

Board of Trustees Supplement

I. Polity matters

A. Board of Trustees membership (Committee 1)

1. Trustees whose terms expire as of June 30, 2015, or who have resigned:

Region/Classis	Member
Region 11	Mrs. Joan Flikkema
U.S. at-large	Mr. Mark Charles
U.S. at-large	Dr. Peter Szto
Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan	Rev. Dale Melenberg
Classis B.C. North-West	Rev. Trevor Vanderveen
Classis Niagara	Mr. Bert Witvoet
Classis Quinte	Rev. Jake Kuipers
Canada at-large	Mr. Bruce Dykstra

2. Words of thanks

The services provided by members of the Board of Trustees deserve the recognition and appreciation of synod. The quality of CRC members who are willing to serve the church in governing functions is one of our strengths as a church and community. This year the following delegates are completing a second term of service on the Board: Mr. Mark Charles, Mr. Bruce Dykstra, Mrs. Joan Flikkema, Rev. Dale Melenberg, and Rev. Trevor Vanderveen. The Board has received and acknowledged the resignations of Rev. Jake Kuipers (due to health reasons) after one year of service, and Dr. Peter Szto (due to family schedules) and Mr. Bert Witvoet (due to health reasons) after three years of service. We thank God for each of these dedicated servants and for their contributions to the Board and the Christian Reformed Church.

Note: The Classis Niagara position will remain vacant until nominees can be identified for appointment in 2016.

3. Board of Trustees nominees

- a. To fill the position from Classis Quinte following the recent resignation of Rev. Jake Kuipers, the Board requests that synod appoint the following single nominee to complete the first term (until 2017), renewable for a second term. Rev. Brix appeared on the slate of nominees with Rev. Kuipers in 2014.

Rev. Shawn R. Brix serves as the pastor of Living Hope CRC, Peterborough, Ontario. He received a B.A. from Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, and an M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary. He has served on the board of governors for Redeemer University College and on its governor affairs committee. Rev. Brix has served on the classical Renewal and Visioning Task Force, the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee, and on the Alternate Routes to Ministry Committee. He has been a synodical delegate several times and has served on the CCRCC InterChurch Relations Committee as well as the classis interim committee. Rev. Brix currently serves on the classical ministry leadership team.

- b. To fill the position of *U.S. at-large* following the recent resignation of Dr. Szto, the Board requests that synod appoint the following single nominee to a first term:

Ms. Susan B. Hoekema, a member of Second CRC in Grand Haven, Michigan, is a law clerk and legal researcher for the Ottawa County courts. Ms. Hoekema has served on various committees with the CRC, was a member of an ad hoc group regarding a Judicial Code matter, and was a member of the Judicial Code Review Committee in 2013. She has also served on the boards of the Grand Rapids Area Center for Ecumenism and Grand Rapids Christian High School (including service as board president). Ms. Hoekema currently serves as secretary of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and serves on the stewardship committee and the community outreach grants committee at Second CRC. She has recently completed a term as deacon.

- c. The Board recommends that synod appoint the following single nominee to the Canada at-large position:

Mr. Ralph Luimes, a member of Ancaster CRC in Ancaster, Ontario, is the chief executive officer of Hald-Nor Community Credit Union, Ltd. He previously served on the Calvin College Board of Trustees, including service on its administrative finance and planned giving committees. Mr. Luimes has also served as president of the board of directors and as council chair of Ancaster CRC, in addition to other various community and professional committee involvements. He currently is serving as a director on the administrative board at Ancaster CRC and serves on the board of directors for Shalom Manor (for Classes Hamilton and Niagara) in Grimsby, Ontario. He also presently serves as chair of the Hamilton Credit Union Managers Association.

4. BOT young adult representative

Following the example set by synod with the young adult representative position, the Board adopted guidelines for appointment and participation of young adult representatives to the Board of Trustees. The Board adopted as one of the denomination's challenges in September that "many in the younger generations are increasingly disconnected from the CRC and are exiting." Engaging this generation in deliberations brings their important perspectives to the table. In addition, these young adults are the future leadership of the Christian Reformed Church—their voices are important for the decisions regarding strategic priorities for the denomination.

The adopted guidelines for appointment and participation of young adult representatives to the Board follow:

The BOT shall appoint two young adult representatives for the purpose of advising the Board of Trustees in all matters brought to the Board by way of its agenda, and shall report it to synod as information. The following guidelines for qualifications and appointment shall apply:

- a. Young adult representatives shall be professing members in good standing within the Christian Reformed Church with demonstrated leadership capabilities within their communities.

- b. They shall represent the voices of the young adult membership (ages 18-26) within the CRC.
- c. One shall be from Canada and one shall be from the United States, appointed by the Board of Trustees from nominees presented by the BOT Nominating Committee, selected from the list of past synod young adult representatives. They shall serve a two-year, nonrenewable term. The terms of the two representatives shall be staggered to better provide continuity in the position.
- d. Young adult representatives shall be nonvoting members of the Board with a voice in all deliberations and shall be present during executive sessions of the Board, with the exception of strict executive sessions.
- e. One young adult representative shall serve on the Servant Leadership and Faith Formation Standing Committee and one shall serve on the Strategic Planning Standing Committee.
- f. The ED is encouraged to utilize these young adult representatives to advise or serve on administrative task forces or teams.

B. Officers of the Board of Trustees for 2015-16 (Committee 1)

At its recent meeting the Board members from their respective Corporations and the full BOT elected the following to serve as officers in the coming year:

1. The CRCNA-Canada Corporation

President: Mrs. Katherine M. Vandergrift
 Vice president: Mr. Peter Noteboom
 Secretary: Mr. Michael Wevers

2. The CRCNA-Michigan Corporation

President: Mr. Chris Van Spronsen
 Vice president: Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn
 Vice-all: Dr. Socorro Woodbury

3. The binational Board of Trustees officers

President: Mrs. Katherine M. Vandergrift
 Vice president: Mr. Chris Van Spronsen
 Vice-all: Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn

C. Retirement of Rev. Joel R. Boot (Committee 1)

The Board paid tribute to Rev. Joel R. Boot at its annual banquet and expressed its gratitude for filling the interim role as executive director for three years and, during 2014-2015, as interim director of ministries and administration. The BOT recommends that synod express its gratitude to Rev. Joel R. Boot for his years of service to the denomination and confer on him the title of *executive director, emeritus*, effective immediately (Rev. Boot is retired as of May 1, 2015).

D. Response to Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture report (Committee 1)

After careful consideration and much deliberation, the BOT adopted the following response to the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture report, for synod's information:

We commend the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) report to synod for its careful consideration.

The TFRSC has served synod by guiding the CRCNA through significant adaptive change these past four years. Since the formation of this task force, one agency was dissolved and two other agencies are moving toward shared ministry. Senior leadership positions are now filled—we are grateful for the stability this brings. Aware of the relationship between structure and culture, we note that the TFRSC has initiated culture change in the denomination and that more is needed.

The Board of Trustees has engaged in significant discussion of the TFRSC report to synod and has been attentive to, for example, (1) the size of the proposed Council of Delegates and the interrelationships with the proposed advisory committees, (2) strengthening binationality, (3) clarity regarding the role of the expanded executive and delegates, (4) ensuring minority voices are enhanced in deliberations, and so forth.

We encourage synod to provide direction and latitude to the proposed Transition Committee if synod decides one should be formed.

E. RCA-CRC Leadership Proposal (Committee 3)

The CRCNA has received a grant from the DeVos Foundation in the amount of \$1 million over a two-year period (2015-17) for a collaborative RCA-CRC Leadership Proposal. The project involves creating and supporting six Congregational Leadership Learning Networks (CLLN) in diverse geographical and ministry contexts in North America consistent with our shared vision for leadership development and focus on mission. The purpose of a CLLN will be to create space for participating congregations to learn from and with one another; to share tools and models for leadership development; to implement and reflect on what they learn; to encourage fidelity to the Reformed tradition; and to do this all in relationships of high accountability, creativity, and innovation.

F. Planning for national gatherings in 2016 (Committee 1)

Progress is being made in the planning for national gatherings—one in Canada and regional “themed” conferences in the United States—to be held in 2016. The Board in 2014 decided that there is value in planning national gatherings in 2016 and a binational conference in 2017 (see *Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 440-42).

G. Banner editor-in-chief position description (Committee 5)

The Board conducted a review and approved a revision of the position description of the *Banner* editor-in-chief in anticipation of the start-up of a search for the next editor. The Board recommends that synod receive the position description in Appendix A as information.

H. Korean Classes Mentoring Committee report (Committee 1)

In response to an overture from Classis Pacific Hanmi, Synod 2014 permitted the classis to divide into two new classes and instructed the ED to appoint a committee to work with the new classes during their formative years. The Korean Classes Mentoring Committee submits, by way of the BOT, a report of its work to Synod 2015 in Appendix B.

I. Doctrine of Discovery Task Force and the Blanket Exercise (Committee 4)

To assist in raising awareness of sensitivities to the upcoming address of the Doctrine of Discovery by Synod 2016, the BOT encourages CRC classes and congregations to engage in the Blanket Exercise within their context prior to and following Synod 2016. The CRC Office of Social Justice or the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue can assist in resourcing and personnel for the Blanket Exercise.

J. Proposal regarding the future of the CRC Yearbook (Committee 1)

The Board received a report from a team exploring options for making available information currently printed in the CRC *Yearbook*, including web-based access and downloadable reports. The BOT endorsed a direction proposed by the “Online” *Yearbook* Team, which also ensured that information contained within the annual CRC *Yearbook* will continue to be gathered annually. Further reporting and recommendations regarding feasible means of data distribution, including availability in both electronic and printable formats, will be developed to be reviewed by the BOT in September.

II. Program and finance matters

A. Program matters

1. Draft Ministry Plan (Committee 1)

The Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Group presented a draft set of “desired futures” and “strategic foci” to the Board for engagement and input. The Board asks that synod endorse the Ministry Plan (a) Desired Futures and (b) Strategic Foci (Appendix C) and asks that synod take time in its schedule to engage with the Ministry Plan Steps (to be distributed at synod) for illustration and input.

2. World Renew U.S. director (Committee 6)

The Board was blessed to meet with Ms. Carol Bremer-Bennett as the nominee for the World Renew U.S. director position as recommended by the board of World Renew. The BOT recommends that synod ratify the appointment of Ms. Bremer-Bennett as the U.S. director of World Renew, effective August 3, 2015, and that she be introduced at synod. The curriculum vitae for Ms. Bremer-Bennett is included as Appendix D.

The Board took time during its spring meeting to express gratitude to God and recognize Mr. Andrew Ryskamp for his years of service as the U.S. director of World Renew, and to wish him blessings in his upcoming retirement.

3. Proposal for unification of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions (Committee 6)

As noted in the Board of Trustees report in the *Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 37, the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) have been in conversation about creating a unified ministry, and a proposal to that effect was received and reviewed by the BOT in May. The Board expressed great appreciation to Dr. Moses Chung, director of CRHM, and Dr. Gary J. Bekker, director of CRWM, for the tremendous amount of work on the unification proposal. The Board presents to Synod 2015 the following for action or information as indicated:

a. That Synod 2015 approve the following:

- 1) That Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) become one agency¹ with the following mandate:

Mandate

The Christian Reformed Church in North America establishes [this Christian Reformed Mission Agency] and assigns it the responsibility of leading the missions programs of the denomination (cf. Church Order Art. 73-77). [This Christian Reformed Mission Agency], hereinafter referred to as *agency*, shall give leadership to the denomination in its task of bringing the gospel holistically to the people of North America and the world and drawing them into fellowship with Christ and his church.

The mandate of the agency has three aspects. The agency shall

- encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism and discipleship.
- initiate, support, and guide new-church development and other evangelistic and discipling ministries.
- develop Christian leaders.

These ministries will be done in partnership with congregations, classes, CRC entities, and other organizations to join with God in his kingdom mission in North America and around the world.

The agency shall administer its work according to the Word of God and the Reformed confessions and in harmony with the regulations of the Church Order and the decisions of synod as interpreted by the Board of Trustees.

Grounds:

- a) A unification has been discussed and encouraged several times by the agencies, the BOT, and others.
- b) The agencies have indicated a unification would be timely, strategic, and stewardly.

¹ An agency name will be proposed during or at the end of the transitional period.

- c) This mandate represents the continuity of mandates from CRHM and CRWM while expressing them in a unified way consistent with the rationale for unification.
- 2) That the corporate entities of CRHM and CRWM be unified into a new single board in Canada and a new single board in the United States, joined in ministry by a joint venture agreement. For a transitional period, the existing corporations will be constituted as wholly owned subsidiary entities. The form of unification will be amalgamation in Canada and consolidation in the United States.

Grounds:

- a) The form of unification (amalgamation in Canada; consolidation in the United States) for the transition period has been recommended by attorneys well acquainted with appropriate law as well as all relevant agency bylaws.
- b) The process being utilized is found in the Synod 2011 report of the Process for Significant Structural Change Task Force (see *Agenda for Synod 2011*, pp. 62-65).
- c) If synod approves the anticipated recommendations coming from the synodical Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon (specifically, changes to Church Order Art. 76-77), it will not be necessary to propose changes to the current Article 76 (which constitutes Home Missions) and Article 77 (which constitutes World Missions).

Note: If synod adopts the proposal for a Council of Delegates or postpones decisions regarding that proposal for consideration at a subsequent synod, the proposal for CRHM/CRWM will require further revision.

- 3) That the existing CRHM and CRWM boards nominate all non-retiring members to constitute the boards (the boards of the new Canada and U.S.A. corporations, and the existing Canada and U.S.A. corporations, which will become wholly owned subsidiary entities for the transitional period). The various boards are to be constituted in accordance with all legal requirements (in the United States and Canada) and all applicable Church Order regulations. This new “parent” board will govern all the CRWM and CRHM legal entities until the programming, staff, and financial resources of both agencies are successfully and responsibly combined.

In addition, it is recommended that synod approve the following matters²—to add to, supersede, or clarify board information in the printed *Agenda for Synod 2015*:

- a) That retiring board members be given the opportunity to extend their appointments for one year.
- b) That Rev. Harvey J. Roosma continue per item a, above; he would remain a representative of Region 1 and not serve as a member-at-large (as found in the *Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 206-207) for the extended period.

² These additions have been approved by the chairs of both boards and by the agency directors.

- c) That Rev. Bruce Gritter, who replaced Rev. John Van Sloten mid-term on the CRHM board, continue his service, and that Ms. Henrietta Hielema be approved as board alternate (*Agenda 2015*, p. 207).
- d) That synod select one of the two nominees listed in the *Agenda for Synod 2015* for CRWM Region 8 (*Agenda 2015*, p. 214) because the current board member from Region 8 has decided not to accept reappointment.
- e) That synod elect Rev. Stanley Workman for CRWM Region 12 to fill the remaining two years of the first term of the member elected in 2014. This person was unable to serve and has resigned. Rev. Workman was on the slate of nominees for Region 12 in 2014.

Grounds:

- a) Continuity, when possible, will best serve governance and ministry in this time of transition.
 - b) Regional representation should continue.
- b. That Synod 2015 receive the following as information (contingent on adoption of the preceding three recommendations):
- 1) That through the transitional phase (anticipated to be completed within two years) of the new agency, the role of codirectors will be filled by the current agency directors, Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung. The codirectors will be under the joint supervision of the CRCNA executive director and the board(s) of the new agency with the following understandings:
 - a) The codirectors will create a transition executive team that will include at least the current CRWM Canada director.
 - b) Given the desire for increased binational differentiation, a different executive arrangement may be presented to the BOT before the end of the transitional period.
 - 2) That the codirectors be instructed to bring to the unified board(s) and then to the BOT, to its fall 2015 meeting if possible but no later than its winter 2016 meeting, recommended statements of mission, vision, and values for the new agency and a refined statement of mission strategy, as well as legal documents for incorporation of the new agency in both the United States and Canada.
 - 3) That no later than the winter 2016 meeting of the unified board(s) Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung, as codirectors, be instructed to recommend a long-term structure and leadership team for the new agency with the proviso that includes one American codirector and one Canadian codirector. After approval by the unified board(s), the recommendation will be brought to the BOT.
 - 4) That no later than the spring 2016 meeting of the unified board(s) Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung, as codirectors, be instructed to bring, after working with key leaders, experts, and constituents, recommendations regarding the name and advancement/communication plans for the new agency.

- 5) That Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung, as codirectors and working with others, be instructed to prepare an appropriate celebration of the new agency at Synod 2016 or at such time as they judge will work well.
 - c. That Synod 2015 take note that the BOT has endorsed the initial plans for the primary work of the unified agency and for a three-part strategy that has been developed within the contours of existing financial resources.
4. Faith Formation Ministries Mandate (Committee 3)

The Board of Trustees endorsed a mandate for the office of Faith Formation Ministries (FFM), also approved by the Ministries Leadership Council, which provides clearer direction for the mission of this new office. The Board recommends that synod take note of the following as the mandate for FFM:

Faith Formation Ministries joins and continues God's mission of transforming lives and communities worldwide by encouraging and equipping local CRC congregations and their leaders in their calling to practice intentional, lifelong, intergenerational, holistic, missional discipleship and faith formation with an emphasis upon children, teens, and young adults.

Faith Formation Ministries shall

- participate in assessing and strengthening discipleship and faith formation throughout the CRC and develop supports, workshops, and resources in response to the assessment.
- cooperate in developing regionally distributed ministry that cultivates interpersonal trust relationships with congregational leaders in order to facilitate the tasks of (1) learning from congregations in order to discern ministry patterns and (2) assessing and empowering them in their callings.
- strategically collaborate with CRC ministries and discern where fruitful collaborations are possible outside of the CRCNA.

Note 1: To ensure that the third task is carried out consistently and transparently, meetings have been scheduled at least monthly with the most significant collaboration partners. At present these include Home Missions, Worship Ministries, Youth Unlimited, and Ministry Support Services. In addition, four members of the five person CORE team are employed by two different CRCNA ministries, thus embodying collaboration.

Note 2: The first task addresses *resources*; however, at this time it is not yet known to what extent FFM will be called to continue the creating and marketing of curricular and study resources previously the responsibility of Faith Alive Christian Resources.

Note 3: The mandate will be revisited if the proposal for the merger of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions is approved by synod.

B. Finance matters (Committee 7)

1. The Board approved the unified budget for the denominational entities, inclusive of the individual budgets of the agencies, the educational institutions, the denominational offices, the Loan Fund, and the Special Assistance Funds of the CRC as presented in the report of the BOT Finance Committee.
2. The Board recommends that synod approve a ministry share of \$339.48 per adult member (age 18 and over) for calendar year 2016 (a 1% increase over the previous year) to partially support the approved unified denominational budget.
3. The Board recommends that synod approve the list of above-ministry share offerings as follows:
 - a. Denominational agencies recommended for one or more offerings
 - Back to God Ministries International
 - Calvin College
 - Calvin Theological Seminary
 - Christian Reformed Church Foundation
 - CR Home Missions
 - CR World Missions
 - Denominational Ministry Programs
 - 1) Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
 - 2) Committee for Contact with the Government
 - 3) Disability Concerns
 - 4) Faith Formation Ministries
 - 5) Pastor-Church Relations
 - 6) Race Relations
 - 7) Safe Church Ministry
 - 8) ServiceLink
 - 9) Office of Social Justice
 - 10) Urban Aboriginal Ministries
 - 11) Worship Ministries
 - World Renew—one offering per quarter because the agency receives no ministry-share support
 - b. Denominationally related agencies recommended for one or more offerings
 - Communities First Association
 - Diaconal Ministries Canada
 - Dynamic Youth Ministries
 - 1) GEMS
 - 2) Calvinist Cadet Corps
 - 3) Youth Unlimited
 - Friendship Ministries (Friendship Ministries—Canada)
 - Partners Worldwide
 - Timothy Leadership Training Institute
4. The Board informs synod that it has approved the renewal of the following accredited agencies for offerings in the churches for 2016—year two in a three-year cycle of support

(2015-2017). Synod 2002 approved certain revisions to the guidelines for nondenominational agencies and changed the policy from a required annual application and synodical approval to one that requires an application and synodical approval every three years. Synod indicated that, in the intervening years, agencies were to submit updated financial information and information regarding any significant programmatic changes. Each nondenominational agency requesting approval submitted the required materials for consideration.

