformed confessional agency: to bear witness to the basic doctrinal position of Reformed churches, to emphasize the fundamentals of Reformed polity, and to render certain practical services to members of the Reformed family" (*Introducing the World Alliance of Reformed Churches*, 1999, p. 6). Today WARC continues to affirm that need. It attempts to strengthen the unity and witness of Reformed churches throughout the world and to assist them in interpreting and, when necessary, reinterpreting the Reformed tradition.

WARC has over two hundred member churches located in more than one hundred countries. These member churches have a total membership of approximately eighty million Reformed believers. Two-thirds of the member churches are located in the Southern Hemisphere; over half are located in Third World countries. Many member churches are also members of the World Council of Churches; many are not. Most Latin American members are not members of the WCC. WARC represents and speaks in the ecumenical arena for all these Reformed churches and believers worldwide.

The **purposes** of WARC are stated in Article III of its Constitution. They are:

1. To further all endeavors to proclaim the Word of God faithfully, and to order the life and worship of the church in obedience to his Word;

2. To further the work of evangelism, mission, and stewardship in all their aspects, to promote common study of the Christian faith and its implications;
3. To encourage the diversity and fraternal character of ministries in the church under the one Head, Jesus Christ;
4. To widen and deepen understanding and fellowship among the member churches and churches eligible for membership and to help them to fulfill their own responsibilities in the service of Christ;
5. To further intercourse between the member churches, through mutual visitation, through the dissemination of information, and by other practicable means;
6. To unite the forces of the member churches in common service wherever needed and practicable;
7. To help member churches which may be weak, oppressed, or persecuted, and through all available channels to stimulate and provide aid to needy churches among them;
8. To promote and defend religious and civil liberties wherever threatened throughout the world;
9. To facilitate the contribution to the ecumenical movement of the experiences and insights which churches within this alliance have been given in their history, and to share with churches of other traditions within that movement, and particularly in the World Council of Churches, in the discovery of forms of church life and practice which will enable the people of God more fully to understand and express together God's will for his people.

C. Organization

The churches of the alliance meet approximately once every seven years in a general council, consisting of delegates appointed by the member churches. If the CRC were to become a member, it would be entitled to send four delegates to general council meetings. WARC's bylaws specify that one delegate should be a woman and one delegate should be no more than 30 years old. The general council sets and administers the alliance's policies and programs. It elects officers, and it appoints members to the executive committee and to the alliance's departments, commissions, and committees. It also oversees the alliance's affairs. The Constitution makes clear that none of WARC's organizational provisions or its decisions "shall limit the autonomy of any member church."

The general council last met in 1997 in Debrecen, Hungary, under the theme, "Break the Chains of Injustice." The council is scheduled to meet again in 2004 in Accra, Ghana, under the theme, "All May Have Life in Fullness."

The executive committee is elected by the general council. It consists of the council's officers and twenty-five other council delegates (thirty-two in all). The executive committee meets annually to exercise general oversight of the alliance's work between meetings of the general council. It also appoints the general secretary who directs and coordinates the alliance's work.

The alliance carries out its work through four departments and two committees: the Department of Theology, the Department of Cooperation and Witness, the Department of Partnership of Women and Men, the Department of Finance, the communications committee, and the committee on youth concerns. The Geneva office has approximately twelve full-time employees. Each member church is expected to support the work of the alliance through an annual financial contribution that reflects the resources of the church. WARC's formula suggests that the CRC's annual membership dues would amount to about \$14,000.

Member churches are divided into five geographical areas and are organized together in councils. They are: European, Caribbean and North American

(CANAAC), Southern African, Northeast Asian, and Latin American. The churches from each area meet from time to time. The CANAAC churches now meet every eighteen months.

D. Noteworthy activity in which WARC is presently engaged

Since the decade of the 1970s, WARC has represented the Reformed churches in bilateral dialogues with other world communions and churches such as the Anglicans, the Baptists, the Disciples of Christ, the Lutherans, the Mennonites, the Methodists, the Roman Catholics, and the Orthodox. Currently, it is engaged in dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, the Oriental Orthodox Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, the African Instituted Churches (Independent), the Pentecostal Churches, and the Seventh-day Adventists. It also works closely with the Lutheran World Federation and the WCC.

WARC has a generous scholarship program, making theological education possible for students living in countries where they do not have an opportunity to study theology or to pursue graduate studies in theology. If the CRC became a member of WARC, scholarship recipients would presumably have an opportunity to study at Calvin Theological Seminary.

At Debrecen, the WARC member churches called for a “committed process of progressive recognition, education and confession (*processus confessionis*) regarding economic injustice and ecological destruction.” The council considered global economic injustice and environmental devastation to be “challenges to the integrity of our Christian faith.” Study of these matters and eventual witness regarding them are priorities on WARC’s agenda.

IV. The Christian Reformed Church’s ecumenical stance and responsibility

In 1940, Synod appointed a committee to thoroughly study the CRC’s program of interchurch correspondence. The committee reported in 1944. The 1944 report has been called, and justifiably so, a landmark for ecumenical vision in the CRC’s history of interchurch and ecumenical relations. The report addressed the fundamental questions of the basis, aims, scope, and norms for correspondence with other churches (bilateral relations).

According to the 1944 report, “all Christian churches [are] closely related as being all and severally manifestations of the one and indivisible body of Christ” (*Acts of Synod 1944*, p. 357). The institutional pluriformity of the church was scripturally improper and should be contraband. Christian churches, the report said, are now institutionally separated because of differences in doctrine, worship, and polity. Although Scripture allowed for some diversity in these matters, it did not permit such extensive differences as presently existed. Some churches were closer in doctrine, polity, and worship to the scriptural norm for the organized church of Christ than others. Churches further from the scriptural pattern were not, for that reason, no longer to be considered churches, nor to be simply disowned or ignored.

The committee attempted to formulate a comprehensive program of interchurch relations for the CRC, taking into consideration the biblical teaching regarding the unity and catholicity of the church, scriptural norms for church life, and the committee’s assessment of where the CRC stood in relation to these biblical standards. Two matters loomed large in the committee’s judgment and proposed program: first, that the CRC had an inescapable obligation

and responsibility to all Christian churches, no matter how imperfect or deformed the might be by the mere fact that they were churches of Christ, and second, that the CRC was the closest approximation of the scriptural norm in doctrine, polity, and worship. In brief, the CRC's task and aim in interchurch relations was to win other churches to the Reformed faith and so to pave the way for eventual union with them.

The committee classified the churches of Christ into four groups that formed concentric circles. The groups and circles began with churches closest to the CRC in doctrine and life, and then widened out to churches most different from the CRC. The groups and circles were:

- Churches similar to the CRC in doctrine, polity, and liturgy.
- Churches that were historically and in name Reformed but no longer so in practice.
- Non-Reformed Protestant churches.
- The Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.

While affirming an ecumenical concern and responsibility for all Christ's churches, as a matter of wisdom and strategy, the committee recommended that the CRC begin with the churches closest to it and then work out progressively to the churches in the other circles "as time, strength and opportunity permitted."

The 1944 report did not anticipate the coming into existence of ecumenical organizations as we know them today, certainly not with their current agendas. Ecumenical organizations today are not primarily concerned to bring about church unions or to provide arenas for interdenominational contact between individual member churches. They are church associations that promote mutual understanding and appreciation and that provide avenues for joint witness and programs of service in and to the world. The 1944 report did, however, express a wish that a worldwide council of strict confessional Reformed churches might soon come into existence. This hope was realized two years later in the founding of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, now the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC).

For more than forty years, the CRC limited its interchurch and ecumenical life almost exclusively to what the 1944 report called circle-one churches. It established relationships of ecclesiastical fellowship with other confessional Reformed churches. On the same confessional basis, the CRC affiliated with the REC and NAPARC. These councils may be called circle-one councils. In 1988, the CRC reaffiliated with the NAE. The NAE may be classified as a circle-three organization.

The Ecumenical Charter adopted by Synod 1987, like the 1944 report, affirmed the biblical doctrine of one holy catholic and apostolic church as it is confessed in the ancient creeds and the Reformed standards. The charter and the earlier report were also essentially in agreement in classifying churches and laying out ecumenical strategy. The charter classified the churches of Christ into three groups representing ever-widening circles: Reformed churches, non-Reformed Protestant churches, and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. The charter said that the CRC should seek rapprochement with all churches of Christ but should give priority to Reformed churches, particularly to those that were not only historically and officially Reformed but were also Reformed in practice.

A new feature of the 1987 charter was a statement of principles to guide the church in matters pertaining to ecumenical organizations. The charter stated that the church in today's world must recognize that ecumenicity is being pursued through various types of ecumenical organizations. Through membership in these organizations, a church may be able to carry out some aspects of its ecumenical responsibilities and to do so more efficiently than through bilateral interchurch relations. The charter acknowledged that membership in ecumenical organizations required "relationships of diverse kinds"—probably meaning varying degrees of intimacy in ecclesiastical fellowship—"consonant with the wide diversity of member churches within the organizations."

In contrast to the 1944 report, the charter affirmed the propriety of diversity in unity. This new feature was no doubt due to the insights gained from the experience of ecumenical organizations that initially were so preoccupied with unity that they lost sight of the need for, and propriety of, diversity. The charter allowed for diversity in worship, confessional formulas, and church order.

While the charter emphatically asserted that the unity of the church of Christ was a unity in truth, in elaborating this biblical principle, it introduced a new feature with far-reaching implications for implementing the CRC's ecumenical calling and responsibility. The 1944 report assumed that the CRC was in doctrine, church government, and worship the closest approximation to the scriptural norm. This assumption, with the implicit superiority embodied in it, shaped the church's understanding of its ecumenical calling and determined its approach to other churches. In striking contrast, the charter stated that en route to achieving unity a church must seek to overcome major differences in the perception of biblical truth, sharing its own perception as well as being open to those of others. This is to be done through ecumenical dialogue, a form of conversation through which it may be assumed God will teach all churches and perhaps unite them through a deeper common grasp of the truth. The possibility of a deeper grasp of the truth through dialogue, the charter said, should not be understood in such a way as to undermine either the certainty of the truth already revealed and grasped or the commitment to it. The charter explicitly stated that as the CRC struggled for unity in truth through dialogue, it did so fully committed to the Reformed faith and the confessions of the Reformed churches.

The IRC reverted to the 1944 report's classification of churches and its use of the concentric circles when recommending membership in WARC in 1988. The committee said that it was necessary to distinguish types of relationships among the CRC and other ecumenical organizations. It identified the RES as a circle-one organization and WARC as a circle-two organization. They were not parallel organizations that could relate equally to the CRC. The committee said: "This distinction is of crucial importance in ecumenical relationships for the CRC and the IRC's evaluation of CRC membership in WARC. Only on the basis of this crucial distinction does the IRC recommend CRC affiliation with WARC" (*Agenda for Synod 1988*, p. 158).

The revised charter adopted by Synod 2000 does not substantively change the CRC's ecumenical stance or alter its perception of its ecumenical task and responsibility. The revision classifies the churches of Christ "into a number of groups: Reformed churches, other Protestant denominations and independent churches (evangelical), the Roman Catholic Church, and the Orthodox Church." The revision eliminates the concentric circles of the 1944 report and the 1987

charter and, thus, also the ecumenical strategy implicit in them. The revised charter does, however, say that the CRC's relationship with other churches—presumably both bilateral and multilateral—“may vary in depth and intensity of fellowship, determined by the degree of our affinity with them.”

V. The Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

For many years REC and WARC distanced themselves from one another. This has now changed. The general council meeting in Debrecen invited Dr. Richard van Houten, general secretary of the REC, to address it. Dr. van Houten brought greetings from the REC. Furthermore, Dr. Setri Nyomi was present at and addressed the most recent REC meeting in Indonesia in 2000.

Setri Nyomi, in his most recent executive committee meeting report, said that WARC and the REC “continue to come closer together.” Representatives from both organizations have met twice for extended conversations. The executive committees of both have been asked to indicate in what direction they would like these conversations to go in the future. Nyomi expressed the opinion that the alliance's Theology Department should consider inviting the REC to send representatives to dialogues as full participants and not just as observers.

In 1988 when the IRC previously recommended membership in WARC, only thirteen RES member churches were also members of WARC. Today, twenty-three of the thirty-eight REC churches are members of WARC. The CRC is the largest REC member not affiliated with WARC.

VI. Christian Reformed Church membership in WARC

As we contemplate membership in WARC, we must face honestly certain difficulties that may lie before us. The CRC differs from WARC and some of its member churches in some rather fundamental ways. The CRC is a confessional Reformed church, which requires subscription to its confessions. WARC's confessional commitment is not as clear and distinct as the CRC's. WARC requires only general agreement with the historic Reformed confessions. It also recognizes that “the Reformed tradition is a biblical, evangelical, and doctrinal ‘ethos’ . . . rather than a definition of faith and order.” The organization thus appears to be traditionally but not distinctively Reformed. Moreover, some of the European and North American member churches in WARC tolerate serious doctrinal deviations and permit their theologians to interpret Scripture in a manner incompatible with sound Reformed hermeneutical principles and practice. WARC itself, however, has produced some very fine studies and made declarations with which the CRC can agree. Contrarily, it has also produced studies and made pronouncements with which the CRC cannot agree. Presumably WARC will do so also in the future.

The question the CRC faces in considering membership in WARC is whether or not the deviations in doctrine and the life of some of the alliance's member churches and the CRC's disagreement with some of WARC's past studies and declarations preclude CRC membership. The IRC does not think so. It rather believes that membership in WARC offers the CRC a rich opportunity for Reformed ecumenical witness and work.

The revised ecumenical charter clearly recognizes that the CRC's relationship with other churches and ecumenical organizations “may vary in depth

and intensity of fellowship, determined by the degree of our affinity with them.” WARC is a looser fellowship of churches than is the REC. In WARC, the CRC would not be expected to assume as much responsibility for the doctrine and life of member churches as it does in the REC. Moreover, the IRC is not ready to render the judgment that WARC member churches, even those with the greatest deviations, are no longer churches of Christ. As churches of Christ, the CRC has an ecumenical responsibility toward them and cannot simply ignore or disown them. In the IRC’s judgment, the CRC should not withhold ecumenical fellowship with the vast majority of the alliance’s member churches worldwide that are truly evangelical and Reformed on account of the presence of a few European and North American member churches whom we may perceive to have defects.

In WARC, the CRC can also join forces with two North American churches with which it is in ecclesiastical fellowship, the Reformed Church in America and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Both the RCA and the EPC have urged the IRC to apply for membership.

Studies and declarations with which the CRC does not agree should not be stumbling blocks to membership. WARC’s constitution prohibits it from “limiting the autonomy of any member church.” The CRC would not be obligated to endorse WARC’s pronouncements or to use its study materials.

The IRC believes that the CRC can subscribe to WARC’s Statement of Basis and can commit itself to the alliance’s Statement of Purposes. It also believes that the CRC qualifies for membership. The committee judges that the basis is adequate to the alliance’s purposes and that, therefore, the CRC can become a member without surrendering its Reformed confessional integrity. The committee also thinks that WARC is an avenue through which the CRC can effectively and efficiently meet its ecumenical responsibility directly to historically Reformed churches and indirectly to many other Christian churches. In the ecumenical arena, churches from non-Reformed traditions turn to WARC to hear the Reformed voice.

The IRC believes that membership in the alliance would benefit and enrich the CRC. Through dialogue with WARC and its member churches, the CRC can teach as well as be taught. Membership would also enhance the CRC’s catholic Christian consciousness and increase the church’s awareness of problems that globally confront Christians and their churches.

Quite a few former CRC mission churches, for example the three daughter churches in Nigeria, and churches with which the CRC is now a partner through Christian Reformed World Missions and Christian Reformed World Relief are members of the alliance. These churches find in WARC a place to let their voices be heard and a place to set up cooperation between themselves and other Reformed churches in their countries. By joining the alliance, the CRC can further cement its relations to these churches by appearing among them and supporting them as they express their own needs and desires.

It is difficult to calculate quantitatively how large and effective the CRC’s Reformed witness would be in WARC. The alliance’s present leaders have a high regard for both the CRC’s confessional position and the abilities of its leaders and theologians. Today, Calvin Theological Seminary is one of the finest Reformed theological schools in the world. It would certainly attract recipients of WARC scholarships from Reformed churches around the world. CRC observer delegates to WARC, CANAAC, and CANAAC’s theology

committee have consistently reported that representatives of WARC and its member churches have treated them with respect and that their contributions were appreciated. Over the years, representatives from many member churches have expressed the hope that the CRC would join the alliance.

God has richly blessed the CRC. It has a rich Reformed confessional and theological heritage. The CRC has invested a huge amount of its resources in a system of Christian education at all levels—grade school through college and seminary. These schools produce very capable leaders, both lay and clergy. Experienced, competent, and dedicated leaders also staff CRC agencies. The IRC is unanimous in its judgment that these rich resources should now be put to use more broadly for the benefit of Christ's church worldwide.

VII. Recommendation

That Synod authorize the IRC to apply for membership in WARC.

Grounds:

1. The CRC meets all the requirements for membership in WARC, can subscribe to its basis, and can affirm its purposes. Therefore, as a member of the Reformed family of churches, the CRC belongs in WARC.
2. Membership in WARC will provide the CRC with an avenue to meet its ecumenical responsibility to historically Reformed churches and, through it, to other Christian churches and communions with which WARC is in dialogue.
3. Membership in WARC would offer the CRC an opportunity to support and strengthen the Reformed witness of other member churches that are also members of the REC or in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC.
4. Membership in WARC would provide the CRC an increased opportunity to assist struggling Reformed churches throughout the world in witness, work, and theological education.
5. Membership in WARC would enrich the CRC by enhancing its catholic Christian self-consciousness and its awareness of problems that globally confront Christians and their churches.
6. It may reasonably be presumed that the CRC can make an impact on WARC and, through it, on other churches of Christ.
7. Representatives of WARC and CANAAC have urged the CRC to become a full member and have said that the CRC both belongs to and can make a significant contribution to the alliance.

Appendix C-1

WARC Constitution (Adopted 1970; amended 1982, 1989, 1997)

Preamble

- I. Name**
- II. Membership**
- III. Purposes**
- IV. General council**
- V. Executive committee**
- VI. Officers of the Alliance**
- VII. Executive officers**
- VIII. Departments, commissions and committees**
- IX. Organization of areas**
- X. Legal status**
- XI. Principal office**
- XII. Amendments**

Preamble

The one foundation of the church is Jesus Christ, the Lord, in whom God's Word became flesh and to whom the Scriptures bear witness; and the church on earth, though composed of many members, is one body in the communion of the Holy Spirit, under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Article I: Name

The name of the organization, hereinafter called the Alliance, shall be The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) and in shorter form, The World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Article II: Membership

Any church which accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, holds the word of God given in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the supreme authority in matters of faith and life; acknowledges the need for the continuing reformation of the church catholic; whose position in faith and evangelism is in general agreement with that of the historic Reformed confessions, recognizing that the Reformed tradition is a biblical, evangelical and doctrinal ethos, rather than any narrow and exclusive definition of faith and order, shall be eligible for membership.

- United churches which share this understanding of the nature and calling of the church shall be eligible for membership.
- Membership in the Alliance does not restrict the relationship of any church with other churches or with other inter-church bodies.

Article III: Purposes

The purposes of the Alliance shall be:

1. to further all endeavours to proclaim the word of God faithfully, and to order the life and worship of the Church in obedience to God's word;
2. to further the work of evangelism, mission and stewardship in all their aspects, to promote common study of the Christian faith and its implications;

3. to encourage the diversity and familial character of ministries in the church under the one head, Jesus Christ;
4. to widen and deepen understanding and community among the member churches and churches eligible for membership and to help them to fulfil their own responsibilities in the service of Christ;
5. to further intercourse between the member churches, through mutual visitation, through the dissemination of information, and by other practicable means;
6. to unite the forces of the member churches in common service wherever needed and practicable;
7. to help member churches which may be weak, oppressed or persecuted; and through all available channels to stimulate and provide aid to needy churches among them;
8. to promote and defend religious and civil liberties wherever threatened throughout the world;
9. to facilitate the contribution to the ecumenical movement of the experiences and insights which churches within the Alliance have been given in their history, and to share with churches of other traditions within that movement, and particularly in the World Council of Churches, in the discovery of forms of church life and practice which will enable the people of God more fully to understand and express together God's will for his people.

Article IV: General council

1. Composition and meetings

The general council shall consist of delegates appointed by the member churches in such numbers as shall be specified in the by-laws. The general council shall meet ordinarily once in five years. The executive committee may convene the general council on its own initiative and shall do so at the request of one-third of the member churches. The time, place and programme may be determined by the general council or in the interim by the executive committee.

2. Functions

The general council shall have power to make and administer policies and programmes in accordance with the purpose of the Alliance; to elect officers, members of the executive committee, departments, commissions and committees; to adopt and amend a constitution and by-laws; to consider all matters brought before it by member churches; and to give oversight to the affairs of the Alliance. None of these provisions shall limit the autonomy of any member church.

Article V: Executive committee

1. Composition and meetings

- a. The general council shall elect an executive committee from the delegates to that general council, the members to hold office from their installation until their successors are elected and installed in office.

- b. The executive committee shall consist of the officers of the Alliance and twenty-five members elected by the general council. The executive officers shall be corresponding members of the executive committee.
- c. If any member of the executive committee is unable to attend a particular meeting of the committee, an alternate may be appointed under provision in the by-laws.
- d. The times, places and plans of meetings of the executive committee shall be according to the provisions in the by-laws or as specified from time to time by the general council or the executive committee.

2. Functions

The executive committee shall exercise general oversight of the work of the Alliance between meetings of the general council, shall represent and, if necessary, speak for the Alliance between meetings of the general council and perform all duties specified elsewhere in this constitution and in the by-laws or committed to it by the general council. It shall have power to fill all vacancies in the offices of the Alliance and in its own membership which may occur between meetings of the general council.

Article VI: Officers of the Alliance

The general council shall elect the following officers from the delegates to that general council to hold office from their installation until their successors are elected and installed in office:

1. A president
2. Three vice-presidents
3. Moderators of departments.

Article VII: Executive officers

The executive committee shall elect the following executive officers, each of whom shall hold office for a fixed term of years and be eligible for re-election:

1. A general secretary
 2. One or more associate secretaries or departmental secretaries
 3. One or more assistant secretaries
 4. A general treasurer
 5. An area secretary and area treasurer for each area which may be organized, upon nomination of the area.
- The terms of office of associate secretaries, departmental secretaries and assistant secretaries shall be not more than three years, of all other executive officers not more than five years.
 - The general secretary shall be the chief executive officer and shall be responsible to the general council and to the executive committee to direct and coordinate the work of the Alliance.

Article VIII: Departments, commissions and committees

1. The general council may establish departments.
2. The general council or the executive committee may establish commissions and committees.

Article IX: Organization of areas

In order to promote the closest possible community and cooperation among member churches in particular areas of the world and the effectiveness of the total work of the Alliance, the general council may authorize the organization of an area by the member churches in any given area of the world. The number, bounds, and names of the areas shall be determined by the general council and ordinarily shall be set forth in the by-laws of the Alliance. The organization of an area shall be effected by the member churches within the area in conformity with the constitution and by-laws of the Alliance, under by-laws drawn up in the area and ratified by the general council or the executive committee.

Article X: Legal status

The general council and the executive committee shall take the steps necessary to qualify the Alliance to own and deal with property, both real and personal.

Article XI: Principal office

The principal office of the Alliance shall be in Geneva, Switzerland.

Article XII: Amendments

1. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the delegates in attendance at any meeting of the general council, providing the proposed amendment has been transmitted to the members of the executive committee, to each member church, and to the moderators of the areas, at least one year before it is voted.
2. By-Laws:
 - a. The by-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the delegates in attendance at any meeting of the general council.
 - b. Between meetings of the general council, by-laws may be amended by:
 - i. approval by a majority vote at a meeting of the executive committee;
 - ii. referral to the member churches and approval by a majority of the member churches in the year following;
 - iii. ratification by a majority vote at the subsequent meeting of the executive committee.

Appendix C-2

Member Denominations in World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Africa

Protestant Church of Algeria

Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola

Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola

Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana

Association of Reformed Evangelical Churches of Burkina Faso

Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
 Protestant Church of Christ the King, Central African Republic
 Evangelical Church of Congo
 Church of Christ in Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo
 Evangelical Community in Congo
 Reformed Presbyterian Community in Africa
 Presbyterian Community in Congo
 Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa
 Presbyterian Community of East Kasai
 Protestant Community of Shaba
 Reformed Community of Presbyterians
 Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile
 Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea
 The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), Ethiopia
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana
 Presbyterian Church of Ghana
 Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya
 Reformed Church of East Africa, Kenya
 Lesotho Evangelical Church, Lesotho
 Presbytery of Liberia
 Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
 Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Malawi
 Presbyterian Church of Mauritius
 Evangelical Church in Morocco
 United Church of Christ in Mozambique
 Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique
 Presbyterian Church of Mozambique
 Evangelical Church of the Republic of Niger
 Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria
 Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria
 Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ, Nigeria
 United Church of Christ in Nigeria
 Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
 The Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv, Nigeria
 Protestant Church of Reunion Island
 Presbyterian Church in Rwanda
 Protestant Church of Senegal
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa
 Dutch Reformed Church, South Africa
 Presbyterian Church of Africa, South Africa
 Reformed Church in Africa, South Africa
 United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
 Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
 Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
 Volkskerk van Afrika, South Africa
 Africa Inland Church (AIC) Sudan
 Presbyterian Church of the Sudan
 Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo
 Reformed Presbyterian Church in Uganda
 Reformed Church in Zambia

United Church of Zambia
Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

Asia

The Church of Bangladesh Synod
The Church of Christ in China
The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China
Church of North India
Church of South India
Congregational Church of India (Maraland)
Evangelical Church of Maraland, India
Lairam Church of Jesus Christ, India
Presbyterian Church of India
Reformed Presbyterian Church, NE India
Karo Batak Protestant Church, Indonesia
Evangelical Church in Kalimantan, Indonesia
Christian Church in Luwuk Banggai, Indonesia
Christian Church in South Sulawesi, Indonesia
Christian Church in East Timor, Indonesia
Indonesian Christian Church, Indonesia
Evangelical Christian Church in Irian Jaya, Indonesia
East Java Christian Church, Indonesia
Pasundan Christian Church, Indonesia
Protestant Christian Church in Bali, Indonesia
Christian Church in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia
Christian Church of Sumba, Indonesia
Christian Evangelical Church in Bolaang Mongondow, Indonesia
Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa, Indonesia
Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor, Indonesia
Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera, Indonesia
Christian Evangelical Church in Sangir-Talaud, Indonesia
Protestant Church in Indonesia
Protestant Church in the Western Part of Indonesia
Protestant Church in South-East Sulawesi, Indonesia
Indonesian Protestant Church in Buol Tolitoli, Indonesia
Indonesian Protestant Church in Gorontalo, Indonesia
Indonesian Protestant Church of Donggala, Indonesia
Protestant Church in the Moluccas, Indonesia
Toraja Church, Indonesia
Church of Toraja Mamasa, Indonesia
Christian Churches of Java, Indonesia
Christian Churches in the Southern Part of Sumatra, Indonesia
Korean Christian Church in Japan
Church of Christ in Japan
Presbyterian Church in Korea (Daeshin) (PCKD)
Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hap Dong Chung Tong) (HDCT)
Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)
The Presbyterian Church of Korea
Presbyterian Church in Malaysia
Independent Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

Mara Evangelical Church, Myanmar
The Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
Church of Pakistan
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
United Evangelical Church of Christ, Philippines
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
The Presbyterian Church in Singapore
Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka
Presbytery of Lanka, Sri Lanka
Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
Church of Christ in Thailand

Caribbean

Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba
Dominican Evangelical Church, Dominican Republic
The Presbyterian Church in Grenada
Guyana Congregational Union, Guyana
Guyana Presbyterian Church, Guyana
Presbyterian Church of Guyana
The United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands
Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago

Europe

Reformed Church in Austria
United Protestant Church of Belgium
Union of Evangelical Congregational Churches in Bulgaria
Reformed Christian Church in Croatia
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Czech Republic
Church of the Brethren, Czech Republic
Reformed Church of Denmark
Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine, France
Reformed Church of France
Malagasy Protestant Church in France
Evangelical Reformed Church (Synod of the Evangelical-Reformed Churches
in Bavaria and North-West Germany), Germany
National Church of Lippe, Germany
Reformed Alliance, Germany
Church of Scotland, Great Britain
Presbyterian Church of Wales, Great Britain
Congregational Federation, Great Britain
Union of Welsh Independents, Great Britain
United Free Church of Scotland, Great Britain
The United Reformed Church, Great Britain
Greek Evangelical Church, Greece
Reformed Church in Hungary
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Waldensian Evangelical Church, Italy
Reformed Church in Latvia
Reformed Church in Lithuania
Evangelical Protestant Church of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg H.B.
Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

The Netherlands Reformed Church, The Netherlands
Remonstrant Brotherhood, The Netherlands
Reformed Evangelical Church in Poland
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
Reformed Church in Romania (Cluj)
Reformed Church in Romania (Oradea)
Church of the Brethren in the Slovak Republic
Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia, Slovak Republic
Reformed Christian Church in Slovenia
Spanish Evangelical Church, Spain
The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, Switzerland
Reformed Church in Carpatho-Ukraine
Reformed Christian Church in Yugoslavia

Latin America

Evangelical Congregational Church, Argentina
Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Argentina
Presbyterian Church of Argentina
Reformed Churches in Argentina
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Bolivia
Christian Reformed Church in Brazil
Arab Evangelical Church of São Paulo, Brazil
Evangelical Reformed Churches in Brazil
Presbyterian Church of Brazil
Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil
Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Chile
Presbyterian Church of Chile
National Presbyterian Church, Chile
Presbyterian Church of Colombia
Fraternity of Evangelical Churches of Costa Rica
United Evangelical Church of Ecuador
Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador
National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala
Christian Reformed Church of Honduras
National Presbyterian Church of Mexico
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Mexico
Presbyterian Reformed Church of Mexico
Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Uruguay
Presbyterian Church of Venezuela

Middle East

Synod of the Evangelical Church of Iran
National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, Lebanon
National Evangelical Union of Lebanon
Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, Lebanon

North America

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
United Church of Canada

Cumberland Presbyterian Church, USA
Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, USA
Evangelical Presbyterian Church, USA
Hungarian Reformed Church in America, USA
Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church, USA
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Reformed Church in America, USA
The Korean Presbyterian Church in America, USA
United Church of Christ, USA

Pacific

Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa
Congregational Federation of Australia
Uniting Church in Australia
Evangelical Church of French Polynesia
Kiribati Protestant Church, Kiribati
Reformed Congregational Churches, Marshall Islands
United Church of Christ-Congregational in the Marshall Islands
Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
Niue Church, Niue Island
Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
United Church in the Solomon Islands
Tuvalu Christian Church, Tuvalu
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Appendix D

Report of the Interchurch Relations Committee Clarifying the Official Doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church Concerning the Mass

I. Introduction

A. Background, mandate, and structure of the report

In 1998, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) received two overtures concerning question and answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism (HC, Q. and A. 80). The first overture requested that Q. and A. 80 be removed from the text of the catechism because the phrase “a condemnable idolatry” should be reserved for the behavior of people who do not believe in justification by faith in Jesus Christ; because Christian love, unity, and understanding demand it; and because Q. and A. 80 was not included in the original text of the catechism. The second overture asked that Q. and A. 80 *not* be removed from the catechism, as the earlier overture had requested, because the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has never repudiated its official condemnation of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith found in the decisions of the Council of Trent (1545/63).

