



I. Introduction and history

The past is prologue for the work of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC). The resignation of the previous executive director of the CRCNA and the subsequent resignation of the previous director of denominational ministries were an integral part of the background to the Board of Trustees report to Synod 2011 and, subsequently, to that synod's appointment of a Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

The TFRSC report to Synod 2012 identified a number of common themes based on listening sessions with CRCNA staff. These sessions verified the analysis of the Stratagem Report received by the BOT in May 2011 and confirmed the breadth and depth of issues related to structure, culture, and leadership. Synod 2012 agreed. A key feature of the TFRSC work was to develop a new position description for the executive director, to provide a suggested composition of an Executive Director Search Committee, and to describe a timeline for a search process, all of which Synod 2012 approved. We join others in praying for discernment and for the identification of a person who will be interviewed for and appointed to the position of executive director by Synod 2013.

The TFRSC report to Synod 2012 identified issues to be addressed and a proposed timeline for reporting to successive synods. The work of the TFRSC is cumulative. As such, we suggest that readers may also benefit by reviewing the 2012 TFRSC report found in the *Acts of Synod 2012* (pp. 665-88). Continuity is important as we provide an update on our work and present recommendations to synod while also reporting through the Board of Trustees. Our desire is to provide a framework and material for continuing the conversation. Almost all the headings and sections of this report follow the tentative outline of issues to be addressed that were identified in our report to Synod 2012.

The Christian Reformed Church has from its very beginning in 1857 concerned itself with organizing committees and governing boards as needed on an ad hoc basis to accomplish studies or tasks as deemed appropriate. Continuing organizational development is a necessary byproduct of evaluating the current organizational structure to determine how well this structure will serve in the future. Current organizational structure should be evaluated

in the light of what we anticipate in that future. If ministry is our goal and covenantal interdependence is our chosen ministry pattern, then our organizational models need to reflect that choice. Organizational structure is not an end in itself. Organizational structure is not the primary mission of the Christian Reformed Church. It is a tool we use to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the Lord and his people to live out his mission.

The Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) is not the only table where discussion about the future ministry and the future structure of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is taking place. The Executive Director Search Committee is also a place where the conversation has taken place. The Board of Trustees of the CRCNA also authorized a “fundamental reframing” of the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church in North America in September 2012.

One microcosm or example of this “reframing” conversation has been the question of the placement of the Faith Formation Committee work within the structure of the CRCNA. This example also makes clear that the conversation on structure is also a question of culture, leadership, and vision. There are multiple dimensions and a nexus of connections with regard to faith formation. As a denomination committed to covenantal theology, faith formation is not new to our heritage, but it is new to think through what it would mean to structure our work around such a key priority and what this means for our agencies and offices.

Our collection of agencies and offices represents concerns of the church over time and how the church responded to those concerns in their time. Creating a new office for or incorporating faith formation efforts within our structure challenges us either to add another office or to house the work within a current agency. The current discussion asks us to identify our key priorities as a denomination and how we might structure in alignment with those priorities.

Organizational realignment has far-reaching implications for how the ministries of the denomination are structured at the present time. It is our judgment that a significant realignment of the ministries must be considered and is consistent with synod’s expressed desire to see less duplication and greater integration. The faith formation initiative is a great opportunity to make such realignment a reality. The present challenges faced by Faith Alive Christian Resources are not the only, and not even the primary, reason for suggesting realignment. Rather, the Faith Alive issues triggered the timing of the realignment because the administration needed to address both the faith formation initiative as well as deal with the realities of Faith Alive not being able to continue in its present format.

The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the board of Faith Alive Christian Resources and the synodical Faith Formation Committee, will report on the details of the realignments proposed. It is sufficient to indicate that the task force was consulted, had opportunity to comment on the realignment discussion, and leaves it to the administration and the BOT to advance a realignment of the ministries involved.

II. Key material for discussion: “Five Smooth Stones”

The task force has been exposed to and impressed by the testimony and example of the Evangelical Covenant Church. This denomination, which is

similar in size and background, recently revised their structure and strategic plan. They have sought to structure the work of their denomination around “Five Smooth Stones” of ministry priorities or goals within their strategic plans. The concise, clear, and distinct framing of their goals has helped the Evangelical Covenant Church identify ministry priorities and clarify how the denomination and local congregations relate to each other. Appendix A to this report presents an overview of the “Five Smooth Stones,” provided with the permission of the Evangelical Covenant Church. We believe that this material is worthy of synodwide discussion as part of ongoing discernment. The task force has drafted and here proposes “Five Streams” to shape the CRCNA’s structural and cultural development, as presented in Appendix B.

A new mechanism called “collaboration tables” has been developed within the Evangelical Covenant Church. The collaboration table is used to connect departments, agencies, and institutions to advance the cohesive development of each of the five ministry priorities. This is of interest to the task force and the CRCNA, because one of the issues for the task force to address is to “specify the pathway for enhancing communication and collaboration within the denominational offices and to the local offices.” We believe that the proposed *streams* will enhance both communication and collaboration.

Therefore, the task force recommends that synod allow forty-five minutes to hear a presentation of the “Five Smooth Stones” as background to the proposed “Five Streams” for use as ministry priorities and values for organizational development within the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Grounds:

1. The Five Streams proposal provides a framework for breaking down “silos” and forming collaboration tables.
2. The Five Streams proposal informs the CRCNA’s strategic planning process that is currently under way.
3. The Five Streams proposal emphasizes outcomes rather than the work of agencies.
4. The Five Streams proposal provides a communication model to help the local church and denomination intersect and interact.
5. The Five Streams proposal provides a framework to analyze and continue to review structure and culture.

III. Additional themes

The role of denominations is being questioned in the CRC. Loyalty to the institutions of our denomination has been diminishing. Ministry is becoming more locally focused. The membership of the Christian Reformed Church is more interested in how denominational offices will assist local congregations to do ministry in their own community and less interested in how the denominational offices do ministry “on behalf of the church.” As a result, the conversation is shifting to how to resource congregations to do ministry as we also affirm that congregations resource ministries at the denominational level.

The three “foundational principles” and eleven guidelines adopted by Synod 1987 (see *Agenda for Synod 1987*, pp. 276-80) regarding how the denomination will function are applicable to the current discussion. These principles and guidelines are provided in Appendix B to the TFRSC report

to Synod 2012 (see *Acts of Synod 2012*, pp. 684-85). However, they are not the only principles or guidelines that could serve in our current conversation. A team that has analyzed the possibility of adding faith formation as one of the “streams” has articulated a number of values important to our discussion.

A. The CRCNA is congregation based

In the use of its Church Order, the CRC has always been careful not to construct a hierarchical structure but, rather, to make the local congregation the foundation of the denomination. This principle should also affect the discussion on the structure of the denominational agencies and offices. They should all serve, expand, and enhance the ministries of local congregations in their local and global community. The very purpose of this denominational structure must be to serve, network, lead, support, and learn from the local congregations.

B. The CRCNA needs to work within ecclesiastical structure

By way of its Church Order the CRC has established a number of ecclesiastical structures and judicatories that bind congregations together locally, regionally, and binationally. In the local church, the offices of pastor, elder, deacon, and commissioned pastor represent the leadership of the Lord in his church. Regionally, classes support congregations by bringing them together to address common needs and concerns through such structures and relationships as church visitors and regional pastors. Synod is made up of representatives of local congregations through the classes. Any envisioned denominational structures or changes must work through and for these congregationally based ecclesiastical bodies.

C. The CRCNA needs to utilize a team approach

Just as many congregations are moving from a *committee* structure to a *ministry team* structure, any denominational structure should have the same culture and focus. Instead of siloed agencies or ministries that tend to focus only on their own agendas, a congregation-centered agency or ministry will be a team centered on developing and supporting excellent congregational life and mission.

D. The CRCNA needs to be nimble

Congregations today operate in a fast-changing world. They face challenges and opportunities that cannot wait. The new denominational structure must be nimble enough to come alongside congregations quickly and to recognize significant shifts in the environments in which congregations serve. How can we have both centralized functions and distributed connections in an effort to have both aligned and contextualized support?

E. The CRCNA needs to operate as a network

As a network, any new structure will emphasize the interrelatedness of all components. Information, ideas, practices, movements, and initiatives move in all directions, emerging from the congregations through ecclesiastical structures, engaging regional and binational teams, and flowing back through to congregations. Communication constantly flows in all directions.

F. The CRCNA needs to apply a multidisciplinary approach

Rather than addressing issues with a single strategy or from a single agency or office, a new structure will assume that every issue will require a

number of approaches or disciplines. We need each other, and we need to work together.

G. The CRCNA needs to minimize institutional overhead

The CRCNA asks local congregations for very significant financial resources that may be diminishing in the future. There have been (and there will continue to be) questions regarding duplication of efforts and multiplication of personnel. Any new structure will need to address the possibility of combining agencies, offices, and personnel for the purpose of providing a common focus on congregations and eliminating any unnecessary and costly duplication of efforts.

IV. Principles for establishing *healthy* organizational structure

During the course of our conversation, it has become clearer that our goal is to nurture a *healthy* denominational structure that better serves local congregations in their mission.

Our research identified the following principles for establishing organizational structure as identified in *Business: Through the Eyes of Faith* by Richard C. Chewning, John W. Eby, and Shirley J. Roels (Harper & Row, 1990; pp. 124-25):

1. Develop structures that provide maximum freedom for every employee, based on their levels of maturity and commitment, as long as they work within the objectives of the organization. Decision-making should be at the lowest level possible.
2. Create an environment that rewards individual creativity and initiative. Encourage employees to think of new and better ways of doing things.
3. Give rewards in ways that encourage group effort and cooperation between people and operational units. Rewards should also encourage workers to do what is best for the company in the long run, and not only what makes them look good in the short run.
4. Clearly identify responsibilities, lines of accountability and communication patterns.
5. Develop structures that provide for interaction and collaboration between all people and groups involved in a project, even though they might be in different departments or divisions. They should facilitate good lateral communication.
6. Develop lean structures with as few hierarchical levels as possible.

These principles were identified in a book published by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities that sought to present business as a reflection of God's kingdom. In the same way, our organization as a church needs to be such a reflection.

Common language is a key to good communication. As an aid for development of a common language, we provide in Appendix C a glossary of terms.

V. The nature of a binational denomination—how to incorporate into CRCNA structure

In 2012 the TFRSC identified a key issue: the need to address the nature of being a binational denomination and how best to incorporate binationality into the CRCNA structure. In August 2012, the director of Canadian ministries stepped down from his position. An interim director of Canadian ministries was appointed and given the task of analyzing the position of

director of Canadian ministries. The task force is grateful for the collegiality and collaboration with the TFRSC during this project, and for the coordination of work on the part of the interim director of Canadian ministries.

The interim director of Canadian ministries and the TFRSC have taken an active role in developing and conducting a survey and holding multiple conversations with church representatives. The convergence of the opportunity to review the position of director of Canadian ministries and at the same time address the question of how best to function as a binational denomination has been a wonderful illustration of how the TFRSC can host a “table of conversation and discernment.”