The nondenominational agencies recommended for financial support but not necessarily for one or more offerings are

a. United States

1) Benevolent agencies

Bethany Christian Services
Cary Christian Center, Inc.
Hope Haven
The Luke Society
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services
Quiet Waters Ministries

2) Educational agencies

Ascending Leaders
Christian Schools International
Christian Schools International Foundation (for textbook development)
Dordt College
Elim Christian Services
Friends of ICS (U.S. Foundation of Institute for Christian Studies)
Hunting Park Christian Academy
Kids Hope USA
The King's University (through the U.S. Foundation)
Kuyper College
Langham Partnership
Redeemer University College (through the U.S. Foundation)
Rehoboth Christian School
Trinity Christian College
Worldwide Christian Schools
Zuni Christian Mission School

3) Miscellaneous agencies

Association for a More Just Society
Audio Scripture Ministries
Bible League International
Care of Creation
Center for Public Justice
Crossroad Bible Institute
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (endorsed for local, specified staff support only)
Middle East Reformed Fellowship, U.S. (MERF)

Mission India
 Talking Bibles
 The Tract League
 World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)
 Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.

b. Canada

1) Benevolent agencies

Beginnings Family Services
 Indwell (formerly Homestead Christian Care)

2) Educational agencies

Dordt College
 Institute for Christian Studies
 The King's University
 Kuyper College
 Redeemer University College
 Trinity Christian College

3) Miscellaneous agencies

A Rocha Canada
 Bible League – Canada
 Canadian Council of Churches
 Cardus (Work Research o/a Cardus)
 Citizens for Public Justice (CJL Foundation)
 Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
 Gideons International – Canada
 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of Canada
 Middle East Reformed Fellowship, Canada (MERF)
 World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)
 Wycliffe Translators of Canada, Inc.

5. In addition, the Board of Trustees recommends the following new request for inclusion on the list of unaffiliated recommended causes:

Canada

Shalem Mental Health Network

Shalem Mental Health Network is a provisional organization that supplies mental health services to individuals, communities, and churches. It also provides consultation on abuse, mental illness, and conflict management.

Ground: This organization meets the standards for inclusion, both in terms of their mission and scope, as well as their financial viability.

6. The denominational salary grid

The BOT recommends that Synod 2015 adopt the salary grid included below for use in fiscal year 2015-2016. The grid reflects no increase from the 2014-2015 salary amounts.

2015-2016 Salary Grade and Range Structure

Level	U.S. Range		Canadian Range	
	Minimum	Target	Minimum	Target
20	\$153,763	\$180,898		
19	\$138,976	\$163,501		
18	\$122,431	\$144,037	\$114,256	\$134,418
17	\$108,478	\$127,621	\$99,706	\$117,301
16	\$93,392	\$109,873	\$87,097	\$102,467
15	\$81,357	\$95,714	\$77,518	\$91,198
14	\$72,640	\$85,459	\$70,566	\$83,019
13	\$64,857	\$76,302	\$64,361	\$75,718

7. Ministers' pension assessment

The BOT endorsed the following decision of the Pension Trustees and includes it in this report for synod's information:

That the 2016 per-member assessment for the Canadian Plan remains \$42.96 and that the Canadian per-participant assessment remains \$9,840. Similarly, that the 2016 per-member assessment for the U.S. Plan remains \$37.20 and the U.S. per-participant assessment remains \$7,704.

8. Summary of denominational investments and compliance with investment policy

Synod 1998 approved a number of measures dealing with investment guidelines and disclosures. The BOT's response to these requests is found in Appendix E.

9. Energy conservation award

During the meeting of the Board of Trustees, a representative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded Mr. John Bolt, director of finance and operations, with the Energy Star for his pioneering efforts in working toward special certification in energy efficiency. The CRCNA office building located at 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan, has saved \$900,000 since the implementation of the energy conservation project.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Dr. R. Scott Greenway, vice president of the Board, when matters pertaining to the Board of Trustees are discussed.

B. That synod by way of the ballot appoint to the Board of Trustees a member from Classis Quinte, an at-large member from the United States, and an at-large member from Canada (BOT Supplement section I, A, 3).

- C. That synod take note of the Board's action to include two young adult representatives as advisers to the Board of Trustees (BOT Supplement section I, A, 4).
- D. That synod express its gratitude to Rev. Joel R. Boot for his years of service to the denomination and confer on him the title of *executive director, emeritus* (BOT Supplement section I, C).
- E. That synod take note of the BOT's response to the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture report as found in section I, D of this supplemental report.
- F. That synod receive the revised position description for the *Banner* editor-in-chief as information (BOT Supplement section I, G).
- G. That synod approve the work of the Korean Classes Mentoring Committee as reported by way of an update report in Appendix B to the Board Supplement (BOT Supplement section I, H).
- H. That synod take note of the Board's encouragement that CRC classes and congregations engage in the Blanket Exercise within their national context prior to address of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force report by Synod 2016 (BOT Supplement section I, I).
- I. That synod endorse the Ministry Plan (a) Desired Futures and (b) Strategic Foci (as found in Appendix C); and that synod take time in its schedule to engage with the Ministry Plan Steps (to be distributed at synod) for illustration and input (BOT Supplement section II, A, 1).
- J. That synod ratify the appointment of Ms. Carol Bremer-Bennett as the U.S. director of World Renew, effective August 3, 2015, and that she be introduced at synod (BOT Supplement section II, A, 2).
- K. That synod express gratitude to Mr. Andrew Ryskamp for his years of service as the U.S. director of World Renew (BOT Supplement section II, A, 2).
- L. That synod address the following with regard to the proposal for unification of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions (BOT Supplement section II, A, 3):

1. That synod approve the following:

- a. That Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) become one agency³ with the following mandate:

Mandate

The Christian Reformed Church in North America establishes [this Christian Reformed Mission Agency] and assigns it the responsibility of leading the missions programs of the denomination (cf. Church Order Art. 73-77). [This Christian Reformed Mission Agency], hereinafter referred to as *agency*, shall give leadership to the denomination in its task of bringing the gospel holistically to the people of North America and the world and drawing them into fellowship with Christ and his church.

³ An agency name will be proposed during or at the end of the transitional period.

The mandate of the agency has three aspects. The agency shall

- encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism and discipleship.
- initiate, support, and guide new-church development and other evangelistic and discipling ministries.
- develop Christian leaders.

These ministries will be done in partnership with congregations, classes, CRC entities, and other organizations to join with God in his kingdom mission in North America and around the world.

The agency shall administer its work according to the Word of God and the Reformed confessions and in harmony with the regulations of the Church Order and the decisions of synod as interpreted by the Board of Trustees.

Grounds:

- 1) A unification has been discussed and encouraged several times by the agencies, the BOT, and others.
 - 2) The agencies have indicated a unification would be timely, strategic, and stewardly.
 - 3) This mandate represents the continuity of mandates from CRHM and CRWM while expressing them in a unified way consistent with the rationale for unification.
- b. That the corporate entities of CRHM and CRWM be unified into a new single board in Canada and a new single board in the United States, joined in ministry by a joint venture agreement. For a transitional period, the existing corporations will be constituted as wholly owned subsidiary entities. The form of unification will be amalgamation in Canada and consolidation in the United States.

Grounds:

- 1) The form of unification (amalgamation in Canada; consolidation in the United States) for the transition period has been recommended by attorneys well acquainted with appropriate law as well as all relevant agency bylaws.
- 2) The process being utilized is found in the Synod 2011 report of the Process for Significant Structural Change Task Force (see *Agenda for Synod 2011*, pp. 62-65).
- 3) If synod approves the anticipated recommendations coming from the synodical Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon (specifically, changes to Church Order Art. 76-77), it will not be necessary to propose changes to the current Article 76 (which constitutes Home Missions) and Article 77 (which constitutes World Missions).

Note: If synod adopts the proposal for a Council of Delegates or postpones decisions regarding that proposal for consideration at a subsequent synod, the proposal for CRHM/CRWM will require further revision.

- c. That the existing CRHM and CRWM boards nominate all non-retiring members to constitute the boards (the boards of the new Canada and U.S.A. corporations, and the

existing Canada and U.S.A. corporations, which will become wholly owned subsidiary entities for the transitional period). The various boards are to be constituted in accordance with all legal requirements (in the United States and Canada) and all applicable Church Order regulations. This new “parent” board will govern all the CRWM and CRHM legal entities until the programming, staff, and financial resources of both agencies are successfully and responsibly combined.

In addition, it is recommended that synod approve the following matters⁴—to add to, supersede, or clarify board information in the printed *Agenda for Synod 2015*:

- 1) That retiring board members be given the opportunity to extend their appointments for one year.
- 2) That Rev. Harvey J. Roosma continue per item a, above; he would remain a representative of Region 1 and not serve as a member-at-large (as found in the *Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 206-207) for the extended period.
- 3) That Rev. Bruce Gritter, who replaced Rev. John Van Sloten mid-term on the CRHM board, continue his service, and that Ms. Henrietta Hielema be approved as board alternate (*Agenda 2015*, p. 207).
- 4) That synod select one of the two nominees listed in the *Agenda for Synod 2015* for CRWM Region 8 (*Agenda 2015*, p. 214) because the current board member from Region 8 has decided not to accept reappointment.
- 5) That synod elect Rev. Stanley Workman for CRWM Region 12 to fill the remaining two years of the first term of the member elected in 2014. This person was unable to serve and has resigned. Rev. Workman was on the slate of nominees for Region 12 in 2014.

Grounds:

- 1) Continuity, when possible, will best serve governance and ministry in this time of transition.
 - 2) Regional representation should continue.
2. That synod receive the following as information (contingent on adoption of the preceding three recommendations):
 - a. That through the transitional phase (anticipated to be completed within two years) of the new agency, the role of codirectors will be filled by the current agency directors, Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung. The codirectors will be under the joint supervision of the CRCNA executive director and the board(s) of the new agency with the following understandings:
 - 1) The codirectors will create a transition executive team that will include at least the current CRWM Canada director.
 - 2) Given the desire for increased binational differentiation, a different executive arrangement may be presented to the BOT before the end of the transitional period.
 - b. That the codirectors be instructed to bring to the unified board(s) and then to the BOT, to its fall 2015 meeting if possible but no later than its winter 2016 meeting,

⁴ These additions have been approved by the chairs of both boards and by the agency directors.

recommended statements of mission, vision, and values for the new agency and a refined statement of mission strategy, as well as legal documents for incorporation of the new agency in both the United States and Canada.

- c. That no later than the winter 2016 meeting of the unified board(s) Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung, as codirectors, be instructed to recommend a long-term structure and leadership team for the new agency with the proviso that includes one American codirector and one Canadian codirector. After approval by the unified board(s), the recommendation will be brought to the BOT.
 - d. That no later than the spring 2016 meeting of the unified board(s) Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung, as codirectors, be instructed to bring, after working with key leaders, experts, and constituents, recommendations regarding the name and advancement/communication plans for the new agency.
 - e. That Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung, as codirectors and working with others, be instructed to prepare an appropriate celebration of the new agency at Synod 2016 or at such time as they judge will work well.
3. That synod take note that the BOT has endorsed the initial plans for the primary work of the unified agency and for a three-part strategy that has been developed within the contours of existing financial resources.
- M.* That synod take note of the Faith Formation Ministries Mandate approved by the Ministries Leadership Council and endorsed by the Board of Trustees (BOT Supplement section II, A, 4).
- N.* That synod receive the agencies and institutional unified budget as information and approve a ministry share of \$339.48 for calendar year 2016 (BOT Supplement sections II, B, 1-2).
- O.* That synod adopt the following recommendations with reference to agencies requesting to be placed on the recommended-for-offerings list:
- 1. That synod approve the list of above-ministry share and specially designated offerings for the agencies and institutions of the CRC and denominationally related ministries, and recommend these to the churches for consideration (BOT Supplement section II, B, 3).
 - 2. That synod receive as information the list of nondenominational agencies, previously accredited, that have been approved for calendar year 2016 (BOT Supplement section II, B, 4).
 - 3. That synod accept the following new request for inclusion on the list of accredited nondenominational agencies (BOT Supplement section II, B, 5):

Canada

Shalem Mental Health Network

Shalem Mental Health Network is a provisional organization that supplies mental health services to individuals, communities, and churches. It also provides consultation on abuse, mental illness, and conflict management.

Ground: This organization meets the standards for inclusion, both in terms of their mission and scope, as well as their financial viability.

P. That synod adopt the denominational salary grid for senior positions as proposed (BOT Supplement section II, B, 6).

Board of Trustees of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Steven R. Timmermans, executive director

Appendix A

Christian Reformed Church in North America

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Editor in Chief of *The Banner*
Department: Ministry Support Services
Reports to: Ministry Support Services Co-Leader, *Banner* Advisory Council
Status: 0.5 FTE or greater, exempt
Salary Level: XVII

PURPOSE

Responsible for the content of *The Banner*

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES include the following:

1. Ensure that *The Banner* achieves its stated purposes to (1) inform readers about what is happening in the CRC as well as the church at large, (2) provide articles that edify and encourage Christian living, (3) stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part in a way that encourages biblical thinking about these issues and is in line with our confessional heritage, and (4) offer tools to help readers find fresh awareness to seek, learn, worship, and serve as Reformed Christians in contemporary society (cf. mandate for *The Banner* adopted by the CRCNA Board of Trustees, February 2015) by effectively directing or performing the following functions:
 - a. plan issues of *The Banner*
 - b. ensure the development and maintenance of *The Banner's* online presence
 - c. write editorials and other appropriate columns
 - d. make final decisions on all submitted manuscripts
 - e. approve all final copy and layout of each issue
 - f. ensure that all *Banner* correspondence is answered appropriately
 - g. maintain an adequate readership level for both the print edition and online edition (including various digital platforms)
2. Work with the executive director and the director of finance and operations to ensure the continuing financial stability of *The Banner*.
3. Consult regularly with the executive director.
4. Effectively interact with people to promote the interest of *The Banner*.
5. Participate in quarterly meetings with staff to plan future issues.
6. Participate in the annual staff retreat for general planning.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Banner staff

QUALIFICATIONS

1. A personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord
2. A member in good standing of the Christian Reformed Church
3. In full accord with the doctrinal positions of the Christian Reformed Church
4. Thorough familiarity with the Scriptures and insight into Reformed teachings

5. Insight regarding issues pertaining to the Christian Reformed Church, the church at large, and the world of our day
6. Demonstrated ability to write with clarity and liveliness, and to sensibly edit what others have written
7. Sensitivity and ability to communicate in writing to *The Banner's* diverse reading audience
8. Ability to develop and direct *The Banner's* online presence in a manner suited to effective online engagement
9. Ability to supervise staff in a way that leads to staff growth and development
10. Ability to work effectively with a senior management team, a board, and committees
11. Ability to deal constructively with a variety of opinions and with criticism
12. General knowledge of administrative functions such as finance, planning, etc.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

1. Master of Divinity or Theological Studies preferred
2. At least 8 years CRC ministry experience preferred

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job.

Appendix B

Korean Classes Mentoring Committee

I. Background

Synod 2014 allowed Classis Pacific Hanmi to divide into two classes with the following understanding (*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 568):

- a. Both classes will begin to meet separately in September 2014.
- b. A tentative roster of the two classes is available in the *Agenda for Synod 2014* (p. 386), including a few undecided churches (p. 387). The official roster and name of the new classis, along with classis functionaries in the two classes, will be provided to the synodical office in the fall of 2014 by the clerk of each classis after the two classes officially meet. The membership of the new classes will be reported to Synod 2015.
- c. The executive director of the CRCNA will appoint mentoring committees for each classis, and these committees will provide these classes with guidelines to assist in their transition and will offer continuing guidance to enable them to grow into healthy CRC classes.

Grounds:

- 1) In comparison to other classes, Classis Pacific Hanmi is extremely large—50 congregations as of 2014.
- 2) Requests have been submitted by some of the churches within Classis Pacific Hanmi to form a new classis.
- 3) The classis leadership and classis as a whole have agreed that there is a need to divide into two classes for the sake of better management of classical work and ministry.
- 4) The central goal in forming two classes is for a renewed vision in the classis and in the development of its ministry.
- 5) The classis itself, in Overture 7, has requested mentoring.

II. Mandate of the committee

The committee was asked to provide the classes with guidelines to assist in their transition and offer continuing guidance to enable them to grow into healthy CRC classes.

III. Process and plan

The mentoring committee has spent time meeting together as a whole and also dividing into two sub-committees to meet with each classis. The committee has been encouraged by the way both classes organized at their first meetings in September 2014 and by the continued openness to learn and grow in following the Church Order. Both classes participated in a one-day Church Order training event in January 2015 led by Joel Boot and Kathy Smith.

The classes' names are Classis Hanmi and Classis Ko-Am. The churches in each classis are listed in the Appendix to this report.

Listening to and learning from the newly formed classes has led to the formation of the following plan.

The committee plans to continue guiding the classes for the next two years by emphasizing the following:

Overview

A. CRC denominational commitments to the classis

1. Share the rich biblical and theological tradition capable of equipping believers and churches to serve God in the 21st century.
2. Provide a proven structure for organizing individual congregations.
3. Provide a proven structure for organizing regional ministry with other CRCs—namely, the classis. These regional groupings of churches provide
 - a. ongoing collegial relationships with other CRC pastors and churches in the area.
 - b. ongoing ministry partnership in mutually agreed upon work (example: preparing, examining, and ordaining persons for ministry roles).
4. Provide a strong binational ministry partnership with other CRCs—namely, the Christian Reformed Church. This includes
 - a. effective, low-overhead global ministry in missions and poverty alleviation.
 - b. educational/group resources for all ages.
 - c. partial funding for church planters.
 - d. priority access to exceptional institutions of higher learning.
 - e. youth ministry resources and mission trip opportunities.

B. CRC classis commitments to the CRC denomination

1. Embrace and teach this rich biblical and theological tradition.
2. Use the congregational governing structure as described in the CRC Church Order.
3. Use the classical governing structure as described in the CRC Church Order.
4. Participate in the national ministry partnership with other CRCs.

Implementation

A. CRC denominational commitments to Classis Hanmi and Classis Ko-Am

Notes: One way the denomination aims to keep its commitments is through the work of Korean Ministries Coordinator Charles Kim. Another is by the appointment, by Synod 2014, of a Korean Classes Mentoring Committee to help the two new Korean classes organize and operate according to the CRC Church Order.

Action steps by the denomination through the Korean Classes Mentoring Committee

1. Steps taken

- a. Mentoring committee members met with both classes at their September classis meetings
- b. Subcommittees met with newly formed classical leadership teams
- c. The committee sponsored a Church Order training seminar led by Professor Kathy Smith with Rev. Joel Boot in attendance to advise.
- d. The committee developed action steps and a meeting template (see below) to equip the leadership teams of the new classes to lead according to the CRC Church Order.

2. Steps planned

- a. At least one member of the Korean Classes Mentoring Committee and the Korean Ministries Coordinator will meet with the leadership team of each classis twice per year—at the meetings during which they prepare for the fall and spring classis meetings. The members of the mentoring committee will highlight the Church Order mandated action steps described below, give Church Order related feedback from the leadership team based on the mentoring committee's review of previous classis meeting minutes, and be available to assist in setting the classis agenda as desired.
- b. Two Korean speakers from the mentoring committee will attend each classis meeting.
- c. The mentoring committee will have a post-classis meeting (one after the fall meeting, one after the spring meeting) to discuss how the classes are growing in following the Church Order and how the team can continue to encourage and hold them accountable.
- d. Repeat steps a-c for 2015-2016 and then evaluate whether the mentoring committee has fulfilled its mandate.

B. CRC Classis commitments to the CRC denomination

- 1. Embrace and teach this rich biblical and theological tradition.
- 2. Use the congregational governing structure as described in the CRC Church Order.

Action steps to be encouraged by Classical Leadership Team:

- a. Each established church will form a functioning church council consisting of at least a pastor and 2 elders and 2 deacons elected by the congregation for terms of service.
- b. Pastors of churches which cannot form a functioning church council at this time will find an established church to supervise their work.

- 3. Use the classical governing structure as described in the CRC Church Order.

Action steps for Classical Leadership Team

- a. Ensure that established churches delegate a pastor and an elder to each classis meeting, and that pastors of emerging churches attend. Reminder: Retired pastors may serve as delegates to classis or synod only if they are actively serving in their church as elders; they may not serve as ministerial delegates. Note: Ensure that classis meetings are held within a reasonable driving distance for elder delegates.
- b. Enable participation of all delegates by publishing a classis meeting agenda three weeks prior to each classis meeting. This agenda includes reports of all classis committees and all matters to be addressed at the meeting.
- c. Publish classis meeting minutes, which include all matters dealt with, and encourage action steps 1 and 2 by including the following charts:

- 1) an attendance chart listing (a) established churches and their delegates and (b) emerging churches and their pastors and sponsoring established churches

Attendance Chart—

Established Church	Pastor	Elder

<u>Emerging Church</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Parenting Church</u>

- 2) a contribution chart listing all classis churches and their ministry share contributions for the current ministry year

MINISTRY SHARES RECEIVED IN 201__				
	Contributing	Shares	Percent	
ORGANIZED Church	Members	Received	Paid	Budgeted
		\$	%	
		\$	%	
		\$	%	
		\$	%	
Subtotals				
EMERGING Church				
		\$		
		\$		
		\$		
		\$		

4. Complete a brief checklist (below) to help keep major goals clearly in mind, and send to the mentoring committee for their information.

