

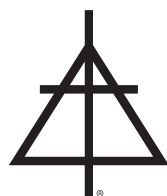
AGENDA FOR SYNOD



Christian
Reformed
Church

**AGENDA
FOR SYNOD**

2015



**Christian
Reformed
Church**

June 12-18, 2015
B. J. Haan Auditorium
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa

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CONTENTS

Preface	7
Announcements	9
Delegates to Synod.....	13
 Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America	
Board of Trustees Report	21
Appendix A: Curriculum Vitae: Colin P. Watson, Sr.	41
Appendix B: Director of Ministries and Administration Position Description	43
Appendix C: Curriculum Vitae: Leonard J. Vander Zee	46
Appendix D: <i>Banner</i> Editor Search Committee Mandate, Composition, and Process	48
Appendix E: <i>Banner</i> Mandate Review Committee Report.	48
Appendix F: <i>Banner</i> Advisory Council	53
Appendix G: The Christian Reformed Church in North America-Canada Corporation Bylaw.....	55
Appendix H: Diversity in Leadership Planning Group (DLPG) Implementation of Synodical Directives Status Update	81
Addendum 1: Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Survey for the Christian Reformed Church.....	91
Addendum 2: Training and Schedule	97
Addendum 3: Communications Plan	98
Addendum 4: Diversity Scorecard and Metrics.....	101
Addendum 5: The Leveraging Difference Cycle	104
Appendix I: Proposed Revision to “Executive Session of Synod” Designation	104
Appendix J: Proposed Church Order Changes for Adoption by Synod 2015	106
Appendix K: Proposed Changes to the Judicial Code (CHurch Order Article 30-c and Its Supplement).....	107
Appendix L: The Christian Reformed Church in North America-Canada Foundation Bylaw	112
Appendix M: Condensed Financial Statements of the Agencies and Institutions	136
 Unified Report of Agencies, Institutions, and Specialized Ministries	
Introduction	167
Faith Formation	
Calvin College	169
Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries	174

Servant Leadership	
Chaplaincy and Care Ministry	177
Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.	181
Pastor-Church Relations	183
Pensions and Insurance	187
Safe Church Ministry	192
Global Missions	
Christian Reformed Home Missions	195
Christian Reformed World Missions	209
Loving Mercy and Doing Justice	
Committee for Contact with the Government	217
Disability Concerns	219
Race Relations	223
Social Justice and Hunger Action	225
Urban Aboriginal Ministries	229
World Renew	230
Gospel Proclamation and Worship	
Back to God Ministries International	249
Calvin Theological Seminary	258
Worship Ministries	266
Standing Committees	
Candidacy Committee	271
Appendix: 24-Month Candidacy Program Forms	278
Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee	285
Appendix: Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, Formal Dialogue, and Other Ecumenical Relationships	298
Historical Committee	300
Sermons for Reading Services Committee	309
Denominationally Related Agencies	
Dordt College	313
Institute for Christian Studies	314
The King's University	316
Kuyper College	318
Redeemer University College	319
Trinity Christian College	321
Communities First Association	323
Diaconal Ministries Canada	325
Dynamic Youth Ministries	
Calvinist Cadet Corps	326
GEMS Girls' Clubs	327
Youth Unlimited	328
Friendship Ministries	330
Partners Worldwide	331
Timothy Leadership Training Institute	333
Study Committees	
Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-sex Marriage	337
Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty	343

Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture	351
Appendix A: Policy Governance Features for the Proposed Council of Delegates, Executive Committee, Ministry Collaboration Committees, and Agency Committees	373
Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions	375
Appendix C: Binationality and Proposed Board Governance Structure	378
Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon	380
Appendix A: Resources for Elders and Deacons	401
Appendix B: Deacon/diaconate, Elder/consistory, Council, Classis, and Synod Roles and Responsibilities from the Church Order	404

Ad Hoc Committee

Report of Synod Ad Hoc Committee Regarding Weber Appeal	411
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Overtures

1. Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan Reinstate the Practice of Appointing Women Advisers to Synod and Review the Formula Adopted by Synod 2014 for Ethnic Advisers	415
2. Classis Red Mesa Approve the Transfer of Chelwood CRC from Classis Rocky Mountain to Classis Red Mesa	418
3. Classis Rocky Mountain Permit Transfer of Membership of Chelwood CRC from Classis Rocky Mountain to Classis Red Mesa	419
4. Classis Holland Add a New Subsection to Church Order Article 38 Regarding Multiaffiliated Churches	420
5. Classis Minnkota Instruct and Admonish Consistories Concerning Actions of “All One Body”	423
6. Grand Rapids East Encourage All CRC Classes and Congregations to Recognize the Ordination of the Executive Director as a Commissioned Pastor	430
7. Classis Hamilton Provide Clarification Regarding Church Order Article 23	434
8. Classis Chatham Amend Church Order Supplement, Article 84 to Include Address of Sexual Abuse	436
9. Classis B.C. South-East Adopt Proposed Church Order Changes by the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon, with Revisions	440
10. Classis Lake Erie Adopt a Modified Version of the Charge to Deacons	442
11. Classis Southeast U.S. Delay Decision on Allowing the Seating of Deacons at Classical and Synodical Meetings	443

12.	Council of Dorr CRC, Dorr, Michigan Do Not Adopt Church Order Changes Requiring the Delegation of Deacons to Classes and Synod	444
13.	Classis Atlantic Northeast Classify the Ecumenical Relationship with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands as That of a Church in Dialogue	447
14.	Classis Minnkota Return the Protestant Church in the Netherlands to the Ecumenical Relationship of a Church in Dialogue	448

Communications

1.	Classis Hamilton	455
2.	Classis Heartland	456

Synod 2015 begins its sessions on Friday, June 12, at 8:30 a.m. in the B. J. Haan Auditorium on the campus of Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. First CRC, Sioux Center, Iowa, will serve as the convening church. Reverend Mark Verbruggen, pastor of First CRC, will serve as the president pro-tem until synod is duly constituted and its four officers have been elected. A community-wide Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise will be held Sunday, June 14, 2015, at 4:00 p.m. at First CRC, 321 2nd Street SE, Sioux Center, Iowa.

All delegates and advisers to synod are encouraged to take time to listen to the audio orientation segments for synod, accessed on the secure delegate site, prior to their arrival at synod. These segments will assist first-time delegates in understanding the nature of synod and will serve as helpful reminders for all returnees to synod.

The congregations of the Christian Reformed Church in North America are requested to remember the synodical assembly in intercessory prayers on the Sundays of June 7 and 14. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will equip the synodical delegates to serve in faith and obedience and will lead the Christian Reformed Church into new and challenging areas of ministry. May Synod 2015 be an experience in which we are further “built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (Eph. 2:22) as we strive to be faithful to Christ’s call in our congregations and ministries.

Steven R. Timmermans
Executive Director of the CRCNA

I. Welcome

Thank you for serving as a delegate to Synod 2015. Whether you are a returning delegate or you are coming for the first time, we sincerely hope and pray that you will find synod to be a pleasant and blessed experience. You come together as disciples of Jesus Christ, as members of the CRC, and as representatives of the classes that delegated and appointed you to serve. Synod is more than just a gathering of church leaders or a governing body. It is a reflection of the church and a time for reflection and celebration of what God is doing in and through the Christian Reformed Church in North America. God has richly blessed us, and you have been given a unique privilege to serve him and his kingdom by your work at synod.

The synodical services staff, under the leadership of Ms. Dee Recker, is available to assist you in whatever way they are able. Please feel free to contact the synodical services office if you need information or have any questions before arriving by writing synod@crcna.org or calling 800-272-5125 or 616-224-0833.

II. Confidentiality of the executive sessions of synod

The Board of Trustees calls the matter of confidentiality to the attention of Synod 2015 and urges that all necessary precautions be taken to prevent violations of confidentiality.

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

III. Audio and video recordings of synod

Synod 1979 authorized the making of an official audio recording of the entire proceedings of the general sessions of synod as a way to verify the written record of the synodical proceedings. Although the general sessions of synod are recorded, executive sessions are not recorded. Delegates to synod are informed at the opening session of synod that all the general sessions are being recorded. Synod has designated that the office of the executive director be responsible for the use and storage of these materials.

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

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

B. *Visitor privileges*

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

(Acts of Synod 1989, p. 445)

IV. Proposed daily schedule

Although each new assembly is free to alter the schedule, the following general schedule is tentatively in place for Synod 2015:

Thursday orientation

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Orientation for deacon advisers, ethnic advisers, faculty advisers, and young adult representatives
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Welcome reception for delegates and advisers
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Orientation for chairs and reporters, and alternate chairs and alternate reporters of advisory committees

Opening Friday

8:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Opening session of synod Election of officers Finalization of committee assignments
11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Advisory committees meet for introductions
12:15 - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Advisory committee meetings
3:00 - 3:20 p.m.	Break
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.	Advisory committee meetings
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Advisory committee meetings

Saturday

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

Sunday

Morning worship and lunch at area CRC churches	
4:00 p.m.	Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise

Monday - Wednesday

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

Thursday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.

Opening worship

8:45 - 11:45 a.m.

Plenary session

*Synod will adjourn no later than noon Thursday.

DELEGATES TO SYNOD 2015

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Alberta North		
Ministers	Gordon H. Pols Kornelis De Koning	Ministers Mike Vandyk Paul J. Birnbaum
Elders	Matt Schoonderwoerd Frank J. Zee	Elders Peter J. Prins Mary van Ryk
Alberta South/Saskatchewan		
Ministers	H. Charles Kooger Folkert de Boer	Ministers George S. Koopmans Jack E. VanderVeer
Elders	Nelly Eyk Jacob D. Appelhof	Elders _____ _____
Arizona		
Ministers	Jonathan Gerstner José Rayas	Ministers _____ _____
Elders	Merle Den Bleyker Rodney J. Hugen	Elders _____ _____
Atlantic Northeast		
Ministers	Ryan M. Goding Kurt A. Monroe	Ministers Raymond E. Coffey Jantina Cornelison
Elders	Tom Cooper Samuel D. Sutter	Elders Cornelius Hutt _____
B.C. North-West		
Ministers	Timothy Sheridan Alan E. van der Woerd	Ministers Andrew E. Beunk Julia A. Prins-Vanderveen
Elders	David P. Mayer John A. Buikema	Elders Sharon L. Bandstra William Vantriet
B.C. South-East		
Ministers	Thomas W. Bomhof William C. Veenstra	Ministers Michael J. VanderKwaak Andrew G. Vander Leek
Elders	Jack Vaandrager Jeanne Murk-Wust	Elders Bart E.C. Vegt _____
California South		
Ministers	Jimmy Han Scott Elgersma	Ministers Cornelius Pool Edward Kim
Elders	Lee A. Johnson Manuel O. Aguilar	Elders Ron L. Glass Robert R. Moore
Central California		
Ministers	Paul H. Vander Klay Bruce A. Persenaire	Ministers Henry Lengkeek Matthew D. Burns
Elders	Maurice Roos Warren B. Wissink	Elders Jerry L. Terpsma _____

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Central Plains		
Ministers	Brian L. Ochsner Gilbert J. Kamps	Ministers Ryan Faber Edward J. Laarman
Elders	Leon J. Groenendyk Brent Disselkoen	Elders Kenneth Rozenboom Tyler J. Humphrey
Chatham		
Ministers	Willemina L. Zwart Joshua C. Tuininga	Ministers William F. Hoogland Phillip A. Apoll
Elders	Frank Beute Clarence J. Nywening	Elders Louis Bosma John Krale
Chicago South		
Ministers	David C. Ten Clay Timothy P. Hoekstra	Ministers Gary K. Foster Ronald D. VanderWell
Elders	John W. Hadley James C. Bolhuis	Elders _____ _____
Columbia		
Ministers	Bradley A. Vos Robert J. Toornstra	Ministers Anthony R. DeKorte Jelmer P. Groenewold
Elders	Seth A. Atsma Leroy Werkhoven	Elders Rob Faber _____
Eastern Canada		
Ministers	David A. Vroege Paul R. Vanderkooy	Ministers Daniel Meinema Chad M. Vandervalk
Elders	Cor Dykstra Jean J. Lauziere	Elders Katherine M. Vandergrift _____
Georgetown		
Ministers	David E. Den Haan Gerald A. Koning	Ministers Brian P. Bosscher Jack B. Dik
Elders	Shelby L. Gemmen Ron J. Koedam	Elders Robin Schreur Rog Slagter
Grand Rapids East		
Ministers	Stedford E. Sims Josiah Chung	Ministers Thea N. Leunk Rebecca Jordan Heys
Elders	Darrell L. Delaney Judy A. Jongsma	Elders Lori A. Keen Herman Witte
Grand Rapids North		
Ministers	Darrin J.B. Compager John M. Mondt	Ministers Benjamin S. Browneye Gina L. Dick
Elders	Kenneth A. Koll David L. Weeks	Elders Mack Randall _____
Grand Rapids South		
Ministers	Stephen A.B. DeWit David A. Struyk	Ministers Michael W. Hoogeboom Raymond A. Blacketer
Elders	Jason Ellis Eric D. Kamstra	Elders Jolene M. DeHeer _____
Grandville		
Ministers	Daniel B. Mouw Dale M. Fopma	Ministers Douglas R. Fauble Jay R. Pruim
Elders	Hendrik Porte Gerrit L. DenHartog	Elders Robert A. Mulder _____

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Greater Los Angeles		
Ministers	Sid Sybenga Bonny S. Mulder-Behnia	Ministers Sam Lee Zachary E. Vandenberg
Elders	Maged L. Fayez Adriana Sybenga	Elders _____ _____
Hackensack		
Ministers	Margaret J. Jenista Matthew Lin	Ministers Gary Roest Douglas H. Bratt
Elders	Karen J. Walker Lenore Y. Maine	Elders Kathryn Van De Weert Kenneth Tanis
Hamilton		
Ministers	Rita S. Klein-Geltink Henry P. Kranenburg	Ministers Jeffrey B. Vandermeer Everett J. Vander Horst
Elders	Martin Tigchelaar Ed Scharringa	Elders Fred Reitsma Garry Sytsma
Hanmi		
Ministers	Hyung Ju Park Paul Im	Ministers _____ _____
Elders	Sang Myeun Moon Chun Sun Lee	Elders _____ _____
Heartland		
Ministers	Robert D. Drenten John C. Klompfen	Ministers Loren J. Kotman Kevin J. Muyskens
Elders	Bruce D. Lefever Ed L. Starkenburg	Elders _____ _____
Holland		
Ministers	Socheth Na Scott A. DeVries	Ministers Steven R. Rusticus Marvin J. Hofman
Elders	Mary E. Jellema Fronse W. Smith, Sr.	Elders _____ _____
Hudson		
Ministers	Michael L. Bentley Mary B. Stegink	Ministers Christian R. Pedersen Kevin C. Vande Streek
Elders	Jeremy Mulder	Elders _____ _____
Huron		
Ministers	Brian J. Bork Henry F. Steenbergen	Ministers Carel A. Geelynsse Andrew Zantingh
Elders	Marguerite E. Ridder Richard Van der Wal	Elders _____ _____
Iakota		
Ministers	Mark N. Verbruggen John Gorter	Ministers Matthew A. Haan John G. Keizer
Elders	Terry Biemers Orlan Gulker	Elders _____ _____
Illiana		
Ministers	Joel W. Zuidema Richard Vanderwal	Ministers Randall R. Bergsma Laryn G. Zoerhof
Elders	Henry J. Goesel Donald Dykstra	Elders Tony Vyn Sam Van Til

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Kalamazoo	Ministers David L. Van Der Wiele Ronald De Young	Ministers Simon A. Tuin _____
	Elders George H. VanderWey Thomas P. Balkema	Elders _____ _____
Ko-Am	Ministers Sung Chang Choi Taekuk Ko	Ministers _____ _____
	Elders Tae Jung Son JongPil Oh	Elders Sung Soo Lim _____
Lake Erie	Ministers Matthew T. Ackerman Christian Y.Y. Oh	Ministers Kenneth R. Bieber Harry R. Winters
	Elders Gary S. Adams Jack Kalmink	Elders _____ _____
Lake Superior	Ministers Anson Veenstra Michael L. Ten Haken	Ministers Steven A. Zwart Donald G. Draayer
	Elders Greg J. Kok Raymond Vander Zaag	Elders Robert M. Brenton Duane A. Starkenburg
Minnkota	Ministers Jon R. Bushnell C. James den Dulk	Ministers Joseph VandenAkker Adam T. Eisenga
	Elders John H. VanderBilt Lyle B. TenHaken	Elders Paul Schelhaas Rick A. Fey
Muskegon	Ministers Jeffrey Hough Leslie D. Van Dyke	Ministers Drew K. Sweetman Cynthia R. de Jong
	Elders Michael K. Jackson Arie A. Fikse	Elders Jan Veenstra Ron Bielema
Niagara	Ministers Christopher W. deWinter Robert J. Loerts	Ministers Fred VanderBerg Benjamin J. Ponsen
	Elders Daniel S. Baarda Eleanor Boersma	Elders Louis den Bak John Kikkert
Northcentral Iowa	Ministers Russell W. Boersma Jonathan L. Spronk	Ministers Joel A. DeBoer Thomas J. Niehof
	Elders Herbert W. Schreur Duane C. Vanderploeg	Elders Clarence E. Karsjens _____
Northern Illinois	Ministers James T. Petersen John L. Hoekwater	Ministers Gregg M. DeMey Phillip Stel
	Elders Alexandra Wurpts Adam DeHoek	Elders Lauren Medenblik Ken Folkerts
Northern Michigan	Ministers Wendell D. Davelaar Chris A. Kostelansky	Ministers David J. Prince Mical Pugh
	Elders Paul Hizelberger Ray Y. Van Sloten	Elders Wayne A. Berkompas Andrew M. Liimaata

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Pacific Northwest		
Ministers	Ben E. DeRegt Randolph A. Beumer	Ministers Mark VanDyke Bomsu Kim
Elders	John M. Rozeboom Mark Wagenaar	Elders John E. Heaphy _____
Quinte		
Ministers	Nathan Kuperus Heidi S. De Jonge	Ministers Michael W. Bootsma Peter Slofstra
Elders	Brian Bylsma Leo Kuiperij	Elders _____ _____
Red Mesa		
Ministers	Joshua R. Holwerda Susan E. LaClear	Ministers Stanley W. Jim John W. Dykhuis
Elders	Norman Chee Ira Charles	Elders Jerome Sandoval Donovan D. Carlisle
Rocky Mountain		
Ministers	Roger DeYoung Craig E. Broek	Ministers Robert L. Westenbroek Mark W. Hilbelink
Elders	Gerald Reinsma Donn Hansum	Elders Julie A. Walden _____
Southeast U.S.		
Ministers	Stanley J. Workman David J. Weemhoff	Ministers Felix Fernandez Scott A. Vander Ploeg
Elders	Karlos E. Palacios John R. Eggebeen	Elders _____ _____
Thornapple Valley		
Ministers	Paul R. DeVries Heather Strooboscher	Ministers David J. Bosscher David D. Poolman
Elders	Chris Van Spronsen Robert J. Zoerman	Elders Phyllis Moes _____
Toronto		
Ministers	Nick C. Overduin Richard A. Bodini	Ministers Hilbrent Vander Heide Nathaniel E. Van Denend
Elders	Rob Datema Michael S. Irshad	Elders John Meiboom _____
Wisconsin		
Ministers	Mark J. Pluimer David L. Katsma	Ministers Peter T. Verhulst Larry L. Meyer
Elders	Michael G. Tinholt Bruce R. McMurry	Elders Harvey S. DeYong _____
Yellowstone		
Ministers	Timothy B. Toeset Jerry L. Blom	Ministers Peter DeVries _____
Elders	Willis Calhoun Dale Venhuizen	Elders David K. Hoekema _____
Zeeland		
Ministers	Stephen F. Terpstra Steve A. Bussis	Ministers Aaron Greydanus Scott C. Stark
Elders	Edward Zylstra Kenneth R. Estelle	Elders Michael J. Miedema Lewis J. Dekker

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (the Board, or BOT) presents this report as a summary of the activities carried out on behalf of synod during the interim between Synod 2014 and Synod 2015.

I. Introduction

A. General

Our Lord Jesus Christ, upon his ascension into heaven, entrusted the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to his disciples and commanded them to be his witnesses, teaching all nations to obey everything he had commanded.

As followers of Jesus Christ, the church corporately and each of its members individually, led by the Holy Spirit, are called to share this gospel of the kingdom within the fellowship of the church and with people throughout the world by proclaiming God's Word and giving God the worship and honor that are his due, in the confidence that Christ is building up the church and is establishing the kingdom.

To carry out this mission, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (hereinafter *synod*) has created the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and such agencies, committees, and institutions as are listed in its bylaws. These agencies, committees, and institutions function primarily within Canada and the United States, where the Christian Reformed Church is committed to being a binational denomination. Each organizational entity and each national expression of the Christian Reformed Church in North America makes its own unique contribution to God's mission in the world as the whole denomination strives to live the fullness of the gospel.

(Preamble, Constitution of the Board of Trustees)

The Board, a synodically elected and appointed governing body, whose members also serve as the directors of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation, has met two times since Synod 2014 (September 2014 and February 2015) and is scheduled to meet again in May 2015. The Board's agenda normally consists of agency matters (program review, personnel appointments, focus of the agency, and so forth), polity matters (study reports, board appointments, interim committee of synod concerns), as well as normal organizational matters that come up in a complex organization such as the CRCNA. In addition, the Board oversees the work of the executive director.

Nearly all the matters addressed by the Board affect the full CRCNA as a binational church, but, in compliance with Canadian regulations governing Canadian registered charities, the Canadian trustees review and approve all actions taken by the full Board and, as necessary, address any matters that

relate directly to uniquely Canadian issues and matters of law. The Board, as synod's agent, is grateful for the opportunity to serve the entire church.

B. Membership

The members of the Board from the United States are Rev. Kenneth A. Baker (Region 10), Mr. Mark Charles (member-at-large), Mr. David DeRidder (Region 7), Rev. Peter J. DeVries (Region 5), Ms. Joan Flikkema (Region 11), Dr. R. Scott Greenway (Region 11), Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn (Region 8), Rev. Christian Y. Oh (member-at-large), Mr. Kyu Paek (Region 6), Ms. Elizabeth Rudenga (Region 9), Mr. Peter Szto (member-at-large), Mr. Jose Tagle (Region 12), Rev. Angela Taylor Perry (Region 10), Mr. Chris Van Spronsen (Region 11), and Dr. Socorro Woodbury (Region 8).

The members of the Board from Canada are Rev. Donald Draayer (Lake Superior), Mr. Bruce Dykstra (member-at-large), Mrs. Verney Kho (member-at-large), Rev. Jake Kuipers (Quinte), Rev. Dale Melenberg (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Mr. Peter Noteboom (Toronto), Mr. Garry Sytsma (Hamilton), Ms. Gavriel Tran (B.C. South-East), Ms. Katherine M. Vandergrift (Eastern Canada), Rev. Trevor Vanderveen (B.C. North-West), Rev. William C. Veenstra (member-at-large), Rev. Norman J. Visser (Chatham), Mr. Michael Wevers (Alberta North), and Mr. Bert Witvoet (Niagara). (The Classis Huron position is currently vacant.)

The executive director (Dr. Steven R. Timmermans) serves *ex officio* as a corporate trustee of the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation and member of the Board of Trustees (without vote) and attends the meetings of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation.

Following are the officers of the Board and of respective corporations for the 2014-2015 term:

1. Board officers: Ms. Katherine M. Vandergrift, president; Rev. R. Scott Greenway, vice president; Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, secretary; Rev. Trevor Vanderveen, vice-all.
2. Corporation officers
 - a. CRCNA-Canada Corporation: Ms. Katherine M. Vandergrift, president; Rev. Trevor Vanderveen, vice president; Mr. Garry Sytsma, secretary.
 - b. CRCNA-Michigan Corporation: Rev. R. Scott Greenway, president; Mr. Chris Van Spronsen, vice president; Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, secretary; Rev. Kenneth A. Baker, vice-all.
3. Executive Committee: Rev. Kenneth A. Baker; Rev. R. Scott Greenway; Mr. Garry Sytsma; Ms. Katherine M. Vandergrift, chair; Rev. Trevor Vanderveen; and Mr. Chris Van Spronsen. Dr. Steven R. Timmermans serves *ex officio*.

C. Salary disclosure

At the directive of synod, the Board reports the following salaries for senior denominational services staff directly employed by the Board of Trustees:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
20	1	1	0
19	2	2	0
18	1	1	0
17	5	4	1

Synod 2014 adopted a new salary administration system that uses a salary range *target* and a minimum of 85 percent of that target. Salary ranges within which the agencies will be reporting actual compensation for the current fiscal year are as follows:

2014-2015 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

II. Activities of the Board

A. Polity matters

1. Ordination of the executive director as commissioned pastor

The Board is aware of an overture to synod from Classis Grand Rapids East and wishes to communicate its support of the overture, which requests that, by way of exception, the ED serve as a commissioned pastor within all CRC classes. Synod 2013 “grant[ed] the BOT permission to consider the possibility, by way of exception to the rule, of a non-clergy nominee for the position of ED, providing that person is or becomes an officebearer in the CRC” (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 576). To fulfill the duties of the commissioned pastor role for which Dr. Timmermans seeks to be ordained, ability to serve in all classes would be helpful.

2. Appointment of director of ministries and administration

In September 2014 the BOT approved a search committee timeline, protocols, and a revised position description for the director of ministries and administration (DMA). Immediately following appointment of the search committee, a search for a DMA was launched and a single nominee was presented to the Board in February 2015 for appointment and ratification on behalf of synod.

With gratitude to God, the Board is pleased to introduce to synod Mr. Colin P. Watson, Sr., appointed to begin in the position of DMA on April 13, 2015. In making this appointment, the Board has recognized Mr. Watson’s leadership ability and fitness for the task at hand. Mr. Watson’s curriculum vitae and the revised DMA position description are included as Appendices A and B for synod’s information.

3. *The Banner*

a. *Banner* editor in chief

At its September 2014 meeting, the Board accepted from Rev. Robert De Moor, editor in chief of *The Banner*, a letter announcing his retirement effective August 31, 2015. With thankfulness for his faithful service, the Board requests that synod recognize Rev. De Moor's significant contributions to the denominational magazine and his years of service and permit time in synod's schedule to hear from Rev. De Moor.

Upon learning of the impending retirement of Rev. De Moor, the Board appointed a search committee to identify an Interim *Banner* editor in chief until a more extensive search can be conducted for a more permanent editor. The Board is pleased to report a successful search resulting in the nomination of Rev. Leonard J. Vander Zee as interim *Banner* editor in chief. The BOT recommends that synod appoint Rev. Vander Zee as interim *Banner* editor in chief, effective September 1, 2015. His curriculum vitae is included in Appendix C. An interview with synod is not needed for this one-year interim position.

The Board also asks synod to initiate the process for the search for a new *Banner* editor in chief by adopting the *Banner* Editor Search Committee mandate, composition, and process as found in Appendix D. Prior to the search, the Board plans to present a revised position description for the *Banner* Editor for synod's approval—to be recommended by way of the Board Supplement.

b. Revisions to the mandate of *The Banner*

At the instruction of Synod 2014, the Board mandated a small review committee to propose revisions to the mandate of *The Banner*. The Board received the report of the review committee at its February meeting and recommends adoption of the changes to the *Banner* mandate as found in Appendix E.

c. Updated *Banner* Advisory Council mandate

In September the BOT took note that revisions in the mandate, membership, and conflict resolution procedure contained in the *Banner* Advisory Council mandate required an update. The Board adopted an updated mandate in February 2015, which also includes a protocol section to define the relationship of the *Banner* Advisory Council to the Board of Trustees. The Board asks synod to take note of the updated *Banner* Advisory Council mandate included as Appendix F.

4. Interim appointments

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

Appointment	Classis	Member	Alternate	Term
Synodical				
Deputies	Hackensack Holland	Rev. Stanley Scripps	Rev. Paul J. Van Dyken	2018(1)
World Renew	Holland	Ms. Rachel Brink		2017(1)

5. Classes that have declared that women officebearers (ministers, elders, deacons) may not be delegated to classis

In accordance with the instructions of Synod 2007, the executive director keeps a list of those classes that, in keeping with their understanding of the biblical position on the role of women in ecclesiastical office, declare that women officebearers (ministers, elders, deacons) may not be delegated to classis. Although some of these classes have developed their own regulations regarding the permissibility of women officebearers participating in classis meetings, some classes have adopted a decision to declare that women officebearers may not be delegated to classis. A list of these classes may be obtained by contacting the office of the executive director.

6. Board nominations

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

The Board recommends the following slates of nominees from various geographic regions and classes for election to a first term:

Region 11

Rev. Randall D. Engle serves as the pastor of North Hills CRC in Troy, Michigan, and is an adjunct professor at Oakland University. He previously served on the Calvin College Alumni Board, the Calvin College Board of Trustees, and the National Board of Directors of the Choristers Guild. Rev. Engle received a B.A. from Calvin College, an M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary, an M.Th. from Luther Seminary, and a Ph.D. from the University of Wales.

Rev. Emmett A. Harrison serves as the lead pastor at Oakdale Park CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has served as a delegate to synod six times and was elected to serve as the vice president of Synod 2004. Rev. Harrison served as chair of the New Church Development initiative and as vice president of its executive committee. He has also served on two synodical study committees and was the chair of an advisory committee at Synod 2012. Rev. Harrison previously served on the executive committee, both as vice president and president, for Classis Lake Erie. He currently serves on the CRC Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.

Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan

Mr. Albert Cramer is a member of Medicine Hat CRC in Medicine Hat, Alberta. He owns a greenhouse business and is chair of a cooperative that markets greenhouse vegetables. Mr. Cramer has served on his local church council every five years for the past 30 years; he currently is, and has served during his past four terms as, the chair of council. Mr. Cramer has also served on classis advisory committees and was a delegate to Synod 2014.

Mr. Peter DeBoer is a member of Emmanuel CRC in Calgary, Alberta, and has served on his church council and the local Christian school board. He has also served on the boards of The King's University, the Trade Industry National Association, the Institute for Christian Studies, and the Canadian Christian Education Foundation. Mr. DeBoer has participated as well in an ad hoc committee re church planting for the Christian Reformed Home Missions board. He served as a delegate to Synods 1999 and 2010 and currently serves on The King's University Foundation Board and is the chair of its Investment Committee.

Classis B.C. North-West

Mr. Andy deRuyter is a member of First CRC in Vancouver, British Columbia. He owns a commercial landscape maintenance company and has served as an elder and clerk of council five times. He also served as an alternate delegate on the Board of Trustees (CRCNA) from 2003-2007. Mr. deRuyter currently serves as the stated clerk for Classis B.C. North-West and as chair of the classis ministry and interim committees.

Ms. Aaltje (Aalie) van Grootheest, a member of Victoria CRC in Victoria, British Columbia, has completed a career in law and has served as an elder and chair of her local church council. She previously also served as a board member of a local Christian newspaper. Ms. van Grootheest currently serves on the Board of Governors of The King's University, as a member of its executive committee, and as chair of the university's Student Life Committee.

Classis Huron

Rev. Darrell Bierman is the founding and lead pastor of River City Church (an emerging church plant) in Cambridge, Ontario. He has served on various synod advisory committees and currently serves on the Classis Huron Home Missions committee. Rev. Bierman received a B.A. from Calvin College, an M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary, and a D.Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is presently one year into a two-year certificate on "conflict management and congregational leadership" through Conrad Grebel College.

Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok serves as the pastor of Waterloo CRC in Waterloo, Ontario. She received a B.A. from Calvin College and an M.Div. and Th.M. from Calvin Theological Seminary. Rev. Verhulst Cok previously served as a delegate to Synod 2008, as a member of the Director of Denominational Ministries Search Committee, and as a member of the board for the Institute for Christian Studies.

The Board recommends the following nominees for election (ratification) to a second term: Rev. Kenneth Baker (Region 10) and Mr. Bert Witvoet (Classis Niagara).

Dr. Peter Szto (U.S. at-large) is unable to serve a second term. The Board will present nominees for this U.S. at-large position by way of its supplemental report.

Mr. Mark Charles (U.S. at-large) has served two terms. The Board presents the following single nominee for election to this U.S. at-large position:

Mr. Randy Freeland is ordained as a commissioned pastor, serving as the pastor of Bethlehem CRC in Gallup, New Mexico. He previously served as head elder at Crownpoint CRC and as a board member for Rehoboth Christian School. Rev. Freeland currently serves Classis Red Mesa in the establishment of a new church plant, as part of the classis's Prayer Summit Team, and as a church visitor.

7. CRCNA-Canada Corporation bylaws

The BOT received and adopted revised bylaws of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation. The updates were required to reflect recent changes to the Canadian Charities regulations. It is recommended that synod receive as information the CRCNA-Canada Corporation bylaws as found in Appendix G.

8. Proposed change to the Constitution of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA

As follow-up to the adopted revisions to the CRCNA-Canada Corporation bylaws, the BOT recommends that Synod 2015 adopt the following amendment to Article IV, B of the Constitution of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to bring it into harmony with the Canada Corporation bylaws:

Current

Ex officio members of the Board and members of the corporate entities

By virtue of the office, the executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America shall be a nonvoting member of the Board, and for legal purposes shall be a voting director of the CRCNA-Canada and the CRCNA-Michigan Corporations.

Proposed

Ex officio members of the Board and ex officio members and guests of the corporate entities

By virtue of the office, the executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America shall be a nonvoting member of the Board, and for legal purposes shall be a guest of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and a voting director of the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation.

9. National and binational conferences

The national standing committees of the BOT received reports from staff and offered input into the planning of national conferences in 2016, unique to each context, in response to the Report Cultivating Binationality in the CRCNA (see *Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 432, 440-42). The Board hopes to be able to share more specific information by way of the BOT supplemental report to synod.

10. Board nominating practice

Synod 2014 asked the BOT "to explore the development of a nominating committee that would not only identify potential persons to serve on denominational boards/committees but also keep a list of persons who have served previously on denominational board and advisory committees" (*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 563). A Board Nominating Practice Review Team was formed, and it presented a report for consideration by the

Board in February. The Board decided, however, to withhold action on the team's proposal, believing it might be better to await Synod 2015's consideration of a proposal by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture to move toward governance of ministry via a Council of Delegates. The BOT Nominating Committee is meanwhile encouraged to experiment with some of the methods described in its report.

11. Board development and training

Upon the request of Synod 2014, the ED conducted a study of the various denominational boards' practices regarding board development and training and reported the findings to the BOT in February. The study informed the Board that many of the denominational boards already conduct purposeful training. As a result of the study, the denominational boards will be asked to allow time during their fall meetings for follow-up to synod's decisions regarding board structure as proposed by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

12. Annual report on gender and ethnic diversity on denominational boards

We are pleased to report that the percentage of women on denominational boards showed a slight increase over last year. However, there is a slight decline in the percentage of ethnic diversity in board composition. There are presently 189 board members serving on seven denominational boards. Out of the 189 board members combined, 55 (29.1%) are women and 34 (18%) are persons of color. The 2014-2015 board terms show a *decrease* of 1 woman and a *decrease* of 3 persons of color on the boards reporting over the previous year.

13. Annual report on denominational efforts to address ethnic diversity and racial justice

Synod 2010 requested that the BOT report to synod each year on the status of denominational efforts to address ethnic diversity and racial justice. Following the decision of Synod 2013, a team of denominational staff have been proactive in advancing the diversity in leadership value. Mr. Colin P. Watson, Sr., gives leadership to this team, known as the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. An updated report from the working group is included as Appendix H. At the instruction of Synod 2013, each CRC agency, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary submitted to the ED, as part of their strategic plan, diversity goals and timelines in their leadership, administrative, and regional ministry teams. This annual report was shared with the Board in February. In addition, the director of synodical services regularly encourages stated clerks and agency boards to seek ethnic diversity in nominating people to serve on boards and to serve as delegates to synod.

The Board considered the use of both Widening the Circle and Dance of Racial Reconciliation trainings during orientation of new denominational board members. Beginning in fall 2015, through the Office of Race Relations, each country-specific antiracism training (meant for board members of their particular country) will be offered once within a three-year period, and the Blanket Exercise will be offered in the third year according to the following three-year schedule, regardless of country of representation:

Year 1: Widening the Circle
Year 2: Dance of Racial Reconciliation
Year 3: Blanket Exercise

14. Deacon advisers to synod

Synod 2013 adopted a recommendation of the Office of Deacons Task Force to include deacon *advisers* to synod until Synod 2015 considers proposed changes to the Church Order with regard to the appointment of deacons as *delegates* to synod. The BOT has appointed the following persons to serve as deacon advisers to Synod 2015 (* indicates service as a deacon adviser in 2014):

* Ms. Trena Boonstra	Mr. Herm Kloosterman
* Ms. Tamara N. Haveman	Mr. Matthew J. Vande Burgt
Ms. Cora Hoekstra	

15. Ethnic advisers to synod

Synod 2014 approved the appointment of up to seven (and no less than two) ethnic advisers to synod each year in order to reflect the diversity of CRC membership (*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 537-38, 576). The BOT has appointed the following persons to serve as ethnic advisers to Synod 2015:

Pastor Bryan Blakely	Mr. John Saa Lendein
Mr. Caleb Dickson	Rev. Carlinda Peoples
Pastor Lee Khang	Ms. Janelia Smiley

16. Young adult representatives to synod

In an effort to engage youth and young adults (18- to 26-year-olds) in the current issues faced by our denomination and to help raise up leadership within the church from among our young adults, young adult representatives will participate in the deliberations of synod. These individuals bring a valuable and unique perspective to the issues we face as a denomination by listening, engaging delegates during advisory committee meetings, and offering input on matters that arise in plenary. The BOT has appointed the following persons to serve as young adult representatives to Synod 2015 (* indicates service as a young adult representative in 2014):

Ms. Ashley Bootsma	* Mr. Corey Van Dyk
Mr. Adam Heynen	* Mr. Justin Ver Woerd
Ms. Youri Lee	Mr. Derick Xayasane
Mr. Aren Plante	

17. RCA/CRC Joint Resolution Committee

The Reformed Church in America General Synod Council and the BOT approved a joint committee to encourage and oversee the implementation of the joint resolution adopted at the joint session of the RCA and CRC synods on June 14, 2014 (*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 502-4). The committee has been given the following mandate:

By means of the approval of this Joint Resolution Committee by the RCA General Synod Council and the CRCNA Board of Trustees, this committee leads, in the spirit of the Lund principle,

RCA-CRC cooperation, collaboration, and implementation and brings joint policy (and, if appropriate, program/resource) recommendations to the General Synod Council and the Board of Trustees when needed. In this way, our mutual efforts in serving the kingdom of God together will be enhanced. Suggestions may be referred for further refinement to the respective administrative channels; collaboration by the ministry entities involved in both denominations is expected; and specific recommendations may be submitted to the administration of each denomination or jointly to the GSC/BOT as appropriate.

18. Convening church of synod

The BOT recommends that synod accept the invitation of North Hills CRC in Troy, Michigan, as the convening church of Synod 2016 scheduled to meet on the campus of Calvin College. *Note:* The Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise will be held in Grand Rapids.

19. Agency presentations at synod

Synod 1995 adopted a three-year rotation cycle for agency presentations at synod. The following roster for agency presentations is scheduled for Synod 2015:

- Calvin Theological Seminary
- Ministries in Canada
- World Renew

20. Executive and strict executive sessions of synod

The Board recommends adoption of revised guidelines for executive and strict executive sessions of synod (Rules for Synodical Procedure, VIII, A). The report and proposed revisions are found in Appendix I.

21. Proposed Church Order changes

a. Church Order changes as proposed by Synod 2013

Synod 2013, in response to the report of the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force, adopted a recommendation to propose changes to a number of Church Order articles related to the office of deacon. The Board of Trustees on behalf of Synod 2013 presents the proposed Church Order changes as found in Appendix J for adoption by Synod 2015.

b. Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c

Upon the instruction of Synod 2014, the Board presents proposed changes to the Judicial Code (Church Order Supplement, Art. 30-c) as found in Appendix K for adoption by synod. Because changes to the Supplement do not require approval of a subsequent synod, it is anticipated that the changes will take effect upon adoption.

22. Judicial Code Committee

The Judicial Code Committee hears appeals from a decision made by a council, a classis, or an agency of the Christian Reformed Church if it is alleged that an action violates the Church Order or the agency's mandate. The procedures followed by the Judicial Code Committee are set forth in Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c. The committee's

members from both Canada and the United States include people with legal expertise, clergy, and nonclergy.

The BOT, on behalf of the Judicial Code Committee, asks that synod appoint two *clergy* members and three *laypersons without background in law* to a first term for membership on the Judicial Code Committee from the following lists of nominees:

- a. *Clergy positions* (appoint two members from the following six nominees)

Rev. Mark A. Davies is retired from ministry within the CRC. He presently volunteers as a county support officer. Rev. Davies has earned A.B., M.Div., and Th.M. degrees. He has specialized training in hospital and mental health chaplaincy, as well as advanced training in critical incident stress management and first responder peer support. He has served on various boards and committees, including the Calvin College and Seminary board, the Center for Public Justice board, the Institute for Christian Studies board (as chair), the synodical Study Committee to Revise the Form of Subscription (as secretary), and several community and educational boards. Rev. Davies ministered in seven CRC congregations in seven classes (one in Canada), including two with Home Missions, one of which was a campus ministry. Currently he is serving as a regional pastor in Classis Pacific Northwest and as a support officer for Whatcom County Community Care in Bellingham, Washington.

Rev. Henry Jonker is currently retired. Rev. Jonker received a B.A. (Philosophy/Greek) from Calvin College and a B.D. from Calvin Theological Seminary and has had several Regent College sabbaticals, including Exegeting Popular Culture and Independent Study on the Sermon on the Mount. He has served at seven synods and has been the chair of synod advisory committees (2004, 2006). He has also served several terms as a synodical deputy and seven years on the denomination's Candidacy Committee (with three years as chair). In addition, he served on the committee to develop a mandate for the council of CRCs in Canada, on the Classis Ministries Committee (several occasions as chair), and on the in-vitro fertilization study committee for Classis B.C. North-West. Rev. Jonker has served four congregations in Canada over a period of 37 years. He is currently part of the Classis Ministerial Leadership team, a Safe Church Ministry evaluator, and an alternate synodical deputy (B.C. North-West).

Rev. Aldon L. Kuiper is a retired minister in the CRCNA serving as a regional pastor for Classis Iakota. He has served as a regional pastor for classes Northcentral Iowa, Heartland, and Iakota. He has been a synodical deputy for Classis Iakota, a member of the Dordt College board and of the CRCNA Board of Trustees, a nine-time delegate to synod (serving also as president of Synod 2010), and a mentor for three ministerial candidates pursuing ordination in the CRC through the two-year EPMC program. He has also served on the council and the executive committee of Trinity CRC, Rock Valley, Iowa.

Rev. John Terpstra is currently a lead pastor at Immanuel CRC in Fort Collins, Colorado. He has served on the CRCNA Board of

Trustees and on the board of Habitat for Humanity. For the local classis he has been a synodical deputy, a synodical delegate, and a part of the classical teams for church visitation and Safe Church advisory, as well as the classical interim committee, and finance committee. He has 38 years of experience chairing the local church council and elders. He is also currently a Reformed Benefits Association board member.

Rev. Gary van Leeuwen is currently a pastor at Blyth CRC in Blyth, Ontario. He received a two-year mechanical engineering degree at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, and a BRE degree at Reformed Bible College. He took classes for a year at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and then transferred to complete an M.Div. degree at Calvin Theological Seminary. He also took classes for two years at Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, and then transferred to Acadia University, where he plans to complete a D.Min. degree at Acadia Divinity College in May 2015. He has served on the executive, interim, and administration committees in two classes, on the University of Toronto Campus Ministry board, and on the Operation Manna board. He has also served for 14 years on the local church council.

Rev. Henry Wildeboer is a retired CRC minister with 50 years' experience in three CRC churches. He currently provides mentoring/coaching to other pastors as well as conflict resolution guidance to churches and businesses. Rev. Wildeboer received his M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary and a D.Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary. He taught leadership development at Tyndale Seminary for 20 years (part-time). He team-taught D.Min. courses with Greg Ogden and David Watson at Fuller Theological Seminary. Rev. Wildeboer served three times as clerk of synod, served for six years on the board of Christian Reformed Home Missions, and served as chair for three meetings of the former Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada.

- b. *Laypersons without background in law positions* (appoint the following three nominees)

Mr. Orlan Gulker is currently retired. He is a high school graduate of Western Christian High School, Hull, Iowa, and he owned and operated a grain elevator for 25 years. Mr. Gulker worked at Hope Haven, Rock Valley, Iowa, doing foundation work for two years. He also worked in sales in the Midwest for 20 years. Mr. Gulker has served as a deacon on his church council for a three-year term. He also served eight years on the Western Christian High School board (four years on the building and grounds committee, and four years as vice president). He is currently serving a third term as elder in the position of clerk. He has been a delegate to synod twice; at Synod 2011 he served on the committee to review the process of the executive director's resignation.

Mr. Calvin Rozenboom is currently a self-employed farmer. He is a high school graduate and took several business classes at Indian Hills Community College (Iowa). He is a graduate of a military electronics course equivalent to an associate's degree. Mr. Rozenboom served six

years on the board of CRWRC (now World Renew), was a delegate to synod, served on the Oskaloosa (Iowa) Christian School board, and served on the District Five National Union of Christian Schools. He also served eight years on the board of the U.S. Meat Export Federation, including four years on the executive committee. He has traveled to 15 foreign countries promoting trade with the Iowa Department of Economic Development and other groups. He has also served on other local boards and committees. Mr. Rozenboom has served one term as a deacon at Bethel Christian Reformed Church and one term as a deacon at Cedar Christian Reformed Church and is currently serving his fourth term as an elder. He has also been a youth leader, a Sunday school teacher, and a Bible study leader. Currently Mr. Rozenboom serves on the Iowa Farm Bureau board of directors (14th year), as chair of the IFBF board organization committee, and as a member of the Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company board of directors (8th year). He will be retiring from these positions in December 2016.

Ms. Roberta Vriesema is currently an executive assistant to the executive director at Open Doors Canada. She received a B.A. focused on psychology at Redeemer College. Ms. Vriesema also received restorative care training at the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging, and she received solutions focused therapy training for a volunteer position on a local distress line. She has management and governance training on the job at STRIVE!, a governance consulting company. Ms. Vriesema has served four years as a board member on the local Neighbourhood Group (socio/community development focus); three years on an umbrella coalition board, first as finance co-chair and for one year as board co-chair. She spent three years as board and management governance junior consultant with STRIVE! Her main focus is with insurance company boards, public health boards, and non-profit Christian organizations. She is currently an elder at her church, First CRC in Guelph, Ontario.

23. Doctrine of Discovery Task Force

At the request of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force, the Board appointed the following two new members to assist the task force in completing its work by the September 2015 deadline for the report to Synod 2016: Mr. Seth Adema and Dr. Linda Naranjo-Huebl.

24. Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture

The Board took time during its February meeting to consider the implications of the new board structures proposed in the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture report and recommendations to synod. An ad hoc group of the Board is instructed to bring to the May BOT meeting a proposed communication to synod in response to the report. Any formal communication to synod will be included in the Board's supplemental report.

25. Publications and services

a. *Yearbook*

The *Yearbook*, published annually, serves as a denominational directory and as a resource for statistical information. In addition to

information about classes, congregations, ministers, and agencies, it provides obituary information about pastors who died during that year.

The *Yearbook* is published near the beginning of each calendar year and reflects denominational and local-church information up to approximately August 31 of the calendar year preceding publication.

Among some of the statistics published in the *Yearbook* are the total number of members (baptized and confessing) in a local congregation, number of families, number of professing members over eighteen years of age, total number of professing members, total number of baptized members, and total number of members received from other CRCs through evangelism and from other denominations.

The core database that stores *Yearbook* data is used for many purposes, such as calculating ministry shares and pension assessments, updating the list of churches and their pastors on Church Finder (on the CRC website), and handling requests for information that is not published in the *Yearbook*.

b. *Church Order and Its Supplements and Rules for Synodical Procedure*

The *Church Order and Its Supplements 2014* reflects the updates adopted by Synod 2014. The latest version, published by the Office of Synodical Services, was made available to the churches in early fall 2014. The *Rules for Synodical Procedure* is published separately and is available only in electronic format on the Synod Resources web page at www.crcna.org/SynodResources.

c. *Agenda for Synod and Acts of Synod*

The publication of the *Agenda for Synod* and *Acts of Synod* is the responsibility of the director of synodical services under the direction of the executive director. From time to time some decisions need to be made by the ED about which material properly belongs in the *Agenda for Synod*. Erring on the side of grace seems more appropriate than erring on the side of rigid regulation. Synod itself will finally decide in all cases whether material is properly on its agenda.

d. *Manual for Synodical Deputies*

The *Manual for Synodical Deputies* is distributed to synodical deputies, their alternates, and stated clerks of classes. A revision of the manual was completed in summer 2014 by the Office of Synodical Services, reflecting the decisions of Synod 2014. Anyone desiring to read a copy of this tool for the classes may download a copy from the stated clerk web page at www.crcna.org/StatedClerks.

B. *Program matters*

A large part of the Board of Trustees' work relates to the ministry programs, personnel, and finances of the denomination. The program and personnel details are reported to synod by way of the reports of the agencies and this section of the BOT's report in this agenda. Additional information regarding financial matters is contained in Appendix M to this Board of Trustees Report as well as in the *Agenda for Synod 2015—Financial and Business Supplement* that is distributed at synod. The final budget and the

ministry share request will be presented to synod by way of synod's finance advisory committee.

The BOT provides denominational oversight on behalf of synod throughout the year. The office of the executive director serves as the primary link between the BOT and the denomination's ministries. Serving within the office of the ED are the director of ministries and administration (DMA), the Canadian ministries director (CMD), the director of finance and operations (DFO), the director of synodical services (DSS), and the director of communications.

The Ministries Leadership Council (MLC), convened by the executive director of the CRCNA, has responsibility for implementation of the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church, the collaboration of the ministries, and the review of program matters. The membership of the MLC is made up of senior leadership, directors of the agencies, presidents of the educational institutions (or their designees), and others representative of their offices and functions. The Canadian Ministries Team, convened by the Canadian ministries director, functions as a subcommittee of the MLC to provide leadership to the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in Canada.

The program and financial matters processed by the Board from July through February are presented to synod as information. Any matters that require action by synod are identified within the body of this report.

1. Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church

The Board of Trustees is mandated by synod to lead in developing and implementing the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church that provides strategic direction for the agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church. The plan provides a framework for the Board's supervision of the management of the agencies; the planning, coordinating, and integrating of their work; and the integration of the respective missions of the denomination's educational institutions into the denominational ministry program.

In May 2012 the Board initiated a review of the priorities that make up the current Ministry Plan—deciding to encourage a “fundamental reframing” of the plan. This process of developing a new strategic direction for the ministries has been the focus of the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team, which presented its final report to the MLC and Board of Trustees in September 2014. The Board accepted as information thirteen challenges identified within the report and mandated a ministry plan development and implementation group to develop a plan based on the following five identified priorities as a focus for the first year (the remaining challenges will be addressed in the years ahead):

- a. Congregations are continuing to discover that they need to learn/relearn how to connect/reconnect with the local contexts in which they minister. *Desired outcome: Congregations will connect with their local contexts providing the message of Christ.*
- b. Many in the younger generations are increasingly disconnected from the CRC and are exiting. *Desired outcome: Congregations will engage youth and young adults in the life of the church.*

- c. There is an increased awareness in the church that something is missing with regard to discipleship, spirituality, and being spirit-led. *Desired outcome: Congregations will focus on holistic lifelong faith formation.*
- d. Lay leadership is under-emphasized and clergy formation processes are inadequate for engaging the challenges before the denomination. *Desired outcome: Congregations will develop leaders, both clergy and lay, that will lead effectively in today's challenging and diverse contexts.*
- e. The direction and overall focus of the CRCNA are no longer clear, and our sense of shared identity is no longer self-evident. *Desired outcome: Congregations will understand and express our shared identity in Christ.*

The BOT anticipates receiving an initial draft of a plan relating to the desired outcomes in May 2015, and a final version will be presented at a subsequent Board meeting prior to recommendation to synod.

2. Collaboration

Synod 2013 instructed the BOT

to request that the newly appointed executive director, when one is appointed and within eighteen months of being in the position, initiate a survey similar to the *Wilder Research Collaboration Factors* survey with CRCNA departments, ministries, and agencies to determine success in making a cultural change within predetermined "projects" requiring three or more groups working together on a particular ministry.

(Acts of Synod 2013, p. 611)

Nearly 100 employees who presently are members of staff collaborative workgroups were invited to complete the survey in late 2014. The results of the survey have provided an initial assessment of collaborative communication and trust factors and will serve as an important baseline for measuring the effectiveness of work and ministry done by the collaborative workgroups.

3. CRC agency board bylaws

As part of its constitutional responsibility, the BOT in September 2014 received and approved changes in the bylaws of each of the Canadian charities, including Back to God Ministries International, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Christian Reformed World Missions, as adopted and recommended by the respective boards of these agencies. It is recommended that synod take note of the agency boards' compliance with Canadian charity regulations.

4. CRC agency, institution, and specialized ministry reports

Each year the Board of Trustees submits a *unified* report to synod composed of individual parts provided by the agencies, educational institutions, and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church. The individual reports of the CRC ministries appear in the following pages of this *Agenda for Synod*.

These reports portray the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church at home and around the world. As you read the material, we invite you to praise God for ministry opportunities.

5. Conversation between the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions

The boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions are in conversation regarding creating a unified ministry. The unified ministry could create an organization that would enhance and increase ministry capability. The Board of Trustees is encouraging any such new entity to embrace a close connection with the local church. Further updates on the conversation between Home Missions and World Missions will be provided by way of the Board Supplement, following the spring meetings of the agency boards.

6. Discipleship and Faith Formation

New to the collection of reports found within this year's *Agenda* is a report from the new office of Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries. This ministry is a result of synod's encouragement "to learn from and about faith formation practices in many times and places. We challenge each other to develop and refine faith formation practices that embody the fullness of the gospel in ways that are at once deeply contextual and intercultural" (*Agenda for Synod 2011*, p. 558). It is recommended that synod allow time to receive an oral report from Dr. Syd Hielema regarding this new initiative.

7. Office of Disability Concerns

The Board requests that synod encourage CRC churches, classes, and educational institutions to sponsor events to celebrate Disability Awareness Week, October 12-18, 2015.

Grounds:

- a. Specific and intentional events that recognize the importance of breaking down barriers and including people with disabilities will remind God's people of the welcome our Lord gives to all of his people (Luke 14:15-24) and will encourage them to press on toward becoming a community in which every member knows that he or she is indispensable (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- b. The Bible calls God's people to be a caring community as the covenant people of God. In 1985, the CRC committed itself as a denomination to eliminate barriers of architecture, communication, and attitude "in order to use the gifts of all people in our life together as God's family." Although our Lord Jesus calls all of his people to ministry in his church, the church has not always made it possible for people with disabilities to participate fully and sometimes has isolated them and their families.
- c. The dates of Disability Week coincide with the CRC denominational schedule for offerings, which assigns the third Sunday in October to Disability Concerns.
- d. The RCA celebrates Disability Awareness Sunday on the second Sunday in October. Having similar dates for this celebration facilitates and enhances deeper collaboration between the Disability Concerns offices of the RCA and CRC. Further, this date aligns our celebration with numerous organizations and agencies that highlight disability awareness in October.

C. *Financial matters*

In order to assure that synod has the most up-to-date and accurate information, detailed financial data will be included in the *Agenda for Synod 2015—Business and Financial Supplement* that will be made available to the delegates at the time synod convenes. This supplement will include financial disclosure information, agency budgets for fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016), and the recommended ministry-share amount for calendar year 2016. In addition, synod will be asked to approve a schedule for one or more above-ministry-share offerings for the ministries of the denomination, a quarterly offering for World Renew (in lieu of ministry-share support), and a listing of new requests for accredited agency status for recommendation to the churches. Additional financial information and/or recommendations will also be included in the Board of Trustees Supplement report due out in late May.

The Board in February approved appointment of a Board-Agency/Ministry-Member Task Force on Financial Sustainability with the following mandate:

To understand the multiple financial means by which the ministries of the CRCNA are provided (as well as to better understand financial paradigms used by other denominations), gather and assess multiple-year data and trends and provide recommendations to the BOT Finance Committee and the full BOT with possible strategies and policies, presenting specific focus (e.g., estate gifts) as well as comprehensive implications to move toward a sustainable paradigm for the next generation. (*Note: The results may require subsequent recommendations to synod.*)

D. *Christian Reformed Church Foundation*

The Christian Reformed Church Foundation began in the early 1990s, when several Christian Reformed Church members and the CRCNA executive director of ministries began the Fellowship Fund to support uniquely denominational programs and needs. Synod 1996 approved a binational Christian Reformed Church Foundation, now a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization in the United States. Its counterpart is the tax-exempt registered charity Christian Reformed Church in North America–Canada Foundation.

In September 2014 the Board of Trustees adopted a revised set of bylaws for the CRCNA-Canada Foundation and recommends this updated document as found in Appendix L to synod for ratification. These updates reflect recent changes in Canadian charity regulations.

Since the Foundation's inception, it has distributed the funds received to various offices and agencies of the CRCNA. Most recently, funds were designated to initiate a new pilot youth ministry effort in the Canadian classes.

The Foundation board of directors is committed to strengthening the ministries of the CRC. The Foundation seeks financial support for new ideas and programs that fall outside the mandates of the denominational agencies and are not funded through budgets of synod, classes, or agencies.

The Christian Reformed Church Foundation does not offer estate planning services but partners with Barnabas Foundation in the United States and with Christian Stewardship Services in Canada to help families make planned gifts and develop estate plans.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Ms. Katherine M. Vandergrift, chair of the Board of Trustees; Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, executive director; and members of the executive staff as needed when matters pertaining to the Board of Trustees are discussed.

B. That synod grant all requests for privilege of the floor by the BOT, agencies, educational institutions, standing committees, and study committees of synod contained within the reports to Synod 2015.

C. That synod approve all requests for special offerings for the agencies, ministries, and educational institutions of the CRC that are contained within the reports to Synod 2015.

D. That synod take note of the Board's support of the overture from Classis Grand Rapids East requesting that, by way of exception, the ED serve as a commissioned pastor within all CRC classes (II, A, 1).