VI. Cultivating binationality in the CRCNA

A. Introduction

In the CRCNA we describe ourselves as a binational church. This is a reality we embrace and a value we want to cultivate. As a binational church, we share a common mission and work out of a shared purpose in different contexts.

This section of the task force report addresses

- the priority of the mission of God.
- a description of binationality—themes and concerns.
- how binationality embraces commonalities and differences.
- ways to cultivate binationality in the CRCNA structure, culture, and leadership.

B. The mission of God

God is on a mission to make his kingdom a reality in the world. He calls his people to incarnate his message of love, hope, reconciliation, and justice in their context. What especially binds us together is the shared call to be engaged in the *mission* of God. As we talk about binationality, organization, culture, or leadership, our discussion always needs to be framed in the context of that mission. Our God is a sending God who wants to reach the nations (Greek: *ethnous*). He provides his Holy Spirit to the church and to each of us in order for us to be people sent to engage in his mission. That is our starting point and needs to be our primary focus.

The mission of God happens in context. The mission of God is to be incarnated into different contexts. There are at least five such contexts.

- Local: The local church as a Christian community ministers in its setting.
- Regional: Local congregations and ministries work together in a classis or region.
- National: National ministries engage in and reflect the unique values and culture of a country.
- Binational: The CRCNA works in a binational setting as we build on each other’s strengths.
- Global: Our mission engagement is global, working through partnerships in many contexts and nations around the world.

Because we believe that all areas of life are to come under the reign of God, the context of our ministry matters. As we carry out our unique mission

as the CRCNA in these various contexts, it is important to see how these contexts shape how we organize for ministry, provide resources to enhance ministry, and make decisions about ministry. Like all of life, how we organize for ministry needs to undergo review and renewal on a regular basis.

C. *Ministry in a binational church*

As we discuss binationality and how it functions in the church, it is important to begin with a description of what we mean by the term *binationality*.

The CRCNA is a Reformed denomination that operates in the United States and Canada. The CRCNA values being a binational denomination for the opportunity it provides to combine pursuit of a common mission with an intentional and meaningful engagement with different national, regional, and local contexts for ministry. Binationality in the CRCNA fosters a culture of gracious space that encourages different expressions of common convictions to achieve common goals of meaningful witness and effective, holistic ministry in different contexts. Intentional recognition of commonalities and significant differences allows adequate flexibility in leadership, structures, and policies to respond to each national context as well as regional, local, and ethnic contexts.

D. *Themes of binationality*

In order to flesh out this definition of binationality, the following themes are important:

1. The CRCNA has a shared purpose in mission
We share a similar passion for God's kingdom work, and we work together for one purpose. The CRCNA has a shared sense of its mission, expressed in congregations and ministries in Canada and the United States and through partnerships around the world.
2. One church—different contexts/cultures
We are a binational church, working as one denomination in two countries in North America. Binationality involves two national identities—each working in different contexts. We recognize the cultural context of each country and how the distinct political and legal realities shape each context and influence how we engage in ministry.
3. Different contexts and cultures are expressed in the way we do ministry
We build on each other's respective strengths and learn to honor differences that are reflected geographically, culturally, and socially in the different countries and regions. This takes organizational shape and is reflected in the way in which we make decisions locally and nationally.
4. Organizational space is provided to reflect different contexts
We take a posture of making gracious organizational space to reflect different contexts. Developing that space means recognizing the need to discern how to do ministry by setting goals, identifying strategies, and developing action for each context.

E. Some concerns about binationality

As we discuss binationality, some concerns and questions are often raised. They include some of the following:

1. Fear of separation or division

Often the discussion about binationality prompts fear of separation or division. Then the discussion revolves around separation or conformity. This fear of division stifles space for legitimate differentiation. The press toward being singular causes us to lose the richness of possible options in-between those two positions that honor binationality.

2. Fear that one nation dominates the other

There is a fear that one nation may dominate or overshadow the other by its size, location of most of staff, and so forth. There is a sense that there can be unequal voices, especially in the decision-making process about ministry.

3. Management tends to be centralized

A more centralized approach to management and organization leads to a model that assumes a single authority and less differentiated space for building relevant ministry in each nation.

It is important to allow the key themes about binationality and these concerns to interact with each other in order to find our way forward together. There are differing approaches to various ministry activities in the two countries. By enhancing the unique approach in each country, we can also bring those strengths to each other to inform each other for our understanding together.

E. Framing the conversation

Often the conversation about binationality is framed as an “either/or”: either we are one denomination, or we will split into two. When this kind of polarity enters the conversation, it makes it almost impossible to have a substantive conversation about nuanced alternatives. In this approach, binationality and nationality become polar opposites requiring people to choose one or the other.

In our denominational covenant, we work out of a spirit of trust with an emphasis on mutuality. We find ways in which one part of the denomination can bless the other. The move is not to independence but to interdependence. The local church does have a unique place and a central place in our polity, but that place does not make it independent of classis or synod.

In our denominational covenant we work out of a spirit of trust in order to cultivate and honor diversity. Each of the various partners must be given space to reflect their unique setting and context in tandem with our shared purpose. By respecting each context and pressing fully into what it means to engage in ministry in that context, we honor the uniqueness and bring those strengths into the shared conversation. We recognize and respect each for what it brings to the partnership.

G. Commonalities and differences contribute to effectiveness of ministry

A shared North American culture and history facilitate common action to meet common challenges. Common features that were frequently identified in a survey on binationality include the role of immigration in the CRCNA

and the fact that Canada and the United States are both wealthy, highly developed countries. Common challenges include being a prophetic witness in an increasingly secularized and materialistic North American context and fulfilling our global responsibilities.

At the same time, there are significant differences between the United States and Canada in population size, culture, historical development, and governing systems. These need careful consideration in the development of effective ministries in each context. As someone stated in the survey on binationality, “generic North American history and culture does not exist.” National differences are significant for effective ministry, in addition to local, regional, and ethnic differences.

Within common areas, differentiation may be needed to effectively witness in national context. Immigration, for example, is a common history. Current immigration trends, however, differ substantively. Immigration to the United States is dominated by working-class Hispanics and Latinos who have a Christian background (mostly Roman Catholic); while immigration to Canada is dominated by middle-class Asians and Africans who are largely non-Christian. To be missional in these two contexts will require differentiation. A one-size-fits-all mentality will hinder rather than advance common goals.

Within some areas of ministry previously identified as unique to one nation are common themes in the other nation that warrant more attention. Canadian aboriginal ministries were established to work with people who are affected by how Canada treats its First Peoples, distinct from CRC ministry with Native Americans in the United States. As each develops, areas of commonality in history and current challenges may lead to greater collaboration.

CRCNA ministry is affected by both commonalities and differences in our national contexts. Following are major themes that emerged from a survey we conducted on how binationality functions within the CRCNA:

1. The mix of common and differentiated approaches varies by ministry area

Some areas of ministry, such as global missions, benefit from a higher level of common action to pool resources and manage costs. Other areas, such as race relations, chaplaincy, ecumenical action, social justice, and aboriginal/American native ministries require a higher level of differentiation to be effective in each national context. Some areas of ministry, such as diaconal outreach and church planting, give more weight to local and regional context. Some areas, such as faith formation and training, are most effectively pursued with attention to both common and differentiated approaches.

2. Intentional consideration of national contextual differences is essential for effective ministry

Deliberate attention is needed in the planning and delivery of ministries to determine when commonality or differentiation is most effective. Too often standardized approaches are assumed to be applicable in diverse settings; leaders need to intentionally create organizational space for church members to deliberate about their context and develop effective strategies for engagement that have the potential to transform culture.

Ignoring binationality has costs, including missed opportunities for ministry. Taking full advantage of opportunities in chaplaincy, for example, requires recognition that the Canadian health care system operates differently than the U.S. health care system. Prisons and the correctional system in Canada are managed differently than in the United States, with implications for prison chaplaincy. While the U.S. and Canadian military cooperate in some conflict zones, understanding how each approaches chaplaincy is essential to the process of developing chaplaincies within the military. Paying attention to binationality benefits ministry.

Differences in the roles of governing agencies and the roles of churches in the public life of each nation have implications for ministry from diaconal outreach to ecumenical activities. World Renew, for example, has benefited from particular Canadian approaches to international development. Community services, an expanding area of ministry for deacons and churches, are affected by differences in social policy and the funding of public services. While churches in the United States need to shape their public witness in the context of an ethos and laws shaped by separation of church and state, churches in Canada face the challenge of adjusting from more recognized roles for ecumenical church bodies in shaping public life and public policies to more organic ways of working for justice in Canada.

H. Rationale for changes in organization, culture, and leadership

As we consider the reasons for making change in organization, culture, and leadership, it is helpful to review the main rationale for those changes.

1. Reviewing our structures and ways of organizing for ministry is part of our Reformed posture for ongoing renewal.
2. The different contexts for ministry require expression regarding how to carry out ministry in each setting.
3. Conversational and planning space is needed to provide opportunities for dialogue to consider trends, share learnings, and explore strategies. These spaces need to be intentional.
4. There are opportunities we can identify for the church in each country to do what God is calling us to do. Without specific attention to these opportunities in a national setting, we could lose these opportunities.
5. The local church needs to make a significant missional shift to engage with its local community. We need to strengthen our bonds and networks nationally, binationally, and globally. This has implications for how the denomination resources classes and congregations.
6. Denominational leadership especially needs to focus on animating vision and engagement in ministry in the community locally, nationally, and globally. It is a leadership that is yearning to walk alongside to discern how God is leading us in the mission.

I. Ways to cultivate binationality in the CRCNA structure, culture, and leadership

Our conversation about binationality and its implications for organization, culture, or leadership needs to be framed in the context of the mission of God. As we do our work, it is God's mission and this vision that shape what we do. We need to find ways to cultivate binationality in the CRCNA

structure, culture, and leadership. This is an ongoing process of renewal. Following are five possible ways to cultivate binationality in the CRCNA, including specific suggestions on how to translate each into action.

1. Gathering to discern vision and understanding of our context

We must intentionally and regularly gather in our respective national contexts to understand trends that are happening, the culture in which we are doing our living, and the implications for our ministry as a church.

- a. Visioning and planning at the classis level needs to be cultivated for member churches and related ministries to do creative work to discern their context and to resource churches and people to engage in their mission.
- b. National conversations for members of the CRC to deliberate on ministry priorities and strategies for effective witness within the respective contexts should be developed and held on a regular basis (every 2-3 years), either in conjunction with synod meetings or as free-standing meetings, to which classes would send appropriate delegations (i.e., triennial conference). Regional gatherings could be included as a step between individual classes and a national forum.

This process of discernment and visioning needs to involve a dynamic interaction between the local/classical initiative and a national/denominational initiative. In this way there would be significant contributions from the local context and also the national context and, as the two interact, a discernment of priorities for ministry and vision in contexts that are both classically, nationally, and binationally based. The process would complement and interact with the vision and strategic plan of the CRCNA.