Classis Meeting Checklist—to be reviewed by Classical Leadership Team and sent to mentoring committee

- a. Classis meeting agenda sent out at least three weeks before classis meeting.
 ___ yes
 ___ no

- b. Dealt only with items on the agenda and referred matters not on the agenda to the appropriate classis committee or team.
☐ yes
☐ no
 - c. Verbally encouraged all established churches who sent elder delegates, and encouraged other churches to do so at a future meeting.
☐ yes
☐ no
 - d. Consulted with mentor committee member Rev. Will Verhoef prior to the meeting on any matters related to joining or leaving the CRC (involving both pastors and congregations).
☐ yes
☐ no
 - e. Consulted with mentor committee member Rev. Will Verhoef prior to the meeting on any matters related to special discipline.
☐ yes
☐ no
5. Participate in the national ministry partnership with other CRCs.

Action steps for Classical Leadership Team

- a. Ensure that each established church submit a brief yearly statistical report as requested by the denominational ministry center.
- b. Schedule spring classis meetings between February 26 and March 15 as requested by the denomination.
- c. Ensure that all matters relating to joining or leaving the CRC (involving both pastors and congregations) be done in consultation with mentoring committee member Rev. Will Verhoef.
- d. Ensure that all matters relating to special discipline be done in consultation with mentoring committee member Rev. Will Verhoef.
- e. Encourage financial support of CRC ministries through denominational ministry shares, including support through the contribution chart described above.
- f. Submit Classical Leadership Team meeting minutes and classis meeting minutes to the Korean Classes Mentoring Committee for review.

IV. Recommendation

That synod approve the work of the committee.

Korean Classes Mentoring Committee
 Ron Chu
 Charles Kim

David Kong
John Seho Oh
Joel Van Soelen, secretary
Will Verhoef
Mark Vermaire, chair
Brent Wassink, vice-chair

Appendix C

Ministry Plan Overview

Initial Revision: April 23, 2015; Subsequent (to BOT) Revision: May 12, 2015

OUR MISSION

As people called by God . . .

We gather to praise God, listen to him, and respond.

We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ.

We love and care for one another as God's people.

We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus.

We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.

OUR VISION

The Christian Reformed Church is a diverse family of healthy congregations, assemblies, and ministries expressing the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide.

OUR DESIRED FUTURE

Theme 1: CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Congregations of the Christian Reformed Church participate with each other and with their local communities to discern where the Spirit is working and to bear witness to Christ's presence.

STRATEGIC FOCI

1.1 Congregations discover and discern how God is at work in their churches and communities, bringing renewal and transformation.

1.2 Ministry leaders, both ordained and lay, discover and discern how God is at work in their communities, resulting in the birth of new churches and discipling communities.

Theme 2: DISCIPLESHIP

Congregations of the Christian Reformed Church are vibrant, grace-shaped communities engaged in lifelong discipleship with those of all generations.

STRATEGIC FOCI

2.1 Congregations are shaped by grace.

2.2 Congregations are places where all generations find spiritual homes and grow in belonging and maturity.

2.3 Congregations discern God's call within their unique identities and contexts, giving rise to strong and creative discipleship practices and a broad range of resources.

2.4 Congregations engage youth and young adults in the life of the church.

2.5 Congregations are characterized by vibrant worship that engages people of all ages.

Theme 3: LEADERSHIP

Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church are places where clergy and lay leaders are developed, trained, and empowered to lead effectively in today's diverse and challenging contexts.

STRATEGIC FOCI

3.1 Congregations and ministries discover, understand, and respond to leadership needs in ways that meet their local contexts.

3.2 Congregations and ministries are characterized by Spirit-filled leaders who have the skills to minister in their local contexts, both internal and external.

3.3 Congregations and ministries participate in leadership development efforts with partners throughout the world.

3.4 Congregations and ministries assist women, racial-ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and young adults in discovering and developing their leadership gifts and callings.

Theme 4: IDENTITY

Congregations and members of the Christian Reformed Church understand deeply, embrace fully, and express freely what it means to be a part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

STRATEGIC FOCI

4.1 Congregations and ministries develop ways to deepen our understanding of our shared identity as the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

4.2 Congregations, ministries, and members of the Christian Reformed Church understand, embrace, and express our identity as part of Christ's church worldwide.

4.3 Congregations, ministries, and members understand, embrace, and express our identity as a diverse church gathered from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev. 7:9).

4.4 Congregations, ministries, and members respond to the call to "act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God" (Mic. 6:8).

Theme 5: COLLABORATION

Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church interact together in ways that are effective, efficient, responsive, cross-culturally competent, easily accessible, and sustainable.

STRATEGIC FOCI

5.1 Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church develop new ways of working together at all levels—local, regional, national, and binational—that are effective, efficient, responsive, clear, and sustainable.

5.2 The Christian Reformed Church develops new ways of connecting congregations with the denominational services they need, as well as increased opportunities to participate in mission outreach, in a way that generates greater efficiency, accessibility, cross-cultural competence, clarity, and sustainability.

Appendix D

Curriculum Vitae: Ms. Carol Bremer-Bennett

Education

1999-2004	Western New Mexico University <i>M.A. in Educational Leadership</i>	Gallup, N. Mex.
1992-1993	Calvin College <i>Secondary Education degree and History minor</i>	Grand Rapids, Mich.
1987-1991	Calvin College <i>B.A. Political Science major and Theology minor</i>	Grand Rapids, Mich.
1983-1987	Grand Rapids Christian High School	Grand Rapids, Mich.

Extra-Curricular Activities and Awards

Student Senator, three terms 1988–1991
Founding member and president of College Association of Political Action, 1987-1991
President of Thespians, two terms 1989-1991
Recipient of the Peace and Justice Award, 1991

Professional experience

2010-present	Rehoboth Christian School <i>Superintendent</i>	Rehoboth, N. Mex.
2005-2010	Rehoboth Christian School <i>Middle School Principal and Assistant Superintendent</i>	Rehoboth, N. Mex.
2003-2005	Rehoboth Christian School <i>Middle School Principal and Director of Alumni Relations</i>	Rehoboth, N. Mex.
1993-2003	Rehoboth Christian School <i>Middle School Teacher</i>	Rehoboth, N. Mex.
1991-1993	Calvin College <i>Resident Assistant, Entrada Summer Program</i>	Grand Rapids, Mich.
1991-1992	Rehoboth Christian School <i>Volunteer</i>	Rehoboth, N. Mex.

Came to Rehoboth after college graduation with the intent to explore my Navajo heritage. After falling in love with the area and the children of the school, I returned to college to receive an education degree.

Additional professional activities

2011-2012	Fellow, Van Lunen Center for Executive Management in Christian Schools
2010	Reader, Gates Millennium Scholarships through the American Indian Graduate Center
2010-present	Member, Ford Foundation Grant Committee to write Navajo curriculum “Iina: Ways of Life”
2009-2014	Member, CSI Accreditation Commission
2008-present	President and board member, New Mexico Association of Non-Public Schools (CAPE Chapter for New Mexico)
2005-present	Chairperson, School Improvement Team
2004-2005	Grant Program Manager, Grant for Preserving Native Language from the First Nations Development Institute
2003-2005	Contributor, NMEH Social Studies Educators Forum
1996-1999	President, Southwest Christian Teachers Association
June 1995	New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities

1992-1993 Middle School Committee to form Rehoboth Christian Middle School

Professional memberships

National Association of Middle Schools
Association of Curriculum and School Development
International Reading Association

Interests and activities

Gardening, cooking, and traveling

Community activities

2010-present Mentor, Delta Program for High School Students, Lutheran Church of Hope, Des Moines, Iowa
2006-present Ambassador, Yezalelem Minch Orphanage, Ethiopia
2005-2010 Vice President, Care 66 (Homeless Shelter)
1999-2005 Board of Trustees, Calvin College
1995-2001 Secretary/Treasurer, Red Mesa Youth Ministry Team
1997-2000 Member, Gallup Gardening Group
1995-1998 Deacon, Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church
1993-1997 Member, Gallup Community Theatre

Other information

United States Citizen
Member of Bethany Christian Reformed Church

Appendix E

Summary of Denominational Investments and Compliance with Investment Policy

Synod 1998 approved a number of measures dealing with investment guidelines and disclosures. Two of these appear on page 440 of the *Acts of Synod 1998* as follows:

That the BOT annually provide synod and classical treasurers with a summary of all investments owned by the agencies and institutions of the CRCNA. The summary is to include groupings of investments listed in the investment policy.

That the BOT annually provide synod with a statement that the agencies and institutions are in compliance with the investment policy; any exception to the policy will be reported.

The accompanying summary and related footnotes constitute the Board of Trustees' response to the first of these requests. In response to the second request, the Board of Trustees reports that on December 31, 2014, all of the agencies and institutions are in compliance with the denomination's investment policy, including the guidance it provides for assets received as a result of gifts or gift-related transactions.

The Board of Trustees' discussions regarding these matters included the following:

1. As requested by synod, the investment summary contains information regarding assets held by the agencies and institutions of the denomination. In addition to these investments, the denomination is responsible for the administration of investments held by various benefit plans, including retirement plans. The BOT reports that assets held by the benefit plans also are in compliance with the denomination's investment guidelines.
2. As requested, the summary includes investments only. It tells nothing of the commitments, restrictions, and purposes attached to the investments. Persons interested in a full understanding of these aspects are encouraged to refer to the financial statements of the agencies and institutions on file with each classical treasurer or to direct their inquiries to the agencies and institutions themselves.

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA**
Agencies and Institutions
Investment Summary in US\$
As of December 31, 2014

	Back to God Ministries International		Calvin College		Calvin Seminary		Denominational Services		CRC Foundation	
Categories Specified by Investment Policy:										
SHORT TERM										
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS										
Cash, Money-market mutual funds & CDs	\$	1,544,226	\$	21,800,700	\$	1,028,555	\$	3,713,241 (9)	\$	364,722
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES										
CRCNA Funds LLC Liquidity Fund (1)		318,200		-		-		3,342		-
Other short term		81,718		-		-		1,224,944		-
CRCNA FUNDS LLC BALANCED FUND (2)		2,888,194		-		-		13,316		50,126
COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS										
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock		-		209,533 (3)		-		-		-
Equity mutual funds		689,184 (3)		51,954,933 (10)		29,396,839 (10)		3,816,759		-
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)										
U.S. treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds		-		47,334,258		-		7,764,524 (9)		-
Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)		-		-		-		8,605,024 (9)		-
Bond mutual funds		163,194 (3)		37,315,066		9,954,931 (1)		-		-
CIBC / TAL overdraft accounts		-		-		-		(20,932,685) (9)		-
Interagency Investments (Obligations):										
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)		-		-		-		(4,000,000)		-
Other Investments:										
Private equity fund		-		-		384,512 (4)		-		-
Partnerships		5,000		34,275,165 (4)		- (4)		-		-
Land contracts		-		-		-		-		-
Life insurance cash value		384,791 (5)		394,591 (5)		111,531 (5)		-		18,305 (5)
Notes receivable		-		-		-		-		-
Common stock -- non-listed		-		3,018,478 (7)		-		-		-
Real estate (non-operating)		6,000 (8)		1,992,000 (8)		1,104,613 (8)		-		-
Total	\$	6,080,507	\$	198,294,724	\$	41,980,981	\$	208,466	\$	433,153

Numbers in parentheses are footnote numbers. See the footnotes that follow.

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA**
Agencies and Institutions
Investment Summary in US\$
As of December 31, 2014

	Home Missions	Loan Fund	World Missions	World Relief
Categories Specified by Investment Policy:				
SHORT TERM				
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS				
Cash, Money-market mutual funds & CDs	\$ 1,851,161	\$ 10,506,706	\$ 1,848,885	\$ 15,443,303
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES				
CRCNA Funds LLC Liquidity Fund (1)	673,082	-	193	26,327
Other short term	-	-	237,832	1,724,000
CRCNA FUNDS LLC BALANCED FUND (2)	1,520,558	-	4,076,625	6,942,212
COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS				
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	-	-	-
Equity mutual funds	864	-	291,709 (3)	-
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)				
U.S. treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds	-	-	-	-
Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	-	-	-
Bond mutual funds	-	-	123,623 (3)	-
CIBC / TAL overdraft accounts	-	-	-	-
Interagency Investments (Obligations):				
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	2,000,000	-	2,000,000
Other Investments:				
Private equity fund	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-
Land contracts	-	-	-	-
Life insurance cash value	-	-	-	35,648 (5)
Notes receivable	-	-	-	-
Common stock -- non-listed	-	-	-	-
Real estate (non-operating)	281,957	-	12,636	-
Total	\$ 4,327,622	\$ 12,506,706	\$ 6,591,504	\$ 26,171,490

Numbers in parentheses are footnote numbers. See the footnotes that follow.

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA
Benefit Plans
Investment Summary
As of December 31, 2014**

Categories Specified by Investment Policy:

	Employees' Savings Plan - U.S. in U.S. \$	Ministers' Pension Plan U.S. in U.S. \$	Special Assistance Fund U.S. in U.S. \$	Consolidated Group Insurance U.S. in U.S. \$	Employees' Retirement Plan - Canada in Canadian \$	Ministers' Pension Plan Canada in Canadian \$	Special Assistance Fund Canada in Canadian \$	Consolidated Group Insurance Canada in Canadian \$
SHORT TERM								
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS								
Cash, CDs and money-market mutual funds	\$ -	\$ 3,138,216	\$ 42,173	\$ 429,342	\$ 155,140	\$ 1,693,623	\$ 184,177	\$ 102,393
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES								
Guaranteed investment contracts	-	-	-	-	199,247	-	-	-
Stable Asset Income Fund	2,240,991	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS								
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	71,257,820	-	-	-	35,545,350	-	-
Diversified/Alternative mutual fund	4,253,039	4,395,768	-	-	2,410,629	-	-	-
Equity mutual funds	17,842,198	-	-	-	1,028,219	-	-	-
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)								
U.S. treasuries, Canadian gov't bonds or Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	17,226,589	-	2,700,460	-	9,630,447	-	-
Bond mutual funds	5,694,578	-	-	-	501,280	-	-	-
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS	-	10,892,859	-	-	-	2,297,586	-	-
Total	\$ 30,030,806	\$ 106,911,252	\$ 42,173	\$ 3,129,802	\$ 4,294,515	\$ 49,167,006	\$ 184,177	\$ 102,393

Footnotes to the December 31, 2014, Investment Summary

1. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized fixed income account for agencies.
2. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized balanced account (fixed income 52%, equities 48%) for agencies.
3. Donated publicly traded stock or mutual funds.
4. Ownership interest in private equity funds, including unrealized gains and reinvestments.
5. Cash value of life insurance contracts received as gifts.
6. Includes promissory notes received in the sale of real estate.
7. Includes investment in Creative Dining Services, owned jointly with Hope College.
8. Real estate received as a gift or held for investment purposes.
9. These investments, which provide security for the overdraft accounts, are part of a Canadian agency concentration/netting for interest cash management and investment program.
10. Includes equity, commodity, and hedged equity mutual funds.

Back to God Ministries International Supplement

I. Introduction

At the April 23, 2015, meeting of the board of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI), the board discussed the “Global mission capability and collaboration” section of the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture being considered by Synod 2015. The BTGMI board appreciates the goal of the task force’s report with its recommendation to implement a structure that simplifies and enhances the governance of the CRCNA and its agencies. BTGMI understands and values effective, streamlined governance for enhancing and enabling ministry in the church and around the world.

Nevertheless, the board of BTGMI has several concerns and requests clarification regarding certain aspects of the task force’s recommendations. The board therefore presents the following to Synod 2015:

II. Concerns

1. It is unclear how the Canada Revenue Agency requirements for Canadian board authority regarding designation of all funds coming from Canadian sources for BTGMI will be met (presently with the Canadian board of BTGMI).
2. The proposed joining of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions raises questions about the place and role of BTGMI in global ministries.
3. It is not clear to us what separation of governance and ministry looks like on a board or committee level—in other words, what will be the role of what is now the BTGMI board?
4. It is not clear in the proposed structure who has fiduciary authority over monies designated for BTGMI received from estates and private donors.
5. In donor relations there are concerns about effects to the BTGMI brand in relation to fundraising, especially with regard to donors outside the CRCNA and donors within the CRC who strongly support the vision and mission of BTGMI.

Back to God Ministries International
Rev. Kurt Selles, director

Calvin College Supplement

I. Introduction

The Calvin College Board of Trustees met May 7-9, 2015, and presents to synod this supplemental report. The board had a successful meeting and completed its scheduled work for committee and plenary sessions. During its meetings the board thanked its eight members who are leaving the board—Rev. Dr. Randall D. Engle, Mr. William J. Katt, Mr. Daniel Meester, Ms. Ruth Palma, Mr. Scott A. Spoelhof, Mr. David VanRandwyk, Dr. Laurens Vandergrift, and Mr. Dale H. Venhuizen—for their diligent work on the board and service to Calvin College.

II. Faculty matters

The Calvin College Board of Trustees honored the following eight individuals for service to Calvin College and the Christian Reformed Church in North America and conferred on them the titles listed below:

1. Marilyn R. Bierling, Ph.D., professor of Spanish, emerita
2. John H. Brink, Ph.D., professor of psychology, emeritus
3. P. Mark Fackler, Ph.D., professor of communication arts and sciences, emeritus
4. Quentin J. Schultze, Ph.D., professor of communication arts and sciences, emeritus
5. Peter V. Tigchelaar, Ph.D., professor of biology, emeritus
6. Glenn E. Triezenberg, M.S.W., M.B.A., director of Career Development Services, emeritus
7. Gerald K. Van Kooten, Ph.D., professor of geology, emeritus
8. Julie Walton, Ph.D., professor of kinesiology, emerita

III. Election of college trustees

A. *At-large trustee*

Mr. Scott Spoelhof is concluding his service on the board. The board recommends that synod appoint Dr. Steven J. Triezenberg. A brief biography follows:

Dr. Steven J. Triezenberg, B.S. in biology and education, Calvin College; Ph.D. in cellular and molecular biology, University of Michigan; Postdoctoral Fellow, Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C.

Dr. Triezenberg, a member of Eastern Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, is the director of Van Andel Education Institute, the president and dean of Van Andel Institute Graduate School, and a professor in the Van Andel Research Institute. Dr. Triezenberg received his bachelor's degree in biology and education at Calvin College. His Ph.D. training in cell and molecular biology at the University of Michigan was followed by postdoctoral research at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington, D.C. Before joining Van Andel Institute in 2006, Dr. Triezenberg was a faculty member of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Michigan State University (MSU) for more than eighteen years. He also served MSU as associate director of the graduate program in cell and molecular biology. He has served on the Calvin College Regional Advisory Council, and he currently serves on the Aquinas College Science Advisory Board and the Grand Valley State University Professional Science Masters in Biostatistics Advisory Board.

B. Alumni trustee

Ms. Ruth Palma is concluding her service on the board. The board recommends that the synod appoint Mr. Jeff DeNooyer. A brief biography follows:

Mr. Jeff DeNooyer, B.A. in business, Calvin College.

Mr. DeNooyer is the president and owner of Metro Toyota, where since 1987 he has worked as part of the third generation with his family in the automobile business. He is a member of the Calvin Alumni Association and has previously served on the Alumni Board as president-elect for one year, followed by service as president for one year. He has previously served on the Kalamazoo Community Foundation Board of Trustees—as a member for sixteen years and as its chairperson for five years. He has also served on the boards of Habitat for Humanity and of the Kalamazoo Christian School's Capital Campaign. He is a member of Third CRC in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he has served as a catechism teacher for many years and as an elder and a deacon.

C. Regional trustees

1. Region 3: Dr. Laurens Vandergrift is concluding his service on the board. The classes did not submit names for nomination in the fall nomination period. The board recommends that synod appoint Ms. Marsha Vander gaast. A brief biography follows:

Ms. Marsha Vander gaast, B.A in social studies and history, Calvin College; M.A. in teaching, Calvin College; specialist in computers, University of Ottawa; specialist in guidance, University of Toronto; special education, University of Ottawa.

Ms. Vander gaast was born in Sioux Center, Iowa, and grew up in Michigan. She has taught at Knox Christian School in Bowmanville, Ontario; Ottawa Christian School in Ottawa, Ontario; and Durham Christian High School in Bowmanville, Ontario. She received a master's degree in teaching at Calvin College and has a specialist degree in computers and counseling. She and her husband Gary, members of Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville, Ontario, have two children, both of whom attended Calvin College.

2. Region 5: Mr. Dale H. Venhuizen is concluding his service on the board. The classis did not submit names for nomination in the fall nomination period. The board recommends that synod appoint Mr. Thomas Wybenga. A brief biography follows:

Mr. Thomas J. Wybenga, B.A., political science, Calvin College (also awarded Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam); J.D., Ohio State University College of Law.

Mr. Wybenga is a partner in the Labor and Employment Practice Group of Seyfarth Shaw, a Chicago-based multinational law firm. Prior to beginning his legal career, he spent approximately five years working as a youth ministries director within the Christian Reformed Church. Previous board experience includes The Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Sammamish (Wash.) Christian School, and various youth soccer organizations. He is a member of the Bellevue (Wash.) CRC, where he has taught the freshman/sophomore Heidelberg Catechism class and also has served on the praise and worship team.