Synod 1998 decided not to accede to the first overture because, among other things, the overture had “not established that the language of Q. and A. 80 is an incorrect presentation of the present official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.” In addition, the synod directed the CRC Interchurch Relations

Committee (IRC) “to make an attempt to dialogue with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church to clarify the official doctrine of that church concerning the mass” (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 427). The following report has been written in pursuit of this mandate.

At its regular meeting in September 1998, the IRC appointed a subcommittee to carry out the synodical mandate. This subcommittee consisted of Dr. David Engelhard (chairperson), Dr. Lyle Bierma, Dr. Henry De Moor, Dr. Ronald Feenstra, and Dr. George Vandervelde. The subcommittee met with delegations of RCC theologians on two occasions: on January 27-28, 1999, at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Washington, D.C., and on August 17-18, 2001, at St. Paul’s College, Washington, D.C. The first RCC delegation consisted of Rev. John Ford, Professor of Systematic Theology at The Catholic University of America (CUA); Rev. David Power, Professor of Liturgical Theology at CUA; Rev. Berard Marthaler, Professor of Theology and Catechetics at CUA; Rev. J. A. DiNoia, Director of the Intercultural Forum at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center; Brother Jeffrey Gros, Associate Director, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (SEIA), USCCB; and Dr. Eugene Fisher, Associate Director, SEIA, USCCB. The second RCC delegation included—in addition to Ford, Fisher, and DiNoia—Monsignor John Strykowski, Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practice, USCCB; and three members of the RCC Ecumenical Commission in Canada: Sister Donna Geernaert, Bishop John Boissonneau, and Bishop John Wingle. The participants spent most of the first meeting discussing the meaning and accuracy of the text of HC 80 and most of the second meeting reviewing and revising those sections of this report that seek to clarify Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass.

From the beginning, both sides agreed that Q. and A. 80 is organized in the following way:

Question 80: How does the Lord’s Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

Answer: (A¹) The Lord’s Supper declares to us
that our sins have been completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ
which he himself finished on the cross once for all.

(B¹) It also declares to us
that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,
who with his very body
is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father
where he wants us to worship him.

(A²) But the Mass teaches
that the living and the dead
do not have their sins forgiven
through the suffering of Christ
unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.

(B²) It also teaches
that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine
where Christ is therefore to be worshiped.

- (A³) Thus the Mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ
(B³) and [basically nothing but] a condemnable idolatry.

This way of dividing up the material suggests that the question asked in Q. and A. 80 receives a twofold answer: the doctrines of the Lord's Supper and the Mass differ in the way they understand both the sacrifice of Christ (A) and the presence of Christ (B). Each of these two issues is treated in three subsections: A¹ explains the Reformed view of the Lord's Supper as it relates to Christ's sacrifice, A² the objectionable part of the Roman Catholic view, and A³ the Heidelberg Catechism's response to the Roman Catholic view. B¹ explains the Reformed view of the Lord's Supper as it relates to the presence of Christ, B² the objectionable part of the Roman Catholic view, and B³ the Heidelberg Catechism's response to the Roman Catholic view.

B. *Historical note*

Question and answer 80 did not appear in the text of the first German edition of the Heidelberg Catechism, which probably left the publisher sometime in February 1563. It first appeared in the second German edition (March 1563) and in the official Latin translation of the Heidelberg Catechism (March 1563). It was also included, in slightly expanded form, in the third (April [?] 1563) and fourth (November 1563) German editions, the last of which became the "*textus receptus*" of the Heidelberg Catechism and the basis for the 1975 CRC translation used above.

It is not clear why the first edition of the Heidelberg Catechism did not include Q. and A. 80. One possibility is that Q. and A. 80 was composed and added in direct response to a statement on the Mass adopted by the Council of Trent in September 1562. The first appearance of Q. and A. 80 in the *second* German edition of the catechism might indicate that the decision of Trent had not reached Heidelberg until after the first edition of the Heidelberg Catechism had already gone to press. This, however, is conjecture. We simply do not know when the statements of Trent first came to the attention of the Heidelberg theologians or whether these statements provoked a confessional rebuttal.

The only documentary evidence we have to work with is a letter dated April 3, 1563, to John Calvin from Caspar Olevianus, one of the contributors to the Heidelberg Catechism. Olevianus writes that "in the first German edition . . . the question on the difference between the Lord's Supper and the papal Mass was omitted," but that "after some urging on my part [*admonitus a me*], the elector decided that it should be added to the second German and first Latin editions" (*Calvini Opera* 19:684). It is not clear from this letter whether Q. and A. 80 was intentionally omitted from the first edition, whether its omission was later regarded as an oversight, or whether it was composed in response to Trent. Nor is it clear who exactly was responsible for the wording of this question. The fact that it was Olevianus who urged the elector to add this material and that the language of Q. and A. 80 is reminiscent of that of Calvin (see, e.g., "The Geneva Confession of 1536," paragraph 16) may indicate that Olevianus, Calvin's protégé in Heidelberg, was himself the composer.

C. Recent synodical decisions regarding question and answer 80

Recent CRC synods have on two previous occasions faced the possibility of eliminating or revising Q. and A. 80. On both occasions, synod decided not to proceed in that direction.

Synod 1975 received both an overture and a communication regarding Q. and A. 80. In the overture, a classis asked that Synod 1975 take appropriate steps to delete the part of Q. and A. 80 that describes and rejects Roman Catholic teaching, on the grounds that this section describes and negates the faith of others rather than offering “a confessional expression of the Reformed faith,” and that it “unnecessarily gives offense to inquirers of Roman Catholic background before they have had opportunity to gain appreciation for the Reformed faith” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 646). In response, Synod 1975 referred the overture to the churches and asked the New Confession Committee to receive responses from the churches and to serve a subsequent synod with advice on Q. and A. 80 (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 106). In the communication, a minister suggested that the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, which was then in progress, should follow the first German edition, thereby omitting Q. and A. 80. Synod did not accede to this request on the grounds that the Synods of 1972 and 1974 did not require that the translators use the first German edition and that other Reformed churches use versions of the Heidelberg Catechism that include Q. and A. 80 (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 92).

Based on the report of the New Confession Committee, Synod 1977 made no changes in Q. and A. 80, on the following grounds: the responses from the churches were inconclusive, weighty reasons are needed to alter a historical creed, the Roman Catholic church has not repudiated the statements of the Council of Trent that Q. and A. 80 rejects, the sharp language of Q. and A. 80 is rooted in “indignation at the withholding of assurance of salvation from believers,” and the main emphasis of Q. and A. 80 is assurance of salvation rooted in complete forgiveness of our sins through Christ’s only sacrifice (*Acts of Synod 1977*, pp. 88-89, 657-58).

D. Outline of the report

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A. Background, mandate, and structure of the report

B. Historical note

C. Recent synodical decisions regarding question and answer 80

D. Outline of the report

E. List of documents cited

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1. The Lord’s Supper: Communication of redemption accomplished on the cross
2. The Mass: Continual sacrificial mediation of forgiveness
3. Critique of the Roman Catholic Mass: Affront to the salvation accomplished by Christ

B. Roman Catholic teaching

1. One Sacrifice—different forms
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 - b. Centrality of word or sacrament
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IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

B. Recommendations

E. List of documents cited

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II. Differences over sacrifice

A. The teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism

The Heidelberg Catechism says little about the sacrificial character of Christ's death in the questions and answers on the Lord's Supper (Q. and A. 75-80). It does, however, address Christ's sacrificial death in its earlier treatment of the Apostles' Creed. There it says that "by his suffering as the *only atoning sacrifice,*" Christ has "set us free, body and soul, from eternal condemnation," and has gained for us "God's grace, righteousness, and eternal life"

(Q. and A. 37, emphasis added). Then, in the introductory questions on the sacraments, the Catechism emphasizes that we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life “by grace alone because of Christ’s *one sacrifice finished on the cross*,” and that through the sacraments the Holy Spirit teaches and assures us that “our entire salvation rests on Christ’s *one sacrifice* for us on the cross” (Q. and A. 66-67, emphasis added).

Then, in Q. and A. 80, the Heidelberg Catechism presents the Lord’s Supper as a testimony to the sufficiency and finality of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross (A¹), contrasts this confession to the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass as sacrifice (A²), and concludes that the Roman Catholic teaching is nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Christ (A³).

1. The Lord’s Supper: Communication of redemption accomplished on the cross (A¹)

The Catechism highlights the finality and sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice in two ways. First, it is at pains to underscore the nature of Christ’s sacrifice as a once-for-all event that was completed in the past. The Catechism’s four-fold reinforcement of this finality is marked by the italicized phrases: “the (a) *one* sacrifice of Jesus Christ (repeated in the conclusion, A³) which (b) *he himself* (c) *finished* on the cross (d) *once for all* (see also HC, Q. and A. 66 and 67).

Secondly, having underscored Christ’s sacrifice as a completed past event (redemption accomplished), the Heidelberg Catechism seeks to safeguard this once-for-all character by emphasizing a particular way in which the Lord’s Supper mediates this finality (redemption applied). The sacrament is a visible sign and pledge that “*declares* to us that our sins *have been* [present perfect: completed action with continuing effect] *completely* forgiven” by virtue of the once-for-all event. To this declaration regarding Christ’s work in the past, the Catechism joins a declaration regarding our bond to the ascended Christ: the Lord’s Supper “also *declares* to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ, who with his very body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father where he wants us to worship him.”

2. The Mass: Continual sacrificial mediation of forgiveness (A²)

In contrast to its understanding of the Lord’s Supper, the Catechism emphasizes that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that sins are forgiven only by the continual offering of the Mass by priests (“*unless* Christ is *still offered* for them *daily* by the priests”).

The Heidelberg Catechism’s reference to the relation of the Mass to the “dead” is best understood, not as introducing a new issue, namely, the state of the dead, but as yet another illustration of how the Mass assumes the inconclusiveness or insufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross: *even at death* the once-for-all sacrifice does not secure final salvation; to secure the complete forgiveness of those who have died requires the daily sacrifice of the Mass.

3. Critique of the Roman Catholic Mass: Affront to the salvation accomplished by Christ (A³)

On the basis of its analysis of the sacrificial character of the Mass, the Heidelberg Catechism draws what appears to be an obvious conclusion: “the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ.”

B. Roman Catholic teaching

Against the background of the Heidelberg Catechism's statements, one of the two main tasks that flow out of the committee's mandate is to determine what the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is regarding the sacrificial character of the Mass. This section of the report attempts to do just that.

Appealing to documents contemporary with, and subsequent to, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Roman Catholic representatives insisted that Q. and A. 80 misconstrues the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass. The understanding of the Mass as sacrifice, they explained, in no way detracts from the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This understanding may be summed up in the four points below.

1. One sacrifice—different forms

The Council of Trent clearly affirms the unrepeatability of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, a sacrifice which is sacramentally made present in the Mass:

He then, our Lord and God, was once and for all to offer Himself to God the Father by His death on the altar of the cross, to accomplish for them an everlasting redemption (Trent, Session 22, ch. 1; DS 1740. In the same section, Trent speaks of "the bloody sacrifice which He was once for all to accomplish on the cross").

In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner (cf. Heb. 9.14, 27) on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner. . . . [T]he victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different. The fruits of this oblation (the bloody one, that is) are received in abundance through this unbloody oblation."

(Trent, Session 22, ch. 2; DS 1743)

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) reaffirms Trent's teaching regarding the unity of Christ's sacrifice and the eucharistic sacrifice:

Through the ministry of priests the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is completed in union with the sacrifice of Christ the only mediator, which in the Eucharist is offered through the priests' hands in the name of the whole Church in an unbloody and sacramental manner until the Lord himself come (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). The ministry of priests is directed to this end and finds its consummation in it.

(*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 2)

Both in Trent and in the Second Vatican Council, the difference between the sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass is that the one sacrifice is offered in different manners. As a sacramental representation of the *one* unique sacrifice, the Mass is said to be a "true and proper sacrifice" and "truly propitiatory" (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2, and canon 1; DS 1743, 1751; cf. canon 3, DS 1753). In our conversations, the Roman Catholic representatives interpreted "truly propitiatory" to mean that in the Mass the fruits of Christ's propitiation become ours (a transfer that happens only in the context of faith).

On the basis of the Heidelberg Catechism, the committee challenged the Roman Catholic representatives as follows: As a *re-enactment* of the sacrifice of Christ which mediates forgiveness, the Mass detracts from the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. To this the Roman Catholic representatives responded: Since the sacrifice of the Mass is a re-enactment and

representation of *the one final, sufficient, and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ on the cross*, the Mass by its very nature as sacrament of that once-for-all event cannot detract from the one sacrifice of Christ.

2. The Eucharist: Sacramental representation and perpetuation of the one, unique sacrifice

The Roman Catholic representatives emphasized that, in Roman Catholic doctrine, the sacrifice of the Mass does not stand in competition with Christ's sacrifice but sacramentally represents it. The duplication of the term *sacrifice* in describing both Christ's gift on the cross and the gift of the Mass presents no problem from the Roman Catholic perspective because of a theology of sacramental representation. The *one* sacrifice, the *same* victim, is indeed offered but in an entirely different way, namely, *sacramentally*. By virtue of this sacramental representation, the Eucharist, far from being "basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice," renders present the unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of Jesus Christ. At the Last Supper, Christ left the church with "a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands)" that "represents," that is, makes present (see the explanation of "real presence" below), *in an unbloody manner* the bloody sacrifice that was "*once for all*" accomplished on the cross. In this way the "salutary power" of the cross "is applied for the forgiveness of sins" (Trent, Session 22, ch. 1; DS 1740). In the "unbloody oblation" of the Eucharist, the "fruits" of the bloody oblation are "received" (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2; DS 1743).

Similarly, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (promulgated in 1992) affirms, "The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the *making present* and the *sacramental* offering of his *unique* sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body" (1362, emphasis added; in 1382 the term used is "perpetuated").

In addition to representing Christ's sacrifice, the eucharistic sacrifice perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross:

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 47)

On this view, the eucharistic sacrifice is not another sacrifice but is the perpetuation and memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

According to the Roman Catholic representatives, therefore, the Heidelberg Catechism's conclusion that the sacrifice of the Mass detracts from the sufficiency or finality of Christ's sacrifice misconstrues the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass as standing in competition with the cross—a construal that Trent explicitly repudiates: "By no means, then, does the latter [the unbloody oblation] detract from former [the bloody oblation]" (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2; DS 1743). Trent anathematizes anyone who says that the sacrifice of the Mass "detracts from" Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Trent, Session 22, canon 4; DS 754).

3. The Eucharistic sacrifice completes the purification of those who die in Christ

According to Roman Catholic teaching, the offering of the Mass also for those who have died in the Lord but who “are not yet wholly purified” (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2, and canon 3) does not impugn the finality or sufficiency of the forgiveness accomplished by Christ’s sacrifice. The eternal state of those who die in the Lord is not in question. They are simply being purified for the state of full glorification. One might say, therefore, that in Roman Catholic teaching the effect of the Mass on those who die in the Lord lies not in the area of justification but of (final) sanctification.

As to the state of these departed saints, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says,

All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but [are] still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (1030)

Thus, the Roman Catholic representatives held that ascribing posthumous purifying efficacy to the Mass in no way detracts from the finality of the redemption (as the certainty of forgiveness and of eternal life) accomplished on the cross. Just as the Protestant affirmation of sanctification as a continuing process in the lives of believers does not detract from the finality or sufficiency of the cross, the belief that this process extends beyond death does not detract from the once-for-all sacrifice.

4. The Eucharist: More than sacrifice

Except for the teaching on bodily presence, the Heidelberg Catechism focuses solely on the Mass as sacrifice. Although this may be understandable in view of the polemical context, the Roman Catholic representatives pointed out that to describe the Eucharist solely as sacrifice obscures its “inexhaustible richness.” The Council of Trent affirmed in the “Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist” (1551) that in instituting this sacrament Christ

poured out, as it were, in this sacrament the riches of His divine love for men, “causing His wonderful works to be remembered,” (cf. Ps. 111 [110]:4), and He wanted us when receiving it to celebrate His memory (cf. 1 Cor. 11:24) and to proclaim His death until He comes to judge the world (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). His will was that this sacrament be received as the soul’s spiritual food (cf. Mt. 26:26) which would nourish and strengthen (cf. n. 1530) those who live by the life of Him who said: “He who eats Me will live because of Me” (Jn. 6:57).

(Council of Trent, Session 13, chapter 2, DS 1638)

Reflecting this, recent Roman Catholic teaching says that the Eucharist includes elements such as meal, spiritual nourishment, offering of thanksgiving, memorial, sign of unity, bond of love, source of grace, and pledge of future glory (Vatican II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 47; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1328-32, 1358-65). Although we acknowledge the many dimensions of the Eucharist, in the following section, we will follow the Heidelberg Catechism in focusing on the main point in dispute, namely the understanding of the Eucharist as sacrifice.

C. *Key differences between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching*

Taking seriously the Roman Catholic self-understanding expressed in official teaching regarding the Mass as sacrifice (presented above) and leaving aside for the moment the Heidelberg Catechism’s conclusion (“basically

nothing but a denial”), it is instructive to analyze and assess some key differences between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching.

1. The nature and the direction of the sacrament

According to Roman Catholic teaching, the Eucharist is the sacrifice of the church in which the church sacramentally re-presents, and joins in, *Christ's* sacrifice:

The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value.

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1368)

In Roman Catholic teaching, the central moment of the Eucharist is Christ's sacrifice to which we are joined. This understanding of the Mass means that, though the entire sacrament and the effects it communicates are gifts of God, the Mass includes as a constitutive element the church's priestly sacrifice to God (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 10).

The Heidelberg Catechism consistently and exclusively describes the Lord's Supper as God's *gift to us*, which we *receive*. This does not mean, of course, that the Godward direction is absent. In Reformed worship, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is surrounded (in anticipation and in response to God's gift) by our doxology and thanksgiving (*eucharistia*). Indeed, the entire event is described as a "*celebration of the Lord's Supper*." This is clearly *our* celebration. Thus, though in both Roman Catholic and Reformed understandings this liturgical event as a totality is bi-directional, God-ward and human-ward, a significant difference appears. In the Mass, the God-ward direction is part and parcel of the sacrament itself. For this reason it may appropriately be called a *sacrifice, our* sacrifice. The Lord's Supper, by contrast, is never spoken of in this way; only our response to this sacramental gift may be called a sacrifice, in the sense of a thank-offering. In his "Catechism of the Church of Geneva" (1545), Calvin sums up his view of this difference:

Minister: Then the Supper is not instituted with the object that the body of his Son be offered to God?

Child: Not at all. For he himself only, since he is the eternal Priest, has this prerogative (Heb. 5:5). And this his words declare, when he says: Take and eat. For there he commands, *not that we offer his body, but only that we eat it* (Matt. 26:26).

("Catechism of the Church of Geneva," in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, p. 137, emphasis added)

2. The role of the church in the mediation of salvation

Implicit in the difference between the Eucharist as sacrifice and gift is a difference regarding the understanding of the role of the church in the mediation of salvation. It is important, however, to note that the point at issue is not *whether* the church has such a role. Because both traditions have a high view of the church and the sacraments, both ascribe a central role to the church in communicating salvation. Accordingly, the Belgic Confession maintains that outside the church there is no salvation (art. 28). More

specifically, this mediating role of the church comes to expression in the common description of the sacraments as “means of grace.” The Belgic Confession states that Christ “works in us all that He represents to us by these holy signs.” Hence it is not erroneous to say that “what is eaten is Christ’s own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood”—though “not by the mouth but by the Spirit, through faith” (art. 35).

a. Gift received or sacrifice offered

There is no dispute therefore regarding “mediation” as such. The difference concerns the manner of mediation. This can be illustrated by the way in which Christ’s command regarding the celebration of his supper is construed. Calvin’s argument that Christ’s command was not that we “offer his body, but only that we eat it” seems incontrovertible. Of course, the Roman Catholic Church does not pull its teaching regarding sacrifice out of thin air. On the contrary, for Trent, Christ’s “institution of the most holy sacrifice of the Mass” (heading of ch. 1, of the 22nd session) is foundational, but it links Christ’s command to a different part of the narrative of the Last Supper. After simply recounting that Christ gave the bread and wine to the disciples, Trent continues, He “ordered them [his disciples] and their successors in the priesthood to offer, saying: ‘Do this as a memorial of Me’, etc. (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24)” (session 22, ch. 1; DS 1740). Trent understands the “this,” which the disciples are commanded to “do,” to refer not to receiving that which Christ gives but to doing what Christ does, namely, offering a sacrifice.

That Trent deliberately and explicitly links Christ’s command in a different way to the upper room narrative is evident in the accompanying negations. In canon 2, the Council declares: “If anyone says that by the words, ‘Do this as a memorial of Me’ (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24) Christ did not establish the apostles as priests or that He did not order that they and other priests should offer His body and blood, *anathema sit*” (DS 1752). Moreover, the previous canon explicitly repudiates a minimalist understanding of “offering,” as if it refers simply to the distribution (“offering” in this sense) of the elements to the communicants: “If anyone says that in the Mass a true and proper sacrifice is not *offered to God* or that the offering consists merely in the fact that Christ *is given to us, anathema sit* (DS 1751, emphasis added). Understanding the words of institution in terms of receiving or offering Christ’s body and blood makes a decisive difference in the way in which the Lord’s Supper is said to be a “means of grace” (cf. BC, art. 33).

The different interpretations of Christ’s words of institution entail a decisive difference in identifying the primary agents of the sacramental action. If Christ commanded us to present a sacrifice, the primary celebrant of the eucharistic offering can be none other than the ordained priests. In Roman Catholic teaching, the priest is said to effect this sacrifice: “The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 10; cf. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 2 and 13). In fact, while encouraging the participation of the entire community of the faithful, Vatican II allows for a priest to cele-

brate the Mass with no one else present (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 26-27; *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 13). Normally, the whole congregation celebrates the Eucharist, albeit through the agency of the ordained minister. The ordained priests “unite the votive offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of their Head” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 28). If, on the other hand, Calvin is correct in insisting that Christ commanded us, not to offer, but to eat, then the celebrants Jesus has in view can be none other than the entire company of believers.

b. Centrality of Word or Sacrament

The Reformed confessions consistently conceive of sacraments as signs and seals of God’s promise. In explaining the nature of the Lord’s Supper, therefore, the Heidelberg Catechism underscores its character as testimony: “The Lord’s Supper *declares* to us that our sins have been completely forgiven. . . . It also *declares* to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ” (Q. and A. 80, emphasis added). A minimal understanding of this declarative function would reduce the “sacrament” to an instrument of divine pedagogy, an audio-visual aid. To understand the sacraments as merely pedagogical rituals, however, is to overlook the richness of Reformed teaching, which describes the sacramental action as “pledge,” “sign,” and “seal.”

Thus, the Heidelberg Catechism states that Christ assures us by the “visible sign and pledge” of the Lord’s Supper

that we, through the Holy Spirit’s work, share in his true body and blood as *surely* as our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance, and that all of his suffering and obedience are as definitely ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.

(Q. and A. 79, emphasis added)

Again, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches, “as surely as I see with my eyes” the bread broken for me and the cup given to me, “so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.” Not content with describing the sacrament as a visual demonstration, the Heidelberg Catechism goes on to say,

as *surely* as I receive . . . and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ’s body and blood, *so surely* he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood.

(Q. and A. 75, emphasis added)

Similarly, the Belgic Confession insists that God so fully backs up this sacramental declaration that he himself, through his Spirit, in his Son, comes along with the signs, so to speak: “we do not go wrong when we say that what is eaten is Christ’s own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood” (art. 35).

The efficacy attributed to the Lord’s Supper is therefore by no means less than that attributed to the Mass, but the Lord’s Supper has its efficacy as sealed promise, as visibly signified word, as tangible declaration. The sacrament is an extension of and is subservient to proclamation. According to the Heidelberg Catechism, “The Holy Spirit produces [faith] in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it through our use of the holy sacraments” (Q. and A. 65; see also Belgic Confession, art. 33).

In the Reformed understanding of the means of grace, the overarching category is proclamation. Accordingly, the Lord's Supper is a specific form of a *declaratory event*.

For the Roman Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council was instrumental in fostering a renewed emphasis on the word and proclamation. The Council insists that the sermon is an essential part of the liturgy and mandates that it is to focus on the proclamation of "God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, that is, the mystery of Christ, which is ever made present and active within us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 35). Indeed, the Council states that "since nobody can be saved who has not first believed, it is the first task of priests as co-workers of the bishops to preach the Gospel of God to all men." (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 4). Frequently the Scripture is coordinated with the sacrament as worthy of equal honor: "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the body of the Lord, in so far as she never ceases, particularly in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ" (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, 21). The word and the specifically sacramental action, however, can both be subsumed under the Mass: "The two parts which in a sense go to make up the Mass, viz. the liturgy of the word and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 56).

When the Council describes the specific functions of the priests, however, it becomes clear that the most unique and characteristic expression of the priestly office is the celebration of the Eucharist. The specific power conferred in the sacrament of ordination is that of effecting (by the power of the Spirit and the presence of Christ) the eucharistic sacrifice (see II. B above); in fact, "the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community [i.e., the people of God] is brought into operation through the sacraments and the exercise of virtues" (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 11). Accordingly, the Council can describe "the nature of priesthood" initially without reference to proclamation: "These men were to hold in the community of the faithful the sacred power of Order, that of offering sacrifice and forgiving sins." Only later in this section does the apostolic mission of spreading the Gospel of Christ come into play (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 2). The priests are said to "fulfill their principal function" in the Eucharistic sacrifice," for it is there that "the work of our redemption is continually carried out" (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 13).

In the Roman Catholic understanding of the means of grace, the overarching category is sacrament. The central sacrament is clearly the Eucharist from which "especially . . . grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 10). Although in the Reformed understanding, as we have noted, the church may be said to play a significant role in the mediation of grace, it conveys grace—even in the administration of the sacraments—principally as herald.

In summary, in Reformed teaching the message is the privileged medium of grace, while in Roman Catholic teaching the Eucharist is the privileged medium of grace. This contrast does not mean that what is privileged in one tradition excludes what is privileged in the other. Rather,

the center of gravity is located at a different point. The pull exerted by these different centers results in significantly different understandings of church, sacrament, and the mediation of salvation.

3. The Mass's efficacy for the dead

Although there are significant differences between Rome and the Reformers regarding the state of departed believers and their relationship to the church on earth, this subject need not be treated as an independent topic in our current discussions with the Roman Catholic Church. The reference to "the dead" in Q. and A. 80 is significant only insofar as it reflects the issue of the efficacy attributed to the Mass and the degree to which the Heidelberg Catechism says such putative efficacy detracts from the finality and decisiveness attributed to the cross. In that regard, a difference remains in that the Reformers affirm that at the time of death, sanctification, too, is complete, for by virtue of his completed sacrifice, Christ is our sanctification.

III. Differences over the presence of Christ in the sacrament

Against the background of the Heidelberg Catechism's statements, the second main task that flows out of the committee's mandate is to determine what the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is regarding the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This section of the report carries out this task.

A. *The teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism*

In its predominantly irenic spirit, the Heidelberg Catechism presents its teaching on the Lord's Supper in questions and answers 75-79. It describes the feast as nourishment and refreshment of the soul given to the church as a sacramental sign and seal of God's gracious promises, a celebration instituted and designed to assure the believer of salvation in Jesus Christ. It asserts with great clarity that "even though it [the bread] is called the body of Christ in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments," it "is not changed into the actual body of Christ" (Q. and A. 78). Instead, the consistent formula appears to be that of "as surely as":

as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.

(Q. and A. 75)

as surely as I receive from the hand of the one who serves, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured out blood.

(Q. and A. 75)

we, through the Holy Spirit's work, share in his true body and blood as surely as our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance.

(Q. and A. 79)

At the root of the Catechism's teaching lies the conviction that Christ "is in heaven and we are on earth" (Q. and A. 76), a teaching often referred to by theologians as the "extra-Calvinisticum," whereby the ubiquity of Christ's humanity is denied. The ascended Lord is host of the meal where believers are

nourished “through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us . . . “ (Q. and A. 76).

Then, in an uncharacteristically polemical manner, the Heidelberg Catechism proceeds—in Q. and A. 80—to single out and contrast certain aspects of its teaching with their counterparts in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the Mass. It is the Holy Spirit who “grafts us into Christ.” Our Savior and Lord “with his very body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father,” and this is “where he wants us to worship him” (section B¹). The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, teaches “that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine where Christ is therefore to be worshiped” (section B²). Thus, the Mass is said to be “a condemnable idolatry” (section B³).

B. Roman Catholic teaching

The Roman Catholic theologians with whom the committee met affirmed that the Heidelberg Catechism is substantially correct in its presentation of the Roman Catholic teaching regarding Christ’s bodily presence in the consecrated bread and wine. They expressed a caution that the word *bodily* should not be misunderstood. When Roman Catholics seek to explain the mystery of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, we were told, they generally proceed by way of the *via negativa*. Among the steps taken along that way is the denial of a localized or fleshly presence. Externally, the bread and wine retain their appearance even after consecration. Yet, at the same time, the whole Christ is sacramentally present in them—the whole Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity. Thus, he is indeed “bodily present in the form of bread and wine.”

The way in which the Roman Catholic Church has explained the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament is through the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Roman Catholic theologians with whom the committee met emphasized that what is important is affirming the real presence of Christ and the change of the elements of bread and wine. The doctrine of transubstantiation has been used in order to give a theological articulation of Christ’s bodily presence in the bread and wine. Although other explanations of this presence would be possible, none has yet been approved by the Roman Catholic Church. The next section offers a brief summary of important developments and statements in Roman Catholic teaching regarding the change in the elements of bread and wine.