2. Developing an organizational culture

We must cultivate a posture of heightened awareness and intentionality to engage with our respective contexts and foster gracious space for differentiated approaches within a commitment to mutual accountability for a common mission.

- a. The potential need for differentiation to effectively respond in a national context should be considered in relation to every ministry rather than assuming general commonality with a few exceptions for so-called “unique” national ministries.
- b. Deliberate consideration of each national context and implications for ministry, along with respect for local and regional contexts, ought to be incorporated into the mandates, planning processes, and accountability mechanisms of administrative and governing structures of the CRCNA.

3. Senior leadership position

Note: There is a process under way to discern the role and function of the director of Canadian ministries. That process will propose further definition of this senior leadership position to the BOT at its May 2013 meeting.

A senior Canadian leadership position that works closely with the executive director (ED) of the CRCNA is mandated to cultivate and nurture vision and facilitate ongoing strategic planning. To make binationality an authentic leadership value, a major component of the ED position will have to be the intentional advancement of a consultative and flourishing binational organizational culture and communion.

- a. The senior Canadian leadership role works closely with the ED in order to nurture and cultivate a vision in both countries. These roles provide regular reporting about progress in discerning and implementing the vision and the proposed strategies. There are a variety of options that can be considered for the senior Canadian leadership role.
 - b. The senior Canadian leadership position and the ED lead and regularly report to the BOT on these and other initiatives to cultivate binationality in the CRCNA.
4. Senior staff team to develop collaboration
- A senior staff team at the national level, currently known as the Canadian Ministries Team, should focus on ministry goals and priorities and areas of potential collaboration with churches, classes, and the agencies and ministries.
- a. A staff team should review the implementation of denominational and agency ministry plans and recommend changes to ensure that plans and programs effectively address the trends, issues, and challenges identified at national, regional, and local levels.
 - b. A staff team should be linked to regional- and classis-based initiatives in order to interact with learnings “on the ground” and be encouraged to go “where the energy is.” The intent would be to develop strategies on which the agencies would work in order to better resource classes and congregations. The staff team would give input to a joint binational staff team (such as the Ministries Leadership Council) that would give overall leadership on how to translate denominational priorities into effective strategies for ministry.
5. Governance
- The Board of Trustees and the boards of agencies should cultivate attention to the discernment and decision-making process for authorizing and implementing ministries in each national context.
- a. The Board of Trustees can cultivate an awareness of national context by having a gathering of board members in each national setting that can help interpret the culture and priorities of each national context into the full Board meetings. For the Board of Trustees (BOT), this could mean the creation of appropriate structures within the BOT, such as standing committees for U.S. and Canadian ministries, with a mandate to advise the BOT on national level priorities and strategies in all areas of ministry.
 - b. The Board of Trustees, as well as the boards of agencies and institutions, can pay particular attention to the decision making process toward authorizing and carrying out ministries in each country in

compliance with the laws of that country and its accounting expectations, as well as to intentional ways in which boards make decisions about ministries happening in each nation.

J. Closing comments on binationality

Implementation of the above suggestions would respond to the themes and concerns about binationality raised in the issues identified by the task force and in the survey on binationality recently conducted by the task force. More important, pursuing these directions would enhance the ministries of the CRCNA in both national contexts to achieve our common mission.

We recommend that synod instruct the Board of Trustees to explore the proposed pathways for cultivating binationality as presented in this report, including its governance implications, in consultation with the interim director of Canadian ministries and the executive director.

VII. Analyze the structure and culture that will best support and be most relevant for the local church

This topic has been the ongoing work of the TFRSC and is the overall trajectory of our work. This task will not be completed during this year, but we desire to provide an update to the Board of Trustees, synod, and the church regarding how we have continued to address this task.

In the past year, we desired to model participatory management by providing an opportunity for leaders and staff within the CRCNA structure not only to identify concerns but also to give insights on how to address those concerns. The material from this survey has been summarized according to various themes and is attached as Appendix D. We appreciate all the insights shared, and we note that while there is a “clustering” of thoughts and themes, there are also divergent approaches. This divergence illustrates the breadth of the challenge as we continue our work.

As mentioned earlier, an additional survey and analysis focused on the issue of binationality. This material provided insights for findings presented within this report as summarized above.

In addition to the foregoing, the TFRSC has maintained contact with the work of the Executive Director Search Committee, the Strategic Planning Task Group, and the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team about the Ministry Plan priorities of the denomination.

The Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture is continuing to analyze what could be learned from an analysis of the structure of the Evangelical Covenant Church as well as to respond to other materials, input, and questions directed to the TFRSC.

Based on our studies, conversation, and collaboration tables, the following summarizes the information received around culture, collaboration, and communication:

A. Culture norms, issues, and challenges

- There has been a general increase in trust between staff and the leadership under the current interim executive director.
- The CRCNA is ready to enter into a “renewal” stage that focuses on increased participation, collaboration, and respect for a diversity of ideas.

Recognition of the need for renewal has led to prayerful discernment regarding the pathway forward for local churches and the denomination.

- The current leadership understands the need for change to address denominational issues and is capable of changing culture. In addition, it is currently mapping external and internal environmental forces to better understand the issues and how to approach the changes.
- The denomination has made great strides in developing information, resources, and assistance for local churches. However, there appears to be a growing disconnect between the local church and the denomination.
- There is consensus that current culture within the CRCNA needs to change and improve.
- Newcomers and new congregations do not easily embrace the culture of the denomination, and the culture of the denomination does not easily embrace newcomers and new congregations.
- The culture of the denomination may be hindering the growth of the church and its ministries.
- Norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions in the CRCNA differ between the United States and Canada.
- “Things don’t always get done” largely because of the red tape, bureaucracy, and lack of coordination, participation, and collaboration.
- The current structure supports an authoritative (command and control) culture over a collaborative culture.
- Staff do not generally feel empowered to make decisions within the context of their positions, but feel strongly they have good ideas and desire to contribute.
- Staff do not always feel they can voice their opinion freely—in part because the leadership does not always invite a diversity of ideas.
- Staff are not always apprized of new developments as they arise; nor do they always communicate with the leadership and receive the expected positive feedback.
- Although the CRCNA has stated values, they are not necessarily modeled or practiced throughout the organization.
- Conflict is not always dealt with swiftly or managed effectively.
- The CRCNA is not adapting to the changing environment in its congregations, in North American society as a whole, and globally.
- Ecclesiology determines our mission, vision, and strategies. Some believe that God’s mission and vision for our denomination should shape our ecclesiology and our strategies for the future of his kingdom.

B. Suggestions for improvement to culture, collaboration, and communication

- Increase participation at all levels within the denomination (including congregations) as key to increased collaboration, communication, creativity, innovation, passion, and effective decision making in supporting local churches, ministries, and programs.
- Develop a culture that “invites engagement” and supports the consideration of a diversity of ideas from persons and groups through encouragement and recognition.
- Continually examine how societal changes are affecting congregations and what vigorous responses can be made as a denomination to address those changes.

- Continually explore ways to assist local congregations in responding to their needs as they change by helping to develop a culture of regular exploration and analysis.
- Explore what collaborative tools need to be employed to unify ministries within a common vision for the denomination.
- Exemplify servant leadership as a core value within the CRCNA where the denomination more clearly serves local churches.
- Examine how a decentralized regional, classical, or organizational system can better support and serve congregations through increased training, resourcing, encouragement, and prevention rather than reaction and centralization.
- Examine and implement a culture where institutional loyalty and governance are replaced successfully with grassroots participation.
- Communicate . . . communicate . . . communicate.
- Develop a culture that invites local churches to seek the CRCNA as “the partner of choice” for mission, resources, and God’s work without the bureaucracy normally associated with the denomination.
- Examine ways of developing a culture within congregations that prevents or effectively manages conflict.
- Reward risk-taking when it is done in union with the Lord, by his Spirit, and for the well-being of the denomination and kingdom work. Risk-taking allows for greater empowerment of staff than the current organizational culture and structures.
- Create a culture that continually examines how women and people of various ethnicities can play important leadership roles for change and renewal across the denomination.

The task force recommends that synod instruct the Board of Trustees to encourage the executive director to identify the process for providing participatory training to staff and the BOT in order to develop a “collaborative culture” where staff, leaders, and congregants are heard and work together to share, develop, and implement a common vision for the denomination.

The task force recommends that synod instruct the Board of Trustees to encourage the executive director and leadership be mandated to explore, embrace, model, promote, and implement a cultural model in the CRCNA that enhances collaboration and effective communication within (and between) its offices, the Board of Trustees, and congregations as described in the above suggestions.

In addition, the task force recommends that synod instruct the Board of Trustees to, within eighteen months of being in the position, request that the newly appointed executive director initiate a survey similar to the Wilder Research Collaboration Factors survey with CRCNA departments, ministries, and agencies to determine success in making a cultural change within pre-determined “projects” requiring three or more groups working together on a particular ministry.

For the benefit of the newly appointed ED and the task force, it is recommended that synod appoint the new executive director to serve on the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

VIII. Delineate the continued role and support structure for specialized ministries

Sometimes the naming of a concern begins the process of addressing the concern. That appears to be the case for the CRC specialized ministries. The need to address the continued role and support structure for specialized ministries was a key theme identified by the TFRSC in its report to Synod 2012. This theme was also present in the initial survey of staff and ministry leaders.

The specialized ministries include such offices as Race Relations, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, Safe Church Ministry, Disability Concerns, Pastor-Church Relations, and Social Justice and Hunger Action. A key guideline affirmed by Synod 1987 was that “new ministries should be placed within existing agencies.” As various offices have arisen, that particular guideline has not been followed. While the “edge” of an advocacy voice has been served by separate offices, the joining of these concerns into a chorus that would manifest greater coordination and accountability has not occurred.

In response to the issue raised by the specialized ministries, we have been advised by the interim executive director that an experiment is unfolding in which some of these offices are clustering together. For example, Safe Church Ministry and Sustaining Congregational Excellence are now seeing their work and ministry coordinated with Pastor-Church Relations.

In the coming years, the task force will address the board structure of all agencies. At the same time, we do not foresee that the continued, independent operation of these small specialized ministries (sometimes one- or two-person offices) is the pathway for greater coordination and accountability in order to more effectively and efficiently serve the church. As a result, we recommend the continued use of an interim “clustering” of such offices as we seek different models, and we want to provide space for experiments as we seek to develop a support structure that is more effective in providing greater service for the local church.

IX. Define how administrative support services function within a denominational office

By definition, the department units of the denominational offices—Human Resources, Finance, Advancement, Information Technology, Communications, Fleet and Facilities—provide support services for the agencies and the denominational office. They currently serve under the direction of the director of finance and administration, who serves under the supervision of the executive director.

An analysis of the past administration makes clear that the nexus of connection and intersection between the agencies and the executive director needs greater clarity regarding how each department interacts with each agency. This clarification of role, function, and posture has been part of the ongoing work of the current interim executive director and deputy executive director.