D. Regional at-large trustees

1. Region 9: Mr. William J. Katt is concluding his service on the board. The board recommends that synod appoint Ms. Janice Buikema. A brief biography follows:

Ms. Janice Buikema, B.A. in business and economics, Calvin College; M.B.A. in finance, DePaul University; master of science in computer information systems, Bentley University.

Ms. Buikema is a vice president at Northern Trust Corporation, where she has worked for the past 27 years in various roles as an internal business consultant/analyst. She is a member at Faith CRC in Tinley Park, Illinois, where she has previously served as a member of the ministry board (finance committee), as well as serving as a deacon for three years—one year as secretary and two years as church treasurer.

2. Region 10: Mr. David VanRandwyk is concluding his service on the board. The board recommends that synod appoint Mr. Christopher (CJ) Grier. A brief biography follows:

Mr. Christopher (CJ) Grier, B.A. in visual and performing arts: concentration in music, Shaw University; master of education in higher education/higher education administration, Ohio University.

Mr. Grier is the assistant to the president for racial initiatives and associate director of admissions at Western Theological Seminary and is a CQ certified facilitator for the Cultural Intelligence Center. He is the chief musician and pastor of worship arts at Maple Avenue Ministries, Holland, Michigan, a union church of the RCA and CRC. His former experience includes pastor of worship at Calvary Reformed Church and gospel choir director for Hope College. He gained staff experience at Shaw University, Ohio University, and Purdue University in multicultural programming, and he served as director of Camp Tall Turf in Western Michigan. He also serves on the board of the Holland Police Community Relations Commission.

3. Region 11: Rev. Dr. Randall D. Engle is concluding his service on the board. The board recommends that synod appoint Ms. Pearl Banks. A brief biography follows:

Ms. Pearl Banks, B.S. in film and television, Michigan State University.

Ms. Banks is the ministries coordinator at and a member of Neland Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan. She grew up on the shores of Lake Michigan in a farming community. She graduated from Michigan State University and later attended Valley College and UCLA for film and television production. She worked for and learned film and television production in Santa Monica, California. After 27 years in production, Ms. Banks returned to work within a church setting. She serves on the Neland Ministries Committee and the Neland CRC council and is a member of Classis Grand Rapids East's Starting and Strengthening Churches Team. She was an original participant and shaper of the denomination's antiracism teams.

IV. Finance

The Calvin College Board of Trustees approved tuition, fees, and room and board rates while approving the budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. These rates are \$30,660 in tuition (including fees), and \$9,690 in room and board, increases of 3.5 percent in tuition/fees and 2.16 percent in room/board, the second lowest percentage increases since 1970.

V. Recommendations

A. That synod give appropriate recognition to the following individuals for service to Calvin College and the Christian Reformed Church in North America and confer on them the titles presented here:

1. Marilyn R. Bierling, Ph.D., professor of Spanish, emerita
2. John H. Brink, Ph.D., professor of psychology, emeritus
3. P. Mark Fackler, Ph.D., professor of communication arts and sciences, emeritus
4. Quentin J. Schultze, Ph.D., professor of communication arts and sciences, emeritus
5. Peter V. Tigchelaar, Ph.D., professor of biology, emeritus
6. Glenn E. Triezenberg, M.S.W., M.B.A., director of career development services, emeritus
7. Gerald K. Van Kooten, Ph.D., professor of geology, emeritus
8. Julie Walton, Ph.D., professor of kinesiology, emerita

B. That synod appoint new members to the Calvin College Board of Trustees, as nominated (sections III, A-D).

Calvin College Board of Trustees
Christine A. Metzger, secretary

Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement

The Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees presents this supplement of additional matters relating to the seminary.

I. Board of Trustees

At its meeting on May 21-22, 2015, the board elected the following officers for 2015-2016: Mr. Sid Jansma, Jr., chair; Rev. Andrew Vander Leek, vice chair; Ms. Teresa Renkema, secretary.

II. Academics

A. Graduates

Calvin Theological Seminary graduated 106 students at its commencement service on May 23, 2015. Of those students, 36 were the first graduates of the seminary's recently established Hispanic Ministry program and received a Certificate in Hispanic Ministry. Two students were the first to receive the master of divinity degree through the seminary's Distance Learning program, now completing its third year. The Ph.D. program saw the largest number of graduates during its 23-year history, with seven students receiving their degree.

B. Distinguished Alumni Awards

Dr. Dale J. Cooper and Rev. Henry De Bolster received the seminary's Distinguished Alumni Awards for 2015.

C. Faculty

At its recent meeting, the trustees made the following appointments and renewals:

1. Dr. Matthew J. Tuininga appointed as assistant professor of moral theology for three years. The trustees recommend that, following a successful interview, synod ratify the appointment of Dr. Matthew J. Tuininga as Assistant Professor of Moral Theology for three years, effective July 1, 2016. The curriculum vitae for Dr. Tuininga is found in Appendix A.
2. Mr. Cory B. Willson appointed as the Jake and Betsy Tuls assistant professor of missiology and missional ministry for three years. The trustees recommend that, following a successful interview, synod ratify the appointment of Mr. Cory B. Willson as the Jake and Betsy Tuls Assistant Professor of Missiology and Missional Ministry for three years, effective July 1, 2015. The curriculum vitae for Mr. Willson is found in Appendix B.
3. Dr. Mary VandenBerg reappointed with promotion to the rank of professor of systematic theology with permanent tenure. The trustees recommend that synod ratify this reappointment.
4. Ms. Sarah Chun reappointed as associate dean of students and international student advisor for three years, effective July 1, 2015.
5. Dr. Jeff Sajdak reappointed as dean of students for three years, effective July 1, 2015.

D. Position openings

At its February meeting, the board declared the opening of the director of mentored ministries position. The board heard an update on the search process in May and continues to request the prayers of the churches for potential nominees and the process of filling this position.

III. Recommendations

A. That, following a successful interview, synod ratify the appointment of Dr. Matthew J. Tuininga as Assistant Professor of Moral Theology for three years, effective July 1, 2016.

B. That, following a successful interview, synod ratify the appointment of Mr. Cory B. Willson as the Jake and Betsy Tuls Assistant Professor of Missiology and Missional Ministry for three years, effective July 1, 2015.

C. That synod ratify the reappointment of Dr. Mary VandenBerg with promotion to the rank of Professor of Systematic Theology with permanent tenure.

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees
Teresa Renkema, secretary

Appendix A

Cover Letter and Curriculum Vitae: Matthew J. Tuininga

Professor Lyle Bierma
Chair, Search Committee for Professor of Moral Theology, Calvin Theological Seminary

Dear Professor Bierma and Committee Members,

I am responding to your advertisement for a faculty position in moral theology, or moral and philosophical theology, at Calvin Theological Seminary. I received my Ph.D. in Religion, Ethics, and Society from Emory University in 2014. I wrote my dissertation, titled *Christ's Two Kingdoms: Calvin's Political Theology and the Public Engagement of the Church*, under the direction of John Witte, Jr., Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University School of Law; Timothy P. Jackson, Professor of Christian Ethics, and Steven Tipton, Professor of the Sociology of Religion, both from Emory University's Candler School of Theology; and Elsie Anne McKee, Professor of Reformation Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary.

My abiding scholarly interest is in the moral and social implications of the Christian faith. I am especially interested in what it means for Christians to witness faithfully to the gospel of Christ in contexts characterized by religious, social, and moral pluralism, as individuals and as churches, in word and in deed. I use a broad framework of theological, philosophical, historical, and sociological perspectives to work through practical challenges facing contemporary believers and churches.

My passion lies in service to the church. A licentiate for nearly eight years, I have served four pastoral internships, in one case as the sole pastor of a church for two months. I have preached nearly two hundred times and continue to receive regular invitations from churches across the United States. In terms of training pastors, I served for several years as a teaching associate in ethics and theology at Candler School of Theology, a seminary of the Methodist Church, and I taught one semester as a contingent professor of moral theology at Sewanee, the University of the South, a seminary of the Episcopal Church. Though I currently teach undergraduates in a liberal arts setting, it is my desire to teach in a Reformed institution dedicated to the service of the church through the training of pastors and teachers.

My ties to the Reformed tradition run deep. My grandfather, father, and uncle are all graduates of Calvin Theological Seminary. As the son of a Christian Reformed pastor, I enjoyed the richness of life as a child in a CRC congregation consisting largely of Dutch immigrants and their children. I also experienced the painful division that led to the formation of the United Reformed Churches, dividing both my family and my circle of friends. I began my affiliation with the Presbyterian Church (PCA) as a student at Covenant College. My wife (who grew up RCA) and children are members of the PCA congregation in which I worship at this time, though my license remains in the URC due to my confessional preference for the Three Forms of Unity. While serving as an Intelligence Analyst for the FBI, where I studied Islam, I came to appreciate the decisive importance of the theology and public witness of the church and decided to go to Westminster Seminary California.

I chose Westminster because I thought it exemplified a confessional, ecumenical, and Christocentric emphasis on church planting. As a mentor and teacher, Michael Horton helped me work through a crisis of faith by showing me that we embrace the authority of Scripture because we believe in *Christ*, and not the other way around. He emphasized that we serve within the Reformed *tradition* but we hold to the Christian *faith*. He spurred me to engage and

take seriously the broader world of academic theology. Along with WSC's biblical-theological emphasis and its emphasis on the ministry of the church, these convictions provided the foundation for a significant personal watershed. They prompted me to reprioritize my theological commitments, reconsider my interpretations of Scripture, and rethink the role of the church and believers in the world. I hope to play the same sort of role mentoring and encouraging students—on a personal level—that Horton played for me.

I entered Emory University's program in Religion, Ethics, and Society interested in wrestling with the value of Reformed two kingdoms theology for contemporary Christian ethics. On the one hand, I believed that an eschatologically oriented two kingdoms theology provides a foundation for Christians to witness to the gospel and its social implications in a manner that spurns triumphalism in favor of witness. On the other hand, I found certain “neo-platonic” versions of two kingdoms thought troubling. My professors at Emory helped me to explore the value of Reformed moral theology in light of its broader historical and sociological contexts while placing it in conversation with the social gospel, liberation theology, feminism, black theology, and Neo-Anabaptism. By working with colleagues representing a wide diversity of backgrounds and convictions and by wrestling with questions and problems far beyond the scope of my past experiences, I came to appreciate the “big picture,” so to speak, of the contemporary context for Reformed moral theology. Yet these experiences deepened my appreciation of the need for faithful confessional Reformed witness to the gospel.

It was in Calvin that I discovered enormous and largely untapped resources for resolving problems in two kingdoms theology. Calvin emphasized the lordship of Christ over all of life, yet he insisted that Christ's kingdom cannot be conflated with the temporal affairs of this world. He stressed obedience to God in every vocation, but he did so in a manner that encouraged self-sacrifice, humility, and hope rather than conquest, arrogance, or worldly success. Calvin helped me grasp how the church exhibits Christ's restoration of the material cosmos by serving the world as the new humanity, through word, sacrament, discipline, and diaconate, and so witnessing to its complete transformation in the future. He showed me how the church might proclaim a vision of kingdom restoration as Christians, individually and collectively, are conformed to Christ's image in their lives and vocations. My work on Calvin and Reformed political theology enables me to contribute to the excellent scholarship on the Reformed tradition spurred by Dr. Richard Muller and others through Calvin Theological Seminary's doctoral program, and to play a role in the ongoing training of doctoral students.

Properly understood, I believe Reformed moral theology is structured by the New Testament's call to believers faithfully to follow Christ and his commandments in obedience, love, service, and suffering—in every area of life—rather than by the Old Testament call to transform society according to the model of Israel. This Christocentric approach to moral theology is desperately needed in Reformed churches that are only beginning to grasp what it means to follow Christ in a post-Christian context. A central part of this task is to show how Christian worship shapes faithful Christian witness.

My study of Calvin also led me to rethink my relationship to the broader Reformed world, including the Christian Reformed Church. Calvin's Christocentric interpretation of Scripture and the law confirmed my inclination to reject the narrow fundamentalism that has come to characterize strands of Reformed Christianity. His emphasis on the distinction between moral/spiritual matters and political/temporal matters, rooted in the New Testament's eschatology, enabled me to discern and embrace biblical grounds for women's ordination to pastoral office. His emphasis on the unity of the church led me to question unnecessary ecclesiastical separation.

I believe my theological training, academic and intellectual trajectory, and passion for the churches of the confessional Reformed tradition make me an excellent fit for the position you are seeking to fill at Calvin Theological Seminary. On my CV you will find contact information for personal and professional references. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Dr. Matthew J. Tuininga

Matthew J. Tuininga, Ph.D.

Education

Ph.D., Emory University, Graduate Division of Religion, Ethics and Society, 2014.

M.Div., Westminster Seminary California, 2009.

B.A. (History), *Summa cum laude*, Covenant College, 2004.

Current Faculty Appointment

Adjunct Professor of Politics and Core Studies: Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia.

POL 290, *Religion and American Politics*, Spring 2015

COR 201, *Human Nature and the Social Order I* (two sections), Fall 2013, 2014.

COR 202, *Human Nature and the Social Order II* (two sections), Spring 2014, 2015.

HON 101, *Christianity and the Rise of Science*, Fall 2014.

Previous Teaching Experience

Contingent Professor (sabbatical replacement, Fall 2013): Sewanee, University of the South – School of Theology, Sewanee, Tennessee; Courses: CEMT 522, *Contemporary Moral Issues*, Fall 2013.

Teaching Associate, Dr. Deborah Lipstadt, Emory University; *History of the Holocaust*, Spring 2013. Lectured and graded student work.

Teaching Associate, Dr. Steve Tipton, Emory University – Candler School of Theology: *Morality in America*, Spring 2011. Lectured, led regular seminars, graded student work.

Teaching Assistant, Dr. Joy McDougall, Emory University – Candler School of Theology: *Systematic Theology*, Fall 2010. Led regular seminars, graded student work.

Teaching Assistant, Dr. Timothy Jackson, Emory University – Candler School of Theology: *Introduction to Christian Ethics*, Fall 2009. Led regular seminars, graded student work.

Dissertation (Defended September 18, 2014)

Topic: *Christ's Two Kingdoms: Calvin's Political Theology and the Public Engagement of the Church*.

Committee:

Timothy P. Jackson, Professor of Christian Ethics at Emory University's Candler School of Theology (codirector).

John Witte, Jr., Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University School of Law (codirector).

Steven Tipton, Professor of the Sociology of Religion at Emory University's Candler School of Theology.

Elsie Anne McKee, Professor of Reformation Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Research Assistant Experience

Research Assistant, Prof. John Witte, Jr., Center for the Study of Law and Religion, 2009-2010.

Conducted large scale research and report for an ongoing book project on John Calvin's theology of law. Drafted article on Martin Luther's political thought for *Encyclopedia of Political Thought*.

Research Assistant, Dr. David VanDrunen, Westminster Seminary California, 2007-2009.

Conducted research and editing on a series of articles and book projects on Reformed political theology and bioethics, including *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, *Bioethics and the Christian Life*, and *Divine Covenants and Moral Order*.

Research Assistant, Covenant College History Department, 2003-2004.

Honors and Awards

Full Tuition Scholarship and Annual Stipend for Five Years of Doctoral Work, Emory University, Graduate Division of Religion, 2009-2014.
 Highest Possible Grades in Comprehensive Exams, Graduate Division of Religion, Emory University, 2011.
 D.K. Kim Scholarship, Westminster Seminary California, 2006-2009.
 Van Til Award (best paper in Department of Theological Studies), Westminster Seminary California, 2008.
 Van Til Award (best paper in Department of Practical Theology), Westminster Seminary California, 2007.
 Brock Scholarship, Covenant College, 2001-2004.
 Presidential Scholarship, Covenant College, 2001-2004.
 Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Honors Program, Oxford University, 2003.

Relevant Previous Employment

Intern, Immanuel's Reformed Church, Salem, Oregon; Summer 2012
 Teacher, All Saints Redeemer Church, Atlanta, Georgia; 2009-2010
 Intern, Messiah's Reformed Fellowship, New York, New York; Summer 2008
 Intern, Draper's Valley Presbyterian Church, Draper, Virginia; Summer 2007
 Intern, Escondido United Reformed Church, Escondido, California; 2007-2008
 Intelligence Analyst, counter-terrorism, Federal Bureau of Investigation; 2005-2006
 Legislative Correspondent, U.S. Congressman Dave Weldon; May-December 2004
 Intern, U.S. Congressman Zach Wamp; Spring 2004

Linguistic Competencies

French (advanced), German (basic), Latin (basic), Hebrew (basic), Greek (basic)

Professional Organizations

American Academy of Religion
 Society of Christian Ethics

Book Chapters

"Calvin as Two Kingdoms Theologian: In Theology, In Church, and In State." In Anne Eusterschulte, ed., *Anthropological Reformations: Anthropology in the Era of Reformation*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, forthcoming.
 "John Calvin and the Redemption of the Cosmos." In W. Bradford Littlejohn and Peter Escalante, eds., *For the Healing of the Nations: Essays on Creation, Redemption, and Neo-Calvinism*. Proceedings of the Second Annual Convivium Irenicum. Moscow, Idaho: The Davenant Press, 2014.

Article in Peer Reviewed Journal

"Good News for the Poor: An Analysis of Calvin's Concept of Poor Relief and the Diaconate in Light of His Two Kingdoms Paradigm." *Calvin Theological Journal* 49 (2014): 221-247.

Conference Papers Delivered

"John Calvin and the Redemption of the Cosmos." Second Annual Convivium Irenicum, Laureldale Cottage, South Carolina, June 6, 2014.
 "Christ or Fuhrer: Luther, Bonhoeffer, and the Two Kingdoms Under Hitler." Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Baltimore, Maryland, November 24, 2013.
 "Calvin as Two Kingdoms Theologian: In Theology, In Church, and In State." Third RefoRC Conference 2013, Freie Universitat, Berlin, Germany, May 18, 2013.

"Reformulating the Two Kingdoms Paradigm: A Constructive Critique of James Henley Thornwell's Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church." Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, Georgia, October 30, 2010.

"A Common Covenant: Grounding Civil Politics in the Noahic Covenant." Annual Conference of the Abraham Kuyper Center for Public Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary, April 16, 2010.

Select Published Articles (Non-Peer Reviewed)

"Review: Christian Political Witness, Edited by George Kalantzis and Gregory W. Lee." *Modern Reformation*, 23.5 (Sept.-Oct. 2014): 51-54.

"Should Christians Love Their Country?" *Reformation 21* (Sept. 2013).

"Why Did German Protestants Support Hitler?" *Patheos* (Apr. 15, 2013).

"Wilson Was a Calvinist, but He Got Calvin Wrong." *Patheos* (Dec. 16, 2012).

"The Two Kingdoms Doctrine: The Teaching of Scripture." *Reformation 21* (Nov. 2012).

"The Two Kingdoms Doctrine: John Calvin." *Reformation 21* (Oct. 2012).

"The Two Kingdoms Doctrine: What's the Fuss All About?" *Reformation 21* (Sept. 2012).

"How Plato Taught the Church to Tolerate Oppression." *Modern Reformation* (July/Aug. 2010).

"The Noahic Covenant, Common Grace, and the Character of God." *Modern Reformation* (May/June, 2009).

"Review: A Defense of Natural Law, by David VanDrunen." *The Outlook* 57.7 (July/Aug. 2007): 9-10.

Appendix B

Cover Letter and Curriculum Vitae: Cory B. Willson

February 13, 2015

Dr. Lyle Bierma
Calvin Theological Seminary

Dear Dr. Bierma,

After conversations with Richard J. Mouw and reviewing the job description for the Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal (IGCPR), I am eager to apply for the Professor of Missiology and Missional Ministry at Calvin Theological Seminary. My experiences as a university and seminary professor, ethnographic field research in congregations, and years of experience in pastoral ministry have provided the theological and pedagogical training necessary to equip men and women for a missional encounter with the contexts in which they live and work. I would love to continue this career trajectory as a professor at Calvin Theological Seminary because it values creative, Reformed approaches to discipleship, church planting, and renewal.

I am passionate about enriching the faith and practice of Christians through a sustained engagement with Scripture, theology, and culture. This passion has led me on an interdisciplinary journey as I have sought to bring the Christian faith to bear on every sphere of life. During my tenure as the Director of College Ministries, I pursued an MBA at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. After graduating, I was hired to teach business management courses and to contribute to several publications. Afterwards I pursued two degrees in theology. In each of these contexts I have sought to explore how the work of a theologian helps local churches cultivate disciples to live on mission in their specific cultural and vocational contexts.