E. That synod take note of the appointment of Mr. Colin P. Watson, Sr., as the director of ministries and administration (II, A, 2).

F. That synod recognize the significant contributions of Rev. Robert De Moor, *Banner* editor in chief, to the denominational magazine and his years of service and permit time in synod's schedule to hear from Rev. De Moor (II, A, 3, a).

G. That synod appoint Rev. Leonard J. Vander Zee as interim *Banner* editor in chief, effective September 1, 2015 (II, A, 3, a).

H. That synod adopt the *Banner* Editor Search Committee mandate, composition, and process as found in Appendix D (II, A, 3, a).

I. That synod adopt the changes to the *Banner* mandate as found in Appendix E (II, A, 3, b).

J. That synod take note of the updated *Banner* Advisory Council mandate as found in Appendix F (II, A, 3, c).

K. That synod approve the interim appointments made by the Board for synodical deputies and alternate synodical deputies (II, A, 4), as well as to the agency and institution boards as needed.

L. That synod by way of the ballot elect members for the Board of Trustees from the slates of nominees presented and elect the single U.S. at-large nominee presented (II, A, 6).

M. That synod by way of the ballot reappoint to a second term members for the Board of Trustees from the slate of nominees presented (II, A, 6).

N. That synod receive the CRCNA-Canada Corporation bylaws as found in Appendix G as information (II, A, 7).

O. That synod adopt the following amendment to Article IV, B of the Constitution of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to bring it into harmony with the CRCNA-Canada Corporation bylaws (II, A, 8):

Current

Ex officio members of the Board and members of the corporate entities

By virtue of the office, the executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America shall be a nonvoting member of the Board, and for legal purposes shall be a voting director of the CRCNA-Canada and the CRCNA-Michigan Corporations.

Proposed

Ex officio members of the Board and ex officio members and guests of the corporate entities

By virtue of the office, the executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America shall be a nonvoting member of the Board, and for legal purposes shall be a guest of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and a voting director of the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation.

P. That synod accept the invitation of North Hills CRC in Troy, Michigan, as the convening church of Synod 2016 scheduled to meet on the campus of Calvin College (II, A, 18).

Q. That synod adopt the revised guidelines for executive and strict executive sessions of synod (Rules for Synodical Procedure, VIII, A) as found in Appendix I (II, A, 20).

R. That synod adopt the changes to the Church Order as proposed by Synod 2013 and presented in Appendix J (II, A, 21, a).

S. That synod adopt the proposed changes to the Judicial Code (Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c) as found in Appendix K (II, A, 21, b).

T. That synod by way of the ballot elect to a first term members for the Judicial Code Committee from the lists of nominees presented (II, A, 22).

U. That synod take note of the agency boards' compliance with Canadian charity regulations as found in updated bylaws of each of the Canadian charities (II, B, 3).

V. That synod allow time to receive an oral report from Dr. Syd Hielema regarding Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries (II, B, 6).

W. That synod encourage CRC churches, classes, and educational institutions to sponsor events to celebrate Disability Awareness Week, October 12-18, 2015 (II, B, 7).

Grounds:

1. Specific and intentional events that recognize the importance of breaking down barriers and including people with disabilities will remind God's people of the welcome our Lord gives to all of his people (Luke 14:15-24) and will encourage them to press on toward becoming a community in which every member knows that he or she is indispensable (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
2. The Bible calls God's people to be a caring community as the covenant people of God. In 1985, the CRC committed itself as a denomination to eliminate barriers of architecture, communication, and attitude "in order to use the gifts of all people in our life together as God's family." Although our Lord Jesus calls all of his people to ministry in

his church, the church has not always made it possible for people with disabilities to participate fully and sometimes has isolated them and their families.

3. The dates of Disability Week coincide with the CRC denominational schedule for offerings, which assigns the third Sunday in October to Disability Concerns.
4. The RCA celebrates Disability Awareness Sunday on the second Sunday in October. Having similar dates for this celebration facilitates and enhances deeper collaboration between the Disability Concerns offices of the RCA and CRC. Further, this date aligns our celebration with numerous organizations and agencies that highlight disability awareness in October.

X. That synod ratify the revised set of bylaws for the CRCNA-Canada Foundation as found in Appendix L (II, D).

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

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

Appendix A

Curriculum Vitae: Colin P. Watson, Sr.

Personal information

Colin P. Watson, Sr., is a ministry volunteer in local and denominational ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Colin is also a managing partner of Foundation Enterprises LLC, a community improvement and consulting company he founded after retiring as senior vice president of strategic marketing and e-business for KeySpan.

After he retired, Mr. Watson became the executive minister of the Madison Avenue CRC in Paterson, New Jersey, from 2005 to 2010. He has served in numerous other capacities for his church, classis, and denomination as well. Recently he served as a diversity agent (consultant) on the CRCNA's Diversity and Leadership Planning Group (DLPG), and he currently leads the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group responsible for implementing the DLPG directives adopted by Synod 2013.

Colin and his wife, Freida, have three adult children.

Education and Experience Summary

- Local Church Membership (1985–present): Madison Avenue CRC, Paterson, New Jersey

Academic and Other

- B.S. (Honors) Mathematics, Summa cum laude, 1972 – Union College, N.Y.
- Phi Beta Kappa—elected 1972 (Chapter 5 – Alpha of New York)
- M.S. in Operations Research and Applied Statistics, 1973 – Union College, N.Y.

- Executive Management Certificates – Columbia University, 1987; University of Virginia, 1984
- David Rockefeller Fellow, New York City Partnership, 1993
- Numerous courses and seminars in over 30 years of executive management

Present positions/occupation

- Ministry volunteer
- Managing member, Foundation Enterprises, LLC – a community improvement and consulting company

Business or professional experience and training

- Executive minister, Madison Avenue Christian Reformed Church (2005-2010)
- Executive consultant to NYC2012 – New York City’s Olympic Bid committee (2004-2005)
- Vice chairman, KeySpan Foundation (1999-2005)
- Senior vice president, strategic marketing and e-business, KeySpan (1997-2004)
- President and CEO of several small NYNEX subsidiaries (1995-1997)
- Board member, Gibraltar NYNEX Communications (1995-1997)
- Managing director, worldwide operations, NYNEX (currently Verizon) (1995-1997)
- Corporate director, strategic marketing; executive director, strategic planning; vice president, customer relations; vice president, general business sales – NYNEX (1980-1995)
- Supervising statistician, AT&T (1977-1980) – U.S. national project management responsibility
- Mathematical statistician, accounting department, New York Telephone Company (1973-1977)

Business related boards or committees

- Vice chairman and board member of the KeySpan Foundation
- Board member, American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE)
- Founder, Executive adviser, Black leadership at KeySpan (BLAK)
- Executive adviser, Minority Management Association (Verizon)
- Member, NYC2012 – committee to bring the Olympic Games to New York City in 2012

Involvement on denominational and regional church boards and committees

- Treasurer, chair of finance committee, Madison Avenue CRC (2010-present)
- Men’s Ministry (Brotherhood) team leader – Madison Avenue CRC
- Treasurer, Madison Avenue Crossroads Community Ministries (2003-present)
- Diversity consultant, DLPG Implementation, CRCNA (2013-present)
- Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (2011-present)
- Board member, former president, Christian Reformed World Missions (2006-2014)

- Search committees, CRCNA: Director, Christian Reformed Home Missions (2011); Executive Director, CRCNA (2012-13); Canadian Ministries Director (2013)

Other experience on denominational, regional church boards or committees

- Chair, Empowering Leadership Team of Madison Avenue CRC (2013)
- Chair, ReFocusing Team (Planning), Madison Avenue CRC (2012-2013)
- Chair, Executive Leadership Team of Madison Avenue CRC (2007-2009)
- Executive minister, Madison Avenue CRC (2005-2010)
- Chair, Madison Avenue Crossroads Community Ministries (1998-2002)
- Former deacon, elder of Madison Avenue CRC (various times: 1990 - 2008)
- Former board member, Synodical Committee on Race Relations (1986-1989)
- Chair, Founding member, Jubilee Employment Services (1985-1995)
- Delegate to Synod 2008 of the Christian Reformed Church
- Former representative to classis on numerous occasions

Appendix B

Director of Ministries and Administration Position Description

I. General description

The Director of Ministries and Administration (DMA) shall

- Be invested with executive authority and management responsibility that enhances the unified ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC).
- As a member of the senior leadership team, cultivate, nurture, and implement a shared and vibrant vision for the mission of the CRC throughout the denomination, as reflected in the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church.
- Serve as the administrative officer for matters pertaining to the ministries and agencies of the CRC, their boards, programs, budgets, and personnel.
- Conduct all responsibilities and roles subject to the direction of the Executive Director of the CRCNA (ED).

II. Specific responsibilities

The person appointed to this office shall

- Have responsibility for joint strategic plan implementation and coordination of goals while recognizing the particular responsibilities and functions of each agency and educational institution.
- Convene meetings, on a functional basis and in various combinations, of directors or official representatives of denominational agencies and educational institutions to advance collaboration and cooperation among the various entities.

C. Participate in the implementation of ministry plans of the Christian Reformed Church; respond as a member of the senior leadership team to Board directives when new ministry plans require development.

D. Serve as the administrative supervisor of the agency directors (in cooperation with their respective agency boards).

E. Serve as the administrative supervisor of CRCNA staff serving in other ministries unless such supervision is specifically assigned elsewhere.

F. Attend the meetings of each agency and educational institution's board as needed or as desired.

G. Manage and guide the implementation of synodical and Board policy decisions as they relate to denominational ministries.

H. Regularly report to the ED and the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA on work being done with the agencies and educational institutions based on individual goals and the strategic plan for the denomination.

I. Serve as a member and co-vice-chair of the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC).

J. Attend the meetings of the Board of Trustees and its executive committee.

K. Participate in ecumenical meetings, as well as classical and regional church meetings as agreed upon by the senior leadership team of the CRCNA, and/or as invited by these bodies.

L. Provide staff support as needed.

M. Perform other duties as assigned by the ED.

Qualifications and Working Relationships of the Director of Ministries and Administration

I. Primary qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall

A. Be a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ, giving evidence of being a strongly committed member of the CRC or of willingness to become such a member.

B. Possess a good knowledge of, and commitment to, the teaching of Scripture and the Reformed confessions and have a Reformed Christian worldview.

C. Have a love for the whole mission of the Christian Reformed Church.

D. Have demonstrated commitment to the binationality of the CRC and be familiar with, and show a good comprehension of, the different factors that affect ministry in the United States and Canada.

E. Have prior senior management experience in which exemplary leadership and management skills have been demonstrated.

F. Be a seasoned, confident, experienced servant leader who is able to lead a team to implement a vision for local, national, and global ministry in an environment of shifting demographics and significant cultural change.

- G. Be able to nurture relationships, empower colleagues, and advance ministry.
- H. Demonstrate self-reliance and sound judgment in decision-making.
- I. Have demonstrated the capacity to delegate authority.
- J. Have demonstrated the capacity for listening, integrating ideas, and recommending future priorities.
- K. Have the ability to plan and work collaboratively with everyone involved in denominational ministries.
- L. Have the ability to develop rapport and trust with denominational employees in order to promote job satisfaction and a high level of achievement.
- M. Be able to exercise authority in an unobtrusive manner in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of denominational ministries and agencies.
- N. Have a good grasp of sound financial practices and good fiscal policies and procedures.
- O. Have the ability to understand and act on advice with respect to budgetary guidelines, financial reports, and fiscal priorities of denominational agencies.
- P. Have a strong commitment to cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity in positions of servant leadership in the CRC.
- Q. Possess personal and professional integrity, forthrightness, and a compassion for the poor, the lost, and the disenfranchised.
- R. Possess a master's degree in a relevant field.

II. Working relationships

The Director of Ministries and Administration

- A. Is administratively accountable to the Executive Director (ED) and shall consult regularly with the ED and the senior leadership team in the discharge of duties.
- B. Works closely with the ED and senior leadership team to cultivate vision for and develop and implement ministry plans in North America.
- C. Works cooperatively with agency directors and other staff in conducting his/her duties.
- D. Serves at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, September 2014

Appendix C

Curriculum Vitae: Leonard J. Vander Zee

Education

AB, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI, 1967

M.Div., Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI 1970

Present Employment

- Interim Pastor of Preaching and Worship, Neland Ave. CRC, Grand Rapids MI

Employment History

- Visiting Professor at Asia Center for Theological Studies, South Korea
August – December, 2013
- Editor in Chief, Faith Alive Christian Resources
2006-2013 (retired)

In this position I was responsible for the entire editorial process and staff, including print and video media.

Faith Alive was the publishing agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America until June 2013, publishing educational, study, and devotional materials for church members of all ages. Faith Alive products continue to serve not only the CRC but also a wide spectrum of evangelical denominations. In this position I was responsible for theological editing of all Faith Alive products.

- Pastor, South Bend (Ind.) Christian Reformed Church
1990-2006

A congregation of 330 members from a wide variety of religious backgrounds and areas of work. The congregation attracts a significant number of graduate students and professors from the University of Notre Dame.

- Pastor, Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan
1983-1990

Copastor to a 550-member inner-city congregation with a significant ministry to its struggling neighborhood. Staff of three besides copastor.

- Pastor, Trinity Christian Reformed Church, Iowa City, Iowa
1978-1983

A 200-member congregation in a college town with a significant membership of university faculty, staff, and students.

- Pastor, West Sayville Christian Reformed Church, Long Island, New York
1973-1978

A suburban congregation of 350 members.

- Pastor, Des Moines Christian Reformed Church, Des Moines, Iowa
1970-1973

A small homogeneous city congregation.

Publications

Books

Christ, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper: Recovering the Sacraments for Evangelical Worship. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2004. 249 pages. (Chosen as one of the "Best Books of 2005" by Christianity Today, now in eighth printing.)

In Life and in Death: A Pastoral Guide for Funerals. Grand Rapids, Mich.: CRC Publications, 1992. 220 pages.

Can I Call After Midnight? A Leader's Guide for Teaching Prayer. CRC Publications, 1989. 52 pages.

More than Words: Prayer as a Way of Life. Leader's Guide. Revised edition. CRC Publications, 1995.

Articles

"God's Bellybutton." *The Banner*, January 2013.

"He Showed Them His Wounds." *Reformed Worship*, December 2012.

"Also Many Animals." *The Banner*, June 2012.

"Just Doing Our Duty." *The Banner*, January 2011.

"What Happens in the Lord's Supper." *The Banner*, January 2011.

"A Litany for the Sick and Dying." *Reformed Worship*, June 2010.

"A Cloud of Witnesses." *Reformed Worship*, June 2008.

"Praying by the Book." *The Banner*, August 2004.

"Too Spiritual for Your Own Good: A Theology of the Lord's Supper." *Reformed Worship*, June 1998.

"Hot Dogs and Holy Communion." *Perspectives*, September 1996.

"Cultivating Faith: Godparents in the Reformed Tradition." *Reformed Worship*, June 1995.

"The Good Funeral." *The Banner*, May 29, 1995.

"Prayer That Works." *The Banner*, March 7, 1994.

"Laughing with Sarah." *Christianity Today*, March 9, 1992. (Won recognition as the "Most Valued Article" of the issue.)

"When Someone Dies." *Reformed Worship*, June 1992.

"Marriage: Weaving the Fabric of Trust." *The Banner*, June 10, 1991.

"The Nuts and Bolts of Prayer." *The Banner*, February 15, 1987.

"When the Christmas Tree Comes Down." *The Banner*, December 30, 1985.

Other Positions

- Member of the CRC Worship Committee
- Member of subcommittee of the CRC Worship Committee that produced a major study on worship for Synod 1997, approved and published as *Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture* (CRC Publications, 1997).

Honors

- Recipient of the Merrill Fellowship, Harvard Divinity School, Spring 1985
- Recipient of the Louisville Foundation Religious Leaders Study Grant for 1997
- Recipient of a Pastoral Renewal Grant, Lilly Foundation, 2005

Appendix D

***Banner* Editor Search Committee Mandate, Composition, and Process**

A. Mandate

The task of the Search Committee for Editor in chief of *The Banner* is to manage the nomination process, screen and interview applicants, and present a single nominee to the BOT at its May 2016 meeting for interview and recommendation to Synod 2016 for appointment.

B. Search committee composition

Synod 2015 will appoint the committee members to serve, with the committee composition as follows:

Two at-large members

One member of *The Banner* staff

One member of *The Banner* Advisory Committee

One member of the BOT

Either the Canadian ministries director or the director of ministries and administration

Director of synodical services, who shall also serve as recorder

Synod will ensure that diversity goals in the search committee composition are met and that at least one young adult will be included. In addition, gender and U.S./Canadian balance will be achieved. Synod will appoint the chairperson of the search committee. The director of human resources will serve the committee but shall neither attend interviews nor participate in decisions.

C. Search process

The position opening will be communicated to churches and via other postings (print and electronic media), requesting both nominations and applications. All persons nominated will be invited to submit application materials. After the closing date for applications, the Search Committee will begin a process of review and conclude with a final round of interviews, leading to the presentation of a single candidate to the BOT and subsequently to Synod 2016 for appointment following a successful interview.

Appendix E

***Banner* Mandate Review Committee**

I. The committee's mandate

Synod 2014 of the Christian Reformed Church adopted a recommendation requesting the BOT to conduct a review of the present mandate of *The Banner*, the magazine of the Christian Reformed Church. The wording of the request with grounds follows:

That synod instruct the BOT to ensure a review of the 1998 mandate of *The Banner* and report to Synod 2015 with any proposed changes.

Grounds:

- a. There is confusion regarding expressions such as “stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part” included in the 1998 mandate.
- b. There is a need for clarity on how *The Banner* can challenge and stimulate critical thinking on contemporary issues while affirming Scripture and our confessions.
- c. It is appropriate to review mandates from time to time.

(*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 573-74)

The BOT appointed the following persons at its September 2014 meeting to review the *Banner* mandate: Rev. Kenneth A. Baker, chair; Dr. James Bratt, Mrs. Deb Flaherty, Rev. Sheila E. Holmes, Dr. Stanley Mast, and Mr. Bert Witvoet. The committee began its work by way of email correspondence and met by way of conference call in late November.

II. Background

It soon became apparent that the members of the committee were of one mind in acknowledging that the current *Banner* mandate (see Appendix) is fundamentally sufficient and that issues that arose last year, causing significant concerns, were not the result of a faulty policy or mandate but, rather, came about by an error in judgment on the part of the editor.

After the committee reached agreement on the sufficiency of the *Banner* mandate, the discussions focused on whether the *implementation* of this mandate can be strengthened. It is noted that, sprinkled throughout *The Banner* mandate, statements can be found that reflect who we are as Reformed believers and what our foundation is. Hence, there is enough guidance in the mandate to help an editor make critical decisions about the identity of *The Banner* as a Reformed publication.

Nevertheless, the committee decided it may be useful to strengthen a statement in the introductory paragraph of the mandate that is often quoted in defense of publishing materials that challenge our Reformed positions. This statement refers to *The Banner's* mandate to “stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part.” When this statement is read in isolation from the rest of the mandate, it does not provide enough guidance.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod adopt the following additions to the current *Banner* mandate (indicated by *italics*):

1. Addition to point 3 in the introductory paragraph

(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, in line with our confessional heritage; and . . .*

2. Addition of a new point 4 to the introductory paragraph

(4) *offer tools to help readers find fresh awareness to seek, learn, worship, and serve as Reformed Christians in contemporary society.*

Grounds:

- a. Including these two statements in the introduction of the *Banner* mandate provides a balance in the mandate between the views of two constituencies within the CRC—one of which is concerned about losing our Reformed identity, the other of which is concerned about losing an opportunity to connect with our surrounding society.
 - b. The mandate given by Synod 1998 is sufficient as written, but a casual reader may not connect all the parts distributed throughout the 1998 mandate.
- B. *That synod take note of the following observations shared by the review committee:*
1. That, in interviewing for the position of editor and in carrying on the work thereafter, the importance of regular consultation between editor and executive director be underscored. This is not to say that the executive director has veto power over editorial decisions but that both parties continually be alert to possibly problematic issues so that neither is blindsided when such erupt. *Note: Consultation, not control.*
 2. That, in interviewing for the position of editor, full conversation be undertaken about the reality of *The Banner's* online presence and the implications of the distinctive tone and mode that tend to characterize online venues. Potential editors and the officials to whom they are responsible need to consider how that particular world of communication be designed and sustained—in style and ethos as well as in content—in a way compatible with an ongoing ministry of the church of Jesus Christ.
 3. That *The Banner* consider formatting styles that more obviously differentiate official CRC agency news and reports from columns of opinion, features, editorials, and the like. The former represent “who we are”; the latter represent the (sometimes difficult) conversations we are having.

Banner Mandate Review Committee
Kenneth A. Baker, chair
James Bratt
Deb Flaherty
Sheila E. Holmes
Stanley Mast
Albertus Witvoet, reporter

Addendum

Guidelines for *The Banner's* Accountability and Freedom

Adopted by Synod 1998 (*Acts of Synod 1998*, pp. 370-72)

Note: De facto updates reflecting organizational changes since 1998 are reflected in underlined text within this document.

The Banner is a publication of the Christian Reformed Church in North America rather than an independent magazine. Accordingly, the editorial staff, led by the synodically appointed editor in chief, is accountable to the

church for the style and content of this magazine. This accountability to the church is realized in a number of diverse, sometimes overlapping, and at times conflicting responsibilities to various groups and structures within the denomination. All these responsibilities are governed by *The Banner's* synodical mandate 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, and (3) stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part.

I. Lines of accountability

Lines of accountability have been established by previous decisions of synod and CRC Publications. For the editorial staff, accountability runs through the editor in chief, who is directly accountable

A. To *the Board of Trustees*, the body mandated by synod to publish this denominational periodical. This accountability includes

1. Reporting periodically on editorial activities and decisions.
2. Reporting reactions, criticisms, and suggestions received from readers and churches.
3. Recommending needed changes in policies and procedures.
4. Carrying out all approved policies and procedures.

B. To *the executive director*, the administrative head appointed to manage and coordinate the work of denominational staff. This accountability includes

1. Keeping him/her informed of possibly sensitive or controversial issues being addressed and listening seriously to any advice offered regarding such issues. The executive director should, at his/her discretion, consult with other CRC ministry leaders.
2. Being fiscally responsible.
3. Following approved personnel procedures.
4. Working cooperatively with Ministry Support Services.

II. General responsibilities

In addition to this direct accountability, the editorial staff carries general responsibilities inherent in the nature of a denominational magazine:

A. To its subscribers and readers in the Christian Reformed Church for

1. Reporting in an honest and unbiased manner information about activities affecting the church.
2. Presenting to the readers the issues pertinent to the life of the church in a way that shows the diverse positions held within the church and encourages biblical and Reformed thinking about these issues.
3. Edifying readers so as to encourage them to grow in Christian maturity and faith and to live out their faith in daily life.

4. Providing a vehicle through which church members can express their views and opinions on pertinent issues.

B. To the ecclesiastical assemblies (councils, classes, synod) of the CRC for

1. Keeping church members informed about important decisions taken.
2. Reporting significant trends or policy directions.

C. To the official agencies of the CRC for

1. Presenting and explaining their ministry on behalf of the churches, making sure the information disseminated is accurate.
2. Keeping church members informed about important changes in their programs and personnel.
3. Encouraging church members to support and participate in the ministries being carried out.

III. Freedom of editorial staff

In order that it may carry on these diverse responsibilities, the editorial staff must be granted the freedom to

A. Inform its readers and subscribers about what is occurring in the church (including relevant problems, needs, and concerns) even though some persons, congregations, or agencies may prefer that such information not be disseminated.

B. Investigate and determine the facts regarding any occurrence in the church that appears to merit reporting to readers.

C. Lead and encourage a responsible discussion of the issues important to the life of the church through editorial comment and publication of articles that represent the various views held within the church.

D. Permit people of the church to voice their views and reactions even though some of these views may be unacceptable to others in the church.

E. Provide a biblically prophetic and responsible criticism and evaluation of trends within the church and society and of actions, decisions, policies, programs, etc., being considered by or already approved by ecclesiastical assemblies and agencies.

IV. Editorial integrity

The following guidelines for editorial judgment will be used in determining what materials (editorials, articles, news stories, etc.) are published in the pages of *The Banner*:

A. The Banner materials should be faithful to Scripture and the confessions.

B. The Banner materials should edify and educate readers.

C. Truth must be written but always in love.

D. Criticism must be constructive and fair.

E. Editing of materials should always maintain the intent of the author while making the writing more effective in presenting the author's views.

F. No author should be demeaned by editorial comment or by the way an article, column, letter, etc., is presented.

G. Selection of authors should aim at equity of representation (U.S./ Canada, minorities, men/women, younger/older, conservative/progressive, etc.).

H. Nothing deliberately inflammatory, insulting, or divisive should be published.

I. Nothing that serves the interest solely of one individual, organization, or group in contrast to other individuals, organizations, or groups or in neglect of the general interest of the churches should be published.

J. *The Banner* should give preference to CRC authors.

K. Heads/titles should not be misleading or sensational; they should accurately reflect the heart of the story/article.

Appendix F

***Banner* Advisory Council**

Mandate

As a committee of the Board of Trustees (BOT), the primary functions of the *Banner* Advisory Council (BAC) are as follows:

1. Advise the editor of *The Banner* on editorial policy, content, and matters the council believes affect the publishing of a denominational magazine.
2. Report to the BOT about editorial activities and decisions, as well as reactions, criticisms, and suggestions received.
3. Monitor and report to the BOT annually the fiscal welfare and ministry health of *The Banner* as it serves the denomination.
4. Ensure the implementation of approved policies and procedures, recommending to the BOT necessary changes to the policies and procedures.

In addition, the BAC will function as a "conflict resolution committee" in the event there is an unresolved conflict between the editor of *The Banner* and the executive director of the CRCNA about matters related to material to be published in *The Banner*.

Protocol

As a standing committee of the BOT, the BOT is party to the advice given by the BAC. Thus minutes of the BAC, including advice given (which shall be recorded in official minutes of the BAC), shall be distributed to the BOT, the ED, and the editor of *The Banner*. While not an ordinary occurrence, the BOT may instruct the BAC in the modification, retraction, or initiation of advice given.

Membership

Drawn from a list of nominees submitted by the executive director of the CRCNA and the editor of *The Banner*, the membership of the council shall be recommended by the BOT Executive Committee for appointment by the BOT and composed of three (3) members of the BOT and three (3) members at-large. In addition, the editor of *The Banner* and the director of ministries and administration (or his/her designee) shall serve as advisers ex officio without vote. Members from the BOT are appointed for the duration of their term on the BOT. At-large members are appointed for a three-year term, renewable for a second term. At-large members will represent areas of expertise including, but not limited to, theological foundations, journalism, and communications. One of these six members shall be selected by the BAC each year as its chair, voting only in the case of a tie. Normally three members will be Canadian, and three will be from the United States. The editor of *The Banner*, the Canadian ministries director, and the director of ministries and administration will serve as advisers ex officio without vote.

Conflict Resolution Procedure

In the event that a conflict about materials to be published develops between the editor of *The Banner* and the executive director, every effort shall be made to seek a resolution at the administrative and staff level. If a resolution is not achieved, and the matter is brought to the attention of the BAC by either the editor of *The Banner* or the executive director, the BAC may decide a resolution for all parties for publishing purposes; such a decision may be appealed to the BOT, which will hear the appeal via a panel of five trustees (none of whom serve on the BAC) appointed by the BOT Executive Committee, and the panel will make a recommendation to the BOT, whose decision is final.

Adopted by the BOT, February 2015

Note: The *Banner* mandate will be appended to the *Banner* Advisory Council Mandate upon approval of synod. Proposed revisions to the *Banner* mandate are on the agenda of Synod 2015 (see Appendix E).

Appendix G

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA— CANADA CORPORATION

BY-LAW NUMBER 2014-1

A By-law relating generally
to the conduct of the affairs of

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA— CANADA CORPORATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. INTERPRETATION**
 - 1.1 Meaning of Words
 - 1.2 Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act Terms
 - 1.3 Severability
- 2. CRCNA AGENCY**
- 3. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF CRCNA Cda Corp**
 - 3.1 Representation
 - 3.2 Purposes
 - 3.3 Activities
 - 3.4 Statement of Faith
- 4. HEAD OFFICE**
- 5. SEAL**
- 6. MEMBERSHIP**
 - 6.1 Membership Conditions
 - 6.2 Termination of Membership
 - 6.3 Discipline of Members
 - 6.4 Liability of Members
- 7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
 - 7.1 Board
 - 7.2 Elected Directors
 - 7.3 Qualifications
 - 7.4 Quorum
 - 7.5 Vacancies
 - 7.6 Removal of Directors
 - 7.7 Remuneration of Directors
 - 7.8 Responsibility for Acts
 - 7.9 Rules and Regulations
- 8. ELECTION OF THE BOARD**
 - 8.1 Term of Office
 - 8.2 Re-Election
 - 8.3 Elections
 - 8.4 Nominations
 - 8.5 Election Method
 - 8.6 Forms

- 9. MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS**
 - 9.1 Calling Meetings
 - 9.2 Notice of Meetings
 - 9.3 Regular Meetings
 - 9.4 Meetings by Electronic Conference
 - 9.5 Voting
- 10. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS**
 - 10.1 Annual Meeting
 - 10.2 Meetings by Electronic Conference
 - 10.3 Special General Meeting
 - 10.4 Notice of Meetings
 - 10.5 Quorum
 - 10.6 Voting by Members
 - 10.7 By saying "aye"
 - 10.8 Chair
 - 10.9 Polls
 - 10.10 Adjournments
 - 10.11 Annual Financial Statements
- 11. OFFICERS**
 - 11.1 Executive Officers
 - 11.2 Duties of the President
 - 11.3 Duties of the Vice-President
 - 11.4 Duties of the Secretary
 - 11.5 Duties of the Treasurer
 - 11.6 Board May Appoint Other Officers
 - 11.7 CRCNA Cda Corp Executive Director
 - 11.8 Holding More Than One Office
 - 11.9 Vacancy in Office
- 12. ED and DED of the CRCNA**
 - 12.1 Receiving Documents
 - 12.2 Attending Meetings
- 13. COMMITTEES**
 - 13.1 Appointment of Committees
 - 13.2 Rules Governing Committees
- 14. PROTECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS**
 - 14.1 Directors and Officers Liability Exclusion
 - 14.2 Pre-Indemnity Considerations
 - 14.3 Indemnification of Directors and Officers
 - 14.4 Insurance
- 15. EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS**
 - 15.1 Cheques, Drafts, Notes, Etc.
 - 15.2 Execution of Documents
 - 15.3 Books and Records
- 16. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**
 - 16.1 Board to Designate Bankers
 - 16.2 Deposit of Securities

17. **BORROWING BY CRCNA Cda Corp**
 - 17.1 Borrowing Authority
 - 17.2 Specific Borrowing Authority
 - 17.3 Delegate Borrowing Authority
 - 17.4 Supplement of Borrowing Authority
18. **FINANCIAL YEAR**
 - 18.1 Financial Year Determined
19. **AUDITOR**
 - 19.1 Annual Appointment
 - 19.2 Notice of Intention to Nominate
 - 19.3 Vacancy in the Office of Auditor
 - 19.4 Removal of Auditor
20. **NOTICE**
 - 20.1 Method of Notice
 - 20.2 Omissions and Errors
21. **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**
 - 21.1 Mediation and Arbitration
 - 21.2 Dispute Resolution Mechanism
22. **BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS, ETC.**
 - 22.1 Requirements for Amendment of By-laws
 - 22.2 Additional Requirements for By-law Amendment
 - 22.3 By Whom By-law Amendments Proposed
23. **REPEAL OF PRIOR BY-LAWS**
 - 23.1 Repeal
 - 23.2 Exception
 - 23.3 Proviso
24. **EFFECTIVE DATE**
 - 24.1 Effective Date

BY-LAW NUMBER 2014-1

A By-law relating generally to the conduct of the affairs of the
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA—
 CANADA CORPORATION**
 (CRCNA Cda Corp)

WHEREAS by Letters Patent issued under the *Canada Corporations Act*, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-32, and dated the 15th day of March 2002, CRCNA Cda Corp was incorporated;

AND WHEREAS it is considered expedient to enact a General By-law relating generally to the conduct of the affairs of CRCNA Cda Corp;

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED as a By-law of CRCNA Cda Corp as follows:

1. INTERPRETATION

1.1 Meaning of Words

In this By-law and all other By-laws and resolutions of CRCNA Cda Corp unless the context otherwise requires:

- 1.1.1 the singular includes the plural;
- 1.1.2 the masculine gender includes the feminine;
- 1.1.3 “Act” means the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, S.C. 2009, c.23*, including the regulations made pursuant to the Act, in each case, as such statute or regulations may be amended, restated or in effect from time to time;
- 1.1.4 “Articles” means the original or restated articles of incorporation or articles of amendment, amalgamation, continuance, reorganization, arrangement or revival of the Corporation;
- 1.1.5 “Board” means the board of Directors of CRCNA Cda Corp;
- 1.1.6 “By-laws” means this By-law and any other By-laws of the Corporation as amended and which are, from time to time, in force and effect;
- 1.1.7 “BOT” means the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America;
- 1.1.8 “CRCNA” means the Christian Reformed Church in North America;
- 1.1.9 “Christian Reformed Church in Canada” means the churches in Canada belonging to the CRCNA denomination;
- 1.1.10 “CRCNA Cda Corp” means The Christian Reformed Church in North America—Canada Corporation;
- 1.1.11 “CRCNA Corp U.S.A.” means Christian Reformed Church in North America—Michigan Corporation, a nonprofit corporation incorporated pursuant to the laws of the State of Michigan;
- 1.1.12 “Director” or “Directors” means a person or persons who have been elected to the office of Director in accordance with Article 7, or appointed to fill a vacancy in the office of Director in accordance with Section 7.5;
- 1.1.13 “Documents” includes deeds, mortgages, hypothecs, charges, conveyances, transfers and assignments of property, real or personal, immovable or movable, agreements, releases, receipts and discharges for the payment of money or other obligations, conveyances, transfers and assignments of shares, bonds, debentures or other securities and all paper writings;

- 1.1.14 “CRCNA Cda Corp Executive Director” means that person holding the position of Canadian Ministries Director from time to time;
- 1.1.15 “ED” means that person holding the position of Executive Director of the CRCNA from time to time;
- 1.1.16 “Executive Officers” means the persons who hold the offices enumerated in Section 11.1;
- 1.1.17 “DED” means the persons holding the position of Deputy Executive Director and representing the senior leadership team of the CRCNA from time to time;
- 1.1.18 “Member” shall mean any Member attending or entitled to attend a meeting;
- 1.1.19 “Pastor” means a minister of the Word in the CRCNA;
- 1.1.20 “Special Resolution” means a resolution passed by a majority of the Directors and confirmed with or without variation by at least two-thirds of the votes cast by CRCNA Cda Corp in a general meeting of the Members of CRCNA Cda Corp called for that purpose; and
- 1.1.21 “Synod” shall mean the Synod of the CRCNA.

1.2 Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act Terms

Other than as specified in Section 1.1, all terms defined in the Act have the same meanings in this By-law and all other By-laws and resolutions of CRCNA Cda Corp.

1.3 Severability

The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this By-law shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provision of this By-law.

2. CRCNA AGENCY

CRCNA Cda Corp shall function as part of the CRCNA and is currently a participant in a joint venture with CRCNA Corp U.S.A. and shall in all respects be subject to the rules, regulations, practices and procedures of the CRCNA, provided that in the event of any conflict between those rules, regulations, practices and procedures and the provisions of the Act or other applicable law in Canada, the provisions of the law shall prevail.

3. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF CRCNA Cda Corp

3.1 Representation

Subject to the Letters Patent of CRCNA Cda Corp, CRCNA Cda Corp shall represent the Christian Reformed Church in Canada by leading it to respond obediently to our Lord’s command to proclaim the good news of God’s kingdom and make disciples of all nations.

3.2 Purposes

In so doing, the organization shall

- 3.2.1 lead in developing and implementing a denominational ministries plan for the agencies, committees, and educational institutions established by Synod.
- 3.2.2 implement programs and ministries which further the goals and objectives of the denominational ministries plan.
- 3.2.3 assure collaboration among agencies, committees, and educational institutions established by Synod.
- 3.2.4 exercise general oversight and authority in the manner provided for in the governing documents of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, as established by Synod.
- 3.2.5 serve as the umbrella organization for the agencies, committees, and educational institutions established by Synod and for the Christian Reformed Church in Canada. Specifically,
 - 3.2.5.1 to improve the efficiency of the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and other registered charities related to the Christian Reformed Church by providing a facility, at below-market rates, to house the operations of these ministry agencies and other Christian registered charities.
 - 3.2.5.2 to improve the efficiency of the ministry agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church and other Christian registered charities by providing professional centralized support services and systems, including finance, human resource, payroll, and information technology, at below-market rates, to service the operations of these ministry agencies and other Christian registered charities.
 - 3.2.5.3 to provide support for and to improve the efficiency of the ministry agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church by administering a ministry share funding system within the Christian Reformed Church denomination.
 - 3.2.5.4 to improve the efficiency of the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and other Christian registered charities by providing specialized and pooled programs pertaining to banking, insurance, extended health and life insurances, and retirement plans.
 - 3.2.5.5 to improve the efficiency of the member congregations and regional assemblies (classes) of the Christian Reformed Church, which are each a distinct registered charity in Canada, by providing specialized and

pooled programs pertaining to banking, insurance, extended health and life insurances, and retirement plans.

- 3.2.5.6 to increase the capacity and to improve the effectiveness of the member congregations and regional assemblies (classes) of the Christian Reformed Church by providing consultation and expertise in a variety of areas including discipleship, diversity, justice, planning, missions, volunteerism, and worship in order to enhance charitable programs to better address the needs of beneficiaries.

3.3 Activities

Without limiting the generality of 3.2.5 above, umbrella activities may include the following:

- 3.3.1 providing and maintaining a facility at reduced cost to house the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and other registered charities.
- 3.3.2 providing specialized administrative services and integrated systems in the areas of accounting, communications, finance, human resources, information technology, payroll, and resource development for the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and other registered charities.
- 3.3.3 negotiating and purchasing goods and services on behalf of the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and other registered charities.
- 3.3.4 negotiating lower group insurance rates and administering a group insurance plan and denominational retirement plan on behalf of the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and other registered charities.
- 3.3.5 collecting and disseminating data of interest and of use to the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and its member congregations and regional assemblies.
- 3.3.6 establishing and maintaining websites to promote and communicate the activities of the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church and to facilitate secure on-line donations and to provide a variety of resources and expertise.
- 3.3.7 producing and distributing a denominational magazine and other communications, in print and online to promote and communicate the activities of the ministry agencies of the Christian Reformed Church.

3.4 Statement of Faith

The Corporation hereby adopts the Statement of Faith documents included in the Covenant of Officebearers of the Christian Reformed Church in North

America which must be affirmed by every Member, Director of the Board, officer, missionary and employee whose job requires such affirmation as specified by the governing body of the Corporation.

The Corporation also recognizes the witness of Statements of Faith declared by the Christian Reformed Church in North America to be Ecumenical Faith Declarations and the Contemporary Testimony.

Each Member, Director or officer shall affirm the Statement of Faith documents included in the Covenant of Officebearers:

1. at the time of admission, election or appointment as a Member, Director or officer, as applicable; and
2. annually at the time of re-election or re-appointment, as applicable.

Any Member, Director or officer who ceases to affirm and recognize these shall automatically cease to hold office as hereinafter provided in this By-law.

4. HEAD OFFICE

The head office of CRCNA Cda Corp shall be in the City of Burlington, in the Province of Ontario, until changed in accordance with the Act.

5. SEAL

The seal, which is impressed in the margin hereon, shall be the corporate seal of CRCNA Cda Corp.

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Membership Conditions

Subject to the Articles, there shall be one class of Members in the Corporation. The membership of the Corporation shall be limited to those Canadian delegates elected from time to time by Synod consistent with the Church Order or synodical regulations and mandates. Each delegate shall continue to hold the office as a Member of the Corporation until a successor has been chosen and the next synodical assembly has been duly convened and constituted.

6.2 Termination of Membership

A membership in CRCNA Cda Corp automatically terminates upon the happening of any of the following events:

- 6.2.1 if the Member resigns by delivering a written resignation to the Chair of the Board;
- 6.2.2 if the Member fails to maintain any qualifications for membership described in Section 6.1;
- 6.2.3 if the Member ceases to be a member of a CRCNA congregation;
- 6.2.4 if the Member dies;

- 6.2.5 if the Member is expelled in accordance with Section 6.3 or is otherwise terminated in accordance with the Articles or By-laws; or
- 6.2.6 the Corporation is liquidated or dissolved under the Act.

Subject to the Articles, upon any termination of membership, the rights of the Member, including any rights in the property of the Corporation, automatically cease to exist.

6.3 Discipline of Members

The board shall have authority to suspend or expel any Member from the Corporation for any one or more of the following grounds:

- 6.3.1 violating any provision of the Articles, By-laws, or written policies of the Corporation;
- 6.3.2 carrying out any conduct which may be detrimental to the Corporation as determined by the Board in its sole discretion;
- 6.3.3 for any other reason that the Board in its sole and absolute discretion considers to be reasonable, having regard to the purpose of the Corporation.

In the event that the Board determines that a Member should be expelled or suspended from membership in the Corporation, the President, or such other officer as may be designated by the Board, shall provide twenty (20) days' notice of suspension or expulsion to the Member and shall provide reasons for the proposed suspension or expulsion. The Member may make written submissions to the President, or such other officer as may be designated by the Board, in response to the notice received within such twenty (20) day period. In the event that no written submissions are received by the President, the President, or such other officer as may be designated by the Board, may proceed to notify the Member that the Member is suspended or expelled from membership in the Corporation. If written submissions are received in accordance with this section, the Board will consider such submissions in arriving at a final decision and shall notify the Member concerning such final decision within a further twenty (20) days from the date of receipt of the submissions. The Board's decision shall be final and binding on the Member, without any further right of appeal.

6.4 Liability of Members

Absent the failure to act honestly and in good faith in the performance of the duties of office, and save as may be otherwise provided in any legislation or law, no present or past Member shall, as such, be held answerable or responsible for any act, default, obligation or liability of CRCNA Cda Corp or for any engagement, claim, payment, loss, injury, transaction, matter or thing relating to or connected with CRCNA Cda Corp.

7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

7.1 Board

7.1.1 A Board composed of a minimum of ten (10) Directors and a maximum of twenty (20) Directors shall manage the affairs of CRCNA Cdn Corp. The number of Directors shall be fixed from time to time by Special Resolution.

7.1.2 The Directors of the Board shall be those individuals from member churches of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada whom the membership elect to be on the Board consistent with the procedures and policies of Synod or the BOT may adopt from time to time.

7.2 Elected Directors

Elected Directors, subject to the provisions of Section 7.3, shall be elected in the manner set out in Article 8, each of whom, subject to the provisions of the Articles, shall hold office until the next annual meeting after election to office or until the successor of the Director has been elected and qualified.

7.3 Qualifications

Each Director shall:

7.3.1 be a member of CRCNA and been approved by BOT on behalf of Synod to act as a Director of the Corporation;

7.3.2 reside in the geographical region in which he or she resided when elected;

7.3.3 be at least eighteen (18) years of age;

7.3.4 not have the status of bankrupt;

7.3.5 not have been found to be incapable of managing property under the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 or the Mental Health Act;

7.3.6 not have been found to be incapable by any court in Canada or elsewhere; and

7.3.7 not be an "ineligible individual" as defined in section 149.1(1) of the Income Tax Act.

If a Director ceases to meet any of the above qualifications, the person thereupon ceases to be a Director, and the vacancy so created may be filled in the manner prescribed by Section 7.5.

7.4 Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business at meetings of the Board shall be the smallest whole number that is not less than fifty percent (50%) of the number of Members of the Board.

7.5 Vacancies

So long as a quorum of the Directors remains in office, such vacancy shall remain until the next annual meeting of the Members. If no quorum of

Directors exists, the remaining Directors shall call a special meeting of the members for the purpose of electing Directors.

7.6 Removal of Directors

The Members entitled to vote may, by resolution passed by a majority of the votes cast at a special general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to pass the resolution has been given, remove any Director before the expiration of the Director's term of office, and may, by a majority of the votes cast at that meeting, elect any person in the place and stead of the person removed for the remainder of term of the removed Director.

7.7 Remuneration of Directors

The Directors of CRCNA Cda Corp shall serve without remuneration.

7.8 Responsibility for Acts

The Directors of CRCNA Cda Corp shall not be under any duty or responsibility in respect of any contract, act or transaction whether or not made, done or entered into in the name or on behalf of CRCNA Cda Corp, except such as shall have been submitted to and authorized or approved by the Board.

7.9 Rules and Regulations

The Board may prescribe such rules and regulations not inconsistent with these By-laws relating to the management and operation of CRCNA Cda Corp as they deem expedient, provided that such rules and regulations shall have force and effect only until the next annual meeting of Members of CRCNA Cda Corp when they shall be confirmed and in default of confirmation at such annual meeting of Members, shall at and from that time cease to have force and effect.

8. ELECTION OF THE BOARD

8.1 Term of Office

The term of office of a Director shall be three years.

8.2 Re-Election

A Director, if otherwise qualified, is eligible for re-election for up to three additional years, provided that no Director shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive three (3)-year terms or more than six (6) consecutive years.

8.3 Elections

At each annual membership meeting, the number of Directors shall be elected for the vacant positions for the term of office established in Section 8.1.

8.4 Nominations

Candidates for the office of Director shall meet the qualifications of Section 7.3. The Board in preparing its nominations for the Board will ensure that the total composition of the Board, including the Members being presented for election, if elected, together with the incumbent members of the Board will represent the geographical regions in Canada established by Synod from

time to time which are presently described and represented as one (1) for each of the twelve (12) Classes within Canada. In addition the Members shall elect three (3) Directors at large from the Denomination within Canada.

8.5 Election Method

8.5.1 If the number of candidates nominated is equal to the number of offices to be filled, the Secretary of the meeting shall cast a single ballot electing that number of candidates for the offices.

8.5.2 If the number of candidates nominated is greater than the number of offices to be filled, the election shall be by ballot.

8.6 Forms

The Board may prescribe the form of nomination paper and the form of a ballot.

9. MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS

9.1 Calling Meetings

Meetings of the Board may be held at any place within or outside the geographic location of the head office, as designated in the notice calling the meeting. Meetings of the Board may be called by the President, or any two (2) Directors.

9.2 Notice of Meetings

Subject to the provisions of Section 9.3, notice of Board meetings shall be given to each Director by personal delivery, prepaid letter post, telephone, facsimile, email or other electronic method not less than ten (10) days before the meeting is to take place, the giving of which shall be in accordance with Section 20.1.

The statutory declaration of the Secretary or President that notice has been given pursuant to this By-law shall be sufficient and conclusive evidence of the giving of such notice. No formal notice of a meeting is necessary if all the Directors are present or if those absent have signified their consent to the meeting being held without notice and in their absence. No notice shall be necessary for a meeting of Directors to be held immediately following the meeting at which they were elected.

9.3 Regular Meetings

The Board may appoint one or more days in each year for regular meetings of the Board at a place and time named; no further notice of the regular meetings need be given. The Board shall hold a meeting within seven (7) days following the annual meeting of CRCNA Cda Corp for the purpose of organization, the election and appointment of officers and the transaction of any other business.

9.4 Meetings by Electronic Conference

If all persons who are members of the Board or a committee (as the case requires) consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting and

each has adequate access, such persons may participate in a meeting of the Board or committee by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear and speak to each other, and a person participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

Provided that at the outset of each such meeting, and whenever votes are required, the Chair of the meeting shall call roll to establish quorum, and shall, whenever not satisfied that the proceedings of the meeting may proceed with adequate security and confidentiality, unless a majority of the persons present at such meeting otherwise require, adjourn the meeting to a pre-determined date, time and place.

9.5 Voting

Questions arising at any meeting of the Board shall be decided by majority vote. At all meetings of the Board every question shall be decided by saying "aye" unless otherwise required by a By-law of CRCNA Cda Corp or unless a poll is required by the Chair or requested by any Director entitled to vote. Whenever a vote by saying "aye" has been taken upon a question, unless a poll by the showing of hands is requested, a declaration by the Chair that a resolution has been carried or lost by a particular majority and an entry to that effect in the minutes of CRCNA Cda Corp is conclusive evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of votes recorded in favour of or against the motion.

10. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

10.1 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the membership shall be held each year within or outside the geographical location of the head office, at a time, place and date determined by the Board, not being more than 15 months after its prior annual meeting, for the purpose of:

- 10.1.1 hearing and receiving the reports and statements required by the Act to be read at and laid before CRCNA Cda Corp at an annual meeting;
- 10.1.2 electing such Directors as are to be elected at such annual meeting;
- 10.1.3 appointing the auditor and fixing or authorizing the Board to fix the remuneration therefore; and
- 10.1.4 the transaction of any other business properly brought before the meeting.

10.2 Meetings by Electronic Conference

If all persons who are Members entitled to vote consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting and each has adequate access, such persons may participate in a meeting of Members by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating

in the meeting to hear and speak to each other, and a person participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

Provided that at the outset of each such meeting, and whenever votes are required, the Chair of the meeting shall call roll to establish quorum, and shall, whenever not satisfied that the proceedings of the meeting may proceed with adequate security and confidentiality, unless a majority of the persons present at such meeting otherwise require, adjourn the meeting to a pre-determined date, time and place.

10.3 Special General Meeting

The President or two or more Directors may at any time call a special general meeting of the Members for the transaction of any business, the general nature of which is specified in the notice calling the meeting. The Directors may also call a special general meeting of Membership or the President upon the written requisition of the minimum of five percent (5%) of the Members entitled to vote.

10.4 Notice of Meetings

Notice of the time, place and date of meetings of Members and the general nature of the business to be transacted shall be given to each Member (and in the case of an annual meeting to the auditor of CRCNA Cda Corp) by sending the notice by the following means:

- 10.4.1 by mail, courier or personal delivery to each Member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 60 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held; or
- 10.4.2 by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility to each Member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 35 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Notice of each meeting of Members must remind the Member if the Member has the right to vote by proxy.

10.5 Quorum

Not less than fifty percent (50%) plus one of the Members present in person constitutes a quorum at a meeting of Members, unless a greater number of Members are required to be present by the Act. If a quorum is present at the opening of a meeting of Members, the Members present may proceed with the business of the meeting even if a quorum is not present throughout the meeting. No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless the requisite quorum is present at the commencement of such business.

10.6 Voting by Members

Unless otherwise required by the provisions of the Act or the By-laws of CRCNA Cda Corp, all questions proposed for consideration at a meeting of Members shall be determined by a majority of the votes cast by Members entitled to vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be deemed to have been lost. A Member may, by means of a written proxy,

appoint a proxy holder to attend and act at a specific meeting of Members, in the manner and to the extent authorized by the proxy. A proxy holder is not required to be a Member of the Corporation.

10.7 By saying "aye"

At all meetings of Members every question shall be decided by saying "aye" unless otherwise required by a By-law of CRCNA Cda Corp or unless a poll is required by the Chair or requested by any Member entitled to vote. Every Member entitled to vote, or proxy holder for a Member entitled to vote, present in person shall have one vote. Whenever a vote by saying "aye" has been taken upon a question, unless a poll by the showing of hands is requested, a declaration by the Chair that a resolution has been carried or lost by a particular majority and an entry to that effect in the minutes of CRCNA Cda Corp is conclusive evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of votes recorded in favour of or against the motion.

10.8 Chair

In the absence of the President or the Vice-President and Vice-All, the Members entitled to vote present at any meeting of Members shall choose another Director as Chair and if no Director is present or if all of the Directors present decline to act as Chair, the Members present shall choose one of their number to be Chair.

10.9 Polls

If at any meeting a poll is requested on the election of a Chair or on the question of adjournment, it must be taken forthwith without adjournment. If a poll is requested on any other question, it shall be taken in the manner and either at once or later at the meeting or after adjournment as the Chair directs. The result of a poll shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting at which the poll was requested. A request for a poll may be withdrawn at any time prior to the taking of the poll.

10.10 Adjournments

Any meeting of Members may be adjourned to any time and from time to time, and any business may be transacted at any adjourned meeting that might have been transacted at the original meeting from which the adjournment took place. No notice is required of any adjourned meeting if the time and place of the adjourned meeting is announced at the original meeting.

10.11 Annual Financial Statements

The Corporation may, instead of sending copies of the annual financial statements and other documents referred to in subsection 172(1) (Annual Financial Statements) of the Act to the Members, publish a notice to its Members stating that the annual financial statements and documents provided in subsection 172(1) are available at the registered office of the Corporation and any Member may, on request, obtain a copy free of charge at the registered office or by prepaid mail.

11. OFFICERS

11.1 Executive Officers

There may be the following Executive Officers, each of whom shall be a Director:

- 11.1.1 a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, or a Secretary/Treasurer elected for a term of one (1) year by and from among the Board at the first meeting following the annual meeting of CRCNA Cda Corp. The Executive Officers shall not be entitled to remuneration; and
- 11.1.2 such other officers as are provided in this Article 11.

11.2 Duties of the President

The President shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the Board and the Members. The President shall perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.3 Duties of the Vice-President

During the absence or inability of the President to act, the duties and powers of the President may be exercised by the Vice-President, or if there are more than one, by the Vice-Presidents in order of seniority. If a Vice-President exercises any of those duties or powers, the absence or inability of the President to act shall be presumed with reference thereto. A Vice-President shall also perform the other duties from time to time prescribed by the Board or incident to the office.

11.4 Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- 11.4.1 act as Secretary of each meeting of the Board;
- 11.4.2 give all notices required to be given to Members and to Directors;
- 11.4.3 be the custodian of the corporate seal of CRCNA Cda Corp and of all books, papers, records, correspondence and documents belonging to CRCNA Cda Corp; and
- 11.4.4 perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.5 Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- 11.5.1 certify all documents issued by CRCNA Cda Corp; and
- 11.5.2 keep full and accurate accounts of all assets, liabilities, receipts and disbursements of CRCNA Cda Corp and shall perform the tasks and functions normally performed by a Treasurer; and perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.6 Board May Appoint Other Officers

The Board may from time to time appoint such other officers as it considers expedient, to hold office at the pleasure of the Board, the duties and remuneration of whom shall be such as the terms of their engagement call for or the Board prescribes. Any such officer shall execute and subscribe to the Statement of Faith at the time of any appointment or re-appointment. Any remuneration fixed by the Board shall be confirmed by resolution of the Members at the next semi-annual meeting.

11.7 CRCNA Cda Corp Executive Director

The CRCNA Cda Corp Executive Director shall, subject to the authority and direction of the Board and the President, be the Chief Executive Officer of CRCNA Cda Corp, and shall oversee the general and active management of the operations of CRCNA Cda Corp and will implement or advise to be implemented all orders and resolutions of CRCNA Cda Corp, subject to the directions of the Board and the President from time to time.

11.8 Holding More Than One Office

A person who is an Executive Officer may not be nominated or selected for, elected or appointed to, and hold more than one office. A person who is not an Executive Officer may hold more than one office that is not that of an Executive Officer.

11.9 Vacancy in Office

In the absence of a written agreement to the contrary, the Board may remove, whether for cause or without cause, any officer of the Corporation. Unless so removed, an officer shall hold office until the earlier of:

- 11.9.1 the officer's successor being appointed,
- 11.9.2 the officer's resignation,
- 11.9.3 such officer ceasing to be a Director (if a necessary qualification of appointment), or
- 11.9.4 such officer's death.

If the office of any officer of the Corporation shall be or become vacant, the Directors may, by resolution, appoint a person to fill such vacancy.

12. ED and DED(s) of the CRCNA

12.1 Receiving Documents

The ED and DED(s) shall be entitled to receive copies of all reports, minutes, proposals, agenda and other written material relating to the affairs and business of CRCNA Cda Corp.

12.2 Attending Meetings

The ED and DED(s) shall be entitled to receive notice of, be present at, and participate in all meetings of the Directors and Members for purposes as a resource person providing advice, information and insight to assist the

Directors and Members. The ED and DED(s) shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Board or Members.

13. COMMITTEES

13.1 Appointment of Committees

The Board may, from time to time, establish committees and ad-hoc committees to assist it with meeting the mandate for which it has been established.

13.2 Rules Governing Committees

Except as otherwise provided by By-law of CRCNA Cda Corp, all committees are subject to the following:

- 13.2.1 the chair and members shall be appointed by the Board, from among the Members of CRCNA Cda Corp who are qualified to hold office;
- 13.2.2 in addition to the members of a committee appointed pursuant to subsection 13.2.1, the Board may appoint to any committee, persons who are not Members of CRCNA Cda Corp who are qualified to hold office; provided that the total number of such persons shall at all times remain less than one-third of the total number of persons who are members of such committee;
- 13.2.3 a member of a committee shall serve for a term as determined by the Board, and is eligible for reappointment for one or more additional terms as needed;
- 13.2.4 a member of a committee who is not otherwise a Member, Director or officer of CRCNA Cda Corp shall execute and subscribe to the Statement of Faith at the time of appointment or any re-appointment to a committee;
- 13.2.5 each committee shall meet at least annually, and more frequently at the will of its chair or as required by its terms of reference, and as requested by the Board; and
- 13.2.6 each committee shall be responsible to, and report after each meeting to the Board.

14. PROTECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

14.1 Directors and Officers Liability Exclusion

Absent the failure to act honestly and in good faith in the performance of the duties of office, and save as may be otherwise provided in any legislation or law, no present or past Director or officer of CRCNA Cda Corp shall be personally liable for any loss or damage or expense to CRCNA Cda Corp arising out of the acts (including wilful, negligent and accidental conduct), receipts, neglects, omissions or defaults of such Director or officer or of any other Director or officer or employee, servant, agent, volunteer or independent contractor arising from any of the following.

- 14.1.1 insufficiency or deficiency of title to any property acquired by CRCNA Cda Corp or for or on behalf of CRCNA Cda Corp;
- 14.1.2 insufficiency or deficiency of any security in or upon which any of the monies of or belonging to CRCNA Cda Corp shall be placed out or invested;
- 14.1.3 loss or damage arising from the bankruptcy or insolvency of any individual including any individual with whom or which any monies, securities or effects shall be lodged or deposited;
- 14.1.4 loss, conversion, misapplication or misappropriation of or any damage resulting from any dealings with monies, securities or other assets belonging to CRCNA Cda Corp;
- 14.1.5 loss, damage or misfortune whatever which may occur in the execution of the duties of the Director's or officer's respective office or trust or in relation thereto; and
- 14.1.6 loss or damage arising from any wilful act, assault, act of negligence, breach of fiduciary or other duty or failure to render aid of any sort.