1. The bodily presence of Christ in the elements

a. Historical statements

The question of the bodily presence of Christ in the elements became a significant issue during the Middle Ages. Berengar of Tours (c. 1010–1088) provoked much opposition when he maintained the real presence of Christ in the sacramental meal but denied “that any material change in the elements is needed to explain it” (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3d ed., s.v. “Berengar of Tours”). In response, Berengar’s opponents introduced a distinction between “material” and “substantial” change. The Council of Rome (1079) required Berengar to swear that “the bread and wine which are placed upon the altar are by the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of our Redeemer *substantially* changed into

the true and real and life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord” (DS 700; emphasis added). In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council said, “His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body by the divine power and the wine into the blood” (DS 802). The early reformer John Wycliffe (c. 1330-84) and his followers, the Lollards, rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, arguing that the consecration of bread and wine in the Mass is not a sacrifice and that since the elements remain bread and wine, adoration of the Eucharist is idolatry. These views were among the “heresies” for which they were condemned and persecuted.

That Christ is bodily present by virtue of a change in the substance of bread and wine is stated quite clearly in the teaching of the Council of Florence (1439):

The form of this sacrament is the words of the Saviour with which He effected this sacrament; for the priest effects the sacrament by speaking in the person of Christ. It is by the power of these words that the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the substance of wine into His blood; in such a way, however, that the whole Christ is contained under the species of bread and the whole Christ under the species of wine. Further, the whole Christ is present under any part of the consecrated host or the consecrated wine when separated from the res.

(DS 1321)

During the sixteenth century, those who tried to reform the church included the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ among the teachings that needed reform. In response, the Council of Trent stated:

To begin with, the holy Council teaches and openly and straightforwardly professes that in the blessed sacrament of the holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the appearances of those perceptible realities. For, there is no contradiction in the fact that our Saviour always sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven according to His natural way of existing and that, nevertheless, in His substance He is sacramentally present to us in many other places. We can hardly find words to express this way of existing; but our reason, enlightened through faith, can nevertheless recognise it as possible for God, and we must always believe it unhesitatingly.

(Trent, Session 13, ch. 1, DS 1636)

Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly His body that He was offering under the species of bread . . . , it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now again declares that, by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of His blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly named transubstantiation.

(Trent, Session 13, ch. 4; DS 1642)

If anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really and substantially contained, but says that He is in it only as in a sign or figure or by His power, *anathema sit*.

(Trent, Session 13, canon 1, DS 1651)

b. Contemporary statements

The Second Vatican Council initiated a number of significant renewals and reforms in the Roman Catholic Church. Given its pastoral focus, this Council made no significant revisions in the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ.

The recent *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says:

At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood. . . . The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ.

(1333)

It then proceeds to cite DS 1651 and DS 1642 of the Council of Trent, indicating in the strongest possible terms that "it is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1375). Indeed,

the Eucharistic presence of Christ begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist. Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts, in such a way that the breaking of the bread does not divide Christ.

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1377)

Similarly, in 1965, Pope Paul VI rejected seeing the Eucharist as "nothing else than an efficacious sign 'of Christ's spiritual presence and of his intimate union with his faithful members in the mystical Body'" (*Mysterium Fidei*, 39, quoting Pope Pius XII). Appealing to Christ's words at the Last Supper, he said, "the very words used by Christ when he instituted the most holy Eucharist compel us to acknowledge that 'the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins and which the Father in his loving kindness raised again'" (*Mysterium Fidei*, 44, quoting Ignatius of Antioch). Thus Christ is made present in the sacrament by

the change of the whole substance of the bread into his body and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood. . . . As a result of transubstantiation, the species of bread and wine . . . no longer remain ordinary bread and wine, but become the sign of something sacred, the sign of a spiritual food. . . . For there no longer lies under those species what was there before, but something quite different; and that, not only because of the faith of the Church, but in objective reality, since after the change of the substance or nature of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, nothing remains of the bread and wine but the appearances, under which Christ, whole and entire, in his physical "reality" is bodily present, although not in the same way as bodies are present in a given place.

(*Mysterium Fidei*, 46)

One way to get a sense of current Roman Catholic teaching is to observe that church's response to important ecumenical developments. In its Faith and Order Paper drafted at Lima in 1982, the World Council of Churches sought to articulate a "significant theological convergence," noting that the commission responsible for the text "includes among its full members theologians of the Roman Catholic and other churches which do not belong to the World Council of Churches itself" (*Baptism*,

Eucharist and Ministry, p. ix). On the meaning of the Eucharist, it made the following assertions:

Many churches believe that by the words of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine of the Eucharist become, in a real though mysterious manner, the body and blood of the risen Christ, i.e., of the living Christ present in all his fullness. Under the signs of bread and wine, the deepest reality is the total being of Christ who comes to us in order to feed us and transform our entire being. Some other churches, while affirming a real presence of Christ at the Eucharist, do not link that presence so definitely with the signs of bread and wine. The decision remains for the churches whether this difference can be accommodated within the convergence formulated in the text itself.

(*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Commentary on Eucharist, par. 13)

The response of the Roman Catholic Church to these assertions is significant.

A distinction is made in Commentary 13 between churches that “believe” in the *change* of the elements and those which do not link Christ’s presence “so definitely to the signs of bread and wine.” But the final sentence seems to relativize the word “believe.” It asks whether the “difference can be accommodated with the convergence formulated in the text itself.” On the one hand, we welcome the convergence that is taking place. On the other hand, we must note that for Catholic doctrine, the *conversion* of the elements is a matter of faith and is only open to possible new theological explanations as to the “how” of the intrinsic change. The content of the word “transubstantiation” ought to be expressed without ambiguity. For Catholics this is a central mystery of faith, and they cannot accept expressions that are ambiguous. Thus it would seem that the differences as explained here cannot be accommodated within the convergence formulated in the text itself.

(*Churches Respond to BEM*, p. 22)

In response to the statement in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* that the bread and wine “become the sacramental signs of Christ’s body and blood,” the official Roman Catholic response adds a comment that “the thought that they become sacramental signs is linked to the intrinsic change which takes place, whereby unity of being is realized between the signifying reality and the reality signified” (*Churches Respond to BEM*, p. 22).

It appears, then, that the official position of the Roman Catholic Church on the matter of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist has remained consistent since the Council of Trent. The Heidelberg Catechism’s representation of that position as holding that “Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine” may omit nuances of Roman Catholic teaching but is substantially correct.

2. Veneration of the consecrated bread and wine

What, then, of the Heidelberg’s insistence that Christ “wants us to worship him” as seated at the right hand of God and not “in the form of bread and wine” in the elements of the Eucharist? On these points, the Council of Trent is abundantly clear:

There remains, therefore, no room for doubting that all the faithful of Christ, in accordance with the perpetual custom of the Catholic Church, must venerate this most holy sacrament with the worship of *latría* which is due to the true God. Nor is it to be less adored because it was instituted by Christ the

Lord to be received. For in it we believe that the same God is present whom the eternal Father brought into the world, saying: "Let all God's angels worship Him" (Heb. 1:6; cf. Ps. 97(96):7), whom the Magi fell down to worship (cf. Mt. 2:11) and whom, finally, the apostles adored in Galilee as Scripture testifies (cf. Mt. 28:17).

(Trent, Session 13, ch. 5; DS 1643)

And again,

If anyone says that Christ, the only-begotten son of God, is not to be adored in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist with the worship of *latria*, including external worship, and that the sacrament therefore is not to be honoured with special festive celebrations nor solemnly carried in processions according to the praise-worthy universal rite and custom of the holy Church; or that it is not to be publicly exposed for the people's adoration, and that those who adore it are idolaters, *anathema sit*.

(Trent, Session 13, canon 6, DS 1656)

In these passages, venerating the holy sacrament means venerating the consecrated bread and wine.

In their discussions with us, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church acknowledged the polemical tone of these statements, indicating that such may have been more appropriate in the sixteenth century than in the decidedly more ecumenical context of today. They also noted that the primary purpose of reserving (storing) consecrated elements is not to venerate the elements but to make possible communion for the dying (*Eucharisticum Mysterium* (A.D. 1967), ch. III, I, A). On the main issue itself, however, they insisted along with Trent, first, that the holy sacrament is to be venerated and, second, that this veneration does not constitute idolatry inasmuch as, in the veneration of the consecrated bread and wine, Christ is being worshiped, not the elements.

C. *A key difference between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching*

With regard to veneration, it is important to remember that the Reformed creedal tradition did not embrace the Zwinglian interpretation of the sacrament. The Belgic Confession, for example, while recognizing that eating the "living bread" is a matter of appropriating and receiving Christ "spiritually by faith," declares the "manner" of God's working in the sacrament to be "beyond our understanding" and "incomprehensible to us, just as the operation of God's Spirit is hidden and incomprehensible." Or, again, while insisting that the "manner in which we eat" is "not by the mouth but by the Spirit, through faith," it declares that "we do not go wrong when we say that what is eaten is Christ's own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood" and, later, that we must therefore "receive the holy sacrament" with "humility and reverence" (BC, art. 35). It seems reasonable to assert that the difference between Roman Catholic and Reformed teaching is not whether the sacramental meal should be treated with reverence but the precise manner in which that reverence is expressed. Roman Catholic teaching insists on veneration (*latria*) of the consecrated bread and wine because sacramentally they are the body and blood of Christ. Reformed teaching requires believers to receive the sacrament in humility and reverence, since the ascended Lord is spiritually present as the host and substance of the meal. Thus, the Belgic Confession also states—with little ambiguity—the concern that "Jesus Christ remains always seated at the

right hand of God his Father in heaven” and that “he never refrains on that account to communicate himself to us through faith” (BC, art. 35).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

Based upon the above study, the committee proposes the following statements as summary conclusions of the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching concerning the sacrament of the Mass:

1. Although the Eucharist is spoken of as a sacrifice, it is much more than that. It is a meal, spiritual nourishment, offering of thanksgiving, memorial, sign of unity, bond of love, source of grace, and pledge of future glory.
2. The difference between the sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass is that the one sacrifice is offered in different manners.
3. The Eucharist sacramentally represents and perpetuates the one unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
4. In the consecration of the bread and wine, the substance of the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.
5. In the Eucharist, the real presence of Christ is a bodily presence in the form of the consecrated bread and wine and he should be worshiped through the veneration of those consecrated elements.
6. The consecrated bread and wine deserve the veneration due to the ascended Jesus Christ. In venerating the consecrated bread and wine, Christ is being worshiped, not the elements.
7. Offering Mass for the dead does not detract from the finality of redemption accomplished on the cross. The effect of the Mass on those who die in the Lord lies not in the area of justification but of (final) sanctification.

If the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States and Canada endorse the above report as an accurate presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist, that will have significant implications on whether, and how, the Heidelberg Catechism ought to be modified. If Roman Catholic teaching is as it is presented in this report, the committee has serious concerns about the Heidelberg Catechism’s conclusion that “the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ and a condemnable idolatry” (Q. and A. 80). If this report accurately presents Roman Catholic teaching, there are also serious questions about the Heidelberg Catechism’s representation, in Q. and A. 80, of what “the Mass teaches.” Thus, if this report accurately presents Roman Catholic teaching, significant changes in the Heidelberg Catechism may be warranted.

Given the seriousness of the issues involved, including the possibility of altering one of the church’s confessions, the committee believes that Synod 2002 should take every appropriate step to assure the Christian Reformed Church that the report’s presentation of Roman Catholic teaching is accurate. Thus, the committee is taking the unusual step of recommending that this report be sent by Synod 2002 to the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States and Canada for their endorsement of its accuracy in presenting the

Roman Catholic position. If this endorsement is granted, or even if some other response is given, the Interchurch Relations Committee should be expected to advise a future synod about any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Based upon the above study, the committee has also identified the following topics as worthy of further dialogue both within the Reformed churches and bilaterally between the Roman Catholic and Reformed churches:

1. What is the proper understanding of the nature and direction of the sacrament? Is it to be understood primarily as a sacrifice we offer or as a gift we receive?
2. What is the relationship between Word and sacrament as means of grace?
3. What is the role of the church (and its ministers) in mediating God's grace?
4. Given that both Reformed and Roman Catholic believers affirm the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, what is the significance of the differences of understanding about the nature of that presence (i.e., spiritual vs. bodily presence)? How should we understand the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper?
5. For Christians who do not believe that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, does Roman Catholic veneration of those elements constitute improper worship?
6. What implications do the differences and agreements regarding the Lord's Supper have for the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Reformed churches?

B. Recommendations

The Interchurch Relations Committee recommends the following:

1. That Synod receive the report as fulfillment of the mandate given by Synod 1998 to the IRC "to make an attempt to dialogue with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church to clarify the official doctrine of that church concerning the mass" (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 427).
2. That Synod submit the report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops requesting their agreement that the report gives an accurate presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist.
3. That Synod ask the Interchurch Relations Committee, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
4. That Synod ask the Interchurch Relations Committee, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about the value of further dialogue between the Christian Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church.
5. That Synod send this report to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship and to the Reformed Ecumenical Council informing them of our study and inviting their response.

I. Brief overview

In 2001, the committee published twenty-seven sermons in three booklets of nine each. The committee served 145 churches by annual subscriptions. In addition, some nineteen churches availed themselves of a one-time number of back copies.

The committee has also investigated making sermons available via the Internet, and a separate report is presented in response to the request of Synod 2001 (see Appendix).

Subscription rates for 2003 will remain at \$65 (U.S.) and \$90 (Canadian), with back copies at half price.

Committee member and chairman, Rev. Paul D. Stadt, will retire after having served two full terms. Rev. Gerrit J. Bomhoff, whose first term also expires this year, has agreed to serve a second term as alternate. The committee's present alternate, Rev. Hendrik P. Bruinsma, has agreed to become the new chairman. Because of additional work during the transition from the printed page to the Internet, the committee proposes to add one member. Rev. Ralph Koops, pastor of Maranatha CRC of Cambridge, Ontario, and the recently retired Rev. John Zantingh of Hamilton, Ontario, have been nominated, one to replace the retiring Rev. Stadt, and one as the additional committee member.

The committee is composed of Rev. Paul D. Stadt (2002), chairman; Rev. Hendrik P. Bruinsma (2004), alternate; Rev. Gerrit J. Bomhof (2002); Rev. Jack Westerhof (2003); and Mr. Ray Vander Ploeg (2003), secretary-treasurer.

II. Recommendations

- A. That synod approve the publication of The Living Word for 2003 to provide sermons for reading services for the churches.
- B. That synod encourage the churches to subscribe to the service for the benefit of churches and individuals.
- C. That synod approve the appointment of Rev. Gerrit J. Bomhof for a second term of three years.
- D. That synod approve the appointments of Rev. Ralph Koops and Rev. John Zantingh to three year terms.

Rev. Ralph Koops is pastor of Maranatha CRC, Cambridge, Ontario.
Rev. John Zantingh is a retired pastor living in Hamilton, Ontario.
- E. That synod approve the recommendations contained in the report of the Appendix.

Sermons for Reading Services Committee
Gerrit J. Bomhof
Hendrik P. Bruinsma, alternate
Paul D. Stadt, chairman
Ray Vander Ploeg, secretary-treasurer
Jack Westerhof

Appendix

Request to Create an Electronic Format for Living Word Sermons

I. Background

The Christian Reformed denomination, since its very inception has sought to make available approved sermons suitable for churches that are without the services of an ordained pastor. For the last number of decades, the synodical Sermons for Reading Services Committee has been based in southern Ontario and has faithfully published three booklets per year, each containing nine sermons. The number of subscriptions has been as high as 200 but now has declined to 145, with the vast majority going to churches in Canada. With costs rising, and the increasing number of exhorters and retired pastors available to conduct services in vacant churches, it is the committee's conclusion that the number of subscriptions will continue to decline. Subscription rates have covered the honoraria paid to pastors whose sermons are published and the printing, office, and sundry costs. The ministry has been self-supporting.

For the last few years, the committee has discussed the possibility of making the sermons available through the Internet. Even though there are myriads of sermons available via the Internet, and many CRC pastors post their sermons on their own web pages, there is not yet available "sermons officially approved for reading services." Synod 2001 "urge[d] its Sermons for Reading Services Committee, in consultation with the director of Communications of the CRC and appropriate personnel of the CRC Publications and Product Services, to make sermons for reading services available electronically" (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 512).

II. Recommendations

Our committee makes the following recommendations in fulfillment of Synod 2001's request:

- A. That the CRC webmaster be authorized to create space and a link on the CRCNA web site (www.crcna.org) for the posting of Living Word Sermons beginning in September 2002.
- B. That the Living Word booklets continue to be published until December 2004.
- C. That the synodical Sermons for Reading Services Committee would remain in place to solicit, screen, approve, and edit the sermons that are posted. Honoraria would no longer be provided after 2004 to those who submit sermons.
- D. That the director of Communications and Product Services be mandated, in consultation with the Living Word Committee, to create an indexing system.
- E. That the costs for this service, which should be minimal, be absorbed under the budget of Denominational Services.
- F. That once the link for sermons is available through the CRCNA web site, that pastors from the various ethnic communities within the CRC be encouraged to post sermons in their native languages.

Ground: This is in keeping with a mandate from Synod 2001 to investigate the possibility of producing sermons in other languages and consistent with the way of making those sermons available to the public contained in recommendations A-E above.

DENOMINATIONALLY RELATED AGENCIES

For forty-seven years, God has blessed Dordt College with remarkable stability in the midst of continued potential for growth. We are committed not only to remaining true to the solid foundations that have been laid in the past but also to preparing well for the growth and development that the future will bring.

As part of our commitment to remain true to our Reformed heritage, we require each new faculty member to attend a yearlong new-faculty orientation. New faculty members are given a reduced teaching load to participate in these meetings. The primary purpose of the orientation is to help new faculty understand and develop a commitment to the mission and direction of the college and our particular Reformational perspective. New faculty genuinely appreciate the time to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as Dordt College faculty members.

Dordt College also has maintained its solid academic foundation. This was confirmed in 2002 when the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmed Dordt's accreditation for another ten years. The visitation team from the Higher Learning Commission expressed great appreciation for the strong sense of mission and the consistently thorough way in which Dordt College's purpose and conviction is reflected in its faculty, students, and staff. They underscored how unusual and gratifying is the unified sense of purpose that pervades the campus—especially the degree to which it is embodied in and articulated by our students and our alumni.

Not only can our students and alumni articulate Dordt College's vision, but they continue to support Dordt financially as well. Last year over 40 percent of our active alumni sent in some form of financial support. In addition, our alumni are also encouraging their children and grandchildren to attend the college. Over 40 percent of our current students are children or grandchildren of alumni.

Dordt College also celebrates its continuing relationship with the Christian Reformed Church. As we rely on the CRC for a significant amount of our support, we also serve the CRC by training many of its young men and women, encouraging them to live lives of kingdom service. This mutually beneficial relationship is one that we pledge to maintain and strengthen.

Stability, for Dordt College, has never meant stagnation. We are stable because of the Reformed principles we hold, our academic standards, and our strong alumni and denominational support. However, we are ever reforming and renewing our commitment to our principles and standards.

Our professional-development program encourages our professors to stretch themselves as academics and as teachers. The program includes funding for conferences, professional memberships, leaves of absence, grants, projects, assignments, and academic paper presentations. We seek professors who are not content to simply maintain the status quo but who are Reformational in their attitude toward their subject matter and their students.

Growth and change comes in other ways, as well. In October, we will celebrate the dedication of our new Campus Center. The Campus Center has been designed to reflect Dordt College's commitment to the integration of life

and learning. The building combines the library, new business classrooms, student-activity areas, and office-support areas into a comprehensive learning center. As we look forward to a new school year, we are excited about the new role the Campus Center will play in the life of our community as it serves as a central catalyst for building a Christian learning community in service to Christ's kingdom.

Besides the Campus Center, Dordt College has also committed itself, along with the city of Sioux Center and the Sioux Center Community Schools to provide \$9 million for a new aquatics center and ice arena, to be located directly across the street from the Dordt College campus. Groundbreaking for this new facility has already taken place. We look forward to the completion of this new building, which will serve not only Dordt College but also the local community.

The academic year 2001-2002 has brought many changes to Dordt College, but these have always occurred in the context of an unwavering commitment to our Lord and our Reformed desire to see his glory made manifest in all of life. It is with this vision that we have persisted in our mission for forty-seven years. It is with this vision that we will persist in our mission well into the future.

Dordt College
Carl E. Zylstra, president

The Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) is a graduate school that provides creative, biblical, and thoughtful academic leadership to students and the global Christian community. ICS is an affiliate member of the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto. In addition to its own masters' degrees, ICS offers a Ph.D. degree in cooperation with the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Along with its regular program of academic research and graduate-level teaching, ICS continues to implement its "Directions" statement that outlines a vision for the development of ICS over the next ten years. This statement includes a commitment to securing fiscal and other resources needed to implement the vision. To that end, ICS staff developed an extensive business plan to ensure that all our activities, including program development, student recruitment, publishing, book sales, and fundraising are guided by our central mission. ICS staff has been reorganized into teams to work on key strategies in the plan.

Through significant effort on many fronts, ICS has addressed key operational needs. Consultation with a variety of stakeholders has led to the decision to proceed with *reGeneration! The Campaign for ICS*. This campaign will seek funding for a variety of projects including the endowment of two academic chairs; the creation of an expanded scholarship fund; the expansion of a Distributed Learning program (providing graduate-level courses at locations away from Toronto and online); and the creation of the Faith and Learning Network, web-based access for Christian scholars around the world to materials that address the role of Christian faith in learning.

Enrolment is up for the 2001-2002 academic year. Over one hundred students have benefited from ICS master's and doctor of philosophy courses over the past year. Many of the new full-time students are graduates of CRC-supported colleges.

ICS continues to value the cooperation it experiences with many partners. In partnership with the National Institute for Christian Education (NICE) in Australia, ICS offers graduate-level courses to teachers across North America. Distributed-learning techniques allow participants to access courses that are normally out of their reach. ICS is also involved with the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (IAPCHE), and the Association of Reformed Institutions of Higher Education (ARIHE) of which ICS president Harry Fernhout is the chair. ICS looks forward to continued valuable interaction with its many partners.

God has richly blessed ICS with a spirit of unity and creativity as it carries out its institutional vision. God has also provided a very full agenda; one that gives joy and anticipation. Voluntary income covers more than 75 percent of the ICS budget, and about 80 percent of that income is provided by CRC members and churches. The faculty, staff, and students at ICS are grateful for the prayer and financial support of Christian Reformed churches.

Institute for Christian Studies
Harry Fernhout, president

The faculty, support staff, and students of The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta, extend greetings to the 2002 synod. May the Lord bless you in your gathering and deliberations.

The King's University College continues to experience blessings and growth. Current-year enrolment reached 564 students averaged over the two semesters, an increase of 6 percent over last year. Especially encouraging is an increase of over 15 percent in first-year enrolment, which allows us to project continued growth in the years to come. New programs in business and computing science are attracting additional students, and there is also strong growth in our elementary education program. We launched several new programs in recent years, and we are grateful to see the resulting enrolment growth.

When King's acquired its present campus in 1992, it was designed to accommodate about six hundred students, and our facility is currently being used to capacity. For this reason, faculty and staff engaged in a future-needs-assessment process in the past year to determine how continued growth should be accommodated. On the basis of this assessment, we have engaged an architect to help us with the development of a facilities expansion plan. A long-term master campus plan will be created first, and subsequent to that, plans for facilities expansion over the next five years will be developed. Parallel with facilities planning, the University College is currently preparing to launch a multiyear capital fund-raising campaign with the theme "Growing to Serve."

Degree programs offered at the University College are accredited by the Government of Alberta upon the recommendation of Alberta's Private Colleges Accreditation Board, a government agency with membership from academia as well as the general public. Over the years, each time the University College requested to add a new degree program, a very thorough review process was used to determine whether the program should be approved. In addition, the Accreditation Board conducts periodic reviews of the entire institution. King's participated in such a review in 1992, five years after the accreditation of its first bachelor of arts programs. In the fall of 2002, the Accreditation Board will conduct a second (fifteen-year) review of our entire operation. Faculty and support staff are busy in the current year preparing a comprehensive self-study in preparation for this review. The document will review all aspects of our operation in depth. While the review process is mandated externally in order to continue to receive the required government accreditation, it serves the institution internally as an important assessment procedure, and the report will hopefully serve as a useful management tool for future development.

We are pleased to see a growing number of international students at King's. They number about 10 percent of our student body, coming to King's from a wide variety of countries, including several in Africa. Their presence adds a much valued international dimension to our community.

The King's University College is grateful for the support it receives from many congregations and individuals in the Christian Reformed Church. It also continues to attract hundreds of students who are members of the denomination,

mostly from western Canada but increasingly also from other parts of Canada and from the United States. The University College values its relationship with the denomination. It is our hope and prayer that we may continue to serve the denomination and its students with quality Christian university education.

The King's University College
Henk Van Andel, president

Redeemer University College reflects upon the previous year with a profound sense of thanksgiving to the Lord for his blessing on our mission of providing a Reformed Christian university education in the Canadian context. Explosive enrolment growth to over seven hundred students—an increase of 45 percent in the last three years with the potential to grow to one thousand in the next five years—has made us increasingly aware of the opportunity we are being given to bring an effective witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ in teaching and scholarship in a country in which higher education has been dominated by secular and publicly funded institutions.

Students come primarily from Ontario but include all ten provinces, fifteen U.S. states and six countries, representing forty-four different denominational backgrounds and a variety of racial and ethnic groups. Christian Reformed students continue to account for one-half of our enrolment, with students of Reformed background making up two-thirds of the student body. Overall, this mix of students has contributed to a diverse campus community that is spiritually vibrant, respectful of diversity, and expressive of its unity in Jesus Christ.

Our growth is indicative of the resurgence of interest in Christian liberal arts and sciences education in the wider Christian community in Canada. Training Christian leaders to impact our increasingly secular culture in Christ's name across a variety of vocations is an objective shared by a growing number of Canadian Christians. This is leading to larger enrolments in existing Canadian Christian colleges and universities as well as to the expansion of a number of Bible colleges into institutions that offer Christian liberal arts and sciences programs. No longer satisfied with pursuing a Bible college degree or a secular university program, many students are looking for a Christian university education.

This movement is enabling Redeemer, with its Reformed Christian outlook, to expand and play a larger and more influential role not only in Canadian Christian higher education but also in postsecondary education in Ontario, where the legitimacy of a Christian university education that meets high academic standards is gaining increasing recognition. The next major challenge in this area is our application to the Ontario College of Teachers for full accreditation of our teacher education program, which would round out the university recognition we have already received.

We are also working to develop an identity statement that will enable us to communicate the Reformed Christian and biblically rooted vision of Christ's lordship over all of life and culture to the wider Christian audience we are seeking to serve. This is part of our strategic plan, "Growth with Integrity," in which we are also looking ahead to the expansion of our faculty, increased emphasis on faculty research and development, adding to our residences and academic facilities, and augmenting our academic program and student services. This will enable us to respond effectively to the opportunity that the Lord is providing to expand our mission and witness in a Canadian culture that has secularized more rapidly and more extensively than that of the United States.

Redeemer University College is grateful for the support that we receive in this mission from the Christian Reformed Church and its members. Join us in praying that the Lord will enable us and other Christian college and university partners to raise up a new generation of Christian leaders to be a light and a leaven in our communities, our province, our national centers of cultural formation, and beyond.

Redeemer University College
Justin D. Cooper, president

The growth Reformed Bible College (RBC) has experienced over the past few years is *rewarding* with regard to our professional efforts. Even more importantly, however, this growth is *inspirational* with regard to what we see God doing through us. The reason an increasing number of students desire an RBC education has remained consistent over the years: a strong sense of being called by God to full-time kingdom work and ministry. Faculty members at RBC focus on integrating, intertwining, and directly applying the content of our ongoing requirement of a double major—Bible and a professional area—so that these two do not stand in isolation from each other. This “double helix” approach has been foundational to RBC and characterizes the spiritual, pragmatic, and professional quality of our academic programs and graduates.

These factors are important to emphasize because RBC is going through a period of internal review through which we desire to strengthen our mission and impact. We are conducting a major curriculum review and studying the possibility of a name change for the college. The curriculum review is aimed not only at enhancing quality and coordinating academic programs but also at equipping students with “passport skills” in their professional exit track. These skills, which range from nursing to education to technology, enable students to obtain positions in organizations or countries where they can apply their calling to kingdom witness and activities.

Two academic programs have been strengthened this year by the addition of two faculty members: Professor Julie VanDerVeen in youth ministry and Professor Judi Meerman in social work. These professors not only enhance these established programs, but they also serve as strong role models for women in ministry. We deeply appreciate the spiritual and professional influence they have with faculty, student body, and community.

The name review is an effort to determine if there is a better mission-enabling name for the college. The board will be submitting this question to the RBC Association for its input and vote only after the board has determined that there is strong and just reason to recommend such a change.

RBC’s efforts in reflecting the diverse nature of God’s kingdom in its student body are resulting in a wonderfully enjoyable and energizing campus community. Praise God! The number of minorities enrolled is increasing, and, on our small campus, their positive impact is greatly felt and appreciated. We desire and need to do even more in reaching out to our sisters and brothers from all ethnic backgrounds. We seek your prayers and assistance to that end.

We see that there is an increased desire in the Reformed community to rediscover, understand, and reconnect with our Reformed worldview. RBC has been active in inculcating this in the classroom and is delighted to be even more involved in the church and general community with this renewed enthusiasm for the richness of biblical understanding and life purpose that a Reformed worldview provides. Our experience should lend encouragement to the CRC to be enthusiastic and bold in its evangelistic and training efforts throughout our global society.

Reformed Bible College
Nicholas V. Kroeze, president

The past year has been filled with blessings for Trinity as we witnessed increased enrollments, wonderful new facilities, expanded programming, and the continued affirmation of our regional accrediting agency. The Martin and Janet Ozinga Chapel was dedicated in February 2001, with its 1200-seat auditorium, music classrooms, recital hall, and offices for faculty and staff of the student ministries program. Chaplain Tim Hoekstra, assisted by student chaplains and a very active ministry team, has reinvigorated the chapel program, and today more students than ever are involved in Bible studies, chapel attendance, praise and worship events, and other opportunities for spiritual growth. One of two pipe organs has been installed, with the other to be added in the summer of 2002. The entire Trinity community is thankful to God for blessing us with these important resources as we work together to build his kingdom. In addition, hundreds of community neighbors who had never before set foot on campus have attended programs and concerts in the new chapel.

Forming the west flank of the "Trinity Commons" is the Heritage Science Center, scheduled for completion by spring 2002. This building will provide much-needed improvements and expanded space for the chemistry, biology, and physics programs, as well as additional computer classrooms.

Because of increased demand for on-campus student housing, Trinity purchased two apartment buildings last summer in nearby Crestwood to meet that need. This step has brought welcome relief from the housing shortage but also presents the challenge of offering quality student-life programming at a distance. The board of trustees is in fervent prayer and discussion about the need to begin construction of an additional student residence on campus, a daunting prospect in view of ongoing construction projects at Trinity. We praise God that, through the generous support of His people, Trinity has experienced such growth in facilities to serve an increasing student population, and we are grateful for the continued recognition that synod gives to Trinity's contributions to the life and development of the greater Reformed Christian community.