In my dissertation, I have approached a theology of work through qualitative research in several evangelical churches. This is essential to my convictions that a theologian is to be a servant of the church and that theology should assist the church in its missional engagement of culture. In order to do this, I have constructed a theology of work in dialogue with the historic and contemporary theologies of work and vocation (e.g., *Rerum Novarum*, *Laborem Exercens*, Herman Bavinck, Miroslav Volf, Lee Hardy, etc.) and drawing on primary ethnographic research that I conducted over a six-month period in three congregations. This qualitative research is set into conversation with the academic debates over work and vocation. Qualitative research raises my awareness of the lived needs, questions, and topics that a theology of work needs to address if it is to serve the work of vocational discipleship in local churches. This approach to theological reflection on qualitative research is an essential methodological counterpart to a missional hermeneutic of culture, rooting the task of a theologian in its proper place of being a servant to the church.

I have cultivated my passion for teaching since completing graduate school in 2002. My involvement in public universities, evangelical seminaries, and local churches in the Netherlands, China, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda, France, and Italy have deepened my knowledge of the diversity within the global Christian church. These experiences have solidified in me a commitment to pursue a career that seeks to equip Christians to serve both Christ and neighbor in their particular cultural context. The tools of team-based learning, Socratic dialogue, and the experiential learning discipline of “action and reflection” have served me well in my work in the

church and academia and have given me confidence that I can make a meaningful contribution to the work taking place in the Church Renewal Learning Labs at IGCPR.

My desire to equip men and women for the manifold ministries of the church grows out of my own story of training and work in a secular university as well as my pastoral concern for the evangelical community. The evangelical heritage is rich in evangelism and commitment to Scripture but sadly has often overlooked the importance of preparing Christian leaders who can embody a missional encounter with their culture. In my studies under Richard Mouw at Fuller Seminary I have integrated insights from theology, missiology, and anthropology into my theological method. These efforts have challenged me to address one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: the growing religious diversity of society given the immigration patterns from the global south.

Over the past eight years I have been regularly involved in interfaith work and have contributed to a book on Christian and Jewish approaches for social ethics with Rabbi Elliot Dorff. I also teach an interdisciplinary course with Richard Mouw (a philosopher and theologian) and Douglas McConnell (a missiologist and anthropologist) on evangelicals and interfaith engagement. I have served as the cofounding editor of the journal *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue* since 2010 and have participated with Richard Mouw in an ongoing Mormon-Evangelical dialogue since 2008. In my role as editor I have regular interaction with the scholarship emerging from evangelicals on every continent as the journal provides a platform for indigenous perspectives on interfaith engagement to educate the larger church.

In my local church I serve as an elder, and I have come alongside the worship pastor to create an evangelical liturgy for our urban, increasingly post-Christian context. This effort was subsidized in part by the Worship Renewal Grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship awarded to our church in 2010-11. One of the most rewarding ministries for me has been to help lead an annual retreat on the Psalms with a diverse leadership team consisting of therapists, worship leaders, and pastors. These and other multidisciplinary pursuits in the church and academy express my commitment to help Christians remain grounded in the authority of Scripture and the resources of the Christian faith as they seek to know Christ and serve him in this world with conviction and civility.

Over the past twenty years I have come to see that God has gifted me as an educator and given me the desire to serve the body of Christ by equipping men and women for service both in the church and in broader society. I would consider it an honor to join the team of faculty at Calvin Theological Seminary.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my application. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this position and how I might contribute to the mission of the seminary.

Warmly,
Cory B. Willson

Cory B. Willson

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

2010—Present *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue* journal, co-founder and editor (at Fuller Theological Seminary)

2013—Present Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California
Adjunct Faculty in the School of Intercultural Studies

EDUCATION

July 2015 **Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California**

Defense of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) dissertation, Center for Advanced Theological Studies

Supervisors: Richard J. Mouw, Cornelius van der Kooi, and William A. Dyrness;

Dissertation: *Shaping the Lenses on Everyday Work: A Neo-Calvinist Understanding of the Poetics of Work and Human Flourishing*

September 2015 **Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

Defense of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) dissertation; School of Theology

Supervisors: George Harinck, Cornelius van der Kooi, and Richard J. Mouw;

Dissertation: *Shaping the Lenses on Everyday Work: A Neo-Calvinist Understanding of the Poetics of Work and Human Flourishing*

June 2009 **Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California**

Master of Divinity (M.Div.)

June 2002 **California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo**

Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)

June 2000 **California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo**

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Business Administration

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2012—2013 Director of Leadership Development; Max De Pree Center for Leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary

2007—2012 Course Coordinator and Research Assistant for Richard J. Mouw; Courses: *Perspectives on Christ and Culture & Evangelicals and Interfaith Dialogue*; Research: Christian Approaches to Engaging Culture and Public Theology; Evangelicals, Religious Diversity and Interfaith Engagement; Jewish and Christian Approaches to Social Ethics

2002—2004 Adjunct Faculty in Business Management, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

2007—Present Grace Brethren Church of Long Beach; Elder

2005—2006 Grace Brethren Church of Long Beach; Pastoral Practicum: College Ministry and Young Adults

2004—2005 Grace Brethren Church of Long Beach; Intern to Senior Pastor

2000—2001 Grace Church, San Luis Obispo; Director of College Ministries

1998—2000 Grace Church, San Luis Obispo; Pastoral Intern for College Ministry

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

- The emanating center of my dissertation, interfaith engagement, writing and teaching, and research with local congregations is a neo-Calvinist interpretation of the biblical teaching concerning the *missio Dei*. The *missio Dei* refers to the manifold purposes of the triune

God that began at creation and will reach its culmination in the new creation. This theological framework holds together biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation and provides the foundation for a biblical theological anthropology. It also provides practical resources for missiologists, pastors, and lay Christians as they engage in their culture-making vocations.

- As co-founding editor of the *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue* journal at Fuller Seminary, I have the privileged position of working closely with scholars, pastors, and practitioners from every continent. This affords me regular interaction with non-Western Christian voices on global issues. The selection of authors and geographic locations are purposefully chosen to provide for the larger evangelical community indigenous perspectives on critical issues arising from these sociocultural contexts. This reverses the traditional flow of exporting Western theology abroad.
- In conjunction with Richard Mouw and several seminary presidents, I have participated with a team of scholars to develop theological and pedagogical resources for integrating interfaith education into the curricula of the core disciplines of theological schools in North America.

PUBLICATIONS

- “*Simul Humanitas et Peccator*: The Talmud’s Contribution to a Dutch Reformed Notion of the *Imago Dei*,” in the *Kuyper Center Review*, Volume 2: *Revelation and Common Grace*, Eerdmans, 2011.
- *The Jewish Approach to Repairing the World (Tikkun Olam): A Brief Introduction for Christians*, by Elliot N. Dorff and Cory B. Willson (Jewish Lights Publications: October 2008).
- “Should Christians Confront Mormon Missionaries When They Knock on the Door?” a response in *Christianity Today*’s Open Question forum (forthcoming, 2015).
- “A Spirituality Fit for Our Times: Towards a Bavinckian Theology of Work,” in *Neo-Calvinism and Roman Catholicism*, eds. James Eglinton and George Harinck (pending).
- “Learning Proper Manners for the Religious Roundtable: Kuyper and Convicted Civility,” in *Comment Magazine*, July 13, 2011.
- “Temple Garments: A Case Study in the Lived Religion of Mormons,” in *On Talking Doctrine: Examining the Mormon-Evangelical Dialogue*, eds. Richard J. Mouw and Robert L. Millet (forthcoming: IVP, 2015).
- “Atoning Grace on Progression’s Highway: Explorations into Latter-day Saint Theological Anthropology Through the Writings of Robert L. Millet” in *Festschrift for Robert L. Millet* (forthcoming, 2015).
- “When Is a Mall Just a Mall? The Complexity of Reading Cultural Practices,” with Robert S. Covolo, *The Other Journal*, February 2, 2012.
- “Why Resurrection People Remember the Dead: Keeping the Memory of Our Deceased Loved Ones Alive,” *Christianity Today* online (April 14, 2014).
- “How Theology Can Ruin Your Prayer Life. How the Psalms Can Help,” *Reformed Worship*, June 2012.
- “Beyond Appreciation and Debate: A Response to Dr. Douglas McConnell’s Missiological Principles and Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue,” in *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*, Issue 1.1, Winter 2010.
- “Putting Business on the Mission Map: How Churches Can Serve Businesspeople,” *Comment Magazine*, October 19, 2012.
- “Reflections on Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” in *Theology News and Notes*, Fall 2010.

- “Whose Islam? Which Christianity? Africa’s Religious Landscape,” in *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*, Issue 2.3, Fall 2011.
- *Behavior in Organizations, 8th Edition*, McGraw Hill Publications, 2004 (contributing author).
- *Behavior in Organizations, 8th Edition, Teachers Manual*, McGraw Hill Publications, 2004 (contributing author).
- *Collaborative Research in Organizations: Foundations for Learning, Change and Theoretical Development*, Sage Publications, 2003 (contributing author).
- “Between Two Worlds: The Pastoral Role of Integrating Faith and Work,” *Leadership Journal* (April 2014).
- “Confronting the ‘Exasperating Discontinuity’: Max De Pree’s Concept of Persons (Part 1 & 2),” *Fieldnotes Magazine* (Sept. 12, 2012).
- “Redeeming What Was Tossed: Fashion, Faith and a California Designer’s Creative Calling,” *Christianity Today’s This Is Our City Project*, June 22, 2012.
- “Cultivating Her Creative Calling,” *Comment Magazine*, February 22, 2012.
- “Review of William Dyrness’s *Senses of Devotion*,” *ARTS Journal*, 25.2, 2014.
- “East Meets East: In the Heartland of Hinduism,” in *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*, Issue 2.2, Summer 2011.
- “Commentary: Discussion of the Aims of *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*,” in *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*, Issue 1.3, Summer 2010.
- “The Stories We Tell Ourselves and Each Other,” in *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*, Issue 1.3, Summer 2010.
- “Convicted Civility and Interfaith Dialogue,” in *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue*, Issue 1.3, Summer 2010.

GRANTS RECEIVED

- 2012—2015** The Henry Luce Foundation Grant (\$190,000 three-year grant)
Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue journal
- 2013—2015** The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations Grant (\$50,000 two-year grant)
Research on evangelical approaches to interfaith education in North American theological schools
- 2010—2011** The Max De Pree Leadership Fellow scholarship award (\$15,000)
- 2010—2011** The Henry Luce Foundation Grant (\$25,000)
Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue journal
- 2010—2011** Calvin Institute of Christian Worship’s Worship Renewal Grant (\$15,000)

Christian Reformed Home Missions Supplement

At its spring meeting, the board of Christian Reformed Home Missions adopted the following communication to Synod 2015 with regard to the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture:

Thank you for your service to the church by giving of your time and wisdom during this important meeting of synod. We are thankful for the many ways that God is moving in our denomination and join you in celebrating the Spirit's life that is at work within us and through us.

We are writing to address several concerns we have about the report you received from the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC). We offer this communication with deep thanks to the many people who have contributed to the conversations and ideas presented in that report and with hope that the denomination will continue to pursue answers to the issues that face us.

One practical concern is that delegates to synod may not have had adequate time or information to distinguish between the TFRSC report and a proposal from the Board of Trustees (BOT) that synod establish a single mission agency of the CRCNA. Both of these reports involve re-organization at the denominational agency level. However, they are quite different, particularly in how long the plans were conceived and how long they have been developing.

The BOT request for establishing a single mission agency was conceived at the ground level and has been considered for some time. Churches, classes, and board delegates of Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) and Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) have encouraged cooperative work between these agencies for more than a decade, and the agency directors themselves have spearheaded the proposal toward unification. In comparison, the TFRSC proposal is more recent, was engineered mostly at the binational level, and has had less time to gather support and engagement from the local churches.

We ask that the delegates to synod take careful notice of the distinctions between the TFRSC proposal regarding agency restructuring and the BOT proposal to establish a single mission agency of the CRCNA and treat each proposal on its own merits.

If synod should decide to request more time for the churches to consider and provide input regarding the work of the TFRSC (as has been suggested in *The Banner*), we ask that synod not do the same to the BOT's request for unifying the mission work of the CRCNA into a single agency. We believe that the momentum toward the proposed unification of the work of CRHM and CRWM is healthy and should be maintained at its current pace.

We are grateful that the TFRSC reported updates of their work at our CRHM board meetings. At these same meetings we heard from representatives of the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team (SPACT), which identified thirteen specific *adaptive challenges* facing the denomination. We are concerned that the TFRSC proposal does not address the adaptive challenges noted by SPACT but instead proposes significant *technical changes* in the form of structural reorganization.

We support the denomination's pursuit of Spirit-led changes that will lead to greater cooperation and more open communication among agencies and institutions and between these binationally organized groups and the Christian Reformed churches and classes scattered across North America. However, while we wholeheartedly support the intent, we are not convinced that the solutions proposed by the TFRSC will bring about the necessary changes.

To that end, we echo the communication to Synod 2015 from the board of Christian Reformed World Missions. In an ongoing spirit of cooperative mission and work between our agencies, we have discovered that we share concerns. We ask you to carefully consider the implications of the proposed changes suggested by the TFRSC.

1. The TFRSC report fails to acknowledge the already existing cooperative work among agencies, particularly between CRWM and CRHM, but also in other areas. Instead it describes a competitive, "silo-like" atmosphere more reflective of previous decades than of current conditions.
2. The TFRSC report is unclear in how to develop better governance and conflict resolution practices than what are currently in place in the CRCNA.
3. The size of the proposed Council of Delegates is not conducive to the current needs of the CRCNA.
 - a. It would be difficult for members of a Council of Delegates to know the work of each agency well enough to offer specific and effective support and governance.
 - b. Many of the agencies have previously had much larger boards and determined that the unwieldy size was counterproductive. The larger the size of the board, the more likely it will simply "rubber stamp" the agency's work instead of engaging in appropriate governance.
 - c. The size of the Council of Delegates would not necessarily enhance better connection between churches, classes, and denominational work.
4. The TFRSC report does not demonstrate a plan for greater cooperation and unity among agencies and institutions that already operate more independently (e.g., World Renew, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary).

Thank you for your attention to these very important and pivotal matters before you at this synod. We pray for wisdom and discernment for each of you and for ourselves as we strive to live and proclaim the love of Jesus, keep up with God's mission, and follow the Spirit's movement in leading the church. May we all remain faithful.

For the board of Christian Reformed Home Missions

In Christ,
Harv Roosma, president
Joy Engelsman, vice president

Christian Reformed Home Missions
Moses Chung, director

Christian Reformed World Missions Supplement

I. Introduction

The board of Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) asks Synod 2015 to take note of its response to and reflections on the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC). The CRWM board via an ad-hoc committee has reviewed the TFRSC report. Following is our response and some accompanying reflections.

II. Opening statement

The CRWM board appreciates the desire to be more responsive to a changing environment and simplify the lines of accountability. However, we are concerned about the proposed increase in centralization that would result with a single 60-member Council of Delegates making decisions, which would in all practicality be made by the 12 people on the Executive Committee.

We are also concerned about the elimination of regional representation from both the United States and Canada that would result on the agency committees and the further reduction of connection that this would cause between agencies and the local churches and classes. As board members, part of our responsibility is to represent the interests of the agency to the congregations at classis, and vice versa. We can only anticipate that this role would be diluted with a single classis delegate on the proposed Council of Delegates.

Moreover, the reduction in Canadian representation on the proposed Council of Delegates (because there are fewer Canadian than American classes) could increase tensions between Canadian congregations and the denomination as a whole.

Further, in light of our own strong efforts to accomplish much of what the task force intends by way of increased collaboration and missional unity through our recommendation that synod join the Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) agencies, we urge synod to postpone for at least one year any action on the TFRSC report. This year would provide time for the church to assess the implications of the proposal to join CRWM and CRHM with regard to the concerns raised in the report of the TFRSC.

III. Background information and reflection

A. *Current collaboration*

Part of the reasoning given for the TFRSC proposals is that agencies are currently not working together well. The TFRSC report states that “the culture, structure, and leadership context . . . is often suspicious of anything that has the scent of centralization at the cost of greater collaboration and missional unity” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 351). This statement may accurately describe situations prominent in the 1970s and 1980s. We judge that this statement does not describe well the ways in which agencies and offices work today. Among the many collaborative efforts between the agencies and offices we note the following:

1. Global Coffee Break—brings a Home Missions (and former Faith Alive Christian Resources) product into use among CRWM partners with some participation by Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI).

2. Timothy Leadership Training Institute—a nonformal pastor training program governed and funded in part by BTGMI, World Renew, CRWM, and Calvin Theological Seminary and used by international partners in at least fifty countries.
3. Congregational Services Coordination Team—brings together representatives from all the agencies and many of the offices to seek ways to serve congregations more effectively.
4. Many joined/shared/collaborative ministries involving BTGMI, World Renew, and CRWM around the world.
5. Involvement of some specialized ministries in agency programs (Office of Social Justice, Office of Race Relations, and Office of Disability Concerns have recently participated in World Missions programs).
6. The recently developed *Mission Montreal* is a collaborative ministry of CRWM, CRHM, Diaconal Ministries Canada, and Classis Eastern Canada.

B. Increased collaboration

The agencies and offices work cooperatively and even collaboratively within the existing structure under most circumstances. The recent decision by CRWM and CRHM to join their boards and operations is the fruit of extensive consultation over a number of years. Such consultation responded favorably to synodical and Board of Trustees' directives to cooperate. It is unclear to us that a future Council of Delegates governing several agencies would result in their working more collaboratively than has been the case with the current Board of Trustees.

C. Board engagement

The current agency boards have an opportunity to know the character and work of their respective agencies pretty well, while members of the proposed Council of Delegates would have a much harder time gaining deep knowledge of our denominational ministries as a whole because the size and scope are so great. Knowing well even the work of one agency, World Missions, takes a long time. Knowing the whole well is unlikely to happen even through six years of board service.

D. Connection to the churches

The recommendations claim to be more responsive to the local church, but the Council of Delegates scenario would have the effect of putting an extra layer or filter between the local church and the agencies.

1. Having a 60-member Council of Delegates (COD) with 48 of the delegates elected by classes might seem to be a way to reconnect to the churches. However, we are concerned that the problems which led CRWM and the other agencies to move to smaller boards would recur. Unless the 48 were pastors, who are normally at classis meetings, they would not have great connectivity to their classes. Also, it seems likely that the percentage of lay, women, and ethnic minority decision makers would likely decline because just one-fifth of COD members would be at-large.
2. It has been observed that the larger the governing body, the more likely it is that they will “rubber stamp” recommendations brought to them by staff. We are concerned that real

influence would be concentrated in the 12-member executive committee of the Council of Delegates.

3. Delegates to the Council of Delegates would have to work through a great variety of reports from agency directors and absorb a large amount of detail if they wished to represent adequately the supervision as classis representatives. The risk of overload lends itself all too readily to an inability to attain a deepened understanding of their tasks, and a failure to act with genuine vision and understanding of the work at hand. The experience of the combined Calvin College and Seminary Board, before its division, in dealing responsibly with the reports of two presidents is an example to keep in mind.
4. There is already considerable frustration among congregations and their leaders with the distance between agencies and local congregations (between “Grand Rapids” and the local church) because past changes have altered the nature of accountability.
5. Accountability via a large Council of Delegates would increase that distance. The council delegates would have too many “hats to wear” and would have to deal with too many details to report adequately back to their classes.
6. Since some of the frustration arises from the binational character of the CRCNA, it is not helpful that the vast majority of the members of the Council of Delegates would be from the United States, since the majority of classes are in the United States. The equality of national representation on the council Executive Committee would serve only as a cynical reminder of the expectation that the real center of authority would be in the Executive Committee.
7. Regional synods could be helpful, providing that it is clear what kind of real authority they would have in relating to the local church and in contributing to governance in the CRCNA as a whole.
8. There is a risk that decisions would be made for the agencies rather than arising out of the agencies working with a vision appropriate to each agency in consultation with local churches.

E. Integration or disintegration

The TFRSC hopes to bring greater coordination and unity to the ministries of the CRC, but it is unclear whether the structure they propose would actually have that result. It is clear that the CRC values holding Word and deed together. At present World Renew, like the other agencies, has a board that reports to synod via the Board of Trustees. The proposed structure would make World Renew unique. They would be less connected to the proposed Council of Delegates than would other agencies, with the result that World Renew would be more separate than integrated with the other missions ministries. The question arises whether such a change would lead to greater integration or to greater disintegration. Similar questions could be raised about the proposal’s impact on the relationship of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary with the denomination.

F. Agency board volume

Concern has been expressed about the large number of people who are presently serving on the various boards and the resultant expenses for their service. However, that number has

already been greatly reduced since 2005. Further, service on agency boards has created a pool of people across the denomination who have significant relationships with other CRC people all over North America. This relational connectivity serves the denomination well in an era when older types of connectivity such as family connection, common educational experience, and the like are less common. Over the past decade CRWM's 18-member board has made a practice of holding meetings in various geographic locations to better connect with and understand the commonalities and differences across the denomination. A 60-member board would find such engagement with the churches next to impossible. The logistics would become overwhelming.

G. Theological reflection

Church-created entities, like the agencies, offices, and educational institutions of the Christian Reformed Church, should reflect their origin and the biblically spiritual values on which they are based. While not every aspect of their structure and ministry can be drawn directly from Scripture, and the attempt to do so is sure to lead to proof-texting, theological reflection on the nature of these institutions would benefit them and the church they serve.