X. Revise senior executive leadership position descriptions

As synod moves to the appointment of a new executive director (ED), it is clear that the CRCNA will need to develop a senior executive leadership team with the input of the new ED and take into account the ED’s gifts. This

process can occur within the next year, prior to Synod 2014; such timing would be very helpful for the work and ministry of the new ED. As such, the task force asks that synod affirm that the Board of Trustees is authorized to approve revised senior leadership position descriptions as presented to the Board by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture in consultation with the newly appointed ED. Upon approval of the revised position descriptions, appropriate search processes may begin in order to fill the senior leadership team prior to Synod 2014.

XI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant privilege of the floor to Rev. Joel R. Boot, chair, and Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, reporter, when the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture is discussed.

B. That synod allow forty-five minutes to hear a presentation of the “Five Smooth Stones” as background to the proposed “Five Streams” for use as ministry priorities and values for organizational development within the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Grounds:

1. The Five Streams proposal provides a framework for breaking down “silos” and forming collaboration tables.
2. The Five Streams proposal informs the CRCNA’s strategic planning process that is currently under way.
3. The Five Streams proposal emphasizes outcomes rather than the work of agencies.
4. The Five Streams proposal provides a communication model to help the local church and denomination intersect and interact.
5. The Five Streams proposal provides a framework to analyze and continue to review structure and culture.

C. That synod endorse the ministry priorities as identified in the “Five Streams” document in Appendix B to this report for discussion and discernment within the church, its agencies, boards, and planning groups.

D. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to explore the proposed pathways for cultivating binationality, including its governance implications, presented in this report, in consultation with the senior leader within Canada and the executive director (secs. V-VI).

E. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to encourage the executive director to identify the process for providing participatory training to staff and the BOT in order to develop a “collaborative culture” in which staff, leaders, and congregants are heard and work together to share, develop, and implement a common vision for the denomination (sec. VII, B).

F. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to mandate the executive director and leadership to explore, embrace, model, promote, and implement a cultural model in the CRCNA that enhances collaboration and effective communication within (and between) its offices, the Board of Trustees, and congregations as described in the above suggestions (sec. VII, B).

G. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to request that the newly appointed executive director, within eighteen months of being in the position, initiate a survey similar to the Wilder Research Collaboration Factors survey with CRCNA departments, ministries, and agencies to determine success in making a cultural change within predetermined “projects” requiring three or more groups working together on a particular ministry (sec. VII, B).

H. That synod appoint the new executive director to serve on the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (sec. VII, B).

I. That synod affirm that the Board of Trustees is authorized to approve revised senior leadership position descriptions as presented to the Board by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture in consultation with the newly appointed ED. Upon approval of the revised position descriptions, appropriate search processes may begin in order to fill the senior leadership team prior to Synod 2014 (sec. X).

J. That synod thank Rev. Peter Borgdorff and Rev. Joel R. Boot for their service as secretary and chair, respectively, to the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture
Calvin J. Aardsma
Joel R. Boot, chair
R. Scott Greenway
Julius T. Medenblik, reporter
Peter Meerveld
Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo
Terry Vander Aa
Jane Vander Haagen
Katherine G. Vandergrift
Colin Watson, Sr.

Appendix A

Five Smooth Stones Report

Organizing for Mission (Covenant Executive Board, October 2011)

Background and Introduction

Throughout the history of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) there have been defining moments that have carried this movement to new levels of faithfulness and fruitfulness. We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses whose legacy of vision, sacrifice, and priority over the course of 126 years has moved us forward at critical junctures.

Now it is our turn. Organizing for Mission is a summons to our own deeper levels of resolve and determination for the sake of God’s work in the world.

When I became president I identified the core assignment for this season this way: to advance the mission while bridging to the future. This is fundamentally a season of positioning the Covenant for a strong future, even while attending to the mission that is currently ours.

To frame the review we have undertaken a three question process to understand our mission, to clarify our priorities, and to propose ways of expanding our capacity to serve.

The first question is the *purpose* question: What are we trying to accomplish in the lives of real people in real places?

In a commitment to the full dimensionality of God's work in the world, we use this understanding:

We join God in God's mission to see more disciples, among more populations, in a more caring and just world.

The second question is the *strategy* question: What are the key priorities that will help us accomplish that mission?

We have identified five key priorities. These core ministries, sometimes referred to as our "five smooth stones" recalling David going into battle with Goliath, are:

- Develop leaders
- Start and strengthen churches
- Make and deepen disciples
- Love mercy – Do Justice
- Serve globally

That leads to the third question, which is the *mobilizing* question: What is the best alignment of personnel, structures and resources to accomplish those strategies?

It is this third question that this report addresses by proposing a series of 27 recommendations.

Process

The October, 2010 meeting of the ECC Executive Board authorized the president to undertake this review, with a report to be made to the October, 2011 meeting. Evelyn Johnson, former superintendent of the Pacific Southwest Conference, was assigned as project manager. The process has had four primary stages.

Stage one, the balance of fall 2010, was framing the scope of the assignment and the identification of values to maintain in the design process. See appendix 1.

Stage two was the recruitment and activation of a 20 person project team representative of both the structural and demographic mosaic of the ECC. This included two representatives from each of the following: ECC executive board, conference executive boards, council of administrators, council of superintendents, and institutions. The balance was made up of individuals representative of the congregational and demographic diversity of the ECC, with a bias towards younger leaders. See appendix 2 for listing of members.

In stage three, beginning in January 2011, the project team gave itself to a current state assessment, using task groups to look broadly at all that is currently being undertaken. An extensive array of background materials, surveys, and interviews informed the work throughout this and the next phase. See appendix 3.

Stage four then moved toward the future, with a new round of different task groups proposing ways forward in each of the five priority areas. These initial proposals were then reviewed and refined by the entire team at an

August retreat, with all refined proposals supported by the entire team. An additional set of recommendations around institutions and corporations was also affirmed by the entire team.

Since that time these have been reviewed with and further refined by feedback gained from both the council of superintendents and ECC administrators.

Anticipated Result and Required Resolve

Key to the organizational design work was the need to articulate an anticipated outcome, or future footprint, around which capacity issues could be addressed. Essentially, this was the need to envision the potential scope and scale of the ministry of the ECC over the next decade to use as a planning point.

The basic anticipated footprint is this:

- 1,000 congregations
- >30% of congregations among populations of color or intentionally multi-ethnic
- 250,000 aggregate attendance on any given Sunday (implied constituency of 400,000 regular attenders)
- 2,500 credentialed clergy
- 1,000,000 lives impacted globally through international partnerships and initiatives

While these figures represent an aggressive outcome, their deeper importance is pointing to the required resolve necessary to achieve the result.

For example, to achieve 1,000 congregations means church planting must remain a central priority to our mission here in the United States and Canada across all conferences, since this represents the planting of the next 200 congregations. This in turn means we will need to address resourcing all conferences in church planting, including those with limited finances and staffing. It likewise implies a sustained commitment to congregational vitality, taking a preventative approach to congregational health, ensuring that more of our congregations have strong traction into the future.

To achieve greater than 30% diversity of congregations will require that one-half of all church plants be among populations of color or intentionally multi-ethnic. This in turn requires a fresh look at long term and sustainable strategies for ethnic and multi-ethnic ministries, particularly for immigrant and urban contexts. It will mean living with even greater intentionality around the Five-fold Test in becoming a more authentic multi-ethnic movement (appendix 4). And it will call us into areas of biblically-rooted compassion, mercy and justice to address societal matters having a disproportionate impact on constituent groups.

To see 250,000 in average attendance means we will need to be resolutely engaged in evangelism, with people further finding meaningful pathways to deepen faith and obedience in their walk with God.

To see a global impact of one million lives will require not only the continued sending of missionaries and partnerships that strengthen national churches, but additional focused initiatives, and coming alongside congregationally-generated projects .

All of this requires capable leadership from clergy and laity alike. To see 2,500 clergy implies a deeper commitment to raising up the vocational option for women and men, as well as contextualized and life-long delivery systems of training. For laity, it implies a major step forward in the development and delivery of relevant resourcing.

Yes, the anticipated footprint drives design capacity considerations. But garnering the required resolve around the underlying implications will be the decisive factor for achieving progress.

Design Considerations

The scenarios that follow for each of the five ministry priorities are NOT organizational charts for departments and conferences per se. Rather, they deal with mechanisms that clarify responsibility, expand capacity, and increase coordination.

Throughout there is a desire to bring resourcing closer to congregations through the resourcing of conferences, as well as through taking advantage of expertise already resident in our ministerium, laity, and congregations.

Certain aspects related to scale, identity, resourcing, coordination, and research and development continue to be well-served from a center point.

The five ministry priorities serve as the organizing framework. To approach these, the existing departmental structure is the baseline that is used. It was felt important to first live into the priorities, and then let any lessons learned inform future departmental reorganization, if any. There is sufficient flexibility in the current by-laws to begin by living into the articulated priorities through a cross-departmental approach.

The existing conference structure is likewise the beginning baseline that is used. Long-established loyalties, uneven interior regions of strength within conferences themselves, organizational complexities tied to conference institutions (such as camps), and added administrative costs mitigated against the redrawing of boundaries. The availability of staff to smaller conferences and the scalability of staff in larger conferences is a key challenge in resourcing mission and ministry across the ECC. There is a concept for how neighboring conferences adjacent to areas of opportunity can jointly plant a new region (appendix 5).

All institutions and corporations are identified within one of the five priorities. A separate set of recommendations focused on internal processes is included. The full report on institutions and corporations is found as appendix 6.

The focus of this assignment is the five key ministry priorities. There are other important undergirding operational areas that provide integral support to the whole of our mission such as communication, information technology, business functions, financial services, insurance and pension benefits, donor development, event support, and human resources. Once direction in the five areas is clarified through action on accompanying recommendations, we will be able to address opportunities and approaches in these areas as well.

Capacity Mechanisms

In the scenarios that follow, there is reference to various new mechanisms to expand capacity and increase coordination.

Collaboration Table: An innovating, catalyzing, coordinating structure to advance the cohesive development of a core ministry priority.

Expert Practitioners/Best Practice Centers: Individuals and settings that model and share effective ministry practices.

Networks: Affinity groupings around a ministry area or context for mutual encouragement and best-practice sharing.

Regional Services: ECC staff or shared conference staff providing a service to multiple conferences.

“Chief Ministry Officer”: A new position (yet to be titled) that helps operationally in the collaboration, coordination, execution and attainment of ministry priorities across departments and conferences, freeing the president to focus on strategic direction, fund development, and cohesive activities.

Partner Organizations: Partnerships with like-minded entities where collaboration can dramatically leverage capacity.

Scenario Summaries

Following you will find scenarios for each of the five ministry priority areas. Each includes a vision for that area, a delineation of basic responsibilities, a schematic to picture that inter-relatedness, and a set of recommendations to move towards implementation.

Following the five scenarios are a set of additional general recommendations that influence all five areas.

This is followed by a set of recommendations for various processes related to institutions and corporations.