In the current academic year, Trinity is serving 794 traditional-aged students, 98 percent of whom are full-time students, with two-thirds residing in campus-provided housing. The Trinity Adult Degree Completion Studies program (TRACS) serves over 150 adult students, offering courses in organizational management and teacher education. The demand for teacher certification in particular has been especially acute in the Chicago area, and enrollments in this program are challenging staff, facilities, and schedules to meet this need. In September of 2001, Trinity applied for permission from the Illinois State Board of Higher Education and the Commission of Higher Education of the North Central Association to begin offering adult degree programs at off-site locations. Approval is expected from both agencies in early spring 2002 to allow Trinity to offer programs in the south suburbs at Prairie State College and in downtown Chicago using the facilities of the Chicago Metropolitan Center, a consortial program of the six Reformed colleges in the Midwest. Trinity's Semester in Spain campus in Seville enrolls an additional thirty to forty students each semester, representing twenty-five different colleges and universities nationwide, mostly from Christian colleges.

All of these programs combined bring the total student population to nearly one thousand, an increase of 48 percent over the past five years.

In March of 2001, Trinity received its ten-year reaccreditation visit by the North Central Association with positive results, as the team recommended a ten-year renewal to be scheduled for 2010-2011. The college was pleased to accept this reaffirmation of the hard work put forth by dedicated faculty, staff, board members, and administration. Our overwhelming joy is, as always, the wonderfully cooperative and positive attitude of the students—Trinity's greatest asset.

The leading academic major continues to be in teacher education, attracting about one-third of all students this year, followed by business and nursing. Majors in business communication and Spanish continue to appeal to students, and we anticipate an accredited bachelor of social work program to be completed within the next three years. The Cooper Career Center is fulfilling an important role by providing career counseling, internship placement, and alumni networking opportunities with the goal of helping students match their talents and interests with appropriate career options. Trinity is fortunate to have this service available to guide students in planning their futures after graduation.

Churches are an essential component in providing the faculty, facilities, programs, and services needed to support our mission of equipping students for lives of meaningful service. Over 60 percent of Trinity students come from families who are members of Reformed churches; 43 percent come from the CRC. During the last fiscal year, churches contributed \$141,210 in unrestricted gifts, over 12 percent of total annual unrestricted giving. We respectfully request that synod continue to urge area classes to support faithfully the work of their regional Christian colleges.

Trinity continues to face the challenges of higher enrollments and the need for larger, improved facilities, which increases the pressure to raise tuition. We are acutely aware of the concerns of middle-class families who envision their children attending an excellent Christian college in the Reformed tradition. Our fiscal stewardship includes provision for increased assistance directly to families with financial need. Trinity's commitment to provide quality education at a reasonable cost goes hand in hand with efforts to expand our endowment, encourage controlled growth in student enrollments, and partner with friends whose gifts support our mission. We are committed to fiscal responsibility and careful planning as we strive to fulfill our mission of educating young people for leadership roles in church, education, business, professional vocations, and society.

The vision of Trinity is to be "a community of Christian scholarship committed to shaping lives and transforming culture." We are blessed to serve young people of Christian faith, charged to nourish them spiritually and prepare them intellectually for the glory of God. The campus community gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Christian Reformed Church and its members in sustaining us through prayers and gifts. We pray that our partnership may continue to flourish for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

Trinity Christian College
A.J. Anglin, president

STUDY COMMITTEE

I. Introduction

A. Mandate and grounds

The Committee to Give Direction about and for Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members was appointed by Synod 1996, with the following mandate and grounds:

That synod appoint a study committee to give direction about and for pastoral care of homosexual members in a manner consistent with the decisions of Synod 1973 (*Acts of Synod 1973*, Report 42).

Grounds:

1. Since the recommendations of Report 42 are now a generation old, it is time to review how effectively they encourage the churches in providing ministry to their homosexual members.
2. Christian homosexuals are beginning to turn away from their isolation, despair, and practice (homosexualism) and are beginning to turn to the church for a sense of community. Many ministries to homosexuals have developed in the years since the 1973 report on homosexuality was written. The churches of our denomination would be well served by a study to evaluate these ministries and give direction to our churches on the subject of homosexuality.
3. This study could help us to understand to what degree the pastoral recommendations of Report 42 of Synod 1973 have been effectively carried out and to uncover reasons why this may or may not be so.
4. This issue is too big for any of our churches or classes to deal with individually. Several classes and congregations have conducted such studies (e.g., Classes Alberta North, Grand Rapids East, and Toronto and the council of First CRC, London, Ontario). But these local studies have not exhaustively studied all the available ministry possibilities.

(*Acts of Synod 1996*, pp. 572-73)

B. Report to Synod 1999

1. Part I (*Agenda for Synod 1999*, pp. 237-46)

The report to Synod 1999 was presented in two parts. Part I was sent directly to the churches in the fall of 1998, and Part II was combined with Part I in the printed *Agenda for Synod 1999*, pp. 237-79. Part I contained information about the membership and experience of the committee, the process followed by the committee, a report detailing the survey conducted among CRC ministers regarding ministry to homosexual members, and a recommended prayer of confession.

Summarized briefly, the membership of the original committee numbered nine, including six clergy (representing areas of parish, education, theology, and pastoral care ministries), one physician, one educator, and one psychologist. Over one hundred years of professional experience was

represented on the committee, including significant ministry with persons who have same-sex attractions and related issues. (*Note:* The phrase "persons with same-sex attractions" is used throughout this report in the sense of persons who experience sexual attraction to others of the same gender.)

The process of the committee was initially one of listening, information-gathering, study, and deliberation. Many individuals, couples, and groups from diverse locations in the United States and Canada were met and heard. These guests described not only their pain, loneliness, and isolation as church members with same-sex attractions but also their hope that the church can become more of a place where they feel they can belong and openly participate.

The results of a survey of Christian Reformed pastors in parish and special ministries were also described in Part I of the committee report. The committee concluded, based on the survey results, that for a variety of reasons, many congregations had little knowledge of the report presented to Synod 1973 or of its pastoral recommendations. Furthermore, the survey revealed that guidelines had not, by and large, been effectively carried out in most congregations. The specific pastoral guidelines of the 1973 report were listed, and the committee suggested that what most individuals with same-sex attractions have experienced from the churches is not at all in line with the ministry envisioned in the pastoral recommendations and promises of 1973. As such, the committee asked Synod 1999 to call the churches to repentance for their failures, as expressed in a prayer contained in Part I. Synod 1999 called the churches to repentance for their failures to minister to persons who experience same-sex attractions and added the prayer presented by the committee to serve as an acceptable expression of that repentance.

2. Part II (*Agenda for Synod 1999*, pp. 247-79)

The committee submitted Part II of its report to Synod 1999 for information with a request that synod make the entire report (Parts I and II) available to the churches for study and response. This request was granted, and churches were asked to forward their responses to the report to the committee by April 1, 2000.

Part II contained discussion of such matters as the spiritual ministry of the church, common spiritual issues among persons with same-sex attractions, guidelines to evaluate ministries, justice issues, transformational ministries, and ministry to families. Some suggested readings and a review of biological, psychological, and exegetical issues were appended.

In requesting that the churches study and respond to the report, the committee sought to gather information from the churches that could contribute to the work of the committee, and to provide a final report that would reflect a broader denominational commitment to this area of ministry. Over fifty churches responded to the request to study the report and provide a response. Each committee member reviewed these responses, and they are considered in this final report.

C. Church responses

In the responses from the churches, two issues surfaced repeatedly: the prayer of repentance and the distinction between the condition of homosexuality and homosexual behavior (homosexuality).

Objections advanced to the prayer of repentance were the lack of culpability, the impropriety of a call for corporate repentance, and erroneous conclusions from the survey results. The committee did not submit the prayer of repentance without some reservation, but did, however, submit it to the body of Christ, where “if one suffers, every part suffers with it; if one is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). Also in submitting the prayer, the committee was mindful of the Psalms, many of which are corporate calls to thanksgiving, to lament, and to repentance. It was in such a context that the committee submitted the prayer in its report, and subsequently, Synod 1999 prayed it and offered it to the churches.

The second issue, the distinction between the condition and behavior raised the question, “Is not the desire itself sinful even if the person does not act on that desire?” Perhaps the 1999 report was unclear in its response to this question. The committee has attempted to address this question in the “Common Spiritual Issues” section later in this report. Additionally, there were those in the responding churches from both sides of the issue who maintained that the 1973 distinction between the condition or orientation and the behavior was not biblically and/or psychologically sound.

D. Reflections

Throughout its work over the past five years, the committee has recognized the sensitivities and complexities inherent in issues involving persons with same-sex attractions. We have attempted to remember that this is not just a “subject” or an “issue,” but an endeavor that involves the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of humans made in the image and likeness of God.

In the process of addressing ministry to individuals with same-sex attractions, the committee has been repeatedly challenged by thoughtful individuals within the Christian community about exegetical issues. Some question the validity of the church’s exegesis in 1973 that called for a distinction between “homosexuality” and “homosexual.” Others question the validity of the church’s current exegesis of those scriptural passages that speak of sexual behavior between persons of the same sex. The committee frequently discussed to what extent we were mandated to look further at what the Scriptures say about homosexuality. We reached the conclusion that we were not asked to reexamine scriptural texts that deal explicitly or implicitly with homosexuality. This conclusion appeared consistent with the latter part of the mandate given by Synod 1996, which stated that we were to give direction “. . . in a manner consistent with the decisions of 1973.” Thus, we considered the Scriptures more in light of how they could guide us attitudinally as we looked at where we have been since 1973 and how we could more effectively encourage and equip individuals and churches to minister to members with same-sex attractions. However, given the thoughtful challenges posed by individuals and churches within the denomination, there may be wisdom, both pastorally and theologically, for the church to address these concerns at some time in the future.

Finally, it was clear from many presentations and discussions with individuals and groups, and from the responses by churches, that there is considerable diversity of opinion and feeling within the denomination about individuals with same-sex attractions and ministry to them. We believe it is important for diverse perspectives to be able to be openly discussed and examined. We also believe that it is important that members of our church family who experience same-sex attractions can belong to, openly participate in, and be ministered to

within the fellowship of the church. It is our hope that the work of this committee and the contents of the report that follows will advance that end and assist our churches in ministering more effectively in the name of Christ.

II. The spiritual ministry of the church

The church ministers in many ways, especially through the teaching and proclamation of the Word of God, through worship, through prayers, through the holy sacraments, and through pastoral visits. The church ministers in these ways to all its members. It proclaims the gospel, making known that we are all saved by grace through Jesus Christ. It calls us to faith and to commitment. It calls us to an obedient life and to gratitude to God. More specifically, it teaches us, among other things, about ourselves and about our sexuality, its purposes and its boundaries. The church instructs, guides, comforts, and sometimes admonishes, even rebukes, when we are not obedient to the commands of our Lord.

All of this is ministry, essential ministry for all persons, including those who are homosexual. When the church reminds us of our brokenness and tells us not to trust our own spirits but to trust the Spirit of God, who speaks through the Scriptures, it is ministering to us about our sexuality. And when the church invites us to come to the table of the Lord as repentant sinners, we are once again *one in the Lord* in spite of all our differences and in spite of our sins. This is ministry, essential ministry—also to persons who are homosexual—ministry that helps them find their place within the body of Christ.

The church does not always create special ministries for specific groups of people—for example, parents who have lost children in death or persons disabled by accident in their youth—even though these people have specific angularities to their spiritual needs. The church ministers to these as well as others through all the regular ministries that Christ has assigned to it.

In addition to all of these regular ministries, the church must sometimes focus its ministry on the specific needs of certain people. That is what the 1973 report on homosexuality spoke about. But that kind of ministry has often not been done. However, since much of it is private, more of it may be taking place than we think, though it is known only to those involved. Because many persons who are homosexual have not made this fact known to the church out of fear of the response they might receive, the church has had no opportunity to minister to the specific needs of these people.

As a committee, we heard wonderful stories from some homosexual persons about how other members of the church have supported them, encouraged them, helped them overcome their shame, and admonished them when they needed admonition. However, more commonly we heard stories of the church's silence and lack of ministry, stories that indicate an unwillingness on the part of the church to talk with them about their same-sex attractions and their spiritual struggles.

When considering a specific ministry to persons who are homosexual, we do well to remember that there is no such person as "the homosexual." Same-sex attraction in no way defines the personality, morality, life-style, occupation, or family history of homosexual persons. They are as different from each other as heterosexual persons are. Some are moral; others are not. Some are caring, loving people who love the Lord with all their heart and soul and mind, and others are not.

Ministry, especially pastoral care, must be specific to each person. Prejudgment is prejudice. Making pastoral assumptions before meeting a person and hearing her or his story is not only poor pastoral care, it also violates an officebearer's subscription to the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day 43), which reminds us not to "judge anyone unheard." In spite of their individual differences, the conversations we have had with persons who are homosexual and the literature we have read about homosexuality identified several common spiritual issues among homosexual persons.

III. Common spiritual issues among homosexual persons

A. *Shame*

Persons who experience same-sex attractions have some common experiences that require the ministry of the church. The first and in many ways the most significant of these is their experience of themselves as different, as abnormal, as being not the way most others are. Since their differentness is related to their sexuality, it is a very personal and private matter. Their early responses to this growing awareness, usually in early adolescence, include a wish to keep it concealed and an attendant fear of exposure. They sense that if others would know, they would lose esteem, be judged negatively, and perhaps be ridiculed and rejected. These early shame responses sometimes lead to an intrapsychic denial of the same-sex attraction, which can persist well into adulthood.

The process of becoming self-aware is often a complex experience. For many it begins at an early age and gains definition as they grow older. They may discover that they are attracted to persons of the same sex as well as to persons of the opposite sex and that the balance between these two shifts as they mature. If, as they grow older, their same-sex attractions become dominant, the outcome is often a deep loneliness and a sense of isolation. They develop a deep sense of not belonging, even though they may have a caring family and good friends. Beneath all such relationships is the sense that, if others knew about their sexuality, they would think differently about them, esteem them differently, and perhaps not accept them. Keeping this part of themselves hidden produces a sense of falseness, a lack of honesty and a phoniness, and at the same time a strong sense of shame about who they are in a very deep part of their personality.

They may feel shame simply for experiencing the same-sex attraction. This shame can be pervasive. It can isolate the person from genuine community, from a sense of belonging, even from the sense of belonging to the family of God, the church. It can affect their sense of self, including their sense of being a new self in Christ, and lead to depression and suicidal thought. This is a shame about something they did not choose and about something they did not do. It is a shame they do not deserve. Yet it is a shame that erodes their sense of well-being and their sense of love and grace. Some shame may come from behavior that is disobedient to God's law. Such shame is appropriate and needs to be removed by the cleansing that comes with confession and repentance.

Shamed persons need the very community they fear. Persons who live with the poison of shame have a deep spiritual need for community, for deep and intimate personal relationships in which they love and are loved and in which they are valued by others. They need the relationships of shared lives, relation-

ships in which they know and are known, known even in the brokenness of their sexuality, and yet are loved and valued.

B. Identity in community

The church of Jesus Christ has the antidote to this shame. In the church, God gathers his people into a new community and gives them a *new* identity. Believers are a new creation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the body of Christ. Individually they are children of God. The church has this identity because of the actual, historical reality of Christ's death and resurrection. "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). Neither who we are nor what we have done excludes us from this new community. Together we have been forgiven and accepted by God, and our shame has been taken away. In turn we must create an accepting, forgiving community of the unashamed.

As adopted children in the family of God we share these family characteristics with each other:

1. Everyone in the new community is fallen. We are all broken and weak. Each of us is a sinner, and we deserve some of the shame we have.
2. On the cross Christ bore the shame as well as the guilt of everyone in this new community. "... upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21).
3. Everyone in this community participates in Christ's holiness. "And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified" (1 Cor. 6:11). We are now, by God's definition, a clean, pure, unashamed, holy community.

This new community must practice these commonalities:

1. We no longer see each other as persons who are guilty of idolatry, theft, greed, drunkenness, sexual immorality, slander, or swindling. Although that is what we were, we are now clean and holy (1 Cor. 6:11). We give up these old judgments about others.
2. Because Christ has borne the weight of our brokenness, our weaknesses, and our sins, we can acknowledge them with each other. "But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another" (1 John 1:7) because "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).
3. In this community we experience the power of healing prayer, following the advice of James when he says, "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed" (James 5:16).
4. In this community we treat each other not only with justice but also with grace and mercy.

Our very humanity depends upon our connectedness. To be disconnected, isolated, alone in the universe is to lose our very humanness. We were made to live in community, and without it we die. Even broken community is better

than no community, but the best community of all is a reconciled, redeemed community where each thinks of the other as better than her/himself and where the last shall be first and the first last.

All of us have this same need, and if we do not find such community within our families and within the church, we are likely to seek it elsewhere. Persons who experience same-sex attractions sometimes seek it within the gay and lesbian communities of larger cities. The cry for acceptance voiced by many homosexual persons is a cry for community.

C. *Assuming one's identity*

"Who am I?" is a question all people ask, especially adolescents growing into adulthood. It is a question that has deep spiritual significance. As John Calvin said in the forward to the *Institutes*, "Who am I?" and "Who is God?" are the two major spiritual questions every person must answer. He also observed that the two questions are related. No one can answer one question without answering the other.

How we label or identify ourselves often defines us. Our identity tells us to what community we belong, how we are to live, and to some extent what our purpose or meaning is. Persons who experience same-sex attractions often identify themselves in terms of this aspect of their personality, just as a person who is disabled is tempted to identify herself as "the cripple" or a person who is athletically gifted as "the athlete." Emotional impairments such as depression, schizophrenia, or uncontrolled anger have the same power to define identity. They have this power partly because of the pervasiveness of these issues in a person's life and partly because other people tend to identify certain people according to these characteristics. This tendency to reduce a person to some aspect of her or his person is dehumanizing and unchristian.

Taking on an identity may make an individual less flexible and more static than that person might otherwise be. Especially for young people, "coming out" may concretize their sexual identity while it is still being understood or being formed. Taking on a gay identity as secular culture defines it may mean the uncritical acceptance of one's desires and attractions and allowing those desires to shape behavior. Therefore, lesbian/gay/bisexual support groups that do not foster spiritual transformation and one's new identity in Christ can erode both faith and obedience.

Some persons who experience sexual attractions to others of the same gender feel a need to tell family and friends, coworkers, employers, and the community that they are gay or lesbian. There seem to be many reasons they do this:

1. To be known and accepted completely as they are.
2. To live with authenticity.
3. To find and be supported by others who have experienced similar painful struggles.
4. To raise the issue publicly, promote a positive image of homosexual persons, and engage others in discussion.

The ministry of the church to persons with same-sex attractions begins with enfolding these persons into community while at the same time sounding the message of the gospel that one's sexual identity is not one's deepest and true

identity. One's core identity must not be hostage to one's sexual identity or sexual orientation.

The enduring message of the gospel is that male or female, American or Canadian, homosexual or heterosexual, disabled or well-bodied—none of these adjectives defines who we truly are. These words describe some aspect of ourselves, but they are adjectives, not nouns. Even our moral behavior no longer defines us when we are born again in Christ. Listen carefully to the Word of God on this subject:

Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. *And this is what some of you used to be.* But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

(1 Cor. 6:9-11, NRSV, italics added)

Acknowledging the struggles and temptations and moving toward this new identity in Christ allow one to be honest, to receive the love of the Christian community, and, above all, to have hope. This is no easy task. This change of identity is part of what the Scripture calls “becoming a new person in Christ.” This becoming is not an instantaneous, one-time event. It begins with an act of grace received in faith, but it is also a process. One needs to grow into this new identity so that it shapes one's self-image, one's way of thinking, one's way of responding, and one's behavior. When the church enfolds homosexual persons into its fellowship, they are empowered to live beyond their sexual identity.

D. Temptation and sin

The desire for sexual union outside of marriage is rightly understood in Christian moral teaching as temptation. There are many kinds of sexual temptations, some of them mutually exclusive. Nearly all human beings experience sexual temptations at various times in their lives, with various degrees of intensity. But temptation is not the same as desire, attraction, or even arousal. Temptation is the urge to do what we know to be wrong. Sometimes strong, sometimes persistent, sometimes seemingly irresistible, such an attraction, no matter how beautifully it is pictured and how vital it seems to our life and happiness, is an attraction to sinful behavior.

Good ministry requires that we be clear that temptation is not sin. Whether gentle and fleeting or persistent and consuming, even if it brings us to the edge of disobedience, temptation is neither sinful nor shameful. Scripture clearly teaches that our Lord was tempted in all ways even as we are; yet he did not sin.

We must be clear that temptation becomes sin only when we give some form of assent to it, some kind of yes. It is possible to sin in our hearts even when we do not bring our desires to outward actions. For temptation to give birth to sin (James 1:13-15) a person must in some way say “yes” to the sinful desire, even though it be in one's inner being.

The kind of assent can also differ. Sometimes we *fall* into sin; sometimes we *yield* to temptation; sometimes we *intentionally* and *deliberately* sin. Whatever the degree of wilfulness, sin needs both forgiveness and cleansing.

But what does a tempted person need? Scripture teaches us that a tempted person needs both strength to resist and a way of escape. In our weakness we

need to be empowered. Ephesians 6:10-18 shows the way. We do not overcome temptation. Christ has done that for us. We put on his truth and righteousness, and, when we are fully clothed with what he has done for us, “having done everything,” we stand firm. We do not fight the devil. Christ has done that for us. We are “strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.” If we struggle in our own power, we lose. If we rest in his, we can stand firm.

Believers must pray to be delivered from temptation, as modeled by the Lord’s Prayer: “Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” We need to pray as a community, the community of the tempted ones who pray for one another. We cannot stand against the fiery darts of the evil one alone. We need other Christians. We need their prayers.

Let us not be too quick to say that “God allows no one to be tempted beyond what he is able to bear.” However true, such a statement is a bit like saying to a parent who has lost a child, “All things work together for good to those who love God.” It shows an insensitivity about, a lack of empathy with, those who suffer and struggle.

E. The gift of celibacy (self-control)

In the seventh chapter of Corinthians (vv. 1, 8-9, and 32-35) the apostle Paul recommends singleness as a preferable state for Christians. These passages clearly teach that one need not be married in order to have meaning in life or to fulfill one’s purpose or role in this world. In fact, marriage is often detrimental to serving the Lord. The reasons advanced are that being married in times of great trials is very difficult and also that marriage belongs to the order of things that are passing away (Matt. 22:30 and 1 Cor. 7:29-31). When the kingdom fully comes, marriage will be no more. According to 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, those who are citizens of the kingdom begin to live in the new fellowship that replaces marriage. This Scripture passage teaches that it is not wrong to marry but that singleness is preferable.

But what are single persons to do about their sexuality? What are youth between the ages of 12 or 13 (the age of sexual maturity) and 26 or 27 (the median ages of first marriages) to do when they “burn with passion”? This is a very important question for *all* adult single persons—unmarried, divorced, or widowed—as well as for celibate homosexual persons. Persons who are homosexual, like other adult singles, often struggle intensely with their sexual drives.

For Christians the problem is compounded by Jesus’ statement to his disciples about marrying or staying single. When Jesus told them that divorce is contrary to the will of God except in instances of unfaithfulness of one spouse, the disciples responded, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” To this Jesus replied,

Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.

(Matt. 19:8-12)

Who are the ones “who can accept this”? What did our Lord mean by “only those to whom it has been given”? Is renouncing marriage (making oneself a eunuch) for the sake of the kingdom of God potentially possible for anyone?

None of these questions is answered in this passage in Matthew or the parallel passages in Mark 12 and Luke 20.

However, the apostle Paul, when speaking of married people who mutually decide to forgo sexual relations in order to devote themselves to prayer, states that they should do so for only a limited time so that Satan will not tempt them because of their “lack of self-control.” He adds, “I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind” (1 Cor. 7:7). Paul here identifies the gift necessary for celibacy as self-control.

The church has often understood these passages as teaching that some people have a gift that allows them to forgo sexual relations. Such persons may choose not to marry. What then of those who do not have such a gift, such a charisma, from God? What if marriage is not possible or not permissible for them, for whatever reasons? In particular, what about those who are sexually attracted to persons of the same sex? If marriage is not possible and they do not have the gift, or charisma, necessary to control their sexuality, what are they to do? It is this dilemma that has led many Christian writers, including many ethicists, either to allow for or to argue for a same-sex equivalent to marriage. For example, Lewis Smedes, in the revised edition of *Sex for Christians*, writes,

I still believe that the Creator intended the human family to flourish through heterosexual love. I still believe that homosexuality is a burden that homosexual people are called to bear, and bear as morally as possible, even though they never chose to bear it. I still believe that God prefers homosexual people to live in committed and faithful monogamous relationships with each other when they cannot change their condition and do not have the gift to be celibate. My mind has not changed in any basic way since I set these opinions to paper nearly two decades ago. (p. 239)

The question of what to do about one’s sexuality when marriage is not an option is no mere question of theological theory. It is, rather, a sometimes desperate question of a Christian who is homosexual, struggling to be obedient to her or his Lord. It is also an urgent pastoral concern (see Report 42, *Acts of Synod 1973*, pp. 628-31, where both the pastoral dimensions and the ethical issues are explored in detail). If a person lacks self-control but marriage is not possible, is sin then the only option?

What is this *gift*, or *charisma*, of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 7:7? It is commonly called the gift of celibacy. Scripture, however, nowhere speaks specifically of celibacy. Rather, in the immediate context (1 Cor. 7:5) Paul calls this ability to deny oneself sexual relationships “self-control,” saying some people have it and others lack it.

Galatians 5:22-23 speaks of self-control as one of the fruits of the Spirit: “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.” Self-control is listed along with such virtues as love, joy, peace, and gentleness among the things that are produced by the Holy Spirit in those who belong to Christ. A “fruit of the Spirit” is not the same as a “gift of the Spirit,” but some of these Christian virtues are also described as gifts, or charisma, of the Spirit. For example, in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 Paul speaks of spiritual gifts, including the gifts of faith, hope, and love. Both love and faith are fruits of the Spirit

and gifts of the Spirit, so it is not strange for Paul to speak of a gift (self-control) that is also a fruit of the Spirit.

At the conclusion of his teaching on gifts, Paul instructs us to “strive for the spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. 14:1). We may seek them and pray for them. Gifts are not some power or special ability that God either gives or does not give to us without possibility of change. In many places in the New Testament the Holy Spirit promises to give Christians whatever they need in order to obey and serve God. Christians who lack self-control of their anger or their sexuality must seek it and ask God for it. Married people as well as singles need self-control, including self-control of their sexuality, for a well-disciplined life.

Finally, Scripture is clear that even though virtues such as love and faith are both fruits of the spirit and gifts of the Spirit, they are also commanded of us. We are called to love and to believe and are held responsible when we do not. The fact that both are gifts of the Spirit does not relieve us of responsibility. No one may argue that he is relieved from the obligation to love or to believe because he does not have that gift of the Spirit.

So, too, with self-control. It is a gift of the Spirit, one of the fruits of the Spirit, and a command to be obeyed. Scripture speaks of it in Titus 2:11-15: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to *live lives that are self-controlled*, upright, and godly. . . . Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority”; in 1 Peter 1:13: “Therefore prepare your minds for action; *discipline yourselves*; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed”; and in 2 Peter 1:5-6: “For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and *knowledge with self-control*, and self-control with endurance”

The argument that one is excused from the obligation to be sexually chaste if one does not have the gift of celibacy (or self-control) rests on questionable grounds.

How then do we learn self-control?

1. We must seek it, desire it, and pray for it, alone and with others.
2. We must believe that God gives us what we ask in Jesus' name.
3. We must know our own weakness, know that we are fully capable of falling into sin. We must “beware when we think we stand, lest we also fall.” We must let this knowledge of weakness and vulnerability lead us to trust in God's power.
4. We must practice self-control. Learning self-control in other aspects of our lives is a virtue that shapes our character and enables us to say no. Or, to put it differently, self-indulgence is the enemy of self-control.
5. We must learn to flee temptations like pornography, which is not only dangerous but addictive.
6. We must be accountable to fellow Christians. For example, a person striving to learn self-control should find a partner or small group with whom to meet regularly for support, prayer, and monitoring each other's behavior.

7. We must learn to live one day at a time, for “tomorrow will bring worries of its own” (Matt. 6:34).
8. We must speak about our temptations. Hiding them and keeping secrets gives them a power that can be broken only by allowing others to bear our burdens with us.

F. Sexual brokenness and healing

God promises the healing of all our diseases, of whatever distorts our lives, of that which troubles our relationships, and of that which destroys shalom—whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. He tells us that healing and the gospel go together. The power of God is shown in changed lives, changed in all sorts of ways. When Jesus, the firstborn of the Father, came into the world, the new creation was made manifest. Those who believed in him became new people, and those who were sick were healed.

Christ commissioned the apostles (Luke 9:1-6) and later the seventy (Luke 10:8-9) to preach the gospel and heal the sick. The book of Acts repeatedly demonstrates the connection between the proclamation of the gospel and healing (e.g., Acts 3:8-12; Acts 4:29-30). Among the gifts of the spirit given to the church is the gift of healing (1 Cor. 12:9). And James commissions the church to a ministry that pairs the forgiveness of sins and healing.

All Christians experience God’s healing hand in many ways in their lives. Nearly every small illness has the potential to develop into a serious, even deadly, illness. Again and again God hears our prayers and heals us and those we love. It is, however, important to remember that God does not promise to heal us every time, from *all* our diseases and from *all* our brokenness throughout our lives. In fact, he tells us the opposite in Scripture. Some brokenness and some disease will not be healed until we come into his presence at the end of time. Some live with the pain of unhealed brokenness throughout their lives. The church must communicate all that God promises but also no more than he promises.

Sometimes healing comes as a direct answer to prayer and sometimes, perhaps most often, through the healing services of medicines, counselors, and surgeons. So, too, with sexual brokenness. We need to turn to God for healing, but he often answers our prayers through the ministry of others. An important part of the church’s ministry is the communication of hope for healing, but it must be a realistic and well-grounded hope.

Persons with same-sex attractions testify that this healing comes in many forms and to varying degrees: (1) diminished inclinations, (2) a greater measure of self-control, (3) a supportive Christian community that brings peace and wholeness into their lives, (4) strength and support in a continuing struggle throughout their lives, (5) a greater attraction to the opposite sex, (6) and in some cases the ability to marry and have a family.