Reformed polity has always tried to be sensitive to the organic nature of the church. Agencies work on behalf of the local church, enabling them to act in concert. The proposed structure brings a rational way of thinking from the corporate world, with a strong emphasis on the corporate cultural mantra of efficiency. We need to reflect more deeply on how a scriptural model also reflects the insights that God has granted to others.

H. A way forward

By raising these concerns, CRWM is not advocating for the status quo. We are grateful for the opportunity to engage the denomination's process for significant structural change as initiated by the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions, to be unified into a single agency with both global and local focus, and we appreciate the endorsement of the TFRSC for this important work.

1. We also see a need for a renewed effort on the part of the Board of Trustees and the new executive leadership team to provide a common set of guidelines and measures that will help all the agencies, offices, and educational institutions of the CRC to have common language and goals.
2. The outdated denominational Ministry Plan should be renewed. There should be robust discussion at key leadership meetings that do much more than process urgent agenda items.
3. We also believe that existing efforts at collaborative ministry should continue and be increased, including collaboration involving World Renew, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin College.

Christian Reformed World Missions
Gary J. Bekker, director

Note: The board of Christian Reformed World Missions, in conjunction with the board of Christian Reformed Home Missions, has also submitted a joint supplemental report to Synod 2015.

Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions Supplement

Following God's Lead: Joining Home Missions and World Missions

I. Introduction

The boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions ask that Synod 2015 accept recommendations by the Board of Trustees that will result in Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions becoming one agency under a single synodical mandate.

We stand before a new and exciting era for mission through the Christian Reformed Church. We believe God is leading Home Missions and World Missions to become a single mission agency within the CRC. A joined mission agency with a comprehensive local and global vision and mandate will enable the Christian Reformed Church to serve our Lord with greater strategic effectiveness and improved stewardship of resources.

Home Missions and World Missions have a long history of church planting, discipleship, developing Christian leaders, and encouraging and assisting CRC congregations and classes in their work of evangelism, discipleship, and missions. Over time we have continued to adapt to historical and cultural shifts and have contextualized our approach, but the message of the gospel has not changed.

II. Historical background

The first "home missionary" was appointed in 1879. The focus of his work at that time was to start churches in areas with concentrations of Dutch Reformed immigrants. In following years, cross-cultural missionaries were sent to serve among Native Americans and other international communities under the supervision of what is now Christian Reformed World Missions. In 1964 the current division of ministry became established with Christian Reformed Home Missions dealing with Canada and the United States, while World Missions dealt with the rest of the globe. Fifty years ago, that division made sense because the context of ministry in North America was very different from the situations in other countries.

III. A changing world

The world has changed dramatically since the early 20th century, when our current agency structures were developed. In that era, when travel to foreign countries took weeks by ship and returning home happened perhaps once in ten years, people thought of missions as taking the gospel to distant lands and different peoples who lived far from us. Meanwhile, most people living in North America, even if they were not committed Christians, had at least some Christian heritage and some basic concepts about God, the Bible, and the church. Over time the center of Christianity has moved from North America and Europe to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The vibrant growth and health of the church in the global south are matched by a relative decline in the global north. Nations such as Korea, China, and Brazil, which were once the recipients of missionaries, are now major missionary sending countries.

Today international travel is simple and common. The Internet allows ideas and images to be pervasive. Technology makes talking with someone in St. Petersburg, Russia, just as easy as talking with someone across the hall. North American universities are full of students from every corner of the world. Globalization has led to an unprecedented movement of people. The

world has come to our doorstep in North America. The need for missionaries overseas remains very strong; however, the need for ministry in North America is just as pressing.

IV. A mission agency for the 21st century

We have a unique opportunity and responsibility for the world that has moved into our neighborhood. We need to be able to adapt to and address needs of the globalized world that we are called to serve. We cannot meet the needs of today's world with the structure of yesterday. The boards of Home Missions and World Missions now believe that the division between *Home* and *World* has outlived its usefulness.

V. Breaking

In today's world, dividing our denominational mission efforts by geographical boundaries causes gaps in ministry. In places where partnership is possible, separate mission, vision, priorities, reporting, and organizational structure decrease ministry effectiveness and prevent complete collaboration.

As one mission agency, joined in mission, vision, strategy, and structure, we will have a seamless integration of local and global mission. One agency will eliminate the logistical barriers that exist with two agencies. One agency will serve a world and a God who is not bound by geography.

VI. A new vision

Our goal is to create a new joined mission agency that brings the unique strengths and mission strategies of each agency together for greater impact within the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the global church. The joining of Home Missions and World Missions will build on a key strength common to both agencies: their supportive engagement with the church in communities in North America and around the world. A single agency will be able to boldly engage a globalized world.

VII. Rationale

The leadership, staff, and boards of both Home Missions and World Missions believe it is time to make a strategic change in the way that our agencies are structured and to create a new joined mission agency. Three main reasons for this move are as follows:

A. Effectiveness

This move will help CRC congregations engage in effective evangelism in a globalizing world. Our churches are experiencing a new globalized reality; the unification allows for new ways to serve them.

1. Individuals and church groups are traveling and serving globally (not exclusively through World Missions). This new agency, with a globally networked team, will help congregations take the "next steps" and figure out how to have the best long term mission impact in those areas of the world in which they feel called to invest.

2. Congregations in North America are surrounded by globally diverse neighbors; this new agency with a globally networked team will be positioned to help congregations create pathways to connect locally with neighbors from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
3. “The current mission structure of the Christian Reformed Church was built around the reality of two solitudes: one focused on those who are nearby, with no language or cultural gaps, no great distances to travel, no visas or passports needed; the other reaching out to those who are far away, with boundaries of language, culture, time and economics. . . . It’s time to close the gap that our structure has unintentionally produced. The world is both far away and nearby—all at the same time.”—Steve Timmermans
(<http://network.crcna.org/synod/mind-gap>)

B. *Efficiency:* Leveraging decades of combined mission experience and administration

The new agency will benefit from the combined strengths, knowledge, and experiences of doing mission work in North America and globally over many decades. We will be “better together” in addressing the missional challenges of the 21st Century as we build on a collective past.

1. We see this as a tremendous new opportunity to be on the edge of stepping into what the Spirit of God is already doing beyond “our own boxes” and inherited structures. The old/inherited structures of *Home* and *World* geographic boundaries, which have served us for a long time, no longer serve us in this changed context of global realities.
2. Our current structure limits having fully integrated teams that connect North American mission leaders with those working in international mission contexts around key common missional strategies. Both agencies are involved in planting churches and developing leaders. Mutual learning will be more vigorous in a combined agency.
3. This proposal gives us, as agencies and a North American denomination, an opportunity to reimagine, rethink, and remake a new mission agency that participates in the work the Spirit of God is doing in the world today in a new way—not only with each other as two mission agencies with different strengths and cultures, but also with our local congregations that are facing and addressing the challenges of changed everyday realities on the ground.
4. There are already good examples of collaborative projects such as Mission Montreal, Transformational Networks, and Global Coffee Break.
5. We are already networked organizations distributed throughout North America and the world that work primarily through partnerships with local congregations, leaders, and mission organizations.
6. Being mission organizations has pushed us to think creatively and contextually about the ever increasing challenges of rapid changes all around us.
7. While this move is not financially driven, we believe this move will eventually help to decrease the level of administrative expenses that will be shared centrally, freeing up more funds for direct ministry.

C. Obedience

We have sensed God calling us to join these agencies.

1. God has given us leaders who desire increasingly to move toward unity together. In prayer we believe that this is a move God wants us to make.
2. We are preparing for the future. The future is already here, and this is the right and obedient step in following our missionary God, joining him in sharing the gospel in a world that will continue to change.

VIII. Timing

Upon approval of the three recommendations presented by the Board of Trustees, Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung, as codirectors, will create a transition executive team that will include at least the current CRWM Canada director, Steve Kabetu. The team will develop and approve the following:

No later than February 2016:

- Statements of mission, vision, and values, a refined statement of mission strategy, and legal documents for incorporation of the new agency in both the United States and Canada.
- A long-term structure and leadership team for the new agency with the proviso that it include one American codirector and one Canadian codirector.

No later than May 2016:

- Agency name, advancement plan, and communications plan.

Synod 2016

- A celebration for the new agency.

IX. Conclusion

For over one hundred and twenty-five years our agencies have assisted members of the CRC to fulfill their calling to be God's witnesses, both domestically and internationally. Churches have been planted; lives have been transformed. As we continue to serve in an ever-changing world, we are excited about the opportunities God is presenting to us. We want to be able to join in what our Lord is already doing in our neighborhoods and communities all around the world.

Christian Reformed Home Missions
Moses Chung, director
Christian Reformed World Missions
Gary J. Bekker, director

Appendix A

FAQ's regarding Home Missions and World Missions Forming a Single Mission Agency

1. Why are Home Missions and World Missions joining to form a single mission agency?

Home Missions and World Missions have a long history of church planting, discipleship, developing Christian leaders, and encouraging and assisting CRC congregations and classes in their work of evangelism, discipleship, and missions.

In today's world, dividing our denominational mission efforts by geographical boundaries causes gaps in ministry. One agency will eliminate the logistical barriers that exist with two agencies. One agency will serve a world and a God who is not bound by geography. A joined mission agency with a comprehensive local and global vision and mandate will enable the Christian Reformed Church to serve our Lord with greater strategic effectiveness and improved stewardship of resources.

2. What is the vision for a new joined mission agency?

The goal is to create a new joined mission agency that brings the unique strengths and mission strategies of each agency together for greater impact within the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the global church. The joining of Home Missions and World Missions will build on a key strength common to both agencies: their supportive engagement with the church in communities in North America and around the world. A single agency will be able to boldly engage a globalized world.

3. What benefits, opportunities, and areas for increased effectiveness come with a joined mission agency?

It is difficult to create a comprehensive list that covers all of the potential benefits of a strategic restructuring like this, but here are a few:

- Shared knowledge, organizational expertise, and programmatic integration related to missional strategy and implementation.
- Opportunity to connect North American immigrant congregations with those in countries of origin.
- Further integration of programs such as
 - campus ministries, with increased efforts to reach international students and specific ethnic groups.
 - Transformational Networks that utilize the strengths of churches and ministries in North America and abroad.
 - efforts to reach people living in urban centers—for example, Mission Montreal.
 - Global Coffee Break.
 - youth volunteer programming both domestic and international.
 - increased networking capacity for church-to-church relationships.
- Raised awareness of new and existing missional opportunities among the CRCNA family.

4. How will this affect local congregations?

A joined mission agency will serve local congregations for mission and leadership better and with greater impact. Integrating Home Missions and World Missions staff will strengthen their existing partnerships and create opportunities to explore and identify new opportunities for connecting churches and ministries locally and abroad.

5. What does this mean for the existing staff and the projects of the current staff?

Home Missions and World Missions highly value their staff, projects, and programs that they have stewarded over the years. Pending retirements of key staff in both Home Missions and World Missions will make the present an ideal time for restructuring. Current programs will be evaluated and reviewed for effectiveness and impact to ensure alignment with the joined agency's vision for ministry. It is expected that changes will occur; however, at this point it is too early to confirm specifics pertaining to current programming.

6. Is the motivation for this financial?

Exploring the creation of a joined mission agency has been purely a missional decision. The goal has been to find ways to do the most effective ministry regardless of geography. By doing this together, Home Missions and World Missions as a joined agency will have the most impact for God's kingdom.

7. What are the financial implications?

This move will not result in immediate financial efficiencies. Typically, when two organizations seek to join together, they can find a number of redundant staff positions to consolidate. However, because Home Missions and World Missions are denominational agencies, they already share common human resource services, financial services, information technology services, and facilities.

8. Will churches and individuals still be able to designate their gifts for either domestic or foreign ministry?

Yes. Whether a church or individual is interested in domestic or foreign ministry, there will be a way for them to direct the focus of their gifts toward specific ministries of the new joined mission agency.

9. What does this mean for the Home Missions and World Missions boards of directors?

If synod approves the recommendation to create a joined mission agency, a single board consisting of current board members from both respective agencies will serve as the new governing board.

10. Who will be leading this new mission agency?

After synodical approval, Dr. Gary J. Bekker and Dr. Moses Chung as codirectors will create a transition executive team that will include at least the current CRWM Canada director, Steve Kabetu. The directors and executive team will be charged with implementing the BOT- and

synod-approved plan for joining Home Missions and World Missions while ensuring that the vital mission work continues with minimal disruption.

11. Is this part of the CRCNA review of structure and culture?

No. This is not a new idea. As far back as 2008 there have been conversations about a new global (domestic and foreign) agency. Since then, leaders of the two agencies have met regularly, as directed by their boards, to discuss areas of collaboration. As a result of those discussions, the Home Missions Coffee Break program has been increasingly used and appreciated in many countries around the world, and Mission Montreal has been launched as a way of engaging the Transformational Network model of World Missions in a North American cross-cultural ministry setting. In 2010 a multiday event was held to explore the idea of a new global agency.

12. What about Back to God Ministries International and World Renew? Or Faith Formation Ministries? Or Calvin Theological Seminary?

This proposal joins together two denominational agencies who share a mutual history and programming. It is impossible to know what the future holds for the structure and organization of denominational ministries in general, but Home Missions and World Missions are excited to be able to collaborate in a much more deliberate way than they have ever been able to before. Collaboration with other CRCNA agencies will not only continue but will remain a priority.

Appendix B

Stories of Impact

Serving the City, Uniting the Church

Some surveys estimate that Montreal has more unreached people than any other city in the world. Less than 4 percent of residents attend church in this city of nearly 2 million people. “The city has dramatically turned from its Christian heritage and undergone intense secularization,” says Adrian Van Giessen, Home Missions Regional Leader for Eastern Canada. The CRCNA as a denomination has limited resources (and only one Christian Reformed Church) in Montreal, but as Van Giessen says, “There’s a spiritual hunger there. The city is ready for God, and God shares our passion to see redemption in this place.”

Montreal is now the home of a brand-new ministry called Mission Montreal, the first of its kind in North America.

Joel Huyser, World Missions director for Transformational Networks, describes Montreal as a global city. “The city has strong local roots, but is also home to immigrants from around the world.” Home Missions and World Missions entered Montreal knowing we’d find God already at work there. What we found there was even more encouraging—partners already on the ground, committed to strengthening the church and fostering unity. Joining together with Diaconal Ministries Canada, Classis Eastern Canada, and our “partner on the ground,” Christian Direction, we’ve seen big increases in our capacity to develop, equip, and work alongside Christians and churches in Montreal.

Glenn Smith, executive director of Christian Direction, stepped into this partnership to assist in linking the Christian Reformed Church with ministry already happening. “This is one of the most fascinating partnerships I’ve ever been involved with,” he says. From Smith’s perspective, the biggest asset Home Missions and World Missions have brought to the table is their collaborative spirit. “Christian Direction has been around for nearly 50 years—we’ve got good roots, but we’re a small organization,” he says, “We know we can’t accomplish our mission without partnerships, and this one is really special.”

Mission Montreal has seen God at work in a myriad of ways. Focusing on developing missional communities, equipping Christians to reach their Muslim neighbors, and working alongside ministries at Montreal’s universities, Mission Montreal seeks to unite churches to serve the city. “We’ve taken the concept of church unity and expanded it far beyond our denominational walls,” says Van Giessen. “We want to enhance and contribute towards a shared Christian witness in a city that desperately needs God.”

Smith can list a host of ways Mission Montreal is seeing real, concrete life transformation. Montreal has more university students per capita than any other city in North America except Boston, yet mission work among this population is minimal. Mission Montreal has sought out these students, involving them in volunteer work, small groups, and telling them about Jesus—some for the first time. One of the biggest areas of focus for Mission Montreal is outreach to their large Muslim immigrant community. Through feeding the hungry, conversation cafes, music lessons, and outreach to single Muslim mothers, the ministry is building relationships and changing lives.

This innovative initiative in Montreal has been spurred on by Home Missions and World Missions’ coming together in a way they have not been able to before. In addition to contributing

financial support for the project, both organizations have contributed staff members to the board of Mission Montreal, including Adrian Van Giessen, Steve Kabetu, and Joel Huyser. Home Missions and World Missions have also added staff capacity to the project by providing for the hiring of three employees working exclusively with Mission Montreal.

“This is the first time World Missions has ever done a project in North America. It’s unprecedented,” says Huyser, who is excited about the future of collaboration between Home Missions and World Missions. Both agencies have brought essential resources and experience to Montreal. But Huyser sees this effort as an even bigger opportunity than just serving the city. “From the beginning, we’ve said we want Montreal to be a laboratory and a classroom for the CRCNA,” he says. “Rather than seeing the places that we do mission simply as ‘receivers,’ we see them as places to learn together.” As Home Missions and World Missions seek to become more unified, as we learn more from each other and from the communities we serve, we can join more fully in God’s mission.

“Mission Montreal is proof positive that we can embed collaboration and imagination into the work of the CRCNA,” says Van Giessen. “Future initiatives and projects will build on groundwork laid here.” Home Missions and World Missions are working to use what we’ve learned in Montreal as a template for new ministry all over the world. As a joined agency, we can refine this method of finding God at work, coming alongside partners who share our values and passion for ministry, and adding our gifts and resources to the mix. “We’re on the cutting edge of missional practice,” says Smith.

Leaders at both agencies are hearing God’s call to work together through their experience at Mission Montreal. “The collaboration we see here is compelling; it’s exciting,” says Home Missions director Moses Chung. “Imagine what could be on the horizon moving forward as one agency—Mission Toronto? Mission Beijing? God’s ushering in a new reality.” World Missions director Gary Bekker adds, “A joined mission agency is the next step in our calling to bring a Christian witness to the ends of the earth.”

Church Planting and Shared Connections

When Scott and Marcia Geurink felt God calling them back home to North America in 2014, they returned with more than 20 years of church planting experience.

With the guidance of Christian Reformed World Missions, the Geurinks used established church planting strategies along with the gifts of the local people to create strong communities of faith in Tijuana, Mexico.

In fact, God’s kingdom in Tijuana has grown from having one church, one congregation, and one mission when the Geurinks arrived in 1993 to twelve churches and missions today.

But this success didn’t happen overnight. The work of developing leaders and strengthening existing believers’ gifts took longer than expected. Still, God used the Geurinks’ struggles and disappointments to help make the church in Tijuana even stronger. With each new church plant came a better-prepared Scott and Marcia and a stronger network of local support to continue the work when they left.

“The vision for the first daughter mission of [our first church plant] actually came from the men and women who wanted to reach out to a neighboring community,” said Marcia. “These same men and women teamed up with us to help start another church.”

Although Scott and Marcia have returned to the United States, their work of strengthening churches has not come to an end. Today they are still using their gifts among the Spanish-speaking population to work alongside Alas de Aguila church plant in Allendale, Michigan. Together with the church plant's pastor, they lead Bible studies and disciple believers from Alas de Aguila.

The Geurinks, like CRHM and CRWM, have a vision for a global, joined mission. But there is still more potential for shared connections with a joined mission agency.

Alas de Aguila and churches like it face a future full of opportunity to partner with churches around the corner and overseas. Imagine if Alas de Aguila became engaged in the churches where Scott and Marcia recently served. As church plants and missions grow and look to fulfill the Great Commission, imagine if global missionaries and local churches could share their connections and mutually learn from one another.

With a joined mission agency, these connections would be more probable and shared ministry could take place. This is the vision that we as CRHM and CRWM share.

United in Mission

In 2011 my wife, Chichi, and I [John Eigege], two Nigerian immigrants, received a call from God and New Life Christian Reformed Church to move to Houston, Texas, and explore fulltime ministry. Through Christian Reformed Home Missions, we would explore the possibility of planting a new church.

As Chichi and I explored our passions, our gifting, and the needs in our city, we sensed God calling us toward the inner city and the college campus. In this setting of density and diversity, we would serve young professionals and retired seniors, university students and the working poor. As we continued to learn about ministry, two major movements in the church began to shape our thinking and our practice—movements that are separated by two unique mission agencies but have potential to become even more powerful when combined.

The first movement is called Missional Church. It asks, "What does it mean for the church to be missional?" Is it enough for the church to only have paid staff who are sent to be ambassadors of Christ in our world? Or is the idea of being "called and sent by God" to be embraced by all who confess Jesus Christ as Lord? For the missional church, mission is its life blood, not just one of many programs it runs. The Missional Church brings the gospel to life wherever in society that may be.

Christian Reformed Home Missions has really shaped and challenged us as church planters to be missional in all we do. Through Home Missions, we established a missional community that gathered around rhythms of Scripture study, prayer, community service, and celebration, with the hope that this would eventually develop into a worshipping community.

The second movement is called Transformational Networks. These are diverse communities of service and learning that train people in an integral, biblical worldview. They train and network people to make an impact on their communities with the whole gospel. They ask two basic questions in their approach: What does the good news of Jesus look like here and now? How can we effectively work together to make that vision a reality?