All of the recommendations were approved by the Covenant Executive Board on October 15, 2011.

Develop Leaders

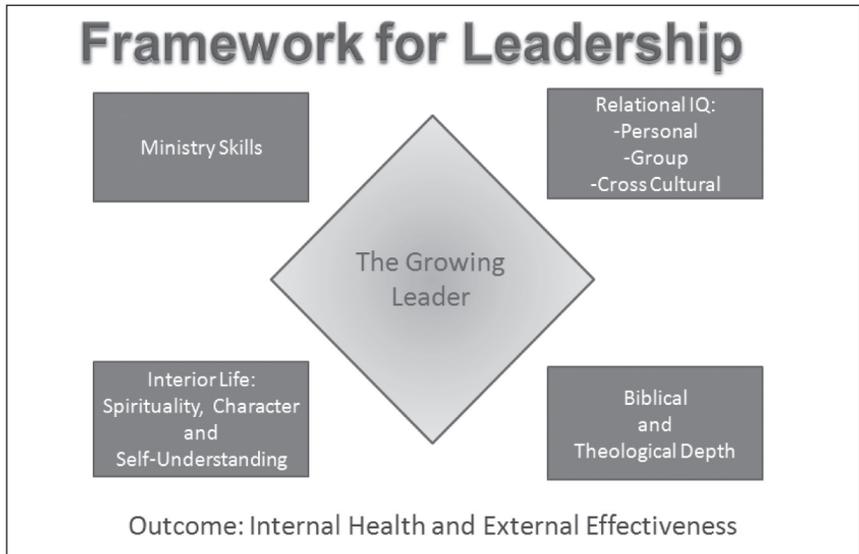
Key vision for Developing Leaders: That through expanded capacity and enhanced coordination, the ECC raise up and develop leaders (clergy and lay, female and male, reflective of the ECC mosaic), for the ever-increasing challenges of ministry. In believing that everyone can grow in leadership, we envision in particular that life-time vocational development will be the accepted norm among clergy with regular and contextual growth opportunities; that clergy will have defined resources for career-stage thresholds (entry, mid-career, legacy); and that lay leadership resourcing will be elevated.

Key Considerations to Accomplishing the Vision

1. That a baseline leadership construct guide the development of leadership resources.*
2. That all dimensions of the Covenant already do and will continue to contribute to the development of clergy and lay leaders.
3. That an ECC Center for Leadership be established that would convene, coordinate, communicate, and collaborate across contributors related to clergy development, and do the same plus create resources related to lay leadership development.

4. That Ordered Ministry staffing be configured to include service-region resourcing (e.g., east/west) for conferences related to credentialing; care and discipline; and clergy development pathways.**

*OFM Recommended Leadership Construct:



**OFM Recommended Regional Assistance through Ordered Ministry Credentialing:

- Resource for conferences
- Train conference Committees on Ministerial Standing
- Maintain standards
- Seminary site visits

Care/Discipline:

- First responder along with superintendent
- Plan and lead disclosure meeting with superintendent
- Plan and monitor implementation of aftercare process for pastor and congregation

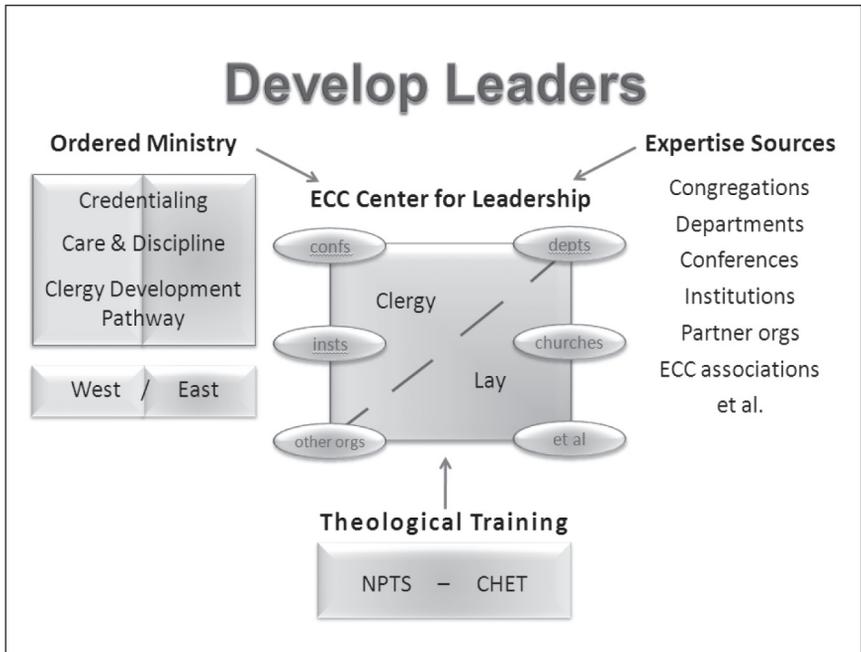
Clergy Development Pathway:

- Covenant Orientation
- First Call resourcing
- New Call/Revisioning (i.e., mid-career)
- Finish Well

Implementation Recommendations Approved

1. That the creation of an ECC Center for Leadership be affirmed, undergirded by a common leadership framework, with the president appointing a scope and design task group to bring an implementation proposal for reporting by June, 2012 including timeline and funding considerations.

- That the staffing of the Department of Ordered Ministry be configured to include the regionalization of key responsibilities be affirmed, and that the president and executive minister of ordered ministry convene a task group to develop an implementation strategy for reporting by June, 2012 including timeline and funding considerations.



Start and Strengthen Churches

Key Vision for Starting and Strengthening Churches: For the ECC to grow to 1,000+ congregations; for half of all new churches to be among populations of color or intentionally multi-ethnic, bringing the ECC ethnic and multi-ethnic mosaic of congregations to greater than 30%; for every congregation to be a healthy, missional church.

Key Considerations to Accomplishing the Vision

- Every conference have direct access to a Director of Church Planting (DCP) and a Director of Congregational Vitality (DCV).
- Reset shared standards, protocols, and strategies for church planting
- Need for multiple avenues of church planting and congregational vitality funding resources for sustainable funding across all conferences and ECC.
- Need to revision long term, sustainable strategies for ethnic and multi-ethnic congregations, particularly in urban and immigrant contexts.

Key Functions and Services in Starting and Strengthening Churches

Starting Churches:

Shared between denomination and conference:

- Develop standards for assessing church planters, projects, training, and coaching
- Concurrence on project design, pastor called, and funding schedule in any church planting project
- Funding strategies

Denomination:

- Resourcing and coordinating conference DCPs
- Research and development
- Concurring with conference DCP selection
- Affinity coaching and networks
- Facility location services
- Revenue generation
- Resourcing capital fund drives

Conference:

- Frontend identification of potential church planters
- Developing project design
- Training
- Coaching
- Contextualizing vision
- Revenue generation

Strengthening Churches:

Shared between denomination and conference:

- Develop resources to picture and measure congregational health
- Develop training and coaching resources
- Identify “restart” pastors
- Funding strategies to sustain congregational vitality ministries
- Develop strategy for congregational conflict resolution

Denomination:

- Resourcing and coordinating DCVs
- Research and development for congregational vitality

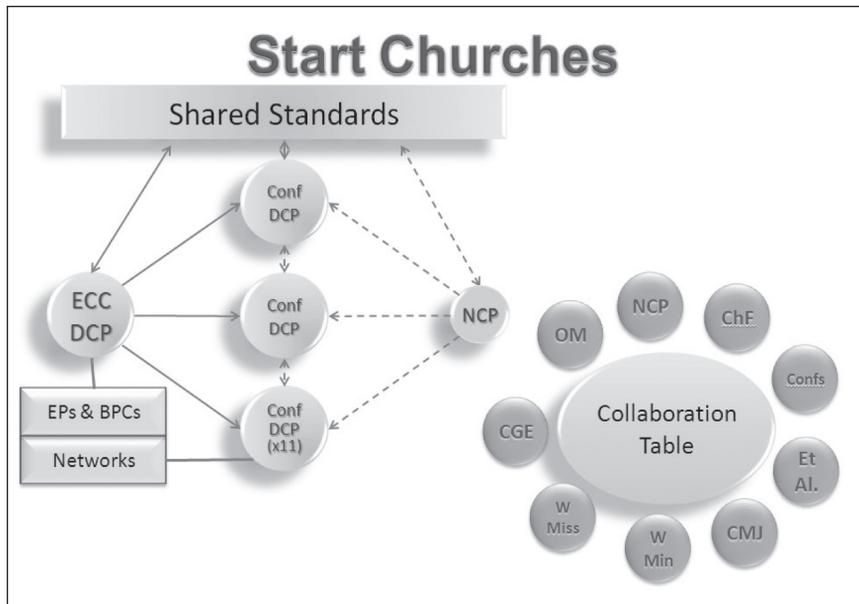
Conference:

- Coaching implementation
- Conflict resources (1st responder)
- Search committee assistance

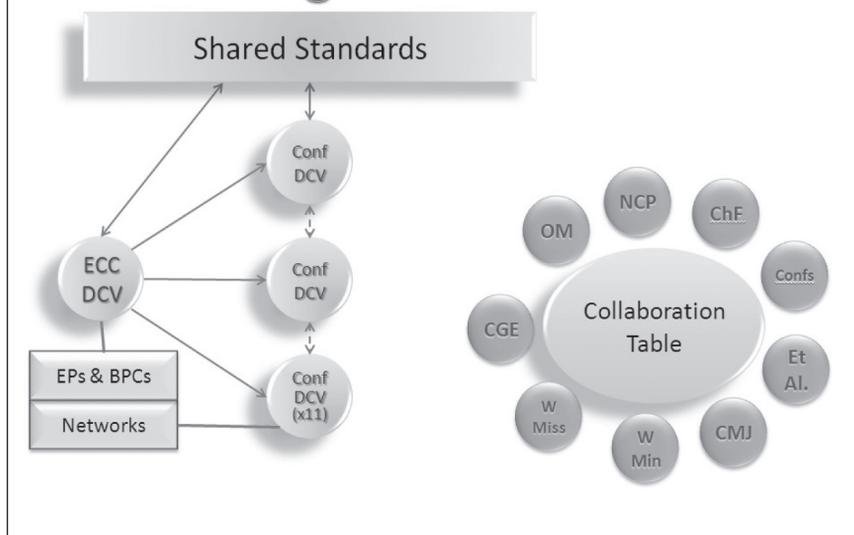
Implementation Recommendations Approved

3. That the standard for every conference to have access to a director of church planting and a director of congregational vitality be adopted, and that the president appoint a task group, in concurrence with the executive minister of CGE and the chair of the council of superintendents, to develop an action plan, including timeline and funding considerations, for review by the council of superintendents by January 2012.