14.2 Pre-Indemnity Considerations

Before giving approval to the indemnities provided in Section 14.3 herein, or purchasing insurance provided in Section 14.4 herein, the Board shall consider:

- 14.2.1 the degree of risk to which the Director or officer is or may be exposed;
- 14.2.2 whether, in practice, the risk cannot be eliminated or significantly reduced by means other than the indemnity or insurance;
- 14.2.3 whether the amount or cost of the insurance is reasonable in relation to the risk;
- 14.2.4 whether the cost of the insurance is reasonable in relation to the revenue available; and
- 14.2.5 whether it advances the administration and management of the property to give the indemnity or purchase the insurance.

14.3 Indemnification of Directors and Officers

Every individual, (including their respective heirs, executors and administrators, estate, successors and assigns) who:

- 14.3.1 is a Director; or,
- 14.3.2 is an officer of CRCNA Cda Corp; or
- 14.3.3 is a member of a committee; or
- 14.3.4 has undertaken, or, with the direction of CRCNA Cda Corp is about to undertake, any liability on behalf of CRCNA Cda

Corp or entity at the request of CRCNA Cda Corp, whether in the individual's personal capacity or as a Director or officer or employee or volunteer of such entity;

shall, upon approval of the Board from time to time, be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of CRCNA Cda Corp, from and against costs, charges and expenses which such individual sustains or incurs:

14.3.5 in or in relation to any demand, action, suit or proceeding which is brought, commenced or prosecuted against them in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever, made, done or permitted or not permitted by them, in or in relation to the execution of the duties of such office or in respect of any such liability; or,

14.3.6 in relation to the affairs of CRCNA Cda Corp generally,

save and except such costs, charges or expenses as are occasioned by their own failure to act honestly and in good faith in the performance of the duties of office, or by other wilful neglect or default.

CRCNA Cda Corp shall also, upon approval by the Board from time to time, indemnify any such individual in such other circumstances as any legislation or laws permit or require.

Nothing in this By-law shall limit the right of any individual entitled to indemnity to claim indemnity apart from the provisions of this By-law to the extent permitted by any legislation or law.

14.4 Insurance

CRCNA Cda Corp shall purchase and maintain appropriate liability insurance for the benefit of CRCNA Cda Corp and each individual acting or having previously acted in the capacity of a Director, officer or any other capacity at the request of or on behalf of CRCNA Cda Corp, which insurance shall include:

14.4.1 property and public liability insurance;

14.4.2 Directors' and officers' insurance; and,

14.4.3 such other insurance as the Board sees fit from time to time;

with coverage limits and with insurers deemed appropriate by the Board from time to time.

No coverage shall be provided for any liability relating to a failure to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of CRCNA Cda Corp.

It shall be the obligation of any person seeking insurance coverage or indemnity from CRCNA Cda Corp to co-operate fully with CRCNA Cda Corp in the defence of any demand, claim or suit made against such person, and to make no admission of responsibility or liability to any third party without the prior agreement of CRCNA Cda Corp.

15. EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS

15.1 Cheques, Drafts, Notes, Etc.

All cheques, drafts or orders for the payment of money and all notes and acceptances and bills of exchange shall be signed by the officer or officers or person or persons and in the manner from time to time prescribed by the Board.

15.2 Execution of Documents

Documents requiring execution by CRCNA Cda Corp may be signed by any two of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer or any two (2) Directors, and all documents so signed are binding upon CRCNA Cda Corp without any further authorization or formality. The Board may from time to time appoint any officer or officers or any person or persons on behalf of CRCNA Cda Corp, either to sign documents generally or to sign specific documents. The corporate seal of CRCNA Cda Corp shall, when required, be affixed to documents executed in accordance with the foregoing.

15.3 Books and Records

The Board shall see that all necessary books and records of CRCNA Cda Corp required by the By-laws of CRCNA Cda Corp or by any applicable statute are regularly and properly kept.

16. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

16.1 Board to Designate Bankers

The Board shall designate, by resolution, the officers and other persons authorized to transact the banking business of CRCNA Cda Corp, or any part thereof, with the bank, trust company, or other Committee carrying on a banking business that the Board has designated as CRCNA Cda Corp's banker, to have the authority set out in the resolution, including, unless otherwise restricted, the power to,

- 16.1.1 operate CRCNA Cda Corp's accounts with the banker;
- 16.1.2 make, sign, draw, accept, endorse, negotiate, lodge, deposit or transfer any of the cheques, promissory notes, drafts, acceptances, bills of exchange and orders for the payment of money;
- 16.1.3 issue receipts for and orders relating to any property of CRCNA Cda Corp;
- 16.1.4 execute any agreement relating to any banking business and defining the rights and powers of the parties thereto; and
- 16.1.5 authorize any officer of the banker to do any act or thing on CRCNA Cda Corp's behalf to facilitate the banking business.

16.2 Deposit of Securities

The securities of CRCNA Cda Corp shall be deposited for safe keeping with one or more bankers, trust companies or other financial institutions to be selected by the Board. Any and all securities so deposited may be

withdrawn, from time to time, only upon the written order of CRCNA Cda Corp signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of CRCNA Cda Corp, and in such manner, as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. The institutions which may be so selected as custodians of the Board shall be fully protected in acting in accordance with the directions of the Board and shall in no event be liable for the due application of the securities so withdrawn from deposit or the proceeds thereof.

17. BORROWING BY CRCNA Cda Corp

17.1 Borrowing Authority

The Board may from time to time:

- 17.1.1 Borrow money upon the credit of the Corporation;
- 17.1.2 Limit or increase the amounts to be borrowed;
- 17.1.3 Issue, sell or pledge debt obligations of the Corporation for such sums and at such prices as may be deemed expedient or be necessary;
- 17.1.4 Charge, hypothecate, mortgage or pledge any or all currently owned or subsequently acquired real or personal, moveable or immovable property of the Corporation and/or give such security therefore thereon as may be required including book debts, rights, powers, franchises and undertaking, to secure any debt obligations or any money borrowed, or other debt or liability of the Corporation;
- 17.1.5 Give indemnities to any Director or other person who has undertaken or is about to undertake any liability on behalf of the Corporation and to secure such Director or other person against loss by giving of a mortgage or charge upon the whole or any part of the real or personal property of the Corporation by way of security.

The words “debt obligations” as used in this paragraph mean bonds, debentures, notes or other similar obligations of the Corporation whether secured or unsecured.

17.2 Specific Borrowing Authority

The Board may from time to time authorize by resolution any Director or Directors, officer or officers, employee of the Corporation or other person or persons, whether connected with the Corporation or not, to make arrangements with reference to the moneys borrowed or to be borrowed as aforesaid, and as to the terms and conditions of the loan thereof, and as to the securities to be given therefore with power to vary or modify such arrangements, terms and conditions, and generally to manage, transact and settle the borrowing of money by the Corporation.

17.3 Delegate Borrowing Authority

Subject to prior approval of the Finance Committee of the BOT of Synod, the Board may from time to time by resolution delegate to the President and the Secretary or to any two individuals (including the President or the Secretary) each of whom is a Director or officer of the Corporation all or any of the powers conferred on the Board by Section 17.1 of this By-law to the full extent thereof or such lesser extent as the Board may in any such resolution provide including the power to sign, execute and give on behalf of the Corporation all documents, agreements and promises necessary or desirable for the purposes aforesaid and to draw, make, accept, endorse, execute and issue cheques, promissory notes, bills of exchange, bills of lading and other negotiable or transferable instruments, and the same and all renewals thereof or substitutions therefore so signed shall be binding upon the Corporation.

17.4 Supplement of Borrowing Authority

The powers hereby conferred shall be deemed to be in supplement to and not in substitution for any powers to borrow money for the purposes of the Corporation possessed by its Directors or officers independently of a borrowing By-law.

18. FINANCIAL YEAR

18.1 Financial Year Determined

The financial year of CRCNA Cda Corp shall terminate on the 30th day of June in each year or on such other date as the Board may from time to time by resolution determine.

19. AUDITOR

19.1 Annual Appointment

The Members of CRCNA Cda Corp at each annual meeting shall appoint one or more auditors, such auditor or auditors having been previously approved as an auditor by BOT, (none of whom shall be a Director, officer or employee of CRCNA Cda Corp), to audit the accounts (including the financial statements) of CRCNA Cda Corp and to report thereon to Members at the annual meeting, to hold office until the close of the next annual meeting, and, if an appointment is not so made, the auditor in office continues in office until a successor is appointed. The remuneration of the auditor shall be fixed by the Board.

19.2 Notice of Intention to Nominate

A person, other than a retiring auditor, is not capable of being appointed auditor at an annual meeting unless notice in writing of an intention to nominate that person to the office of auditor has been given by a Member not less than ten (10) days before the annual meeting; and the Member shall send a copy of any such notice to the retiring auditor and to the person it is intended to nominate, and shall give notice thereof to the Members, either by advertisement or by notice in the manner set out in Article 20, not less than seven (7) days before the annual meeting.

19.3 Vacancy in the Office of Auditor

The Board may fill any vacancy in the office of auditor, but while the vacancy continues the surviving or continuing auditor, if any, may act.

19.4 Removal of Auditor

The Members, by a resolution passed by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at a special general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to pass such resolution was given, may remove any auditor before the expiration of the term of office of the auditor, and shall by a majority of the votes cast at that meeting appoint another auditor in the place and stead of such person for the remainder of the term.

20. NOTICE

20.1 Method of Notice

Any notice (which term includes any communication or document) to be given (which term includes sent, delivered or served), other than notice of a meeting of Members or a meeting of the Board, pursuant to the Act, the Articles, the By-laws or otherwise to a Member, Director, officer or member of a committee of the Board or to the auditor shall be sufficiently given:

- 20.1.1 if delivered personally to the person to whom it is to be given or if delivered to such person's address as shown in the records of the Corporation or in the case of notice to a Director to the latest address as shown in the last notice that was sent by the Corporation in accordance with section 128 (Notice of Directors) or 134 (Notice of change of Directors); or
- 20.1.2 if mailed to such person at such person's recorded address by prepaid ordinary or air mail; or
- 20.1.3 if sent to such person by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility at such person's recorded address for that purpose; or
- 20.1.4 if provided in the form of an electronic document in accordance with Part 17 of the Act.

A notice so delivered shall be deemed to have been given when it is delivered personally or to the recorded address as aforesaid; a notice so mailed shall be deemed to have been given when deposited in a post office or public letter box; and a notice so sent by any means of transmitted or recorded communication shall be deemed to have been given when dispatched or delivered to the appropriate communication company or agency or its representative for dispatch. The Secretary may change or cause to be changed the recorded address of any Member, Director, officer, auditor or member of a committee of the Board in accordance with any information believed by the Secretary to be reliable. The declaration by the Secretary that notice has been given pursuant to this By-law shall be sufficient and conclusive evidence of the giving of such notice. The signature of any Director or officer of the Corporation to any notice or other document to be given by the Corporation

may be written, stamped, type-written or printed or partly written, stamped, type-written or printed.

20.2 Omissions and Errors

The accidental omission to give notice of any meeting of the Board, a committee or Members or the non-receipt of any notice by any Director or committee member or Member or by the auditor of CRCNA Cda Corp or any error in any notice not affecting its substance does not invalidate any resolution passed or any proceedings taken at the meeting. Any Director, committee member, Member or the auditor of CRCNA Cda Corp may at any time waive notice of any meeting and may ratify and approve any or all proceedings taken thereat.

21. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

21.1 Mediation and Arbitration

Disputes or controversies among Members, Directors, officers, committee members, or volunteers of the Corporation are as much as possible to be resolved in accordance with mediation and/or arbitration as provided in Section 21.2 of this By-law.

21.2 Dispute Resolution Mechanism

In the event that a dispute or controversy among Members, Directors, officers, committee members or volunteers of the Corporation arising out of or related to the Articles or By-laws, or out of any aspect of the operations of the Corporation is not resolved in private meetings between the parties, then without prejudice to or in any other way derogating from the rights of the Members, Directors, officers, committee members, employees or volunteers of the Corporation as set out in the Articles, By-laws or the Act, and as an alternative to such person instituting a law suit or legal action, such dispute or controversy shall be settled by a process of dispute resolution as follows:

- 21.2.1 The dispute or controversy shall first be submitted to a panel of mediators whereby the one party appoints one mediator, the other party (or, if applicable, the Board) appoints one mediator, and the two mediators so appointed jointly appoint a third mediator. The three mediators will then meet with the parties in question in an attempt to mediate a resolution between the parties.
- 21.2.2 The number of mediators may be reduced from three to one or two upon agreement of the parties.
- 21.2.3 If the parties are not successful in resolving the dispute through mediation, then the parties agree that the dispute shall be settled by arbitration before a single arbitrator, who shall not be any one of the mediators referred to above, in accordance with the provincial or territorial legislation governing domestic arbitrations in force in the province or territory where the registered office of the Corporation is situated or as otherwise agreed upon by the parties to the dispute.

The parties agree that all proceedings relating to arbitration shall be kept confidential and there shall be no disclosure of any kind. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding and shall not be subject to appeal on a question of fact, law or mixed fact and law.

- 21.2.4 All costs of the mediators appointed in accordance with this section shall be borne equally by the parties to the dispute or the controversy. All costs of the arbitrators appointed in accordance with this section shall be borne by such parties as may be determined by the arbitrators.

22. BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS, ETC.

22.1 Requirements for Amendment of By-laws

Subject to the Articles, the Board may, by resolution, make, amend or repeal any By-laws that regulate the activities or affairs of the Corporation. Any such By-law, amendment or repeal shall be effective from the date of the resolution of the Board until the next meeting of Members where it may be confirmed, rejected or amended by the Members by ordinary resolution. Any such By-law, amendment or repeal shall be approved by the BOT of the CRCNA prior to being presented to the Members. If the By-law, amendment or repeal is confirmed or confirmed as amended by the Members, it remains effective in the form in which it was confirmed. The By-law, amendment or repeal ceases to have effect if it is not submitted to the Members at the next meeting of Members or if it is rejected by the BOT of the CRCNA or the Members at the meeting.

22.2 Additional Requirements for By-law Amendment

Section 22.1 does not apply to a By-law that requires a special resolution of the Members according to subsection 197(1) (Amendment of Articles or By-laws) of the Act. Pursuant to subsection 197(1) of the Act, a special resolution of the Members is required to make any amendments to 6.1, 10.4, 20.1 and this 22.2 if those amendments affect membership rights and/or conditions described in paragraphs 197(1)(e), (h), (l) or (m) of the Act.

22.3 By Whom By-law Amendments Proposed

Any Member entitled to vote at an annual meeting of Members may, in accordance with section 163 (Member proposal) of the Act, make a proposal to make, amend or repeal a By-law.

23. REPEAL OF PRIOR BY-LAWS

23.1 Repeal

Subject to the provisions of Section 22.1 hereof, all prior By-laws, resolutions and other enactments of CRCNA Cda Corp heretofore enacted or made are repealed.

23.2 Exception

The provisions of Section 23.1 shall not extend to any By-law or resolution heretofore enacted for the purpose of providing to the Board the power or authority to borrow.

23.3 Proviso

Provided, however, that the repeal of prior By-laws, resolutions and other enactments shall not impair in any way the validity of any act or thing done pursuant to any such repealed By-law, resolution or other enactment.

24. EFFECTIVE DATE

24.1 Effective Date

This By-law shall become effective after it has been sanctioned by a majority of the Board and sanctioned by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting of Members duly called for the purpose of considering the said By-law.

ENACTED by the Directors as a By-law of **THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA—CANADA CORPORATION** and sealed with the corporate seal

, President

, Secretary

CONFIRMED by the Members in accordance with the Act on the ____ day of _____ 2014.

, President

, Secretary

Appendix H

Diversity in Leadership Planning Group (DLPG) Implementation of Synodical Directives¹ Status Update—February 2015

I. Introduction

Synod 2013 directed the Office of the Executive Director of the CRCNA to implement diversity goals as detailed in the *Acts of Synod 2013* (pp. 628-32). Since that time, the following activities have been initiated:

- On August 8, 2013, Rev. Joel Boot, then executive director of the CRCNA, convened a team to address the mandate of Synod 2013 and to oversee the creation and implementation of the diversity goals. The team included Bing Goei and Colin Watson, contracted to act as diversity agents and as facilitators of the effort. Bing Goei served as consultant responsible for managing the external stakeholders to be contacted as a part of the project, and Colin Watson is responsible for managing internal stakeholders and planning and executing the project plan.

¹ *Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 628-32.

- An initial DLPG steering and implementation team² met to further plan and execute the directives of synod. Rev. Joel Boot, as executive director (ED), and Dr. Peter Borgdorff, then Deputy Executive Director (DED), served as team leaders of the effort.
- The project plan was summarized in the report to the BOT (February 2014). While the plan covers all of the mandates given by synod (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 628-32), it also adds activities critical to the effectiveness of the overall plan. In particular, the project plan recognizes that a great deal of groundwork needs to be done to ensure that all stakeholders not only buy into the immediate importance of the need but are also committed to working together to ensure that synod's overall goal is met. That goal can be best described as achieving a Revelation 7:9-10 vision for the CRCNA. That vision is also well documented in *God's Diverse and Unified Family*, which has been in use in the denomination since 1996.
- When Bing Goei withdrew from the project to take up an assignment with the state of Michigan, it was recommended that a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) be created to direct and oversee all phases of this project. The DIWG is accountable to Dr. Steven Timmermans, now executive director, and to Rev. Joel Boot, current director of ministries and administration. The DIWG charter and goals follow:

II. Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG)

A. Purpose

The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) is specifically responsible for the implementation of the DLPG directives of Synod 2013. The DIWG will work under the direction of the Diversity Agent, Colin Watson, and is accountable to the executive director.

Individual DIWG members are accountable to the existing leadership of their respective organizations. Members also serve as diversity and inclusion champions in their home agencies or departments.

DIWG membership consists of senior leaders within the CRCNA and reflects the vision of diversity articulated in the CRCNA document *God's Diverse and Unified Family*.

The existence and work of the DIWG will also serve to increase the visibility of people of color within the leadership of the CRCNA.

The DIWG will model the behavior and demonstrate the benefits of achieving a fully diverse and inclusive denominational leadership team. The team will be a collaborative group focused on uniting the CRCNA around a shared vision of full inclusion.

The DIWG does not advocate on behalf of any person or persons unless such advocacy is directly critical to the achievement of the DLPG goals as outlined by Synod 2013.

² The initial DLPG team was led by Joel Boot, ED, and included Peter Borgdorff, DED; Mark Rice, Assistant to the ED; and the Diversity Agents (consultants), Bing Goei and Colin Watson, Sr.

B. DIWG goals

1. Develop and execute a work plan in line with synodical directives.
2. Communicate plan and progress to agency and department leaders (MLC members).³
3. Engage the wider CRCNA community to ensure that the Diversity and Inclusion vision is widely embraced.

C. Responsibilities of DIWG members

Each member team engages other members of their own organizations as needed. It is also the responsibility of each member to update and engage with the director or president of their respective organizations. Other members of these organizations will also be asked to participate as team members as the various parts of the plan are implemented. In summary, members agree to do the following:

1. Serve as Diversity and Inclusion champions within their own organizations. These champions are to serve as mutual points of contact for the implementation of our Diversity and Inclusion goals. They will not serve as “compliance officers.”
2. Be responsible (as a team) for executing the DLPG work plan as described in the February 2014 BOT update document.
3. Ensure that every agency and institution is developing a metrics-based Diversity and Inclusion/ Anti-Racism Action Plan tailored to their own context.
4. Design and develop a diversity “Report Card” for use by the denomination, containing key excerpts from agency and departmental plans.
5. Develop and execute mutually agreed upon initiatives which may arise from a joint conversation and collaboration of members of the DIWG. Usually such initiatives will be proposed by senior leadership and directors of the CRCNA.
6. Ensure the integration of all Diversity and Inclusion related initiatives within the denomination (as necessary) to optimize the use of our resources and expected outcomes.
7. Ensure that all Diversity and Inclusion initiatives (plans, events, and milestones) are being widely communicated⁴ throughout the CRCNA.
8. Ensure the review of all Human Resources policies and practices across the CRCNA to ensure that they are appropriate for our Diversity and Inclusion goals. This is an annual and ongoing requirement.

³ DIWG minutes are included as a part of the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC) consent agenda.

⁴ DIWG is working with the CRCNA Communications Department to ensure that these communications are well integrated with other denominational plans.

9. Review and assess all current training. Identify gaps in training which may be advantageous to engaging our diverse audiences and stakeholders.
 - Course name
 - Training experience or course description
 - Training objective
 - Target audience/participants
 - Reach (actual)
 - Effectiveness (participants' ratings)
10. Participate in regional multicultural gatherings. The initial focus will be on enhancing the agendas of already existing/planned gatherings to include conversations on how to better be the church of Revelation 7:9-10 in accordance with our Diversity Vision. The team is also considering the development of separate regional gatherings where no existing meetings are planned. In this event, two pilot sessions (in Canada and in the U.S.) will be held and evaluated prior to conducting more gatherings.

It is also anticipated that other CRCNA leaders, Diversity Champions (from churches, classes, and regions), will be activated as we engage in the regional conversations and training experiences envisioned by the directives of Synod 2013.

III. Summary of work done to date

A. Various preliminary activities critical to the implementation of the synodical directives were concluded (see *Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 46, for additional activities).

- Reviewed synodical directives (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 628-32) and used directives to develop a preliminary Project Plan.
- Sequenced work and assigned dependencies to tasks; created a timeline.
- Conducted internal and external interviews of stakeholders, including agency directors and department heads of the CRCNA, selected ethnic directors and leaders of staff in the CRCNA, and other influential ethnic leaders.⁵
- Received and reviewed departmental information bearing on the diversity issue (i.e., policy statements, practices, historical data, and statistics).
- Solicited input from stakeholders to name some effective approaches to reach the diversity vision.
- Engaged various CRCNA teams for their input to this initiative.
- Began dialogue with existing CRCNA strategic initiative teams, such as the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team (SPACT) and Collaborative Work Groups (CWG).

B. The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) was created. The current membership is:

Christian Reformed World Missions—Steve Kabetu,
Nalini Vanden Bosch

⁵ Leaders who have contributed to the development of diversity strategies in the past.

Christian Reformed Home Missions—Charles Kim
 World Renew—Melissa Barnes
 Human Resources—Michelle DeBie
 Race Relations—Esteban Lugo
 Pastor-Church Relations—Jeanne Kallemeyn (metrics and reporting),
 Denise Posie
 Calvin College—Michelle Loyd-Paige
 Calvin Theological Seminary—Jeff Sajdak
 Candidacy—David Koll
 Synodical Services—Dee Recker
 Justice, Inclusion, Mercy, and Advocacy (JIMA) coordination—Shannon
 Jammal-Hollemans
 Denominational Office—Colin P. Watson, Sr.

C. DIWG has met several times and has organized itself into various sub-teams to do its work. Subteams engage in the following:⁶

1. Policy review – Review of all written personnel policies and practices (including employee handbook and recruitment, retention, performance evaluations processes, and job descriptions) to ensure that they reflect our Diversity and Inclusion values. Ensure that input is received from all affected entities. This review will focus on denominational and agency policies and will not address policies used in individual churches.⁷—*Michelle DeBie (lead), Michelle Loyd-Paige, Denise Posie*
2. Training – Review and assess all current training. Identify gaps in training that may be advantageous to engaging our diverse audiences and stakeholders. This team will also begin to address the best way to communicate the content of the document *God's Diverse and Unified Family* to the church to ensure that the content stays relevant.—*Esteban Lugo (lead), Michelle Loyd-Paige (communications representative)*
3. Database development – Take steps to design and develop a database containing diverse key leaders and potential nominees for future positions. Develop strategies for reaching out to leaders across the CRCNA (and beyond) to populate the database.—*Colin Watson (lead), Steve Kabetu, David Koll, Dee Recker*
4. Regional gatherings – Assess how regional gatherings can be used to engage the wider CRCNA community, and make plans to pilot engagement in at least two such gatherings in the U.S. and Canada. The gatherings will
 - include leaders and potential leaders from many races and cultures (including the majority group).
 - give opportunity for dialog on the critical issues facing the denomination.

⁶ Other non-DIWG members may be asked to participate on subteams to improve effectiveness. The chairperson will serve as a member of each committee.

⁷ Though churches are not included in the policy review, DIWG will consider ways to communicate what we are doing and to encourage similar actions on the part of regional or local parties. There may also be the possibility of learning from local initiatives.

- focus on unity in the midst of diversity.
- disseminate and receive information with the local leaders (e.g., discuss local “best practices”).
- include much time for prayer and mutual encouragement and motivation.

Colin Watson and Esteban Lugo (coleading), Charles Kim

5. Communications – Develop communications strategy to determine what and how to communicate across the denomination. Ensure the use of all media in communications (traditional, electronic, and social).—*Communications specialist, Denise Posie, Dee Recker, Nalini Vanden Bosch*
6. Measurement and metrics – Develop a Diversity “Scorecard” with input from all stakeholders (CRCNA-wide).—*Colin Watson, Sarah Chun, Jeanne Kallemeyn, Michelle Loyd-Paige, Esteban Lugo*

IV. Mapping of DLPG Project Plan to DIWG subteams

All of the tasks referenced by Synod 2013 (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 628-32) and in the DLPG Report to the BOT in February 2014 are being addressed by the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) and its subteams. The following chart indicates how the activities are being sequenced.

DIWG and Subteams	DLPG Project Plan (BOT Report 2/2014)	<i>Acts of Synod 2013</i> , pp. 628-32
DIWG (entire team)	1.1, 1.2, 1.4-1.6, 1.12, 2.5	7, 1-b-1
Policy review	4.1, 4.2, 2.2, 5	3, 4
Training	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6	2, 2-a-1, 2-a-2, 2-d
Database development	1.8, 1.9, 2.3, 2.4	1-a-1, 1-a-2
Develop and execute recruitment plan ⁸	2.1	1
Nominations and appointments to boards and committees (churches, classes, synod)	6.3 – 6.7	5-b, 5-c, 5-d, 5-e-1, 5-f
Fund internships	2.7	1-b-3
Regional gatherings	1.3, 1.7, 1.10, 1.11, 2.6, 3.4, 3.5	2-b, 2-c
Communications	6.1, 6.2, 2.6	5, 5-a, 1-b-2
Measurement and metrics	1.1, 4.3, 2.8	1-c

V. DIWG subteam status reports and relationship to DLPGII Project Plan

A. Policy review

This team is actively working with the Human Resources department in reviewing and recommending policy changes. Policies relevant to diversity issues are reviewed by DIWG before presentation to the MLC for approval. Policies already discussed with DIWG include processes for recruitment,

⁸ Recruitment plan development and related work will be taken up by the Database Team and will begin after the database is deployed.

hiring, onboarding and discrimination, harassment and retaliation.⁹ Current work includes revisions to various sections of the CRCNA employee handbooks (three different handbooks—U.S., Canada, International). Rudy Gonzalez (Race Relations), Wendy Batchelder, and Teresa Jones (both from HR) were invited to join the subteam.

The task of the team is affected by the fact that in the CRCNA each agency does its own hiring and has its own specific policies. A vision statement and a set of principles will be developed. This will serve as an umbrella statement and principles that create alignment with each agency's policies.

The development of these overarching standards and best practices will need periodic review to ensure that they remain relevant and current. The team is receiving valuable input from work already done by the Race Relations teams of the agencies.

B. Training

The subteam is cataloging all existing diversity training and other events (Addendum 2). Further detail is being developed:

1. name of "course" (e.g., DORR, Widening the Circle, Cultural Intelligence, etc.)
2. content and objective of training
3. prime target audience
4. who has already been trained
5. areas for improvement/modification based on feedback from prior events
6. future training schedule, 2015-2017
7. communications plan for "courses"

This is work in progress and will continue over the next months. The team will be communicating the availability and benefit of existing training (see Communications strategy, Addendum 3).

Identify training gaps (i.e., audiences who need to be reached and are not currently targeted by the identified training, or where we need to better engage our diverse audiences and stakeholders).

It is recommended that there should be an expectation that every senior leader will have a diversity training or event experience every year. This recommendation will be included as one of the metrics for measuring our progress along the diversity journey (Addendum 4).

DIWG (through the Training subteam) will also maintain close alignment with the new Staff Development committee of the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC). This Staff Development Committee is made up of representatives of Human Resources and some of the major agencies. This committee will meet at least quarterly and is charged with creating the guidelines and criteria to be used when reviewing and recommending training. Proposed trainings will be brought to the committee for review, and the committee will then present to MLC those they would recommend as either mandatory or strongly recommended.

Diversity related training would therefore also be assessed as "mandatory" or "recommended," and recommendations given to MLC. HR will also begin tracking attendance at mandatory trainings and will report back to directors.

⁹ DIWG discussion on December 5, 2014—U.S. employee handbook—replacement for anti-harassment policy.

DIWG recognizes the importance of actively communicating and promoting diversity training and other events. The Communications subteam will also take up this issue (e.g., website and social media communication, Addendum 3).

C. *Database development*

Letters were sent to classes and churches inviting the submission of names of diversity champions as well as members of the CRCNA who represent diversity. To date, the database contains approximately 250 names.

Terminology used to reference various ethnicities will reflect that which is commonly accepted by the ethnic communities to describe themselves. The one exception to this is the Diversity Survey references terminology used by Canada and the United States in its census and other governmental tracking. The Diversity database will use these same categories for consistency and adherence to regulatory guidelines in the U.S. and Canada.

Various options for the housing of this database were considered. The ultimate approach will include use of a modified Salesforce platform (used for the *Yearbook*). A spreadsheet is being used as a means of collection in the interim.

The database will include self-identified members of minority groups who served as

- delegates to synod
- ethnic advisors to synod
- agency or educational institution boards
- advisory boards or committees of CRCNA departments
- synodical committees
- CRCNA or agency staff
- pastors of CRCNA churches
- members of church councils
- other individuals who may (now or in the future) be identified as potentially filling one of the roles listed above

Care is being taken to ensure the privacy and appropriate use of any data collected at every step of the process, including procedures for collecting the information, housing it, who is allowed access, and for what purpose.

A survey instrument (Survey Monkey) has been designed and is in use to collect the responses and related data (Addendum 1).

D. *Regional gatherings*

1. DIWG members participated in the Glocal conference (glocalchurch.net) on November 17-19, 2014, in California. The conference highlighted the nexus between the local missional church and the global village. Colin Watson and Esteban Lugo led a workshop (breakout session) that highlighted the benefits and opportunities of diversity for the CRCNA. One concept discussed at the workshop was the need to look at diversity from the perspective of Leveraging Difference vs. Managing Diversity.¹⁰

¹⁰ See chart: Leveraging Difference Cycle (Addendum 5).

Due to the success of this initial experience, it is recommended that DIWG seek to take advantage of other similar or regional gatherings and request the opportunity to present a similar diversity experience.¹¹ Taking advantage of these types of opportunities may obviate the need for some or all of the initially proposed regional meetings. This issue will be reevaluated as DIWG participates in existing gatherings.

2. DIWG is also considering pilot gatherings in the United States and Canada where existing meetings are not planned. Such meetings will be evaluated before we do any more (as mentioned in the DLPG report to the BOT in February 2014).

The gatherings will

- include leaders and potential leaders from many races and cultures (including the majority group).
- give opportunity for dialogue on the critical issues facing the denomination.
- focus on unity in the midst of diversity.
- disseminate and receive information with the local leaders (e.g., discuss local “best practices”).
- include much time for prayer and mutual encouragement and motivation.

This issue is in response to the DLPG Plan document (DLPG implementation update Tasks 1.10 and 1.11).

E. Communications

The DIWG collaborated with the Communications team of the CRCNA in developing a Communications Plan (Addendum 3). Elements include processes to communicate across the denomination and ensuring the use of all media in communications (traditional, electronic, and social). A representative of the CRCNA Communications team has been invited to participate at DIWG meetings.

F. Measurement and metrics

A suggested format and content for a diversity scorecard was developed and is included as Addendum 4. The executive director has requested that the agency directors develop and submit annual targets for key metrics. These metrics will be integrated with the diversity scorecard (see Addendum 4, item 5).

The Justice, Inclusion, Mercy, and Advocacy (JIMA) Collaborative Work Group (CWG) and DIWG will share information to ensure alignment of their respective goals. In order to facilitate this collaboration, Shannon Jammal-Holleman is participating as a member of the DIWG and serves as liaison to JIMA.

¹¹ Other regional or affinity meetings might include gatherings chaired by various affinity groups (e.g., “East Meets West” annual gathering of Chinese Pastors from around North America. Gatherings such as the Black and Reformed Conference and the Multiethnic Conference are also critical opportunities for focused workshops.

VI. DIWG timeline

1. Update to BOT in February 2015, as report to Synod 2015.
2. Request that a final report be submitted to Synod 2016.
3. Final report to BOT in February 2016, as report to Synod 2016.
 - a. Initiative never fully complete, but ongoing infrastructure put in place.
 - b. Focus is on leveraging difference—start with race and culture, then extend to other categories on Diversity and Inclusion more broadly.
 - c. Diversity and Inclusion presents opportunities to be leveraged rather than problems to be managed.

Addendum 1

Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Survey for the Christian Ref. Church

1. Personal Information

Dear Friend,

We are seeking to build a database of persons who can serve and advise the Christian Reformed Church and its various ministries, especially from the perspective of diversity and inclusion, focusing primarily on race and ethnicity. The survey includes about 20 questions, most with multiple-choice answers, and will take you 10-15 minutes to complete.

As a result of this survey you may receive invitations to serve in areas of your interest, and invitations to participate in the life of the Christian Reformed Church across North America and in your region. You will also be giving us valuable input as we seek to promote diversity and inclusion. Your responses will be kept confidential, and this data will not be shared with organizations outside of the Christian Reformed Church or with any marketing efforts.

Thank you for your participation in the life of the church—and thank you for taking a few minutes of your time for this survey. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact us at diversity-inclusion@crcna.org.

The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) of the Christian Reformed Church

=====

1. Today's Date?

MM DD YYYY
Date / /

2. New entry... or update?

3. Please provide your contact information:

Name

Address

City/Town

State/Province

ZIP/Postal Code

Email Address

Phone Number

4. Country (Canada or USA)?

5. What is your gender?

Female

Male

6. Between what years were you born?

Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Survey for the Christian Ref. Church

7. Ethnicity/Race (USA) - Check all that apply.

- Asian
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White

Other (please specify)

8. Ethnicity/Race (Canada) - Check all that apply.

- Visible Minority
- Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit, Metis)
- White
- Other (please specify)

9. Education (Highest Level Attained)

- Less than High School
- High School or Equivalent
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Other (please specify)

Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Survey for the Christian Ref. Church

10. Which of the following best describes your current occupation? Check all that apply.

- Pastor
- Church or Denominational Staff
- Business leader or employee
- Skilled Trade
- Educator/Teaching Profession
- Government (Federal, State, or Municipal) worker
- Non-Profit employee
- Student
- Volunteer
- Retired
- Other (please specify)

2. Church Participation

11. How long have you been a member or attendee of the Christian Reformed Church?

- Less than 1 year
- At least 1 year but less than 3 years
- At least 3 years but less than 5 years
- At least 5 years but less than 10 years
- At least 10 years but less than 15 years
- More than 15 years

12. How active are you/have you been in ministry in your local church?

- Very active
- Active
- Somewhat active
- Participate from time to time
- Not active

Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Survey for the Christian Ref. Church

13. Church Membership (or currently attending) and Name(s) of Pastor(s)

Name of Church

Pastor

Pastor

14. What are your areas of interest? Check all that apply.

- Local Missions
- Global Missions
- Diaconal Work
- Media Ministries
- Justice Issues
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Leadership Development
- Finance/Accounting
- Advancement
- Information Technology (IT)

Other (please specify)

15. Name your top 2 or 3 areas of current (local, regional, or other) ministry involvement:

First

Second

Third

Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Survey for the Christian Ref. Church

16. In which of the following areas have you served the Christian Reformed Church (currently or formerly)? Check all that apply.

- Deacon at local church
- Elder at local church
- Youth Leader (e.g., GEMS, Cadets, etc.)
- Church Committee member
- Ethnic Advisor at Synod
- Synodical or Classical Delegate
- Agency Board, Denominational Committee, or Advisory Council
- Multiethnic Conference attendee
- Black and Reformed Conference attendee
- SCORR (Synodical Committee of Race Relations) Scholar
- Short Term or Long Term Missions involvement

Other (please specify)

3. Town Hall or Workshop Meetings

17. Are you interested in participating in a regional town hall meeting or workshop with others in the Christian Reformed Church to discuss issues of Diversity and Inclusion?

- Yes
- No

Other (please specify)

Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Survey for the Christian Ref. Church

18. What agenda items would you like to see in such a gathering?

- What the Bible says about diversity and inclusion
- The diversity imperative (why is it important?)
- History of diversity in the CRCNA
- Current efforts at improving diversity... training and beyond...
- Mutual sharing of ideas to raise awareness of the issues
- Listening to the experiences of other churches
- Leadership in the CRCNA... various roles
- Benefits of leveraging differences to benefit the kingdom

Other (please specify)

4. Closing Remarks and Recommendations

19. Do you have any suggestions as to who else should receive this Diversity and Inclusion Survey?

20. What other thoughts, ideas, or suggestions would you like to provide that would benefit the work of Diversity and Inclusion in the Christian Reformed Church?

Thank you for providing your information. You may anticipate hearing from the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) in the coming months with further opportunities to serve and be engaged in ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. Do not hesitate to contact the Diversity team at cwatson@crcna.org if you have any questions or have further input.

Addendum 2 Training and Schedule

Name of course	Content and objective of training	Prime target audience	Who has already been trained	Areas for improvement/modification based on feedback from prior events	Future training schedule 2014-2015	Communications plan for courses
Dance of Racial Reconciliation 1	To recognize, expose, and dismantle racism in all its forms (systemic, cultural, institutional, and personal)	CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			2x a year	CRC News, F7I Intranet, CRC Race Relations Team Rep.
Dance of Racial Reconciliation 2	Intended to be another contribution toward equipping God's people to work for racial reconciliation. It is designed to deepen what was started with DORR and WTC and give hope to those trying to get at the root causes of racism, to address systemic issues, and to provide a deeper knowledge of racial reconciliation. Its three themes are unity, justice, and reconciliation, along with a section on trauma and cycles of violence.	CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			2014 Pilot/ 2x a year	CRC News, F7I Intranet, CRC Race Relations Team Rep.
Widening the Circle	WTC is an antiracism workshop used in Canada and specific to Canada. It covers five topics: (1) celebrating our unity and diversity in Christ, (2) faith and culture: our true identity, (3) exploring brokenness in the Canadian context of racism and resistance, (4) exploring self-awareness and structures to identify racism, and (5) steps to wholeness by building relationships and action steps. Focuses on concrete skills to improve our ability to act and react in positive ways across cultural lines. These four concrete skill areas are (1) knowledge, (2) motivation, (3) interpretation, and (4) behavior. Through carefully tailored interactive exercises, participants become aware of their personal life-long journey in Cultural Intelligence, as they build their own capacity to improve their CQ over time.	CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			2 x a year	CRC News, F7I Intranet, CRC Race Relations Team Rep.
Cultural Intelligence (CQ)	The Church Between Borders workshop is a collaboration among the CRC offices of Social Justice and Race Relations and the Reformed Church in America. It is about (1) how churches can be welcoming presences for immigrants, (2) how churches can help in the struggle immigrants face when they are not able to get documentation for living in the United States, and (3) how churches have the awesome ability to transform that struggle by acting with justice and mercy.	CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			4x a year	CRC News, F7I Intranet, CRC Race Relations Team Rep.
Church Between Borders	Leadership and Race is a workshop that deliberately pursues inclusion through six tasks: (1) introduction; (2) objectives, expectations, and guidelines; (3) biblical foundations; (4) assumptions; (5) framing the issue; and (6) mountain plan—identifying the journey. This workshop is geared for those in leadership positions.	CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			2 x a year	CRC News and Bulletin Announcements
Leadership & Race	This workshop is aimed for parents with kids that are in preschool through 8th grade. It is also for grandparents, Sunday school teachers, those in nursery, and anybody who relates with children in preschool through 8th grade. Raising Racism-Free Children is a three-hour workshop with four areas of focus. The workshop is not a lecture but a dialogue between participants and facilitators that includes creative activities that engage a variety of learning styles.	CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			2x a year	CRC News and Bulletin Announcements
Raising Racism-Free Children	The Blanket Exercise, developed by KAIROS following the landmark report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, is an excellent tool that literally walks participants through the history of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It helps participants understand why reconciliation is needed and how to take steps toward reconciliation and new relationships.	CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			2x a year	CRC News and Bulletin Announcements
Blanket Exercise		CRCMA Staff, CRC Congregations, and CRC Institutions			August 22, 2014 Pilot to Pilot to Facilitators	CRC News, F7I Intranet, CRC Race Relations Team Rep.

Addendum 3

Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) - Communications Plan

PURPOSE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) was assembled and given responsibility for implementing directives of Synod 2013 in response to recommendations from the Diversity in Leadership Planning Group (DLPG).

The DIWG works under the direction of the Diversity Agent (DA), Colin Watson, and is accountable to the Executive Director (ED) of the CRCNA, Steve Timmermans. Its membership consists of leaders within the CRCNA, reflecting the Revelation 7:9-10 vision of diversity.

The existence and work of the DIWG is intended to serve to increase the participation and inclusion of people of color within the CRC and its leadership. The team will be a collaborative group focused on uniting the CRCNA around a shared vision of full inclusion by modeling the behavior and demonstrating the benefits of achieving a fully diverse and inclusive denominational leadership team.

GOALS

The goals of the DIWG are as follows:

1. Develop and execute a work plan in line with synodical directives.
2. Communicate the plan and progress to agency and ministry leaders (Ministries Leadership Council [MLC]).
3. Engage with the wider CRCNA community to ensure that the vision of diversity and inclusiveness is widely embraced.

COMMUNICATIONS

The DIWG needs a communications strategy that will assist in carrying out its purposes and achieving its goals.

AUDIENCES

Important audiences for DIWG communications include the following:

1. Leadership within CRC congregations
2. People of color within the CRC
 - General
 - We would need to include a separate section for young adults. Even if information is relevant for all people in the congregation, there has to be a different mechanism to get information to the younger generation. At times the information will have to be presented in a different way as well.
 - Networks
3. Denominational leadership (e.g., MLC and Canadian Ministries Team [CMT])
4. Denominational staff
5. Denominational boards (including Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary)

MESSAGES

Key messages for DIWG communications are as follows:

1. Communicating the desire to unify the CRC around a shared vision of diversity in the CRC [church leadership; people of color; all constituents]
2. Sharing success stories and interest stories that reflect this vision of diversity
3. Highlighting the practical and ministerial benefits of leveraging diversity for the CRCNA [all]
4. Alerting people to upcoming activities and events [people of color; church leadership]
5. Human-relations information such as the diversity scorecard [denominational leadership—MLC]

COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

Ways of reaching desired audiences with key messages:

1. Congregational leaders
 - Email to churches—as required or included with Church Announcements (Wednesday)
 - Letter from DA and/or ED—as required
 - “For Pastors” newsletter—weekly, on Thursday
2. Classes
 - Existing diversity teams of classes
3. People of color
 - Email (requires collecting addresses and creating a database)
 - Google site—would enable sharing of information and could include a discussion forum
 - Locate all existing networks and either link to their newsfeeds/blogs/sites or request that they send out information on our behalf (include advertisements in their emails/publications)—for example, Black and Reformed planning committee; annual Multicultural Conference planning team, PRFC network—depending on the content of the information, since this will not be targeting all CRC folks
 - Home Missions Ethnic Ministry Council: Charles Kim, Bob Price, Stanley Jim, et al. for distribution to their networks of people of color.
 - Multiethnic Conference participants
4. Denominational leaders (MLC)
 - Direct communication from the ED and/or director of Race Relations in MLC agendas and monthly meetings
 - Canadian Ministries Team
 - Denominational boards and advisory committees
 - Classis diversity teams
 - Calvin College diversity team
5. Denominational staff
 - All-staff email—as required
 - “FYI” staff e-newsletter—weekly on Monday
6. Young adults
 - Various social and other media

Other communications channels available:

1. CRC News online in the CRC Newsroom and weekly email (Wednesday).
2. *Banner* News section or “Together Doing More” pages—monthly in the print magazine or more frequently in the online *Banner*. Because of the considerable lead time (6-8 weeks) required for a *Banner* story, this would be most useful for general stories that are not time-sensitive.
3. The Network—create a Diversity section on the Network. This could be linked to the Google site to provide a discussion forum for both DIWG members and interested participants or observers from outside the group.
4. Webpage on CRCNA website—develop a webpage with vision statement, resources, links to events/conferences, ways to get involved, etc.
5. New people of color database—consider getting input from people of color during upcoming activities and events about additional effective ways for the DIWG to communicate with them.
6. Social media—either the CRCNA Facebook page or its own page—Twitter and Instagram get used quite a bit (almost more than Facebook these days—at least with our younger audiences).
7. Diversity champions—it would be important for champions to be identified within congregations, institutions, organizations, etc. So much of this has to be relational. It could be one person who has a passion for diversity and is willing to get information out to his/her church community, or it could be a small team of people willing to do this. Diversity champions do not need to be persons of color; they need to be people who are passionate about being a part of this conversation, who are willing to bring others along to participate, and who continue to learn along with the rest of us. Of course, it would be helpful to get people of color on board with the promotion as well.
8. Talented communicators, promoters—we have very talented people working in this denomination, specifically in the area of design. We can come up with posters, brochures, or information cards that can be sent out to leaders in churches/youth group directors/champions who will promote on our behalf. We (along with diversity champions or others willing to serve in this capacity) can set up recruitment tables/info meetings at different churches/institutions—any way to get information in someone’s hands and possibly have a face-to-face conversation. Email announcements are a good start, but there has to be something as a follow up.
9. Video clips—mpeg files that can be sent to churches/institutions to be used as part of their promotion. This would take time, effort, and funds, but if we were to create something that captured the overall vision/mision with an invitation for participation, it could be used in a number of settings and used a number of times. The idea would be to create something that wouldn’t “expire.”
10. Identify all other networks available to and used within the CRCNA.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

Though the work of the DIWG is primarily internal—that is, within the denominational structure—it also seeks to engage with the broader CRC

community in order to gather information and to share its vision of diversity and inclusiveness. This suggests two different styles of communication.

Internally, DIWG needs to report regularly on its activities and progress, both vertically—up the line to senior leadership for purposes of information-sharing and accountability—and horizontally—to denominational staff for purposes of understanding and buy-in. It can do this through regular reports delivered either in person to CRCNA leadership meetings such as MLC and the Board of Trustees, or by email and/or “FYI” to CRCNA staff.

Externally, DIWG needs to be able to speak to a broader constituency of people of color within the CRC and to CRC congregational leaders and members. It will be important to put messages in context: “What does it mean to me and my church?” This can be done through targeted emails as well as via the Network, CRC News, and occasionally *The Banner*.

Addendum 4

Diversity Scorecard and Metrics¹

Scorecard and Metrics Team² — February 2014

The principal task of this team is to gather agency and departmental reports regarding diversity, identify key metrics, and present a recommended format to DIWG for adoption by the Executive Director and the MLC.

CRCNA Synodical and Denominational Boards (BOT, Agencies, and Educational Institutions)³—Reporter: Synodical Services

1. **Measure:** Ethnic/racial diversity of synod
Definition: Percentage of delegates who are ethnic minorities at synod
Target: At least 25% by 2016
Frequency of reporting: Once a year
2. **Measure:** Ethnic/racial diversity of denominational boards
Definition: Percentage of board members who are ethnic minorities on denominational ministry boards including (and limited to) agency and educational boards, including the Board of Trustees
Target: At least 25% by 2016
Frequency of reporting: Once a year

CRCNA Staff⁴ (All Levels) and Leadership (Levels 16 and above)—

Reporter: Human Resources

3. **Measure:** Level of ethnic/racial diversity in CRCNA staff
Definition: Percentage of staff positions on the CRCNA payroll (all levels 5-20) currently filled by people of color

¹ All goals will be continually tested to ensure that they are appropriate, realistic, and move the CRCNA forward.

² Team members include Jeanne Kallemeyn, Jeff Sajdak, and Colin Watson.

³ Encourage classes to adopt goals in keeping with their unique geographies and communities.

⁴ Includes staff of agencies and educational institutions.

Target: At least 25% by June 2017

Current Actual: 17.2% (70 of 407 positions) on 12/31/2014

Frequency of reporting: Twice a year

4. Measure: Level of racial diversity in CRCNA staff leadership
Definition: Percentage of staff leadership positions on the CRCNA payroll (level 16 or above) currently filled by people of color
Target: At least 25% by June 2017
Current Actual: 15.8% (6 of 38 positions) on 12/31/2014
Frequency of reporting: Twice a year

Human Resources (HR) Policies and Procedures/Training—Reporter:
Human Resources

5. Measure: HR policies and procedures are intentionally welcoming of people of all ethnicities. Position descriptions contain no implicit bias.
Definition: All new position descriptions and all policy changes are reviewed annually by a diverse HR team.⁵
Target: 100% of new positions and all policy changes reviewed by HR committee
Frequency of reporting: Once a year
6. Measure: Members of all hiring committees reflect desired diversity
Definition: Percentage of all hiring related committees (i.e., search teams, interview teams, et al.) that are ethnic minorities
Target: At least 25% by June 2015
Frequency of reporting: Twice a year
7. Measure: Training (CRCNA staff)—Each staff member is expected to participate in at least one diversity related experience per year.⁶
Definition: Percentage of staff members who participated in diversity training in the past 12 months
Target: 75% by June 2015; 100% by June 2016
Frequency of reporting: Quarterly

Agency and educational institution specific measures—Reporter: Agencies

8. Measure:
Definition:

To be supplied by the agencies/educational institutions...
--

Target:
Frequency of reporting: At least twice a year
9. Measure: Ever-improving diversity climate and attitudes throughout the CRCNA
Definition: Measures of diversity climate and attitude—e.g., Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale - Short Form (M-GUDS-S) used by Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS), or similar measure
Frequency: Once a year

⁵ This HR team is appointed by MLC.

⁶ This includes DORR, Widening the Circle, DORR-2, Cultural Intelligence, Blanket Exercise, et al. Other options for this training experience are under development.

Partners for Racism-Free Community (PRFC)—Reporter: Race Relations

10. Measure: Becoming a racism-free community

Definition: Progress toward becoming a member of Partners for Racism-Free Community (PRFC)

Target: Become a Level 1 PRFC partner by June 2015

Frequency of Reporting: Quarterly

Communications and Database Development—Reporter: Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG)⁷

11. Communications—develop and implement Diversity communications plan

a. At least one story/message per month in *The Banner* or *CRC News*

b. Create new website/aggregate web address (e.g., diversity.crcna.org) by March 1, 2015

c. Ever increasing (quantifiable) web traffic to site

Frequency of reporting: Quarterly

12. Regional workshops—fully engage minority and racial groups

a. At least three workshops/conferences per year (in different geographical regions), each led primarily by ethnic minority churches but to which the broader CRCNA community is invited (focus is on ministry, but includes segments on board and classis participation)

b. Consider providing partial funding to facilitate at least three workshops per year—potential conveners apply for funding using a model similar to that used by Sustaining Congregational Excellence (SCE)

Frequency of reporting: Twice a year

13. Ethnic leadership database—build a database of current and potential leaders in the CRCNA

a. Goal: 300 persons by June 30, 2015—then growing by at least 100 persons per year.

b. Ensure database is well maintained and is accurate and updated

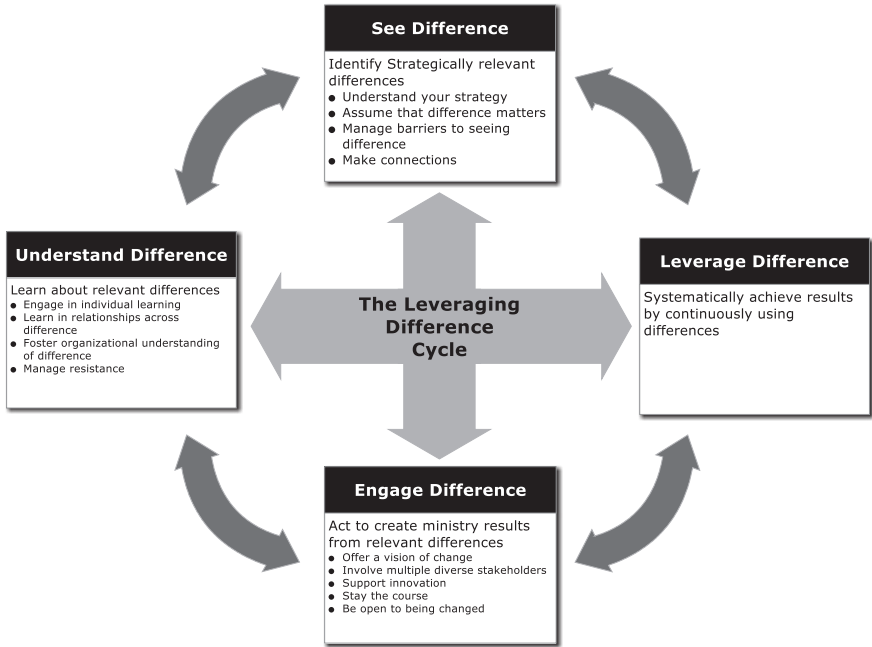
c. Ensure database is well used by agencies, educational institutions and (ultimately) churches (metric: number of inquiries, number of opportunities granted)

d. Migrate the database to the Salesforce platform to further expand its potential use

Frequency of reporting: Quarterly

⁷ These additional measures will be reformatted to be in Scorecard format.

Addendum 5 The Leveraging Difference Cycle



—Adapted from *The End of Diversity as We Know It* by Martin N. Davidson; Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Appendix I Proposed Revision to “Executive Session of Synod” Designation

In conducting a routine review of recent synods, consistent with the delegated tasks assigned to the Board of Trustees, and in the interest of honoring the principles of good governance, it was suggested that a more basic revision of *Rules for Synodical Procedure*, sections VIII, A, 1 and 2 is desirable because the designation “closed sessions of synod” in present practice has become a euphemism. There was a time when closed sessions were strictly observed; however, in more recent years following decisions to include various types of advisers, and since later decisions have allowed advisers to remain in the assembly when “confidential matters” are considered, the “executive session” designation has been significantly compromised.

The current reality is that designated advisers to synod (potentially more than 20) may remain, while some others who are also present in official capacity are automatically excluded. Based on a discussion between members of the Board of Trustees executive committee and members of the staff, the following revisions are proposed to the BOT and synod for consideration.

It is recommended that Synod 2015 approve revisions to sections VIII, A, 1 and 2 of the *Rules for Synodical Procedure* as follows:

Present section VIII, A, 1

Executive Session: Synod may enter an executive session in unusual or delicate situations. In such sessions, only the delegates, the staff consultants, the seminary advisers, the ethnic advisers, and the young adult advisers shall be present. If delegates from fully recognized churches in ecclesiastical fellowship are at synod, they also may remain in this session.

Proposed section VIII, A, 1

Executive Session: Synod may enter an executive session in unusual or delicate situations. In such sessions, only the delegates, the staff consultants, the seminary advisers, the president and one other member of the executive committee of the Board of Trustees, and such others as determined by synod upon the recommendation of the executive director, shall be present. If delegates from fully recognized churches in ecclesiastical fellowship are at synod, they also may remain in this session.

Present section VIII, A, 2

Strict Executive Session: Synod may enter a strict executive session in very unusual situations when such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honor or for the welfare of the church. In such sessions, only the delegates, the staff consultants, the seminary faculty advisers, the ethnic advisers, and the young adult advisers shall be present. If any of the above mentioned persons are personally involved in the matter under discussion, they will absent themselves voluntarily or by synodical ruling.

Proposed section VIII, A, 2

Strict Executive Session: Synod may enter a strict executive session in very unusual situations when such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honor or for the welfare of the church. In such sessions, only the delegates, any staff consultant that may be needed upon the recommendation of the executive director, the seminary advisers, and the president and one other member of the executive committee of the Board of Trustees shall be present. If any of the above mentioned persons are personally involved in the matter under discussion, they will absent themselves voluntarily or by synodical ruling.

Grounds:

1. With the incremental addition of advisers, the number of nondelegates present at executive sessions has increased to the point where it can hardly be considered an executive session.
2. In recent years there have been several instances in which synod deliberated on matters that were sensitive and confidential. It seemed inappropriate to allow so many nondelegates to remain in the assembly.
3. When synod promises confidentiality in discussing sensitive matters, then only delegates and those who are essential for the work of synod should normally be in attendance.

4. The inclusion of the president of the BOT in executive and strict-executive sessions acknowledges the governance function of the BOT when synod is not in session.
5. Synod may at any time designate additional individuals to remain in the assembly if such presence is needed or helpful to the task at hand.

Appendix J

Proposed Church Order Changes for Adoption by Synod 2015

The Board of Trustees is forwarding the following proposed Church Order changes with regard to the office of deacon on behalf of Synod 2013 to Synod 2015 for adoption:

1. That synod adopt the following changes to Church Order Article 40 with implementation following adoption.

Note: **Boldface text** indicates changes from the current Church Order.

Proposed Article 40

- a. The council of each church shall delegate a minister, an elder, **and a deacon** to the classis. If a church is without a minister, or the minister is prevented from attending, **another elder** shall be delegated **in place of the minister**. Officebearers who are not delegated may also attend classis and may be given an advisory voice.

Proposed Supplement, Article 40-a

The gender of delegates to a classis shall be consistent with the decisions of that classis concerning the supplement to Article 3-a of the Church Order. Delegates who believe the seating of women delegates is in violation of the Word of God may record their protest on the appropriate credentials. Their names, along with their protests, shall be included in the official record of each classis meeting. If a classis so desires, it may also invite emerging churches to delegate **three** officebearers to the meetings of classis.