I have been inspired by the work of Transformational Networks that Christian Reformed World Missions establishes in urban centers around the world. From the Nehemiah Center in Nicaragua to the Daniel Center in Nigeria, missionaries are successfully mobilizing gospel networks for the transformation of their cities and societies.

As I surveyed our neighborhood, I knew it needed a missional movement of Christians. But was a traditional church plant the only way to catalyze that movement? I knew the idea of Transformational Networks could radically transform the neighborhood, but could the Christian Reformed Church implement them locally? I was inspired by the idea of a missional church as part of a Transformational Network, a model that would allow both influences to fully flourish.

As I searched for congruence in my ministry experience, leaders of both Home Missions and World Missions were already knee-deep in conversations about joining both agencies. The world is at North America's doorstep. What kind of posture should the North American church take so that it gives witness to the reconciliation that God gives all in Jesus Christ? Can both agencies learn from each other and apply our collective best practices, no matter the location, to see the gospel of Christ fully expressed in our world?

As I searched for congruence in our neighborhood, many other like-minded leaders from different Christian traditions searched for the same thing. Nine months ago we started getting together to pray for one another and for the transformation of our neighborhood—a place filled with both brokenness and hope.

Out of our joint prayer, along with a collective brainstorming session, our group started to identify some needs for transformation. In order to continue transforming our neighborhood, we felt we strongly needed someone who could network and resource our organizations fulltime. We are early in our church planting journey. But as I think of the needs of our community that will breathe lasting transformation, is this a call to morph my role in the community into a catalyst for transformation?

Home Missions and World Missions are early in the journey to join as well. I wonder at the enormous, vital task in front of them. And I am uplifted to know that our denominational leaders are seeking God's will above all.

The prospect of establishing Transformational Networks in North America, in our own neighborhood, excites me. The vision of our churches and organizations working together for common good inspires me. The hope of the missional community that currently meets in my house joining this bigger network of transformation, hence multiplying our impact, energizes me. I pray for discernment and courage—both for myself and Chichi and for my denominational leadership—to follow God in mission.

Whenever decisions for big changes loom on the horizons of our lives, it is easy for anxiety and fear to creep in. As my family and denominational leadership discern next steps for following God in worldwide mission, God encourages us with these words from the book of Joshua: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9).

John Eigege is a church planter from Nigeria working in Houston, Texas. He serves on the Christian Reformed World Missions board.

Candidacy Committee Supplement

I. Candidates for minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church

A. Candidates for ministry

Each year it is a privilege to meet and interview the applicants for candidacy. The interviews for these candidates were conducted this year by teams of four persons. The Candidacy Committee is pleased to recommend the following forty-four persons for candidacy to become ministers of the Word in the CRC. These candidates include those who graduated from other than Calvin Theological Seminary through the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy. Biographical details for each of the candidates can be found in the Candidate Booklet, available for download at www.crcna.org/candidacy.

The following motion will allow their names to be approved by synod:

That synod declare the following individuals as candidates for ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, subject to completion of all remaining (if any) requirements (the list of candidates eligible for call is available on the Candidacy Committee website: www.crcna.org/candidacy):

Andrea M. Baas	Karis Mpindi
Nicholas C. Baas	Joe W. Nasvytis
(Tony) Hyeon Bang	Jacob D. Porter
Jenna L. Brandsen	Barbara A. Sanders
Christina L. Brinks-Rea	Hannah R. Smele
Blake I. Campbell	Jason R. Terpstra
Jeffrey Chang	David van Eyk
Joshua M. Christoffels	Chad N. Van Ginkel
Bryant M. DeKruyter	Charles W. Van Hoffen
Kendra R. Ettema	Corey Van Huizen
Shelby L. Gemmen	Scott J. Van Voorst
David Groen	Mary L. Vanden Berg
Robert A. Hoekstra	Jeremy S. Vandermeer
Darren S. Hoogendoorn	Kevin J. VanderVeen
Jin Su Hwang	Mark A. VanderWerf
Edward C. Jiang	Philip J. VanderWindt
Eric D. Kas	Ben G. VanStraten
(Brandon) Yongwan Kim	Adam S. Veenstra
Kristy R. Manion	Jesse L. Walhof
Elaine G. May	Perrin M. Werner
Janina S. Mobach	Rhonda S. Workman
Mark A. Mohrlang	David P. Zigterman

B. Extension of candidacy

The rules of synod require that a declared candidate by one synod must request an extension of candidacy status at the following synod if a call has not been accepted. The Candidacy Committee communicates with such persons in order to determine the validity of the request and to offer words of encouragement. The Candidacy Committee recommends the following thirty-one persons for candidacy extension approval:

Kevin J. Boss
 Yoon Chul (Daniel) Choi
 Nevada L. DeLapp
 Douglas J. De Groot
 Kyle Dieleman
 Richard France-Coe
 Tyler Greenway
 Robert J. Gruessing
 Patrick N. Guarracino
 Gareth P. Harker
 Ryan Hoogerbrugge
 Joseph Hwang
 Daniel B. Jung
 Erik W. Kamp
 Lee Khang
 Michelle J. Kool

Victor S. Laarman
 Mark E. Langenbach
 Timothy Leferink
 Daniel Meyer
 Dena E. Meyerink
 Cornelius M. Muasa
 Kurt C. Schaefer
 Paula Seales
 Juli Stuelpnagel
 Lesli L. van Milligen
 Richard W. Visser
 Kristopher R. Walhof
 Beverly Weeks
 Douglas M. Wood
 Leo H. Yoon

II. Presentation of the candidates to synod

It is recommended that the candidates be presented to Synod 2015 on Tuesday, June 16, at 9:30 a.m. The director of candidacy and the president of Calvin Theological Seminary will formally introduce the candidates for 2015 to synod.

III. Article 8 candidates approved

Our process for guiding pastors ordained in other denominations who wish to become ordained in the CRC is described in Church Order Article 8. Church Order Supplement, Article 8, F directs the Candidacy Committee to be intimately involved in this process and to submit for synod's review the names of those approved for Article 8. The Candidacy Committee has concurred on *need* for the following persons in the past year. In each case the appropriate documents are on file with the director of candidacy.

Date	Name of applicant	Classis	Former denomination
5-7-14	An, Sang Hyun	Central California	Talbot Korean Church Association
8-7-14	Chiang, James	Central California	San Ramon Valley Gospel Church
9-2-14	Choi, Ilyong "Paul"	Rocky Mountain	Korean Presbyterian Church USA
9-2-14	Kim, Yoon Whan	Kalamazoo	PCA
9-2-14	Oh, Sang Kyu	Hanmi	Presbyterian Church in Korea
9-2-14	Shin, In Chul	Hanmi	Korean Evangelical Church of America
9-4-14	Kim, Myunggil	Hanmi	Presbyterian Church of Korea
9-14-14	Agbuya, Alex	Central Plains	Assemblies of God in the Philippines
2-9-15	Kim, Won Chei	Ko-Am	Pentecostal Assembly of God of Korea
2-9-15	Son, Tae Jung	Ko-Am	Bible Presbyterian Church in America
2-9-15	Yoon, Gyeong Soo	Ko-Am	Presbyterian Church of Korea
5-1-15	Kim, Jong Yup	Southeast U.S.	Korean Presbyterian Church

IV. Special Article 8 case

In the Candidacy Committee supplemental report to Synod 2014, mention was made of two special Article 8 cases, involving the reaffiliation of pastors who had served in the CRC earlier in their careers. One was mentioned by name for approval of *need*, and the committee promised

to call the attention of synod to other cases as they were approved under the special protocol described in this report.

The committee is pleased to note that the other of these two cases has progressed to completion in the past year. The Zion Chinese CRC of Abbotsford, British Columbia, has worked with Classis B.C. South-East and the Candidacy Committee to call and install Rev. Joseph Chen to service as their pastor, after a period in which he had been away from the CRC. An abbreviated Article 8 process was used for this case. We ask that synod approve the action of the Candidacy Committee relative to the process used for readmission to CRC ministry for Rev. Joseph Chen under Church Order Article 8.

V. Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidates review and report

In the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2015, mention was made of a committee that is working to review the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidates (EPMC), which is the required program toward candidacy for those who attend seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary (the M.Div. program of Calvin Seminary includes the elements of the EPMC). The committee report stated that findings of the committee would be presented to synod via their supplemental report. The following describe the review and modifications for the program.

A. Current EPMC requirements

- Five courses at Calvin Theological Seminary: Hermeneutics, Creeds and Confessions, CRC Polity, CRC History, Preaching (10 credit hours)
- A Bible Knowledge exam or course (course is 3 credit hours, if elected)
- A Digital Bible Tools seminar (3 days – no credit given)
- Twelve prerequisite courses that meet admission requirements
- Fifteen hours of required biblical language and exegetical course work
- Six hundred hours of mentored ministry work

B. New EPMC requirements

The Admissions and Standards Committee at Calvin Theological Seminary is currently reviewing the list of prerequisite courses, so no recommendations are being made in this area. The assumption is that EPMC students should meet the same admission requirements that are required of M.Div. students at Calvin Theological Seminary. The same assumption applies to the current requirements of fifteen credit hours in the biblical languages and six hundred hours of mentored ministry work.

1. EPMC students must take a minimum of nine credit hours at Calvin Theological Seminary, either as a residential or a nonresidential student. In practice, most students will still end up taking ten or eleven credit hours. The students will now take the digital tools course for credit and will have opportunity to substitute a two credit elective for preaching if their background in preaching is sufficient. As is currently the case, it is hoped that students will apply these credits toward their M.Div. in their degree-granting seminary.
2. EPMC students must meet the following requirements at Calvin Theological Seminary, either through residential courses or in the alternative ways listed. Note that course options will be available contingent upon a sufficient number of students being interested in a given semester.

- a. Requirement: Hermeneutics (1 credit hour)
Options:
 - Residential course 710 during Gateway in August
 - Online course 711 in fall semester (or potentially the J-term)
- b. Requirement: Creeds and Confessions (3 credit hours)
Options:
 - Residential course 303 in the fall semester
 - Online course 303 in the spring semester or summer
- c. Requirement: CRC Polity (1.5 credit hours)
Options:
 - Residential course 773 in the fall semester
 - Online course 773 in the spring semester or summer
- d. Requirement: CRC History (1.5 credit hours)
Options:
 - Residential course 774 in the fall semester
 - Online course 774 in the spring semester or summer
- e. Requirement: Preaching (2 credit hours)
Options:
 - Residential course 306 (Preaching Theory and Methods) in the spring semester
 - Hybrid distance learning course 306 (Preaching Theory and Methods) in the fall semester
 - EPMC Residential course: 435 (Preaching the Word) in the fall semester
 - EPMC Distance course: 435X (Preaching the Word) in the fall semester
 - Residential course 434 (Preaching Practicum II) in the fall semester

Note: EPMC students who have completed at least five credit hours in preaching at another seminary do not need to take one of these preaching courses at Calvin Theological Seminary. Note that for these students some of their sermons will be reviewed as part of the Calvin Theological Seminary Mentored Ministries program. They also will be doing supervised preaching as part of their twenty-four-month mentoring program. Finally, all EPMC students will have a three-hour introduction to the tools offered through the Calvin Center for Excellence in Preaching, presented by the staff of the center.

- f. Requirement: Bible Survey (3 credit hours)
Options:
 - Pass the Bible Survey Exam
 - Residential course 716 in the fall semester
 - Online course 716 in the summer
- g. Requirement: Digital Tools for Teaching and Preaching (one credit hour)
A self-paced online seminar with a terminal date of no later than December 15 of the year before they become candidates.

Note: The December EPMC course in digital Bible tools will no longer exist.

3. EPMC students will choose other courses from the Calvin Seminary curriculum to meet the minimum nine-credit hour requirement if sufficient credit hours are not earned from the list above.

4. Calvin Seminary Faculty Evaluation of EPMC students

The current practice of requiring EPMC students to engage in a successful interview with a panel of Calvin Seminary faculty members will continue, but a variety of enhancements and modifications to the interview process will be implemented in order to lower the frustration level among faculty and students alike.

5. EPMC students who feel they have a special circumstance in any of these matters are invited to contact the director of candidacy.

C. Final notes

1. The program adjustments described above maintain many of the current course requirements, but they provide more flexibility for EPMC students. They must still take a minimum of nine credit hours at Calvin Theological Seminary (the old minimum was ten hours), but they now have more options and, in some cases, will be able to fill out their nine hours with a course that is entirely their choice.
2. There is now the potential for EPMC students to take their required course work at Calvin Theological Seminary earlier in their program rather than in the final year, which had been the most common practice in the current system. This timing is advantageous in that it will foster a longer relationship between Calvin Theological Seminary and EPMC students, they may be more likely to integrate their EPMC course work into their M.Div. degree at another seminary, and they may even enjoy Calvin Theological Seminary so much that they elect to take other courses here.
3. All non-resident EPMC students will be *encouraged* to take at least one course at the Calvin Theological Seminary campus. This could be a J-term course, a distance learning hybrid course that includes a one-week “intensive” component on campus, or a summer course. This will potentially fulfill one of the two visits that are required by all non-resident EPMC students.

The Candidacy Committee asks synod to take special note of these developments by approving the following motion:

That synod take note of the developments in the EPMC program and offer its thanks to the committee and the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary for their effective partnership as they prepare candidates for ordained ministry within the Christian Reformed Church.

VI. RCA candidates in the CRC

A. Background

As a denominational Candidacy Committee in the CRCNA, we have spent significant energy considering the complexity of the routes to ordination as it pertains to candidates and RCA/CRC service. The “Orderly Exchange of Ministers” agreement between the CRC and RCA, approved in 2005 (CRC Church Order Supplement, Article 8, D), specified eleven notes of

understanding and did not address the “first call scenario.” Research done in 2010 revealed that for some unknown reason a twelfth statement had been omitted from this list, which indicates, “Such service is not intended for a first call.” This statement was inserted by the CRC Synod 2011, with a coordinate action by the RCA. (It had been a feature of an identical agreement the RCA has with three other denominations.)

Notably the phrasing “is not intended” has not been interpreted in the CRC as “is not allowed.” There have been CRC candidates who have ended up serving in RCA settings as their first call, with the use of the loan provisions of CRC Church Order Article 13-c. In 2014 the Candidacy Committee discussed this practice and offered what it considered to be a balanced set of guidelines for ministries, classes, and synodical deputies as cases are considered (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, pp. 250-52). Synod 2014 approved these guidelines (see *Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 544-45).

Thus there has been a degree of flexibility found for CRC candidates who wish to serve in the RCA (i.e., they remain closely affiliated to the CRC through a CRC calling church, a mentor in the CRC, and completion of the CRC candidacy requirements).

What has not been considered up to this point in any official way is the question of how an RCA candidate may be allowed to serve a first call in the CRC. No “route by way of exception” has been identified that is parallel to the exception just described for CRC candidates. We have had occasions in which RCA candidates have been asked to become CRC candidates and members of the CRC, but have not effectively found a way for RCA candidates to remain in the RCA and to serve in the CRC for a first call, even in exceptional cases.

One concern from the CRC perspective in this matter is that the candidacy requirements in the CRC differ from the candidacy requirements in the RCA. There is concern that aspiring candidates in the CRC will gravitate toward the RCA process as an “end run” around our EMPC and candidacy process. All along their intention may be to serve in the CRC. These persons would be motivated more by expedience than conviction.

Yet a spirit of collegiality and respect between the CRC and RCA would demand that a “route by way of exception” for RCA candidates (who want to serve in the CRC as a first call) be identified just as it has been identified for CRC candidates (who want to serve in the RCA as a first call). This document offers such a route. It has been worked out between the CRC director of candidacy, Rev David Koll, and the staff person for Classis Zeeland of the RCA, Rev. Dan Ackerman (a CRC pastor serving in this RCA assignment). The document arises from two specific cases with the anticipation that future exceptional cases are likely.

B. A route by way of exception

RCA candidates would be welcomed to serve a first call in the CRC in exceptional cases if the following occurs:

1. The potential candidate and the calling ministry sign an agreement for completion of the requirements of the CRC EPMC program within up to three years of receiving and accepting the call.
2. The potential candidate agrees to the mentorship requirement of the CRC for candidates—that being a CRC appointed mentor for a five-year period (or, in these cases, up to five

years, given the fact that such a person may move into an RCA ministry as a second call before the five years are completed).

3. Representatives of the CRC classis involved (that of the calling church) and the RCA classis involved (that of the classis where the RCA candidate was under care of classis) also sign the agreement confirming their support, with such an agreement submitted to the director of candidacy in the CRC.

Grounds:

- a. This route brings order to an area of our “Orderly Exchange of Ministers” where confusion has occurred.
- b. This agreement allows an equitable exception for RCA candidates that matches an exceptional route that has developed for CRC candidates.
- c. This agreement maintains the desire of the CRC that the EPMC requirements not be disregarded by those beginning in ministry in the CRC.
- d. This agreement is consistent with the commitment of cooperation approved by both the CRC and RCA synods in 2014.

This understanding and practice is being presented both for the information of synod and the endorsement of synod. The committee asks that synod endorse this direction for an exceptional route for RCA pastors serving a first call in the CRC, and encourage the Candidacy Committee to continue conversations with the appropriate RCA functionaries regarding this matter.

VII. Recommendations

- A. That synod declare those listed in section I, A as candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
- B. That synod approve the extensions of candidacy as recommended in section I, B.
- C. That synod approve the declaration of *need* for those listed in section III for affiliation under Church Order Article 8.
- D. That synod approve the action of the Candidacy Committee relative to the process used for readmission to CRC ministry for Rev. Joseph Chen under Church Order Article 8.
- E. That synod take note of the developments in the EPMC program and offer its thanks to the committee and the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary for their effective partnership as they prepare candidates for ordained ministry within the Christian Reformed Church.
- F. That synod endorse the direction (outlined in section VI, B) for an exceptional route for RCA pastors serving a first call in the CRC, and encourage the Candidacy Committee to continue conversations with the appropriate RCA functionaries regarding this matter.

Candidacy Committee
David R. Koll, director of candidacy

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee Supplement

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee (EIRC) held its spring meeting by conference call April 24, 2015. What follows is a supplement to the report in the printed *Agenda for Synod 2015* (pp. 285-99).

I. The classification named *Ecumenical Faith Declaration*

The EIRC discussed the issues surrounding the category of Ecumenical Faith Declaration adopted by Synod 2012 and the placement of the Belhar Confession in this category. As previously reported, many of the CRC's ecumenical partners were consulted about the helpfulness of such a category for the ecumenical community. In short, the designation did not find favor with the vast majority of consulted churches. The EIRC, rather than pressing forward, decided to delay recommending a solution to synod concerning this matter and instead recommends the following:

That synod, by means of a relevant advisory committee, be informed about the problematic nature of the category designated as Ecumenical Faith Declaration.

Grounds:

1. Ecumenical partners have provided this feedback.
2. The EIRC, while not providing a solution to this problem, continues to struggle with this issue, seeking ways to make the Belhar Confession useful to the churches.

II. Incorporation of the Belhar Confession's themes into the discipleship and liturgical life of the CRC

The EIRC recommends the following regarding the incorporation of the Belhar Confession's themes into the discipleship and liturgical life of the CRC:

A. That synod reaffirm the decision of Synod 2012 to recommend the Belhar Confession to the churches for study and for incorporation of its themes into their discipling and liturgical ministries.

Grounds:

1. The importance of Synod 2012's decision deserves to be emphasized by a subsequent synod.
2. The lack of attention by churches to the Belhar Confession and the need for further study of the Belhar's themes and incorporation into the discipleship and liturgical life of the CRC call for synod's reaffirmation.

B. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to ensure that denominational Ministry Support Services, Faith Formation Ministries, and Worship Ministries provide consultative Belhar Confession assistance to congregations and make related materials available through their service, marketing efforts, and web-based access.

Grounds:

1. The listed entities within the denominational offices are in the best position to assist the churches with consultation, advice, and creative ideas for use of the Belhar Confession in the discipleship and liturgical ministries of the church.

2. Marketing and web access decisions fall within the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.
3. Effective marketing and web access options enable congregations to obtain these materials more readily.

III. World Reformed Fellowship (WRF)

The EIRC has taken the initiative during the past year to reconnect with some former ecumenical partner churches who terminated their relationship to the CRC, mostly over the ordination of women issue. The committee is grateful to report that these discussions, though only in initial stages, are being well received with encouraging results. Much more work will need to be done, and it is likely that reestablishing formal relations will take time. But that does not mean everything should be at a standstill. Several such churches suggested that one step forward in our relationship with them could occur if the CRC would become a participating denomination in the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF). Subsequently, an invitation from the WRF has been issued to the CRC, and related documentation has been received by the EIRC. It is fair to say that many of the current participating denominations in the WRF are the more conservative Reformed and Presbyterian denominations from around the world. In that regard, and in direct response to the suggestion of Synod 2014, the CRC could be in more direct connection with such churches by affiliating with the WRF since it is a fellowship of churches, individuals, and Reformed-related ministry institutions (e.g., parachurch ministries, theological schools, evangelical movements, etc.). It is the position of the EIRC that this would be a wholesome and hopeful development fully within the spirit of the CRC's ecumenical charter. Therefore, the EIRC recommends

That synod approve of the CRC's affiliation with the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF).