All persons should be encouraged to seek whatever healing God may provide for them. They should seek it both through the common ministry of their congregations and through the specialized ministries for persons who are homosexual. Most of the specialized ministries to persons who are homosexual are related to Exodus International, a worldwide coalition of Christian ministries that offers support to men and women seeking to overcome homosexuality. Many of these ministries also offer specialized support to spouses, families, and friends. These ministries include support groups, individual counseling,

literature, and other resources. Ministries associated with Exodus International differ from one community to another, so pastors making referrals are encouraged to contact local groups and become thoroughly acquainted with them. Information about the ministry of Exodus, including a complete list of referral groups, is available from Exodus International—North America, P.O. Box 77652, Seattle, WA 98177; (206-784-7799).

IV. Guidelines to evaluate ministries

Many parachurch organizations and associations of churches now minister to people who experience same-sex desires. Obviously, this committee cannot evaluate every existing ministry. These programs range from those that are unhealthy and destructive to those ministering grace and healing. Even programs bearing the same name vary from region to region. Therefore, pastors and congregational leaders should carefully evaluate a ministry before referring a member to it.

A. Common features of effective ministries include the following:

1. Acceptance and affirmation, seeing every human being as one who is created in God's image and therefore having worth and dignity.
2. Hope for healing with an understanding that sanctification is a process and that wholeness is a lifelong journey.
3. A setting that makes intimate nonsexual relationships between people of the same and different genders possible.
4. Accountability in holy living and help in cultivating a new mindset.
5. Belief that in Jesus' resurrection God has given power to break the cycles of sinful behavior.
6. Help in dealing with anger against God, against society, and specifically against those who have hurt, abused, and misused.
7. Worship that is God-centered, joyful, and hopeful.
8. Supportive small groups in which there is healing prayer and confession of sin.

B. A few cautions regarding ministries for homosexual persons

1. Beware of ministries that promise complete or immediate change in desires and orientation.
2. Beware of ministries that offer little or no hope for change in desires or the power of those desires.
3. Beware of programs that mandate gender-specific behavior or tell participants they must learn to display certain "male" or "female" traits. In other words, beware of ministries that place any emphasis on male and female roles that have no biblical foundation.
4. Beware of ministry models that do not respect individual Christians' abilities to hear and respond to God's voice and that do not recognize people's decision-making abilities.

5. Beware of inflexible, legalistic models of ministry, for example, any ministry requiring individuals to follow a prescribed pattern of steps to ensure results.
6. Beware of ministries that too quickly identify same-sex attraction as irreversible homosexuality.

V. Compassionate ministry and the local church

Referrals are no substitute for the ministry of the local congregation, and referrals are rarely successful unless they are made in the context of a compassionate church. Each congregation must do its own ministry. But what can a church do that has no specialized ministry in this area? What good news, what gospel, does it have to extend to persons who struggle with same-sex attractions?

First, the church must remember that gospel, not law, has the power to redeem our lives and make us whole. Saying no is not enough. The church must reach out with love and compassion, creating a fellowship of mutual honesty, caring, and support.

Christian ministry begins with compassion. Just as Jesus was moved by the cry of the blind man on the way to Jericho, by the widow following the body of her son, by the lepers who cried out from the crowd, and by the tears of the woman who washed his feet, so too we must first be moved in our deepest feelings by those who struggle with same-sex attractions.

Compassion is what we feel when we are in touch with the pain of others even though their situation may be very different from anything we have experienced. Compassion is born of imagination, the ability to put ourselves into their situation and know what it is really like. Only when we know our own brokenness, our own pain, and our own temptations can we begin to identify with others and feel compassion. That compassion is the motivational power for ministry. It moves us to reach out and do what we can. It also helps overcome their shame, the shame they do not deserve.

Compassionate ministry seeks to incorporate those with same-sex attractions fully into the body and life of the church, satisfying their need for community, for intimacy, for oneness with others, and their need to serve their Lord. Much of their sexual struggle lies here. What they need and what sometimes gives desperate urgency to their need is not genital sex but to love and to be loved, to know and to be known, to feel worthwhile about themselves.

Compassionate ministry begins with lifting the taboo. Love and compassion will help us overcome our apprehension about same-sex attractions or about those persons who experience sexuality this way. We need not stop our ears or avert our eyes. We must break down the conspiracy of silence and the walls of separation, which convey judgment, alienation, exclusion, and loss of hope to our brothers and sisters in Christ and to those outside of Christ who have been shut out of the church.

We must pray for all who struggle with sexual temptations, some with attraction to persons of the same sex, others to persons who are not their spouses, and still others with deep dark secrets about their sexuality and their sexual behaviors. We must speak of who we are in Christ and how little being male or female, black or white, Cuban or American, homosexual or heterosexual says about who we are. We must bear one another's burden, support one

another in the Christian life, strive to live in holy obedience, hold out hope to one another, and seek healing from all our impairments.

When we do these things, we will meet our Lord, for he has said, whatever you do to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you do to me.

VI. What the local church can do

While many congregations will find it useful to be able to refer their members to helpful parachurch ministries, every church can minister to its attenders who experience same-sex desires. Some congregations will develop full-orbed ministries specifically designed for those who are seeking healing in the area of their sexual practice and desires. Other congregations may be able to offer a single helpful ministry in this area. Local congregations may not be able to replicate every program that the specialized ministries provide. But every congregation can create a hospitable climate and an inclusive environment for those who experience same-sex desires.

A. Creating a hospitable climate

- 1. Use language that assumes and describes the church community as the family of God.** The church is a new community of Jesus Christ's followers, who are single, married, and from all varieties of backgrounds. In other words, teach that the church is not simply a collection of biological families or parts of families. Because the church is a new community, it needs to provide a home, a haven, for its members.
- 2. Model and encourage intimate nonsexual relationships with people of the same gender and the opposite gender,** in other words, brother-brother, sister-sister, and brother-sister relationships. Church leadership should demonstrate and refer to friendships of all sorts with all ages and both genders. Such friendships can be fostered by, but are not limited to, various small-group Bible studies, ministry teams, prayer partnerships.
- 3. Provide an environment for confession of sins and accountability to other Christians.** In small-group settings as well as in public worship, provide a safe place to share struggles, confess sins.

B. Some practical ways to make the ministry of the whole church more inclusive of those who experience same-sex desire

- 1. In congregational prayers** include the health and well-being of the single Christians' relationships as well as the health and well-being of the congregation's marriages and families. For example, leaders could pray for faithfulness and commitment in friendships and for love and forgiveness toward housemates as well as for patience and understanding in marriage and families.
- 2. During liturgical confession** refer by name to specific sins, including homosexual practice. Use Scripture and prayers that refer to the fact that Christians are tempted by, struggling with, and trapped in a variety of sins. Train liturgists/worship leaders to use language that demonstrates that every kind of sin displeases God and that no sin is beyond God's forgiveness, that God's power can break the power and the cycles of sin.

Mention sinful practices of attitude and thought as well as of behavior

and speech, including such things as gossip, slander, theft, murder, violence. Among sins confessed should be those often perceived as ordinary and mundane as well as those that may be seen as dramatic.

3. **In preaching** talk about a variety of sexual sins, including all sexual practice outside of marriage (premarital, extramarital, same-sex). Give examples of God's grace and comfort to those who struggle with brokenness and also examples of people who have been freed from the power of homosexual sin.
4. **Encourage small groups** that are made up of singles and couples, are mixed in age, or are arranged geographically in addition to or instead of small groups that are only couple-oriented, geared to singles, and/or age specific.

C. Ministry that local churches have offered

The following are examples of congregational ministries that some Christian Reformed members have found helpful in their struggle with same-sex desires:

1. Prayer partnerships with others within the congregation.
2. Congregational members who told the individuals that they prayed for them.
3. Biblical teaching on the sinful nature of homosexual practice, on God's forgiveness, and on God's power for the believer to resist sin.
4. Practice of and training in classic spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, corporate worship, and service.
5. A setting where it was known that other church attenders also experienced same-sex desires.

VII. Pastoral care to families

Although the mandate given to this committee focuses on ministry to the homosexual member, there is a broader challenge to the church. The reality of homosexuality impacts not only individuals but also other family members. Parents, siblings, and spouses experience emotions that are evident in times of crisis. In the pastoral advice given in Report 42 of the *Acts of Synod 1973*, ministry to family members is included as well as ministry to homosexual persons. Ministry will be hampered if family members do not experience pastoral care from the church.

When families are confronted with the reality of a loved one's homosexuality, the struggles that ensue often involve shock, denial, anger, shame, blame, grief, heartache, and depression. The journey may be a long and lonely one if burdens cannot be shared. The church needs to respond with compassion. A church that responds with grace will more likely be able to hear and minister to the needs, fears, and concerns of the homosexual and his/her family than a church that responds with shame.

In his book *Windows of the Soul*, Ken Gire speaks of the power of story. He gives a personal illustration that speaks to how the church can also be there for family members even when there isn't complete understanding:

If a story is to follow us home, find entrance through some door of our heart, it must be asked, consciously or unconsciously, two questions: What does this story have to say? And what does it have to say to me?

A few years ago when reading Norman Maclean's story *A River Runs Through It*, I wrestled with those questions. . . . What was Norman Maclean's story saying?

It was saying, I think, that the ones we most want to help are the ones we are often least able to help. It is a story about connecting with the people closest to us, how difficult that is to do, and how heartbreaking it is when, for whatever reason, we can't seem to do it.

If that was what the story was saying, what was it saying, if anything, to me?

I read *A River Runs Through It* at a time when I was trying to connect with someone I lived with and loved and should have understood but suddenly didn't, with someone I wanted with all my heart to help but even with all my heart, couldn't. It filled me with grief and sadness and questions like ones the father asked his son in Norman Maclean's story.

"Are you sure you have told me everything you know about his death?" he asked.

"Everything."

"It's not much, is it?"

"No," I replied, "but you can love completely without complete understanding."

"That I have known and preached," my father said.

When I read those words, it was as if the father had preached them to me.

"*You can love completely without complete understanding.*" The words echoed in me as if off the walls of an empty cathedral in which I was the only person sitting in the pews.

It was not required of me to understand. It was required of me to love, and to go on loving, completely. (pp. 78-80)

Loving even when we do not completely understand—may that be our attitude as the church ministers to family members as well, helping them to love completely without complete understanding, and loving them completely even when we are without complete understanding.

A. *Role of the pastor*

The pastor is key to effective church ministry. Pastors are in a position to instruct their congregations and to alert members and officeholders to the responsibility they bear toward homosexual persons in their fellowship. Pastors need to prepare their congregations to minister to serious needs. They have the opportunity to help create empathy among the members. Pastors may be limited in how much time they can personally spend in one-to-one contacts, but they should be able to put people in touch with resources as well as with two or three people who will walk with the hurting family members.

Authentic community needs not only to be taught but also to be caught—that is, to be modeled by pastors. Pastors should also encourage an understanding of and compassion for homosexual persons, while dispelling prejudices under which they suffer. One way to do so is through preaching and encouraging the use of resources for reflection, discussion, and study in small groups. One example of an excellent resource is *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World* by Dr. Richard Mouw. This is an excellent book for those who wish to know how it is possible to hold on to their convictions and still dialogue with and show Christian love to those with whom they differ. Mouw writes, "It is important to distinguish between beliefs and behaviors with which we disagree and the very real human beings who believe and behave in those ways. We need to be very clear about our disagreements without responding irrationally to homosexual persons" (pp. 87-88).

Mouw stresses in another place that “the whole point of the biblical perspective is to promote a sexuality that is kind and reverent. So it is important that we present the biblical viewpoint kindly and reverently to those with whom we disagree about sexual standards. Not to do so is to undermine our own message. Sexual civility is an important way of living out our commitment to the gospel” (p. 94).

Another resource is the Pastoral Message from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Its pastoral recommendations are given here:

With a view toward overcoming the isolation that you or your son or daughter may be experiencing, we offer these recommendations to you as well as to priests and pastoral ministers.

To parents:

1. Accept and love yourselves as parents in order to accept and love your son or daughter. Do not blame yourselves for a homosexual orientation in your child.
2. Do everything possible to continue demonstrating love for your child. However, accepting his or her homosexual orientation does not have to include approving all related attitudes and behavioral choices. In fact, you may need to challenge certain aspects of a lifestyle which you find objectionable.
3. Urge your son or daughter to stay joined to the . . . faith community. If they have left the church, urge them to return and be reconciled to the community
4. Recommend that your son or daughter find a spiritual director/mentor who will offer guidance in prayer and in leading a chaste and virtuous life.
5. Seek help for yourself, perhaps in the form of counseling or spiritual direction, as you strive for understanding, acceptance and inner peace. Also, consider joining a parents' support group or participating in a retreat designed for [Christian] parents of homosexual children. Other people have traveled the same road as you, but may have journeyed even further. They can share effective ways of handling delicate family situations such as how to tell family members and friends about your child, how to explain homosexuality to younger children, how to relate to your son or daughter's friends in a Christian way.
6. Reach out in love and service to other parents who may be struggling with a son or daughter's homosexuality. Contact your parish about organizing a parents' support group. . . .
7. As you take advantage of opportunities and support, remember that you can only change yourself; you can only be responsible for your own beliefs and actions, not those of your adult children.
8. Put your faith completely in God, who is more powerful, more compassionate and more forgiving than we are or ever could be.

(pp. 290-91)

To church ministers:

1. Be available to parents and families who ask for your pastoral help, spiritual guidance and prayer.
2. Welcome homosexual persons into the faith community. Seek out those on the margins. Avoid stereotyping and condemnations. Strive first to listen. Do not presume that all homosexual persons are sexually active.
3. Learn about homosexuality and church teaching so that your preaching, teaching and counseling will be informed and effective.
4. Use the words *homosexual*, *gay*, *lesbian* in honest and accurate ways, especially from the pulpit. In various and subtle ways you can give people “permission” to talk about homosexual issues among themselves and let them know that you're also willing to talk with them.

5. Maintain a list of agencies, community groups and counselors or other experts to whom you can refer homosexual persons or their parents and family members when they ask you for specialized assistance. Recommend agencies that operate in a manner consistent with [church] teaching.
6. Help to establish or promote existing support groups for parents and family members.
7. Learn about HIV/AIDS so you will be more informed and compassionate in your ministry. Include prayers in the liturgy for those living with HIV/AIDS, their caregivers, those who have died, and their families, companions and friends. . . .

(p. 291)

As pastors become aware of such guidance and intentionally speak, teach, and model the core ideas mentioned here, family members will be encouraged and strengthened as well.

B. A circle of support

Families need support. This should be a small group, a place where they can be completely open. This support group can blunt the sting and share the burden. The complexity of issues and emotions that are dealt with by family members will require ongoing support.

Families may not have the opportunity to make the choice of “coming out.” The homosexual member may already have made that decision for the family. Because family structures vary, cultural implications must also be taken into account. Various ethnic groups may deal with the issue of homosexuality differently.

Confidentiality is absolutely essential when family members share their burden with others. This confidentiality must not be broken.

C. Continuing ministry

A continuing ministry is necessary for families, especially if their loved ones continue to live openly in a same-sex relationship. It is often hard enough for family members to share with others that a loved one has a homosexual orientation. This becomes even more complex if that loved one is engaged in explicit homosexual practices. Sometimes churches have been helpful in shouldering the burden of family members who are initially trying to come to terms with the sexuality of their loved one. However, long-term sustaining support is often lacking, especially if little or no change is seen in the loved one’s condition or behavior. The circle of support may then narrow to include only those who are willing to commit to the family for an extended period of time.

Family members often feel ill at ease about how to address a number of situations. Are they to inquire about their loved one’s sexual activities? If so, how? What if the family member wants to have a friend or partner come along on the family vacation? What if the loved one has gone through years of counseling and finally agonizes to the conclusion that his/her orientation is unalterable? How do family members decide what level of friendship is acceptable for their loved one? Should family members shun friends or partners of their loved one, or should they interact with them as they would with friends of another family member? These can be real issues with which families struggle. When the church provides a long-term sustaining presence, regardless of the outcome, it demonstrates the unconditional love of Christ.

Some Christians do not support a homosexual person's family members who attend their church if the homosexual person shows any sign of developing a relationship with a same-sex friend. They believe that if they show any sign of understanding or compassion to the individual or even to that individual's family members, they are condoning the behavior and therefore participating in the sin. This perspective lacks an appropriate idea of boundaries. Individuals can be a supportive presence for family members even if they don't agree with all of the decisions that are made. By acknowledging the complexity of the issue, they can empathize with the burden family members experience and can walk with them instead of shunning or shaming them.

Ministry to family members over a long period of time will begin to realign the family members' focus so that they will be able to move on eventually. Over time, the fact that their loved one is homosexual will not be the all-consuming focus of their lives. However, even after years have passed, there may be times when family members will need to talk. Members of the support group need to be sensitive to those times and should from time to time initiate the subject by asking, "How is it going? How are you doing?"

The church may provide ministry through the establishment of small groups (in some churches these are called I.C.U.'s—Intensive Care Units). Members of such groups commit to confidentiality and long-term support if necessary. Membership in an I.C.U. must be voluntary for successful ministry.

Family dynamics are different from family to family, but it is not uncommon for tensions to arise within the family because of differences about how to respond to or interact with a homosexual loved one. It is not uncommon that families become polarized, one part of the family taking a hardline, condemning stance, another part of the family taking the other extreme in hopes of keeping the peace of all the family members at whatever cost. Such intrafamily tension may result in temporary or, at times, long-term periods of distance or even of estrangement in relationships. The body of Christ must be willing to show compassion and to foster a spirit of love and understanding when there is family disunity.

Families dealing with homosexuality may need support groups and may also need guidance in their choices. Family members often pass through a maze of circumstances about which decisions have to be made. A listening, supportive presence can help family members think through the situation. Oftentimes having a listening ear can help family members come to decisions with which they feel comfortable.

Family members also may struggle with their relationship with God, especially if there is little or no evidence of behavioral change in their loved one. Believers who are aware of this struggle should take the initiative to ask family members from time to time how this situation has affected or is affecting their relationship with God. There is a variety of pastoral approaches that can be implemented in helping family members work through periods of anger or disillusionment with God.

Though most of the literature on homosexuality speaks of situations involving a son/daughter or brother/sister, there are also instances when a spouse discovers that his/her life partner is gay. These are particularly difficult situations because they involve the breaking of trust. Issues of autonomy and mutuality are also affected. The dynamics of these complex situations often differ, depending upon whether there are children born to the couple and

whether this discovery is revealed in a gradual way or through a crisis situation. Sometimes the homosexual person may wish to remain married. Most often professional help is needed in such situations because of the depth of the hurt and brokenness of the relationship. Anita Worthen and Bob Davies in *Someone I Love Is Gay: How Family and Friends Can Respond* specifically address common issues that arise in such cases.

D. Haunting fears

In all families touched by homosexuality, there are overwhelming fears that grip the hearts of parents, siblings, and spouses. One of these is the fear that the homosexual loved one may be or may become infected with the HIV virus and develop AIDS. This fear is very real and may grow if the loved one continues to be sexually active. The ache and terror are insistent. Families need accurate information concerning this issue. It is important that family members learn how HIV is transmitted and how it is not transmitted, the stages of HIV disease, various treatments, and the side effects of such treatments.

Another fear is for the spiritual health of the loved one. Some family members may question whether their loved one is in a right relationship with the Lord. Others may wonder how or when they may be able to speak about their spiritual concerns with their loved one. If there is a deep concern about the eternal welfare of their loved one, how can this be addressed without alienating their relationship? These sensitive matters will require thoughtful and prayerful consideration by family members and by those who are willing to support them through this journey. Remembering God's unconditional love and irresistible grace can be of comfort and support as conversations about spiritual health and welfare are held with loved ones.

E. A healing ministry

For many families the homosexuality of a loved one can become an all-consuming focus. Some family members have difficulty in focusing on other aspects of life. The healing ministry of the church involves helping family members come to terms with and transcend their loved one's situation. To the extent that the church family can empathize and support family members, healing in the form of release from shame can occur, and a sense of shalom can be restored. This does not mean that all issues will be resolved for families with homosexual loved ones. It does mean, however, that family members can come to a point of transcending the situation and finding some meaning and purpose in living through this experience. For some this may mean getting to know their son/daughter, their brother/sister, or even their spouse on a deeper, more authentic level than ever before. Others have shared that through their experience they were able to get to know and support those who have had a similar experience. Sometimes family members transcend this situation by getting the opportunity to tell their story in an educative way to others. Some family members may even become involved in starting a support ministry for family members in their church or local community. Families can be helped to move on, to find gratitude in their lives again, and to give themselves to others again. There is a sense of healing and release in embracing the knowledge that God knows and lifts up those who are brokenhearted.

F. Concluding prayer

It does not take complete understanding and outstanding expertise to minister to family members of a homosexual person. Sometimes those who know their own brokenness are in the best position to walk alongside of these family members. We can learn much from each other, and God can use all persons, broken though they are, as vehicles of his grace. As William E. Amos, Jr., once wrote, "God has chosen the fragile vessels of people to be vehicles of grace and messengers of God's ministering presence and mercy" (*When AIDS Comes to Church*, p. 29).

As we think of the struggle of family members to come to terms with and transcend the reality of a loved one's homosexuality, we are reminded again of how each of us needs humbly to ask for God's guidance. Ken Gire gives us this prayer as a guide:

Please God,

Reveal to me through stories something of what it is like to walk around in someone else's shoes. Show me something about myself in the stories I read, something that needs changing, a thought or feeling or attitude. Deliver me from myself, O God, and from the parochial and sometimes prejudiced views I have of other people, other nations, other races, other religions. Enlarge my heart with a story, and change me by the characters I meet there. May some of the light from their lives spill over into mine, giving illumination where there was once ignorance, interest where there was once indifference, understanding where there was once intolerance, compassion where there was once contempt. . . . (p. 82)

VIII. Justice issues

A. Justice and grace

In its mission statement the Christian Reformed Church pledges,

As people called by God . . .
We pursue God's justice and peace
In every area of life.

As a closing section to this report, we ask the church to reflect on the pursuit of God's justice and peace with respect to homosexuality.

Why is this emphasis in our mission statement? Put simply, we serve a God who is just. Actually, God *loves* justice! He *is* righteous! He wills for his creations that which is right and true and fair. Scripture proclaims and echoes this from start to finish:

"For I the Lord love justice." (Isa. 61:8)

For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds . . . (Ps. 11:7)

"The Rock, his work is perfect, and all his ways are just.
A faithful God, without deceit, just and upright is he." (Deut. 32:4)

And I heard the altar respond: "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty,
your judgments are true and just!" (Rev. 16:7)

Justice and righteousness are at the very heart of God. They should also be at the very heart of his imagebearers. Scripture proclaims this loudly:

But let justice roll down like waters, and
righteousness like an everflowing stream. (Amos 5:24)

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. . . . Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For [you] tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. (Matt. 23:4, 23)

Scripture repeatedly characterizes God as epitomizing justice and righteousness and repeatedly calls us to reflect God in these attributes as we deal with others.

It is worthy of note that in Scripture, companion words are regularly paired with the word *justice*. For example, the word *righteousness* is often nearby, if not parallel with *justice*, and that combination feels sensible. Righteousness underlines justice, or at least our sense of what true justice is. However, there are also companion words to the word *justice* that seem less sensible: *love*, *kindness*, *mercy*, and *faith*, for example, or even our mission statement's word: *peace*. What are we to make of these?

We know, of course. We know that if God were *only* just, or *simply* just, if God delivered only what we deserve, not one of us would be available for the business of reflecting him! For we are sinners—all of us—and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Thank God that “he does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities” (Ps. 103:10). Thank God that he has given us his gracious and free gift: “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

In other words, God adds something to justice, something amazing, something utterly mysterious, something impossible for us to comprehend, because it runs counter to our imperfect sense of justice, something unfathomably merciful, something called grace. God gives us the mercy we do not deserve. And, once again, God calls us, the recipients of his lavish grace and mercy, to reflect him:

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36)

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic. 6:8)

“ . . . justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practiced. . . .” (Luke 11:42)

This is the Word of the Lord.

B. Working toward justice and grace

When we ask how we can apply these concepts of justice and grace to the way we minister to and with persons who are homosexuals, we hear echoes of *both justice and grace* in the following Pastoral Guidelines, to which we committed ourselves in 1973:

- a. Homosexuality (male and female) is a condition of disordered sexuality that reflects the brokenness of our sinful world and for which the homosexual may himself bear only a minimal responsibility.
- b. The homosexual may not, on the sole ground of his sexual disorder, be denied community acceptance, and, if he is a Christian, he is to be wholeheartedly received by the church as a person for whom Christ died.
- c. Homosexuality—as explicit homosexual practice—must be condemned as incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Holy Scripture.
- d. The church must exercise the same patient understanding of and compassion for the homosexual in his sins as for all other sinners. The gospel of God's

grace in Christ is to be proclaimed to him as the basis of his forgiveness, the power of his renewal, and the source of his strength to lead a sanctified life. As all Christians in their weaknesses, the homosexual must be admonished and encouraged not to allow himself to be defeated by lapses in chastity, but rather, to repent and thereafter to depend in fervent prayer upon the means of grace for power to withstand temptation.

- e. In order to live a life of chastity in obedience to God's will the homosexual needs the loving support and encouragement of the church. The church should therefore so include him in its fellowship that he is not tempted by rejection and loneliness to seek companionship in a "gay world" whose godless lifestyle is alien to a Christian.
- f. Homosexuals, especially in their earlier years, should be encouraged to seek such help as may effect their sexual reorientation and the church should do everything in its power to help the homosexual overcome his disorder. Members of the churches should understand that many homosexuals, who might otherwise seek therapeutic aid, are deterred from doing so by the fear of detection and consequent ostracism. Christian acceptance and support can in all such cases be a means toward healing and wholeness. On the other hand, to those who are not healed and who must accept the limitations of their homosexuality, the church must minister in the same spirit as when it ministers to all who are not married.
- g. Christians who are homosexual in their orientation are like all Christians called to discipleship and the employment of their gifts in the cause of the kingdom. They should recognize that their sexuality is subordinate to their obligation to live in wholehearted surrender to Christ. By the same token, churches should recognize that their homosexual members are fellow-servants of Christ who are to be given opportunity to render within the offices and structures of the congregation the same service that is expected from heterosexuals. The homosexual member must not be supposed to have less the gift of self-control in the face of sexual temptation than does the heterosexual. The relationship of love and trust within the congregation should be such that in instances where a member's sexual propensity does create a problem, the problem can be dealt with in the same way as are problems caused by the limitations and disorders of any other member.
- h. It is the duty of pastors to be informed about the condition of homosexuality and the particular problems of the homosexual in order that the pastor may minister to his need and to the need of others, such as parents, who may be initially involved in the problems of homosexuality. The pastor is also in a position to instruct his congregation in appropriate ways about homosexuality and to alert members and office holders to the responsibility they bear toward homosexuals in the fellowship. He can encourage an understanding of and compassion for persons who live with this sexual disorder, and dispel the prejudices under which they suffer.
- i. The church should promote good marriages, and healthy family life in which relations between husband and wife and between parents and children are such that the psychological causes that may contribute to sexual inversion are reduced to a minimum. Parents should be encouraged to seek Christian counsel and help when they see signs of disordered sexual maturation in their children.
- j. Institutions and agencies associated with the church that are in a position to contribute to the alleviation of the problem of homosexuality are encouraged to do so by assisting ministers to become better informed, by offering counseling services to the homosexual and his family, and by generally creating a Christian attitude in the churches as well as in society as a whole.
- k. The church should speak the Word of God prophetically to a society and culture which glorifies sexuality and sexual gratification. It should foster a wholesome appreciation of sex and expose and condemn the idolatrous sexualism and the current celebration of homosexualism promoted in literature, the theater, films, television, advertisements, and the like.

(Acts of Synod 1973, pp. 51-53)

Justice is a very broad landscape, and its terrain is difficult. There are more questions than answers here, and several factors militate against our being just. As humans, we have a natural inclination to look for simple and quick answers to difficult and emotional issues, and this tendency can lead to a premature drawing of lines and a lack of compassion in our responses. Besides, many heterosexuals have a natural tendency to feel uncomfortable when dealing with anything homosexual. This natural unease is augmented by the way Scripture speaks of homosexual acts. The Bible we read and value as our rule for faith and life speaks plainly and harshly about homosexual acts. This fact tends to make it difficult for some even to imagine being helpful toward homosexuals and understanding of their issues. Furthermore, we are surrounded by raucous demonstrations of homosexuality: gay-pride parades, in-your-face homosexuality, highly inflamed confrontations between gays and antigay crusaders. All of these things can make it very tempting to steer clear of anything homosexual. As Reformed Christians we have attempted to be slower to draw lines, more understanding of gray areas, less interested in making quick judgments. We are gifted by God with intellectual honesty, committed by the hope within us to becoming more and more comfortable with being uncomfortable. We are a people committed to reflecting God's justice and mercy.

When issues of justice for gays and lesbians are put before us as citizens, what is actually at issue? Often the issues are human-rights issues or equity issues: the political, civil, and social rights of every citizen.

Political rights safeguard the ability of citizens to take part in and be responsible for the political direction of a country. Civil rights protect freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion, association, and so forth, by the state or by other bodies of society. Social rights ensure access to such essentials as housing, adequate food, employment, income, health care, and education.

("Legal Equality: A Public Justice Response to Discrimination against Gays and Lesbians," CIL Foundation 1996, p. 4)

Which of these would we want to deny to homosexual persons? On what basis? Would our being proactive for a kind of justice for persons with whom we have large disagreements be seriously misunderstood? Would that be a problem? If so, to whom?

These kinds of scenarios are not usually simple. Often they are, or feel to us as though they are, part of a larger political gay/lesbian agenda. Perhaps that is true. Perhaps if we give an inch, we will lose a mile. Perhaps. But shouldn't we entrust the future to the God who holds it and who calls us to "do justice and love kindness and walk humbly with our God"?

We have different views on the subject of homosexuality. Emotionally charged issues tend to bring quick reactions, personal attacks, threats to secede, and so forth. But Scripture says, "You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness" (James 1:19-20). As Christians we must learn to exercise justice and grace when we disagree.

Attitudes soften when people can present their views without being interrupted, when a person's reasons for adopting certain beliefs are truly heard. Often other people are driven by life experiences far different from our own. Can we calm down enough to hear the stories of others? Can we listen to each other without simply looking to win a debate?

In the present atmosphere, it is possible for people to lose their livelihood when they espouse a view on homosexuality different from that of the majority. Sometimes a more accepting view has developed reluctantly when one's own child is gay. How should we deal with such differences in a way that is just and gracious? Are divergent views intolerable in this area? Is this the place where the line must be drawn for the sake of orthodoxy and job security?

Many of us may never have a significant and personal emotional experience with homosexuality. We may never have a family member or close acquaintance challenge us to carefully review what we thought were simple issues, simple distinctions. However, we may sometime be part of the leadership of a church or classis where significant situations regarding homosexuality arise, situations that feel quite personal to us.