(Acts of Synod 1997, p. 621)

(Amended Acts of Synod 2007, p. 612)

(Amended Acts of Synod 2009, p. 613)

(Amended Acts of Synod 2015, p. ***)

Proposed Supplement, Article 40-a and -c

Modification for Churches of Classis Red Mesa

- a. The council of each church shall delegate a minister, **an elder, and a deacon** to the classis. If a church is without a minister, or a minister, elder, or deacon delegate is prevented from attending, **any combination of three officebearers may be delegated**. Officebearers who are not delegated also may attend classis and may be given an advisory voice.

c. The presiding officers of classis shall be selected from office-bearers within the classis. **Ordinarily** the same presiding officers shall not be chosen twice in succession.

(*Acts of Synod 1981*, p. 16)

(Amended Acts of Synod 2015, p. *)**

Grounds:

- a. Numerous requests over the years have asked that the major assemblies seat deacons in order to have full representation and participation in carrying out the mission of the church.
 - b. Previous synodical reports have said that the Bible and the confessions do not prohibit the seating of deacons at major assemblies.
 - c. Delayed adoption and implementation will allow for clarification on outstanding issues, and thus allow for fuller conversation and ownership within the church.
2. That synod adopt the following changes to Church Order Article 45 with full implementation (delegation of a deacon) at Synod 2016.

Proposed Article 45

Synod is the assembly representing the churches of all the classes. Each classis shall delegate **one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one other officebearer** to synod.

Grounds:

- a. Numerous requests over the years have asked that the major assemblies seat deacons in order to have full representation and participation in carrying out the mission of the church.
- b. Previous synodical reports have said that the Bible and the confessions do not prohibit the seating of deacons at major assemblies.
- c. Delayed adoption and implementation will allow for clarification on outstanding issues, and thus allow for fuller conversation and ownership within the church.

Appendix K

Proposed Changes to the Judicial Code (Church Order Article 30-c and Its Supplement)

Synod 2014 instructed the BOT to bring a proposal to Synod 2015 for possible revisions to the Judicial Code. The BOT at its September 2014 meeting adopted the following for consideration by Synod 2015 in response to the request of synod, included below with the proposed changes to Church Order Article 30-c and its Supplement (changes indicated in ~~strike through~~ and *italics*).

- a. That the role of the executive director in relation to the Judicial Code Committee be addressed directly in the proposed Judicial Code, Section 8.

Ground: The job description of the executive director includes ex officio membership in this committee, though the Judicial Code does not explicitly recognize this.

(*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 569)

Section 8: The Judicial Code Committee of Synod

a. Original hearings and appellate hearings before synod shall be referred to a Judicial Code Committee appointed by synod. This committee meets between synods as frequently as its business requires and presents its recommendations to synod in writing. Although there are some separate regulations regarding this committee in the Rules for Synodical Procedure, the committee largely functions as a normal advisory committee of synod.

b. The Judicial Code Committee shall be composed of twelve (12) members and shall reflect the diversity of the denomination. Each year four (4) persons shall be elected for terms of three (3) years. At least one (1) of these four (4) persons shall be a minister of the Word or a commissioned pastor; at least one (1) shall be a person trained in the law; at least one (1) shall not be a minister of the Word or a commissioned pastor nor one trained in the law. Synod shall elect members from nominations presented by the Board of Trustees of the CRC. The Judicial Code Committee may recommend nominees to the Board of Trustees of the CRC. The terms of members shall commence July 1 following their election by synod. In the event of a vacancy on the committee because of resignation or death, the Board of Trustees of the CRC shall appoint a person to fill the balance of that term. Members may be reelected but shall not serve more than six consecutive years. A former member who has been off the committee for two or more years shall be eligible for election to the committee as a new member. The Judicial Code Committee shall select a chairperson and reporter from among its membership. *In addition, the executive director serves as a procedural adviser to the Judicial Code Committee chairperson.* Any member of the Judicial Code Committee advising a given synod may be, but need not be, a delegate to that synod.

- b. That section 1, d, i of the Judicial Code be amended to read as follows (exact wording to be determined by the BOT):

“when written charges are filed by an employee, an assembly, or an individual who is directly affected either materially or personally; and”

and that section 5, d be amended as necessary to coordinate with this change.

Ground: This limitation of scope in the procedures for the Judicial Code is found in section 5, d, but it would help clarify the understanding of the scope of the Judicial Code if it appears in this section.

(Acts of Synod 2014, p. 569)

Section 1: Scope of the Judicial Code

a. Disputes arising from allegations of offenses against the Word of God, doctrinal standards, or Church Order are subject to resolution under the Judicial Code. In particular, the Judicial Code governs the procedure for filing written charges and conducting judicial hearings before a council, classis, or synod, and appeals from judicial hearing.

b. Matters of admonition and discipline do not prompt a judicial hearing unless there are written charges that either party or the assembly determines require a judicial hearing. The Judicial Code recognizes the fundamental and

primary role of pastoral means in all matters of admonition and discipline; it assumes that these matters are best handled by counseling and entreaty; and if sanctions are required, it leaves the determination of them to the church under the Church Order.

c. The Judicial Code deals with the following matters:

- i) Disputes involving members and/or assemblies of the church and, in some limited instances, nonmembers (see Section 3-a).
- ii) Disputes involving agencies, boards, or committees on one side and members or assemblies of the church on the other side, excluding challenges to termination of employment (see Sections 3-a, 5-d, 5-e).

d. With respect to such matters, the provisions of the Judicial Code apply only

- i) when written charges are filed; *written charges may be filed by an employee, an assembly, or an individual who is directly affected either materially or personally*; and
- ii) when either party to the dispute requests a judicial hearing or when the assembly first hearing the charges determines to constitute a formal hearing.

Section 5: Judicial Hearing Procedures

a. A judicial hearing, if ordered, shall proceed as follows:

[i-viii are not included here but are unchanged]

b. The testimony shall be recorded verbatim.

c. The complainant has the burden to prove the written charge. Written charges must be proven with a high degree of probability.

d. If a complainant other than an employee or an assembly has filed written charges against an agency, board, or committee, he or she must allege—and the burden remains on him or her to show in any hearing—that the decision, act, or course of conduct being challenged substantially affects him or her directly, either materially or personally, and as an individual apart from other members of the church.

e. If a complainant is an employee who has filed written charges against an agency, board, or committee, he or she must allege—and the burden remains on him or her to show in any hearing—that the decision, act, or course of conduct being challenged substantially affects him or her directly, either materially or personally, in his or her capacity as an employee.

Notes:

1. The additional language has been added after the semicolon instead of the way suggested by synod in order to keep the focus on the scope: “when written charges are filed.” The “*by whom*” then modifies the phrase “written charges.”
2. Rather than amending Section 5, coordination is gained by the insertion of references to 5-d and 5-e in Section 1, c, ii.

- c. That the preamble include the citation(s) to the *Agenda for Synod 2010*, p. 497, that describe the formation and function of the Advisory Panel Process (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 78).

Grounds:

- 1) As it stands, there is no immediate context for understanding what this Advisory Panel is and does. Tying this to the *Acts of Synod* clarifies what this panel and its functions are.
- 2) The section on restorative justice in the preceding paragraph does cite the appropriate *Acts of Synod*.

(*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 569-70)

Preamble to the Judicial Code

Synod 1977 adopted the first edition of the Judicial Code of Rights and Procedures. It did so to “encourage greater uniformity of procedure throughout our denomination when charges must be adjudicated.” The belief is that this Code “will help to insure just treatment of those who are involved in the judgment and decisions of the church” and that providing “impartial judgments among God’s people” is required by Scripture (Deut. 1:16-17; Deut. 16:18-20; Lev. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19-21). “Procedural guidelines” are needed to deal with substantive issues in an appropriate and “ecclesiastical manner” (Church Order, Article 28), and, according to synod, the Judicial Code provides this “procedural pattern within which the law of love may be fulfilled” (James 2:1, 8-9).

However, the Judicial Code should not be considered as providing a means of broad applicability for resolving disputes. Rather, the Judicial Code is intended to be a dispute-resolution mechanism of last resort because judicial hearings and subsequent decisions of assemblies will likely never fully satisfy the parties involved. Thus, complete reconciliation may not be achieved. Rather, the focus of Judicial Code hearings and of the resultant decisions made by the assemblies is not primarily on reconciliation but on some kind of final resolution. While the Judicial Code does provide rights for all parties and a fair process toward resolution, it does not purport to restore the mutual trust that may have been lost as any given dispute may have raged and festered.

Before invoking the rights afforded under the Judicial Code, brothers and sisters in Christ should make every effort to resolve issues between them amicably, according to the teachings of Scripture. If they require external assistance to reach agreement, they should, where appropriate, seek trained facilitators or mediators to help them reach agreement. A process of mediation led by neutral parties may facilitate a more satisfactory resolution.

One of the ways in which issues can be resolved more amicably is to use restorative justice practices. Synod 2005 encouraged “the active participation of churches and church members in restorative justice efforts in order to restore and reconcile victims and offenders where possible, and to effect, as far as possible, the establishment of justice for all members of our societies.” It also urged “congregations, schools, denominational offices, other Christian institutions, and homes to employ restorative justice practices” (*Acts of Synod*

2005, pp. 761-62). These practices bring with them greater potential for true reconciliation.

On the other hand, mediation or restorative justice practices are not necessarily appropriate for charges involving physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Such charges should be dealt with in the first instance by way of the Advisory Panel Process approved by synod and associated with the denomination's Safe Church Ministry (see *Acts of Synod 2010*, p. 866; *Agenda for Synod 2010*, pp. 497-502).

Thus, even if written charges have been filed and a formal hearing has been requested, the assembly must still make a determination as to whether or not sufficient means for resolution, formal or informal, have or have not been exhausted. If such means have not been exhausted, the assembly should seriously consider postponing the judicial hearing while further efforts are undertaken. Only after the assembly determines that sufficient means have been exhausted or that such means do not resolve the matter, should the assembly proceed to conduct a judicial hearing as set forth below.

- d. That the Church Order in some way reconcile the potential conflict between Articles 30-a and 30-c that may occur when a matter is first brought to an assembly as an appeal, and then at a later time when that same matter is brought to the same assembly via the Judicial Code.

Grounds:

- 1) Having potentially already heard an appeal with substantially the same material and issues, that assembly may not always be expected to be, and appear to be, impartial.
- 2) A matter that first proceeds as an appeal and then returns through the vehicle of the Judicial Code seems to duplicate efforts.
- 3) This may put a respondent in the position of double jeopardy.
- 4) The Church Order in no way clarifies whether this possible duplication of efforts is permissible or not, or under what circumstances such a scenario might be permitted.
- 5) Clarification on this point would be a benefit to the churches and its assemblies if and when such a scenario would arise.

(Acts of Synod 2014, p. 570)

Article 30

- a. Assemblies and church members may appeal to the assembly next in order if they believe that injustice has been done or that a decision conflicts with the Word of God or the Church Order. Appellants shall observe all ecclesiastical regulations regarding the manner and time of appeal.
- b. Synod may establish rights for other appeals and adopt rules for processing them.
- c. If invoked, the Judicial Code shall apply to the processing of ~~appeals~~ **and** written charges, *unless the assembly to which the charges are submitted has dealt with and ruled definitively on substantially similar appeals in a manner pursuant to the provisions of Article 30-a.*

Note: This amendment involves clarification of procedure and is not deemed to be a substantial alteration (see Art. 47 and its Supplement). The recommendation therefore deliberately would use the word *adopt* rather than *propose*.

Appendix L

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA— CANADA FOUNDATION

BY-LAW NUMBER 2014-1

A By-law relating generally
to the conduct of the affairs of

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA— CANADA FOUNDATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. INTERPRETATION**
 - 1.1 Meaning of Words
 - 1.2 Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act Terms
 - 1.3 Severability
- 2. CRCNA AGENCY**
- 3. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF CRCNA Cda Fdn**
 - 3.1 Representation
 - 3.2 Purposes
 - 3.3 Statement of Faith
- 4. HEAD OFFICE**
- 5. SEAL**
- 6. MEMBERSHIP**
 - 6.1 Membership Conditions
 - 6.2 Termination of Membership
 - 6.3 Discipline of Members
 - 6.4 Liability of Members
- 7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
 - 7.1 Board
 - 7.2 Elected Directors
 - 7.3 Qualifications
 - 7.4 Quorum
 - 7.5 Vacancies
 - 7.6 Removal of Directors
 - 7.7 Remuneration of Directors
 - 7.8 Responsibility for Acts
 - 7.9 Rules and Regulations
- 8. ELECTION OF THE BOARD**
 - 8.1 Term of Office
 - 8.2 Re-Election
 - 8.3 Elections
 - 8.4 Nominations
 - 8.5 Election Method
 - 8.6 Forms

- 9. MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS**
 - 9.1 Calling Meetings
 - 9.2 Notice of Meetings
 - 9.3 Regular Meetings
 - 9.4 Meetings by Electronic Conference
 - 9.5 Voting
- 10. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS**
 - 10.1 Annual Meeting
 - 10.2 Meetings by Electronic Conference
 - 10.3 Special General Meeting
 - 10.4 Notice of Meetings
 - 10.5 Quorum
 - 10.6 Voting by Members
 - 10.7 By saying "aye"
 - 10.8 Chair
 - 10.9 Polls
 - 10.10 Adjournments
 - 10.11 Annual Financial Statements
- 11. OFFICERS**
 - 11.1 Executive Officers
 - 11.2 Duties of the President
 - 11.3 Duties of the Vice-President
 - 11.4 Duties of the Secretary
 - 11.5 Duties of the Treasurer
 - 11.6 Board May Appoint Other Officers
 - 11.7 CRCNA Cda Fdn Executive Director
 - 11.8 Holding More Than One Office
 - 11.9 Vacancy in Office
- 12. ED and DED of the CRCNA**
 - 12.1 Receiving Documents
 - 12.2 Attending Meetings
- 13. COMMITTEES**
 - 13.1 Appointment of Committees
 - 13.2 Rules Governing Committees
- 14. PROTECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS**
 - 14.1 Directors and Officers Liability Exclusion
 - 14.2 Pre-Indemnity Considerations
 - 14.3 Indemnification of Directors and Officers
 - 14.4 Insurance
- 15. EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS**
 - 15.1 Cheques, Drafts, Notes, Etc.
 - 15.2 Execution of Documents
 - 15.3 Books and Records
- 16. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**
 - 16.1 Board to Designate Bankers
 - 16.2 Deposit of Securities

17. **BORROWING BY CRCNA Cda Fdn**
 - 17.1 Borrowing Authority
 - 17.2 Specific Borrowing Authority
 - 17.3 Delegate Borrowing Authority
 - 17.4 Supplement of Borrowing Authority
18. **FINANCIAL YEAR**
 - 18.1 Financial Year Determined
19. **AUDITOR**
 - 19.1 Annual Appointment
 - 19.2 Notice of Intention to Nominate
 - 19.3 Vacancy in the Office of Auditor
 - 19.4 Removal of Auditor
20. **NOTICE**
 - 20.1 Method of Notice
 - 20.2 Omissions and Errors
21. **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**
 - 21.1 Mediation and Arbitration
 - 21.2 Dispute Resolution Mechanism
22. **BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS, ETC.**
 - 22.1 Requirements for Amendment of By-laws
 - 22.2 Additional Requirements for By-law Amendment
 - 22.3 By Whom By-law Amendments Proposed
23. **REPEAL OF PRIOR BY-LAWS**
 - 23.1 Repeal
 - 23.2 Exception
 - 23.3 Proviso
24. **EFFECTIVE DATE**
 - 24.1 Effective Date

BY-LAW NUMBER 2014-1

A By-law relating generally to the conduct of the affairs of the

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA—
CANADA FOUNDATION
(CRCNA Cda Fdn)**

WHEREAS by Letters Patent issued under the *Canada Corporations Act*, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-32, and dated the 15th day of April 2003, CRCNA Cda Fdn was incorporated;

AND WHEREAS it is considered expedient to enact a General By-law relating generally to the conduct of the affairs of CRCNA Cda Fdn;

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED as a By-law of CRCNA Cda Fdn as follows:

1. INTERPRETATION

1.1 Meaning of Words

In this By-law and all other By-laws and resolutions of CRCNA Cda Fdn unless the context otherwise requires:

- 1.1.1 the singular includes the plural;
- 1.1.2 the masculine gender includes the feminine;
- 1.1.3 “Act” means the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, S.C. 2009, c.23, including the regulations made pursuant to the Act, in each case, as such statute or regulations may be amended, restated or in effect from time to time;
- 1.1.4 “Articles” means the original or restated articles of incorporation or articles of amendment, amalgamation, continuance, reorganization, arrangement or revival of the Corporation;
- 1.1.5 “Board” means the board of Directors of CRCNA Cda Fdn;
- 1.1.6 “By-laws” means this By-law and any other By-laws of the Corporation as amended and which are, from time to time, in force and effect;
- 1.1.7 “BOT” means the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America;
- 1.1.8 “CRCNA” means the Christian Reformed Church in North America;
- 1.1.9 “Christian Reformed Church in Canada” means the churches in Canada belonging to the CRCNA denomination;
- 1.1.10 “CRCNA Cda Fdn” means The Christian Reformed Church in North America—Canada Foundation;
- 1.1.11 “CRCNA Fdn U.S.A.” means Christian Reformed Church in North America—Foundation of the United States of America, Inc., a nonprofit corporation incorporated pursuant to the laws of the State of Michigan;
- 1.1.12 “Director” or “Directors” means a person or persons who have been elected to the office of Director in accordance with Article 7, or appointed to fill a vacancy in the office of Director in accordance with Section 7.5;
- 1.1.13 “Documents” includes deeds, mortgages, hypothecs, charges, conveyances, transfers and assignments of property, real or personal, immovable or movable, agreements, releases, receipts and discharges for the payment of money or other obligations, conveyances, transfers and assignments of shares, bonds, debentures or other securities and all paper writings;
- 1.1.14 “ED” means that person holding the position of Executive Director of the CRCNA from time to time;

- 1.1.15 “Executive Officers” means the persons who hold the offices enumerated in Section 11.1;
- 1.1.16 “DED” means the persons holding the position of Deputy Executive Director and representing the senior leadership team of the CRCNA from time to time;
- 1.1.17 “Member” shall mean any Member attending or entitled to attend a meeting;
- 1.1.18 “Pastor” means a minister of the Word in the CRCNA;
- 1.1.19 “Special Resolution” means a resolution passed by a majority of the Directors and confirmed with or without variation by at least two-thirds of the votes cast by CRCNA Cda Fdn in a general meeting of the Members of CRCNA Cda Fdn called for that purpose; and
- 1.1.20 “Synod” shall mean the Synod of the CRCNA.

1.2 Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act Terms

Other than as specified in Section 1.1, all terms defined in the Act have the same meanings in this By-law and all other By-laws and resolutions of CRCNA Cda Fdn.

1.3 Severability

The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this By-law shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provision of this By-law.

2. CRCNA AGENCY

CRCNA Cda Fdn shall function as part of the CRCNA and is currently a participant in a joint venture with CRCNA Fdn U.S.A. and shall in all respects be subject to the rules, regulations, practices and procedures of the CRCNA, provided that in the event of any conflict between those rules, regulations, practices and procedures and the provisions of the Act or other applicable law in Canada, the provisions of the law shall prevail.

3. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF CRCNA Cda Fdn

3.1 Representation

Subject to the Letters Patent of CRCNA Cda Fdn, CRCNA Cda Fdn shall represent the Christian Reformed Church in Canada by leading it to respond obediently to our Lord’s command to proclaim the good news of God’s kingdom and make disciples of all nations.

3.2 Purposes

In so doing, the organization shall

- 3.2.1 assist in the financial support of the ministries, programs, and activities of the CRCNA Cda Corp and the agencies, committees, and educational institutions established by Synod

through establishing long- and short-term designated funds and endowment funds.

- 3.2.2 promote, solicit, accept, and manage gifts of property, securities, life insurance, bequests, cash, and other forms of contribution for the sole benefit of CRCNA Cda Corp and the agencies, committees, and educational institutions established by Synod.

3.3 Statement of Faith

The Corporation hereby adopts the Statement of Faith documents included in the Covenant of Officebearers of the Christian Reformed Church in North America which must be affirmed by every Member, Director of the Board, officer, missionary and employee whose job requires such affirmation as specified by the governing body of the Corporation.

The Corporation also recognizes the witness of Statements of Faith declared by the Christian Reformed Church in North America to be Ecumenical Faith Declarations and the Contemporary Testimony.

Each Member, Director or officer shall affirm the Statement of Faith documents included in the Covenant of Officebearers:

1. at the time of admission, election or appointment as a Member, Director or officer, as applicable; and
2. annually at the time of re-election or re-appointment, as applicable.

Any Member, Director or officer who ceases to affirm and recognize these shall automatically cease to hold office as hereinafter provided in this By-law.

4. HEAD OFFICE

The head office of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall be in the City of Burlington, in the Province of Ontario, until changed in accordance with the Act.

5. SEAL

The seal, which is impressed in the margin hereon, shall be the corporate seal of CRCNA Cda Fdn.

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Membership Conditions

Subject to the Articles, there shall be one class of Members in the Corporation. Membership in the Corporation shall be limited to THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA—CANADA CORPORATION.

6.2 Termination of Membership

A membership in CRCNA Cda Fdn automatically terminates upon the happening of any of the following events:

- 6.2.1 if the Member resigns by delivering a written resignation to the Chair of the Board;

- 6.2.2 if the Member fails to maintain any qualifications for membership described in Section 6.1;
- 6.2.3 if the Member is dissolved;
- 6.2.4 if the Member is expelled in accordance with Section 6.3 or is otherwise terminated in accordance with the Articles or By-laws; or
- 6.2.5 the Corporation is liquidated or dissolved under the Act.

Subject to the Articles, upon any termination of membership, the rights of the Member, including any rights in the property of the Corporation, automatically cease to exist.

6.3 Discipline of Members

The board shall have authority to suspend or expel any Member from the Corporation for any one or more of the following grounds:

- 6.3.1 violating any provision of the Articles, By-laws, or written policies of the Corporation;
- 6.3.2 carrying out any conduct which may be detrimental to the Corporation as determined by the Board in its sole discretion;
- 6.3.3 for any other reason that the Board in its sole and absolute discretion considers to be reasonable, having regard to the purpose of the Corporation.

In the event that the Board determines that a Member should be expelled or suspended from membership in the Corporation, the President, or such other officer as may be designated by the Board, shall provide twenty (20) days' notice of suspension or expulsion to the Member and shall provide reasons for the proposed suspension or expulsion. The Member may make written submissions to the Chairman, or such other officer as may be designated by the Board, in response to the notice received within such twenty (20) day period. In the event that no written submissions are received by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, or such other officer as may be designated by the Board, may proceed to notify the Member that the Member is suspended or expelled from membership in the Corporation. If written submissions are received in accordance with this section, the Board will consider such submissions in arriving at a final decision and shall notify the Member concerning such final decision within a further twenty (20) days from the date of receipt of the submissions. The Board's decision shall be final and binding on the Member, without any further right of appeal.

6.4 Liability of Members

Absent the failure to act honestly and in good faith in the performance of the duties of office, and save as may be otherwise provided in any legislation or law, no present or past Member shall, as such, be held answerable or responsible for any act, default, obligation or liability of CRCNA Cda Fdn or for any engagement, claim, payment, loss, injury, transaction, matter or thing relating to or connected with CRCNA Cda Fdn.

7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

7.1 Board

7.1.1 A Board composed of a minimum of four (4) Directors and a maximum of six (6) Directors shall manage the affairs of CRCNA Cdn Fdn. The number of Directors shall be fixed from time to time by Special Resolution.

7.1.2 The Directors of the Board shall be those individuals from member churches of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada whom the membership elect to be on the Board consistent with the procedures and policies of Synod or the BOT may adopt from time to time.

7.2 Elected Directors

Elected Directors, subject to the provisions of Section 7.3, shall be elected in the manner set out in Article 8, each of whom, subject to the provisions of the Articles, shall hold office until the next annual meeting after election to office or until the successor of the Director has been elected and qualified.

7.3 Qualifications

Each Director shall:

7.3.1 be a member of CRCNA and been approved by BOT on behalf of Synod to act as a Director of the Corporation;

7.3.2 be at least eighteen (18) years of age;

7.3.3 not have the status of bankrupt;

7.3.4 not have been found to be incapable of managing property under the *Substitute Decisions Act, 1992* or the *Mental Health Act*;

7.3.5 not have been found to be incapable by any court in Canada or elsewhere; and

7.3.6 not be an "ineligible individual" as defined in section 149.1(1) of the Income Tax Act.

If a Director ceases to meet any of the above qualifications, the person thereupon ceases to be a Director, and the vacancy so created may be filled in the manner prescribed by Section 7.5.

7.4 Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business at meetings of the Board shall be the smallest whole number that is not less than one-half (1/2) of the number of Members of the Board.

7.5 Vacancies

So long as a quorum of the Directors remains in office, a vacancy on the Board may be filled in accordance with the Articles. If no quorum of Directors exists, the remaining Directors shall recommend names from the membership to the BOT who acts on behalf of Synod, for approval.

7.6 Removal of Directors

The Members entitled to vote may, by resolution passed by a majority of the votes cast at a special general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to pass the resolution has been given, remove any Director before the expiration of the Director's term of office, and may, by a majority of the votes cast at that meeting, elect any person in the place and stead of the person removed for the remainder of term of the removed Director.

7.7 Remuneration of Directors

The Directors of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall serve without remuneration.

7.8 Responsibility for Acts

The Directors of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall not be under any duty or responsibility in respect of any contract, act or transaction whether or not made, done or entered into in the name or on behalf of CRCNA Cda Fdn, except such as shall have been submitted to and authorized or approved by the Board.

7.9 Rules and Regulations

The Board may prescribe such rules and regulations not inconsistent with these By-laws relating to the management and operation of CRCNA Cda Fdn as they deem expedient, provided that such rules and regulations shall have force and effect only until the next annual meeting of Members of CRCNA Cda Fdn when they shall be confirmed and in default of confirmation at such annual meeting of Members, shall at and from that time cease to have force and effect.

8. ELECTION OF THE BOARD

8.1 Term of Office

The term of office of a Director shall be three years.

8.2 Re-Election

A Director, if otherwise qualified, is eligible for re-election for up to three additional years.

8.3 Elections

At each annual membership meeting, the number of Directors shall be elected for the vacant positions for the term of office established in Section 8.1.

8.4 Nominations

Candidates for the office of Director shall meet the qualifications of Section 7.3.

8.5 Election Method

8.5.1 If the number of candidates nominated is equal to the number of offices to be filled, the Secretary of the meeting shall cast a single ballot electing that number of candidates for the offices.

8.5.2 If the number of candidates nominated is greater than the number of offices to be filled, the election shall be by ballot.

8.6 Forms

The Board may prescribe the form of nomination paper and the form of a ballot.

9. MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS

9.1 Calling Meetings

Meetings of the Board may be held at any place within or outside the geographic location of the head office, as designated in the notice calling the meeting. Meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairman, or any two (2) Directors.

9.2 Notice of Meetings

Subject to the provisions of Section 9.3, notice of Board meetings shall be given to each Director by personal delivery, prepaid letter post, telephone, facsimile, email or other electronic method not less than ten (10) days before the meeting is to take place, the giving of which shall be in accordance with Section 20.1.

The statutory declaration of the Secretary or Chairman that notice has been given pursuant to this By-law shall be sufficient and conclusive evidence of the giving of such notice. No formal notice of a meeting is necessary if all the Directors are present or if those absent have signified their consent to the meeting being held without notice and in their absence. No notice shall be necessary for a meeting of Directors to be held immediately following the meeting at which they were elected.

9.3 Regular Meetings

The Board may appoint one or more days in each year for regular meetings of the Board at a place and time named; no further notice of the regular meetings need be given. The Board shall hold a meeting within seven (7) days following the annual meeting of CRCNA Cda Fdn for the purpose of organization, the election and appointment of officers and the transaction of any other business.

9.4 Meetings by Electronic Conference

If all persons who are members of the Board or a committee (as the case requires) consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting and each has adequate access, such persons may participate in a meeting of the Board or committee by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear and speak to each other, and a person participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

Provided that at the outset of each such meeting, and whenever votes are required, the Chair of the meeting shall call roll to establish quorum, and shall, whenever not satisfied that the proceedings of the meeting may proceed with adequate security and confidentiality, unless a majority of the persons present at such meeting otherwise require, adjourn the meeting to a predetermined date, time and place.

9.5 Voting

Questions arising at any meeting of the Board shall be decided by majority vote. At all meetings of the Board every question shall be decided by saying “aye” unless otherwise required by a By-law of CRCNA Cda Fdn or unless a poll is required by the Chair or requested by any Director entitled to vote. Whenever a vote by saying “aye” has been taken upon a question, unless a poll by the showing of hands is requested, a declaration by the Chair that a resolution has been carried or lost by a particular majority and an entry to that effect in the minutes of CRCNA Cda Fdn is conclusive evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of votes recorded in favour of or against the motion.

10. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

10.1 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the membership shall be held each year within or outside the geographical location of the head office, at a time, place and date determined by the Board, not being more than 15 months after its prior annual meeting, for the purpose of:

- 10.1.1 hearing and receiving the reports and statements required by the Act to be read at and laid before CRCNA Cda Fdn at an annual meeting;
- 10.1.2 electing such Directors as are to be elected at such annual meeting;
- 10.1.3 appointing the auditor and fixing or authorizing the Board to fix the remuneration therefore; and
- 10.1.4 the transaction of any other business properly brought before the meeting.

10.2 Meetings by Electronic Conference

If all persons who are Members entitled to vote consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting and each has adequate access, such persons may participate in a meeting of Members by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear and speak to each other, and a person participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

Provided that at the outset of each such meeting, and whenever votes are required, the Chair of the meeting shall call roll to establish quorum, and shall, whenever not satisfied that the proceedings of the meeting may proceed with adequate security and confidentiality, unless a majority of the persons present at such meeting otherwise require, adjourn the meeting to a pre-determined date, time and place.

10.3 Special General Meeting

The Chairman or two or more Directors may at any time call a special general meeting of the Members for the transaction of any business, the general nature of which is specified in the notice calling the meeting. The Directors may also call a special general meeting of Membership or the Chairman

upon the written requisition of the minimum of five percent (5%) of the Members entitled to vote.

10.4 Notice of Meetings

Notice of the time, place and date of meetings of Members and the general nature of the business to be transacted shall be given to each Member (and in the case of an annual meeting to the auditor of CRCNA Cda Fdn) by sending the notice by the following means:

- 10.4.1 by mail, courier or personal delivery to each Member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 60 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held; or
- 10.4.2 by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility to each Member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 35 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Notice of each meeting of Members must remind the Member if the Member has the right to vote by proxy.

10.5 Quorum

Not less than fifty percent (50%) plus one of the Members present in person constitutes a quorum at a meeting of Members, unless a greater number of Members are required to be present by the Act. If a quorum is present at the opening of a meeting of Members, the Members present may proceed with the business of the meeting even if a quorum is not present throughout the meeting. No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless the requisite quorum is present at the commencement of such business.

10.6 Voting by Members

Unless otherwise required by the provisions of the Act or the By-laws of CRCNA Cda Fdn, all questions proposed for consideration at a meeting of Members shall be determined by a majority of the votes cast by Members entitled to vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be deemed to have been lost. A Member may, by means of a written proxy, appoint a proxy holder to attend and act at a specific meeting of Members, in the manner and to the extent authorized by the proxy. A proxy holder is not required to be a Member of the Corporation.

10.7 By saying "aye"

At all meetings of Members every question shall be decided by saying "aye" unless otherwise required by a By-law of CRCNA Cda Fdn or unless a poll is required by the Chair or requested by any Member entitled to vote. Every Member entitled to vote, or proxy holder for a Member entitled to vote, present in person shall have one vote. Whenever a vote by saying "aye" has been taken upon a question, unless a poll by the showing of hands is requested, a declaration by the Chair that a resolution has been carried or lost by a particular majority and an entry to that effect in the minutes of CRCNA Cda Fdn is conclusive evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of votes recorded in favour of or against the motion.

10.8 Chair

In the absence of the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman, the Members entitled to vote present at any meeting of Members shall choose another Director as Chair, and if no Director is present or if all of the Directors present decline to act as Chair, the Members present shall choose one of their number to be Chair.

10.9 Polls

If at any meeting a poll is requested on the election of a Chair or on the question of adjournment, it must be taken forthwith without adjournment. If a poll is requested on any other question, it shall be taken in the manner and either at once or later at the meeting or after adjournment as the Chair directs. The result of a poll shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting at which the poll was requested. A request for a poll may be withdrawn at any time prior to the taking of the poll.

10.10 Adjournments

Any meeting of Members may be adjourned to any time and from time to time, and any business may be transacted at any adjourned meeting that might have been transacted at the original meeting from which the adjournment took place. No notice is required of any adjourned meeting if the time and place of the adjourned meeting is announced at the original meeting.

10.11 Annual Financial Statements

The Corporation may, instead of sending copies of the annual financial statements and other documents referred to in subsection 172(1) (Annual Financial Statements) of the Act to the Members, publish a notice to its Members stating that the annual financial statements and documents provided in subsection 172(1) are available at the registered office of the Corporation and any Member may, on request, obtain a copy free of charge at the registered office or by prepaid mail.

11. OFFICERS

11.1 Executive Officers

There may be the following Executive Officers, each of whom shall be a Director:

11.1.1 a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, or a Secretary/Treasurer elected for a term of one (1) year by and from among the Board at the first meeting following the annual meeting of CRCNA Cda Fdn. The Executive Officers shall not be entitled to remuneration; and

11.1.2 such other officers as are provided in this Article 11.

11.2 Duties of the President

The President shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the Board and the Members. The Chairman shall perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.3 Duties of the Vice-President

During the absence or inability of the President to act, the duties and powers of the President may be exercised by the Vice-President, or if there are more than one, by the Vice-Presidents in order of seniority. If a Vice-President exercises any of those duties or powers, the absence or inability of the President to act shall be presumed with reference thereto. A Vice-President shall also perform the other duties from time to time prescribed by the Board or incident to the office.

11.4 Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- 11.4.1 act as Secretary of each meeting of the Board;
- 11.4.2 give all notices required to be given to Members and to Directors;
- 11.4.3 be the custodian of the corporate seal of CRCNA Cda Fdn and of all books, papers, records, correspondence and documents belonging to CRCNA Cda Fdn; and
- 11.4.4 perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.5 Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- 11.5.1 certify all documents issued by CRCNA Cda Fdn; and
- 11.5.2 keep full and accurate accounts of all assets, liabilities, receipts and disbursements of CRCNA Cda Fdn and shall perform the tasks and functions normally performed by a Treasurer; and perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.6 Board May Appoint Other Officers

The Board may from time to time appoint such other officers as it considers expedient, to hold office at the pleasure of the Board, the duties and remuneration of whom shall be such as the terms of their engagement call for or the Board prescribes. Any such officer shall execute and subscribe to the Statement of Faith at the time of any appointment or re-appointment. Any remuneration fixed by the Board shall be confirmed by resolution of the Members at the next semi-annual meeting.

11.7 CRCNA Cda Fdn Executive Director

The CRCNA Cda Fdn Executive Director shall, subject to the authority and direction of the Board and the Chairman, be the Chief Executive Officer of CRCNA Cda Fdn, and shall oversee the general and active management of the operations of CRCNA Cda Fdn and will implement or advise to be implemented all orders and resolutions of CRCNA Cda Fdn, subject to the directions of the Board and the Chairman from time to time.

11.8 Holding More Than One Office

A person who is an Executive Officer may not be nominated or selected for, elected or appointed to, and hold more than one office. A person who is not an Executive Officer may hold more than one office that is not that of an Executive Officer.

11.9 Vacancy in Office

In the absence of a written agreement to the contrary, the Board may remove, whether for cause or without cause, any officer of the Corporation. Unless so removed, an officer shall hold office until the earlier of:

- 11.9.1 the officer's successor being appointed,
- 11.9.2 the officer's resignation,
- 11.9.3 such officer ceasing to be a Director (if a necessary qualification of appointment), or
- 11.9.4 such officer's death.

If the office of any officer of the Corporation shall be or become vacant, the Directors may, by resolution, appoint a person to fill such vacancy.

12. ED and DED(s) of the CRCNA

12.1 Receiving Documents

The ED and DED(s) shall be entitled to receive copies of all reports, minutes, proposals, agenda and other written material relating to the affairs and business of CRCNA Cda Fdn.

12.2 Attending Meetings

The ED and DED(s) shall be entitled to receive notice of, be present at, and participate in all meetings of the Directors and Members for purposes as a resource person providing advice, information and insight to assist the Directors and Members. The ED and DED(s) shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Board or Members.

13. COMMITTEES

13.1 Appointment of Committees

The Board may, from time to time, establish committees and ad-hoc committees to assist it with meeting the mandate for which it has been established.

13.2 Rules Governing Committees

Except as otherwise provided by By-law of CRCNA Cda Fdn, all committees are subject to the following:

- 13.2.1 the chair and members shall be appointed by the Board, from among the Members of CRCNA Cda Fdn who are qualified to hold office;
- 13.2.2 in addition to the members of a committee appointed pursuant to subsection 13.2.1, the Board may appoint to any committee,

persons who are not Members of CRCNA Cda Fdn who are qualified to hold office; provided that the total number of such persons shall at all times remain less than one-third of the total number of persons who are members of such committee;

- 13.2.3 a member of a committee shall serve for a term as determined by the Board, and is eligible for reappointment for one or more additional terms as needed;
- 13.2.4 a member of a committee who is not otherwise a Member, Director or officer of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall execute and subscribe to the Statement of Faith at the time of appointment or any re-appointment to a committee;
- 13.2.5 each committee shall meet at least annually, and more frequently at the will of its chair or as required by its terms of reference, and as requested by the Board; and
- 13.2.6 each committee shall be responsible to, and report after each meeting to the Board.

14. PROTECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

14.1 Directors and Officers Liability Exclusion

Absent the failure to act honestly and in good faith in the performance of the duties of office, and save as may be otherwise provided in any legislation or law, no present or past Director or officer of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall be personally liable for any loss or damage or expense to CRCNA Cda Fdn arising out of the acts (including wilful, negligent and accidental conduct), receipts, neglects, omissions or defaults of such Director or officer or of any other Director or officer or employee, servant, agent, volunteer or independent contractor arising from any of the following.

- 14.1.1 insufficiency or deficiency of title to any property acquired by CRCNA Cda Fdn or for or on behalf of CRCNA Cda Fdn;
- 14.1.2 insufficiency or deficiency of any security in or upon which any of the monies of or belonging to CRCNA Cda Fdn shall be placed out or invested;
- 14.1.3 loss or damage arising from the bankruptcy or insolvency of any individual including any individual with whom or which any monies, securities or effects shall be lodged or deposited;
- 14.1.4 loss, conversion, misapplication or misappropriation of or any damage resulting from any dealings with monies, securities or other assets belonging to CRCNA Cda Fdn;
- 14.1.5 loss, damage or misfortune whatever which may occur in the execution of the duties of the Director's or officer's respective office or trust or in relation thereto; and
- 14.1.6 loss or damage arising from any wilful act, assault, act of negligence, breach of fiduciary or other duty or failure to render aid of any sort.

14.2 Pre-Indemnity Considerations

Before giving approval to the indemnities provided in Section 14.3 herein, or purchasing insurance provided in Section 14.4 herein, the Board shall consider:

- 14.2.1 the degree of risk to which the Director or officer is or may be exposed;
- 14.2.2 whether, in practice, the risk cannot be eliminated or significantly reduced by means other than the indemnity or insurance;
- 14.2.3 whether the amount or cost of the insurance is reasonable in relation to the risk;
- 14.2.4 whether the cost of the insurance is reasonable in relation to the revenue available; and
- 14.2.5 whether it advances the administration and management of the property to give the indemnity or purchase the insurance.

14.3 Indemnification of Directors and Officers

Every individual, (including their respective heirs, executors and administrators, estate, successors and assigns) who:

- 14.3.1 is a Director; or,
- 14.3.2 is an officer of CRCNA Cda Fdn; or
- 14.3.3 is a member of a committee; or
- 14.3.4 has undertaken, or, with the direction of CRCNA Cda Fdn is about to undertake, any liability on behalf of CRCNA Cda Fdn or entity at the request of CRCNA Cda Fdn, whether in the individual's personal capacity or as a Director or officer or employee or volunteer of such entity;

shall, upon approval of the Board from time to time, be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of CRCNA Cda Fdn, from and against costs, charges and expenses which such individual sustains or incurs:

- 14.3.5 in or in relation to any demand, action, suit or proceeding which is brought, commenced or prosecuted against them in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever, made, done or permitted or not permitted by them, in or in relation to the execution of the duties of such office or in respect of any such liability; or,
- 14.3.6 in relation to the affairs of CRCNA Cda Fdn generally,

save and except such costs, charges or expenses as are occasioned by their own failure to act honestly and in good faith in the performance of the duties of office, or by other wilful neglect or default.

CRCNA Cda Fdn shall also, upon approval by the Board from time to time, indemnify any such individual in such other circumstances as any legislation or laws permit or require.

Nothing in this By-law shall limit the right of any individual entitled to indemnity to claim indemnity apart from the provisions of this By-law to the extent permitted by any legislation or law.

14.4 Insurance

CRCNA Cda Fdn shall purchase and maintain appropriate liability insurance for the benefit of CRCNA Cda Fdn and each individual acting or having previously acted in the capacity of a Director, officer or any other capacity at the request of or on behalf of CRCNA Cda Fdn, which insurance shall include:

14.4.1 property and public liability insurance;

14.4.2 Directors' and officers' insurance; and,

14.4.3 such other insurance as the Board sees fit from time to time;

with coverage limits and with insurers deemed appropriate by the Board from time to time.

No coverage shall be provided for any liability relating to a failure to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of CRCNA Cda Fdn.

It shall be the obligation of any person seeking insurance coverage or indemnity from CRCNA Cda Fdn to co-operate fully with CRCNA Cda Fdn in the defence of any demand, claim or suit made against such person, and to make no admission of responsibility or liability to any third party without the prior agreement of CRCNA Cda Fdn.

15. EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS

15.1 Cheques, Drafts, Notes, Etc.

All cheques, drafts or orders for the payment of money and all notes and acceptances and bills of exchange shall be signed by the officer or officers or person or persons and in the manner from time to time prescribed by the Board.

15.2 Execution of Documents

Documents requiring execution by CRCNA Cda Fdn may be signed by any two of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer or any two (2) Directors, and all documents so signed are binding upon CRCNA Cda Fdn without any further authorization or formality. The Board may from time to time appoint any officer or officers or any person or persons on behalf of CRCNA Cda Fdn, either to sign documents generally or to sign specific documents. The corporate seal of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall, when required, be affixed to documents executed in accordance with the foregoing.

15.3 Books and Records

The Board shall see that all necessary books and records of CRCNA Cda Fdn required by the By-laws of CRCNA Cda Fdn or by any applicable statute are regularly and properly kept.

16. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

16.1 Board to Designate Bankers

The Board shall designate, by resolution, the officers and other persons authorized to transact the banking business of CRCNA Cda Fdn, or any part thereof, with the bank, trust company, or other Committee carrying on a banking business that the Board has designated as CRCNA Cda Fdn's banker, to have the authority set out in the resolution, including, unless otherwise restricted, the power to,

- 16.1.1 operate CRCNA Cda Fdn's accounts with the banker;
- 16.1.2 make, sign, draw, accept, endorse, negotiate, lodge, deposit or transfer any of the cheques, promissory notes, drafts, acceptances, bills of exchange and orders for the payment of money;
- 16.1.3 issue receipts for and orders relating to any property of CRCNA Cda Fdn;
- 16.1.4 execute any agreement relating to any banking business and defining the rights and powers of the parties thereto; and
- 16.1.5 authorize any officer of the banker to do any act or thing on CRCNA Cda Fdn's behalf to facilitate the banking business.

16.2 Deposit of Securities

The securities of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall be deposited for safe keeping with one or more bankers, trust companies or other financial institutions to be selected by the Board. Any and all securities so deposited may be withdrawn, from time to time, only upon the written order of CRCNA Cda Fdn signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of CRCNA Cda Fdn, and in such manner, as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. The institutions which may be so selected as custodians of the Board shall be fully protected in acting in accordance with the directions of the Board and shall in no event be liable for the due application of the securities so withdrawn from deposit or the proceeds thereof.

17. BORROWING BY CRCNA Cda Fdn

17.1 Borrowing Authority

The Board may from time to time:

- 17.1.1 Borrow money upon the credit of the Corporation;
- 17.1.2 Limit or increase the amounts to be borrowed;
- 17.1.3 Issue, sell or pledge debt obligations of the Corporation for such sums and at such prices as may be deemed expedient or be necessary;
- 17.1.4 Charge, hypothecate, mortgage or pledge any or all currently owned or subsequently acquired real or personal, moveable or immoveable property of the Corporation and/or give such security therefore thereon as may be required including book

debts, rights, powers, franchises and undertaking, to secure any debt obligations or any money borrowed, or other debt or liability of the Corporation;

- 17.1.5 Give indemnities to any Director or other person who has undertaken or is about to undertake any liability on behalf of the Corporation and to secure such Director or other person against loss by giving of a mortgage or charge upon the whole or any part of the real or personal property of the Corporation by way of security.

The words “debt obligations” as used in this paragraph mean bonds, debentures, notes or other similar obligations of the Corporation whether secured or unsecured.

17.2 Specific Borrowing Authority

The Board may from time to time authorize by resolution any Director or Directors, officer or officers, employee of the Corporation or other person or persons, whether connected with the Corporation or not, to make arrangements with reference to the moneys borrowed or to be borrowed as aforesaid, and as to the terms and conditions of the loan thereof, and as to the securities to be given therefore with power to vary or modify such arrangements, terms and conditions, and generally to manage, transact and settle the borrowing of money by the Corporation.

17.3 Delegate Borrowing Authority

Subject to prior approval of the Finance Committee of the BOT of Synod, the Board may from time to time by resolution delegate to the Chairman and the Secretary or to any two individuals (including the Chairman or the Secretary) each of whom is a Director or officer of the Corporation all or any of the powers conferred on the Board by Section 17.1 of this By-law to the full extent thereof or such lesser extent as the Board may in any such resolution provide including the power to sign, execute and give on behalf of the Corporation all documents, agreements and promises necessary or desirable for the purposes aforesaid and to draw, make, accept, endorse, execute and issue cheques, promissory notes, bills of exchange, bills of lading and other negotiable or transferable instruments, and the same and all renewals thereof or substitutions therefore so signed shall be binding upon the Corporation.

17.4 Supplement of Borrowing Authority

The powers hereby conferred shall be deemed to be in supplement to and not in substitution for any powers to borrow money for the purposes of the Corporation possessed by its Directors or officers independently of a borrowing By-law.

18. FINANCIAL YEAR

18.1 Financial Year Determined

The financial year of CRCNA Cda Fdn shall terminate on the 30th day of June in each year or on such other date as the Board may from time to time by resolution determine.

19. AUDITOR

19.1 Annual Appointment

The Members of CRCNA Cda Fdn at each annual meeting shall appoint one or more auditors, such auditor or auditors having been previously approved as an auditor by BOT (none of whom shall be a Director, officer or employee of CRCNA Cda Fdn), to audit the accounts (including the financial statements) of CRCNA Cda Fdn and to report thereon to Members at the annual meeting, to hold office until the close of the next annual meeting, and, if an appointment is not so made, the auditor in office continues in office until a successor is appointed. The remuneration of the auditor shall be fixed by the Board.

19.2 Notice of Intention to Nominate

A person, other than a retiring auditor, is not capable of being appointed auditor at an annual meeting unless notice in writing of an intention to nominate that person to the office of auditor has been given by a Member not less than ten (10) days before the annual meeting; and the Member shall send a copy of any such notice to the retiring auditor and to the person it is intended to nominate, and shall give notice thereof to the Members, either by advertisement or by notice in the manner set out in Article 20, not less than seven (7) days before the annual meeting.

19.3 Vacancy in the Office of Auditor

The Board may fill any vacancy in the office of auditor, but while the vacancy continues the surviving or continuing auditor, if any, may act.

19.4 Removal of Auditor

The Members, by a resolution passed by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at a special general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to pass such resolution was given, may remove any auditor before the expiration of the term of office of the auditor, and shall by a majority of the votes cast at that meeting appoint another auditor in the place and stead of such person for the remainder of the term.

20. NOTICE

20.1 Method of Notice

Any notice (which term includes any communication or document) to be given (which term includes sent, delivered or served), other than notice of a meeting of Members or a meeting of the Board, pursuant to the Act, the Articles, the By-laws or otherwise to a Member, Director, officer or member of a committee of the Board or to the auditor shall be sufficiently given:

- 20.1.1 if delivered personally to the person to whom it is to be given or if delivered to such person's address as shown in the records of the Corporation or in the case of notice to a Director to the latest address as shown in the last notice that was sent by the Corporation in accordance with section 128 (Notice of Directors) or 134 (Notice of change of Directors); or

- 20.1.2 if mailed to such person at such person's recorded address by prepaid ordinary or air mail; or
- 20.1.3 if sent to such person by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility at such person's recorded address for that purpose; or
- 20.1.4 if provided in the form of an electronic document in accordance with Part 17 of the Act.

A notice so delivered shall be deemed to have been given when it is delivered personally or to the recorded address as aforesaid; a notice so mailed shall be deemed to have been given when deposited in a post office or public letter box; and a notice so sent by any means of transmitted or recorded communication shall be deemed to have been given when dispatched or delivered to the appropriate communication company or agency or its representative for dispatch. The Secretary may change or cause to be changed the recorded address of any Member, Director, officer, auditor or member of a committee of the Board in accordance with any information believed by the Secretary to be reliable. The declaration by the Secretary that notice has been given pursuant to this By-law shall be sufficient and conclusive evidence of the giving of such notice. The signature of any Director or officer of the Corporation to any notice or other document to be given by the Corporation may be written, stamped, type-written or printed or partly written, stamped, type-written or printed.

20.2 Omissions and Errors

The accidental omission to give notice of any meeting of the Board, a committee or Members or the non-receipt of any notice by any Director or committee member or Member or by the auditor of CRCNA Cda Fdn or any error in any notice not affecting its substance does not invalidate any resolution passed or any proceedings taken at the meeting. Any Director, committee member, Member or the auditor of CRCNA Cda Fdn may at any time waive notice of any meeting and may ratify and approve any or all proceedings taken thereat.

21. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

21.1 Mediation and Arbitration

Disputes or controversies among Members, Directors, officers, committee members, or volunteers of the Corporation are as much as possible to be resolved in accordance with mediation and/or arbitration as provided in Section 21.2 of this By-law.

21.2 Dispute Resolution Mechanism

In the event that a dispute or controversy among Members, Directors, officers, committee members or volunteers of the Corporation arising out of or related to the Articles or By-laws, or out of any aspect of the operations of the Corporation is not resolved in private meetings between the parties, then without prejudice to or in any other way derogating from the rights of the Members, Directors, officers, committee members, employees or volunteers of the Corporation as set out in the Articles, By-laws or the Act, and as an

alternative to such person instituting a law suit or legal action, such dispute or controversy shall be settled by a process of dispute resolution as follows:

- 21.2.1 The dispute or controversy shall first be submitted to a panel of mediators whereby the one party appoints one mediator, the other party (or, if applicable, the Board) appoints one mediator, and the two mediators so appointed jointly appoint a third mediator. The three mediators will then meet with the parties in question in an attempt to mediate a resolution between the parties.
- 21.2.2 The number of mediators may be reduced from three to one or two upon agreement of the parties.
- 21.2.3 If the parties are not successful in resolving the dispute through mediation, then the parties agree that the dispute shall be settled by arbitration before a single arbitrator, who shall not be any one of the mediators referred to above, in accordance with the provincial or territorial legislation governing domestic arbitrations in force in the province or territory where the registered office of the Corporation is situated or as otherwise agreed upon by the parties to the dispute. The parties agree that all proceedings relating to arbitration shall be kept confidential and there shall be no disclosure of any kind. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding and shall not be subject to appeal on a question of fact, law or mixed fact and law.
- 21.2.4 All costs of the mediators appointed in accordance with this section shall be borne equally by the parties to the dispute or the controversy. All costs of the arbitrators appointed in accordance with this section shall be borne by such parties as may be determined by the arbitrators.

22. BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS, ETC.

22.1 Requirements for Amendment of By-laws

Subject to the Articles, the Board may, by resolution, make, amend or repeal any By-laws that regulate the activities or affairs of the Corporation. Any such By-law, amendment or repeal shall be effective from the date of the resolution of the Board until the next meeting of Members where it may be confirmed, rejected or amended by the Members by ordinary resolution. Any such By-law, amendment or repeal shall be approved by the BOT of the CRCNA prior to being presented to the Members. If the By-law, amendment or repeal is confirmed or confirmed as amended by the Members, it remains effective in the form in which it was confirmed. The By-law, amendment or repeal ceases to have effect if it is not submitted to the Members at the next meeting of Members or if it is rejected by the BOT of the CRCNA or the Members at the meeting.

22.2 Additional Requirements for By-law Amendment

Section 22.1 does not apply to a By-law that requires a special resolution of the Members according to subsection 197(1) (Amendment of Articles or By-laws) of the Act. Pursuant to subsection 197(1) of the Act, a special resolution of the Members is required to make any amendments to 6.1, 10.4, 20.1 and this 22.2 if those amendments affect membership rights and/or conditions described in paragraphs 197(1)(e), (h), (l) or (m) of the Act.

22.3 By Whom By-law Amendments Proposed

Any Member entitled to vote at an annual meeting of Members may, in accordance with section 163 (Member proposal) of the Act, make a proposal to make, amend or repeal a By-law.

23. **REPEAL OF PRIOR BY-LAWS**

23.1 Repeal

Subject to the provisions of Section 22.1 hereof, all prior By-laws, resolutions and other enactments of CRCNA Cda Fdn heretofore enacted or made are repealed.

23.2 Exception

The provisions of Section 23.1 shall not extend to any By-law or resolution heretofore enacted for the purpose of providing to the Board the power or authority to borrow.

23.3 Proviso

Provided, however, that the repeal of prior By-laws, resolutions and other enactments shall not impair in any way the validity of any act or thing done pursuant to any such repealed By-law, resolution or other enactment.

24. **EFFECTIVE DATE**

24.1 Effective Date

This By-law shall become effective after it has been sanctioned by a majority of the Board and sanctioned by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting of Members duly called for the purpose of considering the said By-law.

ENACTED by the Directors as a By-law of **THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH in NORTH AMERICA—CANADA FOUNDATION** and sealed with the corporate seal:

, Chairman

, Secretary

CONFIRMED by the Members in accordance with the Act on the ____ day of _____ 2014.

, Chairman

, Secretary

Appendix M Condensed Financial Statements of the Agencies and Institutions

Back to God Ministries International Balance Sheet (000s)

	-----June 30, 2014-----				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 1,381		182		1,563
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	3,599	-	925	99	4,623
Receivables & Advances	129	-	-	-	129
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	516	-	-	-	516
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	5,625	-	1,107	99	6,831
Accounts Payable	585	-	-	-	585
Notes/Loans Payable	295	-	-	-	295
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	588	-	-	-	588
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	1,468	-	-	-	1,468
Net Assets	\$ 4,157	-	1,107	99	5,363
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Isaac Jen endowment fund and Media Reach Fund.				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Permanently restricted endowment funds.				