Grounds:

1. Membership would provide sufficient compatibility and benefits, despite the fact that within the WRF there is diversity of thought about biblical interpretation.
2. As the CRC's ecumenical charter states, "The CRC does not need to endorse every position taken by an ecumenical partner. Rather, the present understanding in ecumenical circles is that churches learn from each other and discuss differing perspectives. Ecumenical relationship can be built on common interests and commitments to the ministry of the gospel and the mission to which that gospel calls the whole church."

IV. Response to overtures regarding the Protestant Church in the Netherlands

The EIRC took note of Overtures 13 and 14 (from Classes Atlantic Northeast and Minnkota) asking Synod 2015 to change the decision of Synod 2014 classifying the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship upon Synod 2014's approval of the Memorandum of Understanding with the PCN. It is our understanding that these overtures are being referred to the officers of Synod 2015 to determine whether the overtures are legally on the agenda of synod. The EIRC observes that neither overture raises new grounds that were omitted from the deliberation last year. The EIRC, in the spirit of our ecumenical charter, has taken the position that differences between ecumenical partners are part of the world we live in, and that such differences need not be a hindrance to a relationship acknowledging considerable common history and values. If the officers of synod decide that the overtures will be considered by Synod 2015, the EIRC is prepared to engage synod in a greater in-depth discussion to explain why the action requested by the overtures would make our work

extremely difficult and would conflict with the clear understanding of the CRC's ecumenical charter—namely, that unity in the global Reformed community does not require uniformity in the decisions made by various churches.

V. Nomination for EIRC membership

The printed *Agenda for Synod 2015* includes a request that synod appoint Dr. Robert Sweetman to a second term as a member of the EIRC. It is now clear that Dr. Sweetman will not be available for a second term; therefore, the EIRC requests that synod appoint the following nominee:

Rev. John Tenyenhuis has been the pastor of Rehoboth Fellowship CRC in Toronto, Ontario, since 1989. He has been a delegate to synod seven times and has broad experience in church matters, having served on advisory committees in the areas of education, missions, synodical services, Church Order, synodical study reports, and publications. He has served the denomination on the board of Christian Reformed World Missions (two separate terms). He has also served on many classical committees and as stated clerk for both Classes Eastern Canada and Toronto. Rev. Tenyenhuis has served, as well, on the interfaith task force for the Canadian Council of Churches for six years.

VI. Expression of gratitude

The EIRC set aside time at its meeting in April to express its sincere gratitude to Dr. Peter Borgdorff for his years of service to the Christian Reformed Church in North America in the name of ecumenicity. His name is recognized with appreciation across North America and worldwide for his contributions. Dr. Borgdorff will conclude his service to the CRCNA and the EIRC after the conclusion of Synod 2015. It is recommended that synod express its gratitude to Dr. Borgdorff for his contributions in the name of ecumenicity.

VII. Recommendations

A. That synod, by means of a relevant advisory committee, be informed about the problematic nature of the category designated as Ecumenical Faith Declaration.

Grounds:

1. Ecumenical partners have provided this feedback.
2. The EIRC, while not providing a solution to this problem, continues to struggle with this issue, seeking ways to make the Belhar Confession useful to the churches.

B. That synod reaffirm the decision of Synod 2012 to recommend the Belhar Confession to the churches for study and for incorporation of its themes into their discipling and liturgical ministries.

Grounds:

1. The importance of Synod 2012's decision deserves to be emphasized by a subsequent synod.
2. The lack of attention by churches to the Belhar Confession and the need for further study of the Belhar's themes and incorporation into the discipleship and liturgical life of the CRC call for synod's reaffirmation.

C. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to ensure that denominational Ministry Support Services, Faith Formation Ministries, and Worship Ministries provide consultative Belhar Confession assistance to congregations and make related materials available through their service, marketing efforts, and web-based access.

Grounds:

1. The listed entities within the denominational offices are in the best position to assist the churches with consultation, advice, and creative ideas for use of the Belhar Confession in the discipleship and liturgical ministries of the church.
2. Marketing and web access decisions fall within the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.
3. Effective marketing and web access options enable congregations to obtain these materials more readily.

D. That synod approve of the CRC's affiliation with the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF).

Grounds:

1. Membership would provide sufficient compatibility and benefits, despite the fact that within the WRF there is diversity of thought about biblical interpretation.
2. As the CRC's ecumenical charter states, "The CRC does not need to endorse every position taken by an ecumenical partner. Rather, the present understanding in ecumenical circles is that churches learn from each other and discuss differing perspectives. Ecumenical relationship can be built on common interests and commitments to the ministry of the gospel and the mission to which that gospel calls the whole church."

E. That synod appoint Rev. John Tenyenhuis to a first term on the EIRC.

F. That synod express its gratitude to Dr. Peter Borgdorff for his contributions in the name of ecumenicity.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee
 Peter Borgdorff, ecumenical officer
 Shirley Roels, chair
 Steven R. Timmermans (ex officio)

Overture 15: Postpone Adoption of Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Recommendations

I. Background

The Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) has been meeting since 2011, and has been charged, among other things, to analyze and address the “dual authority and accountability that currently exists between agency boards and the Board of Trustees, which has at times led to confusion, duplication, suspicion, and tension” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 356). Currently, agency boards have delegated authority from synod but also must report to and be responsible to the BOT.

The proposal currently before synod this year is to “approve the formation of a Council of Delegates . . . to take the place of the current Board of Trustees” and several agency boards. The report lists a number of possible advantages “for discussion and discernment,” with the clarifying remark that the “collaboration and alignment” which these proposals would achieve “is not, in itself, centralization” (*Agenda 2015*, pp. 359, 361).

Classis Hudson wants to first of all express its appreciation for the significant investment of time and energy the TFRSC has put into this process. The structure and culture of the CRCNA are a complex and complicated matter to unpack, and the committee deserves the appreciation of the denomination for its efforts to chart a way forward. In particular, the contribution of the Five Streams as a unifying feature of the CRC’s ministry is helpful and encouraging.

However, the classis also wishes to express its concerns over the proposals set forth in the TFRSC report. These concerns fall into two broad categories: cultural and structural.

II. Cultural concerns

A. Though the report insists that “extensive consultations with all levels of stakeholders were held to understand need and examine proposed solutions” (*Agenda 2015*, p. 353), the actual process seems less plain than this statement suggests. The initial proposal for the TFRSC came out of a report brought to Synod 2011 by the BOT in its supplemental materials in response to a consultant’s report (*Agenda for Synod 2011*, p. 702). Thus the whole process has not been a response to the felt needs of the churches, but to the issues perceived by an outside consultant, shared almost as an afterthought with synod. This seems like an odd background for a report which affirms that “the CRC is congregation based” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 352).

In addition, the feedback sought from the churches themselves throughout this process has been relatively little. To be sure, the TFRSC has sought approval from subsequent synods for its work, and Synod 2014 held a round table discussion on the direction of the task force’s work. However, to the knowledge of this classis the TFRSC has never directly sought input from councils and classes after an initial information-gathering request in late 2011.¹ The report brought to Synod 2012 lists the concerns of denominational staff members but not the responses of the churches (*Agenda for Synod 2012*, pp. 679-84). An appeal for church input after Synod 2014 was limited to *The Banner*² rather than being sent directly to councils.

¹ <http://www.thebanner.org/news/2011/11/task-force-on-crc-structure-and-culture-seeks-input>

² <http://www.crcna.org/news-and-views/task-force-structure-and-culture-requests-feedback>

Recent *Banner* articles would suggest that such concerns are more widespread than the TFRSC would acknowledge.³

B. The very manner in which this report is being brought to synod reflects on the challenges of working in the current CRC culture. Rules for Synodical Procedure require study committee reports to be filed with the executive director by September 15 and distributed to the churches no later than November 1 (*Rules for Synodical Procedure*, section V, B, 9). This is done so that councils and classes may have sufficient opportunity to discuss and respond to the reports through prescribed ecclesiastical channels.

Though Synod 2011 charged the TFRSC to make its recommendations directly to synod rather than having it serve as a “BOT-appointed task force” (*Acts of Synod 2011*, p. 864), the TFRSC has consistently conducted its work as if it were a task force of the BOT. This means that its reports have generally not been publicized until the *Agenda for Synod* is printed (2013, 2014) or, in some cases, in the supplemental materials for synod (2012). This timeline means that the churches have never had significant opportunity to respond to specific, formal proposals of the TFRSC and thus the task force’s work has been handled mostly through the BOT. For structural changes of the magnitude proposed by the TFRSC to be handled without significant opportunity for input from the minor assemblies, however, represents a troubling trend in the CRC in departure from the principles of Church Order Article 27.

C. CRC polity requires that substantial alterations to our way of doing things be handled by a subsequent synod (Church Order Art. 47). Though the current proposals of the TFRSC do not fall into the prescribed categories (creeds, Church Order, and principles of worship), they do represent a “substantial alteration” in our denominational structure, which the churches have not had prior opportunity to consider. The TFRSC report envisions broad effects for the future of CRC ministry if its proposals are adopted by synod. Given these facts, it seems only wise for synod to treat the TFRSC proposals for what they are—substantial alterations—and to respond to them in a way consistent with our polity’s requirements for substantial alterations.

III. Structural concerns

A. It is not clear precisely what the TFRSC proposals aim to accomplish. To be sure, the report lists a number of perceived advantages “for discussion and discernment” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 359). However, the final recommendations for this sweeping change come to synod without specific grounds. This limits synod’s ability to evaluate whether the proposed changes actually address the specific concerns from which the whole process flows, as well as the ability of this or other overtures to consider whether other models might better address these concerns.

The proposed changes draw heavily from the model of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Surprisingly, though, the report does not indicate whether other models for ministry from denominations to ours were considered. How does the Reformed Church in America design its structure? The Evangelical Presbyterian Church? The Presbyterian Church (USA)? The Presbyterian Church in America? Were such models considered and rejected? This would be helpful for the churches and the classes to know as they consider the proposals of the TFRSC.

³<http://www.thebanner.org/departments/2015/02/bridging-the-denominational-divide>,
<http://www.thebanner.org/news/2015/03/board-of-trustees-reviews-structure-task-force-report>,
<http://www.thebanner.org/features/2015/04/grand-rapids-dreaming>

B. Though the TFRSC report insists that shared governance is not centralization, the very statement indicates recognition that the perception of centralization is a concern in the CRCNA. Consolidating oversight of denominational agencies under the authority of a restructured BOT risks further accentuating this suspicion. Agencies that used to be able to claim a certain degree of independence would now be under common governance, and the BOT risks becoming a lightning rod for every problem in the denomination. The proposed changes demand a significant degree of trust from the churches and classes in the denominational authority, and assume that structural changes have no effects in terms of the agencies' ability to raise funds or pursue strategic ministry partnerships outside the CRC. Yet recent controversies over the Belhar Confession and over certain publications in *The Banner* indicate a certain level of suspicion in centralized pronouncements from the CRCNA leadership, within the CRC at a very minimum.

The tensions in "shared governance" exist throughout the denomination in the relationship between churches and classes, and classes and synod. Authority in the CRC is always delegated authority. The TFRSC report assumes that overlap of responsibility between the BOT and the agency boards is a bad thing. However, it could also be argued that our denominational structures reflect the same value of independent authority. The agencies report independently to synod, just as local congregations do to their classis. Yes, this overlapping responsibility requires a commitment to clear communication, operation within the larger network, and a team approach to ministry work. These commitments, as the report notes, have not always been in place. But that does not mean that the structure is faulty.

C. The report leaves one fundamental issue unaddressed—namely, What ministry does the CRC actually intend to do in covenant partnership as a denomination in the 21st century? Are the agencies we have today the ones which we intend to have into the indefinite future? How are these agencies funded? With increasing pressure on the ministry-share system that funds the work we do together, as well as the pace and scope of cultural change around us, synod would do well to ask whether the time and energy to be invested in the proposed structural changes are actually the best way to do ministry ten years from now, or whether they merely represent an improvement to a way of life our denomination could have had twenty years ago.

IV. Summary

Though our classis appreciates the desire to achieve greater alignment and efficiency across our denomination, we feel that the proposals before synod will make the denomination the driving force for ministry in the CRC rather than the local churches and the agencies. This is a fundamental shift in the culture of the CRC (compare Church Order Art. 27), and should not be underestimated by the TFRSC. We talk about doing ministry "in covenant," but covenant requires dialogue and discussion, not simply the implanting of a vision crafted by a denominational board.

It is our opinion that the TFRSC should seriously explore some other options and report back to a future synod. A single appointed board would have a huge task to provide oversight for such a wide range of denominational ministries, meaning that day-to-day direction setting would be left increasingly in the hands of denominational staff with less input from the assemblies of the church. In short, we believe that the centralizing tendencies within the CRC would present a distraction from effective ministry by promoting an unnecessary uniformity in the name of efficiency. While we can tinker with the systems involved to try to more effectively address our culture with the gospel, there is a diminishing return involved for the local churches should the current TFRSC proposal be adopted. Ministry can be messy. But that messiness will

not go away simply by changing a few structures. What we face as a denomination is primarily a cultural challenge. We would do much better to focus on cultural questions such as our commitment to covenant ministry, and trust that the necessary structures will naturally present themselves as we serve faithfully in the name of Christ.

V. Overture

To this end, Classis Hudson overtures Synod 2015 to do the following:

A. Delay implementation of the TFRSC proposals (especially Recommendations B, C, and D) until at least a further ratification of this direction by Synod 2016, and seek input from the councils and classes regarding the proposals now before it.

Grounds:

1. The proposed changes represent significant alterations in the structure of our denominational life and should be treated in keeping with Church Order Article 47.
2. Because of the timeline of the report's submission to synod, councils and classes have had limited opportunity to consider formal proposals rather than general trends.
3. Such a delay would give opportunity to build a broader consensus and deeper level of trust from councils and classes across the denomination, especially considering that the initial impetus for this process began with the Board of Trustees rather than the churches.
4. It is not clear, from sources such as *The Banner*,⁴ whether the agencies and boards of the CRCNA are entirely in favor of the changes being proposed.

B. Instruct the TFRSC to explore further a vision for covenant ministry in the 21st Century, and, in particular, the impact of declining ministry-share receipts on the future of shared denominational ministry.

Grounds:

1. Though the report quite properly highlights the perceived advantages of the TFRSC proposals, it would be helpful for synod to be aware of possible implications that the proposed changes might have on the ability of individual agencies to raise funds or form strategic partnerships in order to carry out their historic mandates, or to assess the comparative advantages of other possible options for restructuring.
2. As described in the TFRSC report, the present assortment of agencies came about by an ad-hoc approach rather than a strategic decision, and the increasing pressure on the ministry-share system would seem to indicate that a conversation about our covenant commitment to shared ministry is appropriate.
3. The models for ministry proposed in the TFRSC report draw heavily on traditions outside the CRCNA, without significant interaction with our own tradition and the reasons for it. A theological grounding for our future ministry work as a denomination would be a helpful addition to the practical considerations offered in the report.
4. The stresses on the ministry share system make it important to consider our commitment to shared ministry before we implement sweeping structural changes.

C. Clarify the standing of future task forces in the Rules for Synodical Procedure, to mandate that such groups issue a final report in the time frame normally assigned to study committees.

⁴ <http://www.thebanner.org/news/2015/03/board-of-trustees-reviews-structure-task-force-report>

Ground: The sweeping nature of the proposals in task force reports such as this one, whether appointed by the BOT or answering directly to synod, means that an adequate timeline for consideration by the churches is necessary and important to maintain the cultural commitment to shared ministry in our denomination and to respect the input of the officebearers of the CRCNA.

Classis Hudson
Joel D. Vande Werken, stated clerk

Overture 16: Table the Recommendations of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Until 2016

We the undersigned councils within Classis Iakota overture Synod 2015 to table the discussion on the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 351-79; hereafter TFRSC) until Synod 2016.

The report of the TFRSC was first made available to the churches of the CRC as part of the *Agenda for Synod 2015*, published in the first week of April. The report proposes sweeping changes to the structure and governance of the CRC, including the creation of a Council of Delegates (COD), providing strategic leadership, and the formation of a Transition Committee given an exceptionally broad mandate. This Transition Committee, yet undefined other than “under the leadership of the executive director,” would not only oversee the transition from our current Board of Trustees model to the Council of Delegates model but would also review and make recommendations for changes to the Church Order, organizational bylaws, and “other key issues that may arise in the implementation of transition.” The Council of Delegates would itself be under the direct leadership of a small, yet undefined executive leadership team.

Our concern is less about the specific plan being offered; rather, it is more about the manner in which it is presented. By delaying presentation of this plan until the publication of the *Agenda for Synod*, the TFRSC bypassed the ability of most churches and classes to respond to its recommendations by way of the proper channels in the proper timeframe. In addition, it places key decisions that would be made for the long-term future of the Christian Reformed Church into the hands of yet undefined groups under the leadership of a small team of people, rather than listening to the congregations and classes of the Christian Reformed Church.

While we recognize the desire of our denominational leadership to be “nimble,” we feel that it would be an unwise decision to move too hastily to implement the recommendations of the TFRSC. In the words of Rev. Clayton Libolt, “For a restructuring of this size and importance, we should ask for more time to consider. If what the TFRSC recommends is good, another year won’t matter; if not, the price will be high” (*The Banner*, “Grand Rapids Dreaming”). Allow this process to work through the proper channels, providing opportunity for congregations and classes to wrestle with and discuss this report before bringing it to the floor of Synod 2016.

The councils of
Bethel CRC, Sioux Center, Iowa
Bob Den Ruler, clerk
Corsica CRC, Corsica, South Dakota
Richard Bordewyk, clerk
Covenant CRC, Sioux Center, Iowa
Andy Landman, clerk
Faith CRC, Sioux Center, Iowa
Scott Hulstein, clerk
First CRC, Rock Valley, Iowa
Carl Elbers, clerk
First CRC, Sioux Center, Iowa
Randy Meyer, clerk

Note: Classis Iakota did not meet after the *Agenda for Synod 2015* was published; therefore the councils were unable to process the above overture through classis.

Communication 3: Classis Grand Rapids East

I. Background

Classis Grand Rapids East noted with surprise and concern Overture 5 on synod's agenda: "Instruct and Admonish Consistories Concerning Actions of 'All One Body.'" Overture 5 asks synod to instruct two consistories of churches in our classis, Eastern Avenue CRC and Calvin CRC, to exercise discipline with respect to those in their congregations who are members of the group "All One Body," and to admonish these consistories for hosting meetings of this group.

Classis Grand Rapids East offers several observations for consideration of this overture by Classis Minnkota along with the respectful request that Classis Minnkota rescind this overture.

In the event that Classis Minnkota declines this request, Classis Grand Rapids East also offers these observations for the consideration of this overture by Synod 2015. We are not requesting any response from synod. Rather, we hope this communication will help synod respond to Overture 5 with wisdom and discernment.

II. Absence of due communication

We were surprised, and then we were concerned, to learn

- that neither Eastern Avenue CRC nor Calvin CRC, nor any of the individuals mentioned by name in the overture had received previous communication asking for clarification about these concerns from the congregation in Classis Minnkota which originated the overture;
- that Classis Minnkota endorsed this overture and forwarded it to the Synodical Office knowing that such communication had not taken place; and, further,
- that Classis Minnkota itself did not directly inform or communicate with these two councils or the named individuals regarding this overture.

This seems to lack the required mutuality reflected both in Matthew 18:15-17 and Church Order Article 80.

III. Nature of church discipline

It is our understanding that the admonition and discipline of members is a matter for the local church elders to deal with (Church Order Art. 37, 78-84, and 85). It is also our understanding that local church elders are advised to maintain strict confidentiality in all matters relating to admonition and discipline (Guidelines for Confidentiality, Church Order Supplement, Art. 78-84, and *Acts of Synod 1991*, pp. 723, 769). Therefore, it seems most inappropriate, and even hurtful, that individuals have been publicly named in this overture and consequently in the synodical agenda.

IV. Value of public discussion

We see no reason to admonish these two churches for hosting meetings of the group "All One Body." Neither Eastern Avenue CRC nor Calvin CRC has endorsed "All One Body." That these churches provided meeting space for "All One Body" does not indicate, nor should it imply, endorsement of the views this group presented. Allowing for public discussion of these

difficult issues recognizes the value of our churches as places where people can honestly and graciously discuss this timely, important, and complicated matter.

V. Conclusion

We share Classis Minnkota's desire for both unity and holiness in the church. However, we do not believe acceding to this overture will promote either unity or holiness. Our classis, like many other classes in our denomination, is struggling with how best to provide pastoral care to our homosexual members. We believe patient understanding and compassion are a better way forward than discipline and admonition.

Classis Grand Rapids East
Alfred E. Mulder, stated clerk