IX. Recommendations

- A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Dr. Melvin Hugen, Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma, and Rev. Herman Van Niejenhuis (Dr. Gerald Zandstra, alternate).
- B. That synod recommend this report with its appendices to the churches for their use in ministering to persons with same-sex attractions.
- C. That synod make the report available to the churches in a suitable form.
- D. That synod dismiss the committee.

Committee to Give Direction about and for
Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members

Rose Alons
Mary-Lee Bouma
Cornelius J. De Boer
David H. Engelhard (ex officio)
Melvin D. Hugen, chairman
Christian (Yong-Ju) Oh
Herman Van Niejenhuis
Robert Van Noord
Gerald L. Zandstra

Note: John Kreeft faithfully served on our committee until his sudden death in January 1998.

Appendix A Resources

I. Reading materials

A. *For persons struggling with same-sex attractions*

1. Books

Davies, Bob, and Lori Rentzel. *Coming out of Homosexuality: New Freedom for Men and Women*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993. (This book is a practical guide for persons struggling with same-sex desires. It has much to say both to those who think controlling or leaving homosexuality can be easily done and to those who reject the possibility altogether. It offers realistic expectations and dozens of practical and authentic suggestions for helping people change their lives.)

Oates, Wayne E. *Temptation: A Biblical and Psychological Approach*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. (Wayne Oates is a leading small scholar in pastoral care and the psychology of religion. In this small book, he addresses the meaning and management of temptation. The biblical references and the chapter on "Overcoming Temptation" are especially useful.)

van den Aardweg, Gerald J. M. *The Battle for Normality: A Guide for (Self-) Therapy for Homosexuality*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997. (The author, a Roman Catholic psychotherapist with thirty years experience, writes this practical guide from a psychological perspective rather than a religious one. His method and its outcomes are well documented in the research of dozens of other therapists on the medical faculties of universities around the world over the past sixty years.)

2. Articles

Lucas, Jim. "Five Years Later," *Perspectives* (April 1997).

Stewart Van Leeuwen, Mary. "Asking Better Questions in the Homosexuality Debates," *Perspectives* (April 1997).

B. *For families and friends of homosexual persons*

1. Books

Dew, Robb Forman. *The Family Heart: A Memoir of When Our Son Came Out*. New York: Ballantine, 1994. (This book details a mother's journey especially well. Though she ends with a different position from our own denominational stance, this work captures one family's experience and gives insight into some of the perceptions and struggles that occur when a family member comes out of the closet.)

Johnson, Barbara. *Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and Be Happy*. New York: Inspirational Press, 1990. (Barbara Johnson is the founder of a nonprofit organization designed to "peel parents off the ceiling with a spatula of love and begin them on the road to recovery." Barbara Johnson's books are wonderfully encouraging, written in a straightforward manner, and sprinkled with humor. Barbara continues to write and minister to families ravaged by brokenness.)

—. *Where Does a Mother Go to Resign?* Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1979.

Smalley, Gary, and John Trent. *The Blessing*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986. (This book includes an important section for adults on repairing relationships with their parents.)

Swindall, Charles R. *How to Avoid Stress Fractures*. Portland: Multnomah, 1990. (Although the subject of this book is not homosexuality, it addresses all kinds of situations that bring stress and pain into our lives. As the book states: "We need to be lifted above the heat, noise, and confusion to catch a fresh glimpse of our status, our resources, our defenses, our hope and our destiny." This is a biblical and practical guide with "some answers that cannot fail to bring you relief.")

Worthen, Anita, and Bob Davies. *Someone I Love Is Gay: How Family and Friends Can Respond*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996. (This book is filled with biblically grounded guidance distilled from years of personal experience of ministry to persons with same-sex attractions and their loved ones. The advice is practical, credible, and compassionate.)

2. Articles

"God Loves Our Gay Son." *The Banner*, 11 April 1994, 12-13.

National Council of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Marriage and Family. "Always Our Children: Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers." *Origins: CNS Documentary Service*, 9 October 1997, 285-91.

C. Biblical studies

Schmidt, Thomas E. *Straight and Narrow? Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexual Debate*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994. (Those interested in exploring the meaning of disputed biblical texts about same-sex behaviors will find this book a careful, thorough, and searching work—far and away the best book of its kind. Schmidt addresses the interpretations of Bailey, Boswell, McNiell, Pronk, and many others in a well-documented exegetical study. He writes clearly and with deep empathy.)

Siker, Jeffrey S., ed. *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

Stott, John. *Same-Sex Partnerships? A Christian Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revel, 1998. (This little book begins with a review of four key biblical texts and the contemporary challenges to their common interpretations. Stott then responds to five arguments commonly advanced in favor of same-sex relationships. He speaks with wisdom and grace as well as hope and compassion.)

D. General/miscellaneous

Alexander, Marilyn Bennett, and James Preston. *We Were Baptized Too*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996. (This book will help the church recognize that Christians with same-sex attractions aren't strangers "out there" somewhere—they are our beloved sisters and brothers in Christ. While many will not agree with some of the conclu-

sions drawn, this book may help people to empathize with the reality of homosexuality among believers.)

Bawer, Bruce. *A Place at the Table*. New York: Poseidon Press, 1993.

Dallas, Joe. *Desires in Conflict*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1991.

—. *A Strange Delusion*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1996.

Douma, Timothy. *Cleaning Out the Closet before It Fills with Skeletons*. D.Min. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2000. Copies can be ordered through Loop Christian Ministries, 407 S. Dearborn, Suite 240, Chicago, IL 60605. E-mail: tim@loopchurch.org; Telephone: 312-427-7962. This is an extended case study of one congregation's attempt to deal with issues surrounding homosexuality with integrity and grace.

Gaide, Beth Ann, ed. *Congregations Talking about Homosexuality*. Bethesda, Md.: The Alban Institute, 1998.

Homosexuality: Seeking the Guidance of the Church. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Reformed Church in America, 1998. (This is a five-part study for small groups or church-education classes. The last half of this publication is an appendix that details the synodical statements and decisions made regarding homosexuality in the Reformed Church in America from 1978 to the present. Available from RCA Distribution Center. Phone: 1-800-968-7221.)

Mouw, Richard J. *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992. (See especially Chapter 7, "How to Be Civil about Sex," pp. 81-96. This excellent work shows how to combine a civil outlook with a "passionate intensity" about our convictions. It aims at a convicted civility.)

Smedes, Lewis. *Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Wilson, Sandra D. *Released from Shame*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

II. Developing a church ministry

A. Use of language

The language one uses in ministry or even in developing a plan for ministry sets the tone in important ways. Of course, all derogatory words must be avoided, but even words such as *gay*, *lesbian*, and *homosexuals* carry meanings and connotations that the church may wish to avoid. The designation "persons with same-sex attractions" is preferable.

This change puts the issue into its proper place. The terms *gay* or *lesbian* describe the person and usually refer to a personal identity. Since the phrase *persons who have same-sex attractions* describes something about their sexuality, it places such persons in the category of all humans. It describes something problematic about their sexuality; however, all humans have sexual problems of one sort or another. No one's sexuality escapes the distorting effects of sin. None of us has a sexuality that functions as it was meant to be.

The phrase *persons with same-sex attractions* also avoids some of the stereotypes and connotations that *gay* or *lesbian* carry with them. Persons who have same-sex attractions cover the full range of humankind: young and old, moral and promiscuous, deeply pious and secular, and ordinary and flamboyant. These attractions can be mild and fleeting or strong and persistent. They can coexist with opposite-sex attractions or be exclusive.

Attractions or inclinations can be acted upon or denied. The consequences of such attractions are not inevitable. The Bible nowhere speaks of same-sex attractions. The passages that speak of homosexuality use words that describe same-sex behaviors and always assume that persons have control over their behaviors. This distinction is important when speaking of ministry to persons who live with such sexual temptations.

B. Models of ministry

“Harvest” is a ministry associated with the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and is endorsed by the Philadelphia Presbytery of the PCA. This ministry stresses Bible study, small groups, and person-to-person contacts. Congregations who are exploring various models of ministry can contact Harvest at 7834 Oxford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111. Phone: 215-342-7114.

“New Creation Ministries” has developed a structured program that stresses healing through relationships, particularly with mature Christians who form an encourager/friend relationship with a person struggling with same-sex attractions. Personal spiritual growth is central to the program, beginning with an honest search of one’s inner fears, angers, hurts, and fantasies. New Creation Ministries, P.O. Box 5451, Fresno, CA 93755-5451. Phone: 562-531-6820.

The Immanuel Reformed Church (RCA, Rev. Ken Korver, pastor) of Paramount, California, has developed a congregation-based ministry to persons with same-sex attractions. Immanuel, a congregation of three thousand members, began this ministry several years ago and has integrated it with the other ministries of their church. Contact them for a description of this ministry. Immanuel Reformed Church, 15941 Virginia Avenue, Paramount, CA 90723. Phone: 562-532-6820.

C. Sermons

Beelen, David. “Pastoral Advice.” Delivered November 19, 1995. Madison Square Christian Reformed Church, 1434 Madison Avenue S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49507. Phone: 616-245-7791.

Bouma, Mary-Lee. “Good and Gay” (Gen. 1 and 1 Cor. 6:1-20). Delivered April 29, 1999. University Church, 211 W. Broomfield, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858. Phone: 989-772-0664.

—. “What Does the Bible Say about Homosexuality?” Delivered September 9, 1997. University Church, 211 W. Broomfield, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858. Phone: 989-772-0664.

Douma, Timothy H. “God, Sex, and You” (1 Cor. 6:12-20). Delivered March 8, 1992. Loop Christian Ministries, 407 S. Dearborn, Suite 240, Chicago, IL 60605. Phone: 312-427-7962. E-mail: tim@loopchurch.org.

Kelderman, Duane K. “Same-Sex ‘Marriage:’ Yes or No?” Delivered November 3, 1996. Calvin Theological Seminary, 3233 Burton Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546. E-mail: dkelderman@calvin.edu.

Mast, Stanley. “God Gave Them Over to Unnatural Desires” (Rom. 1:24-32). Delivered October 11, 1998. LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church, 107 LaGrave Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Phone: 616-454-7204.

III. Considerations in choosing a counselor/therapist

Individuals may seek the services of a professional counselor or therapist when struggling with same-sex attractions; when experiences begin to include anxiety, depression, or other clinical symptoms; or when support, advice, or counsel is needed by a family member of an individual with same-sex attractions.

Choosing the right counselor or therapist can be difficult at times, but there are ways of becoming connected with the right person if some consideration is given in advance to factors that help produce the correct “fit.”

A. *Considerations for pastors, physicians, and others who recommend mental health professionals to individuals or families*

Learn the following about the professionals to whom you may refer others for counseling or therapy:

1. Training and credentials—including graduate education and internship or other supervised field work.
2. Amount of professional experience and in what settings.
3. Licensure or certification and standing with the licensure/certification board.
4. Professional organization membership.
5. Specialty areas and specific training in them.
6. General theoretical orientation—how does she/he view the counseling/therapy process?
7. Perspective on and orientation toward the religious belief system of a client *vis-à-vis* the therapy process.

B. *Considerations for individuals seeking a counselor/therapist*

1. Choose a counselor/therapist who:
 - a. Will respect and work within your personal value and belief system, including your religious belief system.
 - b. Listens closely, attends well, shows interest in you, and conveys that you are the focus of attention for the entire time you are together.
 - c. Is licensed or certified by the state or province—professionals who have obtained licensure or certification and have met the minimum requirements for credentials and training of the state or province in which you reside. You can confirm licensure or certification and check whether any complaints have been filed against a given practitioner with the state or provincial board of licensure or regulation.
 - d. Has membership in professional organizations. Those who are members of international, national, and regional professional organizations typically have been granted membership on the basis of strong or stringent education and training criteria
 - e. Is willing to have you interview and ask questions of him/her. Feel free to interview several practitioners, if necessary, until you find the right match. Your prospective counselor or therapist should be able to talk openly and nondefensively about her/his training, credentials, experience, theoretical orientation, areas of expertise, beliefs about mental health distress, and how she/he works with clients.

2. Expect and demand high ethical standards and practices of the therapist, particularly regarding issues of confidentiality and any form of physical contact.
3. Be aware of and use your own sense and “feeling” about the practitioner. How you feel toward the counselor/therapist is important. Do you feel that this person is someone you can trust? Do you feel a basic sense of liking toward them? Is this someone you will likely be able to feel comfortable and at ease with?
4. Consider the physical setting in which you would be doing your therapy work. Is it private and confidential? Is it comfortable for you? Does it seem conducive to positive therapy work?
5. Remember that you may ask any question that would help you determine if a certain counselor or therapist is a good match. For example:
 - a. What is your understanding of Scripture as it relates to same-sex attractions?
 - b. Are you willing to establish specific goals with me for my counseling?
 - c. What experience do you have in working with issues like mine?
 - d. Are you on the provider list for my insurance plan?

IV. Resource persons

Alons, Rose. Mrs. Alons is willing to serve as a resource to families who are struggling with the homosexuality of a family member or friend. Mrs. Rose Alons, 3435 North 49th Place, Sheboygan, WI 53083. Phone: 920-457-9440.

Bouma, Mary-Lee. Rev. Bouma is willing to serve as a consultant to congregations in their ministry to people with same-sex attractions. She will also speak on “Pastoral Care for those with Same-Sex Attractions” and “Understanding What the Bible Says about Homosexuality.” University Church, 211 W. Broomfield, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858. Phone: 989-772-0664.

Douma, Timothy. Dr. Douma is willing to serve as a consultant to churches in their ministry to members with same-sex attractions. Loop Christian Ministries, 637 S. Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60605. Phone: 312-427-7962. E-mail: tim@loopchurch.org.

Hugen, Melvin. Dr. Hugen is willing to serve as a consultant to congregations developing a ministry to persons with same-sex attractions. He will also speak on “Interpretation of the Biblical Texts” and “Ministry to Persons with Same-Sex Attractions.” Calvin Theological Seminary, 3233 Burton Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Phone: 616-942-0001.

Appendix B Biological and Psychological Issues

I. Summary of biological research

Since 1973, biological research into homosexuality has looked into the following areas: possible differences in brain structure between heterosexuals and homosexuals, genes that might be associated with homosexuality, possible inheritance patterns of homosexuality, and prenatal hormone influences.

The most widely discussed work involving brain structures was that of Simon LeVay, who in 1991 reported on a comparison of certain brain-stem structures of nineteen homosexual men who had died of AIDS, sixteen heterosexual men (six of whom had died of AIDS), and six heterosexual women (one of whom had died of AIDS). He found that the third interstitial nucleus of the hypothalamus (INAH3) of homosexual males was on average structurally more like that of heterosexual females than like that of heterosexual males. This was not the first report of a possible difference in brain structure in homosexuals, but it captured much media attention. These findings should be treated as preliminary for the following reasons: they have not been replicated by other researchers, the sample size was small, the sexual orientation of heterosexuals was assumed if their hospital chart did not mention homosexuality (even though six of the men died of AIDS), and the changes may have developed over an individual's lifetime from other causes. LeVay himself said the work was preliminary and that it only opened the door to other studies of brain cells and chemicals and their relationship to homosexuality. He also stressed that from his study one could not conclude that the differences in brain structure caused homosexuality or were caused by it. Similar comments can be made about other studies of brain structure by such researchers as Swaab and Hofman (1988, 1990), Allen and Gorski (1991, 1992), and Demeter et al. (1988), for example.

Technology capable of studying gene sequences made possible the publication of two papers (Hamer et al., 1993; Hu et al., 1995) investigating the genes of families of homosexuals. The homosexual men selected for the first study came from families whose pedigree indicated transmission of homosexual orientation through the maternal side of the family, that is, via the X-chromosome. It was found that thirty-three of the forty pairs of homosexual brothers shared similar gene sequences in the Xq28 region of the X-chromosome. The second study found that heterosexual brothers did not share this Xq28 sequence. Although the studies were technically of high quality, they have not been replicated. The men chosen for the studies were a highly selective sample, not randomly chosen. Thus, the studies' results can be applied only to homosexuals selected in this way, not to the general homosexual population. Most important, the fact that homosexual brothers share a gene sequence does not necessarily mean that this gene sequence causes homosexual orientation. In fact, the second Hamer article states, "... the Xq28 region was neither necessary nor sufficient for a homosexual orientation." Finally, a more recent study (not a gene analysis) by Bailey et al. (1995) found that homosexual fathers have a higher proportion of homosexual sons than heterosexual fathers do. This finding would contradict the maternal-transmission hypothesis of Hamer and Hu.

Although for a time it was thought that genetics is not involved in homosexuality, Bailey and Pillard (1991) published a paper indicating a 52 percent concordance for male homosexual orientation in identical twins, 22 percent for fraternal twins, 9.2 percent for nontwin brothers, and 11 percent for adoptive brothers. In a second study Bailey et al. (1993) reported similar values for female sexual orientation. Bailey's results were replicated by Whitam et al. in 1993. However, King and Mc Donald (1992) found concordance rates in identical twins of only 25 percent (10 percent if one excludes bisexuals). Much lower concordance rates were also reported by the Minnesota Twin Project

(1986). The particularly high rates of concordance in the Bailey studies may have been influenced by the recruitment methods used, which consisted of advertisements that may not have blinded volunteers to the purposes of the study. Subjects were self-selected rather than randomly selected.

The studies of prenatal hormone influences are generally indirect and heterogeneous. There are considerable difficulties in applying the results of studies on the offspring of female rats exposed to prenatal hormones to human homosexuality. These difficulties range from the incomparability of human and rat homosexual behavior to the very high (nonphysiologic) hormone doses used in these studies. Some cite the brain-structure studies already mentioned above to support the idea that prenatal hormones affect the development of sexual orientation. The assumption is that the structures are different from birth and that they are sensitive to hormonal influence—neither of which has been demonstrated. A third thread in prenatal-hormone-influence research is derived from accidents of nature and therapeutics. Human female fetuses exposed to too much of the male hormone testosterone (produced by adrenal tumors) look female and can reproduce, but their adult behavior is masculine. Some of these fetuses become lesbian or bisexual adults. A recent study found that children of mothers exposed inadvertently to synthetic estrogen during their pregnancy are somewhat more likely to become bisexual or lesbian. A fourth argument advanced in favor of the prenatal-hormone hypothesis is that boys who demonstrate effeminate behavior are more likely to become homosexual (Bailey et al., 1995).

The biological research since 1973 is still preliminary and fragmented. There is no generally accepted hypothesis regarding the development of homosexuality. The synod report of 1973 stated, "It is important to understand that homosexuality is not the result of any conscious choice or decision on the part of the person to be homosexual. . . ." The research done since 1973 would support that idea, but it does not provide a clear picture of how nature and nurture might interact to produce homosexuality.

II. Psychological perspectives

Many studies have been published since 1973 that provide information regarding the gay and lesbian population. And, as often is also true of other disciplines, psychological research and theory have provided a variety of results and conclusions. There is some agreement on a general description of homosexuality as a romantic attraction and sexual desire toward a same-sexed individual that sometimes leads to sexual behavior with a person of one's own gender. It is viewed as an orientation that includes the entire range of interpersonal relations (i.e., love, understanding, friendship, belonging, and companionship) and is not just a physical attraction.

Many experts believe that dichotomies such as homosexuality and heterosexuality are too simplistic and that there are varying degrees of sexual orientation, including bisexuality. Based upon observations made in his treatment and research center, Kinsey (1948) developed a continuum of sexual orientation that consisted of a seven-point scale ranging from 0 to 6, where 0 represented exclusive heterosexuality and 6 represented exclusive homosexuality, with a range of orientations in between. Others (e.g., Masters and Johnson, 1966) have developed similar scales, which measure such factors as love, sexual attraction, fantasy activity, and self-identification. When used both

singly and in combination with each other, these scales can be helpful for understanding the multifaceted and complex nature of sexual orientation. Additionally, it is possible for a person's ratings to change over time. These ratings are not necessarily rigid. For example, same-sex fantasy during one period of a person's life would not necessarily be an accurate predictor of sexual orientation at another time in life.

Though the homosexuality prevalence figure of 10 percent appears frequently in church documents and other writings, more recent studies and surveys have revealed that the actual rate of homosexuality as a stable life orientation in our culture is more likely below 3 percent for both genders combined. The 10 percent figure has been attributed to Kinsey et al.'s 1948 study of males, where they reported that 4 percent of white males were exclusively homosexual throughout life after adolescence and that a total of 10 percent of white males were mostly or exclusively homosexual during at least a three-year period between the ages of 16 and 55. In fact, the rate of males who engage in sustained homosexual practice over a significant period of adult life is probably less than 5 percent of the male population, and the rate of men who manifest a sustained and exclusive commitment to homosexual practice is certainly less than 3 percent (Jones and Yarhouse, 1997). Female homosexuality continues to be estimated at approximately half or less than the male rates; it appears to characterize less than 2 percent of the female population. Thus, when the genders are combined, homosexuality almost certainly characterizes less than 3 percent of the population; the correct percentage may be even lower than 2 percent (Jones and Yarhouse, 1997).

The major professional societies of the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry do not define homosexuality as a mental illness or disorder. Both disciplines seem to believe that to do so would require demonstrating that homosexuals cope with life more poorly than heterosexuals do. Early studies suggested that the incidence of mental illness was indeed higher among homosexuals, but subsequent examination revealed that the early studies used poor techniques, as the people studied were selected from prisons or were psychiatric patients. In 1957, Hooker reported research that was interpreted to indicate that adult homosexual males who were not in or seeking therapy were no more neurotic than heterosexual males. In 1973, Saghir and Robins extended the work of Hooker by using a much larger sample, including gay men, lesbians, and single heterosexuals. They reported that the majority of gays and lesbians studied were well-adjusted and productive.

Masters et al. (1992) inferred from Hooker's work that homosexuals are as emotionally healthy as heterosexuals, and that has been generally held to be common knowledge, whereas the factual basis for this assertion has come under more recent question. The conclusions drawn from both the Hooker and the Saghir and Robins studies have since come under serious criticism for their methodology (Jones and Yarhouse, 1997), with specific reference to subject selection and nonrepresentativeness of the sample. That is, in both instances, the subjects were specifically selected to exclude those with possible psychopathology. Consequently, the conclusions drawn are questionable. Jones and Yarhouse (1997) concluded that contemporary research continues to suggest higher levels of distress, at least, and likely also more severe difficulties such as major depression and suicidality for the gay and lesbian population. They stated that "scientific evidence falls far short of a convincing case that homo-

sexuality in itself constitutes a psychopathological condition. The evidence also suggests that one would be on shaky ground in proclaiming that there is no evidence that homosexuality is anything more than a healthy, normal lifestyle variant." Nonetheless, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its official *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* in 1973, no longer considering it a disorder, and the American Psychological Association took a similar stance shortly thereafter.

A variety of myths, stereotypes, and erroneous ideas have arisen about gay and lesbian individuals over the years, and psychological research has been providing additional information over time. A common misconception, for example, has been that homosexuals are more likely to engage in child molestation (pedophilia). A significant body of research in the area of child abuse, including law-enforcement research, now exists that indicates that homosexual people are *less* likely to sexually approach children (Burgess et al., 1978) and that heterosexual men are more of a threat to children (Groth and Birnbaum, 1978).

It has been commonly believed that there is a gay/lesbian stereotype as well. In fact, gays and lesbians can be found in all strata of society. They are found among all races, cultures, religions, and occupations, although not necessarily in the same proportion. Gay and lesbian people exhibit a wide range of behaviors and values, just as heterosexual people do. Another common myth is that all gay men are effeminate and all lesbians are masculine. The fact is that few are gender atypical. In a 1980 study, Voelles demonstrated that no more than 15 percent of gay men are effeminate. Similarly, Storms (1980) found that the majority of homosexuals exhibit behavior consistent with their gender.

A variety of causes for homosexuality have been suggested over the years, ranging from exclusively environmental factors (nurture) to exclusively biological ones (nature). Several studies have attempted to refute the idea of psychological causation. For example, the Bell, Weinberg, and Hammersmith study (1981) is often referred to as definitive evidence that the psychoanalytic hypothesis (that homosexuality derives from early childhood experience) is refuted. However, the results of that study may also be questioned because it was based on survey or interview research, which leaves it open to the influence of the phenomenon of adult reinterpretation of the past. As Jones and Yarhouse (1997) indicate, it appears that there is not enough evidence to prove the psychological hypothesis, but there is too much to dismiss it at this time.

Currently, the genetic, brain-structure, and prenatal-hormone causation hypotheses are receiving much interest (see I. Summary of biological research [above]). There is a substantive body of research in favor of those hypotheses, though the research is not conclusive. Similarly, there is a substantial body of literature in favor of hypotheses focusing on psychological and familial factors. The major emphasis in recent research appears to be on biological factors, however, even though the biological theories appear to have "no greater explanatory value" than the psychological theories they seek to displace (Byne and Parsons, 1993).

Jones and Yarhouse (1997) introduce an interesting and relevant discussion about whether the presence of causative influences, either biological or psychosocial, render human choice irrelevant to the development of sexual orientation. They postulate that there are a variety of factors that may provide

a “push” in the direction of same-sex preferences for some people, but they also state that there is no evidence that the “push” of these factors renders human choice utterly irrelevant. They agree with Byne and Parsons (1993), who say that human choice can be construed to be one of the factors influencing the development of sexual orientation but that a statement to that effect “is not meant to imply that one consciously decides one’s sexual orientation.” They suggest that sexual orientation is assumed to be shaped and reshaped by a cascade of choices made in a context of changing circumstances in one’s life and by enormous social and cultural pressures and in the context of considerable predispositions toward certain types of preferences. This language seems to suggest that choice may also be influenced by both psychological/ familial factors and biological ones (see also M.S. Van Leeuwen, *Gender and Grace*, Chapters 4 and 5, pp. 80-105).

The possibility that same-sex preferences may be different in etiology and manifestation across persons, and perhaps across genders, has not been lost to this committee. Though there is little current research literature focused on women who become lesbian later in life, some members of the committee could share clinical and pastoral experience suggesting (a) that there may be differences between men and women in etiology and manifestation of same-sex preferences; (b) that for some individuals, their past experiences did make a difference in their preferences; and (c) that in some sense they had made a choice. Jones and Yarhouse state that adult converts to lesbianism may exemplify individuals whose erotic proclivities really are their sexual preference, as Baumrind (1995) and others have argued.

Most experts today believe that the cause(s) of homosexuality have not been definitively established; there is no agreement about its etiology, and much of the data is incomplete. Science has not yet identified what determines heterosexuality, let alone homosexual orientation. Some experts express the belief that there are various causes of homosexuality, and many are leaning toward a combination of biological and environmental factors in their search for a cause.

Finally, the question of whether homosexual orientation can be changed has received considerable attention. Again, experts differ in their judgment about the possibility of sexual reorientation. It must be remembered in this consideration that many do not view homosexuality as an illness or something requiring change and, furthermore, that many gay and lesbian individuals have no desire to change.

Such professionals as Van den Aardweg (1985), Nicolosi (1991), and Masters and Johnson (1979) believe that change, though demanding and difficult, is possible and advocate that reparative therapy should be recognized as a viable option for those who are motivated to pursue it. On the other hand, there are those such as Isay (1989) who argue that efforts to change sexual orientation can be harmful, with severe emotional and social consequences. Isay believes that strong consideration must be given to how injurious unsuccessful change may be to a person’s self-esteem. Haldeman (1994) has also argued that homosexual orientation is immutable, or unchangeable, and has offered some criticism of claims made by those who advocate that change in sexual orientation is possible.

When statistics are cited that claim successful change, the question “What has changed?” must be asked. Has the person’s orientation changed, or just his

behavior? Psychologists are far from agreed on the *definition* of successful change. Some are satisfied with celibacy or heterosexual behavior (no change in orientation, change in behavior), whereas others require functioning as a heterosexual person with no homosexual inclinations (change in orientation and behavior). And the definition used has a bearing on the degree of success that can be claimed.

Given some lack of agreement about the definition of successful change, it does appear that there are some conditions that may predispose toward more rather than less success. Most spokespersons for change would agree that change is most likely when motivation is high, when gender-identity issues are not present, when actual homosexual practice has been minimal, and when there is a history of successful heterosexual functioning. These factors are revealed in change statistics cited. Successful treatment is reported for 30 to 50 percent of gay individuals who have had previous positive heterosexual experience (likely bisexual individuals), whereas successful treatment is reported for 0 to 20 percent of gay individuals seeking change who have had exclusively homosexual experiences. Though not all experts agree as to the efficacy of attempts to change sexual orientation, it is evident from the data that sexual orientation is not readily or easily changed.

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OVERTURES, APPEAL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Overture 1: Revise Decision of Synod 2000 Not to Permit Women Ministers to Serve as Synodical Deputies

I. Background

A. *The words of synod*

For years the Christian Reformed Church has been discussing how we ought to use the gifts of its women members. Early in the discussion, synod urged “churches to make all possible use, within biblical guidelines and the restrictions of the Church Order, of the talents and abilities of women in the work of the church” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 78). “The Holy Spirit,” said synod, “has given to women many gifts and talents which can and should be used for the edification of the church” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 78).

Near the beginning of the last decade, synod encouraged “churches to use the gifts of women members to the fullest extent possible in their local churches . . .” (*Acts of Synod 1992*, p. 700). “Any failure of the church to use women’s gifts,” said synod, “results in a serious impoverishment of the church’s life and inhibits women’s joyful service in the church (1 Cor. 12)” (*Acts of Synod 1992*, p. 700).

At the very beginning of this decade, synod urged “councils and classes to nurture and make appropriate provision for the full use of the gifts that the Spirit gives to all their members, both women and men” (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 695). Here synod broadened its previous urgings from individual churches to classes and from women to men. It also strengthened the reasons why church assemblies ought to follow the urging of synod, saying, “Such use of the Spirit’s gifts is an essential part of honoring Jesus Christ as the Lord of the church. Such use of the Spirit’s gifts enriches the church’s ministry, witness, and fellowship. Such use of the Spirit’s gifts is *mandatory* [italics ours], regardless of the stance taken on the women-in-office issue” (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 695).

B. *The actions of synod*

Those who read these words might be impressed with the strong affirmation the CRC repeatedly gives to its women members. Sadly, the reality is quite different. When synod speaks such words, it always does so in the context of denying councils and classes opportunities to use the gifts it identifies as highly valuable.

This was evident again at Synod 2000. Synod urged “councils and classes to nurture and make appropriate provision for the full use of the gifts that the Spirit gives to all their members, both women and men” (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 695). It proclaimed, “Such use of the Spirit’s gifts is an essential part of honoring Jesus Christ as the Lord of the church . . . , enriches the church’s

ministry, witness, and fellowship . . . and is mandatory . . .” (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 695). A synodical study committee and synod’s own advisory committee asked synod to put those words into practice by approving the following recommendation: “A classis which has decided that the word *male* in Church Order Article 3-a is inoperative for its constituent churches may appoint a female minister to serve as synodical deputy as long as, out of consideration for neighboring classes, a male minister is the alternate” (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 697). Though it encouraged classes to make full use of women’s gifts, synod was unwilling to give classes this opportunity to do what it encouraged them to do.