4. That the timeliness of resetting of standards, protocols, and strategies related to church planting be affirmed, and that the president appoint a task group, in concurrence with the executive minister of CGE and the chair of the council of superintendents, to do such with an action plan for review by relevant parties by January 2012.
5. That the need for every conference and the ECC to have sustainable funding for church planting and congregational vitality be affirmed and that the president appoint a task group in concurrence with the executive minister of CGE and chair of the council of superintendents to develop sustainable funding strategies for church planting and congregational vitality across all conferences and the ECC with an action plan for review by the council of superintendents in January 2012.
6. That the need to revision sustainable strategies for ethnic and multi-ethnic congregations, particularly in urban and immigrant contexts, be affirmed, and that the president present this commitment to the Ethnic Commission in November 2011, and from input received establish appropriate task groups with preliminary reporting back by June 2012.
7. That the need to develop a church conflict resolution strategy for serving churches be affirmed and that the president appoint a task force with the concurrence of the executive minister of the ordered ministry and chair of the council of superintendents to explore options with a report for review by the council of superintendents in September 2012.



Strengthen Churches



Make and Deepen Disciples

Key Vision for Making and Deepening Disciples: That the ECC grow to 250,000 in aggregate attendance, with every church seeing people come to faith in Christ every year, and every church having clear pathways and opportunities for every person to deepen faith, nurtured by Covenant identity.

Key Considerations to Accomplishing the Vision

1. Making and deepening disciples is foundational to ECC identity. Capturing intentionality in both evangelism and spiritual growth underpins all that we do; without it all other ministry priorities of starting and strengthening churches, developing leaders, loving mercy-doing justice, and serving globally suffer.
2. The primary responsibility for making and deepening disciples lies in the local church through dimensions such as worship, preaching, teaching, fellowship, service, and mission.
3. There are resources available to congregations through sources other than the ECC
4. There are increasing numbers of full and part time church staff serving in related areas (children, youth, and adult, and worship ministries in particular), resulting in churches being more self-resourced.

Key Functions and Services Summary for Make and Deepen Disciples

Denomination:

1. Communicating vision—painting a picture of what making and deepening disciples looks like in the ECC and how it is accomplished

(principles/pathways/marks/strategies) in an integrated way across ministry priorities.

2. Best practice sharing—working with conferences to identify expert practitioners to provide coaching, and best practice centers that can function as models for others, as well as facilitating ministry idea exchanges.
3. Networks--forming and supporting networks that connect leaders of similar ministries for peer resourcing and support (e.g., worship leaders, youth ministry, camp directors, women ministries, etc).
4. Resource development focused in ECC identity and initiatives.
5. Resource review, recommending ECC-compatible materials developed by other groups (e.g., VBS materials, small group curriculum, etc).

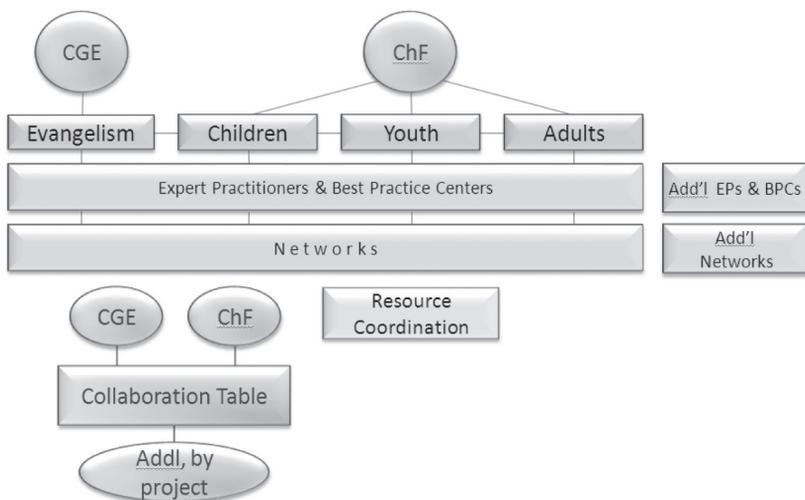
Conference:

1. Communicating vision for making and deepening disciples
2. Work with denomination to identify expert practitioners and best practice centers and connect local churches to such.
3. Point and connect local churches to denominational resources and recommendations.

Implementation Recommendations Approved

8. That the role of expert practitioners, best-practice centers, and practitioner networks be elevated in strategy to take advantage of expertise, proximity, and contextualization within the breadth of the ECC.
9. That the president, in consultation with all of the executive ministers engaging in expert practitioner/best practice center approaches, appoint a task group to establish protocols for identification, standards, training, support, and utilization of such, with a report to the Covenant Offices Leadership Team and Council of Superintendents by January 2012.
10. That resource development focused in ECC identity and initiatives be affirmed, and that the president convene a task group with the executive ministers of communication, Christian formation, and church growth and evangelism to develop a list of projected core resources, with a report to Covenant Offices Leadership Team by March 2012.
11. That resource recommendations and review of materials produced by others be affirmed and that the collaborative table generate a listing of general categories for such action with a report to Covenant Offices Leadership Team by March 2012.

Make and Deepen Disciples



Love Mercy and Do Justice

Key Vision for Loving Mercy and Doing Justice: This area echoes Micah 6:8, where the people of God are called on to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with our God. The key vision for this area is to significantly increase the capacity for regional conferences and local congregations to develop ministries of loving mercy and doing justice (LMDJ), evidenced by every congregation being able to identify and develop its specific ministries in this area as well as through tangible denominationally-wide mobilized ministries.

Key Considerations to Accomplishing the Vision

1. Collaborative structures across all dimensions of the ECC will ensure this biblical and historic emphasis of the ECC will attain key indicators of effectiveness*; responsibility is not localized into a single department or institution.
2. An additional position in the department of compassion, mercy, and justice will enable the mobilization of substantial and tangible love mercy-do justice ministries across the denomination, conferences, and churches.
3. Direct collaboration between the department of compassion, mercy, and justice and Covenant Initiatives for Care (a subsidiary of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence), will increase the mobilization of substantial and tangible love mercy-do justice ministries across the denomination, conferences, and churches.

*OFM Key Indicators of Effectiveness:

1. Local churches will identify and develop specific and tangible LMDJ ministries.
2. Every church will engage in a full array of outreach--evangelism, church planting, LMDJ, and global connection.
3. We will mobilize denomination-wide to develop collective LMDJ ministries.
4. There will be increasing numbers of multiethnic and socio-economically diverse churches.
5. Churches will recognize and call out systemic injustice and take tangible steps towards making things right.
6. Every conference will develop a mosaic immersion experience helping people relate to and understand people of different ethnicities and class in their regional context.
7. Discussions of compassion, mercy, and justice issues will be biblically-rooted rather than politically-driven, aspirational, and point to real changes in people and communities.
8. A formal process will be developed to enable Covenant leadership to name and address internal and organizational issues of justice.
9. There will be a common language for LMDJ.
10. There will be collaborative and integrative structures to connect LMDJ with the core ministries of start and strengthen churches, make and deepen disciples; develop leaders; and serve globally.

Key Functions and Services for Loving Mercy and Doing Justice

Denomination:

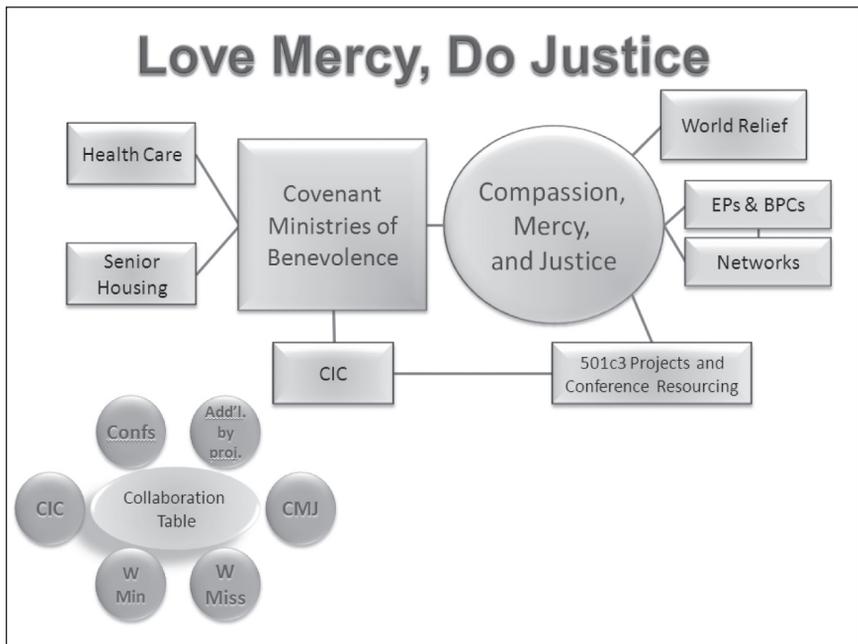
1. Develop resources and training materials in collaboration with conferences and local churches.
2. Identify and facilitate "big initiatives" (e.g., Matthew/Micah) that can be done on a collective, denomination-wide basis.
3. Coordinate LMDJ ministries across departments and institutions.
4. Develop national and international partnerships.
5. Develop a communication strategy in collaboration with other departments and institutions.
6. Convene "Covenant leaders group" at regular intervals to identify and address internal and organizational issues of justice.
7. Teaching and preaching prophetically on loving mercy and doing justice.

Conference:

1. Connect resources and training to local churches in collaboration with CMJ.
2. Consult with and coach local churches in LMDJ ministry initiatives.
3. Work with CMJ to network and connect LMDJ practitioners, advocates, and champions.
4. Develop local and regional partnerships for collective initiatives.
5. Teaching and preaching prophetically on loving mercy and doing justice.

Implementation Recommendations Approved

12. That an additional position in the department of compassion, mercy, justice be affirmed focusing on the mobilization of tangible love mercy-do justice ministries in support of conference and local church efforts, with the aim of having the position filled by Feb 1, 2012.
13. That the advantage of direct collaboration between the department of compassion, mercy, and justice and Covenant Initiatives for Care be affirmed; and that the two entities identify a defined set of tangible love mercy-do justice ministry initiatives supporting the mobilization of conferences and churches, with a recommendation including timeline and funding considerations to their respective boards by March 2012.
14. That networks of expert practitioners and best practice centers be mobilized by joint efforts between conferences and the department of compassion, mercy, and justice with a report back by June 2012.



Serve Globally

Key Vision for Serving Globally: That the global whole-gospel impact of the ECC increase to more than one million lives through the continued sending of missionaries, the strengthening of partner national churches, directed attention to focused initiatives, and enhanced support to self-initiated congregational international undertakings; that the global identity and partnership among ECC-related national churches be nurtured.

Key Considerations to Accomplishing the Vision

1. That serving globally is about the international implementation of the other stated priorities: to start and strengthen churches, to make and deepen disciples, to develop leaders, and to love mercy-do justice.
2. That the continued calling and sending of missionaries remains an integral part of our collective efforts.
3. That strengthening national churches and national leaders through missiologically-sound partnerships is integral to the long term vitality and sustainability of work in any location.
4. That within maintaining a complement of international partnerships and missionary placement, the ECC engage national churches to identify particular countries, areas of expertise, and compelling opportunities that deepen and focus impact.
5. That given the access available to local congregations to be directly involved in self-initiated international opportunities, the ECC come alongside such congregations to coach for effectiveness and network among common interests.