**Back to God Ministries International
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 12-13 Actual	Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:			
Ministry Share	\$	3,548	\$ 3,346
% of Total Income		37.6%	35.4%
Other Gift Income:			
Above Ministry Share	\$	4,021	\$ 3,732
Estate Gifts	\$	1,262	\$ 1,743
Total Gift Income		5,283	5,475
% of Total Income		56.1%	57.9%
Other Income:			
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$ -
Grants-Animation	\$	-	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$	594	\$ 641
Total Other Income		594	641
% of Total Income		6.3%	6.8%
TOTAL INCOME		9,425	9,462
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):			
Program Services:			
English	\$	2,471	\$ 2,471
FTEs		15	15
International	\$	4,708	\$ 4,470
FTEs		17	17
Education	\$	129	\$ 161
FTEs		2	2
Social Media – Cross Ministry Initiatives	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		3	3
Total Program Service \$	\$	7,308	\$ 7,102
Total Program Service FTEs		37	37
% of Total \$		74.2%	74.4%
% of Total FTEs		78.7%	78.7%
Support Services:			
Management & General	\$	826	\$ 848
FTEs		4	4
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Fund-raising	\$	1,718	\$ 1,595
FTEs		6	6
Total Support Service \$		2,544	2,443
Total Support Service FTEs		10	10
% of Total \$		25.8%	25.6%
% of Total FTEs		21.3%	21.3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	9,852	\$ 9,545
TOTAL FTEs		47	47
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$	(427)	\$ (83)

**Calvin College
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	-----June 30, 2014-----				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 10,195	-	-	-	10,195
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	24,005	-	-	-	24,005
Inventory	555	-	-	-	555
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	31,193	-	22,358	40,734	94,285
Equities	35,868	-	25,710	46,839	108,417
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	2,721	-	1,951	3,554	8,226
PP & E	221,170	-	-	-	221,170
Other	3,973	-	-	-	3,973
Total Assets	329,680	-	50,019	91,127	470,826
Accounts Payable	3,608	-	-	-	3,608
Notes/Loans Payable	115,789	-	-	-	115,789
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	5,766	-	-	-	5,766
Deferred Income	1,969	-	-	-	1,969
Other	53,566	-	-	-	53,566
Total Liabilities	180,698	-	-	-	180,698
Net Assets	\$ 148,982	-	50,019	91,127	290,128
Footnotes:	<p>Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.</p> <p>Note 2: List details of designations.</p> <p>Note 3: List details of restrictions.</p> <p>Note 4: List details of restrictions.</p> <p>Over 1,303 accounts for instruction, scholarships, grants, research, public service, student services, etc., funded by outside sources.</p> <p>Endowed gifts.</p>				

**Calvin College
Income and Expenses (000s)**

	Fiscal 12-13 Actual	Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:		
Ministry Share	\$ 2,571	\$ 2,451
% of Total Income	1.9%	1.7%
Other Gift Income:		
Above Ministry Share	\$ 3,190	\$ 3,252
Estate Gifts	\$ 21	\$ 18
Total Gift Income	<u>3,211</u>	<u>3,270</u>
% of Total Income	2.3%	2.2%
Other Income:		
Tuition & Sales	\$ 126,226	\$ 136,051
Grants	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 5,214	\$ 3,854
Total Other Income	<u>131,440</u>	<u>139,905</u>
% of Total Income	95.8%	96.1%
 TOTAL INCOME	 <u><u>137,222</u></u>	 <u><u>145,626</u></u>
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):		
Program Services:		
Education	\$ 118,960	\$ 127,020
FTEs	597	586
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
Total Program Service \$	<u>\$ 118,960</u>	<u>\$ 127,020</u>
Total Program Service FTEs	597	586
% of Total \$	86.7%	87.2%
% of Total FTEs	77.3%	78.0%
Support Services:		
Management & General	\$ 7,605	\$ 7,245
FTEs	63	58
Plant Operations	\$ 7,419	\$ 7,976
FTEs	73	70
Fund-raising	\$ 3,238	\$ 3,385
FTEs	39	37
Total Support Service \$	<u>18,262</u>	<u>18,606</u>
Total Support Service FTEs	175	165
% of Total \$	13.3%	12.8%
% of Total FTEs	22.7%	22.0%
 TOTAL EXPENDITURES	 <u><u>\$ 137,222</u></u>	 <u><u>\$ 145,626</u></u>

**Calvin Theological Seminary
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	-----June 30, 2014-----				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 2,250	-	1	-	2,251
CDs, Time Deposits	900	-	-	-	900
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	218	-	1,980	-	2,198
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	6	-	-	-	6
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	12,596	-	12,596
Equities	-	-	13,261	12,191	25,452
Partnerships	-	-	-	3,921	3,921
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	1,100	1,100
PP & E	10,933	-	-	-	10,933
Other	1,186	-	-	-	1,186
Total Assets	15,493	-	27,838	17,212	60,543
Accounts Payable	1,878	-	-	-	1,878
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	67	-	-	-	67
Annuities Payable	-	-	191	-	191
Deferred Income	-	-	713	-	713
Other	-	-	1,608	-	1,608
Total Liabilities	1,945	-	2,512	-	4,457
Net Assets	\$ 13,548	-	25,326	17,212	56,086
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.	Office building in endowment - investment income.				
Note 2: List details of designations.	Accounts payable: Early retirement and post retirement liabilities Notes/Loans Payable: Net student loan receivables and liabilities.				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Donor designated, program, scholarship, grants, and construction pledges.				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Calvin Theological Seminary
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 12-13 Actual		Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	2,864	\$	2,701
% of Total Income		37.6%		37.4%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	976	\$	830
Estate Gifts	\$	277	\$	52
Total Gift Income		1,253		882
% of Total Income		16.5%		12.2%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	2,420	\$	2,374
Grants	\$	1,020	\$	1,204
Miscellaneous	\$	59	\$	58
Total Other Income		3,499		3,636
% of Total Income		45.9%		50.4%
TOTAL INCOME		7,616		7,219
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Instructional	\$	2,844	\$	3,054
FTEs		30		30
Public Service	\$	101	\$	68
FTEs		1		1
Academic Support	\$	1,134	\$	1,190
FTEs		5		5
Student Services	\$	577	\$	612
FTEs		5		5
Student Aid	\$	346	\$	400
FTEs		1		1
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	5,002	\$	5,324
Total Program Service FTEs		42		42
% of Total \$		66.6%		66.0%
% of Total FTEs		71.2%		71.2%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	995	\$	1,096
FTEs		9		9
Plant Operations	\$	717	\$	1,002
FTEs		2		2
Fund-raising	\$	793	\$	650
FTEs		6		6
Total Support Service \$		2,505		2,748
Total Support Service FTEs		17		17
% of Total \$		33.4%		34.0%
% of Total FTEs		28.8%		28.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	7,507	\$	8,072
TOTAL FTEs		59		59
Post-retirement benefit costs >		583		1,461
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$	692	\$	608

**Consolidated Group Insurance - U.S.
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	-----December 31, 2014-----				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 430	-	-	-	430
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	26	-	-	-	26
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	2,700	-	-	-	2,700
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	3,156	-	-	-	3,156
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets	\$ 3,156	-	-	-	3,156
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Consolidated Group Insurance - U.S.
Changes in Net Assets (000s)**

	2013 Actual	2014 Actual
ADDITIONS:		
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:		
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:		
Participant Premiums	\$ 10,248	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -
Investment Earnings	\$ 21	\$ 58
Total Other Income	10,269	58
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	10,269	58
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):		
Program Services:		
Claims Expense	\$ 6,165	\$ 63
FTEs	-	-
Insurance Premiums	\$ 1,566	\$ 1,601
FTEs	-	-
TPA & PPO Fees	\$ 431	\$ -
FTEs	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
	\$ -	\$ -
	-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 8,162	\$ 1,664
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-
% of Total \$	95.2%	98.8%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%
Support Services:		
Management & General	\$ 415	\$ 21
FTEs	3	3
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-
Total Support Service \$	415	21
Total Support Service FTEs	3	3
% of Total \$	4.3%	4.3%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 8,577	\$ 1,685
TOTAL FTEs	3	3
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 1,692	\$ (1,627)

Employees' Retirement Plan - Canada (in Canadian \$)
Balance Sheet (000s)

	December 31, 2014				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 155	-	-	-	155
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	501	-	-	-	501
Equities	3,440	-	-	-	3,440
GICs / Stable Asset Fund	199	-	-	-	199
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	4,295	-	-	-	4,295
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Forfeitures Due Agencies	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets	\$ 4,295	-	-	-	4,295
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Employees' Savings Plan United States
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	December 31, 2014				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ -	-	-	-	-
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	5,695	-	-	-	5,695
Equities	17,842	-	-	-	17,842
GICs / Stable Asset Fund	2,241	-	-	-	2,241
Diversified	4,253	-	-	-	4,253
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	30,031	-	-	-	30,031
Accounts Payable	15	-	-	-	15
Forfeitures Due Agencies	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	15	-	-	-	15
Net Assets	\$ 30,016	-	-	-	30,016
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Employees' Savings Plan United States
Changes in Net Assets (000s)**

		2013 Actual		2014 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	\$	-	\$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	-	\$	-
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$	-
Total Gift Income		-		-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Income:				
Contributions	\$	2,112	\$	2,179
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	4,490	\$	1,900
Total Other Income		6,602		4,079
% of Total Income		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS		<u>6,602</u>		<u>4,079</u>
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	\$	3,018	\$	2,520
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	3,018	\$	2,520
Total Program Service FTEs		-		-
% of Total \$		95.7%		95.0%
% of Total FTEs		0.0%		0.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	137	\$	133
FTEs		1		1
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service \$		137		133
Total Support Service FTEs		1		1
% of Total \$		4.3%		5.0%
% of Total FTEs		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	<u>\$</u>	<u>3,155</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>2,653</u>
TOTAL FTEs		<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	<u>\$</u>	<u>3,447</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>1,426</u>

FAITH ALIVE CHRISTIAN RESOURCES
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2014				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 365	-	12	-	377
CDs, Time Deposits		-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	335	-	-	-	335
Inventory	1,427	-	-	-	1,427
Prepays & Advances	59	-	-	-	59
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	16	-	-	-	16
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	91	-	-	-	91
Total Assets	2,293	-	12	-	2,305
Accounts Payable	1,084	-	-	-	1,084
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	47	-	-	-	47
Other	126	-	-	-	126
Total Liabilities	1,257	-	-	-	1,257
Net Assets	\$ 1,036	-	12	-	1,048
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Leadership project.				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

FAITH ALIVE CHRISTIAN RESOURCES
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 12-13 Actual		Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	1,173	\$	1,747
% of Total Income		22.3%		32.7%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	303	\$	292
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$	-
Total Gift Income		303		292
% of Total Income		5.8%		5.5%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	3,473	\$	3,083
Grants	\$	270	\$	188
Miscellaneous	\$	41	\$	36
Total Other Income		3,784		3,307
% of Total Income		71.9%		61.9%
TOTAL INCOME		5,260		5,346
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Banner	\$	1,303	\$	1,297
FTEs		4		4
Education	\$	3,723	\$	2,805
FTEs		19		18
World Literature	\$	507	\$	473
FTEs		2		-
Teacher Training	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		1		-
Faith Formation / CWG	\$	-	\$	87
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	5,533	\$	4,662
Total Program Service FTEs		25		22
% of Total \$		87.0%		86.1%
% of Total FTEs		92.7%		91.7%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	828	\$	753
FTEs		2		2
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service \$		828		753
Total Support Service FTEs		2		2
% of Total \$		13.0%		13.9%
% of Total FTEs		7.3%		8.3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	6,361	\$	5,415
TOTAL FTEs		27		24
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$	(1,101)	\$	(69)

**Home Missions
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	----- June 30, 2014 -----				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 845	786	267	-	1,898
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	327	-	28	-	355
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	25	-	-	-	25
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	668	-	-	668
Equities	25	468	837	150	1,480
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	257	-	-	-	257
PP & E	8	-	-	-	8
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	1,487	1,922	1,132	150	4,691
Accounts Payable	298	-	-	-	298
Notes/Loans Payable	793	-	-	-	793
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	173	-	-	-	173
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	1,264	-	-	-	1,264
Net Assets	\$ 223	1,922	1,132	150	3,427

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Mission Trg Fund: \$39; Hawaii: \$1,305; Estate special proj: \$226

Note 3: List details of restrictions.

NA Trng: 40; Can Legacy: \$234; Short term loan: \$483; CMI: \$175

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

Emerging Leader Trust: \$150

**Home Missions
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 12-13 Actual		Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	3,757	\$	3,557
% of Total Income		58.8%		59.7%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	1,856	\$	1,660
Estate Gifts	\$	234	\$	95
Total Gift Income		2,090		1,755
% of Total Income		32.7%		29.5%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$	-
Grants	\$	309	\$	353
Miscellaneous	\$	234	\$	292
Total Other Income		543		645
% of Total Income		8.5%		10.8%
TOTAL INCOME		6,390		5,957
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Ministry Teams	\$	3,795	\$	4,281
FTEs		21		20
Ministry Devel & Planning	\$	939	\$	827
FTEs		7		6
	\$	-	\$	-
	\$	-	\$	-
	\$	-	\$	-
	\$	-	\$	-
	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	4,734	\$	5,108
Total Program Service FTEs		28		26
% of Total \$		75.2%		78.6%
% of Total FTEs		75.7%		78.8%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	807	\$	832
FTEs		2		2
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	\$	751	\$	560
FTEs		7		5
Total Support Service \$		1,558		1,392
Total Support Service FTEs		9		7
% of Total \$		24.8%		21.4%
% of Total FTEs		24.3%		21.2%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	6,292	\$	6,500
TOTAL FTEs		37		33
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$	98	\$	(543)

**Loan Fund
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2014				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 9,836	-	-	-	9,836
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	24,293	-	-	-	24,293
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	34,129	-	-	-	34,129
Accounts Payable	81	-	-	-	81
Notes/Loans Payable	26,767	-	-	-	26,767
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	26,848	-	-	-	26,848
Net Assets	\$ 7,281	-	-	-	7,281
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - Canada
Balance Sheet (000s) in Canadian \$**

	-----December 31, 2014-----				
	Pension	S.A.F			Total
Cash	\$ 1,694	184	-	-	1,878
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	54	1	-	-	55
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	9,630	-	-	-	9,630
Equities	35,545	-	-	-	35,545
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Real Estate (nonoperating)	2,298	-	-	-	2,298
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	49,221	185	-	-	49,406
Accounts Payable	114	-	-	-	114
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	114	-	-	-	114
Net Assets	\$ 49,107	185	-	-	49,292
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

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

	MPF 2013 Actual	MPF 2014 Actual	SAF 2013 Actual	SAF 2014 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13	\$ 9
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	86.7%	81.8%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:				
Participant Assessments	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,750	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Investment Earnings/(Losses)	\$ 7,252	\$ 5,416	\$ 2	\$ 2
Total Other Income	10,902	9,166	2	2
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	13.3%	18.2%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	10,902	9,166	15	11
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	\$ 2,478	\$ 2,587	\$ 28	\$ 22
FTEs	-	-	-	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Program Service \$	\$ 2,478	\$ 2,587	\$ 28	\$ 22
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	78.9%	78.1%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%		
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$ 663	\$ 725	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	1	1	-	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	663	725	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1	-	-
% of Total \$	21.1%	21.9%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%		
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 3,141	\$ 3,312	\$ 28	\$ 22
TOTAL FTEs	1	1	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 7,761	\$ 5,854	\$ (13)	\$ (11)

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States
Balance Sheet (000s)

	-----December 31, 2014-----			
	Pension	S.A.F		Total
Cash	\$ 3,138	42	-	3,180
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	135	-	-	135
Inventory	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):				
Bonds	17,227	-	-	17,227
Equities	71,258	-	-	71,258
Diversified / Alternative	4,396	-	-	4,396
Real Estate (nonoperating)	10,893	-	-	10,893
PP & E	129	-	-	129
Other	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	\$ 107,176	42	-	107,218
Accounts Payable	38	46	-	84
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	38	46	-	84
Net Assets	\$ 107,138	(4)	-	107,134
Footnotes:				
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.				
Note 2: List details of designations.				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.				

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States

Changes in Net Assets (000s)

	MPF 2013 Actual	MPF 2014 Actual	SAF 2013 Actual	SAF 2014 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ 18
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	14.1%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:				
Participant Assessments	\$ 5,401	\$ 5,390	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 110
Investment Earnings	\$ 17,553	\$ 6,902	\$ -	\$ -
Total Other Income	22,954	12,292	-	110
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	85.9%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	22,954	12,292	18	128
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	\$ 9,890	\$ 9,847	\$ 139	\$ 128
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 9,890	\$ 9,847	\$ 139	\$ 128
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	90.1%	89.2%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%	-	-
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$ 1,087	\$ 1,192	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	2	2	-	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	1,087	1,192	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	2	2	-	-
% of Total \$	9.9%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%	-	-
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 10,977	\$ 11,039	\$ 139	\$ 128
TOTAL FTEs	2	2	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 11,977	\$ 1,253	\$ (121)	\$ -

**Specialized Ministries
Balance Sheet (000s)**

INCLUDED IN SYNODICAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

**Specialized Ministries
Income and Expenses (000s)**

	Fiscal 12-13 Actual	Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:		
Ministry Share	\$ 3,879	\$ 3,712
% of Total Income	84.2%	83.5%
Other Gift Income:		
Above Ministry Share	\$ 483	\$ 434
Estate Gifts	\$ 4	\$ 87
Total Gift Income	487	521
% of Total Income	10.6%	11.7%
Other Income:		
Tuition & Sales	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 241	\$ 213
Total Other Income	241	213
% of Total Income	5.2%	4.8%
TOTAL INCOME	4,607	4,446
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):		
Program Services:		
Lead-Chaplaincy Services	\$ 254	\$ 276
FTEs	2	2
Lead-Pastor-Church Relations/SCE/SPE	\$ 1,127	\$ 1,173
FTEs	6	6
Lead-Network/Healthy Church	127	90
FTEs	1	1
Justice-Race Relations	\$ 488	\$ 433
FTEs	4	4
Justice-Safe Church Ministry	\$ 210	\$ 228
FTEs	2	2
Justice-Disability Concerns	\$ 284	\$ 292
FTEs	2	2
Justice-Social & Restorative Justice	\$ 510	\$ 568
FTEs	5	5
Justice-Ministries in Canada	\$ 1,231	\$ 1,226
FTEs	5	5
Faith-Volunteer Services	\$ 179	\$ 182
FTEs	2	2
Total Program Service \$	\$ 4,410	\$ 4,468
Total Program Service FTEs	29	29
% of Total \$	99.0%	98.9%
% of Total FTEs	96.7%	96.7%
Support Services:		
Management & General	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -
FTEs	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ 43	\$ 50
FTEs	1	1
Total Support Service \$	43	50
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1
% of Total \$	1.0%	1.1%
% of Total FTEs	3.3%	3.3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 4,453	\$ 4,518
TOTAL FTEs	30	30
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$ 154	\$ (72)

**Synodical Administrative Services
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2014				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 3,393	-	158	-	3,551
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	2,312	-	-	-	2,312
Inventory	85	-	-	-	85
Prepays & Advances	40	-	-	-	40
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	22,809	-	-	-	22,809
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	7,874	-	-	-	7,874
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	36,513	-	158	-	36,671
Accounts Payable	6,313	-	-	-	6,313
Notes/Loans Payable	23,274	-	-	-	23,274
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	29,587	-	-	-	29,587
Net Assets	\$ 6,926	-	158	-	7,084
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property currently in use.	Canadian Cash Concentration and Netting for Interest Program.				
Note 2: List details of restrictions.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Includes: \$14 of Sea to Sea, \$38 of All Ontario Youth Conference, and \$106 other.				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Synodical Administrative Services
Income and Expenses (000s)**

	Fiscal 12-13 Actual	Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:		
Ministry Share	\$ 2,862	\$ 2,668
% of Total Income	66.4%	75.3%
Other Gift Income:		
Above Ministry Share	\$ 31	\$ 20
Estate Gifts	\$ 23	\$ -
Total Gift Income	54	20
% of Total Income	1.3%	0.6%
Other Income:		
Tuition & Sales	\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ 75	\$ 75
Services & Misc	\$ 1,316	\$ 780
Total Other Income	1,391	855
% of Total Income	32.3%	24.1%
TOTAL INCOME	4,307	3,543
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):		
Program Services:		
Synodical Services & Grants	\$ 2,719	\$ 2,794
FTEs	5	5
Communications	\$ 677	\$ 626
FTEs	4	4
CRC Plan		
FTEs		
Sea to Sea expenses & grants	\$ 580	\$ 1,150
FTEs	-	-
Leadership Programs	\$ 18	\$ 37
FTEs	-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 3,994	\$ 4,607
Total Program Service FTEs	9	9
% of Total \$	77.7%	79.5%
% of Total FTEs	56.3%	56.3%
Support Services:		
Management & General	\$ 856	\$ 860
FTEs	4	4
D.D.M.	\$ 244	\$ 265
FTEs	2	2
Fund-raising (Foundation)	\$ 48	\$ 63
FTEs	1	1
Total Support Service \$	1,148	1,188
Total Support Service FTEs	7	7
% of Total \$	22.3%	20.5%
% of Total FTEs	43.8%	43.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 5,142	\$ 5,795
TOTAL FTEs	16	16
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$ (835)	\$ (2,252)

**Synodical Administrative Services (Agency Services)
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 12-13 Actual	Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:			
Ministry Share	\$	- \$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:			
Above Ministry Share	\$	- \$	-
Estate Gifts	\$	- \$	-
Total Gift Income		-	-
% of Total Income		0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:			
Tuition & Sales	\$	4,004 \$	3,434
Grants	\$	- \$	-
Services & Misc	\$	6,087 \$	6,244
Total Other Income		10,091	9,678
% of Total Income		100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL INCOME		10,091	9,678
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):			
Program Services:			
Advancement	\$	680 \$	819
FTEs		9	9
Finance & Payroll	\$	2,197 \$	2,217
FTEs		22	22
IT and Phones	\$	1,498 \$	1,612
FTEs		7	7
Human Resources	\$	332 \$	330
FTEs		2	2
Coordinated Services	\$	227 \$	192
FTEs		2	2
Proservices	\$	4,038 \$	3,445
FTEs		15	15
Total Program Service \$	\$	8,972 \$	8,615
Total Program Service FTEs		57	57
% of Total \$		88.9%	89.0%
% of Total FTEs		96.6%	96.6%
Support Services:			
Management & General			
FTEs			
Plant Operations/Debt Serv.	\$	1,119 \$	1,063
FTEs		2	2
Fund-raising (Foundation)			
FTEs			
Total Support Service \$		1,119	1,063
Total Support Service FTEs		2	2
% of Total \$		11.1%	11.0%
% of Total FTEs		3.4%	3.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	10,091 \$	9,678
TOTAL FTEs		59	59
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$	- \$	-

**World Missions
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2014				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 1,506	469	75	-	2,050
CDs, Time Deposits					-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	488	488
Receivables & Advances	215		-	-	215
Inventory	11	-	-	-	11
Prepays & Advances	893	-	-	-	893
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	136	755	659	398	1,948
Equities	136	755	659	398	1,948
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	449	-	-	-	449
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	3,346	1,979	1,393	1,283	8,001
Accounts Payable	994	-	-	-	994
Notes/Loans Payable	31	-	-	-	31
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	158	-	-	-	158
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1,230	-	-	-	1,230
Total Liabilities	2,413	-	-	-	2,413
Net Assets	\$ 933	1,979	1,393	1,283	5,588
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.	List supplied upon request (land/buildings overseas).				
Note 2: List details of designations.	Board Designated Reserves \$1,500 Endowment/annuities \$250; Other \$241				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Restricted gifts, missionary support, and program support.				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Endowments.				

**World Missions
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 12-13 Actual		Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	4,848	\$	4,584
% of Total Income		34.6%		30.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	7,828	\$	8,969
Estate Gifts	\$	519	\$	593
Total Gift Income		8,347		9,562
% of Total Income		59.6%		62.5%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$	-
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	808	\$	1,149
Total Other Income		808		1,149
% of Total Income		5.8%		7.5%
TOTAL INCOME		14,003		15,295
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Africa	\$	3,515	\$	3,666
FTEs		24		24
Eurasia	\$	3,008	\$	2,625
FTEs		17		17
Latin America	\$	4,396	\$	3,902
FTEs		21		21
Global/other Int'l program	\$	1,360	\$	1,684
FTEs		11		21
Education	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	12,279	\$	11,877
Total Program Service FTEs		73		83
% of Total \$		84.1%		83.0%
% of Total FTEs		83.9%		85.6%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	1,144	\$	1,213
FTEs		4		4
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	\$	1,174	\$	1,220
FTEs		10		10
Total Support Service \$		2,318		2,433
Total Support Service FTEs		14		14
% of Total \$		15.9%		17.0%
% of Total FTEs		16.1%		14.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	14,597	\$	14,310
TOTAL FTEs		87		97
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$	(594)	\$	985

**World Renew
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2014				Total
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	
Cash	\$ 15,732	-	-	-	15,732
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	829	2,000	-	-	2,829
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	1,822	-	-	-	1,822
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	25	-	-	25
Equities	1,388	3,775	1,450	23	6,636
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	35	-	-	-	35
PP & E	268	-	109	-	377
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	20,074	5,800	1,559	23	27,456
Accounts Payable	1,554	-	-	-	1,554
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	221	-	-	-	221
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	1,775	-	-	-	1,775
Net Assets	\$ 18,299	5,800	1,559	23	25,681
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Pure endowments: \$23				

**World Renew
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 12-13 Actual		Fiscal 13-14 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	-	\$	-
% of Total Income		-		-
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	18,161	\$	20,642
Estate Gifts	\$	1,308	\$	1,768
Total Gift Income		19,469		22,410
% of Total Income		54.7%		56.5%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$	-
Grants	\$	15,519	\$	16,082
Miscellaneous	\$	626	\$	1,145
Total Other Income		16,145		17,227
% of Total Income		45.3%		43.5%
TOTAL INCOME		35,614		39,637
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Overseas programs	\$	10,868	\$	11,248
FTEs		45		41
North America programs	\$	744	\$	580
FTEs				
Disaster relief programs	\$	1,586	\$	1,595
FTEs		16		11
Above-budget relief costs	\$	19,770	\$	15,711
FTEs		-		5
Education	\$	1,127	\$	1,323
FTEs		8		10
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$		34,095		30,457
Total Program Service FTEs		69		67
% of Total \$		89.7%		88.8%
% of Total FTEs		75.8%		77.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General		1,775		1,511
FTEs		5		5
Plant Operations		-		-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising		2,135		2,342
FTEs		17		15
Total Support Service \$		3,910		3,853
Total Support Service FTEs		22		20
% of Total \$		10.3%		11.2%
% of Total FTEs		24.2%		23.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		38,005		34,310
TOTAL FTEs		91		87
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)		(2,391)		5,327

REPORT OF AGENCIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND MINISTRIES

Introduction

Each year the Board of Trustees submits a *unified* report to synod composed of individual parts provided by the agencies, educational institutions, and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church. The reports of the ministries are organized this year in alignment with the Five Streams ministry priorities endorsed by synod (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 610; *Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 563): Faith Formation, Servant Leadership, Global Missions, Loving Mercy and Doing Justice, Gospel Proclamation and Worship. Supplementary reports may be provided, if needed, prior to the time synod convenes.

Writing these reports is an exercise of accountability that is appropriate in our life together as a denomination. Much of what is written is provided as information for synod. Some of the material provides a background for decisions that synod will be asked to make. In either case, these reports are the story of how God is blessing and guiding our ministry through the agencies of the Christian Reformed Church. As you read the material, we invite you to join us in thanksgiving for wonderful ministry opportunities.

Steven R. Timmermans
Executive Director of the CRCNA

Calvin College

I. Introduction

In the past year Calvin College has been operating under its new strategic plan—*Calvin 2019: Strengthen, Support, Secure*—and developing means to carefully track progress on each of its six themes. The plan helps the college sharpen its program offerings and operations as it lives out its core mission “to equip students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ’s agents of renewal in the world.” In the context of a dynamic higher education marketplace, the plan helps the college leadership ensure that Calvin College remains anchored in its rich theological tradition while strengthening its commitments to academic excellence.

One of the six themes of the strategic plan is to secure Calvin’s financial future, and the past twelve months have seen much progress. A five-year prioritization plan continues to be implemented, and efforts to reduce debt through direct fundraising and the sale of noncore real estate are ahead of schedule. The college exceeded its \$25 million debt-reduction fundraising goal, and it plans to make its second major debt reduction payment this spring, reducing total long-term debt from \$115 million to less than \$90 million. This reduction gives us budget relief and diminishes costs that would otherwise be passed on to our students. Fall 2015 enrollment projections appear to be promising, and income from enrollment continues to provide adequate resources for college operations. Graduation rates are rising slightly, and undergraduate student indebtedness is declining slightly—both encouraging signs.

The college is also working diligently, as are many denominational agencies, on setting and meeting goals for diversity and inclusion. The college has conducted a comprehensive review of its practices, set immediate and longer-term goals, and incorporated in its strategic plan clear means to achieve these goals. These diversity and inclusion goals are key elements of Calvin’s efforts to enhance its workplace culture, which is measuring significant improvement. The college continues to work toward excellence in leadership and management, with focused work on these matters among the board, senior leadership, and faculty and staff at the college. We still have significant room for improvement, but we are encouraged by our progress.

II. Reflecting the Five Streams

Calvin College’s curricular and cocurricular efforts centered in our Academic Affairs and Student Life divisions align well with the denomination’s Five Streams of Faith Formation, Servant Leadership, Global Missions, Loving Mercy and Doing Justice, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship. Educating young adults puts us at the center of each of these streams. Whereas much of our programming inside and outside of the classroom advances these goals, examples of work within each stream include the following:

- *Faith formation*—Barnabas leaders in each residential dorm help fellow students foster communities in which students are encouraged and

empowered to love God and love others with individual encouragement and supportive programming.

- *Servant leadership*—Community-based and academically based service learning opportunities abound, many of which are coordinated by our Service Learning Center.
- *Global missions*—Calvin offers multiple opportunities for short-term and long-term global experiences, and in the classroom our ministry leadership minor in the Congregational and Ministry Studies Department offers a missions emphasis.
- *Loving mercy and doing justice*—Spring 2015 marked the college’s tenth annual Faith and International Development Conference (FIDC), a completely student-organized event to link students to professionals in the field.
- *Gospel proclamation and worship*—Our Office of Campus Ministries sponsors daily chapel and Sunday-evening on-campus church services, and it helps link students to active participation in local congregations.

III. Board matters

A. Board officers

Board officers for the 2014-2015 year are Mr. Scott Spoelhof, chair; Mr. Craig Lubben, vice-chair; Ms. Christine Metzger, secretary; Ms. Sally Vander Ploeg, treasurer (vice president for finance and administration); and Ms. Sharolyn Christians, assistant secretary (executive assistant to the president). At the October 2014 meetings, Mr. Craig Lubben was elected as chair-elect of the board, to succeed Mr. Scott Spoelhof as board chair at the beginning of the 2015-2016 year.

B. Board membership

1. Reappointment of trustees

a. Regional trustees

The Calvin College Board of Trustees recommends reappointment of the following regional trustee eligible for a second three-year term: Mr. Scott Boot (Region 10).

b. Regional at-large trustee

The Calvin College Board of Trustees recommends reappointment of the following regional at-large trustee eligible for a second three-year term: Mr. Thomas Geelhoed (Region 11 at-large).

c. At-large trustees

The Calvin College Board of Trustees recommends reappointment of the following at-large trustees eligible for the identified term:

- 1) Mr. Brad Haverkamp, for a third three-year term
- 2) Mr. Allan Hoekstra, for a second three-year term
- 3) Ms. Wendy Hofman, for a second three-year term
- 4) Ms. Marge Hoogeboom, for a second three-year term

2. New trustees

a. Regional trustees

- 1) No names were submitted from the classes for the anticipated vacancy in Region 3. The Trustee Committee will continue work on identifying potential nominees from the region and present nominees for election by way of the Calvin College Supplement report.
- 2) Likewise, no names were submitted from the classes for the anticipated vacancy in Region 5. The Trustee Committee will continue work on identifying potential nominees from the region and present nominees for election by way of the Calvin College Supplement report.
- 3) Region 6

Mr. Daniel Meester is completing his second term on the board. The board presents the following slate of names to the classes in Region 6 for a vote to name the trustee to be presented to Synod 2015 for ratification:

Ms. Rachel VanderVeen, B.A. in economics, Calvin College; master's in public administration, San José State University

Ms. VanderVeen is an administrative officer for the City of San José and presently serves in its Finance Department. She is a member of San José CRC, where she serves as a volunteer Kid's Life director and has previously served as deacon. Ms. VanderVeen currently serves on the San José Management Association Board, a professional organization for the City of San José management employees.

Mr. Fernando del Rosario, B.S. in social work, University of the Philippines; master's in Christian leadership, Asian Theological Seminary; master's in public administration/organizational development, California State University

Mr. del Rosario is an administrator at the Synthetic Biology Engineering Research Center, U.C. Berkeley. He has been a commissioned pastor in the CRC since 1995. He is a member of Christ's Community Church in Hayward, California, where he has served as an elder and discipleship group facilitator. He is also a former church planter. Mr. del Rosario has previously served on the synodical Committee to Study Ethnic Advisers, as an ethnic adviser and elder delegate to synod, and as stated clerk for Classis Central California.

b. Regional at-large trustees

At its fall 2014 meetings, the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA approved a change in Calvin College bylaws that reclassifies some regional trustees as regional at-large trustees. The number of regional trustees remains the same, but in regions with more than one trustee (Regions 9, 10, and 11) one regional trustee in each region remains selected by the regional process, whereas additional regional trustees are selected in the same manner as regular at-large trustees. For the

2015-2016 year, Regions 9, 10, and 11 each have one regional at-large trustee opening.

The Trustee Committee will present names for three regional at-large positions (Regions 9, 10, and 11) to the May board meeting and forward nominees by way of the board's supplemental report for appointment by Synod 2015.

c. At-large trustee

The Trustee Committee will present names to the May board meeting and forward a nominee by way of the board's supplemental report for appointment by Synod 2015.

d. Alumni trustee

Ms. Ruth Palma is completing her terms of service on the board. The Trustee Committee will present names to the May board meeting and forward a nominee by way of the board's supplemental report for appointment by Synod 2015.

IV. Finances

Assumptions about tuition, room, and board rates were approved by the board at its winter meetings, and final decisions on those matters will be included in the final 2015-2016 budget to be considered by the board in early May. These financial details will be reported to synod by way of the supplemental report.

V. Synod 2014 request for resources on relationship of science and theology

Synod 2014 passed a motion asking the denomination's Board of Trustees to

encourage Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, in concert with other CRC-related institutions of higher education, to (a) make available to a future synod a list of resources on the relationship of science and theology, especially as they relate to the doctrines of creation, the fall, original sin, and the atonement, and (b) to organize one or more conferences or open conversations on these same topics.

(Acts of Synod 2014, p. 567)

Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary have formed an ad-hoc committee of representatives from each institution to respond to this request and are planning to provide a full update to Synod 2016. During the interim, it should be noted that many resources in this area are currently available at the Ministry Theorem, which can be found at <http://ministrytheorem.calvinseminary.edu>. The Ministry Theorem seeks to remind pastors and other leaders in the church that an appreciation of science lies deep within the Reformed tradition as well as within the Christian tradition generally. From a biblical-theological standpoint, Christians rightly view science as a partner in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church, increasing our wonder over God's works and so enhancing our worship of the Creator God. Developed jointly by the Center for Excellence in Preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary and the Science Division of Calvin College, the Ministry Theorem serves to promote an enhanced awareness of contemporary science and to provide resources and encouragement for engaging science in the

ministries of congregations everywhere. The resources provided on the website will be of help to pastors, church school teachers, youth leaders, worship planners, and others in our congregations.

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to the chair of the board, Mr. Scott A. Spoelhof, and to the president of Calvin College, Dr. Michael K. Le Roy, when matters pertaining to education are discussed.

B. That synod ratify the follow faculty appointments/reappointments with tenure, effective September 1, 2015:

1. Brian D. Cawley, Ph.D., associate professor of business
2. Vicki L. De Vries, Ph.D., associate professor of French
3. Peter J. Snyder, Ph.D., associate professor of business
4. Jason M. Stansbury, Ph.D., associate professor of business
5. Julie E. Yonker, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology

C. That synod by way of the ballot elect new members, reappoint for subsequent terms, and ratify the results of elections held in classes for membership on the Calvin College Board of Trustees.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Calvin College Board of Trustees
Christine A. Metzger, secretary

Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries (Dr. Syd Hielema, team leader)

I. Introduction

Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries (DFFM) is in its infancy, and we are eager to discern how the Lord will shape and refine us to serve his church.

Synod 2011 adopted the report of the Faith Formation Committee (*Acts of Synod 2011*, pp. 829-32), which included the following call: “We encourage each other to learn from and about faith formation practices in many times and places. We challenge each other to develop and refine faith formation practices that embody the fullness of the gospel in ways that are at once deeply contextual and countercultural” (*Agenda for Synod 2011*, p. 558). “We call on each other to see profession of faith not as an end but as the beginning of a new step forward in the journey of faith formation. We call on each other to emphasize the lifelong nature of Christian discipleship and develop ministries to aid this awakening” (p. 564). After the work of the Faith Formation Committee ended in 2013 (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 552-53), Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries was formed in response to that call.

A. Mission

DFFM is a newly formed denominational ministry whose stated mission is to “join God’s mission of transforming lives and communities worldwide by encouraging and equipping local CRCNA congregations and their leaders as they practice intentional, lifelong, intergenerational, holistic, missional discipleship and faith formation.”

Though DFFM is new, it was formed from several other ministries. Faith Alive Christian Resources ended its work as an agency in 2013, and its strengths in resourcing congregations have been transferred to DFFM. From 2007-2013 the synodical Faith Formation Committee shepherded the denomination through the issue of children at the table of the Lord’s Supper, and the learnings gleaned from this unusual shepherding process have been incorporated within DFFM. During the summer of 2013, a small Faith Formation Initiative pilot project experimenting with regional ministry began, and this pilot is now part of DFFM. Finally, the denomination has been exploring various ways to strengthen collaboration between ministries, and these explorations are also bearing fruit in the work of DFFM as it works to shape its ministry identity, mission, and strategy.

B. Strategy

Our strategy focuses on encouraging and equipping congregations and their leaders through regional ministry served by a core group. Recognizing that local congregations vary significantly from one to another, DFFM aims to

- build relationships with discipleship and faith formation leaders in local congregations through effective communication from the core team and regional catalyzers stationed throughout North America.
- learn from these leaders the patterns that exist across congregations, and discern the best ways to speak into these patterns.
- provide encouragement, counsel, workshops, resources, and networking opportunities that address these patterns.

These tasks will be carried out by the following participants:

1. A core team of 5 people (3 in the United States, 2 in Canada).
2. Twelve to fifteen regional catalyzers in the United States and Canada who each serve ten or more hours per week (in place by 2018).
3. An advisory group of representatives from partner ministries, including Christian Reformed Home Missions, World Renew, Youth Unlimited, Disability Concerns, and Pastor-Church Relations.

The core team and the advisory group are in place. Currently a handful of catalyzers are in the field, and their numbers will gradually increase during the next three years. Their job description includes the following tasks:

- Cultivate relationships with congregational discipleship and faith formation leaders.
- Discern with them the state of discipleship and faith formation in local congregations.
- Discern patterns of plenitude and need across local congregations and regions.
- Host regional faith formation strategizing workshops together with members of the core team.
- Cultivate relationships with other regional personnel who represent partner ministries.

II. The Five Streams

While Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries is situated directly within the stream of Faith Formation, we interact continually with the streams of Servant Leadership, Global Missions, Loving Mercy and Doing Justice, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship.

We are still in the process of discerning our priorities. To date, we have focused on the following tasks:

- Hosting regional workshops that introduce our ministry to congregational leaders, inviting them to assess the ways in which they are practicing faith formation and to discern steps for improving these practices.
- Updating the *God Loves Me* story books for young children, and developing a *Children at the Table Toolkit* for congregations that are reassessing their communion practices.
- Developing a youth ministry support system.
- Preparing a curriculum to complement mission and service trips.
- Providing consultation to congregational leaders on a wide variety of questions and issues related to discipleship and faith formation.
- Developing a web presence on the Faith Formation and Intergenerational Ministry pages of the Network in order to share ideas and to encourage congregational leadership.
- Providing support to current users of Faith Alive resources.

We are very encouraged that our birth as a ministry coincides with a refreshed denominational commitment to bless local congregations and their leaders.

III. Stories from the field

Research shows that the most significant place to nurture a child's faith is in the home. Part of our task is to support congregations as they encourage families in the faith nurture of their children at home. A blog post on the Network by DFFM member Karen De Boer titled "Dear Parents, Thank You for Bringing Your Child to Worship" was designed to help congregations do just that. The feedback was tremendous. Widely shared and seen by thousands, it became the second most popular Network blog for all of 2014. (*Note: The most read Network post in 2014, a memorial tribute to the youth ministry work of Jake Hiemstra, is also DFFM related.*)

At each of our regional workshops, we have invited participants to provide written feedback. Comments include the following:

- "We wish we had sent more people."
- "Please offer this workshop for our entire congregation."
- "Thank you for articulating a deep connection between grace and discipleship."
- "We received more ideas than we can work with."
- "Very practical."
- "Thank you for not pushing a program but respecting our own context."
- "Thank you for reviving our hope."

We are encouraged to read that participants are receiving what we are offering in ways that resonate with our goals and dreams for events.

Several congregations have asked us for advice while they craft job descriptions for a new position: Pastor of Faith Formation. On each occasion we discovered that we were able to help with advice and to link these contacts with other congregations going through the same process. Our conversations with these congregations have helped us glimpse a movement toward integrating ministry to children and youth within a larger congregational framework for discipleship. Or, to put it differently, we are sensing that more and more congregations are asking, "What kind of leadership do we need to equip our congregation to fulfill its corporate baptismal vows in a sturdy, transformative manner?"

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry (Rev. Ronald A. Klimp, director)

I. Introduction

Many of the people who make up the CRCNA would be surprised to learn that over 130 of our ordained clergy (or approximately 10%) serve full- or part-time as chaplains. The mandate given by synod to the Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry states, "Chaplains are called by the church to extend the ministry of Christ to persons in institutional or specialized settings." The mission of the Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry is "to implement and regulate the denomination's commitment to chaplaincy by recruiting, training, and endorsing persons to provide ministry in specialized settings, including military chaplains, pastoral counselors, institutional spiritual caregivers, hospice care, and others called to minister in places where the institutional church is not present. This office supports and promotes the development of chaplaincy and related ministries for the denomination."

II. Ministries of the Office of Chaplaincy and Care

A. *Ministry that reflects the Five Streams*

1. Faith formation

Most chaplains are required to obtain a full theological education (often an M.Div.) plus two to four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) that focuses on how best to understand and meet the emotional and spiritual needs of persons in crisis, usually within the context of an institution with a diverse population. This means that our chaplains are uniquely qualified to encourage and train others (particularly in their local church) about how to live out their faith by providing compassionate care to others around them in times of crisis.

2. Servant leadership

Currently we have six chaplains serving as CPE supervisors. These individuals are instrumental in training our future chaplains and those from other denominations. A number of other chaplains serve as directors of departments or independently manage counseling or chaplaincy ministries. Many of our chaplains are members of or serve in leadership roles in a variety of professional organizations, including the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, the Association of Professional Chaplains, the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care, the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, and the Michigan Chaplains Association. Two of our Army chaplains are currently serving as teachers at the Chaplains Training School at Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. All of the above facts are remarkable for a relatively small denomination and represent significant influence in God's world through our chaplains. In March 2014, one of our Army chaplains became the first in United States history to add the Special Forces (Green Beret) pin to his Army Ranger pin (earned in 2009). He did so in order to serve those who expose themselves to the greatest risks and rigors of military missions.

3. Global missions

While serving locally or overseas, our chaplains enter and influence populations, cultures, and faith groups from all over the globe. Our chaplains have the unique opportunity to influence individual lives in crisis. They also influence the institutions in which they serve by calling the organizations to ethical standards of care and concern. This influence stretches literally “from the prison to the Pentagon.” Individuals in crisis often search for meaning beneath and around the circumstances they face. Chaplains represent the caring presence of God in such circumstances. They have extensive training in how to minister to these individuals, regardless of their faith background or lack thereof. When it’s appropriate, they share their own faith story as well. With 130 chaplains connecting daily with numerous individuals and their families, many of whom share their faith as well, the potential for introducing and strengthening faith is significant.

4. Loving mercy and doing justice

Chaplains in hospitals often serve as key members of the ethics committees in those institutions. Chaplains in other institutions often have access to management and are respected for their observations and insights in terms of policies and procedures affecting justice issues. Military chaplains are instructed in chaplain school that they are expected to be the moral conscience for the command structure. “From the prison to the Pentagon” few other voices have access to such important cultural arenas.

5. Gospel proclamation and worship

All chaplains are called and their life and doctrine are overseen by a local church. Most have filled the pulpit of their calling church or those of other area churches on numerous occasions. Some have served on their church council, at classis, or as delegates to synod. Some have pastored local churches while serving local hospital, hospice, prison, or military personnel part-time. Chaplains conduct adult education classes and workshops, and they help formally and informally with pastoral care in local congregations. We encourage this interaction with the local church as part of the emphasis on *Care* in our ministry name. In addition, our chaplains lead in worship opportunities in places where the church might otherwise not be visible—from hospital chapels to veterans’ facilities, long-term care facilities, prisons, college campuses, Army field tents, air bases, and aircraft carriers.

B. Collaborative efforts

1. In response to Synod 2012’s challenge to develop ways to “get involved earlier,” multiple agencies have worked together to launch a two-year pilot project (began in 2013) to enhance ministry “fit” for pastors and other religious leaders. This is a proactive strategy for improving pastor/congregation/ministry relationships. The Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry has played an active leadership role in this project from the beginning. We have now begun a second pilot process to explore this matter further. Based on positive results thus far and with the encouragement of other leadership within CRC ministries, we are also proposing a durable process and structure for this function to continue to exist to serve

ministry-minded individuals across our denomination. Further developments in this process will be forthcoming.

2. We annually arrange for chaplaincy representatives to visit a number of Christian colleges and seminaries (six in the past year) to talk with students about the exciting ministry options that exist in the world of chaplaincy. We often do this in conjunction with the Reformed Church in America (RCA) endorser.

C. *Diversity and development of future ministry*

Currently 29 of our 130 endorsed chaplains are female (22%). Nine of our current chaplains represent ethnic minorities. Most of these have been endorsed in the past decade. Based on current applicants and students showing an interest in chaplaincy, we expect this trend to continue.

III. **Connecting with churches**

In addition to the ministries mentioned above, we look for opportunities to communicate with local churches and classes, suggesting that they

- encourage our young people to prayerfully consider a wide range of ministry options, including chaplaincy.
- pray regularly for chaplains who walk daily with people in crisis situations, who have significant influence in secular institutions, and who serve in difficult and sometimes dangerous situations—especially those who are separated from home and family by military deployment.
- welcome chaplains at their regular meetings and explore with them how to use their training and gifts to benefit the care ministries of the local church.

We also urge churches to be particularly aware of the needs of deployed and returning military personnel and their families. For more information and/or ideas about resources that can help in addressing these needs, please contact us at chaplain@crcna.org.

IV. **Recruitment and training**

The future of chaplaincy depends on the growth or restriction of chaplaincy positions and on developing an interest among younger (and older) members of our denomination who feel drawn to full- or part-time ministry. We believe that we are expanding this interest by interacting with students at Christian colleges and seminaries throughout North America and by encouraging chaplains to tell their rich and moving stories of serving individuals in crisis situations. We are also attempting to interact with churches and classes to help create opportunities for these stories to be heard.

There seems to be a growing interest among educational institutions and students in “nontraditional” ministry options like chaplaincy. We currently are working with 45 students (up from 34 in last year’s report), assisting them as needed in their education—both financially and through mentoring. Funding for this assistance in the future will come increasingly from the Chaplains Development Fund. We are encouraging many of our contributors to specify this fund with their gifts.

We have begun planning for the 2015 chaplains conference with Dr. Harold Koenig as the keynote speaker. We will convene at the end of May

at the Prince Conference Center on the campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We arrange for transportation, housing, meals, speakers, music, and chaplaincy resources to make this event edifying and enjoyable (approx. \$30,000 per year). Since chaplains work at the margins of church and society, they relish the time they can spend with each other at the annual conference to renew friendships, learn together, and dialogue with fellow servants of the Lord who identify with the unique pressures, joys, and challenges that chaplaincy brings.

V. Current chaplaincy statistics

The Chaplaincy Ministries Advisory Council (CMAC) and the Chaplaincy and Care Ministry Office present the following statistics:

1. Total CRCNA chaplains: 130 (full-time 91; part-time 23; endorsed-unemployed 16); in the United States: 112; in Canada: 18
2. Military chaplains: 18 in the United States; 2 in Canada; 3 in the National Guard and Reserves
3. Twelve new chaplains in 2014

*Larry Baar

Dae Lee

Kristy Manion

*Jeremy Pool

Cory Van Sloten

*Caitlin Visser

Caleb Walcott

*Hitomi Kornilov

Karen Norris

*Emily Vanden Heuvel

*Allen Breems

*Dan Wierenga

(*Provisional endorsement—still completing one or more prerequisites.)

4. Eight recently retired chaplains in 2014

Hendrik H. Boer

Charles R. Cornelisse

John de Vries, Jr.

Lynn A. Likkel

William J. Moxey

Denis Vanderwekken

Jack J. Van Dyken, Jr.

Kenneth Van Schelven

5. Military chaplains who have served in the past year, or are currently serving, overseas are Peter Hofman, InSoon Hoagland, Cornelius Muusa, Timothy Rietkerk, Douglas Vrieland, and Timothy Won.

Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S., was established by Synod 1983 with a directive to assist organized Christian Reformed churches in the financing of capital improvements. The Loan Fund operates exclusively in the United States. The Board of Directors of the Loan Fund oversees the loan approval process, the determination of loan interest rates, and the setting of Loan Fund policies. The Board also establishes interest rates for Investment Certificates sold—primarily to members, classes, churches, and agencies of the CRCNA.

II. Board of Directors

Loan Fund board members are eligible to serve for two three-year terms. Members of the Board of Directors are Ms. Andrea Karsten (2017), Mr. Thomas Sinke (2017), Ms. Chery De Boer (2016), Mr. Kenneth Stienstra (2016), Mr. Scott Ritsema (2015), and Mr. Jon Swets (2015). Mr. Ritsema is completing his first term. Mr. Swets is completing his second term and is not eligible for reappointment.

The Board requests that synod reappoint Mr. Scott Ritsema for a second three-year term. The board also requests that synod appoint one new board member from the following slate of nominees to serve a three-year term:

Mr. James Brewer is a founding member of Many Peoples CRC in Chicago, Illinois, where he was a member of its steering team. He is a Certified Financial Planner and is principal of Envision Wealth Planning and Retirement Advisors in Chicago. Mr. Brewer is an active participant in two community organizations, the Taproot Foundation and the Gads Hill Center corporate committee. He also serves as a board member of the Rogers Park Business Alliance, a business, economic, and development organization. He is a graduate of Kettering University and earned a master of business administration degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Rev. Matthew Eenigenburg is a member of Celebration Community CRC in Muskegon, Michigan, where he serves as pastor. He is also a member of the classical ministries board of Classis Muskegon. Rev. Eenigenburg previously served as director of youth ministries at Faith CRC in New Brighton, Minnesota, and as a mental health counselor in Dyer, Indiana. He is secretary of the Shoreline City Ministers Fellowship in Muskegon and is a classroom reading assistant at Lakeside School, also in Muskegon. Rev. Eenigenburg is a graduate of Trinity Christian College, Governors State University, and of Bethel Seminary.

III. Financial operations

A. The Loan Fund is eligible to sell Investment Certificates to investors in twenty-three states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. Additional states could be added as needed to benefit the Fund.

B. At the close of the 2014 fiscal year (June 30, 2014), a total of \$26,766,526 in interest-bearing Investment Certificates held by investors was outstanding.

Interest rates vary from 1.30 percent to 3.50 percent, with a weighted average of 2.16 percent. The variances in interest rates reflect market conditions and the terms of the Certificates at the times they were issued.

C. Since its inception in 1983, the Loan Fund has originated nearly two hundred loans totaling almost \$70 million to churches across the United States. As of June 30, 2014, the Loan Fund had \$22,292,604 in loans and interest outstanding. Loan delinquencies do occur from time to time, but they are closely monitored and are very infrequent. The Fund maintains a loan loss reserve to help cover potential losses. The Fund is blessed to have experienced no loan losses in its history.

D. Financial operations are also reflected in the following data:

	2014	2013	2012
Cash and equivalents	\$11,836,031	\$11,607,134	\$9,004,061
Net loans and interest receivable	\$22,292,604	\$21,208,263	\$22,413,193
Total assets	\$34,128,635	\$32,815,397	\$31,417,254
Certificates and interest payable	\$26,847,368	\$25,666,069	\$24,538,140
Net assets	\$7,281,267	\$7,149,328	\$6,879,114
Total liabilities and net assets	\$34,128,635	\$32,815,397	\$31,417,254

E. A summary of the audited financial report as of June 30, 2014, appears in the *Agenda for Synod 2015—Financial and Business Supplement*.

IV. Sources of funding

Funds for the Loan Fund operations are derived from the following sources:

A. The sale of Investment Certificates in those states where legal approval to offer them has been obtained.

B. Gifts and bequests made to the Fund.

C. An unsecured line of credit with a bank that permits borrowing up to \$2 million. The Loan Fund currently has no amounts outstanding on this line of credit.

V. Staff

The Loan Fund is served by Mrs. Alice M. Damsteegt, customer service specialist, and Mr. David E. Veen, director.

VI. Recommendations

A. That the Loan Fund's director or any members of the Board of Directors of the Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S., be given the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to the Loan Fund are discussed.

B. That synod reappoint Mr. Scott Ritsema to the Board of Directors of the Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S., for a second three-year term and that synod, by way of the ballot, appoint one board member from the slate of nominees presented to the Board of Directors of the Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.

Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.
David E. Veen, director

Pastor-Church Relations (Rev. Norman J. Thomasma, team leader; Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis, lead consulting pastor)

I. Introduction

The Office of Pastor-Church Relations (PCR) began in 1982. It arose from a denominational recognition that local congregations needed assistance in responding to a growing number of conflict situations that interfered with the ministry of congregations, their pastor(s), and other ministry leaders. PCR was charged with helping congregations that were experiencing difficulty, as it was urged to develop resources and practices that would help pastors and congregations deal more effectively with conflict situations.

II. Pastor-Church Relations and the “Five Streams”

By envisioning ministry as having various themes or streams, current leaders in the CRCNA are picturing the fluid and organic way in which mission and worship, faith formation and justice-seeking, serving and leadership are descriptively distinct and yet inextricably joined. Consistent with the biblical picture of church as the “body of Christ,” the notion of several streams flowing together invites us to imagine how the various parts of the church work and flow together as a thriving river, always changing, never ceasing.

The interactions that PCR has with congregations, pastors, and other ministry leaders are often focused on relationships. One interesting way in which relationships come into view relates to the various characteristics of a healthy, thriving church and the manner in which its different emphases are held in relationship. Signs of health are apparent when worship and mission complement each other and when faith formation and justice-seeking are creatively paired for engagement with the world and maturation of God’s people. And when the proportional emphasis on each of these streams is being tended through wise and discerning servant leaders, the local church becomes Exhibit A of Christ’s kingdom in the world. Part of PCR’s work is to walk with churches as they consider these different emphases or streams and to seek to help them flourish in connection with each other and for the good of the whole.

III. Connecting with churches

There are three intersecting ways in which PCR connects with congregations in the CRCNA. These involve (1) connections with congregations, (2) connections with pastors and church staff, and (3) connections with classes in the service of congregations and their leaders.

A. Resourcing congregations directly

1. The staff of PCR responds to various questions and requests from congregations. This includes consulting/intervention in times of difficulty, suggesting resources when congregations are adding staff or considering a change in organizational structure, and helping with processes by which challenging congregational conversations can be planned and implemented. Much of this work is accomplished over the phone or through email, but PCR staff also work “on site” when circumstances warrant doing so.

Educational and retreat activities for councils, congregations, classes, and church staff also continue to be a focus of PCR activity.

2. One key initiative now housed within PCR is the **Sustaining Congregational Excellence** (SCE) program. Begun in 2007, SCE provides financial grants for new ministry initiatives to smaller congregations and hosts learning events to encourage and strengthen the leadership of local churches. As of February 2015, just over 500 churches have participated in the SCE program.
3. The **Ministerial Information Service** maintains a database of more than eight hundred pastor profiles as well as several hundred congregation profiles. These profiles are used by search committees of congregations looking for pastors and by pastors seeking new positions. The Office of Pastor-Church Relations, with the assistance of a volunteer committee, suggests potential pastors to search committees of congregations. In this area of its work, PCR is renewing efforts to develop a web-based approach to the Ministerial Information Service, an approach that may provide greater freedom for communication among churches looking for pastors, as well as among pastors and pastor candidates looking for churches.
4. To help local congregations during times of pastor vacancy, PCR staff wrote *More than a Search Committee*, a training tool for congregations. It is gratifying to see the extent to which congregations are ordering and using this new resource. Copies are available on the PCR website (www.crcna.org/PCR) or free of charge through Faith Alive Christian Resources at faithaliveresources.org.
5. **Specialized Transitional Ministers** (STMs) are trained to help congregations deal with challenges and opportunities during the transition between pastors. At this time, there are twenty STMs endorsed by PCR. Congregations are also calling on other pastors to be supply pastors. Although these pastors are not working directly with PCR, a list of these supply pastors, many of whom are retired, is available from the PCR office.

B. Resourcing pastors and church staff

1. PCR continues to advance the work of mentoring new pastors. Mentoring, beginning in the seminary and continuing throughout a pastor's ministry, is seen as a crucial area of pastoral growth and accountability. PCR provides mentors and mentees with *Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring*, a guide that helps in shaping the mentoring conversation and relationship.
2. PCR continues to seek effective ways to build a working relationship with candidates and newly ordained pastors. Each year, PCR hosts a dinner in which relationships are initiated and the work of PCR is explained. These dinners include those enrolled in the M.Div. program at Calvin Theological Seminary, as well as those enrolled in the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy. Given synod's decisions regarding commissioned pastors, PCR is also seeking ways to better serve this expanding group in the denomination.

3. **Sustaining Pastoral Excellence** provides grants for pastor peer groups, biennial conferences for pastors' spouses, and regional gatherings for pastors and their spouses. Since SPE's inception in 2003, nearly 800 pastors have participated in this program.
 4. Through the **Staff Ministry Team**, over 1,000 nonordained church professionals are being supported in a variety of ways. Opportunities for networking and distribution of resources are offered and, increasingly, churches are requesting services pertaining to staffing concerns. Endorsed by the Board of Trustees, a credentialing process for professional church staff has been developed and continues to attract new applicants. Finally, PCR is grateful for the recent publication of *The Church Staff Handbook*, authored by Laura Keeley. Laura has worked closely with the staff ministry team and served as its chair for a number of years.
 5. On behalf of synod, the Office of Pastor-Church Relations administers a **continuing education fund** for pastors and professional church staff. Grants of up to \$750 per year are awarded to pastors and staff who demonstrate the value of an educational event and/or opportunity they are pursuing. Applicants access this information via the PCR website.
 6. In response to Synod 2012's challenge to develop ways to "get involved earlier," PCR, along with several other offices and agencies, launched a two-year pilot project to develop best practices around **vocational assessment** for pastors. This proactive strategy is intended to improve and enhance "ministry fit" for pastors and other ministry leaders.
 7. Staff of PCR, along with representatives of other organizations, are working with the Office of Disability Concerns to develop resources for pastors and their families who are being directly affected by the challenges of mental illness.
- C. *Resourcing congregations and their leaders by resourcing classes*
1. PCR *extends* its work through **regional pastors** at the classis level who provide support, encouragement, and counsel to pastors and spouses challenged by the demands of life and ministry. These pastors also assist in setting up mentoring relationships for new pastors and encourage the development of support mechanisms when there are multiple staff persons within a congregation. In addition, PCR's relationship with **classical church visitors** continues to grow through opportunities for collaboration and training.
 2. In response to the request of Synod 2013 and the Board of Trustees, PCR has convened an initiative called "Better Together." It is intended to enhance and strengthen denominational support for classis functionaries, such as church visitors, regional pastors, mentors, and church counselors, as a key strategy for assisting congregations who are in the early stages of challenging situations. Encouraged by the work of the "Better Together" team, PCR is thinking and planning for more robust resourcing strategies intended to strengthen the role and work of classical church visitors, regional pastors, and classically appointed counselors for congregations

intending to call a new pastor. Classes that have an interest in these initiatives are invited to communicate that interest to the staff of PCR.

IV. Considerations for the future

1. PCR is seeking ways to become more regionally present while retaining some of the advantages of a more centralized office. This research is happening in concert with other offices and agencies who share similar interests.
2. PCR is considering how to develop a more substantive approach to resourcing ethnic and multicultural congregations.
3. PCR is often looking to enhance the skills and resources of its staff to strengthen its work with pastors, staff, and congregations—for example, incorporating new approaches such as the wisdom of narrative theory, the goodness of restorative practices, and the creativity around organizational behavior.
4. Collaborating with other offices and agencies is becoming more and more a way of life at PCR. This trend will continue and will promote an organic and holistic understanding of what contributes to congregations that are well conceived, healthy, and kingdom-focused reflections of the mind of Christ in his world.