C. *The discussion of synod*

Six delegates addressed the above recommendation when it was discussed. The first, opposed to the service of women in any official church capacity, spoke against the recommendation.

Two delegates spoke in an attempt to understand the recommendation. One asked, “Does this mean that a classis that does not seat women would have a woman synodical deputy *sent* to it” (italics ours) (*Tape of Synod 2000*). The advisory committee reporter informed synod that this would not happen and pointed out that a male alternate was specified. Another delegate responded to that answer by asserting that the recommendation was not clear and by asking the committee to fix it. He continued, “It’s not clear that the alternate is the designated deputy in that event. It just says that there is an alternate. It doesn’t say that that alternate has any special role” (*Tape of Synod 2000*). The reporter indicated that the recommendation was clear and added, “When the stated clerk asks for the presence of synodical deputies, that stated clerk can let it be known that Article 3a is still fully operative. The synodical deputies . . . would make the determination that the synodical deputy to go would be the male deputy” (*Tape of Synod 2000*).

Responding to the expressed confusion of delegates by insisting that the recommendation was clear was not helpful. Informing synod that the synodical deputies themselves make a determination about who will go to a certain classis was not true. In order to vote knowledgeably on this recommendation, delegates needed clarification, not more confusion, of the process by which synodical deputies are secured. The process is this: When a classis needs synodical deputies, the classis, through its stated clerk or classical interim committee, *requests* them from neighboring classes. It is impossible for any classis to have a deputy *sent* to it. The synodical deputies themselves do not make a determination as to which deputy will *go*. The stated clerk in the *requesting* classis decides which deputy will *come*.

Two other delegates spoke to paint unrealistic, worst case scenarios. One informed synod that his classis had declared the word *male* inoperative and that one of its member councils always sent its delegates to classis meetings under protest. He continued, “That council would have to know about the process by which the stated clerk invites the deputies and get its word in there in time” (*Tape of Synod 2000*). It is extremely difficult to believe that a stated clerk or a classical interim committee would invite a woman synodical deputy and then say to the congregation in question, “It’s too bad you didn’t notify us in time that you aren’t in favor of this.” It is sad that a worst case scenario is painted to encourage delegates to prohibit the use of the gifts of our women members.

Another delegate informed synod that his classis had declared the word *male* inoperative by only one vote and contended that the possibility of a woman synodical deputy would create controversy and confusion in his classis. Though the makeup of this classis is different from the one mentioned above, the dynamics are similar because some people are strongly opposed to the service of women as elders and pastors. Again, it is very difficult to believe that a stated clerk or a classical interim committee, knowing that the presence of a woman synodical deputy would create controversy and confusion in the classis, would extend such an invitation. Once more, it is sad that a worst case scenario is painted to encourage delegates to prohibit the use of the gifts of our women members.

In the face of the confusion about the process by which synodical deputies are secured and in the face of these worst case scenarios, there was one delegate who sought to remind synod that it had just said, "It is our responsibility to seek earnestly to live together in unity and to minister together for the glory of God" (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 694). This delegate said, "I'd encourage synod to give women this opportunity to serve. We've decided that women may serve as elders, ministers, and evangelists, but we've also limited where and how they will serve. If we pass this, we are giving them an opportunity to serve in a capacity that classis has chosen, and it's an opportunity for them to use their abilities in that context" (*Tape of Synod 2000*).

D. A voice for the voiceless

One expects that all members of the denomination will be represented at synod. One especially expects that the church will take up the cause of those who have no voice. "Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow" (Isaiah 1:17) says the prophet as he reflects on the disenfranchised in his society.

Many women in our denomination, restricted from giving synodical voice to their own cause, anticipate that others will plead for them so that justice rolls on like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream. Yet, in spite of the fact that synod's study committee and advisory committee recommended that women be permitted to use their gifts as synodical deputies, only one delegate asked synod to approve that recommendation.

It is time for synod to translate its words into concrete action. It is time for synod to allow the use of women's gifts in congregations and classes willing to affirm those gifts. It is time for the ignorance of the process by which synodical deputies are secured and for the painting of worst case scenarios to cease. It is time for synod *itself* to "nurture and make appropriate provision for the full use of the gifts that the Spirit gives to all [its] members, both women and men" (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 695).

E. Response to the urgings of synods

Over the years some congregations and classes have attempted to respond affirmatively to the repeated urgings of synods to use the Spirit-given gifts of women who wish to serve Christ's church. In our classis (Classis Grand Rapids East), women serve our congregations in many capacities, unordained and ordained. Some use their gifts in church school, GEMS, visitation teams, food banks, and a host of other ministries. Others serve as deacons, elders, and pastors. Women are routinely delegated to our classis meetings and some serve as the presidents of our church councils. Three women serve as pastors

of our churches. One serves as a military chaplain. Three serve as hospital chaplains. One serves as the program manager of the Institute of Christian Worship. Seven of these eight pastors were examined in our classis. Gladly, we would have invited a woman synodical deputy from a neighboring classis to participate in these examinations and would have been enriched by the unique perspective a woman pastor brings.

Classis Lake Erie, one of our neighboring classes, has traditionally requested a synodical deputy from our classis. A woman serves as a pastor in one of its congregations, and two women serve member congregations as evangelists. All three were examined in that classis. Classis Grand Rapids East would have welcomed the opportunity to respond affirmatively to the request of that classis for a woman synodical deputy. We do not have the authority or the desire to *send* a woman synodical deputy to a neighboring classis that has not declared the word *male* in Church Order Article 3-a inoperative. In fact, no classis has the authority to *send* a deputy, male or female, to any other classis. A classis must *request* the deputy or the deputy's alternate.

Synod says it will honor both convictions present in our denomination and yet it continues to dishonor the convictions we hold. Synod says we must "seek earnestly to live together in unity," and yet it fails to adopt a provision that affords a workable way of doing that. Synod affirms the use of women's gifts in its words and yet prohibits the use of those gifts in its actions. This must not continue.

II. Request for revision

Classis Grand Rapids East requests

A. That Synod 2002 revise the decision of Synod 2000 not to adopt the recommendation of both its study committee and its advisory committee to permit women ministers to serve as synodical deputies in classes that wish to use women's gifts in this way (cf. *Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 697).

Grounds:

1. Some delegates did not understand the process by which a classis secures synodical deputies, and no one clarified that process before synod voted. In fact, inaccurate information about the process was given to the delegates, further confusing the delegates' understanding of the recommendation.
2. This decision of Synod 2000 is inconsistent with synod's own encouragement to classes "to nurture and make appropriate provision for the full use of the gifts that the Spirit gives to all their members, both women and men" (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 695) and inconsistent with the denomination's commitment to honor both convictions regarding the use of women's gifts.

B. That Synod 2002 replace B.2. in the supplement to Church Order Article 3-a with the following: "A classis that has decided that the word *male* in Church Order Article 3-a is inoperative for its constituent churches may appoint a female minister to serve as synodical deputy as long as, out of consideration for neighboring classes, a male minister is the alternate."

Grounds:

1. This regulation honors both convictions regarding the use of the gifts of women by giving classes who wish to affirm the use of women's gifts an opportunity to do so and by ensuring that a male alternate is available for classes who do not wish to invite a female deputy.
2. This regulation is consistent with synod's repeated urgings to the church to use the gifts of its women members to the fullest extent possible.

Classis Grand Rapids East
Philip R. Lucasse, stated clerk

Overture 2: Revise Decision of Synod 2000 Not to Permit Women Ministers to Serve as Synodical Deputies

I. Background

After a long and often divisive debate, Synod 1995 adopted a new approach to the issue of women serving in the offices of elder, evangelist, and minister. The approach is grounded in the observation that there are in our denomination "two different perspectives and convictions, both of which honor the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God, on the issue of whether women are allowed to serve in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist" (*Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 731). Synod sought to honor both positions by giving classes and councils the right to ordain women to these offices but regulated that right in order to protect the freedoms and convictions of both sides as far as possible (*Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 735). This policy of noninterference has now been in place for seven years, having been reconsidered and reinstated by Synod 2000 (*Acts of Synod 2000*, pp. 687-95).

This overture deals with one small part of the compromise reached in 1995 and 2000: the issue of women serving as synodical deputies. At Synod 2000, the study committee appointed to assemble and review the 1995 decision and the advisory committee appointed to review the work of the study committee both proposed that a classis in which the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order has been declared inoperative be permitted to "appoint a female minister to serve as synodical deputy as long as, out of consideration for neighboring classes, a male minister is the alternate" (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 697). The motion was defeated.

The question is whether synod gave proper consideration to this matter. A review of the tape of the synodical session reveals that the debate on the issue was short (six speakers) and that several of the speakers manifested confusion about the way in which synodical deputies function. These confusions were not corrected at the time of the debate and seemed to have contributed to the negative vote on the issue. Among the confusions are the following. Several speakers seemed to think that a synodical deputy is sent to a requesting classis by the classis that has appointed the deputy and that, therefore, the requesting classis has no say in who comes. In fact, this is not the case and is contrary to the spirit of the motion. The stated clerks of classes requesting synodical deputies communicate directly with the deputies that they choose to invite. No classis is required to accept a certain deputy. A second source of confusion was the ability of the classes to regulate their own policy with regard to

inviting synodical deputies. In classes in which the issue is very divisive, even if that classis has declared in favor of ordaining women, local regulations can be put in place to maintain harmony over this issue. Just because classes are given permission to appoint women as synodical deputies does not mean that any classis is required to do so.

We raise this issue because the negative vote on this matter seems to go contrary to the spirit of the decisions of Synod 2000. It stands out among the decisions of Synod 2000 as the only decision contrary to the recommendations of the advisory committee for the Supplement to Church Order 3-a. Why would synod vote no just on this motion? The result of the motion would not impinge on the freedom of those classes that have not declared themselves in favor of women in office. It would allow a small but significant freedom to those classes that have declared the word *male* in Church Order Article 3-a inoperative. It would seem that the negative decision of Synod 2000 was the result of some confusion in the body and that it therefore should be reconsidered as contrary to the spirit and letter of synodical policy on women in office.

II. Request for revision

Classis Lake Erie requests that Synod 2002 revise the decision of Synod 2000 and adopt the following regulation, proposed by the study and advisory committees reporting to Synod 2000, for inclusion in the supplement to Church Order Article 3-a: A classis that has decided that the word *male* in Church Order Article 3-a is inoperative for its constituent churches may appoint a female minister to serve as synodical deputy as long as, out of consideration for neighboring classes, a male minister is the alternate (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 697).

Grounds:

1. A review of the Synod 2000 debate on this regulation evidences considerable confusion in the body about how synodical deputies function and, in view of other votes taken by the same synod, it seems likely that this confusion contributed to the negative vote. The regulation should receive a fair hearing on its own merits.
2. This decision of Synod 2000 is inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the policy adopted by Synods 1995 and 2000 to grant freedom of practice to classes and councils in the matter of women serving in the offices of elder, evangelist, and minister, provided that these classes respect and honor the commitments of others.
3. By providing that any classis that appoints a female synodical deputy must appoint a male as the alternate synodical deputy, no classis would be required by rule or necessity to request a female synodical deputy, while those classes that would like to have women as synodical deputies would be given the freedom to appoint and request the participation of female synodical deputies.

Classis Lake Erie
Robert Abogast, stated clerk

Overture 3: Explore Organic Unity with the Reformed Church in America

I. Background

In the four letters of withdrawal, separation, and secession submitted to a Classis of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in 1857—the official communications that led to the separation from the RCA of the congregations that would form the Christian Reformed Church in North America—four grounds were filed identifying deficiencies in the RCA that necessitated and justified the schism:

- The singing of hymns in public worship.
- Inviting non-RCA Christians to join at RCA celebrations of the Lord’s Supper.
- Failure to enforce sufficiently requirements for weekly catechism preaching and annual home visitation to every member household.
- Cooperation with other denominations in production of educational materials.

II. Overture

Classis Grand Rapids East overtures Synod 2002 to encourage the denominational Interchurch Relations Committee to explore *organic unity* with the Reformed Church in America.

Ground: The “deficiencies” in the RCA, cited in 1857 as grounds necessitating and justifying a schism, are all now characteristic or common practice of the Christian Reformed Church as a denomination and of its constituent classes and congregations.

Classis Grand Rapids East
Philip R. Lucasse, stated clerk

Overture 4: Revise Belgic Confession Article 34

Classis Chatham overtures Synod 2002 to remove the following sentence from the body of the Belgic Confession, Article 34 and place it in a footnote: “For that reason we detest the error of the Anabaptists who are not content with a single baptism once received and also condemn the baptism of the children of believers.”

Grounds:

1. The removal of this sentence in no way diminishes the church’s belief in the necessity of only one baptism. Indeed it may enable churches to make better use of this article in maintaining and encouraging our loyalty to the Reformed understanding of holy baptism.
2. Such a decision follows the precedent of the Synod of 1985 when it moved a paragraph from the body of Article 36 to a footnote.
3. Such an action respects the historical nature of our confessions, while bringing them more into line with the current ecumenical spirit among churches. The enmity and near hatred between Reformed and Anabaptist churches no longer exist.

4. In many areas, the Reformed churches and denominations with Anabaptist roots work together to good advantage with the obvious blessings of God.
5. The Confessions of the church should clearly state what the churches believe and not engage in polemics against others.
6. The sentence in question has caused severe difficulties for some office bearers to sign the Form of Subscription.
7. Although this sentence detests the “error” of Anabaptists and not the persons themselves, the harsh, strident language unnecessarily drives a wedge into the body of Christ and causes pain to members of the Christian Reformed Church who have relatives and friends in congregations that follow the Anabaptist tradition.

Classis Chatham
Jack Herder, stated clerk

Overture 5: Appoint Study Committee to Revise the Manner of Ministry-Share Assessments

Classis Holland overtures synod to appoint a study committee to revise the manner in which denominational and classical ministry-share amounts are assessed.

Grounds:

1. Current assessment practices do not distinguish among the differing financial needs of congregations—of large, medium, small, and very small sizes.
2. The fiscal needs of congregational ministry change as congregations grow in size. Current assessment practices do not take these changes into account.
3. As congregations grow larger and thus pay greater proportions of classical and denominational ministry shares, an imbalance of decision-making authority occurs. For instance, a congregation with one thousand adult confessing members currently pays approximately \$150,000 in denominational ministry shares; whereas a congregation of one hundred adult confessing members currently pays approximately \$15,000 in denominational ministry shares, yet each has exactly the same say in how those funds are spent. As the larger congregation grows, the inequity of decision-making authority increases. There should be some kind of formula in place to bring some degree of equity to this situation.
4. A “percentage of congregational ministry spending plan” ministry-share assessment would be more fair, since it would remind congregations that as they had funds to increase local ministry initiatives they also had an obligation to expand their denominational and classical ministry-share contributions. At the same time, this “percentage of congregational ministry spending plan” ministry-share assessment could be tiered so that as a congregation grows very large, its denominational and classical contributions would neither undermine its ministry potential nor create an excessive imbalance in denominational governing procedures. There

could also be a means to cap the total yearly ministry-shares assessment for very large megachurches.

5. If synod does not work toward changing these assessment practices, it is likely that more congregations will not provide their assigned funds during years of large building programs, thus undermining the very system our denomination needs in order to hold congregations in covenant relationships and also to establish sound budgets for ongoing denominational ministries.

Classis Holland

Jack Stulp, stated clerk

Overture 6: Appoint a Committee to Study Ministry-Share System

I. Background

Over the last 20 years, the gap between ministry-share-monies requested and ministry-share-monies received has increased significantly. Whereas in 1981 the denomination received 89 percent of what was requested, by 1996 this figure had slipped to 63 percent, and has hovered near there ever since: in 2001 the rate was 62.8 percent. It is the *size of this gap* between what is requested and what is received that needs to be addressed.

Note: Since 1993, the actual figures identifying the shortfall factor are no longer provided in the synodical *Acts* or *Agenda*, but they are published in a financial supplement provided to delegates. Technically, the figures are still published openly, but in reality these figures are not as readily available to members of our denomination. The result is decreased transparency.

In 1992, Synod received a report from the Committee to Study Denominational Funding that concluded that “the quota system continues to be a sound, viable avenue to provide a stable base for denominational ministry funding” (*Acts of Synod 1992*, p. 686). Recommendations were made in the areas of education, standardization, and promotion, with the hope that such efforts would strengthen a basically sound system of raising monies for denominational ministry. In spite of these efforts and recommendations, the gap between what has been requested and received remains huge.

Respecting the vital role of ministry shares in the life of our denomination, and recognizing the need to include a shortfall factor of some kind in the budgeting process, we nevertheless are convinced that the present situation is unhealthy, unwise, and unworkable in the long term. It is not a shortfall factor or experience factor *per se* that concerns us. It is a question of how great such a factor can be before it raises the questions of credibility and undermines the trust that is so essential to having this arrangement work well. If the cord of trust is stretched too far, and if the gap between what is requested and what is received is perceived as simply too great, then that gap becomes a credibility gap. Continuing to ask congregations for a full contribution (100 percent) becomes more and more problematic when the average return is less than two-thirds.

The complexity of this issue is confirmed by the host of questions it raises. Are we requesting too much? Ministry-share requests that are over 50 percent higher than what is expected in return seem rather inflated. Or, are we giving too little? Has the makeup of our denominational membership changed so that

there is a decrease in ability and/or willingness to contribute to ministry shares? Is this a problem of diminishing loyalty to the denomination's ministries or simply a matter of more attention being directed to local ministries? What are the risks in shrinking this gap? What are the risks in maintaining this gap?

Answers to questions such as these may be instructive in helping us understand the dynamics of our present situation and provide input toward a solution of the problem that presents itself. To maintain the credibility and the honor of ministry shares and the denominational ministries they support, we require more realistic numbers.

II. Overture

Classis Alberta North overtures Synod to appoint a study committee with the mandate:

- A. To explore and articulate an understanding of the context of our present experience with ministry-share receipts.
- B. To explore and propose means by which ministry-share monies requested are more in line with the ministry-share monies we may realistically expect to recover.

Grounds

1. The demonstrated decline in ministry share receipts over the past twenty years has shown no evidence of a turnaround.
2. Recent communications from the denominational office confirm that ministry share income is a deepening concern (cf. January 2002 letter from Dr. Peter Borgdorff sent to each church council).
3. The size of the gap between monies requested and monies received raises the question of credibility.
4. The size of the gap between monies requested and monies received raises the question of sustainability.
5. This would provide the denomination with valuable input for self-awareness.
6. This would provide a valuable opportunity to demonstrate transparency with respect to a delicate financial concern and in that way strengthen trust between the denominational establishment and the denominational members.
7. The complexity of the issue warrants the effort and expense.

Denominational Ministry Share Recovery Rate

(% = percentage of requested monies actually received for that year)

YEAR	'80	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89	'90
%	88	89	87.9	86.2	88.6	86	84.1	83.9	82.2	78.6	78.1

YEAR	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01
%	n/a	69.5	69.4	70.3	67	63	61.3	62.4	65.8	64.6	62.8

Classis Alberta North
William H. Vanden Born, stated clerk

Overture 7: Permit Transfer of Messiah Korean CRC from Classis California South to Classis Pacific Hanmi

Classis California South overtures synod to permit the transfer of Messiah Korean CRC of Cypress, California, from Classis California South to Classis Pacific Hanmi.

Ground: Messiah Korean CRC is a Korean speaking church. Due to this language barrier, the church has found it difficult to participate in the matters of Classis California South. A transfer to Classis Pacific Hanmi would enable the church to become more involved at the classical level.

Classis California South
David Y. Chong, stated clerk

Overture 8: Permit the Transfer of Messiah Korean Church to Classis Pacific Hanmi

Classis Pacific Hanmi overtures synod to permit the transfer of Messiah Korean Church of Cypress, California, from Classis California South to Classis Pacific Hanmi.

Ground: Messiah Korean Church can be a more effective member in Classis Pacific Hanmi where the Korean language is used to conduct its business.

Classis Pacific Hanmi
In Chul Kim, stated clerk

Overture 9: Permit the Transfer of Neung-Ryuk CRC to Classis Pacific Hanmi

Classis Pacific Hanmi overtures synod to permit the transfer of Neung-Ryuk Christian Reformed Church of Anaheim, California, from Classis Greater Los Angeles to Classis Pacific Hanmi.

Ground: Neung-Ryuk CRC can be a more effective member in Classis Pacific Hanmi where the Korean language is used to conduct its business.

Classis Pacific Hanmi
In Chul Kim, Stated Clerk

Overture 10: Permit the Transfer of San Bernadino Korean CRC to Classis Pacific Hanmi

Classis Pacific Hanmi overtures synod to permit the transfer of San Bernadino Korean Christian Reformed Church of San Bernadino, California, from Classis California South to Classis Pacific Hanmi.

Ground: San Bernadino Korean CRC can be a more effective member in Classis Pacific Hanmi where the Korean language is used to conduct its business.

Classis Pacific Hanmi
In Chul Kim, stated clerk

Overture 11: Permit the Transfer of East Bay Korean CRC to Classis Pacific Hanmi

Classis Pacific Hanmi overtures synod to permit the transfer of East Bay Korean Christian Reformed Church of El Cerrito, California, from Classis Central California to Classis Pacific Hanmi.

Ground: East Bay Korean CRC can be a more effective member in Classis Pacific Hanmi where the Korean language is used to conduct its business.

Classis Pacific Hanmi
In Chul Kim, stated clerk

Overture 12: Permit the Transfer of San Jose New Hope CRC to Classis Pacific Hanmi

Classis Pacific Hanmi overtures synod to permit the transfer of San Jose New Hope Christian Reformed Church of San Jose, California, from Classis Central California to Classis Pacific Hanmi.

Ground: San Jose New Hope CRC can be a more effective member in Classis Pacific Hanmi where the Korean language is used to conduct its business.

Classis Pacific Hanmi
In Chul Kim, stated clerk

Overture 13: Reinstate the Status of Pastors Who Are Not Full Participants in the CRCNA Pension Program

I. Background

The CRCNA has defined pension plan benefits for ordained clergy serving in the United States and Canada as follows: While the primary purpose of the Plan is to provide retirement benefits, the Plan also provides significant disability, survivors, and orphan benefits. These benefits are available to plan participants who have experienced long-term disability, to the spouses of participants who die while in active ministry, and to the orphans of deceased members.

However, with respect to disability, survivors, and orphans benefits, the Plan requires registration as a plan participant within ninety days of ordination as a minister of the Word in the CRC. It also requires continuous participation as an active member, including payment of costs. This means that failure to register within the prescribed period or to meet the requirements for

continuous participation results in forfeiture of a significant portion of the disability, survivors, and orphans benefits. None of the Plan's benefits are available for those who have not registered.

This has caused a great deal of difficulty for some of the ethnic pastors who failed to register within the prescribed period and/or whose payment was interrupted for reasons beyond their control. In many cases, they simply were not aware of the registration procedure and the existence of the stipulation about forfeiture. The main problems stem from the fact that they do not have a good command of English and that they have difficulty understanding the full ramifications of the pension procedure. As a result, the majority of ethnic pastors are not receiving the additional benefits for disability, survivors, and orphans that are due to full participants.

II. Overture

Classis Pacific Hanmi overtures Synod 2002 to instruct the Canadian Pension Trustees and the U.S. Board of Pensions to reinstate ethnic pastors who did not participate fully in the pension program so that they, upon fulfilling certain conditions and necessary obligations, will be able to reinstate full membership and receive full benefits in the program.

Some of the conditions that need to be met before reinstatement are:

- The pastor has to register for the program.
- The pastor or church has to be making the payment to the program.
- If there is an interruption in the payment, the pastor should be allowed to pay back the defaulted amount, or to adjust the pension start date so that the credited terms will be the same as the actual payment period during his or her tenure.
- Full membership in the program will be in effect retroactively starting from the adjusted start date or from his installation date (in case the payment started before his installation), whichever comes later. If a participant has served more than one CRC, the total accumulated credited terms should be calculated and his or her start date readjusted accordingly.
- The pastor should be able to prove that he or she was in good health at the start of the program. If that is not feasible, then the most recent proof of his or her health should be presented.

Grounds:

- A. For most ethnic pastors, English is not the primary language. It is a great challenge for them to sift through, understand, and respond to all the documents that come from the denominational offices. Most of them do not remember receiving the pension registration packets. Some of them started to pay the bill anyhow, assuming that they would be automatically registered by paying the bill.
- B. Most of the ethnic pastors did not receive clear orientation on the program, its procedures, and its ramifications. Very few of them have received clear communications concerning the importance and urgency of the stipulation about forfeiture. No material has been translated to explain the program, or to give warnings about the consequences in case they do not respond. The Korean Ministry office translated the program

brochure on its own and sent it to Korean pastors last year. However, it did not know about the ninety-day forfeiture clause even at that time.

C. To most ethnic churches, the pension system was a relatively new and foreign concept. Pastors had difficulty asking their churches to pay for their pension when most of the congregation's members do not have pension or health insurance for themselves. They also did not understand that the pastor's pension is the church's responsibility because no one had clearly explained this to them. Now that they understand the responsibilities and the full ramifications of the program, they would like to have the opportunity to start over, receiving the proper credits that are due to them based on their actual payment.

Classis Pacific Hanmi
In Chul Kim, stated clerk

A Confessional-Revision Gravamen–Appeal to Replace the Phrase “He Descended to Hell” with “He Descended to the Realm of the Dead” in the Apostles’ Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism

Note: Living Hope CRC, Petersborough, Ontario, submitted the attached confessional-revision gravamen to Classis Quinte for adjudication. Classis Quinte defeated a motion at its January 22, 2002 meeting to send the gravamen to synod. According to the provision of Church Order Supplement, Article 5 regarding confessional-revision gravamen, a negative decision of a classis may be appealed to synod. Therefore, this matter comes by way of the appeal route rather than the overture route. The complete text of the gravamen is attached so that all delegates to synod and all church councils can be informed regarding the request.

I. Our appeal

We begin by thanking Classis Quinte for considering our gravamen multiple times on the floor of classis. We also appreciate the work of the classical study committee that helped us clarify and refine our thinking. Yet, because our gravamen was rejected by classis at its January 22, 2002 meeting, we decided at our February 19, 2002 council meeting to appeal to synod and ask that synod adjudicate our gravamen.

II. Introduction

Increasingly the phrase “he descended to hell” in the Apostles’ Creed is being replaced by “he descended to the dead” or “he descended to the place of the dead” or “he descended into hades.” For example, in Canada, the Free Methodists use the phrase “He descended into hades.” The Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches use, “he descended to the dead.” In the NavPress booklet entitled, *The Basics: What We Believe* their “modern English translation of the creed” uses, “He descended to the dead.” The question then is: Is this change in the creed warranted? We believe the answer to be yes.

The issue here is the crucial and biblical distinction between hades and hell. Hades (the Greek *hades* and the Hebrew *sheol*) is the interim place of the dead, the temporary realm of departed spirits. And hell (the Greek *gehenna*) is the place of final and everlasting punishment. Both of these teachings are clearly found in the Bible, but because we are dealing with the translation and interpretation of the original Latin creed, and not Scripture, we must ask: To what is the creed referring? For the following reasons, therefore, we believe that the creed refers to hades and not hell, and therefore, the phrase “he descended to hell” should be replaced by “he descended to the realm of the dead.”

III. Rationale

A. *The historical reason*

In interpreting the Bible, the first question we ask ourselves is: What did the verse or passage mean in its original context—to its author and intended recipients? This is the same question we must ask of the creed. What did the original consolidators of the creed have in mind when they wrote it?

First, we note the Latin words they had to choose from. The Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, consistently translates the Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades* with *infernium* or a variant and the Greek *gehenna* with *gehennam* or a variant. The Latin creed uses the word *infernium* instead of *gehennam*.

We now quote from *Agenda for Synod 2000* - Appendix B - Report of the Committee to Study the Materials from the Reformed Churches of Australia re Christ's Descent Into Hell:

The reference to "hell" is a translation of *infernium* or *inferus* (the Latin equivalents of the Greek word *hades*), namely, the resting place of the dead or "lower regions" of the earth, not the place of final punishment. Moreover, none of the fathers [that is, patristic fathers, the consolidators of the creed] or later commentators understood the creed as indicating a descent of Christ to the place of eternal punishment.

(*Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 223)

And again:

Thus the early church, understanding the clause as descent into *hades*, took the Creed to affirm that Christ descended to the place of the dead or the "lower regions" of the earth, not to the place of final punishment.

(*Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 218)

J. N. D. Kelly confirms this:

To say that Jesus Christ has died, or that He had been buried, was equivalent to saying that He had passed to *Sheol*. The unquestioned premiss [sic], for example, of the lengthy passage in Tertullian's *De anima* 50 ff. is that all souls descend to *Hades* immediately after death, and that "Christ our God, Who because He was man died according to the Scriptures, and was buried according to the same Scriptures, satisfied the law also by undergoing the form of human death in the underworld, and did not ascend aloft to heaven until He had gone down to the regions beneath the earth."

(*Early Christian Creeds*, Longmans, 1960, p. 380)

Essentially what we have, then, in Calvin's and the catechism's treatment of this phrase in the creed is a major reinterpretation of the original creed. Biblically, there is no need to make such a change, for there is much biblical support for retaining the original reading of the creed, namely, "He descended to the realm of the dead."

B. *The biblical reason*

The Bible is quite precise in its references to death and the afterlife. The precision, however, is often lost in the inconsistency of our English translations. The problem is that we often use the word *hell* to refer to both *hades*, the realm of the dead, and to *hell*, the place of final and everlasting punishment. This imprecision shows up, for example, in the NIV translation of Luke 16:23, where the footnote indicates that they have translated the Greek *hades* as *hell*. This imprecision is unfortunate because elsewhere, as in Revelation 20, the NIV transliterates *hades* as *Hades*.

This is the same imprecision that we face in the creed by retaining the phrase “he descended to hell.” What does this mean? Is it a reference to hades? Or is it a reference to hell? By retaining and maintaining the word *hell*, we create unwarranted confusion and blur important biblical distinctions. This confusion and blurring of distinction is compounded in Q. and A. 44 of the Heidelberg Catechism (Also see Ursinus’ *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*):

Why does the creed add, “He descended to hell”?

To assure me in times of personal crisis and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, especially on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.