Key Functions and Services Summary for Serve Globally

Denomination:

Casting vision and telling the story
Missionary screening, placement, and support
Connecting congregations to support missionaries
Development of major initiatives
Support of local church initiatives through networking and coaching
Catalytic role with global partners
Link US/Canada mosaic with global mosaic, finding cross-pathways of mission and ministry
Funding streams and models
Administration/Finance

Conference:

Communicating vision for serving globally
Identifying networking opportunities for support of ECC mission and local church initiatives
Assistance with periodic special projects

Implementation Recommendations Approved

15. That the structure of the department of world mission include support for focused major initiatives, and that the president and executive minister convene a task group to develop an implementation strategy for reporting by June, 2012 including timeline and funding considerations.
16. That the structure of the Department of World Mission be configured to include the regionalization of personnel with key responsibilities to both support local church global initiatives and to engage local churches in the support of ECC opportunities; and that the president and executive minister convene a task group to develop an action plan for such by June 2012, including timeline and funding considerations.
17. That the executive minister engage international partner churches to ascertain interest in heightened engagement among all parties through a global network of ECC-related bodies.



Appendix B
Proposed “Five Streams”

Christian Reformed Church in North America Our Five Streams (Denominational Priorities)				
Faith Formation	Servant Leadership	Global Missions	Loving Mercy; Doing Justice	Gospel Proclamation and Worship
<p>As a community of believers we seek to introduce and nurture faith in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>We believe the church must work together to challenge and equip each believer to grow in their faith as they seek to be faithful disciples in the kingdom of God.</p>	<p>We seek to identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God.</p> <p>We believe the lifelong equipping of all leaders is essential for the flourishing of churches and ministries.</p>	<p>We are a missional community with a kingdom vision.</p> <p>Therefore, we seek to be witnesses and agents of the kingdom “to the ends of the earth.”</p> <p>Our primary objective is to start and strengthen local churches, both in North America and around the world.</p>	<p>We hear the cries of the oppressed, forsaken, and disadvantaged.</p> <p>Our hearts are broken by the things that break the heart of God.</p> <p>Therefore we seek “to act justly and love mercy” as we walk humbly with our God.</p>	<p>Faith comes through the hearing of God’s Word.</p> <p>We seek to proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and worship him in all that we do.</p>

Note: Each stream or priority is to be supported by a “collaboration table” of representatives of select ministries and/or institutions within the CRCNA for the purpose of advancing the respective stream within the denomination.

Appendix C Glossary of Terms

Administration includes those administrative functions and staff within the denominational office that *support* ministries and programs managed by the denomination. These functions can include human resources, information technology, corporate communications, facilities, financial management, fleet, and, in some cases, corporate policy and planning. Depending on the mandate of *administration*, these functions can provide a valuable service by providing a unifying force within the organization, and working collaboratively with ministries, programs, and partners in developing common goals for the betterment of the organization (e.g., cost reduction measures).

Binationality: The CRCNA is a Reformed denomination that operates in the United States and Canada. The CRCNA values being a binational denomination for the opportunity it provides to combine pursuit of a common mission with an intentional and meaningful engagement with different national, regional, and local contexts for ministry. Binationality in the CRCNA fosters a culture of gracious space that encourages different expressions of common convictions to achieve common goals of meaningful witness and effective, holistic ministry in different contexts. Intentional recognition of commonalities and significant differences allows adequate flexibility in leadership, structures, and policies to respond to each national context as well as regional, local, and ethnic contexts.

Collaboration is the step beyond cooperation and coordination. Collaboration is the commitment of the organization and its leaders to a common mission, common goals, and to one or more projects undertaken for longer-term results.

Core values succinctly describe how the CRC *applies* Christian, organizational, and professional ethics with its staff and congregations and within their working environments. These values apply to all within the organization and are relevant to the conduct and manner in which individuals live, apply themselves, or interact with each other and with stakeholders. In healthy organizations, these values are normally displayed under core value statements, social charters, or ethic codes and are shared and modeled by leaders, staff, and volunteers.

Culture is defined by the church's values, norms, rituals (processes and practices), organizational beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors. Often these are the unspoken "rules" that are hidden from outsiders and refer to the patterned ways in which staff, trustees, synod, and congregations interact, both physically and socially. They include the deeper and underlying understandings that drive organizational behavior within the denomination. This interaction can often be defined by the culture and values that already exist within the organization and can be understood at both formal and informal levels.

Governance is defined as the act of governing. Within a denomination, governance relates to how the denominational *leadership* generally manages

the affairs, issues, congregational needs, ministries, and programs within an existing *structure* and *culture*. Good governance sets the environment whereby leaders can provide consistent and cohesive management, prioritization, policies, guidance, processes, monitoring, collaboration, and decision making that serve to nurture the spiritual needs and communal welfare of congregations, congregational members, and the communities they serve within the context of furthering the Lord's kingdom.

Leadership (and **Leaders**) provides the critical link between the organization's structure and culture and includes any person who serves in a leadership capacity, including senior staff (or management) within the denominational offices, the Board of Trustees, synod, classes, and the leaders within individual congregations. They are generally responsible for the *overall* oversight and management of the denomination, including the various ministries, administrative units, and congregations. They are usually responsible for the direction of the denomination as a whole. Leadership shapes (and is shaped by) the mission, vision, and culture within a defined organizational structure. Leadership is often defined by the level of skills or competencies consistent with the ability to lead.

Effective Christian leadership is the process of helping a group embody in its corporate life the practices that shape vital Christian life, community, and witness in ways that are faithful to Jesus Christ and the gospel, and that are appropriate to a particular group's setting, resources, vision, and purpose (taken from "Leadership: A Working Definition" from the Leadership Development Team of the CRCNA, May 2004, p. 9).

Management includes senior management, executive(s), executive team, or management team. They are individuals or a team of individuals at the highest level of denominational management, including those in agencies, ministries, or specialized programs. They normally hold specific authority conferred to them by the executive director, Board of Trustees, or synod and are responsible for the day-to-day activities of the organization.

Mission (and **Mission statement**) describes in one brief sentence the aim(s) of the CRC and why it exists (e.g., to create and sustain healthy congregations). It can sometimes describe how it provides value to congregations and stakeholders. It needs to be simple and understood by a twelve-year-old. It does not include *theological beliefs*, but is expected to be guided by them.

Participatory training is training by which management includes team members in discussions and decisions related to defined objectives of the agency or organization as a way to broaden decision making and agreement.

Social structure refers to the patterned ways in which individuals and units within the organization interact. This interaction is largely defined by the culture that exists in the organization. It can be understood at both formal and informal levels, is often shaped by authority or power, the division of labor or role differentiation, and formal rule and procedures.

Strategic planning (and the associated **Ministry Plan**) includes the process to understand the denomination's mission, vision, and values, expected outcomes and "how to get there." It includes at a minimum the following:

- **an environmental scan** (the CRC's current realities, both internal and external and associated potential impacts)
- five to seven **key goals**
- **strategies** (or specific actions) to be taken under each goal to reach the vision
- **performance indicators** to measure success

For the Plan to be successful (i.e., *successful outcomes* or vision nearly accomplished), the process and Plan must be owned by everyone in the CRC and assimilated into the denomination's culture.

Theological statement(s) describes one's deepest belief and reason for being.

Vision (and **vision statement**) describes in one statement what the CRC wants to be—or "what it wants to be when it grows up," or "how it wants the world/society in which it operates to be"—a desired state. It concentrates on the future and the ideal in God's kingdom. It is often meant to be a source of inspiration for staff, stakeholders, and others to a future that is much bigger than its current state (e.g., transformed lives and communities). Vision is a picture of a preferred future. It is intended to serve as a clear guide in choosing the current and future course of action.

Concerns and Options/Considerations
Structure, Culture, and Leadership
from Listening Tables (2011),
Staff Survey (2012), and Task Force Input (2012)

Concerns	Options/Considerations
<p>Structure</p> <p>The structure and culture of the CRCNA is generally considered a hindrance in growing the church and its ministries.</p> <p>The CRCNA operates largely as autonomous agencies and ministries—in part due to our history, culture, structure, and leadership. A “confederacy of nonprofits” versus a “union of ministries.”</p> <p>Conflict of interests between agency boards, agency directors, and central administration (DO) are contributing to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a very complex organization • collaboration issues • competition and division • communication issues • under-represented specialized ministries • funding distribution issues <p>There are growing signs that the CRCNA is in fact a postdenominational “federation” of congregations and ministries.</p>	<p>Be open to “grassroots” committees and groups among agencies and ministries—formal or informal.</p> <p>Some considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of boards or not to consolidate. • Fewer boards or one board. • Change mandate of agency boards to advisory committees of the BOT. • Ministry Council should be the binding agent for integration. • Representative(s) from each board/ministry would be part of the BOT. • Combine mission agencies into <i>Council of Executive Ministries</i> to enable long-term vision and collaboration. • Find ways to unify the ministries of our denomination under a more common vision. Current structures of different agencies are seen as competing with each other for finances and, in some cases, volunteers.

Lack of clarity regarding lines of authority and strategic authority in the structure makes for barriers that have contributed to the organization being less innovative, creative, collaborative, and visionary.

Structure does not allow CRCNA to deliver easily on our priority of healthy congregations and has in some cases prohibited us from being the nimble and cohesive organization the churches need.

“Things don’t always get done” in the CRCNA because there is red tape and bureaucracy.

Is classis the best link between synod and local congregations?

What is needed to ensure that local congregations are connected and responsive to the work of synod and the organization and vice versa?

Much of our current structure is organized by geography rather than function.

The CRCNA models a hierarchical structure (in terms of positional authority) rather than a structure devoted to servant leadership dedicated to congregations and staff.

Structure, role, and participation in decision making are not well understood by staff.

The Board of Trustees and the Denominational Office largely operate as a management board rather than as a strategic board.

Structure is not aligned to embrace people of other color and ethnicities.

- Integrate specialized ministries within one agency (i.e., Home Missions).
- Reorganize the BOT to be representative of advisory committees for each agency and specialized ministries.

A “charter” outlining clear authorities and decision-making processes among ministries, BOT, Denominational Office, and synod.

Restructure to combine all supports for congregations under one department and/or agency with one director who has vision for congregational development.

Develop a structure in which different ideas of mission can flourish under a single denominational banner.

Review/redo/repurpose synod to take into account at least the existence of the CRCNA Board of Trustees as the entity that handles almost all of the governance tasks done previously by synod.

Strengthen our equivalent of middle judicatories (i.e., CRC classes).

Develop a regional services delivery system to churches through a team-based approach.

A regional approach to delivery of services to congregations needs better agency collaboration. Home Missions has a regional team system to service local churches, but there is little collaboration with specialized agencies, especially when much of this work is based on relationships within the region. Where collaboration has occurred, it has worked well.