Pensions and Insurance

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church in North America maintains employee benefit programs that provide retirement, health, life, and disability benefits for employees of the denomination in its ministries, agencies, local churches, and other CRC organizations.

II. Board matters

The ministers' pension plans, special-assistance funds, and employees' retirement plans are governed by the boards of the U.S. and Canadian Pension Trustees. These boards meet several times per year, usually in joint session. Separate meetings of the boards are held as needed.

III. Benefit-program activities

A. Ministers' pension plans

The ministers' pension plans are defined-benefit plans. Benefits paid by the plans are defined by formula, and the required funding of the plans is determined by actuarial calculations. The primary purpose of the plans is to provide retirement benefits to plan participants. The plans also provide benefits to the surviving spouses of participants as well as to any dependent children who are orphaned. In addition, long-term disability benefits are provided through an insurance product to all full-time, active participants in the plans who have furnished the information concerning compensation and housing as required by the insurance carrier.

The following is a summary of participant counts as of December 31, 2014, for each plan and in total. Participants having an interest in both plans (generally the result of having served churches in both the United States and Canada) appear in the column in which their interest is the greater.

	United States	Canada	Total
Active ministers	734	266	1,000
Ministers receiving benefit payments	584	134	718
Spouses and dependents	166	36	202
Withdrawn participants with vested benefits	101	23	124
Total	1,585	459	2,044

Independent actuarial firms are employed to prepare valuations of the plans. These actuarial valuations furnish the information needed to determine church and participant assessment amounts. The U.S. plan is required to have a valuation every three years, while the Canadian plan is required to submit an annual valuation to provincial regulators. Information regarding church and participant assessment amounts will be presented later in this report.

1. Portfolio balances and performance

Plan assets are invested in diversified portfolios under the management of professional investment-management firms. These firms are required to adhere to the denomination's investment guidelines, and their performance is measured against established benchmarks and is regularly reviewed by the trustees.

The plans' actuaries have informed us that as of the date of the plans' last valuation, the actuarial liability totaled approximately \$118.4 million for the U.S. plan (as of December 31, 2013) and \$41.1 million for the Canadian plan (as of December 31, 2013). These amounts reflect the present value of the plans' obligations to all participants including active, disabled, and retired pastors, widows, and dependents.

Market value of the portfolios is summarized as follows:

	December 31, 2014	December 31, 2013
United States (U.S. \$)	\$106,769,000	\$105,528,000
Canada (Can. \$)	48,289,000	42,419,000

Dividends, interest, and appreciation in the value of the plans' holdings provide a significant portion of the resources needed to meet the plans' obligations to the active participants and to fund payments to retirees and beneficiaries.

2. Plan review

The pension plan has undergone several changes since separate plans for the United States and Canada were established in 1983. While the basic defined benefit form of the plan was not altered, changes were made to improve benefits provided by the plan, to clarify how the plan is administered, and to improve the protocols used to obtain funds needed to pay costs.

The more significant changes to the plans (or changes that affect them) made by recent synods include the following:

- 2001 Approved a variety of optional benefit forms in addition to the plan's normal form.
- Applied the plan's 1.46 percent multiple to all service beginning January 1, 1985.
- 2003 Approved guidelines for part-time service.
- Required payment for upgrading the interests of previously frozen participants reinstated as active members of the plans.
- Acted to replace self-insured disability benefits with an insurance contract.
- Changed funding protocols for all organized churches, effective January 1, 2004, to require payment of the greater of direct costs or per-member assessments.
- Linked timely payment of contributions (the greater of participant or per-member costs) to the grant of credited service to first or only pastors of organized churches.
- 2004 Required that pension costs of endorsed chaplains be paid as a condition for active participation in the plan, effective January 1, 2006.

Approved Rule VII for synodical procedure, requiring synods to defer any proposed action concerning the plans until advised by the pension trustees.

Amended Church Order Article 15 to include specific elements of “proper support,” including payment to the denomination’s ministers’ pension plan.

- 2010 Decreased the multiplier used to determine benefit amounts from 1.46 percent to 1.3 percent for credited service beginning January 1, 2011.

Approved a change in the early retirement reduction factor to 0.5 percent from 0.3 percent per month, effective January 1, 2014.

- 2011 Increased the normal retirement from age 65 to age 66.

Advanced the implementation of the change to the early retirement factor (from 0.3% to 0.5% per month) from January 1, 2014, to July 1, 2011.

Froze the final three-year average salary upon which benefits are calculated in Canada at the 2010 level.

Changed the normal form of retirement benefit from joint and survivor to single life with five years certain. (Participants can still elect to receive a joint and survivor benefit at a slightly reduced level of payment.)

3. Funding

All organized churches are expected to pay church assessments determined by an amount per active professing member age 18 and older or, if greater, the direct costs of their first or only pastor’s participation in the plan. The amount of the assessment for 2015 is \$42.96 per member in Canada and \$37.20 in the United States, and direct costs have been set at \$9,840 and \$7,704, respectively. These amounts are collected by means of monthly billings to each organized church, based on reported membership statistics.

All emerging churches and other denominational ministries that employ a minister as a missionary, professor, or teacher, or in any other capacity, including organizations that employ endorsed chaplains (with the exception of chaplains serving in the military who are not yet entitled to receive any military pension benefits), are required to pay the annual cost of participation in the plan. All pension assessments, however determined, are billed monthly, and the grant of credited service for pastors is contingent on timely payment of amounts billed.

While circumstances could change, it is unlikely that there will be a need for an increase in the pension contribution costs for the next year.

B. *Employees’ retirement plans*

The employees’ retirement plans are defined-contribution plans covering most employees of participating denominational agencies and ministries who are not ordained as ministers of the Word. In the United States, contributions are paid to the plan by participating employers in an amount up

to 6 percent of compensation. An additional employer contribution of up to 4 percent of compensation is made to match employee contributions of a similar amount. In Canada, contributions of up to 9 percent are paid to the plan by participating employers. In Canada, there are no contributions made to the plan relative to matching employee contributions. In both plans, participants may make additional contributions up to the limits determined by federal regulation. Participants receive periodic statements indicating the dollar amount credited to their accounts, the value of their accounts, and the vested percentage.

Individual participants direct the investment of their account balances among several investment alternatives, including fixed-income and equity funds. The investment alternatives are currently managed for U.S. participants by J.P. Morgan Chase Trust Division, which also serves as custodian of the plan's assets, and for Canadian participants by Sun Life Financial Group.

As of December 31, 2014, the balances in these plans totaled approximately \$29,991,000 in the United States and \$4,294,000 in Canada. As of that date, there were 366 participants in the U.S. plan and 81 in the Canadian plan, categorized as follows:

	United States	Canada
Active	242	77
Inactive	124	4

C. *Nonretirement employee benefit programs*

Oversight of the denomination's nonretirement employee benefit programs is provided by the Board of Trustees.

Consolidated Group Insurance is a denominational plan that offers health, dental, and life coverage in Canada to ministers and employees of local congregations and denominational agencies and ministries. Currently there are 331 participants in the program. The most significant categories of participants include 219 pastors and employees of local churches, 108 employees of denominational ministries and agencies, and 4 retirees. The plan in Canada is a fully insured plan with coverage purchased through a major health-insurance provider and is supplemental to health benefits available through government health programs.

In the United States, the denomination offers health, dental, and life coverage to ministers and employees of local congregations and denominational agencies and ministries. Currently there are 768 participants in the program. The most significant categories of participants include 324 pastors and employees of local churches, 221 employees of denominational ministries and agencies, and 223 retirees. The plans are provided by the Reformed Benefits Association (RBA) through a trust established to fund benefits and expenses of the plan. RBA was established as of July 2013 by the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and the Board of Benefit Services of the Reformed Church in America to provide nonretirement benefit programs for both denominations.

Premiums charged by the plan in Canada are set by the insurance carrier. The premiums for the U.S. plan are set by RBA based on overall expectations of claims and administrative expenses for the coming year.

D. Financial disclosures

Audited or reviewed financial statements of the retirement plans and of all of the agencies and institutions are made available each year to the treasurer of each classis with the request that they be made available to any interested party. In addition, summary financial statements are included in the *Acts of Synod*. Individualized statements are furnished to active members of the ministers' pension plans and the employees' retirement plans.

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to members of the Canadian Board of Pensions and the U.S. Board of Pensions, and to Mr. John H. Bolt when insurance matters and matters pertaining to pension plans for ministers and employees are discussed.

B. That synod designate up to 100 percent of a minister's early or normal retirement pension or disability pension for 2016 as housing allowance for United States income-tax purposes (IRS Ruling 1.107-1), but only to the extent that the pension is used to rent or provide a home.

Pensions and Insurance
John H. Bolt, director of finance
and operations

Safe Church Ministry (Ms. Bonnie Nicholas, director)

I. Introduction

Safe Church Ministry equips congregations and is a resource for the denomination in abuse awareness, prevention, and response. Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse is pandemic in our culture. Those who bear the name of Christ and follow him are called to be light in this darkness. Safe Church works to equip congregations to prevent abuse, and when it occurs, to respond appropriately with justice and compassion.

II. Reflecting the Five Streams

Abuse is a grave injustice; therefore, Safe Church Ministry fits within the Justice stream. In abuse, power is used to harm, to control, and to minimize others. Abuse is always about misuse of power, and it stands in stark contrast to the way of Jesus, who came in humility, using his power not to harm or for selfish gain but to lay down his life for the sake of those he loved. He shares power with us, through his Spirit, so that we may follow in his way of humility (see Phil. 2). Safe Church flows into the stream of Faith Formation as we are called to live out the faith that we profess in the way we relate to one another. We have been commanded to love one another; there is no place for abuse. There is also a leadership component to our work as we promote healthy ministry relationships and deal with situations in which a sacred trust has been broken and boundaries have been violated.

Safe Church is pleased to have participated in the following collaborative initiatives:

- “Listening to Marginalized Voices Challenge,” which offered stories of people who had experienced abuse as well as those marginalized in other ways. Over 500 people participated. Listening is an important first step in understanding.
- “Boundary Tending,” day-long workshops for pastors and ministry leaders (an ecumenical effort through Sustaining Pastoral Excellence at St. Francis Retreat Center); this initiative now includes collaboration with Pastor-Church Relations as we adapt some of the materials for use in various CRC contexts.
- Restorative Practices for Congregations, a two-day training event sponsored jointly with the Offices of Social Justice, Race Relations, and Pastor-Church Relations.

III. Connecting with churches

Safe Church works through almost 400 Safe Church volunteer team members who act as resources and catalysts for abuse awareness, prevention, and response in their local context. A monthly electronic newsletter is sent to these team members with ideas, information, and links to new resources. In some places (in fewer than half of our classes) efforts are supported and coordinated by a classis Safe Church team. Safe Church team members are involved in offering educational opportunities, assisting with policy development, and providing consultation and support in difficult situations involving abuse.

Safe Church staff members include the director and an administrative assistant. Staff members have been involved in presentations and team training events in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Pella, Iowa; DeWitt, Michigan; Gallup, New Mexico; Ancaster, Ontario; and Ottawa, Ontario. In addition, we hosted our Safe Church Conference in April 2014. About 60 people from 28 classes attended the conference, which included two full days of workshops, plenary sessions, and an evening presentation open to the public. In addition, the office in Grand Rapids responds directly to various requests for assistance. Almost 800 interactions with congregations and individuals were recorded in 2014. We track these interactions with keywords: 172 interactions were related to abuse awareness, 169 were team related, 165 were related to a situation of abuse, 121 were about a policy concern or question, and 77 were related to the *Circle of Grace* program.

Abuse Awareness Sunday, the fourth Sunday in September, is promoted with letters to pastors/congregations and to Safe Church team members with ideas for participation. Two new bulletin inserts were created, a webinar on domestic violence was produced (in collaboration with Safe Haven Ministries, a local domestic violence shelter), and additional resources were added to our website and arranged topically. For Abuse Awareness Sunday, 177 participating congregations ordered bulletin inserts, and two classes and several individuals placed additional orders, for a total of 25,800 inserts. Our informative inserts are available to order free of charge at any time through Faith Alive Christian Resources (www.faithaliveresources.org).

Safe Church continues to promote the *Circle of Grace* program, which equips children and youth to be actively involved in a safe environment for themselves and others. Over seventy congregations have ordered the program, which is subsidized by Safe Church Ministry to make it accessible to every congregation. We believe this is one of the best tools available for preventing abuse and living out of a sense of God's presence with us always. *Circle of Grace* can positively influence the next generation in building respectful Christian communities in which abuse would be unthinkable.

IV. Safe Church Advisory Committee

Safe Church operates with an advisory committee, functioning as advisory to the director, appointed by the Board of Trustees, and composed of the following six members, who serve three-year renewable terms: Judy Cook, Hamilton, Ontario; Violetta Diamond, Washington, D.C.; Bill Padding, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Gail Rice, Palos Heights, Illinois; Michael Vander Laan, Kamloops, British Columbia; Barton Velthuizen, Scarborough, Ontario.

Christian Reformed Home Missions

I. Introduction

Why does mission matter? What is at stake in the community where you live, in your workplace, and in your church? At stake are the people living in our neighborhoods and communities in Canada and the United States—individuals whom God loves but who don't know him yet. They need to hear and experience the love of Jesus through the church, the body of Christ, through "everyday" people in our denomination.

In *Our Word Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*, Article 41 states,

Joining the mission of God, the church is sent with the gospel of the kingdom to call everyone to know and follow Christ and to proclaim to all the assurance that in the name of Jesus there is forgiveness of sin and new life for all who repent and believe. The Spirit calls all members to embrace God's mission in their neighborhoods and in the world. . . . We repent of leaving this work to a few, for **this mission is central to our being.**

"This mission is central to our being," for the future of our denomination. Our future, God's future in us, will be affected by how we, all of us—more than 250,000 members—respond to this call of mission.

Joining the mission of God, Christian Reformed Home Missions calls, catalyzes, and collaborates with God's missionary people to start and strengthen missional churches and campus ministries that transform lives and communities.

II. Reflecting the Five Streams

The themes of the Five Streams flow through every part of our work. The following summary highlights just a few ways our work is reflected in the Five Streams:

A. Faith Formation—CRC churches and leadership working together to equip believers to grow in faith and be faithful disciples in the kingdom. Faith Formation is occurring regularly in churches and campus ministries.

A growing number of church plants (and even some established churches) are using a missional community model that encourages a Christian community centered on a neighborhood or a network to live out their faith in their everyday lives. They hold each other accountable for discipleship practices and missional postures that share the love of Christ with others. As people gather on and around college and university campuses for Bible study, prayer, study, and work, campus ministers serve as catalysts, facilitators, and connectors, leading and empowering discipleship endeavors.

B. Servant Leadership—Identifying, training, and recruiting leaders in the kingdom. Inspiring leadership is essential.

Being a faithful presence within the academic communities we serve, we are able to identify, equip, and send leaders into all walks of life. Leadership development in campus ministry occurs through mentoring, through our Emerging Leader program, and, most recently, through vocational discernment programs funded by the Lilly Foundation. A growing number of grant requests to the Church Multiplication Initiative focus on leadership

development. The Leadership Development Network (LDN) continues to train lay leaders for mission in their local context.

C. Global Missions—We are witnesses of Christ, to the ends of the earth. The denomination strengthens and encourages local congregations to be part of God’s mission.

Missions is at the heart of all our church planting work. A recent study of CRC church planting data shows that 45 of the 48 classes have been involved in a church plant since 2007. Collaboration among congregations working with partners from classis or clusters to plant new churches is increasing. Coffee Break is an effective Bible discovery small group strategy for evangelism. Home Missions supports this work by providing resources, leadership training, and coaching.

D. Loving Mercy and Doing Justice—We think of the oppressed, the broken-hearted, and the disadvantaged. Therefore, we seek to act justly and love mercy.

Mercy and justice are woven into all our work in campus ministry. Campus ministries are connected to both local congregations and community development groups. As campus members serve as volunteers and interns in the community, they work alongside others who are similarly seeking justice and the shalom of the city. Many new church plants and established churches are asking tough questions about their ministry, their approach to loving mercy and doing justice, and their being a faithful presence in their community. In the past seven years, more than half of new church plants have been ethnic minority congregations, with at least 13 different ethnicities represented. Many of these communities are made up of first- and second-generation immigrants who find their relational and spiritual connections in a new CRC church.

E. Gospel Proclamation and Worship—We proclaim the saving message of Jesus and worship him in all that we do. Faith is strengthened by hearing the Word.

Every church plant we launch incorporates a public worship gathering in which we are able to proclaim the gospel message in a corporate/large worship setting. Church plants in earlier stages of development, or those that operate using a different model, gather people for small group Bible study and worship on a regular basis in people’s homes. At the core of campus ministries are the worshiping communities where people gather to worship, and where students, faculty, and staff worship through the studies and vocational callings they are pursuing. In all of this, the gospel is lived out and proclaimed in a variety of ways both on campus and in the surrounding communities.

Finally, prayer weaves its way through all of the Five Streams. Home Missions has played a key role in catalyzing a grassroots prayer movement. The first denominational Prayer Summit took place in 2012. Since then, more than 11 regional and classis prayer events/summits have taken place. As a result, a network for prayer coordinators and leaders is expanding.

III. Connecting with churches

Home Missions depends on relationships with local churches throughout North America. The three main areas of our work happen in concert with local congregations and communities. In each area, Home Missions desires to partner with local congregations in sharing the gospel.

By **starting and strengthening missional churches**, we seek to help all churches move toward becoming missional (mission-centered, mission-focused, mission-shaped) churches and to bring all churches together in mission. By **developing disciples, leaders, and campus ministries**, we seek to equip the leaders in our local congregations. By **engaging with clusters, classes, and communities**, we connect with churches throughout the CRCNA to develop innovative new ways to share the good news of Jesus Christ.



These three areas of focus bring us together around our aim of transforming lives and communities to extend God's name and renown throughout North America.

A. *Starting and strengthening missional churches*

1. This remains the core work of Home Missions. Our changing culture has created a new missionary context—the CRCNA's old models of offering

programs and centralized authority will not work any longer. We continue to build on the faithful work of the past while working hard to walk alongside local churches as they adapt. Following are a few of the ways in which Home Missions is working in partnership with the rest of the denomination to start and strengthen missional churches.

- a. Starting missional churches—Home Missions' church planting efforts are supported by the Church Multiplication Operations Team, an integrated team that serves both the CRCNA and the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Integrating this work at the operations level has led to deeper collaboration in a variety of ways, including the Church Multiplication Initiative and other partnerships. In the past year, Home Missions has provided grants for fifty church plants. However, the support we offer church plants, church planters, and parent churches or networks goes far beyond grant money in order to resource the overall health and development of these new churches.
 - Supporting Church Planters: Home Missions has trained and certified coaches available for each church planter. These coaches guide planters through the church planting process, helping them work in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Every church planter is invited to attend a week of workshops and training (called Thrive) with key leaders of their core team before launching a new church. Many of our planters are involved in a cluster, which provides peer support as they embark on the rather uncertain journey of planting a church.
 - Church Multiplication Initiative: The four initial Kingdom Enterprise Zones (San Francisco, Phoenix, Florida, and Wyoming in Michigan) that began our work together are now self-sustaining, and their focus on mission and multiplication continues through integration into local structures such as classes. There are currently seven more Kingdom Enterprise Zones in various stages of development (New York City; Chicago; Lincoln, Neb.; Seattle; Whatcom County in Washington; Detroit; and Southwest Michigan). These collaborative efforts have resulted in an increased level of church planting, leadership development, and missional opportunities.
 - Planning for the future of church planting: A review of our church planting data conducted this year also revealed that the landscape of church planting is changing. Today more of our planters are ordained as commissioned pastors than as ministers of the Word. More of our planters are bivocational than those serving as full-time pastors. An increasing number of church plants are using a missional community model in order to reach a post-Christian society. Home Missions is developing ways to adapt to these changes.
- b. Strengthening missional churches—Through our network of regional and ethnic leaders, along with regional resource staff and consultants, Home Missions continues to work with classes and local congregations. A key component of strengthening existing congregations is the training and provision of coaches who work with local congregations.

- Coaching, consulting, and training: Home Missions ministry leaders are focused on coming alongside and providing just-in-time coaching for local church pastors and leaders to discern God’s call for their ministry in their communities. We support classes by supporting connections, innovation, learning, and relationship building.
 - Church renewal: Through initiatives like the Ridder Church Renewal process, Home Missions helps pastors develop the tools to confront unhealthy models that have hindered personal and congregational growth. Through this process, participants commit to authentic communication and to understanding the pressures that systems bring on individual behavior. Ridder coaching is currently happening with 60 leaders in 12 CRC congregations in Eastern Canada and is expanding into Western Canada and the U.S. Midwest in 2015. In addition to Ridder, Home Missions is also partnering with the Renewal Lab, a church renewal process developed by Calvin Theological Seminary, as well as the Healthy Church Index, Deeper Journey, Forge Canada, Forge U.S., Embers to a Flame prayer training, and other resources and partnerships.
 - Experiments and adaptive challenges: Home Missions has identified five adaptive challenges facing our organization, the denomination, and our local churches. Many of these challenges have been affirmed by the Board of Trustees in response to the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team report. These challenges will not be addressed by creating new quick-fix programs. Home Missions’ new approach for helping churches to understand and address these adaptive challenges is to assist pastors and church leaders in designing effective adaptive change experiments. “A good adaptive change experiment is not just trying things until we hit upon a strategy or program that might solve our church problems. A good adaptive challenge experiment moves us to rethink our understanding of God and the gospel and the relationship of the church and its context” (The Missional Network).
2. Regional, ethnic, and catalytic leadership—An ongoing strength of Home Missions is our regional and ethnic ministry leadership. Distributed across North America to work with regions and ethnic communities, these leaders are our key connectors and coaches. This year we have added *catalytic leaders*, who focus on connecting, learning, and resourcing. They are networkers and connectors across the denomination and even globally. Catalytic leaders work closely with regional and ethnic leaders to promote, gather, and share learning. Our current regional, ethnic, and catalytic leaders are

Eastern Canada Region: Adrian Van Giessen

Western Canada Region: Martin Contant

Eastern U.S. Region: Drew Angus

Great Lakes Region: Amy Schenkel (coleader)

Central U.S. Region: Peter Kelder

West Central U.S. Region: Jerry Holleman

West Coast U.S. Region: Sid Sybenga (regional coordinator)

Black and Urban Ministries: Bob Price

Hispanic Ministries: Vacant

Korean Ministries: Charles Kim

Native American/First Nation Ministries: Stanley Jim

Catalytic Leaders for New Churches: Amy Schenkel and
Adrian VanGiessen

Catalytic Leader for Discipleship: Sam Huizenga

Catalytic Leader for Campus Ministries and Leadership Development:
Mark Wallace

3. Stories

a. God's call to Niagara Falls

The Bridge is one of the CRCNA's newest church plants. Pastor Allen Kleine Deters is partnering with Classis Niagara; Providence CRC in Beamsville, Ont.; The Village Church in Thorold, Ont.; and others in following God's call to plant a church in Niagara Falls. The church plant's name goes along with its mission to be a bridge connecting people to Jesus and each other. Pastor Allen wants to show Niagara Falls a whole new idea of what church can be. "We want to make the community part of our DNA, not just be a Sunday event."

Niagara Falls has one of the highest rates of poverty in the Niagara region, and there is definitely a need for transformation there. "We've identified a kind of 'parish' area—basically, downtown Niagara Falls," says Pastor Allen. He and his wife, Freda, live close to a dividing line between the middle-class parts of the city and the downtrodden and impoverished areas. "Just down the street from us, we start heading into an area of empty storefronts, vacant buildings, and dilapidated motels. Some old motel rooms are home for entire families." Social services provide only a bare minimum of support and don't do enough to control growing poverty, substance abuse, and other issues.

Allen and Freda heard God's call to plant the Bridge and moved to Niagara Falls in August 2014. "Already in the short time since we've been here, we've built enough relationships in the downtown area that we have a place to meet, which is good because we're about to outgrow our house." Members of the Bridge are connected and serving the neighborhood throughout the week, but they come to Pastor Allen's house each Sunday for a meal, worship, and teaching—for now. Soon the local cigar shop will be their meeting place—a perfect spot that has couches and tables for fellowship and learning.

Over the coming year, the Bridge will expand into what Pastor Allen calls "solid" missional communities. That means raising up leaders to help the church be a part of the community, empowering them to reach more parish areas within the city, and meeting each week to celebrate what God is doing all week long in Niagara Falls. Missional communities don't just talk about mission—they live it. The Bridge is building a reputation of being great to work with, of loving their community, of doing whatever it takes, and of changing lives. More than anything, though, Pastor Allen wants to see God shape the Bridge. "We have

some vision and direction—we're grassroots; we're community focused; but really we are trying to be what God wants us to be in this city."

b. Renewal at Orangeville CRC

Built in Beamsville, Ontario, in 1950, Orangeville Christian Reformed Church is over 60 years old and, in many ways, is a fairly typical southern Ontario congregation. But as part of an ongoing desire for renewal and rekindling, the leadership of the church—pastored by Andrew Vis—connected with the Ridder Church Renewal.

Home Missions works with established churches, like Orangeville and eleven other churches in Ontario and still others across the United States and Canada, to come alongside each one and discern what God's plan is for each church and its community. Engaging and partnering with these churches is an essential part of our vision of collaboration and partnership—our prayer is that the experiments and learning communities developed as part of Ridder and other initiatives will help the CRCNA reach more people for Christ. The Ridder Initiative, described as "a process, not a program," is rooted in Western Theological Seminary. Andrew Vis and five other leaders from the church have made a thirty-month commitment to faith renewal for themselves and their church members.

Change starts by challenging time-honored assumptions about what makes a congregation healthy and vital. "Often our assumption is that we want to make good church members," he said. "But at Ridder, the goal is to make disciples and live missionally." Participants attend five retreats over the course of thirty months, in which they learn from facilitators and then commit to practicing their learning in their own community. "The missional piece is the willingness to live out the gospel in our neighborhoods," Vis pointed out. "The question we ask is, How do we want our community to be different in ten years?"

Pastor Andrew has seen changes within himself. "I'm practicing missional living by making intentional efforts to get to know my neighbors," he stated. "Usually when I get home, I want to go straight into my house, and I don't want to talk to anyone. But now I'm engaging with my neighbors as often as I can."

Deep change takes time. Yet over the last six months of engagement with the Ridder process, Vis has seen changes in his own authenticity, and he is letting go of the need for approval by others. "As I share my story, other people have started to talk to me about their own experiences," he said. "My story of transformation opens up others to the possibility of being transformed."

B. *Developing disciples, leaders, and campus ministries*

1. This work both feeds and supports our efforts to start and strengthen churches. Home Missions is committed to recruiting and training, engaging all generations, and providing resources at the local congregational level in order to transform lives and communities. Our campus ministries, discipleship initiatives, training programs, small groups, clusters, and other projects embody a faithful and loving presence in communities across North America. They identify, equip, and send

leaders into all walks of life. Key aspects of this area of focus include the following:

- a. **Discipleship:** Home Missions provides a variety of resources for local church discipleship leaders. We also provide staff who are available to walk alongside, coach, and encourage these leaders in their work. This work is accomplished not through a programmatic approach but through collaboration and networking; through tailoring resources to the specific needs of local churches and classes. Some of the projects we work with in this area include Coffee Break, Small Group Ministry, Leadership Development Networks, and more.
 - b. **Campus Ministry:** For over seventy years, Home Missions has established a presence on campuses across North America through the work of our campus ministries. This faithful presence gathers students, faculty, and staff in a variety of ways and expressions, including worshiping communities that enrich the lives of those involved as well as the life of the campuses of which they are a part. These ministries are a key component of Home Missions' strategy to reach every generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ while encompassing the Five Streams ministry priorities of Faith Formation, Servant Leadership, Global Missions, Loving Mercy and Doing Justice, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship. Christian Reformed campus ministries invest heavily in developing the gifts and abilities of young adult leaders, sending out alumni into many walks of life. Continued support of and involvement in campus ministry are part of our commitment to Christian education at all levels and in all sectors. It is exciting to see thriving ministries on over thirty campuses throughout North America, and we continue to start new campus ministries and work with churches who are seeking to establish ministries with nearby academic institutions. We anticipate growth through increasing our campus ministries in community colleges and including campus ministries as part of our church planting strategy. In addition to our work in campus ministries, Home Missions works with the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association to support the annual campus ministry conference, regional campus ministry gatherings, and other leadership development activities. The agency also supports the CRC's ongoing work of developing and refining the vision and goals of CRCNA campus ministry across North America.
2. Stories

- a. New Hispanic Bible study in Phoenix

"I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry" (Ps. 40:1). These could be the very words of Harry Weidenaar and Richard Caballero after two years of perseverance in prayer. Weidenaar and Caballero had a vision for a Hispanic Bible study to emerge through First CRC in Phoenix, Arizona. Weidenaar was the interim pastor at First CRC, and Caballero was the senior pastor at Longview Community Church, a predominantly Hispanic RCA congregation. The Phoenix-Tucson Kingdom Enterprise Zone brought these churches

together and, after two years of faithful prayer, the first Bible study was held in early 2014.

The vision of this Bible study is to reach the Hispanic community around First CRC, starting with a small group ministry and eventually growing into a Hispanic congregation. A group of five to six members regularly attends the Bible study. Caballero comments, "At this point, our goal is for God to transform the lives of the people who attend rather than to simply increase our numbers."

Members meet together to pray and discuss biblical matters. Their first series focused on the book of Philippians. Discussions revolved around how to apply the lessons in this letter in a practical sense to everyday living. "I see God moving through the relationships that are being built in the community and through the lives that are being touched and transformed through the Scriptures," said Caballero. The team would appreciate prayers for a strong core group that can develop into a new ministry in the future. In addition, they desire prayers for the Hispanic community in their neighborhood, that the Lord may use this Bible study to transform lives.

b. Standing up for Christ

Ken Vander Wall had planned to be a dentist. But he left dental school when he sensed God calling him to be a pastor, a decision he calls "the best I've ever made." Forty years later, Ken, an ordained CRC pastor, is still a campus pastor at northern New Jersey's William Paterson University, where he also works with InterVarsity staff. "I am now working with student leaders who are children of former student leaders," said Ken.

Ken's days are filled with meeting students, guiding student leaders, working with and encouraging university faculty and staff, and meeting with small groups. He helps plan a large group meeting as well. "My guiding verses have been Psalm 71:17-18: 'Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I'm old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.' I'm working on declaring God's power to the next generation," said Ken, age 70. He has no plans to retire!

Ken is grateful for all the funding the ministry receives, including a grant from Home Missions. "When I see young people taking the lead and standing up for Christ, that brings me joy."

C. *Engaging with clusters, classes, and communities*

1. In the challenging contexts and cultures in which we find ourselves, it is more and more necessary to work fully in collaboration with churches. We are approaching all of the work mentioned in the above two sections from the perspective of partnership. Home Missions' regional and ethnic leaders are actively working with local clusters and classes to determine needs, secure resources, and work together to start and strengthen ministries in North America. Classes are a vital part of our strategy because we believe that classes can and should play a critical partner role in our missionary work with congregations. The approaches we have developed, such as

using clusters to engage in local communities, have proven to be effective for doing ministry in specific geographic areas. Currently pastors, church planters, and congregations are involved in more than fifty clusters across North America. They will play a key role in discerning God's preferred future for both Home Missions and the churches we serve.

In addition to working with classes and clusters in regional contexts, Home Missions is more committed than ever to work with other agencies, ministries, teams, and institutions. Home Missions plays a key role in organizing grassroots prayer movements. Since the first two denominational Prayer Summits in 2012 and 2013, more than eleven regional summits have taken place. In 2015 a denomination-wide Prayer Summit that is planned will once again be a collaborative effort.

- a. Home Missions works with local churches and classes to encourage new projects and communities. These are springing up across the United States and Canada with projects like Mission Activators, developed in partnership with Classis Quinte in Ontario; the Philadelphia Church Planting Cluster, which has planted multiple churches in and around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Ravah, which provides encouragement and support for church planters in Michigan; and many others.
- b. As our partnership with the RCA grows and Kingdom Enterprise Zones (KEZs) flourish, Home Missions is developing collaborative relationships between CRC and RCA classes in ten geographical areas with the hope that more KEZs will be started. We are already actively developing two new KEZs in Canada.
- c. Home Missions continues existing partnerships with Calvin Theological Seminary (Church Renewal Lab and Facing Your Future), World Missions (Salaam and Mission Montreal), Diaconal Ministries and Classis Eastern Canada (Mission Montreal), World Renew (regional ministry teams), the Office of Social Justice (campus ministry initiatives), Pastor-Church Relations and Sustaining Congregational Excellence (Ministry Assessment and Vocational Guidance Pilot Project), the Office of Race Relations, the Reformed Church in America, and many others.

2. Stories

a. F Street Neighborhood Church

About six years ago Jeff Heerspink, commissioned pastor at Northern Lighthouse Ministries Christian Reformed Church and cluster leader in Lincoln, Nebraska, drove past St. Paul United Church of Christ in downtown Lincoln. Located in the Everett neighborhood, the church building and congregation were seeing decline, but Jeff felt led to pray that his cluster could one day plant a church in that building.

Jeff says that because of his cluster and their encouragement to be experimental and try new things, he approached the dying church a few years ago to see if they would be willing to sell their facility. The building itself was valued at well over a million dollars, but the small congregation that remained accepted an offer of just \$260,000. Classis Heartland, along with a generous donor, provided the funding, and F Street Neighborhood Church was born.

The first public worship service was held in June. F Street Church seeks to be a light to their neighborhood and to all of downtown Lincoln. The Everett neighborhood is in transition—though currently more than 40 percent of its residents live below the poverty line, local businesses and organizations are investing in the area. The church hosts a farmers’ market every week, at which they accept food stamps as a way to serve the low-income families surrounding them. They engage the local neighborhoods with events and block parties. A nearby Assemblies of God church saw their unprecedented success and asked to partner with them, and now a number of community organizations meet in the F Street Church building.

As a result of the work of F Street Neighborhood Church, pastor Jeff, and others in the local cluster, the area is now a Kingdom Enterprise Zone (KEZ). The Reformed churches in the area have also been invaluable partners financially, in prayer, and in deed. In 2014 Jeff hired two leaders to serve as residents at Northern Lighthouse Ministries and at F Street. These residents assist the work of these two churches through financial support from the Reformed Church in America. This ministry has truly drawn churches together, strengthened the cluster, and made the KEZ possible.

“From start to finish, this is a wonderful example of how some encouragement, some support, and some small grants from Home Missions have resulted in a wonderful collaborative work among planters, Classis Heartland, and area church members from both Christian Reformed and Reformed churches,” says Home Missions regional leader Jerry Holleman.

“This work has resulted in a ministry that is in and with and for that neighborhood. We’re praising God for something that started out as a wild dream and has resulted in this fantastic ministry.” God has truly blessed the catalytic work of Home Missions far beyond what we asked or imagined, and we are privileged to be a part of what he is doing.

b. Neighborhood Engagement—Hunting and heartfelt conversations

Scott,* pastor at a local CRC congregation, was praying during a recent hunting trip with his neighbors in Fort McMurray, Alberta: “Lord, please provide us with an elk.” None of the other hunters were practicing Christians, and they all laughed as Scott offered up this prayer request. However, much to their surprise, the next evening they were huddled around the campfire cooking fresh elk tenderloin. One of the hunters suggested taking a few moments to give thanks. “It was a ‘holy moment,’” Scott says.

Scott is not alone as he engages with his neighbors through everyday tasks around his community. Neighborhood Life is an initiative gaining force throughout Canada as a way to begin relationships that personify the love of Jesus. This movement is Spirit-led and takes different forms in different neighborhoods. Some individuals are starting cooking groups, some are mowing lawns together, and others are hosting block parties. Fellowship in these everyday activities forms a strong foundation that often blossoms into deeper conversations about Jesus and salvation.

“On the way home, the guy I was riding with said to me, ‘Well, you’ve sure blown away all my notions about pastors! Maybe someday I’ll have to check out your church,’” Scott commented. One neighbor in particular was intrigued by this pastor-hunter and continues to probe Scott with questions about his faith. The relationship they have built over a mutual love of the outdoors and hunting proved Scott trustworthy and opened the door for honest conversations. Recently, in the midst of a painful life experience, Scott was able to speak truth and life into this neighbor’s situation. “We cannot discount common ground—whatever it may be—as a means for building relationships with neighbors.”

*The name has been changed to protect the integrity of the neighborhood engagement.

D. Conclusion

Home Missions is committed to strengthening our relationships with local churches. We will walk alongside churches and congregations, partnering together to shape ministry and be Christ in our communities.

As we move forward, committing to living in partnership with churches and communities, we are excited for what God has in store. We are expectant to learn with congregations and classes what it means to practice spiritual discernment in finding out what God has planned for each church in each local context. To God be the glory!

IV. Board matters

Regional board nominations, approved by the Home Missions board, are forwarded to the respective classes within the regions for a vote, and the results are presented to synod for ratification in June. The person receiving the most votes within the region will become the new board member, and the person receiving the next-highest number of votes will become the alternate board member.

A. Board membership

The Board of Home Missions is mandated by synod to guide and carry out the domestic mission of the CRCNA. The board includes twelve regionally based members (matching CRCNA regions) who serve with the primary functions of governance and strategic direction. Seven at-large board members balance expertise, gender, racial diversity, and clergy and nonclergy requirements set by the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

Three board members are completing their first term and are eligible for reappointment to a second three-year term: Mr. Gerald Klein-Geltink, alternate Ms. Beth Fellingner (Region 4); Pastor Gerry Muller, no current alternate (Region 5); and Mr. Bruce McMurry, no current alternate (Region 9).

The board of Home Missions requests that synod by way of exception appoint Rev. Harvey J. Roosma, current board president, to an additional year on the board, considering the possibility of structural changes during that time. Rev. Roosma would fill the yearlong term as a member at-large.

The following slates of nominees from the respective regions were submitted to the classes for a vote, and the results are being forwarded to synod for ratification of a three-year term:

1. Region 1

Rev. Harvey J. Roosma is completing his second term—synod is being asked to consider a special request for an extension for one year (see above).

Rev. Ronald A. Vanden Brink is a church planter at The Well CRC in Kelowna, British Columbia. He has served on classical committees, including the Home Missions committee, Campus Ministry team, Home Missions regional team, and B.C. South-East Safe Church team. He has served as well on the Rutland Neighbourhood Residence Association board and with Diaconal Ministries Canada. Rev. Vanden Brink has an M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary. He has served previously on the board of Christian Reformed Home Missions.

Ms. Jean Dykshoorn Hooge is from Abbotsford, British Columbia, where she is a member of New Life CRC. She has served as a trainer consultant for Coffee Break and Small Groups, an Alpha team leader, and a certified life coach. Currently Ms. Dykshoorn Hooge is a constituency assistant to a local member of the legislative assembly of government in British Columbia. She has previously served as chair of the Classis Renewal Ministry Committee, as part of the Western Canada Region missional leadership team, and as a synodical delegate. She is currently also a member of the Liberal Party Abbotsford Mission Board of Directors.

2. Region 2

The board alternate from Region 2, Rev. Bruce Gritter, replaced board member Rev. John Van Sloten mid-term.

Rev. Bruce Gritter is willing to continue as the board member for a second three-year term, beginning in 2015. Home Missions has asked the classes from Region 2 to submit names for the alternate position only. One nomination was submitted by the classes and is recommended for appointment as alternate.

Ms. Henrietta Hielema is from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and is a member of Covenant CRC, Winnipeg. She has a background in junior high and high school teaching and as a small business owner. Ms. Hielema has served on many church and community boards and currently serves on the classical Home Missions committee, the board of MIB LifeLease, and the board of Homestead Christian Care. She is semiretired.

B. Board officers

The officers of the board of Christian Reformed Home Missions are Rev. Harvey J. Roosma, president; Rev. B. Joy Engelsman, vice president; Mr. Adam Veenstra, secretary; Mr. Ricardo Tavarez, treasurer; and Rev. Bruce Gritter, vice-all.

C. Salary disclosure

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	1	1	0
16	1	1	0
15	9	8	1

V. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Moses Chung, Christian Reformed Home Missions Director, and Rev. Harvey J. Roosma, board president, when matters pertaining to Christian Reformed Home Missions are discussed.

B. That synod by way of the ballot ratify the election of regional board members for a three-year term.

C. That synod encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Easter Sunday and Reformation Day Sunday as significant opportunities to receive an offering for Christian Reformed Home Missions.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Christian Reformed Home Missions
Moses Chung, director

Christian Reformed World Missions

I. Introduction

For over 125 years, Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) has been helping Christian Reformed churches fulfill the Great Commission mainly through planting churches and sending individual missionaries around the world. Over the past decade, we have intentionally shifted our focus. We understand that strategic partnerships and intentional networking are crucial to extending Christ's reign among the nations. From our work with unreached peoples to mobilizing local churches, strategic partnerships exponentially increase our ability to initiate and sustain transformational momentum in lives and communities. Together, partnering with each other and with God's Spirit, the good news is being preached around the world.

II. Reflecting the Five Streams

The Christian Reformed Church in North America has five denominational streams, or priorities: (1) faith formation, (2) servant leadership, (3) loving mercy and doing justice, (4) gospel proclamation and worship, and (5) global missions. Naturally, Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) mobilizes members of the CRC to reflect the latter stream of global missions. In doing so, we strive to reflect the other four streams to the global church.

A. Reflecting the stream of Global Missions—mobilizing the CRCNA to fulfill the Great Commission

God commissioned his people to witness to the good news of his kingdom and make disciples of all nations. CRWM exists to lead members of the CRC in responding to that commission on the international mission field.

CRWM has more than 200 missionaries serving in over 40 countries. Through partnerships, our work extends to more than 50 countries. Among all our staff and board membership we value ethnic, gender, and role diversity to better understand God's call for us. Our work fits within four main categories:

- Evangelism and discipleship
- Christian education
- Leadership development
- Transforming communities

With these four points of focus, missionaries reflect the other four streams while serving on the global mission field.

B. Reflecting the stream of Faith Formation—introducing and nurturing faith in Jesus Christ within the global kingdom

1. Missionaries play a direct role in faith formation as they teach in international schools. Last year 85 teachers and administrators served in this way. Through their service, students are learning new values and gaining a biblical perspective that extends far beyond their classroom experience. A young electrical engineer in Costa Rica learned that he did not have to leave his job in order to serve the Lord. A recovering alcoholic helps missionaries in Russia distribute literature.

Outside of the classroom, missionaries disciple believers through Bible studies, spiritual discussions, summer camps, and living in community with them. In all of this, they not only encourage others to strengthen their faith but also learn faith-strengthening lessons from others.

2. Faith formation in action: Poncho's story

With the help of his rusty walker, Poncho made his way to the church classroom. He was the first one there every week. Even as the most senior elder serving in his church, Poncho knew he still had much to learn.

At 70 years old, Poncho was fulfilling his goal of reading through the Bible. He was one of nine students taking part in a Bible study led by Abe Lee, CRWM missionary in Mexico. "Poncho loves the Bible," said Abe. "Now he is deepened by God's love story within it."

After reading about God's love to his people, Poncho wanted to reflect that love in his own life. The many hours each day Poncho had been spending in front of his television turned into time spent helping around the house and having meaningful discussions with his wife.

The class also made Poncho examine his relationship with his son, who took part in the Bible study as well. Poncho realized he had made mistakes when raising him. But now Poncho took the opportunity to make things right—right in the middle of the class discussion.

C. *Reflecting the stream of Servant Leadership—identifying, recruiting, and training leaders to be servants in the global kingdom*

1. CRWM missionaries and volunteers serve hand in hand with local leaders to develop leadership skills. By providing formal and informal training, ministry leaders and teachers are realizing the opportunities they have to improve their work—whether it is in the pulpit, in the classroom, or on the mission field.

Last year, 16,000 people participated in CRWM-related leadership training programs. These participants included school administrators in Uganda, deacons in Japan, and teachers in Haiti. Many of these trainees become trainers in future workshops, multiplying the number of servant leaders.

2. Servant leadership in action: Sammy's story

Pastor Sammy Nila has planted two churches in Kenya over the years, but with the second one his strategy changed dramatically.

At the first church he planted, Sammy used a method that he calls "open-air crusades." He entered the community with little preparation and simply called people to the Lord. Those who responded began attending the church. "Building a church that way wasn't easy," said Sammy.

The thought of planting another church never crossed Sammy's mind again until he learned the importance of pastoral care in a training event. He realized that his work would be more effective if he got to know members of the community before trying to start a church there.

"It suddenly wasn't so hard," said Sammy. "It's so intimate when you're visiting someone in Christ's name, hearing their stories, and praying with them. This training has given me confidence to continue planting churches."

D. Reflecting the stream of Loving Mercy and Doing Justice—hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken, and disadvantaged in the global kingdom

1. CRWM missionaries and volunteers address issues of justice through their service. They hear the cries of church leaders in Nepal who have no source of income. They work alongside communities in Guatemala that need resources to extend their ministry. They work to reconcile youth in Eastern Europe who still see the effects of communist rule.

Last year 374 volunteers served through CRWM. Many of these volunteers have a learning component in their service by which they seek to understand issues of injustice on their mission field. While serving in the Dominican Republic, volunteers learned about the mistreatment of Haitian immigrants and their children.

2. Loving mercy and doing justice in action: Berlen's story

Berlen Otoniel Ramirez, a junior in high school, had been able to avoid the drug and gang culture that entices so many young people in Honduras. Instead, he devoted his time to making his community better—until a gang member killed him.

Tragedies like Berlen's can easily explain why so many parents in Honduras would send their children from their gang-ridden, drug-overrun communities to the U.S.-Mexico border, says Caspar Geisterfer, CRWM missionary in Honduras.

Caspar partners with the Association for a More Just Society (AJS) to lead young people like Berlen in forming youth clubs. Caspar and AJS use the clubs to empower young people to make a positive change in their community.

"So many young people are tossed and blown about by the storm of teenage life," said Caspar. "But as God's people, we are supposed to be reaching out and showing them something different."

E. Reflecting the stream of Gospel Proclamation and Worship—proclaiming the saving message of Jesus Christ in the global kingdom

1. Missionaries focus on sharing Christ's love with others. By creating long-term friendships with local people, they show what it means to live out the claim "I am a follower of Jesus." Because the greatest opportunity in evangelism today is among the 1.7 billion people following the Muslim faith, ministry among Muslims is a priority for CRWM. In West Africa, missionaries witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit as longtime Muslims professed faith in Jesus. Last year the Spirit moved more than 13,000 people to commit their lives to Christ through the work of CRWM missionaries and partners.

We also take part in church planting to form communities of faith that can worship and serve together. Last year, 226 new faith communities began worshipping together, including groups in Mexico, Nepal, and Sierra Leone.

2. Proclaiming the gospel in action: Ibrahim's story

"No one will bury you when you die." That's what Ibrahim's neighbors told him when he refused to return to Islam. For Ibrahim, the only follower of Jesus in his West African village, that is a serious threat.

“Who will bury me?” is a major barrier for nomadic Fulani Muslims who are thinking about leaving Islam.

“Fulani seldom mark graves in any permanent way,” said a CRWM missionary who knows Ibrahim. “But the burial ceremony is very important to them.”

So when Ibrahim’s neighbors told him that nobody would bury, his response was amazing. “You can pull my body out into the bush for the hyenas . . . My soul will be long gone with Jesus.”

Even the missionaries, who come from a culture where cremation and medical study of cadavers is common, were surprised by this answer. They said his attitude reflects his confidence in his relationship with Jesus—a relationship that they have seen him develop over the past 15 years.

III. Connecting with churches

CRWM exists to enable members of the CRC to better fulfill the Great Commission. Through the Placement, Learning, and Care (PLC) department, we connect members with mission opportunities and continue to serve them before, during, and after they are on the mission field.

A. Placement

CRWM connects members of the CRC with mission opportunities around the world. Currently these opportunities include career appointments and short- and long-term volunteer assignments (for individuals and groups). CRWM also has long-standing relationships with partner organizations, enabling members of the CRC to connect with and serve with these partners.

CRWM offers a number of opportunities to engage young people in serving. Through our partnership with Calvin Theological Seminary we provide cross-cultural internships for several of their students each summer. These internships place seminarians alongside long-term missionaries and national ministry partners and provide a valuable learning experience.

We also work with LEAP and Youth Unlimited (YU) to engage the youth of the CRC in missions. We participate in YU’s biennial convention for high school students, and we work together to promote opportunities for young people.

B. Learning

CRWM orientation prepares missionaries and volunteers in spiritual care, conflict management, developing healthy relationships, support-raising, diversity and antiracism, communication, and other topics relevant to cross-cultural living.

C. Care

The care component of PLC’s ministry includes providing member care resources (opportunities for spiritual direction, retreats, trainings/workshops, crisis counseling, etc.), logistical assistance (travel, visas, car rentals, and many other practical services), as well as pastoral and medical consultancy and support. CRWM maintains eight duplex units in Grand Rapids that are available to missionaries on home service and to other visitors.

Care also extends to our relationship with churches. We come alongside churches to train them in caring for their missionaries and in taking an active

role in the global church. Churches in North America are extending their impact beyond their church community, beyond their neighborhood, and onto other continents through CRWM.

IV. Board matters

A. Board membership

The board of World Missions reflects the beauty of the worldwide body of Christ with a membership drawn from the CRCNA's twelve regions and with six at-large positions to cultivate ethnic, gender, ordained, and nonordained diversity.

The board is grateful for the contributions of the following members completing service as of June 30, 2015: Rev. Jacob Boer, Region 3; Ms. Dee Kramer, Region 8 (concluding service after her first term); Rev. Tom Oosterhuis, Canada at-large; and Rev. Joe Kamphuis, U.S. at-large.

The following board members are being recommended for ratification to a second three-year term: Ms. Jenny deGroot, Region 1; Rev. Bomsu Kim, Region 5; and Rev. Ronald Meyer, Region 10.

B. Regional board nominations

The following slates of nominees from geographical regions were presented to the classes for a vote at their spring meetings, and the results are being forwarded to synod for ratification of appointment:

Region 3

Rev. Jack Van de Hoef lives in Maitland, Ontario, where he serves as the pastor of Bethel CRC in Brockville, Ontario. He has a B.A. from Dordt College and an M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary. He has served on the interim committees of classes Chatham and Huron and was on the planning committee for the annual Redeemer University College Ministers Conference. Rev. Van de Hoef has been active in the ministerial association in the communities where he has served. Currently he serves as president for the Brockville Ministerial, is a member of the Classis Youth Ministry Team, and serves as a church visitor for Classis Eastern Canada. As part of a sabbatical, he had an excellent opportunity to visit with Bruce and Joanne Adema, CRWM missionaries serving at the time in Davao City, the Philippines. While there, Rev. Van de Hoef taught a one-week course at Koinonia Theological Seminary and visited other churches of the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines. He appreciated the opportunity to see CRWM at work in the Philippines, and this encouraged him to challenge the local church to continue support for CRWM.

Rev. Bernhard VanderVlis lives in Port Perry, Ontario, where he serves as pastor of Hope CRC. He has a B.A. in history from The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta, and an M.A. in educational ministry from Calvin Theological Seminary. A CRWM Summer Mission Program (SMP) in the Philippines set him on the road to a career in foreign missions. He also did a yearlong internship through CRWM at Smith Memorial Bible College in Baissa, Nigeria. Following that and a period of fundraising, Rev. VanderVlis began long-term work in Nigeria on January 1, 1995—a commitment that stretched to fourteen years. During those years he served as a teacher at Smith Memorial Bible College, as vice principal at Veenstra

Theological Seminary, and as a leadership trainer and founder/director of the Daniel Center in Abuja, Nigeria. He completed an M.Div. at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, after returning from Nigeria. Missions—and specifically Nigeria—formed him as a Christian and shaped his perspectives on missions and calling. Rev. VanderVlis sees this opportunity to serve on the CRWM board as fitting well with the gifts, desire, and experience that have developed him in his journey of faith and ministry.

Region 8

Mr. Dennis Kroll lives in Edgerton, Minnesota, and is a member of Bethel CRC. He holds an education degree from Dordt College, an M.A. in East Asian studies from the University of Minnesota, and an M.A. in missions intercultural studies from Wheaton College. In the past (1984-1986 and 1990-2002), Mr. Kroll and his wife served as English Language Institute/China partner teachers through Christian Reformed World Missions—he even speaks a little Chinese. Currently he is a production manager with Pipestone Systems. He has had experience as president of the Dordt College Alumni Board and the Southwest Christian High School Board.

Mr. Joe Van Tol is from Rock Valley, Iowa, where he is a member of Trinity CRC. He is a retired bank CEO. Currently he serves on the boards of four for-profit companies. His nonprofit involvements include serving as president of the Hope Haven Support Foundation and as a member of the National Advisory Council at Dordt College. Mr. Van Tol served previously as a trustee of Dordt College, and he cochaired Dordt College's 50th Anniversary 50 Million Campaign. A few years ago, he served as council president of his church.

B. At-large board nominations

The following single nominees for at-large positions are recommended for appointment by synod:

Canada at-large

Ms. Monica deRegt is a member of Gateway Community CRC in Abbotsford, British Columbia, where her husband serves as part of the pastoral team. She is a graduate of The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta, and is currently working as the features editor of *Christian Courier*. She previously worked for *The Banner* as the news writer for the Hamilton, Niagara, and Toronto classes. Ms. De Regt has also worked for The Bible League of Canada as their church ministries director, in fundraising, and in education/promotion of the needs of the worldwide church. She had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines twice during her time with the Bible League to observe and participate in their ministry of church planting and Scripture placement. She feels a strong call to serve the church, both locally and globally, and has been active in CRC churches across Canada (Smithers, Edmonton, Lacombe, Red Deer, Hamilton, Chilliwack) in areas such as youth and children's ministry, missions/outreach, women's ministry, worship and prayer teams, worship leading, bulletin editing, and janitorial work. Ms. De Regt's strengths are in oral and written communication, planning, teaching, visionary thinking, encouragement, and hospitality. She is a big-picture thinker and loves to brainstorm and strategize ways to do things more effectively to bring positive change. She believes that *God's* story is told

through *our* stories, and she is passionate about helping people of all ages everywhere to understand the big story we are all a part of. For these reasons she would be very honored and humbled to serve on the board of CRWM.

U.S. at-large

Ms. Janice Gebben is from Rockford, Michigan, and is a member of Oakwood CRC in Belding, Michigan. She is a retired accounting manager with a master’s degree in accounting and is also a CPA. She served two terms (1998-2004) as a CRWM board member for Classis Yellowstone while living in Ogden, Utah. Ms. Gebben also gained church council experience serving as a deacon at Family in Christ CRC in Ogden, Utah. Her past mission experience includes service as an associate missionary in Nigeria (2002-2003), five years of cross-cultural experience living and working in Japan, four short-term mission trips to Mexico, and two short-term trips to Haiti. She would be very interested in serving on the board’s Audit Review Committee.

C. Reappointment to a second three-year term

The following nominees are being recommended for ratification to a second three-year term: Ms. Jenny Siebring-deGroot, Region 1; Rev. Bomsu Kim, Region 5; and Rev. Ronald Meyer, Region 10.

D. Salary disclosure

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	1	1	0
17	1	1	0
16	2	2	0
15	6	3	3

V. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the president of CRWM-USA, Rev. Ronald Meyer; the president of CRWM-Canada, Ms. Andrea Bootsma; and the director of CRWM, Dr. Gary J. Bekker, the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to CRWM are addressed.

B. That synod by way of the ballot ratify, appoint, and reelect members of the board of Christian Reformed World Missions as presented.

C. That synod along with the Board of Trustees encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2015, and the third Sunday of September 2015 as significant opportunities to pray for and to receive an offering for Christian Reformed World Missions.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Christian Reformed World Missions
Gary J. Bekker, director

Committee for Contact with the Government/Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue (Mr. Mike Hogeterp, research and communications manager)

The Committee for Contact with the Government, operating as the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue, is a justice and reconciliation ministry of the Christian Reformed churches in Canada. The Centre for Public Dialogue cultivates passionate citizenship in Christian communities, studies critical issues facing Canadian society from a Reformed perspective, and interacts with legislators in a constructive manner.

The Centre for Public Dialogue is driven by a belief that *acts of passionate citizenship* are integral to God's call to justice and reconciliation. Citizens are the focus of the Justice and Faith Project (www.crcna.org/CanadianMinistries/justice-and-faith-project). This project has heard from CRC members about the connection of justice and reconciliation to our lives as Christians. In 2015 this innovative research project will wrap up with community forum events to share and discuss what has been learned. The insights of the Justice and Faith final report will play a central role in a new Canadian ministries strategy to encourage passionate citizenship.

The Centre for Public Dialogue and the Office of Social Justice (OSJ) continue a fruitful collaboration in communications work. Our joint blog, Do Justice (www.crcna.org/dojustice), continues to evolve as a space for dynamic dialogue. Do Justice has also served as a platform for an exciting collaboration called *Listening to Marginalized Voices*. This challenge drew together voices from the networks of The Centre for Public Dialogue, OSJ, Office of Race Relations, Aboriginal Ministries, Safe Church Ministry, and Disability Concerns and generated a lot of enthusiasm. We look forward to continued creative collaboration that encourages dialogue and action on justice and reconciliation in church communities.

In 2015 the Centre for Public Dialogue continues a research, advocacy, and mobilization program on two priorities:

- Refugee justice—Front-line refugee support agencies (The Lighthouse, World Renew) tell us that there are persisting challenges in the refugee determination and settlement system in Canada. We are encouraging citizen advocacy through our interactive learning tool *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories Change Lives*. Our contact with the government and our citizen mobilization will focus on the encouragement of refugee sponsorship and the removal of barriers to settlement.
- Indigenous education reform continues to be a matter of policy dialogue and controversy. We are working with a broad coalition of churches and indigenous organizations to bear witness for reconciliation and equity in indigenous education. Education will be a key theme in Centre for Public Dialogue work in response to the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (June 2015) and in related advocacy and mobilization efforts.

In all our work, we are blessed by partnerships with the Regional Synod of Canada – Reformed Church in America, Canadian Aboriginal Ministries

Committee, Office of Race Relations, Office of Social Justice, and many ecumenical groups. We give thanks for these friends on the journey of justice and reconciliation.