Obviously, this is a biblical teaching. Of course, Jesus suffered the horror of hell on the cross when he endured the absence of the Father’s love and the presence of the Father’s wrath against our sin. This is a biblical teaching and an essential teaching, but Jesus’ experience of this accursed state happened while he was on the cross and on the cross only (Deut. 21:23 and Gal. 3:13). Jesus concluded at his death, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The need to suffer the horror of hell ended there because Jesus’ atoning work ended there. Indeed, Jesus promised to meet the thief in paradise that very day (Luke 23:43). So obviously, both the Bible and the creed could not be referring to Jesus’ descent to hell.

What, then, is the biblical support for saying that Jesus “descended to the realm of the dead”? We begin with an extensive quote from Synod 2000:

- a. Acts 2:27, 31: In its account of Peter’s Pentecost sermon, the book of Acts records Peter’s citation of Psalm 16:10: “For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit” (NRSV). According to Acts 2, Peter mentioned this verse twice, first as part of an extended excerpt from Psalm 16 and then by itself (Acts 2:27, 31). In the context, Peter is arguing that Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified, was raised up and freed from death by God, since it was impossible for him to be held in death’s power (Acts 2:22-24). Peter contrasts David, who died and was buried, with Jesus the Messiah, of whose resurrection David spoke when he said, “He was not abandoned to hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption” (Acts 2:31, NRSV). Although this passage does not directly say that Jesus descended to hades, it does say that God did not abandon him to hades, but raised him up, thereby suggesting that Jesus occupied hades from his death to his resurrection.
- b. Matthew 12:40: “For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth” (NRSV). The key phrase here, “in the heart of the earth,” indicates the center or interior and thus not merely the grave, but sheol, hades, the realm of the dead. Although that *activity* of Christ in the intermediate state or the theological implication of the “descent” is not referred to directly in the passage, the passage is indeed a reference to Christ’s intermediate state and not merely to burial in the tomb.
- c. Ephesians 4:9: In the context of a discussion of Christ’s gifts to his people, Ephesians quotes Psalm 68:18 regarding the gifts that followed on Christ’s ascension and his defeat of “captivity” (Eph. 4:8). After quoting the psalm, Ephesians adds, “When it says, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things” (Eph. 4:9-10, NRSV). For present purposes, the important point is the reference to Christ’s descent into the lower parts of the earth. To what does this refer? Although it is possible that the descent referred to here is Christ’s

descent to earth, it seems more likely that this descent is Christ's journey to hades, the realm of the dead. This latter reading is confirmed when the passage is compared to Acts 2:27, 31 and Romans 10:6-7: "Do not say in your heart, . . . 'who will descend into the abyss' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)" (NRSV).

(*Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 220-21)

A further note on Romans 10:6-7 is that the abyss (Greek *abyssos*) is used to refer to hades. This is confirmed in the following biblical studies:

Rom. 10:7f., following the LXX [Septuagint - the Greek Translation of the Hebrew Old Testament] of Ps. 106:26 (MT 107:26), uses the word to describe the realm of the dead.

(*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, v. 2, p. 205)

In Rom. 10:7 [abyss] simply denotes the realm of the dead.

(*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume, p. 3)

The abyss in this instance may most suitably be taken as a synonym for *sheol*, the latter is frequently in the Old Testament "the grave." As in Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15 heaven is contrasted with *hades*, so here heaven is contrasted with the abyss and, since it is a reference to Jesus' resurrection that the question is asked, the abyss can most convincingly denote what *sheol* and *hades* frequently denote in the Old Testament.

(*Romans*, v. 2, Murray, Eerdmans, p. 53)

So which rendering of the Apostles' Creed's phrase does Romans 10:6-7 support? Clearly, it supports the tenet, "he descended to the realm of the dead." William Hendriksen comments:

Therefore, any attempts on *our* part to ascend to heaven to bring Christ down would amount to a most ungracious denial of the reality and value of Christ's incarnation. Similarly, any attempt to descend into the realm of the dead in order to bring Christ up from the dead would be a disavowal of the genuine character and meaning of Christ's glorious resurrection from the dead and triumphant over the grave (See Ps. 16:10, Acts 2:27, Rom. 4:25, 1 Cor. 15:20, 55-57, Rev. 1:17, 18).

(*Romans*, Baker, p. 344)

And once again John Murray, commenting on Romans 10, states, "Jesus went to the realm of the dead and returned to life again" (*The Epistle to the Romans*, Eerdmans, 1997, p. 54).

Jesus' parable in Luke 16 is also helpful. In Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we discern that death and hades (not hell as the NIV translates it [see the footnote]) are made up of two regions or states, the first being a place of torment and weeping. Even though this is hell-like, it is not hell itself because it is only provisional punishment and not final punishment. The second region or state is that of blessing. This is variously referred to as "paradise," "Abraham's bosom," and "being with the Lord."

Anthony Hoekema's comments are helpful in this regard:

Summing up, what can we learn about the intermediate state from the biblical use of the concepts Sheol and Hades? We may note the following points: (1) Persons do not go totally out of existence after death but go to a "realm of the dead." (2) In this realm of the dead the ungodly remain, with death as their shepherd. The New Testament adds the detail that after death the ungodly will suffer torment, already before the resurrection of the body (Luke 16:19-31). (3) God's people, however, knowing that Christ was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, have firm hope that they too shall be delivered from the power of Sheol. The New Testament again carries this hope one step further when it suggests that after death the godly

are comforted (Luke 16:25). In each case we note that the New Testament complements and expands on Old Testament teachings.

(*The Bible and the Future*, Eerdmans, 1979, p. 101)

John Cooper confirms this:

[I]ntertestamental Judaism pictured Sheol/Hades as containing different locations or compartments in which the dead of different eternal destinies are quartered. Both believers and unbelievers populate the general realm of the dead. Further, we know that the Rabbis thought of paradise as located in Hades. So although the details and terminology of intertestamental eschatology are neither univocal nor consistent in all respects, it is possible to hold that Jesus entered the realm of the dead, Sheol/Hades, and there was in the company of the saints in paradise. He might even have preached to the spirits in prison, whatever that means. In fact if communication across the great divide is possible, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus could have preached to the unbelieving dead in Hades from a "pulpit" on the paradise side of the chasm.

(*Body, Soul and Life Everlasting*, Eerdmans, 1989, pp. 143-44)

Revelation 20 probably most clearly distinguishes between hades and hell. First, there is death and hades, the former being the event and the latter the realm to which it leads. Because death and hades are eventually thrown in the lake of fire, they are only provisional and temporary. Death and hades, then, are not hell (that is, the place of final and everlasting destruction) but the intermediate state, the place or the realm of the dead.

Secondly, in Revelation there is the lake of fire, which is explicitly called the second death (20:14). This then is hell, the place of final and everlasting punishment. So, from Revelation 20 it seems that presently there are neither humans nor demons in hell.

Let us conclude this section with some of the more difficult texts surrounding this issue.

The first text is 1 Peter 3:18-19. This passage raises many questions. As Robert Mounce says in his commentary *Living Hope*, the 1 Peter 3:18-20 passage is "widely recognized as perhaps the most difficult to understand in all of the New Testament." Martin Luther wrote, "this is a strange text and certainly a more obscure passage than any other passage in the New Testament." Luther concludes, "I still do not know for sure what the apostle means" (quoted by Fred Klooster in *Our Only Comfort*, vol. 1, Faith Alive, p. 534). Following Augustine's thought, Reformed interpreters have held that Jesus preached to the people of Noah's day (who were then on the earth but now are "spirits in prison") through Noah's Spirit-inspired words and actions as he built the ark. According to this interpretation, this passage says nothing, then, about Jesus' descent or ascent from hades. Therefore, it has no direct bearing on the conclusion of our argument. If, however, Jesus did descend to hades, this could open up this passage to suggest that Jesus did indeed declare his victory to the spirits (disobedient angels or disobedient humans?) from Noah's days at the time of his descent to hades.

The second set of texts deal with what happens to believers after they die. The thief joined Jesus in paradise (Luke 23:43). In 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 and Philippians 1:23, Paul says that to die is to depart and be with the Lord. How does this square with the teaching that Jesus descended to hades?

One problem is that our language is so limiting. For example, all the language surrounding this issue makes us think spatially. *If hades is here then it cannot be over there. If Jesus descended to hades and ascended to heaven then they*

must be quite far apart. However, even though believers are on earth they are also seated with Christ Jesus in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6). Furthermore, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, but he also lives in the believer's heart (Eph. 3:17). So what if, as Jesus entered hades, heaven came to hades in Christ and the blessed side of hades became part of heaven through Christ? Then those saints who died before Jesus Christ's resurrection experienced a new dimension to their salvation when Jesus died, arose, and ascended, and the blessed side of hades in turn experienced a transformation. It is now part of heaven. So, it is accurate to still maintain that believers go to hades when they die, but, since hades has been translated, they also go to heaven to be with the Lord. This could explain Paul's vision in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 where paradise is now associated with the third heaven. As believers, we do not need to fear death. Jesus has been there before us and he will be there with us.

We quote from the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Baker, 1996):

In summary, the New Testament affirms that Christ has conquered Hades. While dead believers exist in this state, they are also "with the Lord" (p. 322).

Certainly, there still remains some confusion. Certainly, we only see through a glass darkly, but these remaining questions do not overshadow the overwhelming evidence that Jesus did indeed descend to hades and not hell. In fact, returning to the original rendering of the creed helps us better understand the redemptive-historical impact of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension on death and hades. Jesus now holds the keys of death and hades (Rev. 1:18).

C. *Reformational reason*

It must be said that Calvin's teaching is only one reformational stream of thought regarding the descent clause in the creed. We quote from Synod 2000 again:

C. In order to come to a proper estimate of the Apostles' Creed's affirmation of Christ's descent into hell, it will be helpful to explore how Christians (and especially Reformed Christians) have understood the clause.

What becomes apparent upon examination is that Reformed Christians have available at least two or three legitimate and helpful understandings of Christ's descent into hell.

Already in the sixteenth century there were three distinct understandings of the clause among Reformed theologians: (1) Ulrich Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger understood Christ's descent as his entering into the presence of departed believers—a descent into hades. In this view, Christ's descent into hades supports the doctrine of the intermediate state by showing that souls continue to exist even after bodily death. (2) Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism offered a second way of interpreting Christ's descent into hell. Already in the 1536 edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin offers his interpretation: Christ's descent into hell "means that he had been afflicted by God, and felt the dread and severity of divine judgment, in order to intercede with God's wrath and make satisfaction to his justice in our name." Calvin's view is reflected in Question and Answer 44 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Q. Why does the creed add, 'He descended to hell'? A. To assure me in times of personal crisis and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, especially on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell." Unlike Zwingli, Bullinger, and the main tradition of interpretation before him, Calvin sees Christ's descent into hell not as a stage between his death and his resurrection but as a way of emphasizing the severity and substitutionary character of Christ's suffering. (3) Theodore Beza

offered a third (and, in our opinion, less satisfying) understanding of the clause, arguing that the “descent” referred to Christ’s burial.

In the seventeenth century, the *Leiden Synopsis* (1626) identified several permissible Reformed understandings of the clause *descendit ad inferna* or *infernum* (1) If *infernum* or *inferus* is understood as the realm or state of the dead (*sheol* in Hebrew, *hades* in Greek), Christ descended into death. Supporting this interpretation is the subsequent creedal statement that on the third day Christ rose again from the dead. (2) The clause refers to Christ’s entire state of humiliation (the position of Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism). (3) The descent refers to Christ’s three days under the power of death. In this view, this clause adds something to the affirmation that Christ was buried, since burial refers to the body alone, whereas the state of death refers to the separation of body and soul that occurs at death. In addition, Petrus van Mastricht argued for a concept of a threefold descent: into suffering, into the grave, and into the power of death.

(*Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 219-20)

The third position identified by the *Leiden Synopsis* understands the descent into hell as Christ’s having spent three days under the power of death. This is also the view of British Reformed and Puritan writers and is confessionally attested in the Westminster Larger Catechism (Q. 50). Again, this understanding of the descent-into-hell doctrine can be supported biblically. The texts drawn on here are nearly the same as those used to support the first reading to the descent—as Christ’s soul descending to the realm of the dead (although 1 Peter 3:18-20 is omitted). The reason for this use of the same texts is that the words *sheol* and *hades* can be understood either as indications of a subterranean realm or, on the assumption that the language of the netherworld is itself figurative, as the state of the soul in death, separated from the body between the moment of death and the resurrection (p. 222).

Here is the text of Westminster Larger Catechism Q. and A. 50:

Q. Wherein consisted Christ’s humiliation after his death?

A. Christ’s humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, *He descended into hell*.

Since there is more than one Reformed stream of thought regarding Jesus’ descent, we believe it is both allowable and crucial for us to ask: Which stream is most biblical? We would suggest, to use the classification of the *Leiden Synopsis*, that a combination of (1) a descent to the realm of the dead and (3) a coming under the power of death, while at the same time divesting death of its power, is the most historical and biblical interpretation of the creed.

D. *The theological reason*

To return to the original sense of the creed as referring to *hades* instead of *hell*, helps us to answer some important theological questions such as, What happened to Jesus between his death and resurrection? Jesus continued to exist, as everyone else does, even after death. In fact, the Latin of the creed emphasizes the truth that it was *he* who descended to the dead (*Descendit ad inferna*). Death may terminate physical life, but death is not the same thing as annihilation. Death brings about the separation of the body from the soul. The body is buried in the grave. The soul departs to the dead, the place or the realm of the dead, *hades*, the intermediate state, and, in Jesus’ case as well as for all those who are in him, *paradise*.

It may seem that the important biblical and theological teaching that Jesus suffered the pangs of hell on the cross would be lost if we changed the creed. This, however, is not true because that truth is implicit in the fact that Jesus was crucified, which is where and when he suffered the horror of hell, the rejection of the Father. In fact, this truth can be made explicit in the Catechism by inserting within Q. and A. 39 the answer of Q. and A. 44. (See V. Our comfort and IX. Recommendations.)

Another question that we can highlight if we return to the original sense of the creed is the question: What happened to death because of Jesus' death and resurrection?

In regard to this question, understandably there has been much debate as to whether Jesus' descent to the realm of the dead was part of his humiliation or his exaltation. The probable reason for so much confusion and so little consensus on this question is because the biblical answer is both. Jesus' descent is transitional between his humiliation and his exaltation.

Yes, it is part of Jesus' humiliation. The eternal Son of God submitted himself to undergo a complete death as a human being, as we read in Hebrews 2:9 and 14-15:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Yet, as this passage already indicates, Jesus' descent is also part of his exaltation. He died not as the defeated one but as the victorious one. His descent comes after he triumphantly announced, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Could this triumphal descent to hades explain the almost unbelievable events recorded in Matthew 27:50-53?

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

It is of vast theological importance that Jesus descended to the realm of the dead to divest death and hades of their spiritual power. As triumphal Lord of all, he now holds the keys of death and hades (Rev. 1:18). So, he has personally proven his promise that "the gates of Hades will not overcome" the church (Matt. 16:18). They could not stop him!

E. The sequential reason

To change the creed to read "he descended to the realm of the dead" makes sense of the order of the creed's chronological sequence.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the realm of the dead.

The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Death, once again, refers to the termination of Jesus' physical life, the separation of the body and soul. The reference to being buried explains what happened to his body. The reference to his descent to the realm of the dead explains what happened to his soul. His resurrection, then, refers to the soul's being reunited with a renewed body.

To retain our present translation of the creed forces us to make this phrase a summary statement referring to the whole humiliation process or more specifically to Jesus' crucifixion, rather than a statement that is part of an extended chronological sequence. This seems unnatural, unconvincing, and confusing.

F. The liturgical reason

The authors of *Agenda for Synod 2000* - Appendix B - Report of the Committee to Study the Materials from the Reformed Churches of Australia re Christ's Descent Into Hell maintain that a footnote added to the creed would be helpful, as we have done with the word *catholic*. They suggest the following footnote:

The Christian church has never understood Christ's descent into hell as the literal descent into the place of the eternal punishment. Some Christians, including some Reformed Christians, have interpreted it as the descent of Christ's soul into the realm or state of the dead (hades) between his death and resurrection (see the Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. and A. 50). Others, including the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism (Q. and A. 44), have understood it as a reference to the hellish agony of eternal punishment that Christ suffered, especially on the cross but also earlier.

(*Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 227).

First, we wonder if this footnote is accurate in emphatically stating, "The Christian church has *never* understood Christ's descent into hell as a literal descent into the place of eternal punishment" (emphasis added). It is exactly a literal descent into hell that many people believe the creed teaches precisely because of the use of imprecise language. It would be interesting, for example, to survey the Christian Reformed membership to discover what they actually believe regarding this phrase of the creed.

Second, this footnote simply maintains our present state of confusion where there need not be any. It is like saying HELL is not Hell, but hell. That is more confusing than saying CATHOLIC is not Catholic, but catholic.

Third, this footnote is more than cumbersome. The whole purpose of a creed is to be self-evident, simple, and direct. As the *Psalter Hymnal* states, the creed sets forth the teachings of the apostles "in sublime simplicity, in unsurpassable brevity, in beautiful order, and with liturgical solemnity" (p. 813). The need for self-evident simplicity is obvious because the creed's primary function is liturgical and not necessarily instructional, although these two are not mutually exclusive. In other words, the creed is primarily used in worship services and at gravesides. So, adding a footnote like we did with the word *catholic* proves to be unhelpful. How, for example, would one incorporate such

a footnote in a worship service or at a graveside? The route of footnotes is definitely not the way to go.

G. The ecumenical reason

In order to maintain the unity of the body of Christ, it would be important to return to the original meaning of the creed, as so many church bodies have done. (See II. Introduction.)

H. The synodical reason

Obviously, this gravamen is indebted to the fine work of Synod 2000's Report of the Committee to Study the Materials from the Reformed Churches of Australia re Christ's Descent Into Hell. We contend, however, that they stop short of the goal line by recommending to retain the phrase, "He descended to hell." This gravamen-appeal is our attempt to pick up the ball and move it into the end zone.

I. I believe . . .

We now come to our choice of words for the creed. To use the word *hades* would be the most biblically accurate. This would be a literal transliteration of the word used in the Bible. This also has much going for it. However, modern people have no point of contact with this word. Therefore, we rule it out for use in the creed today.

Many churches are simply using, "He descended to the dead." This would keep us ecumenically consistent. However, this does not seem to communicate much more than what has already been said in the creed, namely, that he "died."

Therefore, we would recommend that the phrase in the creed should read, "He descended to the realm of the dead." The realm of the dead is an accurate description of the biblical concept of *hades*. We favor the word *realm* over the word *place* because the word *place* could be taken too spatially. We also favor the word *realm* over the word *state* because the word *state* seems too static and platonic. Moreover, the word *realm* encompasses the meaning of both place and state while adding a new dimension, namely, that of power. Death and *hades* are spiritual powers and principalities that Jesus defeated through his death and resurrection. He now holds their keys (Rev. 1:18).

V. Our comfort

The theme of the Heidelberg Catechism, of course, is comfort. So any change to the catechism must add to this comfort and not take away from it. We believe that changing the wording of the Apostles' Creed, which is embedded within the catechism, and changing the corresponding questions and answers do just that.

First of all, we would combine Q. and A. 39 and 44 together so that the important biblical insight and personal assurance highlighted in Q. and A. 44 would not be lost from the catechism but correctly associated with the appropriate phrase of the creed.

Q. and A. 39

Is it significant that he was “crucified” instead of dying some other way?

Yes. This death convinces me that he shouldered the curse which lay on me, since death by crucifixion was accursed by God.¹

This also assures me in times of personal crisis and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, especially on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.²

¹ Gal. 3:10-13 (Deut. 21:23)

² Isa. 53; Matt. 26:36-46; 27:45-46; Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7-10

This combining of the two questions and answers is inadvertently confirmed in Fred Klooster’s *A Mighty Comfort: The Christian Faith According to the Heidelberg Catechism* (CRC Publications, 1990). After mentioning the “unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul” that Jesus suffered to deliver believers “from the anguish and torment of hell,” Klooster adds, “*That is to say, ‘he shouldered the curse which lay on me’ (Q and A 39),*” (p. 50), (emphasis added).

Secondly, Q. and A. 44 needs to be reconstructed in such a way that it remains true to the theme of comfort. We believe the following question and answer does.

Q. and A. 44

Why does the creed add “*He descended to the realm of the dead?*”

Because even though my Lord’s body lay in the grave, his soul entered the realm of the dead,¹ welcoming in paradise the thief who was crucified beside him,² and so completely shared in the life and death of his people.³

Therefore, I no longer need to fear death because my Lord has been there before me and will be there with me.⁴

¹ Acts 2:27 (Ps. 16:10); Rom. 10:7

² Luke 23:43

³ Heb. 2:9, 14-15

⁴ Ps. 23:4

VI. Objections

Some may object that they find much personal comfort from the fact that Jesus went to hell, so they do not want the phrase changed in the creed. They might say, “Jesus went there, so I won’t have to.” But this shows just how much confusion there is around this phrase in the creed. As Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism interpret the phrase, Jesus did not actually go to hell. He experienced its horror on the cross. That is precisely what the reference to his crucifixion implies because it was on the cross where Jesus suffered the horror of hell. So the cross says it all. We do not need an addendum to his crucifixion. Surely, something happened to Jesus after his crucifixion, but that is best described with the phrase, “He descended to the realm of the dead.”

Others may object that they we give up too much if we remove the word *hell* from the creed. They say, “We’re becoming liberal now!” No one, after understanding the argument of this gravamen-appeal could justifiably say that. We are not calling for a change in the creed to soften our biblical stance but to strengthen it; to be more authentic and accurate to both the creed and the teachings of Scripture.

Still others may object, “Changing the creed will only create more confusion.” Obviously, this change will need some careful instruction when it is introduced to the churches. We believe, however, that this new wording will actually be easier to explain and understand than our present wording and understanding of the creed.

VII. Conclusion

As difficult as it may be to disagree with John Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism regarding this phrase in the Apostles’ Creed, we must. Not that they are wrong about an important biblical teaching. Of course, Jesus suffered hellish agony on the cross. But is this what the creed teaches? No. The creed refers to his descent to the realm of the dead. This phrase, then, should be restored to the creed, and the catechism will need to be changed to reflect this.

Let Peter Toon’s comments in *Heaven and Hell* (Thomas Nelson, 1986) serve as a helpful summary:

Obviously by inserting the article, those who used the Apostles’ Creed intended that it should add something to “he died and was buried.” At least it pointed to his death being a real death with the separation of body and soul and the entrance of the soul into *Hades*. Thus while Calvin’s explanation is thoroughly biblical, it can hardly be a right interpretation of this article. The meaning must be sought in the fact that in death, while his body remained in the sepulchre, Jesus in his naked human spirit passed through into the transcendent, supernatural realm of departed spirits. . . . To be our Saviour from death and its consequences he had to endure all that death means and do this really and truly. He died, was buried, and descended into Hades both as our Substitute and our Representative. In Resurrection his naked spirit/soul reunited with his body to be raised from *Hades* to the right hand of the Father in heaven.

(*Heaven and Hell*, pp. 218-19)

VIII. Prayer

May the Spirit of truth guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

IX. Recommendations

- A. To replace the phrase, “he descended to hell,” in the Apostles’ Creed with, “he descended to the realm of the dead.”
- B. The Heidelberg Catechism be changed as follows (changes in **bold**):

Q. and A. 23

What are these articles?

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit

and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the realm of the dead.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Q. and A. 39

Is it significant that he was “crucified” instead of dying some other way?

Yes. This death convinces me that he shouldered the curse which lay on me, since death by crucifixion was accursed by God.¹

This also assures me in times of personal crisis and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, especially on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.²

¹Gal. 3:10-13 (Deut. 21:23)

²Isa. 53; Matt. 26:36-46; 27:45-46; Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7-10

Q. and A. 44

Why does the creed add “He descended to the realm of the dead?”

Because even though my Lord’s body lay in the grave, his soul entered the realm of the dead,¹ welcoming in paradise the thief who was crucified beside him,² and so completely shared in the life and death of his people.³

Therefore, I no longer need to fear death because my Lord has been there before me and will be there with me.⁴

¹Acts 2:27 (Ps. 16:10); Rom. 10:7

²Luke 23:43

³Heb. 2:9, 14-15

⁴Ps. 23:4

Council of Living Hope CRC,
Peterborough, Ontario
Ingrid Boonstra, clerk

Communication 1: Classis Eastern Canada**I. Background**

As a denomination, the Christian Reformed Church has shown strong leadership in dealing with the issue of abuse. A study was undertaken to determine the scope of the problem within the denomination, and action was taken in response to the study's finding that the incidence of abuse within the CRC is similar to that in society in general. There has been significant growth in pastoral ministries for victims of abuse and in the adoption of child-abuse prevention policies. The office of Abuse Prevention at the denominational level provides support for local and classical initiatives.

On the matter of dealing with allegations of abuse, the guidelines adopted by synod and recommended to the classes provide a reasonable framework to deal justly with all parties and manage any risk of liability for the congregation. There are problems, however, with sustaining the mechanism identified in the guidelines, namely, the classical abuse-response teams.

Classis Eastern Canada established an abuse-response team (ART) some years ago in response to the actions of Synod 1995 (see *Acts of Synod 1996*, pp. 673-74). Initial training was provided to members of the team. However, only a limited number of persons were recruited. Subsequent pleas combined with a lack of active service by the team led to eventual disbanding of the ART. The interim committee was charged with investigating how other classes were dealing with this matter and what possibilities existed in the way of joint ARTs with neighboring classes. Contacts have revealed that the whole ART structure as originally envisioned has been marginal in its success, at best, both in Canada and in the United States. The need for an abuse-response team program of some sort still remains. It would seem that an alternate mechanism is needed to meet the need.

When the abuse-response team for Classis Eastern Canada was disbanded because it could not be sustained, enquiries were made with other classes, and common challenges were identified. Alternative options were explored. Based on preliminary research, there is sufficient reason to ask synod to explore other options, especially the establishment of national abuse-response teams.

II. Request

Classis Eastern Canada requests synod to ask the Board of Trustees to explore the feasibility of establishing two national abuse-response teams—one for Canada and one for the United States—to help individual churches make a fair and effective response to allegations of abuse within the church.

III. Rationale

A. Fewer than ten classes have fully functioning abuse-response teams. For various reasons, many classes have found it is not feasible to establish and maintain well-trained teams for their individual classis.

B. There is a difficulty inherent in the structure itself. To meet the objective, members of an abuse-response team need to be well-trained. While they may not exercise those skills for years, they need to be sharp if a situation should arise that demands an immediate and careful response. In the case of Classis Eastern Canada, members asked to be relieved of their appointment because they were no longer confident of their capacity to respond appropriately, since they had not been asked to use the training they received for several years.

C. A few classes have combined the education and advocacy functions with the investigative functions in one team. If there is active advocacy within the churches, there may be a perception that the advocates cannot be totally impartial for an investigation because advocacy and education work tends to highlight the perspective of victims or potential victims. This approach also increases the probability of a conflict of interest because members of the team are known to those involved in an allegation. In some cases, classes already had ministry groups. To avoid perceptions of bias, separate investigative teams were established, but it is difficult to find enough people to maintain both groups in a high state of readiness. A majority of classes have not put any structure in place, leaving individual congregations without trained support to deal with emergency and delicate situations.

D. The option of forming one response team for several classes was explored. This would increase the possibility of finding enough people who exercise similar skills in their careers and therefore could be ready at all times. It would also reduce the likelihood of conflicts of interest by members who may be known to the persons involved in the allegation. The difficulty, however, is the lack of an administrative structure to provide continuity and oversight. Reporting to several classes and decision-making by several classes is a cumbersome process in our church structure.

E. The Pastor-Church Relations team provides a model for a service that is available to all churches as needed. Specialized skills are accessible, without duplication by every classis. There are many similarities to the needs that arise in cases of abuse allegation, e.g., independent expertise to give advice on how to handle the situation.

F. Given the importance of legislative issues for abuse, it would be preferable to have a Canadian team and a United States team. While legislation differs somewhat by province and state, there is enough similarity and public information to allow a team to be effective in different jurisdictions within each country.

The request above could allow the office of Abuse Prevention to identify a pool of people in the United States and Canada who could serve in the investigative function. When any church has to deal with an allegation, a small team from the pool would be identified, based on availability and no conflict of interest, to review the situation and provide impartial recommendations to

the council. This model may involve some additional costs, such as transportation, similar to costs associated with the Pastor-Church Relations office. The benefits, however, of all churches having access to a trained abuse-response team when special cases arise is worth the cost.

III. Conclusion

The experience of most classes suggests that there are difficulties with the current structure and that these difficulties can best be addressed by consideration of different options at the denominational level. The existing Pastor-Church Relations ministry offers a possible model for exploration. Continuing the status quo is not a good option and could lead to serious problems.

There is now a societal expectation that churches are aware of abuse and are taking the necessary steps to deal with it in a just manner. The Christian Reformed Church can continue to show leadership in this area by developing effective national abuse-response teams available to all churches.

Classis Eastern Canada
James Kooistra, stated clerk

Communication 2: Classis Illiana

At the meeting of Classis Illiana on March 5, 2002, a significant discussion was held regarding *The Banner* article, "When CRC Ministers Abuse" (November 5, 2001). Several members of our classis have expressed their personal disapproval of the article to the Board of Publications but were not satisfied with its response. In response to the wording and impact of this article upon these believers, and after a period of our own extended discussion, Classis Illiana decided to send this communication to synod and request that synod reprimand Rev. John Suk, editor of *The Banner*, for the lack of spiritual and journalistic judgment he exercised in printing the article mentioned above.

We want to make it clear that the churches of Classis Illiana abhor abuse in all its forms. Particularly abhorrent is abuse by pastors who thereby betray the trust of their office and calling. We support the effort of our denomination to address this matter both effectively and pastorally for the spiritual well-being of the church.

As a classis, however, we were deeply disappointed and troubled by the graphic, sexually explicit images and the inflammatory language of the article, especially as it relates to the opening paragraph. As a religious periodical intended to provide devotional instruction for the spiritual development of the CRCNA, *The Banner* grievously departed from good judgment regarding Paul's instruction in Ephesians 4:29: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." When matters of abuse or any other sin are reported to the church, the church is obligated to seek the best pastoral process to address the matter effectively. In the view of our classis, the aforementioned article does not meet this standard.

Additionally, we are appalled at what appears to be a breach of confidentiality when the article makes judgments about cases clearly familiar to some

readers. Although it is the responsibility of the church to address matters of abuse clearly and pastorally, the personhood of perpetrators and victims should not be further violated by *The Banner's* poor judgment regarding the need for confidentiality—confidentiality that is vital to create the basic trust necessary for effective healing for those involved.

Much positive impact could have been gained through a more balanced article on the subject of abuse. As it stands, *The Banner* lost an opportunity to effectively equip the church to engage in this vital issue. Therefore, as a classis, we hope that a reprimand of the editor will require and result in better judgment being used in future editing.

Classis Illiana
Classical Interim Committee