Binationality is becoming a growing issue for the organization and congregations in Canada. Increased sensitivity to Canada's "back room" role in terms of leadership, relevancy, and innovation is contributing to a very real dissatisfaction. This appears to be having some unintended and negative consequences for a cohesive organization.

Our congregations may be distancing themselves from us as an organization—our service to them is not what it ought to be or could be.

Churches do not feel connected to the mission work of the denomination—they have chosen to seek out their own mission opportunities or enter into partnerships with non-CRCNA mission organizations. Dealing with CRCNA agencies for mission work is too complex, with too many restrictions and policies—and the process is too time consuming.

An institutional arrogance that surfaces from time to time—reflected in attitudes that suggest we know how to do something better than the churches or members do—if only they would learn from us or listen to us.

Scorecard and *Dashboard* metrics are not always useful in fulfilling the strategic objectives of the organization.

The denomination could provide training and resourcing to create better local/regional resources—do preventative work versus putting out fires (conflicts).

Organizing by function—church planting, discipleship, and so forth—would make us more efficient.

Organize functionally. Try to grasp what it means to demonstrate servant leadership. Turn organizational structure chart upside down.

Revive strategic planning as ongoing process at level of changing context, challenges, and opportunities, leading to agreement on strategies coordinated by BOT and the Denominational Office and implemented by agencies and ministries.

Rethink how we embrace diversity and employment equity.

Dismantle the binational structure. The structure from an operational management and governance perspective is awkward, ineffective, and cumbersome.

Decentralize the binational structure further so that the denominational structure is closer and more relevant to Canadian churches—regional synods.

Allow Canadian board members to also meet separately with a view to the church's common vision, focusing on the Canadian context and ministries.

Consider a dual leadership role between Canada and the United States.

There is overlap in many places, and we need to find a structure that will help us put components together in meaningful ways (e.g., leadership development, healthy church, or classic renewal desperately need components from Social Justice, Race Relations, Disability Concerns, Safe Church, and so forth). Right now there seems to be no structure to embed these critical components into places where they are needed.

Learn from Canada on collaborative management and leadership styles.

Look at our present structure in light of irreversible trends, including

- people embracing other cultures and denominations because of information technology and globalization.
- the way people are increasingly challenging the role and value of institutions. Denominational loyalty is definitely on the wane.
- a move from general financial giving out of institutional loyalty to giving for specific high-impact causes or projects.
- the changing perception of the role of clergy and the change in understanding of Christian laypeople who are learning to integrate their faith into every aspect of their lives.
- the diminished role of youth in the church—they want a meaningful and active role now.

Consider what kinds of support churches are looking for. In many cases they are looking for things they cannot do on their own (e.g., World Missions, Back to God Ministries International, and World Renew) or something to help address a specific issue at the church (e.g., faith formation, worship, how to respond to a changing community, and so forth). Can the denominational structure change to be more responsive by thinking in broad categories?

Design an agency or office to support and lead congregations in the areas of life and ministry in which they are most engaged on a daily basis—discipleship, including faith formation for youth and adults, worship, adult education, and leadership development.

Require the denomination to ask the local churches what they want the denomination to be and do for them.

Review *Scorecard* and *Dashboard* processes and metrics to realign with strategic priorities and expected outcomes.

Culture

The CRCNA has subcultures within its organization (among leaders, ministries, agencies, other parts of the world).

Newcomers and new congregations do not readily embrace the culture of the CRCNA and fit in.

Norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions in the CRCNA (as a binational church) are generally not the same in the United States as they are in Canada.

The CRCNA does not do well in developing itself through strategic decision making and planning versus maintaining itself and its existing programs.

Develop a culture of “external adaption” and “internal integration.”

Create better awareness and training in managing complexity—learn to work with tensions and promote collaboration.

Examine culture change, then leadership, then structure (all are inextricably linked) through a comprehensive strategic planning process.

Share the vision.

There is a need to clearly articulate our *culture* in two value statements—one for the work environment within the denominational

<p>The CRCNA is not adapting readily to the changing environment in its congregations (across North America and globally) and our society.</p> <p>Conflict is generally not dealt with swiftly or managed effectively.</p> <p>The CRCNA lacks a customer service culture. This is partly due to differing views about who the <i>customer</i> is—in cross-agency collaborative efforts. In reality, the <i>customer</i> is always the congregation, the church, and individual member.</p> <p>Who is the employer—the agency or the denomination? Currently, the prevailing sentiment would point to the agency as the employer.</p> <p>There is reluctance to embrace what is already out there—we would rather create our own resources. This is not wise stewardship.</p> <p>CRCNA has a task-oriented culture and less of a culture that focuses on learning, innovation, and collaboration.</p> <p>The nature of communication is “to” —not “with.” Very few opportunities for collaboration—for staff to contribute their ideas for improvements, implementation of existing directions, collaborative projects, and so forth.</p> <p>Communication is inadequate and does not flow freely—not a culture of information sharing.</p> <p>Decisions are not always fully explained to staff or to the local congregations.</p>	<p>offices, and a second for our relationship with congregations. Write them down, educate staff, and have leaders model them.</p> <p>Consider the priority for the new Executive Director for the next few years invoking “cultural change.”</p> <p>Communicate . . . communicate, and . . . communicate.</p> <p>Increase communication significantly between the offices in Palos Heights, Burlington, and Grand Rapids.</p> <p>Encourage many more informal connections to peers in other agencies and ministries rather than mandated committees.</p> <p>There is potential for social events, cross-agency devotions, and other strategies to build bridges between staff of different agencies and ministries, color, and race. Celebrate diversity in ethos and with passion. Incorporate devotions that infuse justice and race relations.</p> <p>Foster awareness and training in managing complexity—learn to work with tensions and promote collaboration.</p> <p>Encourage the Executive Director and senior executives to spend more time interacting with staff, recognizing and encouraging employees, exchanging ideas and dialoguing.</p> <p>Consider a newly established Staff Advisory Group on Workplace Environment to advise the Executive Director. Develop a culture of listening.</p>
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Each agency has its own personality and culture—each works and uses its authority differently.

A collaborative culture within the defined structure is not natural to the CRCNA in Grand Rapids, resulting in

- obstacles in moving ideas with merit through the organization.
- lack of collaborative coordination—Ministry Council abandoned.
- collaborative efforts made in meetings with little follow-up and accountability.
- duplication of services and efforts.
- criticism rather than experimentation and innovation.
- culture of silence.

More collaboration is needed on the “playing field” or through informal means. The specialized ministries and agencies more closely connected to congregations tend to collaborate more successfully (e.g., World Missions and Home Missions). The Canadian office tends to collaborate well.

There is a visible lack of trust between the Denominational Office and the ministries. The tendency of ministries and agencies is to resist authority structures.

2850 fosters

- division rather than cross-agency and ministry exchange and collaboration.
- a noticeable “upper floor” authority structure.

Success is celebrated—staff that come together around a common passion connect well.

Become a “restorative denomination” that educates and trains all church leaders (and members) to incorporate restorative values (i.e., mutual respect, accountability, support, listening) and practices that result in the transformation of the meeting process and the empowerment of all participants.

Encourage staff to be *outcome-oriented* and not just task-oriented.

Internal collaboration of programs and resources offered to churches *needs* to happen because the church is getting “similar items” from different agencies and ministries. The churches wonder, “Don’t they ever talk to each other in the denominational offices?”

Communication would become a key role in an organic movement. Expand to use all types of communication—text, Tweet, Facebook, network, letter, Skype, and so forth.

Support gatherings—bringing people together around shared ministry is very important. Face to face is still the best way to build relationships.

It is extremely important to get women, people of color, and young adults in positions of leadership (both structurally and culturally, via voice) rather than the “old white males” that currently lead.

Enhance platforms for partnerships with churches on specific projects. Fine-tune ways to invite them to adopt specific projects for prayer and support.

The *Canadian Collaboration Task Force* has had some success. Unfortunately, there is no one position in the current structure that

The Denominational Office is producing information that no one is asking for, and that leaves precious little time to listen for what is really needed in our churches.

Diversity is a challenge that the organization needs to embrace.

There are competing value systems throughout the organization.

Outside organizations see the CRCNA as professional, committed, and organized.

The offices of Race Relations, Disability Concerns, and Safe Church are perceived by other churches as models.

can speak on behalf of all the Canadian agencies to champion this across the country. As a result, agencies operate on their default mode — championing their agency objectives.

Conduct a *Wilder Research Collaboration Factors Survey* among agencies, denominational offices, and local churches — use Mission Insite studies to generate collaborative ministries between agencies and local churches.

Develop a more open culture that encourages and even rewards collaboration (e.g., World Renew is a good model and an inspiration showing how more ministry gets done when we work together in collaboration with others toward common goals).

If the denominational strategic plan is aligned with the needs and desires of the local congregations, then we will all be working on the same objectives with a correct allocation of responsibility. Dwight Eisenhower once said, “Plans are nothing; planning is everything.” It is important to be together with our congregations as much as possible when planning takes place.

Leadership

Leaders, for the most part, do *not* invite diversity of ideas, responses, or disagreement where appropriate.

Leaders do not appear to encourage creativity, innovation, and cross-agency/ministry experimentation.

The CRC is a very complex organization. We need a new kind of executive leadership that is able to navigate through these com-

increase the role of Executive Director as “vision-caster” for all internal staff and the churches — be clear on the position’s role.

Significantly increase the role of BOT in strategic management and planning, using the Executive Director and the Denominational Office staff as key resources.

plexities. However, our history of choosing good pastors to these leadership positions with a proven track record to lead complex organizations has not been good at all.

Leadership does not appear to use ideas presented by others.

The balance between the outside role of the Executive Director as ambassador for the CRC and the internal role of staff leadership is not clear.

Clarity from leadership about decision making at any particular level is not clear.

The CRC lacks a *unifying* vision. Staff do not understand how the local efforts fit into the broader picture and continually look to leadership for the answers.

There is lack of internal discussions about issues being discussed by leaders with BOT (such as diversity).

Leaders are not physically present to other parts of the building.

Succession planning—the organization lacks an intentional way of developing and promoting young leaders.

The pastoral care for employees and flexibility to deal with personal health issues is good.

We need proactive leadership to build trust, collaboration, and support for innovation.

Leaders need to ensure that staff have appropriate input into policy changes that affect their work.

Need an ombudsperson's office to handle complaints to free the ED to focus on vision casting, strategic planning, and communication.

Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for developing leaders for the entire organization.

The Denominational Office and agencies need to send representatives to *listen*, not to defend or promote the denomination but to get a sense of what lives in the grassroots of the denomination.

For the next full-time ED, assign the following five top priorities within the first two years:

- Work with the BOT in leading kingdom visioning and a strategic planning process.
- Integrate internally and adapt (adopt) externally.
- Focus and manage current complexity of the organization and issues.
- Put meaningful structures in place to initiate and maintain culture shift, integration of ministries, and clear decision-making processes within a collaborative structure.
- Communicate more frequently and openly with staff.

There is need for training for all staff in “servant leadership.”