Please connect with us at www.crcna.ca/PublicDialogue or www.facebook.com/crcpublicdialogue to learn more about our efforts to seek justice and speak hope.

Disability Concerns (Rev. Mark Stephenson, director)

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

The Office of Disability Concerns (DC) strives to promote and foster relationships, communities, and societies where everybody belongs and everybody serves by assisting churches, agencies, institutions, and leadership within the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America

- to think and act in keeping with the biblical call regarding people with disabilities.
- to break barriers of communication, architecture, and attitude.
- to establish ministries with, for, and by people with disabilities and their families.

B. Vision

Since 2009, CRC DC has been working in close cooperation with the Disability Concerns office of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Together, our vision can be summarized briefly: “In healthy churches, ministries, and communities, everybody belongs, and everybody serves.”

C. Mission

DC’s mission is to bring about the full participation of all people with disabilities in the life of the church and the full participation of the church in the lives of people with disabilities.

D. Five-year plan

DC adopted a new five-year plan for 2014-2019, and it has four main parts:

1. Networking—Strengthen the network of advocates in both quantity and quality.
2. Awareness/education—Help churches prioritize the full inclusion of people living with disabilities.
3. Resourcing and consultation—Provide churches with the tools they need to minister to and engage people living with disabilities in their congregations and communities.
4. Ministry promotion—Enhance and promote the future growth and development of Disability Concerns for the purpose of serving communities and societies more effectively.

E. Description of disability

DC uses this commonly used description of disability: “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

II. Reflecting the Five Streams and connecting with churches

Although our work is reflected in all Five Streams, some of the five receive more focus than others.

A. *Faith formation*

We believe the church must work together to challenge and equip each believer to grow in faith as they seek to be faithful disciples in the kingdom of God.

1. Friendship Ministries assists churches in faith formation with persons who have intellectual disabilities. While DC has always maintained a close and productive relationship with Friendship Ministries (a separate ministry from DC and from the CRC), that relationship has taken on a deeper dimension this past year with our director being appointed to the Friendship Ministries board and executive committee.
2. Because about 13 percent of children and youth have disabilities of various kinds, Christian Reformed Church and Reformed Church in America Disability Concerns ministries produced five training videos for church leaders (volunteer and staff) to assist them in their ministry with children and youth. In addition, CRC DC has been communicating with the newly formed Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministry to assist them in their work.

B. *Servant leadership*

We believe that lifelong equipping of all leaders is essential for the flourishing of churches and communities.

1. Disability Concerns staff and volunteers have recruited and trained over 600 church and regional disability advocates who serve their churches and classes. Their primary purpose is to assist churches in their ministry with the 15 to 20 percent of people in their communities who live with disabilities. Each year, the CRC and RCA DC ministries sponsor several conferences across North America, including our main event for regional advocates—the DC Leadership Conference attended by about 70 advocates from the CRC and the RCA who meet for encouragement, networking, and training. In addition, CRC and RCA DC produced three training videos this past year for disability advocates, and these videos are available on our website.
2. Besides the Disability Concerns Advisory Committee, we have regional committees that serve in Ontario, Michigan, Illinois/Indiana, the U.S. Midwest, and the U.S. Southwest, and we have one committee that focuses on ministry with people with mental illnesses—the Mental Health Task Force. Except for the Mental Health Task Force, all of these committees include volunteers from the CRC and the RCA, and some include staff from other disability ministries as well.
3. The CRC DC staff consists of our full-time director, two part-time administrative assistants, and a part-time church and volunteer associate.
4. CRC and RCA DC provide for all churches that request it a quarterly resource, *Breaking Barriers*, which tells the stories of people affected by disabilities to deepen understanding and suggest new opportunities for ministry. All Disability Advocates and many churches have received our *Inclusion Handbook: Everybody Belongs, Everybody Serves*, which helps

church leaders and members welcome and engage people with disabilities in the life of the church.

C. *Global missions*

We seek to be witnesses and agents of the kingdom “to the ends of the earth.” While our primary focus is on North America, our web (www.crcna.org/disability) and Network pages (network.crcna.org/disability) reach worldwide. In 2014, we received nearly 34,000 page views in over 22,000 sessions. Of these, 15 percent came from outside the United States and Canada.

D. *Loving mercy and doing justice*

We seek “to act justly and to love mercy” as we “walk humbly” with our God (Mic. 6:8).

1. Providing the possibility for people to be involved in congregational life is a critical part of justice toward our neighbors and fellow church members. The annual survey of CRC congregations indicates that 304 churches worship in barrier-free facilities and that another 645 have partially accessible facilities. Over 500 offer aids for people who are hard of hearing or deaf, and 452 have aids for people with visual impairments. Over 550 churches offer transportation for people who cannot drive themselves, and one-third of CRC congregations have adopted a church policy on disability. Congregations in Ontario have had to think carefully about accessibility of their activities and communications due to passage of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005); CRC DC has provided guidance to these congregations for complying with the act as it phases in over a period of years.
2. Diaconal Ministries Canada and CRC DC have partnered together so that communities and churches will be enriched and strengthened by the inclusion, diversity, and gifts of people with disabilities, thus contributing to the spiritual, social, emotional, and physical well-being of persons and families with disabilities.
3. As part of the Office of Race Relations Community Connect Initiative, DC has recently developed and begun offering a training session for churches on engaging people with disabilities in church life.
4. This past winter, CRC DC collaborated with several other CRC ministries, all of which are part of the Justice, Inclusion, Mercy, and Advocacy Collaborative Work Group, to create the Listening to Marginalized Voices Challenge. For one month, the challenge sent five-minute stories to subscribers to begin to understand and show love for people who are often overlooked, such as people with disabilities, Native Americans, refugees, undocumented immigrants, survivors of domestic violence, and others.
5. Our director serves on the board of Pathways to Promise, a parachurch organization that helps churches minister to people affected by mental illnesses. In addition, the DC Mental Health Task Force has undertaken an initiative, in cooperation with Pastor-Church Relations and other CRC ministries, to encourage and provide resources to pastors and families who are dealing with mental health issues.

6. DC volunteers and staff speak regularly at churches, classis meetings, conferences, webinars, and seminary classes, and consult with many CRCs about engaging people with disabilities in church life. The Mental Health Task Force has created a speakers bureau—people qualified to present to congregations in eleven CRC classes on mental health issues.
7. RCA and CRC Disability Concerns ministries are members of the Inter-faith Disability Advocacy Coalition, which works on public policy priorities in Washington, D.C.

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

We seek to proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and to worship him in all we do. DC provides worship leaders with a variety of resources online, including litanies, prayers, and sermons. Our director consults with the CRC Worship Ministries team concerning accessibility issues in worship, such as their plan for a large-print edition of the *Lift Up Your Hearts* hymnal.

III. Recommendation

That synod encourage CRC churches, classes, and educational institutions to sponsor events to celebrate Disability Awareness Week, October 12-18, 2015.

Grounds:

1. Specific and intentional events that recognize the importance of breaking down barriers and including people with disabilities will remind God's people of the welcome our Lord gives to all of his people (Luke 14:15-24) and will encourage them to press on toward becoming a community in which every member knows that he or she is indispensable (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
2. The Bible calls God's people to be a caring community as the covenant people of God. In 1985, the CRC committed itself as a denomination to eliminate barriers of architecture, communication, and attitude "in order to use the gifts of all people in our life together as God's family." Although our Lord Jesus calls all of his people to ministry in his church, the church has not always made it possible for people with disabilities to participate fully and sometimes has isolated them and their families.
3. The dates of Disability Week coincide with the CRC denominational schedule for offerings, which assigns the third Sunday in October to Disability Concerns.
4. The RCA celebrates Disability Awareness Sunday on the second Sunday in October. Having similar dates for this celebration facilitates and enhances deeper collaboration between the Disability Concerns offices of the RCA and CRC. Further, this date aligns our celebration with numerous organizations and agencies that highlight disability awareness in October.

Race Relations (Rev. Esteban Lugo, director)

I. Introduction

The Office of Race Relations continues to meet the challenges of assisting our denomination in embracing and living out our identity as God's diverse and unified family through partnerships by developing collaborations with denominational agencies, specialized ministries, the Reformed Church in America, and Christian Reformed institutions of higher learning as well as organizations outside the CRC. Race Relations is privileged to continue its responsibilities in providing (1) antiracism and racial reconciliation initiatives that provide education, training, and resources, (2) the Multiethnic Conference, (3) All Nations Heritage celebrations, and (4) a scholarship program that provides not only financial assistance but also training in antiracism and cultural awareness for students attending our institutions of higher education.

II. Connecting with churches and aligning with the Five Streams

Within our mandate for antiracism and racial reconciliation, we are called to provide education and resources to equip our denomination not only to war against the effects of the sin of racism but also to facilitate reconciliation through both workshops and materials. We have several workshops: Dance of Racial Reconciliation (DORR), Widening the Circle (WTC) in Canada, Building Bridges, and Churches Between Borders. In addition, we have a second-level antiracism workshop, the Dance of Racial Reconciliation: Level 2, which piloted successfully in 2014 and is now being offered to all our constituencies. With the Centre for Public Dialogue and the CRC Office of Social Justice, we have partnered in creating a new training/workshop resource called the Blanket Exercise. First developed in Canada, the Blanket Exercise is an interactive telling of the shared history of Indigenous peoples of Canada. This is a history from a perspective not often heard, and it speaks to the profound urgency of reconciliation. The Blanket Exercise has been contextualized for the CRC in the United States as well.

Other trainings we offer include

- Cultural Intelligence Building—a focus on four concrete skill areas: knowledge, motivation, interpretation, and behavior.
- *Facing Racism*—a DVD featuring six small-group studies that enables participants and their congregations to engage with the issue of racism and reconciliation in a modern way.
- Leadership and Race—a workshop that develops and supports leadership that contributes to racial justice.

Our materials include the 1996 syndical study committee report, *God's Diverse and Unified Family*, which provides the theological underpinnings for antiracism. It is available for purchase from Faith Alive Christian Resources in both English and Spanish (visit faithaliveresources.org). In addition to this resource, we provide bulletins and bulletin covers for All Nations Heritage celebrations scheduled for the first Sunday in October each year. The 2015 All Nations Heritage Sunday is October 4.

The Office of Race Relations also sponsors a Race Relations Scholarship Program for students who attend CRC-endorsed institutions.

More information is available, including application forms, on our website (see www.crcna.org/race/scholarships). We support the CRCNA Race Relations Team, which serves within the administrative offices in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Burlington, Ontario; and Palos Heights, Illinois, to encourage and work toward a racism-free environment within our workplaces.

The Office of Race Relations continues to assist CRC congregations in their efforts to become culturally intelligent in the work of cultural awareness called the Community Connect Initiative, a six-month to one-year training through workshops. Several of our existing workshops are offered in partnership with the Office of Social Justice, Office of Disability Concerns, Centre for Public Dialogue, and Timothy Leadership Training Institute. The goal is to increase the capacity of congregations and their leaders for being culturally intelligent and to encourage and assist them in similarly equipping other congregations.

The denomination continues to face the challenge of placing a high value on the dignity of all persons and on the inclusiveness of multiple cultures in life together as a church, as well as on the integrity of that identity. To that end, the ministry of Race Relations continues to lead and encourage throughout the whole church. Race Relations is committed to its statement of vision and its mandate to make the CRCNA a truly diverse and unified family of God. We continue to attribute all the progress and success that has been made in this ministry only to the grace and goodness of God. To this end, we covet your prayers. Please visit our website and Facebook pages for more information (www.crcna.org/race; facebook.com/crcracrelations).

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

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church has always had a good track record on addressing hunger and poverty but has realized that more needs to be done to address the *root causes* of world hunger. Understanding that hunger is always part of a complex web of natural disasters, poverty, oppression, structural injustice, and spiritual alienation, the CRC formed the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action (OSJ) to address these root causes.

Today OSJ works to develop a deeper understanding of and response to God's call to "let justice flow like a river" in our personal and communal lives and in the structures of our societies, especially in relation to hunger and poverty. OSJ works to educate CRC members and to encourage and support their engagement in social justice issues. OSJ is also occasionally involved in direct advocacy.

The Office of Social Justice acts in three ways: (1) through congregational social justice contacts or groups, (2) through organizing collaborative efforts with existing denominational agencies and institutions, and (3) through ecumenical efforts and partnerships. In short, this office aims to be a catalyst that energizes and organizes our denomination for more appropriate, effective, and efficient action on behalf of and with the poor and the oppressed.

II. What is social justice?

Doing justice is about making things right. It involves seeking restoration of our world and society through vocal, active, fearless love for others. It means being a part of Jesus' incredible ministry of reconciliation, restoring broken relationships, and making all things new.

Justice is the work we are already doing—renewed, revamped, refocused on the needs of the marginalized. It is a lens that reframes our community outreach, coffee hour, missions, and worship. Seeking justice makes us question whether we are actually putting the last first and standing with the poor, oppressed, and powerless.

III. Reflecting the Five Streams

A. Faith formation

1. In partnership with Micah Challenge, we created a CRC version of Live Justly. Live Justly is an in-depth scriptural and practical study to help people live faithfully in the areas of advocacy, prayer, consumption, generosity, creation care, and relationships.
2. Faithful to Synod 2010's call to welcome the stranger amid the challenges of a broken immigration system, we continue to equip believers to care for the stranger as an integral part of discipleship. OSJ was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Evangelical Immigration Table to disciple congregations. And our most effective curriculum, *Church Between Borders*, is in its third printing with several updates.

B. *Servant leadership*

1. Our restorative justice work has transitioned to Kate Kooyman with strong collaboration with the Justice, Mercy, Inclusion, and Advocacy Collaborative Working Group. We have begun several workshops and trainings in the United States to complement the highly effective workshops already happening in Canada. These workshops equip congregational leaders to respond to conflict in a holistic, restorative way.
2. We are providing an immersive, intensive experience of the U.S. immigration system. Several leaders and up-and-coming influencers will join us in Arizona to experience both sides of the border, listen to the stories of migrants, and return better equipped to serve their communities and denomination.
3. *Do Justice*, a blog in partnership with the Centre for Public Dialogue, has also become a space for grassroots voices in the denomination to grow. We have seen a dramatic rise in readership and in contributing authors from all points in the denomination.

C. *Global missions*

1. As an active participant of the Justice and Excellence in Short-Term Missions Think Tank, OSJ has contributed to a new way of approaching global missions. Look for a new curriculum, in partnership with Faith Formation, that increases the long-term impact of mission trips, both in the participants and in the host community.
2. We assisted churches in hosting showings of *The Stranger*, a film that reminds us that the global church also comes to us in North America, through immigration, with experiences that enrich our understanding of God and his kingdom.

D. *Loving mercy and doing justice*

1. This year OSJ partnered with World Renew in responding to dire needs in Iraq and Syria. We also responded to a call from our persecuted brothers and sisters in the Middle East, relaying their message to congregations, providing resources and a nuanced perspective, and facilitating advocacy for peace-building efforts.
2. We have completed a U.S. version of the Blanket Exercise, a workshop that literally walks participants through the history of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It helps participants understand why reconciliation is needed and how to take steps toward reconciliation and new relationships. This is a much-needed, tangible resource made possible by the steady work of the Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Committee and the Centre for Public Dialogue.
3. OSJ was able to support the denomination in the aftermath of the Ferguson, Missouri, shooting (Nov. 25, 2014) by hosting meaningful resources from a variety of agencies and an official statement by the executive director, Dr. Steven Timmermans. We are grateful for the opportunity to share wisdom on restorative justice and are glad to be of service to the denomination.

4. Mr. Peter Vander Meulen, coordinator of OSJ, responded to a request from Nigeria to facilitate a peace process through local churches. The CRC has done so successfully before in the Takum Peace Process.
5. In response to the Creation Stewardship report of Synod 2012, OSJ has provided significant resources on the church's responsibility to creation and to people who are most affected by environmental degradation. We are proud to add *Climate Conversation: Kenya* to our growing list of resources. The *Climate Conversation: Kenya* video series provides an opportunity to get up close and personal with the issues of climate change and environmental stewardship. It gives viewers a chance to meet people, not just grapple with statistics, and to hear stories rather than arguments. It is an invitation to a conversation.
6. We saw significant advocacy success this year on Ebola research funding from the United States. World Renew field staff alerted us to obstacles inhibiting their work, congregation members asked us to respond, and our advocacy efforts created real change. A bill passed the House and Senate and was enacted by the President. We rejoice that faithful advocates on one side of the world can add to the effectiveness of faithful field staff on the other side of the world.
7. This year we launched an unusual campaign in collaboration with the Justice, Mercy, Inclusion, and Advocacy Collaborative Working Group. The Listening to Marginalized Voices Challenge was a month-long exercise in humility, listening, and giving up our microphones. Over 500 CRC members took the challenge to listen to a new voice every day—a voice that has been pushed to the margins. We were reminded that the communities we serve are not voiceless; rather, their voices have been ignored. If you missed the Challenge but would like to listen to voices ranging from people with disabilities to people on the poverty line to people of color to marginalized women, visit dojustice.crcna.org and search for the Listening to Marginalized Voices Challenge.

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

1. Our Advent devotional series, a joint effort from OSJ and World Renew, continues to be our most widely read and shared publication this year, with over 2,000 subscribers.
2. We offer fresh content for worship every week through *OSJ Prayers*, a weekly email list of the most pressing justice issues around the world with written prayers appropriate for individuals, small groups, and congregations. *OSJ News* is our bimonthly newsletter for CRC justice activists. This popular newsletter is delivered electronically to over 600 recipients, and it supplies a unique Christian Reformed perspective on social justice news and events. Our newest offering is *OSJ Special Updates*, issue-specific updates tailored to the reader's preference. To subscribe to any of our publications, visit www.crcjustice.org and click on "Newsletters."
3. Our new Lent devotional series is a significant resource, retelling the gospel story and leading us to reflection and just living.

4. In our work on immigration we have developed several new worship resources. They can be found online along with our other worship resources at www.crcjustice.org.

IV. Connecting with churches

1. We provide focused training and leadership development through the U.S.-Mexico border trip, the Blanket Exercise, and restorative justice trainings.
2. OSJ naturally engages younger generations, but this year we anticipate strong connections through our short-term missions curriculum, the Listening to Marginalized Voices Challenge, immigration workshops in bilingual and immersion schools, the large number of Sunday school classes and GEMS/Cadets groups that send cards for women and children in detention centers, growing vibrancy and readership of *Do Justice*, and our social media coverage of timely issues.
3. OSJ continues to partner with World Renew to equip churches to understand and seek justice. The Congregation Justice Mobilization (CJM) project is well into its eighth year with a shared full-time coordinator. Some of the many initiatives coming out of CJM include presentations on various timely issues, an expanded resource collection for small groups, and growing relationships with over 400 congregations. Our work with churches includes increasing congregations' capacities to recognize the dynamic challenges faced by migrants and challenging CRC members to personally and publicly commit to take action to make their communities and nations better places for immigrants to live. We also host resources, like the ones in response to Ferguson, Missouri, events, to help congregations respond to systemic injustices in their local contexts.
4. We offer a wide variety of resources for leadership, ranging from consultations to online discussion guides to weekly prayer newsletters. The OSJ website (www.crcjustice.org) serves more than 2,000 visitors each month. In addition to providing news and advocacy opportunities, the site supplies practical resources and helpful information to pastors, deacons, social justice committees, students, and every CRC member who wants to live the call to do justice. OSJ also engages with over 3,000 subscribers on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest who are eager to learn, speak, and act as agents of social justice.

The Office of Social Justice, in collaboration with the agencies and institutions of the CRC, looks back with gratitude on a productive year. We look forward to continuing to assist members of the CRC to become salt and light in the service of God's justice and mercy.

Urban Aboriginal Ministries

The CRC's Aboriginal Ministries in Canada support healing, reconciliation, and restored relationships between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The Urban Aboriginal Ministry Centres in Winnipeg, Regina, and Edmonton are highly regarded by the communities they serve. Ministry participants value the dignity and respect they experience as they attend and participate in the programs and community activities.

- *Indigenous Family Centre* in Winnipeg, Manitoba, has celebrated its 40th anniversary. It continues to deepen its work on counseling services, contextualization of ministry, and developing a social enterprise project to manufacture moccasins.
- *Indian Metis Christian Fellowship* in Regina, Saskatchewan, provides a drop-in ministry and daily prayer circle. The ministry is known for its ability to contextualize the gospel and for deepening the understanding of the meaning of aboriginal spirituality.
- *Edmonton Native Healing Centre* networks with local partners to carry out a variety of programs to help participants strengthen their capacities and build community.

Educating and mobilizing CRC members are the objectives of the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC).

- For the past nine years CAMC has produced bulletin covers and inserts and other worship resources for Aboriginal Sunday.
- The paintings *Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin*, *The Creator's Sacrifice* have traveled throughout Canada in the reForming Relationship tour and continue to create opportunities for dialogue and to inspire relationship building between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples.
- The Blanket Exercise is a workshop that illuminates the injustices faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. CAMC is working with the Centre for Public Dialogue, the Office of Social Justice, and Race Relations to train facilitators and extend the Blanket Exercise to churches across Canada and the United States.
- CAMC and the Centre for Public Dialogue have also collaborated on a new resource called *Living the 8th Fire*—a curriculum based on a CBC documentary series intended to deepen congregations' understanding of the call to indigenous justice and reconciliation.

For more information about CAMC and its work, please contact Ms. Shannon Perez at camc@crcna.org or visit our toolkit website: <https://aboriginalministry.wordpress.com/>.

For more information about Urban Aboriginal Ministries, please contact the directors:

- Edmonton Native Healing Centre—Harold Roscher, hroscher@e-nhc.org
- Indian Metis Christian Fellowship, Regina—Bert Adema, imcf.bertadema@sasktel.net
- Indigenous Family Centre, Winnipeg—Michele Visser, mvisser@crcna.org

World Renew

I. Introduction

A. *Mandate*

In 1962 the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) approved the formation of the denomination's diaconal agency. Its mandate was to "minister in the name of our Lord to those distressed by reason of the violence of nature, the carnage of war, or other calamities of life, and to relieve the suffering of the needy in the world." In its essence and existence, World Renew makes every effort to offer to those who hunger and thirst access to the river of life: to the stream of justice and mercy that flows from God and his church worldwide to bring healing to the nations.

B. *Mission*

Today the diaconal agency of the Christian Reformed denomination called World Renew continues to fulfill this mandate, reaching out in Christ's name to people who are poor, hungry, and affected by disaster and injustice around the world. In doing so, World Renew's mission is "to engage God's people in redeeming resources and developing gifts in collaborative activities of love, mercy, justice, and compassion."

C. *Ministry*

World Renew's integrated response to poverty, hunger, disaster, and injustice addresses the needs of the whole person, physical and spiritual, as the imagebearer of God. For those who are considered "the least" in this world, World Renew's work provides opportunities for reconciliation and restoration to God and others. This is work that empowers people to recognize their God-given dignity and to shake off the bonds that keep them poor.

"Compelled by God's deep passion for justice and mercy, World Renew joins with communities around the world in rebuilding hope, reconciling lives, and restoring creation." This ministry reached more than 1,067,600 people in 2014, including 587,000 people who were affected by disaster and 480,000 who live in poverty; World Renew helped all these people to make long-term changes that will transform their lives and give them hope for a better future.

World Renew's holistic approach to its mandate, mission, and ministry contributes to each of the five denominational priorities of the Christian Reformed Church: faith formation, servant leadership, global missions, justice and mercy, and worship and proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of the integrated nature of World Renew's ministry to the whole person, much of its work flows into more than one of the Five Streams. World Renew's work is not only integrated; it is collaborative. It involves working with Christian partners to train leaders and develop biblically based community values that strengthen the message of the local church in North America and around the world.

World Renew does not receive ministry shares from the Christian Reformed Church but depends, in faith, on the generosity and sacrifice of God's people to carry out its compassionate ministry. World Renew's financial support from churches and individuals totaled \$22.5 million last year, funding World Renew's long-term commitments for development programs with

local church partners and Christian organizations. World Renew also invests collaboratively in ministry alliances on an international scale that leverages your financial support into a greater response by matching ministry dollars. These collaborations, combined with church and individual donations, resulted in more than \$17 million in disaster response programs.

The love of Christ and the power of God compel us to empower others, not as a privilege we bestow on them but as a pivotal acknowledgement of our shared dignity and identity in Christ. We are all imagebearers of God who have been reconciled to him through Jesus' death and resurrection. World Renew's work provides people with opportunities to encounter that power, and, in the process, to find hope and wholeness as we overcome the barriers that keep us poor physically and spiritually.

II. Reflecting the Five Streams

A. Faith formation

1. North America

a. Church and family education

World Renew produces educational curriculum and intergenerational resources for use by congregations and families. The annual World Hunger Campaign includes family devotions, adult devotions, the Peter Fish activity for younger children, and a newly developed Feed Your Fish app to connect with a new generation. Sunday school teachers and parents can use children's projects like Traveling Our Father's World, an educational activity book, to teach children the diaconal values of serving and loving one's neighbors.

The Free a Family® program also contributes to faith formation in families and in individual hearts. World Renew focused on Free a Family® in 2014 in online campaigns for Giving Tuesday, on social media during Advent, and in email appeals. This efficient, effective program provided a way for more than 2,900 individuals and families to share their blessings with those in need and to learn about people whose lives are much different from those of people in North America. The Free a Family® program transformed the lives of nearly 4,200 families who lived in poverty in 2014, an increase of 382 families.

b. Christian schools

World Renew began to research how the agency can best address unmet educational needs in the more than 400 Christian schools in North America in both curriculum and student service. Initial results in Canada revealed that there are opportunities for World Renew to be more present in Christian elementary and high schools, providing educational assistance in terms of curriculum and potential service opportunities. In the United States, a consulting researcher surveyed a number of Christian elementary and high schools and uncovered potential positive relationships. Staff also invested in a stronger, more intentional presence in Christian schools in North America by teaching classes and leading sessions.

c. Youth and young adults

In response to the growing need to engage and form youth and young adults as committed followers of Jesus Christ who love mercy and do justice, World Renew recently added a new position: youth and young adult engagement coordinator. This position is set aside to listen to and learn from youth workers, pastors, and campus ministers, as well as to collaborate with denominational initiatives in faith formation. World Renew anticipates continued growth in the capacity and breadth of its efforts to connect with and help form youth and young adults in 2015.

2. International

In a blog post from the first few months of her two-year volunteer service with World Renew's Global Volunteer Program, 22-year-old Han Le (not her real name), noted that there were times that she was struggling physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. "I bring up more questions to God as a volunteer in Latin America than when I was living at home," Han says, "but not only has God helped me realize that I can depend on him, but in his love for me he also invites me to trust him. When I observe World Renew's local staff in Managua or work with our partner organizations, I realize that I am learning about God's love. I already knew about it, and yet I questioned what it is: how it is different from human love, and how I can understand it. Then in Isaiah 35, God gave me the answers to my questions and reaffirmed my call to this work with World Renew. This is what he told me.

"Love is joy. I have been looking in the wrong places to find God's will. God tells me that he feels joy by looking at me and within me. In working here the last five months, I have forgotten to notice how I am feeling. I know now that if I don't stop to recognize the happiness and joy he gives, others will not see Christ in me.

"Love is 'the Way.' God's love allows me to walk in the way of holiness (Isa. 35:8). Simply walking in the way with and in Christ is what matters the most. He loved me first, and it's time for me to love him back. Doing grand work in my life doesn't really matter to God: He looks at my heart. The greatest commandment may look very simple, but it is the most difficult thing in life and requires much discipline.

"2014 went by really fast for me: my last semester of college, graduation, preparation for a volunteer term with World Renew, and the adjustment in Latin America. Now I realize that God is teaching me about his love, and I have taken one step forward on the way of holiness. I am excited to see what the next year and a half in my journey here will bring! One thing that I can certainly say is that I am in the process of walking on the way with him."

B. *Servant leadership*

As the corporate expression of the office of deacon in the body of Christ, World Renew's task is to address the challenges of a hurting world. This involves raising up and equipping servant leaders to develop and exercise their gifts in ways that enhance their own faith walk as they minister with their community, nation, and world. Servant leadership is the primary means of World Renew's activities. This call to servant leadership is integral

to the other four priorities of the CRC: faith formation, global mission, justice and mercy, and proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Global Volunteer Program

The Global Volunteer Program (GVP) connects people, groups, and churches with World Renew's short-term international volunteer opportunities. In 2014, GVP matched 380 volunteers with overseas placements where they poured into the lives of those in need and in the process discovered more about themselves and God's call on their own lives. About 40 percent of those placed by GVP last year in volunteer posts, in internships, on tours, or on team trips were youth and young adults. GVP also further developed its partnerships with networked youth volunteer organizations in 2014, including a long-term effort with Youth Unlimited and Mission Year called Mission: Community Renewal.

Serve with a Purpose (SWAP) is a World Renew GVP program for high school and college students between 14 and 24 years of age. This youth- and young-adult-focused effort prepares young people for service overseas, provides discipleship resources and mentorship, and addresses fundraising support and community building in the local church. In addition, more than 5,300 young people engaged with World Renew staff and volunteers at key events, presentations, and services.

2. Disaster Response volunteer programs

a. International Relief Managers

World Renew's international disaster response programs depend on trained, experienced volunteers called International Relief Managers (IRMs) who are available to respond quickly, serve on assignments of three to six months, and can implement and manage the organization's response efforts in difficult situations. IRMs help World Renew and its local partner organizations, if they are present, with the management and logistics of organizing disaster response and rehabilitation projects that help people get back on their feet again after being affected by a natural or human disaster.

In 2014 sixteen IRMs from a group of 26 trained volunteers gave 13,460 hours of time to oversee projects in the Philippines, Madagascar, and Zambia in response to Typhoon Haiyan and drought. These efforts include food distributions to meet emergency needs, seed and tool distributions to help families begin to grow their own crops, and food-for-work projects that offer capable families food vouchers in exchange for community restoration and improvement projects such as road building and establishing clean water supplies.

b. Disaster Response Services volunteer programs

World Renew's Disaster Response Services (DRS) volunteers give their time and talents to help clear debris, assess needs, and rebuild homes after disasters strike in North America. Nearly 3,000 DRS volunteers provided about 60,000 low-income, elderly, or disabled disaster survivors with labor, support, and resources to help them recover from a flood, tornado, or hurricane in 2014. World Renew DRS volunteers include general and skilled laborers, construction estimators

and supervisors, site managers, and regional and area managers who contribute their specific experience and effort to the ministry.

World Renew DRS volunteers repaired and rebuilt 438 homes and assessed the needs of 16,500 households in 2014, giving over 247,500 hours of time to serve disaster survivors. This included more than 115 volunteer groups who served with their local congregation, youth group, school, or family. These volunteers represent 28 different denominations in addition to the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America, which partners with World Renew DRS in domestic disaster response. In 2014, World Renew DRS placed 890 young people in volunteer assignments serving those who are poor, elderly, disabled, and unable to recover from a disaster.

3. International development

One of the strengths of World Renew's international development programs is that they are implemented through servant leaders from Christian partner groups and churches in local communities. World Renew works to empower its partners so that they are able to lead development in their communities. In southern Africa and other locations where Christian missionary work has historically focused on evangelism and handouts, these partners must step back and unlearn dependence while also moving forward to mobilize local congregations to become catalysts for change in the community.

In Malawi for example, where 85 percent of the population is Christian and every community is home to at least one church or congregation, the potential for local church-initiated change is significant. In 2014, World Renew began developing a local church empowerment program in Malawi called Church in Community. The program combines biblical and management training for local church leaders, focusing on deacons, with the provision of small microgrants for programs initiated by the church and community together.

Churches are already being transformed by the program in several pilot projects in Zambia and Malawi: congregations and their leadership realize right away their potential and responsibility to make a difference in their community. World Renew plans to grow the Church in Community program in southern Africa in 2015, raising servant leaders in local congregations who can touch the lives and hearts of vulnerable people in their communities.

C. *Global missions*

World Renew lived out its mandate and mission in communities of poverty, injustice, hunger, and disaster in 2014, reaching nearly 1.1 million people with help for today and hope for tomorrow. While these programs align with the stream of global missions in this report, they also contribute to each of the four other ministry streams, involving faith formation, servant leadership, mercy and justice, and worship in wide variety. However, the scope of the ministry of World Renew could as readily, or more so, align with the loving mercy and doing justice stream of the CRC's five key priorities.

1. International community development

World Renew touched the lives of nearly five million people who live in extreme poverty around the world with community-based programs in agriculture, health, literacy, income earning, and leadership training in 2014. These communities, urban and rural, are located in some of the world's poorest countries where basic services such as health, education, employment, and food security are negligible or out of reach.

World Renew works in communities in collaboration with Christian agencies and organizations. In 2014 this involved seventy-three partner groups that benefited from structural, board, and financial training from World Renew as well as from leadership development and Bible-based values training that strengthened the preaching of the gospel at the local church level. These Christian partners reach out into their communities with the whole gospel—proclaiming the Word and caring for those who are poor.

It is noteworthy that World Renew's agriculture programs have increasingly involved climate adaptation techniques and environmental sustainability training in recent years. Many people who live in poverty find homes on marginal land that is degraded, ill-suited for farming, subject to variable weather patterns—or all of these. When irregular rains or unusual drought and flooding are added to the unpredictability of poverty, families suffer crop loss, months of hunger, and the risk of starvation from years of chronically low yields.

World Renew's agriculture programs help farmers provide food for their families and create better income by improving crop yields, variety, and hardiness. Training in sustainable agriculture techniques is helping farmers provide more adequately for their families through improved cultivation, microclimate technology, irrigation, organic fertilizers, and many other techniques. These improvements not only alleviate hunger, they help poor communities build food security and adapt to the changing climate conditions that affect them.

In 2014, World Renew ended a long-term funding grant for health intervention in Asia. The multiyear grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development made health services accessible to a quarter-million people, provided training for nearly 5,000 community health workers, saved hundreds of infant lives, and established a system of locally based committees in northern Bangladesh and India. This pioneering project in public-private partnership is now an award-winning model for other organizations and government agencies in providing public health access in developing countries. In 2015 and beyond, World Renew will increase its focus on improving health and nutrition for women and for children under two years old.

Since 2007, World Renew has focused more than \$3.5 million on HIV and AIDS response through the Embrace AIDS Campaign and continues to provide AIDS prevention education and care through health programs in at-risk communities. Through grants from the agency's HIV and AIDS Innovation Fund totaling \$81,500, World Renew worked in six countries in 2014: India, Kenya, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Tanzania, and Uganda.

In literacy, during 2014 World Renew worked in thirteen developing countries where educational opportunities are not available, not

affordable, or not attainable. World Renew provides adults with a six-month training course in functional literacy and numeracy that allows people who did not have the opportunity to attend school to better feed their families, own land, get a birth or marriage certificate, and participate in their community. Graduates receive a Bible and a completion certificate that helps them secure employment. They are also then eligible for an advanced course in literacy.

World Renew also works with community partners to help residents provide adequate education for children, sometimes providing seed money but usually encouraging use of the community's savings to improve school buildings, provide teacher housing, and furnish classrooms. Families, often those in the most need, who participate in the community groups that are organized through World Renew and its partners, also have opportunities to access self-funded loans that help them pay tuition fees, purchase school supplies, and provide uniforms and shoes for their school-age children.

In income earning, World Renew helps people in poverty by means of activities coordinated by a community group through a Christian partner. In the past few years, World Renew has focused on training and equipping partner groups to establish village savings and loan (VSL) funds in local communities. These group funds make financial services available to people who are outside the formal banking system by providing a safe place to keep money and a way to access small loans. Instead of waiting for money from outside the community, VSL members make weekly savings deposits into a group fund. They manage the fund, make decisions about loan approvals and terms, and hold each other accountable for repayment. VSLs have high success and repayment rates and are sustainable within the community.

2. Disaster Response

a. International Disaster Response

World Renew responded to disasters in 28 countries last year, empowering people through local partners in their communities. In eight of these countries, World Renew met the urgent needs of people who were displaced by conflict and insecurity, and in 24 countries the response involved a natural disaster—or both. World Renew was active in four of five high-level disasters. These were in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, and the Philippines.

After Typhoon Haiyan struck the central Philippines in November 2013, World Renew provided food, water and filters, shelter, and other essential items to 4,000 families. World Renew also provided generators, kitchen kits, hygiene items, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, stoves and fuel, cash-for-work programs, and trauma counseling. World Renew then began projects to provide boats, nets, and other fishing equipment to 508 families, and to repair and rebuild 1,915 homes.

World Renew has worked in South Sudan since 2010, helping farm families improve their long-term food security and stability. In December 2013 a political struggle exploded into armed conflict, causing families to flee. World Renew responded to 160 displaced families

near the organization's offices in Yei with food, mosquito nets, water purification tablets, soap, and cooking pots.

In response to those displaced by ongoing violence over the past few years, World Renew is providing assistance to families within and outside of Syria, mainly with funding from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The response includes 950 internally displaced families within Syria, 1,000 Syrian refugee families in Jordan, and 1,825 Syrian refugee families in Lebanon.

Hundreds of thousands of people in northern Iraq have been displaced by violence. World Renew is responding to this emergency through a local humanitarian organization based in Erbil. The response includes housing assistance, heaters, food, and clothing. Medical teams, including pharmacists and nurses, are providing emergency medications to those with desperate health needs.

In February 2014, World Renew became a full member of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), an initiative that strengthens accountability to disaster-affected people and awards accountability-related certification to humanitarian organizations for effective, efficient, and empowering disaster-response and development programming.

b. North America

In 2014 World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) touched the lives of nearly 60,000 people in the United States and Canada. The work was accomplished by trained, dedicated volunteers from Christian Reformed, Reformed, and other denominations who gave their time, energy, and talent to people in need. This servant-hearted effort is a witness to the faith and commitment of God's people to reach out in his name.

Early in 2014, World Renew DRS launched worldrenew.net/prepare-disasters, an online resource that empowers churches and families in a step-by-step process to prepare for a disaster. It results in a plan that ensures that families and churches know their options and have disaster action plans. The World Renew disaster-preparedness guide helps families know what to do before a disaster strikes. The web resource helps people identify and reduce risks, answer key questions, address medical emergencies, build an emergency kit, create a plan, and seek ways to help their community.

World Renew DRS has been responding to needs on the Eastern Seaboard since Hurricane Sandy occurred in October 2012. Last year, DRS continued to receive requests for needs assessments from community leaders and to manage an ongoing worksite in Ocean County, New Jersey. Working with local partners, DRS volunteers provided labor for home reconstruction projects and met hurricane survivors' urgent needs in cases of welfare, health, and safety issues. The needs are brought to the attention of the local long-term recovery group to turn around in 24 to 48 hours. By identifying urgent needs, World Renew DRS helps disaster survivors get emergency access to the resources they require.

World Renew DRS also continued work in High River, Alberta, in 2014 to bring hope and healing to people affected by floods in 2013. Grounded in a commitment to justice and peace, World Renew is devoted to helping homeowners who face significant barriers in recovering from disasters in North America. As part of the Christian call to be agents of peace and justice in the world, World Renew DRS works to restore health and well-being in disaster zones like High River by committing to using their hands as part of the larger restoration of humanity and creation.

D. Loving mercy and doing justice

1. North America

World Renew participates in the Justice, Mercy, Inclusion, and Advocacy (JMIA) collaborative working group along with CRC agencies and specialized ministries whose mission encompasses these four topics, believing that more can be accomplished together than apart. As the diaconal arm of the CRC, World Renew provided leadership in the formative stages of the working group and continued to function as a participating member in 2014.

In Canada, World Renew serves on the JMIA working group with Christian Reformed World Missions, Diaconal Ministries Canada, the Office of Race Relations, the Office of Social Justice, and the Centre for Public Dialogue. Through this work, churches are organizing forums for learning about justice issues and using education tools and opportunities for justice action to increase their capacity to connect meaningfully with diverse neighborhoods, locally and internationally.

2. Refugee sponsorship and resettlement 2015

World Renew has a long history of sponsoring and resettling refugees to Canada. As one of the first organizations in Canada to become a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organization, World Renew has been an active participant in the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) since its inception in 1979. Since that time World Renew has worked with churches across Canada to welcome and resettle refugees. Churches walk alongside refugees as they settle, adjust, and navigate the systems and procedures of their new homeland. The churches provide housing, household furnishings, food, and transportation. They also connect refugees with schools and with language training and provide support as refugees find employment. The care and compassion of churches provides the critical support these newcomers need as they start life in their new country. In 2014, seventy-seven refugees were welcomed to Canada through World Renew's sponsorship and resettlement program.

3. Congregational Justice Mobilization in the United States

In congregational justice mobilizing in the United States, World Renew's peace-building and justice work invites Christians to action through education and advocacy in support of the struggle for peace and justice worldwide. World Renew prioritizes these key values because addressing unjust structures is an essential part of long-term change in communities of poverty.

In involving U.S. Christian Reformed churches in advanced justice activities through Congregational Justice Mobilization (CJM) in 2014, World Renew exceeded its goal by 56 percent. CJM is a collaborative effort between World Renew and the Office of Social Justice.

Together, World Renew and the Office of Social Justice produced a video series and study guide on the environment in 2014. *Climate Conversation: Kenya* presents the crises that changing weather patterns cause for subsistence farmers in poor communities. The project shows how World Renew's disaster and development programs help those who live in poverty cope with the effects of a changing climate.

World Renew also partnered with Micah Challenge U.S. to create a small group study called *Live Justly*. This study is a response to congregations' requests to World Renew for materials that investigate biblical principles for justice at a practical level. Contributors to the small group study include Eugene Cho, René Padilla, and Nicholas Wolterstorff.

World Renew is part of the Justice and Excellence in Short-Term Missions Think Tank, an interdenominational task force that helps congregations create short-term missions projects that do justice in the community and have a long-term impact on participants. World Renew played a leadership role in equipping congregations to meet this challenge in 2014.

The think tank is made up of short-term mission staff from Christian Reformed Church agencies and the Reformed Church in America. The group has a two-pronged approach: to evaluate and expand agency effectiveness in transforming communities and the lives of participants through short-term missions; and to empower interested congregations to do the same. The program includes an extensive peer-evaluation process using a tool called *Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Missions*.

In 2014 the think tank commissioned a series of video and discussion tools to equip and prepare congregations for short-term missions and to engage in long-term follow through. Think tank members are also available to consult directly with congregations. The group's goal is to provide tools and guidance for congregations to listen better to each other and their communities. The think tank's overarching objective is to include in the culture of short-term missions a deeper motivation for justice and to expand the long-term impact of short-term trips in CRC congregations.

4. International projects

World Renew's Peace-Building and Justice Fund helps create opportunities for training and education about human rights to meet needs that arise while working in local communities. In 2014 these projects took place in India, the Philippines, Nicaragua, Honduras, West Africa, and other locations. They included education about human rights, antiracism, peace-building, anticorruption, and human trafficking.

In India and Nicaragua, World Renew trained local partners to combat human trafficking by raising awareness in community groups and churches. The director of World Renew's partner EFICOR says that trafficking is increasing in Malto communities in Jharkand, India. With a small grant of \$5,750 from World Renew, EFICOR added \$2,500 of its own funds and developed a curriculum to train one hundred EFICOR staff and

volunteers, including fifty field workers and local leaders in ten project communities.

In Nicaragua, where people in poverty are also broadly subject to the arms and drug trades, World Renew's Nehemiah Center is working in partnership with Christian Medical Action (AMC) in twenty-five Christian congregations in five rural and five urban communities to combat trafficking with a small \$4,500 grant from this fund. Using a curriculum developed during a previous grant period, World Renew and AMC trained church leaders in trafficking prevention, restoration, and increasing the church's role in public policy and peace-building.

Last year World Renew and AMC invested heavily in churches to help combat domestic violence and HIV and AIDS. In the process, the presence of trafficking was uncovered, and church leaders were eager to address it. Since then, these Christian church leaders have consistently applied biblical theories to work in their communities. Through this project, AMC is empowering local churches as catalysts for outreach efforts.

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

World Renew's work to enhance worship and the proclamation of the gospel is woven into its overall approach to the ministry of justice and mercy through development and disaster response in impoverished communities worldwide and in connecting with churches and their members in North America. The organization's overall holistic approach to ministry supports this stream, from tracking its capacity in spiritual development to the choice of its program partners and international alliances.

1. North America

World Renew's efforts to enhance the worship and proclamation of the church include several noteworthy items. World Renew creates a variety of worship resources each year for congregations in North America. These materials help facilitate worship on synodically designated offering dates and on recommended Sundays. They integrate into corporate worship the ministry of justice and mercy with those in need and support the integration of word and deed ministry in local and international settings. They also encourage worshipers to live out the gospel in their daily lives in response to God's call to address hunger, injustice, and poverty.

World Renew also has a long-term presence among a half-dozen CRC agencies in the Salaam Project (formerly AMAM). The project focuses on training people to teach congregations and other groups about the Islamic faith to reach out to Muslims. This collaborative effort offers a basic introduction to the Islamic faith, evangelism, and inter-religious dialogue.

In addition to these involvements that support worship and proclamation of the gospel in North America, World Renew also maintains a part-time, credentialed staff position that includes generating and presenting sermons and papers on the theological foundations of community development, justice, and holistic missions. These efforts, as part of World Renew's broad-based national and international programs, support the proclamation of the gospel, corporate worship, and outreach in the local church and are founded on biblical justice and mercy.

2. International efforts

World Renew's integrated programs in development and disaster response represent the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, ministering to people in need with practical interventions in community development, justice education, and disaster response that point to the saving grace of his death and resurrection. In contexts where the gospel can be freely preached, World Renew openly integrates the Christian faith into its work in communities that are poor or affected by disaster. In contexts where Christianity is not recognized or welcomed, World Renew establishes common ground through values training that is based in the Christian faith, often bringing the first glimpse of the gospel into hearts, homes, and communities where the darkness of hopelessness and poverty reign.

By working with seventy-three Christian churches and partners around the world, World Renew strengthens both local churches and their denominational structures through essential training that increases ministry capacity and the proclamation of the gospel. World Renew works collaboratively with Christian Reformed World Missions throughout the CRC's ministry in global missions, opening the door to a greater Christian ministry presence through development and disaster response programming.

World Renew partners with Timothy Leadership Training Institute on every continent where it works to integrate training for deacons, elders, pastors, and community leaders in Christian stewardship, biblical teaching, pastoral care, and teaching the Christian faith. In Tanzania, Pastor Charles Lussesa of the Free Pentecostal Church in Mwambaluhi, Sengerema, testifies to the ministry improvements made through World Renew's involvement in building up local congregations for worship and growth.

"Timothy Leadership Training helped our church, made up of 26 people with limited resources, to grow," said Pastor Lussesa. "The large group discussions, collaborative learning, instruction in reaching children and youth, and action planning included in the training helped me understand how to lead and minister to my congregation." The result is that Pastor Lussesa's small congregation grew by six new members in 2014.

Pastor Lussesa then began to implement a six-month ministry action plan that includes small business skill training for families in his congregation and teaching in Christian living to adults and children. His goal is for families in his congregation to begin praying together and to live lives that reflect Jesus' teaching in the Bible. Pastor Lussesa is also sharing his knowledge with other pastors and leaders in eleven congregations in his area. Seven of these pastors have already applied what they are learning from Lussesa in their own congregations.

World Renew's integrated approach to ministry in communities of poverty contributes to the proclamation of the gospel and the worship of God's people by strengthening local pastors, their churches, and the community as a whole. "Seeing changes in people's lives takes time," Pastor Lussesa says, "so you must be patient and persistent."

III. Connecting with churches

A. World Renew church relations program

1. Offerings

Because World Renew does not receive CRC ministry shares, synod recommends that CRC congregations hold four annual offerings for World Renew during the church year. In 2014 these included the World Hunger Campaign, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and DRS Sunday. Since synod approved World Renew's hunger and poverty focus in 1979, the annual World Hunger Campaign has been well received by Christian Reformed churches, involving congregations in worship, family and individual devotions, giving, and learning about a Christian response to global poverty.

DRS Sunday involves numerous churches in the United States and Canada with the helpful support of DRS volunteers who make presentations and wear their "green shirts" to celebrate this part of World Renew's ministry. In 2014, World Renew introduced an Advent-themed Giving Tree Project, starting after U.S. Thanksgiving and culminating in a Christmas Day offering. The project utilized World Renew's Annual Gift Catalog and had encouraging results in its first year.

In 2015 World Renew will maintain a health-related spring offering for core development programs, moving to a maternal and child health focus as field and partner staff fold HIV and AIDS programming into larger primary health care efforts. Each year, CRC members give regularly and generously in these offerings, providing key funding for World Renew's development and disaster response programs in communities of poverty around the world. World Renew is deeply grateful for the faithful support, involvement, and prayers of CRC churches and their members.

2. Classical support

In relating to churches, World Renew gives close support and encouragement to its board delegates and their efforts as World Renew representatives in their classes. The goal of these efforts is to increase the visibility of World Renew in CRC congregations by equipping classical delegates with ideas, connections, and information. World Renew provides classical stated clerks with resources for classical agendas. Delegates receive both a report and talking points for their presentations.

In 2014, World Renew Church Relations reinvested its ambassador program to encourage more individuals in their churches to become engaged in the work of World Renew. These ambassadors (formerly champions) were resourced well and encouraged frequently. The efforts resulted in an increased number of ambassadors who took the lead in organizing World Renew campaigns in their churches. Church Relations additionally resourced ambassadors and delegates with a monthly communication called the *Ambassador Dispatch*, a one-page email offering suggestions and encouragement. The ambassador program also has a presence on social media to connect churches and congregants with the work of World Renew online.

In 2014, World Renew Church Relations resourced delegates and ambassadors with a world map to deliver to each CRC in the United States

and Canada. The map highlights the developing countries where World Renew worked in development and disaster response. Many of the maps are already hanging on church lobby walls, helping to increase the connection and visibility of World Renew in churches.

3. Ministry Partner Program

World Renew's Ministry Partner Program structurally connects congregations to various countries where World Renew operates. In 2014 there were more than eighty-five partnerships in place between CRC congregations and developing countries where World Renew program staff are working. One consistent goal of church and country partnerships is growth in faith and understanding between partners. Field staff on deputation, home office staff, and board members made presentations in congregations, schools, small groups, and colleges and universities during 2014, including young adult university board members-at-large who represent five Reformed universities and colleges across North America.

4. Events

Church Relations managed a number of events to engage CRC constituents in the work of World Renew in 2014, including a Sea to Sea activity through a Ride for Refuge bicycling event in Grand Rapids in October. Two additional week-long Sea to Sea bicycling tours are planned in Ontario and Alberta in 2015, and a major bicoastal event will occur in 2017. World Renew also sponsored seven conferences in the United States and Canada last year, which included an ongoing partnership with the All Ontario Youth Convention and a presence at the Urbana Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

World Renew Church Relations also expanded its reach beyond the CRC at conferences and conventions in 2014. The effort is building a wider ecclesiastical support base and is increasing World Renew's visibility within CRC churches. These events included the national Christian Community Development Association Conference and a Reformed Faith networking luncheon.

In the United States, World Renew Church Relations offered church members, volunteers, and staff an online course on the book *When Helping Hurts: Alleviating Poverty without Hurting the Poor* (Fikkert, et. al.). The study was well attended and will be reviewed for 2015.

5. Other resources

World Renew Church Relations distributed three issues of a 16-page journal called *Through the Dust* to Christian Reformed churches and World Renew delegates and ambassadors in 2014. This valuable resource contains World Renew ministry highlights, an event calendar, and stories from the field, and it introduces new videos, offering materials, study guides, and children's projects to church staff and lay leaders. It also equips church leadership with information and knowledge for making decisions regarding their congregations.

B. Communities First Association

In 2014, World Renew worked with Communities First Association (CFA) in 59 churches, 22 of which were Christian Reformed congregations. CFA served in 279 low-income neighborhoods in the United States last year,

working diligently to help them become sustainable in their efforts in asset-based community development.

Since welcoming executive director Reesheda Washington in 2014, CFA has moved ahead in its approach to reconciliation, race, gender, and class equity among Christian churches and in underserved communities around the United States. One of the most significant changes CFA made last year was to invest in the development and certification of community advancement coaches (CACs).

By working with its current coaches, CFA is creating a new training process for vetting and certifying incoming CACs. The process ensures that new coaches receive consistent, quality training that will result in a unified knowledge base across the organization. Those who participate in this new process receive high-level instruction from professional coaches who practice what they teach and are enthusiastic about CFA's mission and vision.

A community scan is one tool used by CFA's trained coaches to explore the ways that a local church can best serve the surrounding community and its residents. The scan assesses a community in four areas: What are its needs? What are its strengths? What are the opportunities? How can the local church contribute to inspiring change in the surrounding community? The scan not only provides a snapshot of a community itself but is also a collaborative resource for the church and for neighborhood networks, community agencies, and grassroots groups.

Looking to the future, CFA is working toward becoming the place where experienced community developers from across the country come to receive a nationally recognized certification in asset-based community development, including training focused on the holistic development of servant leaders who have been called to help local churches in North American communities uncover God's gifts and presence there.

IV. Board matters

An important support to World Renew's ministry is our board. The primary function of the board is to set World Renew's vision and mission and to encourage and track the accomplishment of that vision.

World Renew's governance structure is made up of delegates from each church classis, and, in addition, up to twenty-seven members-at-large, who constitute the Board of Delegates of World Renew. The delegates serve as a vital communication link with classes and churches. They select national boards of seven to ten members each for both the United States and Canada. The two boards together form the Joint Ministry Council, which provides governance for World Renew as a whole.

Board of Directors of World Renew-Canada

Mr. John DeGroot, president
Mr. John DeWilde, vice president
Ms. Truusje Genesis, secretary
Mr. Nick Van Dyke, treasurer
Ms. Marguerite Ridder
Mr. Ray Prins
Mr. Jim Joosse
Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink, pastoral advisor

Board of Directors of World Renew-U.S.

Ms. Jodi Cole Meyer, president

Mr. Lyman Howell, vice president

Ms. Joy Anema, secretary

Mr. Steve Westra, treasurer

Ms. Hyacinth Douglas-Bailey

Ms. Erika Izquirodo

Rev. Thea Leunk, pastoral advisor

A. World Renew new board nominations

1. Canada member-at-large delegates

The board of World Renew requests that synod appoint the following single nominees, each to a three-year term as a Canada member-at-large:

Mr. Jason De Boer is a member of Ancaster CRC, Ancaster, Ontario. He works as a chartered professional accountant and partner for KPMG. Mr. De Boer has used his gifts of stewardship in many areas of ministry, including service as treasurer of Wellingstone Christian Home and Heritage Christian Home. He has also served on the land planning committee for his church and as chair of the Campus of Senior Care Committee. In addition to sharing his financial management and analytical skills, Mr. De Boer is looking forward to contributing his interpersonal and leadership skills as a team member on World Renew's board.

Mr. Thomas Gnanayudam is a member of Crosspoint CRC in Brampton, Ontario. Prior to coming to Canada in 2001 with his wife and two sons, he worked as a federal government employee in several provinces of India. In his church, he is involved in reaching out to newcomers and visible minorities, and he organizes activities that involve multicultural and ethnic themes. Mr. Gnanayudam and his wife routinely volunteer for services such as coffee duty, library duty, and Alpha meals. He has served as a human resources committee member in his church, which has included reviewing the roles and responsibilities of staff positions and making recommendations for change. He is passionate about refugee causes and has participated in Ride for Refugees, a bicycling ministry that World Renew is involved in. By profession, Mr. Gnanayudam is a hydro-geologist and geoscientist who works as a senior manager at Franz Environmental, a division of Arcadis, an international environmental consulting firm, at their Mississauga, Ontario, office.

2. Reappointment of Canada members-at-large

The following Canadian members-at-large are completing their first term on the board and are recommended for appointment to a second three-year term: Mr. Al Hummel, Mr. James Joosse, and Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink (pastoral advisor).

3. Canada members completing terms

The World Renew board would like to recognize and thank the following board members for completing their second terms of service: Ms. Truusje Genesis (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Ms. Danielle Kooy Temple (member-at-large), and Mr. Nick Van Dyk (Eastern Canada). The board of World Renew would like to recognize and thank the following board

member who has completed his first term of service and is unable to continue for a second term: Mr. George Horlings (Classis B.C. North-West).

4. Reappointment of U.S. classical members

The following U.S. members are completing their first term on the board and are being recommended for a second three-year term: Mr. Dennis Preston (Arizona), Ms. Marilyn Harms (Central Plains), and Ms. Joy Anema (Columbia).

5. Reappointment of U.S. members-at-large

The following members-at-large have completed their first term on the board and are being recommended for a second three-year term: Mr. Lyman Howell and Rev. Andrew Woja Henry.

6. U.S. members completing terms

The board of World Renew-U.S. would like to recognize and thank the following board members for completing their service on the board: Mr. Joel Verhoef (California South), Mr. Dick Van Eck (Greater Los Angeles), Mr. Michael Pluimer (Lake Superior U.S.), Ms. Bonnie Zigterman (Northern Illinois), Mr. Henk Dykhouse (Rocky Mountain), Mr. Garry Friesema (Wisconsin), Pastor Phonh Sinbondit (member-at-large), and Rev. Mariano Avila (member-at-large).

B. Finance

1. Salary disclosure

In accordance with synod’s mandate to report executive salary levels, World Renew reports the following:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	2	1	1
16	4	4	0
15	8	4	4

2. Detailed financial information

Detailed financial information and budgets will be submitted to synod by way of the *Agenda for Synod 2015—Financial and Business Supplement*.

C. Human Resources management

World Renew’s Human Resources (HR) management function provides HR support to functional and ministry teams, including but not limited to recruitment and selection, performance management, employee relations, HR systems, and HR advisory support for all team leaders and co-directors.

The HR team continues to focus on achieving gender and racial diversity. World Renew is committed to the process of gender mainstreaming with the goal of gender equality. As part of its gender-equality plan, World Renew regularly tracks goals for the number of both men and women in leadership positions, staff perception about their team’s commitment to gender equality, and the participation of men and women in decision making. Fifty percent of World Renew’s leadership positions (those with a job level of 14 or higher) are held by women. World Renew continues to make progress in increasing racial diversity, including but not limited to, its hiring practices and general HR policies.

Annual performance reviews are routine for all World Renew staff. Regular reviews give staff an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and critically review growth areas. World Renew is thankful for all of its “human resources,” who are critical to providing programs in communities in need around the globe.

D. Resource development report

Last year, World Renew was blessed to receive a total of \$39,639,515 from all sources in the United States and Canada. \$22.5 million of this funding came from churches and individual donors. This was then leveraged through grants, partnerships, and other collaborations. Just under \$3.9 million was received through government grants, and more than \$6.2 million came from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank for emergency disaster response and food security programs. World Renew also received just over \$6 million in grants from organizations in North America, Europe, and elsewhere, and about \$1.15 million from its investments.

World Renew directed \$11.2 million of its 2014 financial resources toward core international development programs, and over \$17.3 million went to disaster response. Just under \$.58 million was used for community development in North America, and \$1.32 million went toward constituent education.

World Renew uses about 11 percent of its resources for general management and fundraising purposes—meaning that 89 percent or more of the money you entrust to World Renew helps those who experience poverty, injustice, and disaster with life-saving, life-changing programs that witness to the justice and mercy of Jesus Christ and build up the church.

V. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Ms. Jodi Cole Meyer, president of World Renew-U.S.; Mr. John DeGroot, president of World Renew-Canada; Mr. Andrew Ryskamp, director of World Renew-U.S.; and Ms. Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director of World Renew-Canada, when World Renew matters are discussed and need to be addressed.

B. That synod commend the work of mercy carried on by World Renew and urge the churches to take at least four offerings per year in lieu of ministry-share support.

C. That synod, by way of the ballot, appoint and reappoint members to the World Renew Board of Delegates.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

World Renew

Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director, World Renew-Canada
Andrew Ryskamp, director, World Renew-U.S.

Back to God Ministries International

I. Introduction

On December 17, 2014, Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) celebrated 75 years of media ministry. Since 1939 BTGMI has served as the media ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Over the years, media has changed, but our mission has remained the same: to proclaim the gospel, disciple those who want to follow Christ, and strengthen the church.

Ways in which Back to God Ministries International carries out its mission:

1. BTGMI proclaims the gospel through media within and across diverse cultures, clearly and efficiently communicating within a variety of cultural contexts to ensure the gospel is truly heard. Because we are a witness to the unity of Christ's body, and because we value stewardship of resources, we work in partnership with like-minded organizations.
2. As an agency charged by the CRCNA to serve the church, we commit to working with and through local gatherings of Christ's body and denominations. We see churches as both sending and receiving, serving and being served. We commit to prayerful, thoughtful, and wise allocation of resources.
3. Under the direction of Rev. Kurt Selles, BTGMI is blessed to work with excellent international ministry team leaders and staff who provide direction in the production of culturally relevant programs and related ministries for gospel proclamation.
4. BTGMI carries out ministry in ten major world languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Over the past year BTGMI has provided evangelism and discipleship resources to people in nearly every country of the world through media outreach.
5. A comprehensive website, BackToGod.net, helps the church and individuals engage in our worldwide witness. Web visitors will also find information about BTGMI outreach and links to all ten language ministries.

Thanks to faithful support of BTGMI media outreach, people are hearing about Jesus and coming to faith in him. Some are hearing the name of Jesus for the first time in places where they would have no other way to learn God's Word.

II. Reflecting the Five Streams of ministry

A. Faith formation

For more than 75 years, BTGMI has provided faith formation resources in the English language, beginning with the flagship program *The Back to God Hour*. Ten years later, in response to audience requests for discipleship

resources, *The Family Altar* (now called *Today*) devotional resource was launched. Every other month approximately 200,000 print copies of *Today*, which celebrates 65 years of ministry in 2015, are distributed to homes, churches, and other outlets. An additional 314,000 individuals receive *Today* devotions through email, social media, and smartphone applications.

1. **ReFrame Media:** English faith formation resources for North American audiences (and beyond)

In addition to the *Today* daily devotions, under the brand name ReFrame Media, BTGMI provides a variety of biblical resources for English-speaking audiences. The goal of ReFrame is for people to see in a fresh way what God is already doing in their lives. God reveals himself in his Word, and his will is communicated through his story of salvation and love. God wants to reshape and restore lives according to his plan—that people may become more like his Son, Jesus Christ. Seeing God’s purpose unfolding reframes the whole world in God’s perspective. The complete list of ReFrame resources can be found at reframemedia.com. Examples of resources available to churches, families, and individuals include the following:

- a. **Kids Corner** is an audio adventure for children, especially ages 6-12. Web-based Bible stories and devotions complement the audio program to help cultivate a lifelong love for the Bible. Parent resources are also available at kidscorner.reframemedia.com.
- b. **Groundwork** is a 25-minute audio program that “turns the soil of Scripture to cultivate growth in faith and obedience.” Pastors Scott Hoezee and Dave Bast guide listeners in casual but thoughtful conversations about practical applications of God’s Word in today’s world. *Groundwork* is produced in partnership with Words of Hope. Listen on the air or online at groundwork.reframemedia.com.
- c. Faith formation goes beyond Bible study and devotional resources. **Think Christian** is a collaborative online publication that provides a place for Christians to bridge the gap between their faith lives and the world around them. How do Christians think about sports, politics, social issues, movies, video games, and so many other facets of culture? Through online articles contributed by a diverse group of authors and in open conversations with other readers, *Think Christian* readers explore God’s sovereignty over all of culture and discuss what it means to fully live and think as a Christian. Interested individuals can join the conversation at thinkchristian.reframemedia.com.
- d. **Church Juice** works with congregations to offer free resources and in-person training for energizing church communications strategies. This covers church ministries such as websites, social media, branding, and marketing—all ways to be intentionally communicating with their community about faith formation resources available through the local congregation. In addition, *Church Juice* offers financial grants to churches. See thejuicys.org to find out how your church could win a Juicys grant. (Interestingly, very few CRC congregations apply for this financial assistance through BTGMI. Our goal is to increase the

number of churches who are aware of this service available to them.) For information about how *Church Juice* can assist your congregation, visit churchjuice.reframedmedia.com.

2. Culturally relevant discipleship resources are also available in the other nine major languages in which BTGMI works. Produced and distributed in print, online, on social media channels, and through smartphone apps, devotions and faith formation resources are bringing God's Word to people around the world.
 - a. Audio and video programs apply God's Word directly through Bible teaching programs, as well as offering Reformed and biblical perspectives on current cultural issues within the context of the nations where we do ministry.
 - b. Thank God with us for the ways he is using BTGMI discipleship resources to bring people to faith and grow in their walk in the Word:
 - 1) Alina was raised in a Christian home in Russia, but she rejected her family's faith. "I did drugs and was completely sinful. I was on a path to death," she testified. Then someone gave her a video produced by the BTGMI Russia ministry. The video got her attention. She learned, she says, that "it's not what I have done, but what Jesus does for me." Alina found and watched several other videos in the series on YouTube.com. She testifies, "It brought life to my heart, and right there by the computer, I repented." Alina is now involved in the ministry of a local church.
 - 2) Staff and volunteers with the BTGMI Arabic ministry are using Skype and text-message conversations to disciple several Muslims in the Middle East. Many of them live in countries where it is forbidden to teach the Christian faith to Muslims. But through media, these seekers are learning about God's saving grace in Christ. A man responded: "My wife and I now listen to your different presentations as much as possible. Every time we listen, we learn something new about what Christ expresses of God's mercy and kindness to us."

B. *Servant leadership*

Back to God Ministries International is blessed to work with indigenous leaders gifted in both ministry and media. These leaders and their teams provide culturally relevant outreach in each of our ten language ministries.

1. After five years of prayerful searching for a well-qualified successor to Hindi leader Stephen Paul, we, along with our partner Words of Hope, give thanks for the appointment of the Rev. Dr. A.K. Lama as the new BTGMI ministry leader in India. Dr. Lama brings extensive experience to the leadership of this ministry that brings the gospel message through media to people in northern India and the Himalayan region.
2. In addition, the following serve BTGMI as ministry leaders in their respective languages: Arabic: Rev. Victor Atallah; Chinese: Rev. Jimmy Lin; English: Rev. Steven Koster; French (interim): Nzuzi Lukombo; Indonesian (interim): Rev. Lukas Banne; Japanese: Rev. Masao Yamashita; Portuguese:

Rev. Hernandes Lopes; Russian: Rev. Sergei Sosedkin; Spanish: Rev. Guillermo Serrano.

3. BTGMI provides leadership training in several regions of the world.
 - a. In partnership with Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM), The Reformed Church of Japan (RCJ), and Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI), BTGMI launched The Leadership Training Center for Reconciliation. The center offers leadership training and coaching programs based on the needs of local churches and participants. Thirty pastors (including eight who record BTGMI radio programs in Japan) and thirty lay leaders are participating in the leadership training programs. In addition, seventy Japanese church leaders are enrolled in Bible study leadership training. This partnership may soon include the Reformed Church in America (RCA).
 - b. Also in partnership with CRWM, BTGMI sponsored the first leadership conference for pastors in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Nearly one hundred church leaders attended the two-day conference “Watching Over Your Ministry.” Haitian pastors and church leaders face many difficulties in pastoral ministry. The goal for the conference was to assist leaders in identifying pitfalls in pastoral ministry as well as opportunities to make pastoral ministry more effective. A second conference on “Music and Adoration” took place two months later. BTGMI and CRWM staff hope the conference will be repeated in 2015 and that many more church leaders will take advantage of the training.
 - c. The BTGMI Chinese-ministry team annually provides leadership at conference workshops on using media in missions. The conferences this past fiscal year were held in China, Hong Kong, and North America.
 - d. The BTGMI Spanish team continues to offer media training for professionals and church leaders in various Latin American countries. These workshops prove to be an effective way to build bridges for our media ministry. The relationships we establish through these workshops are a significant factor in opening doors with stations that are willing to air our Spanish programs—in many cases without charging us broadcast fees! We estimate that if we had to pay each station that now airs our programs, it would place an additional \$500,000 to \$750,000 burden on our budget. Without these partnerships, the cost factor would greatly reduce the number of people we are now able to reach through media ministry. The workshops bring a good return on our investment.
 - e. Since the 2007 launch of listener communities in Indonesia, BTGMI has established 292 of these faith support groups in remote areas of 21 Indonesian provinces. Many of these communities provide translations of our gospel programs into the local tribal language, helping people better understand the messages. For seekers and new believers, the listener communities offer a place to discuss the programs and learn more about the Christian faith. BTGMI, in partnership with CRWM and Words of Hope, provides leadership training for coordinators serving the listener communities.

C. *Global missions*

BTGMI is uniquely positioned to provide gospel outreach in nearly every country of the world, even in places where no Christian missionaries are allowed. Proclaiming the gospel through radio, video, Internet, and social media also reaches people who do not have access to a church or who perhaps would not look to a church for answers to life's questions. We receive constant responses from people around the world who testify that they heard about Jesus for the first time through media ministry.

For example, few churches are available in remote villages of northern India. People have little opportunity to hear the gospel and grow in faith. BTGMI Hindi ministry teams produce radio programs and printed resources to share God's Word. Shyam wrote from the northern state of Uttarakhand: "I wish to convey my heartfelt gratitude to the broadcasters of Christian programs that bring us the gospel in our own tongue. I came to know about the Lord Jesus through your radio program. Now I know him as my personal Savior. Thank you!"

Mr. Jair, who lives in Jundiá, Sao Paulo, was watching TV one Saturday morning and came across the BTGMI Portuguese program *Verdade e Vida (Truth and Life)*. He was so moved by the message of salvation that he and his family decided to visit one of our partner churches in his city. There they were discipled in the Christian faith and gave their lives wholeheartedly to the Lord. "Your program led me and my family to Christ!" he testified.

1. BTGMI employs more than 175 staff members working around the world. BTGMI has a ministry presence in 134 countries through production and discipleship centers, broadcast locations, and resource distribution. In addition, BTGMI reaches people in more than 180 countries through Internet and social media venues.
2. BTGMI international ministry teams have developed 37 ministry websites in ten languages supported by 49 social media sites. BTGMI produces 45 radio/audio programs and 19 TV/video programs.
3. We distribute nearly 3 million printed devotional booklets each year in six languages. In addition, daily devotions are delivered by email, Facebook, or smartphone apps to more than 472,900 people every day in these languages.
4. People around the world are responding! Over the past year, BTGMI logged as many as 30 million interactions with people via letter, email, phone, face-to-face contact, and various web and social media interactions. That's an average of 82,000 interactions *every day* with people seeking to know more about the Christian faith. This global outreach is possible through media ministry.
5. When those who respond to BTGMI outreach ask for personal spiritual guidance, BTGMI staff and nearly 1,000 volunteers worldwide offer discipleship, mentoring, and prayer, and they help seekers connect with local churches. Networks of prayer partners in North America and throughout the world pray regularly for people who respond to our media outreach.
6. BTGMI global outreach is strengthened through crucial networks of North American and international partners. Strong collaborations create

effective partnerships for mission and allow resources to be invested wisely. BTGMI works cooperatively with the following organizations in various ministry areas:

- a. Christian Reformed World Missions—collaborative ministries in Haiti, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, El Salvador, and Eastern Europe.
- b. Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed congregations—media outreach assistance for new church plants as well as established congregations seeking to use electronic media for ministry.
- c. Timothy Leadership Training Institute—cooperative leadership training worldwide.
- d. Korean Council—publication of Korean-English *Today* devotions.
- e. Calvin Theological Seminary, Sustaining Congregational Excellence, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Timothy Leadership Training Institute, The Network, and World Literature Ministries.
- f. Words of Hope—partnership in Indonesian, Hindi, and Arabic ministries and in the production of the English-language program *Groundwork*.
- g. Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF)—media outreach to the Arabic-speaking world.
- h. Good Books Ministries—media outreach and discipleship in northern India and the Himalayan region.
- i. Reformed denominations worldwide—joint-ministry partnerships in Japan (Reformed Church in Japan), Brazil (Presbyterian Church of Brazil), and Indonesia (Indonesian Christian Church). In addition, we partner with evangelical congregations in Eastern Europe and Africa and with house churches and Christian ministries in China.
- j. Christian universities in Russia and Brazil.
- k. Crossroad Bible Institute—discipleship ministry through a Bible study correspondence program.

D. *Loving mercy and doing justice*

While the mission of BTGMI is primarily media missions, our ministry teams and partners have opportunities to provide comfort and assistance to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and disadvantaged.

1. Three years ago BTGMI launched a new program to bring comfort and hope to Japanese people devastated by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Our ministry team in Japan corresponded with listeners of the *Words of Hope* radio broadcast and, whenever possible, connected them with a local church for ongoing spiritual encouragement. Over the past year, we learned of at least one family who joined a partner church and was baptized. We are grateful for this answer to prayer for people living in a region of Japan quite resistant to the Christian faith. In addition, for three years the BTGMI Japanese staff organized a concert for listeners of the *Words of Hope* program to observe the anniversary of that disaster.

Hundreds of people came each year and gave testimony expressing how the program brought them hope and comfort from God's Word. We have now transitioned these listeners to our regular daily broadcast, *Morning Word*, to keep bringing encouragement and biblical direction for those who are seeking God.

2. As wars and persecution continue to threaten Christians and Muslims alike in the Middle East, God has uniquely positioned our Arabic ministry—through our partnership with MERF (Middle East Reformed Fellowship)—to offer practical and spiritual assistance to people displaced by conflicts. MERF specifically addresses diaconal aid to churches and refugees, many of whom lost everything when their towns were overrun by Islamic extremists. Through BTGMI/CRC support we've been able to provide spiritual encouragement by means of audio programs available on radio and a 24/7 Internet broadcast, Bible studies, and children's programs. Several partner churches in Lebanon have reported unusually large numbers of Muslim families attending worship. As a result of the loving welcome they have received, several families have testified, "Now we understand why God allowed us to lose our home in this war. Without this we would not have heard the gospel and received the eternal treasure of Christ our Savior!"
3. Pain and brokenness are not just international concerns. Our English program, *Family Fire*, addresses hurting families in North America. BTGMI/ReFrame Media launched *Family Fire* in 2011 as a primarily Facebook-based ministry to help strengthen families, one of the most basic relationships for a strong society. *Family Fire* addresses broken relationships and provides instructional and inspirational posts and conversations on facebook.com/FamilyFire. The posts lead people to a website that provides resources to explore God's design for marriage, parenting, and other relationships. The *Family Fire* team also offers retreats and teaching events for churches and local groups—all to help strengthen families. A volunteer prayer support team of more than 1,000 prayer warriors daily lifts up the needs of participants who ask for specific prayer by email, Facebook comments, and web responses.

E. *Gospel proclamation and worship*

As outlined above, for more than 75 years the mission of Back to God Ministries International has been to proclaim the gospel, disciple those who want to follow Jesus, and strengthen the church. By God's grace, we have been blessed to faithfully carry out that mission in ten languages, through a variety of media tools available over the years.

BTGMI continually seeks out ways to proclaim the gospel and call people into relationship with God. Additional examples:

- Our historic Spanish program, *La Hora de la Reforma* ("The Hour of Reformation"), celebrates fifty years of continuous radio broadcasting this year (2015).
- Live Internet-based call-in Russian talk shows specifically reach out to atheist skeptics in Eastern Europe.

- A new smartphone app in China provides a broad collection of solid biblical resources for people seeking to learn about the Christian faith for the first time or to grow in their newfound faith.

By God's grace and with the faithful prayers and support of individuals and churches, BTGMI will continue to carry out media missions throughout the world. And as God gives us opportunities to make an impact on people's lives, we are thankful to see the ways they pass along the blessing to others.

"Cathy" is a young mother and sales manager in Shenzhen, China. She listens to our Chinese radio program and subscribes to the *Chinese Today* via weixin (Chinese social media). Cathy wrote, "I have benefited so much from *Today*, and I want to do something for you." Cathy began to volunteer her time and skills by providing photos for the daily devotional posts on weixin, which in turn draws more readers and followers to the site.

We continue to develop live call-in radio programs accessible through Russia's national satellite radio network and a few local FM relays. We have also started carrying our programs online, where most young urban intellectuals seek out information. One of our most successful programs presents the gospel through "high culture" discussion featuring theater, classical music, literature, and highly acclaimed movies. This platform intrigues listeners and opens their minds and hearts to the relevant truth of God's Word. This has opened the opportunity for hundreds of phone calls, emails, and text messages from many who identify themselves as atheists. Through live conversations and thoughtful answers, our program host has the opportunity to share the gospel message. One caller told the host of our live call-in Internet radio program, "I never realized the gospel story affected so much of human history and culture."

In 1965 Rodrigo was a small boy in Colombia. At night he listened to *La Hora de la Reforma*. That's when seeds of faith were planted in his life. Today, Rodrigo says those broadcasts inspired him for his role as president of the National Savings Fund in Colombia and in his call to work as a pastor leading others to faith in Christ. He still listens to *La Hora*, and he recently participated in a pastor-training workshop in Honduras, where he gave testimony of God's work in his life.

Again, thank you for ministry shares, offerings, and individual support that make it possible for Back to God Ministries International to proclaim the gospel, disciple people who want to follow Jesus, and strengthen the church.

III. The Back to God Ministries International board

A. Function

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

B. Officers of the board

The board officers of BTGMI are Rev. Reginald Smith, president; Mr. Wayne Brower, vice president; Mrs. Cindi Veenstra, secretary; and Mr. John Vegt, treasurer. Rev. Ed Visser serves as president of the BTGMI Canadian board.

C. *Board member nominees*

Mr. Wayne Brower (Region 10) and Rev. Joel Vande Werken (Region 12) are completing their first term on the board, and each is eligible for reappointment. The board recommends that synod ratify these members for a second three-year term.

The following slate of nominees was presented in the spring of 2015 to classes for a vote. Synod will be asked to ratify the result of the election.

Region 3

Dr. Raymond Postuma, a member of First CRC in Toronto, Ontario, is retired from a career in medicine in which he worked as a pediatric general surgeon and professor at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Postuma has served as a delegate on the World Renew board for Classis Lake Superior, as a delegate to Synod 2009, as chair of council at Kildonan CRC, as chair of the Winnipeg Christian School Society, and as district chair of Christian Schools International. He is presently serving on council and as an archivist for the Canadian Association of Pediatric Surgeons.

Mr. Dickson Corro, a member of Willowdale CRC in Willowdale, Ontario, is employed as an administrator for Brokerage Service. He presently serves as a Sunday school teacher and is on the worship development team. Mr. Corro has served as an elder and as a delegate to synod.

D. *Salary disclosure*

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	1	1	0
16	5	3	2
15	1	0	1

IV. Recommendations

A. That Rev. Kurt Selles, director of Back to God Ministries International, and Rev. Reginald Smith, board president, be given the privilege of the floor when BTGMI matters are discussed.

B. That synod by way of the ballot ratify the election and reelection of board members from the slate of nominees presented.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Back to God Ministries International
Rev. Kurt Selles, director

Calvin Theological Seminary

I. Introduction

The Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees presents their report to Synod 2015 with gratitude to God for his provision this past year. The seminary has experienced God's faithfulness and looks toward the future with hope and anticipation.

II. Board of Trustees

The board met in plenary sessions in October 2014 and via conference call in February 2015; it anticipates a plenary session in May 2015.

The board officers are Mr. Sid Jansma, Jr., chair; Rev. Andrew Vander Leek, vice-chair; and Ms. Teresa Renkema, secretary.

Trustees Rev. John Dykhuis (Region 7), Rev. Timothy Ouwinga (Region 8), Dr. Karen De Mol (Region 8 at-large), and Ms. Teresa Renkema (Region 11 at-large) have all completed one term of service and are eligible for reappointment. The board recommends that synod reappoint these four members to a second three-year term.

Completing terms on the board are Mr. Hank Vander Laan (Region 4) and Rev. Bill Wilton (Region 5). We are grateful for their service and wise counsel to the seminary and to the church.

The following nominees have been submitted to the classes in their respective regions for a vote. The results of those elections will be presented to Synod 2015 for ratification.

Region 4

Mr. Keith Oosthoek is a retired senior executive from the RBC Financial Group. He is a member of Community CRC in Kitchener, Ontario, and has served both as a deacon and as an elder (pastoral and administrative). His denominational board service includes Back to God Ministries International, the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA, and the Canadian Pension Trustees.

Mr. Brian Verheul is the owner of Verheul and Associates, a consulting practice focused on litigation support and executive search support. This follows a 34-year career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). He is a member of Mountainview CRC in Grimsby, Ontario, and has served as a pastoral elder, youth elder, and clerk. Mr. Verheul has served on several educational boards, including the board of Redeemer University College, and on other various local agency boards.

Region 5

Calvin Theological Seminary presents the following single nominee for Region 5 due to the withdrawal of the second nominee:

Pastor Sergio Castillo is a bivocational, commissioned pastor and serves as associate pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Reformada de Quincy in Quincy, Washington. He has served on boards at his former employment and at his local church, and he has taken part in a program to prepare candidates for pastoral work. Fluent in English and Spanish, he is recommended by his local classis as having an effective ministry style in preaching, teaching, and evangelism, as well as having experience in leadership at all levels. The seminary

believes that Pastor Sergio Castillo brings a unique mix of gifts, abilities, and experiences that can serve the seminary and the denomination at this time.

Region 6

Rev. Scott Elgersma is the lead pastor at The River CRC in Redlands, California, where he has served since receiving his M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary in 2010. He has previous experience as a youth pastor and has served on the Youth Unlimited board as well as on the CRC's Youth Ministry Committee.

Pastor Julius Umawing holds the position of pastor of congregational life at Bethel CRC in Sun Valley, California. He received an M.Div. degree in the Philippines and a Th.M. from Calvin Theological Seminary. He also obtained a Doctor of Dental Medicine degree while in the Philippines. Pastor Umawing served on the Board of Trustees of the Philippines CRC and has served the CRCNA as a synodical delegate and as a member of the leadership development committee for Classis Greater Los Angeles.

Region 10

Rev. Timothy Howerzyl is the pastor of First Allendale CRC in Allendale, Michigan. He received an M.Div. degree from Calvin Theological Seminary and is a Ph.D. candidate in theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has served as a member of the Classis Chicago South finance committee and as an interim team member for Classis Zeeland. He presently serves that classis on its student fund committee and as a synodical deputy.

Rev. James Kuiper is the pastor of First CRC in Fremont, Michigan. He holds a master's degree in education and has experience as a teacher. After receiving an M.Div. degree and a Th.M. degree from Calvin Theological Seminary, he entered the pastorate. His past experience in the church includes serving as a deacon and as an elder and also as a delegate to synod, where he was a member of the advisory committee that addressed the Belhar Confession. Rev. Kuiper is presently on the Muskegon Ministries Board.

III. Administration

The seminary administration includes Rev. Jul Medenblik, president; Ms. Jinny Bult De Jong, chief financial and operating officer; Dr. Ronald J. Feenstra, academic dean; Dr. Mary Vanden Berg, associate academic dean; Rev. Al Gelder, director of mentored ministries; Mr. Robert Knoop, director of development; Rev. Jeff Sajdak, dean of students; and Ms. Sarah Chun, associate dean of students.

IV. Faculty

The seminary faculty continue to serve the church in numerous ways. Although teaching and preparing students for various forms of ministry continues to be central to their work, members of the faculty also provide education and counsel to many local congregations and broader assemblies, preach regularly, publish scholarly books and articles, attend significant conferences, and, in various ways, seek to stay attuned to developments in ministries in the Christian Reformed Church and the church of Christ worldwide.

In addition, the seminary is involved in multiple projects with other agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church. For example, in response to Synod 2012's challenge to develop ways to "get involved

earlier," multiple agencies launched a two-year pilot project in 2013 to enhance "ministry fit" for pastors and other religious leaders. This is a proactive strategy for improving pastor/congregation/ministry relationships.

At this time it is hoped that the board will present nominees to synod for appointment to the position of missiology and missional ministry. The board may also be in a position to bring forward a nominee for appointment in the area of moral theology or moral and philosophical theology by way of its supplementary report.

The board noted the upcoming retirement of Dr. Richard Muller; acknowledged his years of faithful service to Calvin Theological Seminary (1992-2015); conferred on him the title of Professor of Historical Theology, emeritus, effective July 1, 2015; and now requests that synod acknowledge this action with gratitude to God.

V. Five Streams overview; connecting with churches

A. Convergence with the Five Streams

In fall 2013, Calvin Theological Seminary faculty, with input and final approval from the Calvin Seminary Board of Trustees, produced a "Vision Frame" document, outlined as follows:

Mission—What are we doing?

Calvin Theological Seminary is a learning community in the Reformed Christian tradition that forms church leaders who cultivate communities of disciples of Jesus Christ.

Values—Why are we doing it?

Reformed theology—All our teaching and formation grow from a shared understanding of God's Word as articulated in the Reformed confessions.

The church—We are formed by and serve the church, God's agent of hope for the world.

Cultural context—We give our students tools to sow the gospel in a multi-cultural world. We challenge one another to have hearts that engage the broader world God so loves.

The whole person—We cultivate meaningful relationships with our students to foster personal and spiritual growth throughout our learning community.

Strategy—How are we doing it?

Through the power of the Holy Spirit,

- we are known for academic excellence and scholarship.
- we provide innovative learning environments.
- we pursue synergy with our graduates and other ministry leaders.
- we nurture a community of hospitality.
- we enrich the student experience through vital partnership.

Measures—When are we successful?

When graduates of Calvin Theological Seminary

- preach and teach the Bible (message).
- grow in their pastoral identity (person).
- discern and engage ministry contexts (context).
- cultivate and lead communities of disciples (goal).
- equip the church to renew communities for the glory of God (purpose).

A scan of this material shows significant convergence with the Five Streams ministry priorities of the Christian Reformed Church in North America:

Faith Formation—Calvin Theological Seminary seeks to train disciples who become the trainers of more disciples of Jesus Christ.

Servant Leadership—Calvin Theological Seminary is seeking to identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God. From *Facing Your Future* (high school students) to its resident and online education programs followed by continuing education programs and resources, Calvin Theological Seminary is training leaders.

Global Missions—The world is at our doorstep. Every year around twenty different nations (30% outside U.S. and Canada) are represented in the student body of Calvin Theological Seminary. The training for global missions takes place not just in classrooms but also over lunch in the Student Center.

Loving Mercy and Doing Justice—Calvin Theological Seminary trains students through cross-cultural internships and exposure to environments that help form the hearts of Christian disciples. For example, experience with prison ministry through Calvin Theological Seminary has led students to witness the need for ministry to prisoners and to understand the structures of society that need to be addressed.

Gospel Proclamation and Worship—Along with the stream of Servant Leadership this is probably our leading edge within the Five Streams ministry priorities. Our core degree is the Master of Divinity, which helps to form preachers and teachers of the gospel. In addition, we celebrate this year the tenth anniversary of the Center for Excellence in Preaching (cep.calvinseminary.edu). This ministry tool has served church leaders in one-on-one settings with thousands of website resource users every month.

B. Connecting with churches

Making and maintaining connections with churches is a foundational component of education for Calvin Theological Seminary. Whether this involves church-based internships or assignments related to the local church environment, the local church is the key partner for nurturing, developing, and training students.

Calvin Theological Seminary's Institute for Global Church Planning and Renewal has deepened our connection with churches by developing a new pilot program, the Church Renewal Learning Laboratory, which helps cohorts of approximately ten churches learn together how to provide

effective ministry in their contexts. We hope that our learning from this pilot program will enable us to serve the broader Christian Reformed Church and beyond.

VI. Program highlights

Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) has been involved in the training and teaching of students for ministry for 139 years since 1876.

This past academic year marked the anniversary celebration of ten full years of ministry for the Center of Excellence in Preaching. This center has been ably led by Rev. Scott E. Hoezee.

We continue to be blessed by strong support for our Distance Education Master of Divinity Degree program. In fall 2014, a new group of eight students joined the program, which allows students to remain where they are while receiving a Calvin Theological Seminary education through mentoring, cohorts (small groups), and distance classroom experiences. In the 2015 spring semester, three new students are expected to begin the program, bringing total enrollment in the program to 46. The launch of the distance M.Div. has created a great deal of interest in CTS, and we are exploring the suitability of this distance delivery format for additional degree programs. We anticipate and celebrate that our first distance-education M.Div. program student will be graduating in 2015.

The seminary is grateful for overall enrollment numbers for the 2014-2015 academic year, with 74 new students, including 31 M.Div. students (23 residential and 8 in the distance education program). At the same time, we urge the churches to encourage and support men and women who seek additional training for ministry to consider Calvin Theological Seminary.

A year ago, Calvin Theological Seminary received two special grants. The Lilly Endowment awarded CTS a \$500,000 three-year grant to help improve the preaching skills of seminary students as well as preachers who are already working in churches. This grant to the seminary via its Center for Excellence in Preaching is being administered by the center's director, Rev. Scott E. Hoezee. The seminary is one of eight seminaries that have begun a program consisting of two main components: first, the program will seek to enhance the education of M.Div. students through the seminary's preaching curriculum and, second, the program will offer continuing education to pastors already serving congregations through the formation of focused peer-learning groups.

The following data for the Center for Excellence in Preaching compares the first full year of visits, pages viewed, and unique visitors in 2006 with those of this past year, demonstrating the growth of this ministry and illustrating that it is one of the premier Reformed preaching websites:

Year	Total visits	Total pages viewed	Avg. unique visitors per month
2006	86,411	242,871	5,649
2014	212,000	500,000	11,400

The second grant, also from the Lilly Endowment, is for \$250,000, and its focus is to assist the seminary in developing approaches and programs that address financial issues facing its students.

Calvin Theological Seminary is one of fifty-one theological schools that have received this grant as part of Lilly's Theological School Initiative to Address Economic Issues Facing Future Ministers. The seminary is using the grant for its three-year program proposal. In addition to the Lilly grant, a major individual donor gift of \$60,000 has been given to the seminary to particularly support the development of the "financial formation" curriculum proposed in the grant.

The following four goal areas were identified for the seminary in the proposal:

- Understand its current financial situation and that of students.
- Provide significant "financial formation" for students.
- Provide vocational development services for students.
- Develop new financial and scholarship resources for students whose financial needs we are currently least able to meet.

The seminary was blessed with a number of key appointments during the past year. We give thanks for the following new faculty members: Rev. Sarah Schreiber, assistant professor of Old Testament; Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen, associate professor of Old Testament; and Dr. Danjuma Gibson, lecturer in pastoral care. In addition, we have added Mr. Aaron Einfeld as director of admissions and recruitment management and Ms. Chloe King as administrative assistant to the faculty and the academic office.

The seminary has also been blessed to see the continued development of a new institute. Just as the Center for Excellence in Preaching continues to serve the church in providing preaching resources, the Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal (IGCPR), led this past year by retired Professor Carl J. Bosma, serves the church as a catalyst for conversations related to church planting and renewal.

We are planning a major conference titled "Living Scripture Missionally" with such speakers as Dr. Chris Wright, Dr. Richard Hays, and Ms. Ruth Padilla DeBorst already committed to making presentations. The conference will take place on the campus of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary on November 18-19, 2015. This major conference is just one element of the growing work of IGCPR.

We are currently in the second year of the West Michigan Renewal Lab with Rev. Keith Doornbos as pilot project program director. The program uses focused learning intensives, peer groups, the assistance of seminary interns, and the involvement of local church leadership. Over twenty churches are currently involved in cohort learning, and the initial results of this laboratory experiment are promising.

We are grateful for partnerships with congregations and pastors in the training of our students. Seventeen of our twenty-one Mentored Ministries Group Leaders are pastors (the other four are seminary faculty members): Rev. Mike Abma, Rev. Ruth Boven, Rev. Roze Bruins, Rev. Lynn Barger Elliott, Rev. Don Byker, Rev. Doug MacLeod, Rev. Daniel Mouw, Rev. Kenneth Nydam, Rev. Allen Petroelje, Rev. William Renkema, Rev. Kent Rottman, Ms. Amy Schenkel, Rev. Henry Schenkel, Rev. David Struyk, Rev. Elizabeth VanderHaagen, Rev. Paula Vander Hoven, and Mr. Karl Westerhof. In this program, another close tie to congregations and ministry leaders consists in linking each M.Div. and M.A. student with a vocational mentor.

We are also grateful to pastors and others for recommending great students for the Facing Your Future program. We celebrate sixteen years of this opportunity to train young people and expose them to ministry. This past summer, twenty-three high school students experienced theological education at the seminary, followed by ministry in either Austin, Texas; Salt Lake City, Utah; or the Roseland area in Chicago, Illinois.

Two special opportunities for giving that continue to grow are The Presidents' Legacy Society and Mission Builders. Both have proven fruitful in raising the level of financial support for Calvin Theological Seminary.

In response to an overture that raised concerns regarding the teaching of science and theology, Synod 2014 passed a motion asking the denomination's Board of Trustees to

encourage Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, in concert with other CRC-related institutions of higher education, to (a) make available to a future synod a list of resources on the relationship of science and theology, especially as they relate to the doctrines of creation, the fall, original sin, and the atonement, and (b) to organize one or more conferences or open conversations on these same topics.

(Acts of Synod 2014, p. 567)

Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary have formed an ad-hoc committee of representatives from each institution to respond to this request and are planning to provide a full update to Synod 2016. During the interim, it should be noted that many resources in this area are currently available at the Ministry Theorem, which can be found at <http://ministrytheorem.calvinseminary.edu>. The Ministry Theorem seeks to remind pastors and other leaders in the church that an appreciation of science lies deep within the Reformed tradition as well as within the Christian tradition generally. From a biblical-theological standpoint, Christians rightly view science as a partner in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church, increasing our wonder over God's works and so enhancing our worship of the Creator God. Developed jointly by the Center for Excellence in Preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary and the Science Division of Calvin College, the Ministry Theorem serves to promote an enhanced awareness of contemporary science and to provide resources and encouragement for engaging science in the ministries of congregations everywhere. The resources provided on the website will be of help to pastors, church school teachers, youth leaders, worship planners, and others in our congregations.

VII. Students 2014-2015

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

Denominational affiliation

Christian Reformed students: 144 (49%)

Non-Christian Reformed students: 147 (51%)

Presbyterian: 61

Other Reformed: 15

Baptist: 14

Other: 57

Geographical information

U.S. students: 166 (57%)

Canadian students: 36 (12%)

International students, other than Canadian: 89 (31%)

 Korean: 58 (20%)

 Chinese: 8 (3%)

 Other: 23 (8%)

Total countries represented: 19

Student body

Male students: 228 (78%)

Female students: 63 (22%)

Programs and students enrolled

 M.Div.: 131

 M.A.: 16

 M.T.S.: 21

 *EPMC: 27

 Th.M.: 49

 Ph.D.: 31

 Distance Learning: 43

 Certificate/diploma: 4

 Unclassified: 12

*Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy

It should be noted that we currently have twenty-five students in Handlon Correctional Prison who are also considered non-credit students of Calvin Theological Seminary. In addition, we have forty-one students registered in our Hispanic Ministry Certificate Program.

VIII. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Mr. Sid Jansma, Jr., chair, and Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, president, when seminary matters are presented.

B. That synod, by way of the ballot, ratify the election and reappointment of trustees from the slates of nominees presented.

C. That synod approve two offerings for Calvin Theological Seminary (for the Facing Your Future program and the Distance Education program).

D. That synod, with gratitude to God, acknowledge the years of faithful service of Dr. Richard Muller and note the new title conferred on him by the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees: Professor of Historical Theology, emeritus, effective July 1, 2015.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees
Teresa Renkema, secretary

Worship Ministries (Rev. Joyce Borger, director)

I. Introduction

Worship Ministries seeks to support and encourage biblically grounded and theologically Reformed worship in the Christian Reformed Church, celebrating the great diversity of styles and gifts present in the worship of our denomination while encouraging continued creativity, discernment, spiritual vitality, and the faith formation of worshipers. Our prayer is “that [our worship] may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that [we] may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:9-11).

To help set the direction for the work of Worship Ministries, seven overarching values have been discerned from the results of a survey sent to CRC pastors and worship leaders and from discussions in CRC ministry collaborative work group meetings.

1. Learn and share local wisdom. The fundamental posture of this ministry should be to *learn and share* local wisdom across church types, geographic regions, and so forth.
2. Prioritize people. Quality interpersonal learning across church types (a) meets a deep need in an information age, and (b) capitalizes on the signature potential strength of a denomination.
3. Promote unity in diversity. One goal for this ministry should be to encourage more learning across ethnic, cultural, geographic, and church types, asking how common theological commitments are reflected in diverse local contexts.
4. Recognize and utilize valuable assets. Harvest work with significant prior investment and leverage existing strengths.
5. Avoid programmatic silos. Develop weblike, open networks. Resist separation of worship and proclamation from other streams and initiatives.
6. Avoid duplication. Focus on topics that a denomination is well-positioned to do and can do. Create awareness and access to other key resources as we discover them.
7. Develop a diverse team. When people think of CRCNA work on worship and proclamation, they should think not merely of an *office* or *person* but a *team* that includes people from multiple regions, ethnicities, congregations, and agencies. A primary function for the office should be gathering, nurturing, and sustaining a realistic but effective networked team.

II. Reflecting the Five Streams

A. Faith formation

Since all of worship is a part of faith formation, we might say the whole of this report should appear under this heading. In practice, both Faith Formation and Worship Ministries have committed to working closely together as we move forward. One clear example has been is the presence of Faith

Formation staff in our collaboration/advisory meetings and at the table for planning resources.

B. *Servant leadership*

Through the publication of worship resources in *Reformed Worship*, Worship Ministries has supported Pastor-Church Relations' (PCR) work with congregations that are in the process of closing. PCR staff are also working in partnership with Worship Ministries on utilizing worship as a tool for healing and reconciliation following a difficult season in a congregation. In addition, a PCR staff member has been working with Worship Ministry staff as we strive to create a healthy foundation for the future of this ministry.

C. *Global missions*

One of the wonders of the web is that we can connect with people around the world in many exciting ways. We are pleased not only that *Reformed Worship* has subscribers outside of the United States and Canada but also that in the past year the website had visitors from the United Kingdom, the Philippines, India, Australia, South Africa, Indonesia, Nigeria, Ghana, Bangladesh, Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia, Jamaica, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Hong Kong. *Reformed Worship* also continues to promote the use of congregational songs from around the world, and in this past year the magazine included articles written by a worship leader from Pakistan about worship in their context and what it can teach us in North America.

D. *Loving mercy and doing justice*

The June 2014 issue of *Reformed Worship* on the theme of social justice was planned in cooperation with the Office of Social Justice (OSJ). We were also able to provide links to resources on the *Reformed Worship* website to support some of OSJ's work in creation care in addition to highlighting that issue through a recent worship series in *Reformed Worship*.

Our office worked together with the Office of Disability Concerns to discern how best to enable persons with visual impairment to make use of the new *Lift Up Your Hearts* hymnal.

E. *Global proclamation and worship*

In addition to collaborative work outlined in section III (below), Worship Ministries has continued resourcing the church in the area of worship.

1. Liturgical forms—A committee has been formed and work has begun on providing new liturgical forms to reflect new realities such as children at the Lord's Supper, commissioned pastors, profession of faith made at various ages, and increased frequency of Lord's Supper celebrations. Committee members, in addition to staff, include Rev. Shannon Jammal-Holleman, Rev. Sheila Holmes, Mrs. Eunice Kim, Rev. José Rayas, Rev. David Schuringa, Rev. Kathy Smith, Dr. Mary Vanden Berg, Rev. Leonard Vander Zee, and Rev. David Vroege.
2. *Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*—Sales continue to go well, and we have been pleased that through sales of the hymnal and related products we have already been able to recoup the hymnal project's development costs. This year we have been particularly grateful for the work of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and The Hymnary in producing an iPad app for the hymnal, Flex Scores that support the

transposition of songs for use by instruments, and a collection of descants written by Larry Visser. We are also eager for the release of a Large Print edition.

3. *Psalms for All Seasons*—We are grateful for the partnership of GIA Publications, with whom we were able to release an iPad app for this collection of psalms for worship. We look forward to the release of a digital version of *Psalms for All Seasons* to further support churches in the use of this material.
4. *Reformed Worship*—With 2,500 subscribers, *Reformed Worship* continues to be a valuable resource for many CRC churches. A small committee made up of staff from Worship Ministries, Ministry Support Services, and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship spent considerable time discerning future steps for *Reformed Worship*. It has become clear that we ought to continue publishing the print journal while also bolstering and building relationship with our large web following (almost 4,000 users have liked our Facebook page, and our website has seen 473,000 users this past year from all over the world). As a first step we have begun posting weekly blogs and producing a monthly e-newsletter.

III. Connecting with churches

A. *The local church*

New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Great Lakes Region are some of the places where we have been able to connect face to face with local congregations. Through those conversations it has become clear that developing a robust network and greater connections to ethnic and culturally diverse worshiping communities in particular will take significant time but is desired by many who are working in the church—both paid staff and volunteers. Our staff also supports congregations by answering questions via phone and email, including those concerning copyrights.

B. *Other partners*

We continue to work closely with the RCA, particularly in the promotion and support of our joint hymnal *Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*. We also value our relationship with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and The Hymnary, who do much to develop supporting material for our products and to promote them. The Center for Excellence in Preaching collaborates on an article in each issue of *Reformed Worship*, and we continue to look for ways that preaching in the CRC can be supported through their excellent work. We are grateful to Calvin Theological Seminary for the availability of their staff to serve in various ways as well—for example, on the Liturgical Forms committee.

STANDING COMMITTEES

I. Introduction

Synod 2004 established the concept of the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee, which is now known as the Candidacy Committee. The committee began meeting in late 2004 and was provided with a full-time staff person in late 2007. The committee mandate is available in a document titled “Journey Toward Ordination,” available on the Candidacy Committee website (www.crcna.org/candidacy). The members of the committee meet three times per year. As with other denominational committees, Candidacy Committee members serve a potential of two three-year terms.

The committee seeks to be sensitive to the voice of the church as we review, implement, and suggest modifications for our pastoral ordination processes. It is our assessment that over the past ten years there has been growth in a spirit of collaboration between the classes and the denomination in the ordination discussions and policies, and for that we are very grateful. We are aware that our discussions and our adjustments will have to continue, and we are committed to the task.

II. Committee membership

The following people currently serve on the Candidacy Committee: Rev. Chang Guk “Joseph” Byun (2017/1), Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen (2017/2), Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma (2016/2), Rev. Ken Koeman (2016/2), Dr. Laverne Jordan (2016/1), Rev. Fernando Valencia (2016/1), Rev. Joel Kok (2015/1), Ms. Kristen Pikaart (2015/2), Rev. Melvin Jackson (2015/2), Rev. Julius Medenblik (ex officio as Calvin Theological Seminary representative), Dr. Steven Timmermans (ex officio as Executive Director), and Rev. David Koll (nonvoting staff).

Rev. Joel Kok is willing to serve a second term. Ms. Kristen Pikaart and Rev. Melvin Jackson are completing their second term on the committee. Thus, we present to synod the following as nominees to fill the two open positions:

Position 1

Mr. James Jones serves as a commissioned pastor at Oakdale Park CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has been pastor of congregational care and outreach for Oakdale Park since 2007, having served as full-time staff since 1999, as the congregation has transitioned from a traditional Dutch-rooted membership into a multiethnic membership. Mr. Jones has served on the Christian Reformed Home Missions board, on the Classis Grand Rapids East Urban Mission Committee, and on the synodical Christian Day School Committee. He has also served as a delegate to synod.

Rev. Sheila Holmes has served as pastor of the Northside Community CRC in Paterson, New Jersey, for the past fifteen years. She maintains active involvement in her community through disaster relief chaplaincy and community advocacy groups. She also offers active service to her classis and the denomination. She currently serves as the stated clerk of Classis Hackensack and has served as a member and chair of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA, as a delegate and ethnic adviser to synod, as an officer of synod, and as a member of numerous synodical committees.

Position 2

Ms. Susanne Van Dyk Jordan is an adoption program manager (social worker) at Bethany Christian Services in Fremont and Muskegon, Michigan. She currently serves on the classical ministerial leadership team for Classis Muskegon, has served on the classical oversight committee for Classis Muskegon, and has been a delegate to synod. She has served as an elder in her local church and is currently serving in that capacity.

Rev. Susan LaClear serves as a minister of the Word at Maranatha Fellowship CRC in Farmington, New Mexico. She served as a commissioned pastor in this congregation for eight years while also attending seminary and completing the EPMC program and candidacy process in 2013. Rev. LaClear has served on her classical ministerial leadership team for eight years and is very involved in the Classis Red Mesa leadership development network for training future pastors.

III. Major initiatives

A. Development of the EPMC program

The Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) was designed in 2005 and 2006, soon after the inception of the denominational Candidacy Committee. Prior to 2005 there was a one-year program under a different name for those who attended seminaries other than the denomination's Calvin Theological Seminary. The desire of synod was for the Candidacy Committee to design and implement a one-semester program, along with an option for online study.

Over the past eight years, the EPMC program has included a mandated set of courses, totaling ten credit hours, with every program participant being required to take the mandated courses. The course work has included CRC polity, CRC history, Reformed creeds and confessions, Reformed hermeneutics, and a course titled "Preaching the Word." The program also mandates that all students meet a standard level of instruction in (1) a liberal arts core course list, (2) studies using the biblical languages, and (3) field education or mentored ministry experience.

Over the past year the Candidacy Committee has had a team composed of Candidacy Committee members and faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary. This team's task has been to review the EPMC program and its requirements and to search for ways to add possible flexibility for students who participate in the program. The desire has been to look creatively for ways to achieve the desired task of passing on to students the core biblical, ecclesiastical, and confessional values of the denomination while still allowing more flexibility for students based on their experience and desires.

As of this writing, the team has not quite finished their work. They need time in March and in April 2015 to consult further with the seminary faculty and to reflect on their recommendations with the Candidacy Committee. The changes being contemplated will not be substantive and will be reported to Synod 2015 by way of the Candidacy Committee supplemental report.

B. Proposal for a two-year process

Since its inception in 2004, the CRC Candidacy Committee has had the sense that there is value in strengthening the tie between a potential candidate and the regional and local church. The document "Toward Ordination

in the Christian Reformed Church” (now called “The Journey Toward Ordination”), approved by Synod 2006, laid out a protocol for deeper involvement with the local church and classis, beyond that of financial aid (see *Agenda for Synod 2006*, Recommendation D, p. 317). The continuing work of the committee over subsequent years has sought to strengthen the involvement of the regional church in the candidacy process.

An especially fertile venue in achieving this goal has been the nonresident Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC). The EPMC program exists to orient, connect with, and evaluate prospective candidates who attend seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS). A prospective candidate can complete the program’s required ten credit hours of study as a resident student in a fall semester or as a nonresident student who participates in

- a required monthly mentor relationship for 24 months with a designated and trained mentor, meeting 24 times in two years,
- a required relationship with a local church mentoring committee that meets with the student three times during each of those two years, and
- required interviews with the classis or classis committee at the outset and two additional times during those two years.

A result we are noting is that these nonresident EPMC students walk closer with the Christian Reformed Church before entering ordained ministry and receive more intensive support and opportunity for reflection as they prepare for candidacy.

The response to the purposeful two-year mentoring relationship, grounded in local ministry and connected with the regional body, classis, has been very gratifying. Following are some comments among many that were gathered from mentees who participated:

“The 24-month mentor experience was a blessing because my mentor and I were able to grow together. I’m actually older than my mentor, and while he had much more pastoral experience, I had life experience in other areas. We grew to be friends as well as colleagues. I continue to be in contact with him regularly. His wisdom, experience, and openness were valuable as I discerned my call and worked toward visualizing how that call could be realized.”

“My mentor walked alongside in such a great and compassionate manner, and yet firm in the goal of reaching the goal of ordination.”

“Although I would not have prescribed the 24-month mentoring process for myself, I found it enriching as I received regular, constructive advice from my mentor and the mentorship team. This has broadened my scope of ministry for the present and the future, in that I now realize that ministry is not meant as a ‘lone wolf’ endeavor but is another part of God’s relationship-building process so that I may learn from others and others may learn from me.”

And following are comments from two mentors:

“The 24-month mentoring experience was richly rewarding as I walked alongside a person newly entering ministry, with both of us

committed to learning and growing together, and as I learned to see ministry with a broader and refreshed vision. It is a delight to witness the church receiving talented and devoted new leadership with deep rooting in the tradition and fresh ways of approaching new and old challenges. The mentoring experience has confirmed in me the absolute necessity of such relationships to provide churches with the healthiest of leaders, the wisest of teachers, and the strongest of compassionate shepherds.”

“I entered the EPMC as a first-time mentor not really knowing what to expect and somewhat nervous about what I could contribute. Twenty-four months later I can say that it has been a positive and beneficial experience for both the mentee and me. The fact that the mentee and I were serving in the same church accentuated the benefits. The mentee contributed to the success of the experience by being open and willing to investigate with me the back-stories to ministry experiences. The most notable benefit to me was seeing my own work of ministry through the eyes of someone coming into it and being able to talk it through. We both learned together.”

The Candidacy Committee has mentioned its positive assessment of this program in reports to synod on a few different occasions, most recently in the report to Synod 2014: “We are moving toward the process envisioned in 2004 when the Candidacy Committee was created by synod—a process in which the classis and local church play a more active role in the formation of ministerial candidates” (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 246).

The Candidacy Committee believes that it has now established sufficiently strong ties with each regional classis so that it is practical to require for every prospective candidate a two-year relationship with a local CRC and a regional body as a condition of eligibility for candidacy. Up to this point such a relationship has been required only for nonresident EPMC students, although in many cases other prospective candidates have had these relationships on a more random/haphazard basis. The advent of electronic media allows ready access and communication between a student and regional leadership from any two places in the world.

We have prepared simple report forms for accountability and communication in such a relationship (see Appendix), and we have established an orientation approach to assist those involved. The committee believes it has sufficient staff and regional connections so that such expectations are viable. The outcome for the students will be an appreciable strengthening in relationships and encouragement relative to the church they seek to serve. The process will also enable a greater number of voices to provide an informed recommendation on each candidate, in comparison with the traditional system of years past in which the seminary often seemed to be the only voice.

This plan has been reviewed with the appropriate functionaries at Calvin Theological Seminary, and it has their endorsement. Thus, the Candidacy Committee wishes to propose the following:

1. That beginning with Synod 2018, each candidate presented to synod be required to have had three interviews with a classis or classis committee—an initial interview, and then an annual interview over the next two years.

2. That beginning with Synod 2018, each candidate presented to synod be required to have had an approved mentor relationship with a trained leader in the CRC for at least 24 months, in partnership with a local church mentoring committee that meets with the student three times during each of those two years.
3. That Synod 2015 encourage the Candidacy Committee to implement this plan in the coming months by providing orientation to students early in their seminary training, by providing assistance to students and to the designated partners in each classis, and by working in respectful partnership with the Mentored Ministries Office of Calvin Theological Seminary.

C. *Continuing Education for Pastors Committee*

Synod 2014 instructed the Candidacy Committee

to work with Calvin Theological Seminary and the Office of Pastor-Church Relations in developing a plan for continuing education of pastors that includes opportunity for growth in familiarity with our denominational ministries, our confessional commitments, and our polity, and that this plan be presented to Synod 2016.

(Acts of Synod 2014, p. 544)

During the synodical and advisory committee discussions, it was made clear that the task of the committee was to build on the work of previous synods, to consider potential forms of accountability, and to consider a broad range of options and strategies for pastoral continuing education, not only the strategies aimed at familiarity with denominational ministries and values.

The Candidacy Committee has formed the requested Continuing Education (CE) for Pastors Committee, which has begun its work. The members of the committee are as follows:

- Rev. David Koll (director of Candidacy), chair
- Dr. Ronald Feenstra (Calvin Theological Seminary)
- Rev. Denise Posie (Pastor-Church Relations)
- Mr. Mark Wallace (Christian Reformed Home Missions campus ministry coordinator)
- Dr. Laverne Jordan (Candidacy Committee member)
- Rev. Al Postma (pastor from Thunder Bay, Ont.)
- Dr. Russ Palsrok (retired pastor and member of the 2001 synodical committee on CE)
- Pastor Ron Hosmar (commissioned pastor in Ottawa, Ont.)
- Dr. Gary Vander Ark (elder and retired physician from Denver, Colo.)

The committee is energized by the task and is finding rich resources available from consulting previous synodical reports, reviewing surveys done within the CRCNA, and communicating with leaders from other denominations. The committee plans to send a preliminary report to the churches in the summer of 2015, giving opportunity for input from pastors and churches prior to the final report that will be submitted for Synod 2016.

D. *Interagency committee in assessment*

In response to the challenge of Synod 2012 to the Office of Pastor-Church Relations to develop ways to “get involved earlier” in conflictive

relationships between pastors and churches, a multiagency team has been launched. The director of Candidacy is a participant on this team. The team designed and implemented a two-year pilot project in 2013 to enhance ministry “fit” for pastors and other religious leaders. This is a proactive strategy for improving pastor/congregation/ministry relationships. Reports on this initiative will be presented to Synod 2015 and future synods via the Office of Pastor-Church Relations.

E. Continuing projects

The Candidacy Committee is also pleased to note a number of continuing initiatives being carried out as ways to support the church in the task of preparing persons for pastoral ordination in the Christian Reformed Church.

1. Growth in the use of regional teams to interview candidates—In previous years all potential candidates were interviewed in Grand Rapids, Michigan, each spring. In the past few years we have seen a greater use of regional teams, conducting the same sort of interview as is conducted in Grand Rapids, but preventing the need for conference calls or long trips to Michigan. The Candidacy Committee is grateful for the commitment and work of the many pastors in the various regions who are making this trend possible.
2. Continuation of the Korean-language program called KIM—This program is now in its ninth year, and it has offered CRC orientation to over one hundred Korean-speaking pastors who have affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church in the past decade.
3. Ethnic Pastor Orientation—Events were conducted in April 2014 and again in March 2015, in partnership with the ethnic ministry leaders of Christian Reformed Home Missions. Pastors entering service in the CRC are taught about the denominational structure, history, polity, and confessional perspectives. There is significant energy and appreciation as ethnic minority pastors meet and learn in a setting where they are “majority participants.”
4. Learning plans for Church Order Article 23—Synod 2013 added a statement to the Church Order Supplement, Article 23 that requires potential commissioned pastors who will serve in solo or senior ministry positions to engage in a study plan that includes orientation to denominational ministry. The Candidacy Committee has been entrusted with working with classes in creating such plans, and currently over fifteen persons are engaged in learning plans.
5. Consultation with classical ministerial leadership teams and others—the Candidacy office receives frequent phone calls and email from classis leaders, local ministry leaders, and persons looking at potential pastoral service within the Christian Reformed Church. It is our hope and prayer that the office can maintain a responsive and hospitable posture that serves the local and regional church in the tasks surrounding ordination.
6. Tracking the journey of candidates after they are declared eligible for call by synod—The Candidacy office attempts to follow the progress of

candidates as they await a call and ordination, providing support and encouragement.

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. David R. Koll (director of Candidacy), and to an additional member of the Candidacy Committee if one is present, when the Candidacy Committee report is discussed.

B. That synod by way of the ballot appoint two new members to the Candidacy Committee from the nominees as presented, and reappoint Rev. Joel Kok to a second three-year term.

C. That synod approve the following with regard to the candidacy process:

1. That beginning with Synod 2018, each candidate presented to synod be required to have had three interviews with a classis or classis committee—an initial interview, and then an annual interview over the next two years.
2. That beginning with Synod 2018, each candidate presented to synod be required to have had an approved mentor relationship with a trained leader in the CRC for at least 24 months, in partnership with a local church mentoring committee that meets with the student three times during each of those two years.
3. That synod encourage the Candidacy Committee to implement this plan in the coming months by providing orientation to students early in their seminary training, by providing assistance to students and to the designated partners in each classis, and by working in respectful partnership with the Mentored Ministries Office of Calvin Theological Seminary.

D. That synod take note of the various initiatives and challenges identified by the Candidacy Committee as noted in this report.

Candidacy Committee
David R. Koll, director

Appendix

24-Month Candidacy Program Initial Report for Classis

Applicant's Name: _____
Last/Family First Middle

This applicant was interviewed by the CMLT of Classis _____ on
(Classis Name)

(Year Month Day)

1. Summarize what you believe are the applicant's strengths and potential strengths/gifts for ministry.

2. Summarize the areas in which you believe the applicant will need to grow in order to be effective in ministry.

3. What motivates the applicant's desire to prepare for Christian ministry?

Study Plan

1. At which seminary(ies) is the student pursuing their studies, and why?

2. When does the student intend to conclude their studies? _____
(Year) (Month)
3. Is the student studying full-time or part-time?
 Full-Time Part-Time Other (explain below):

4. If obtaining their M.Div at a seminary other than Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS), is the student aware of the requirements of the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy?
____ Yes _____ No
5. Other comments related to the student's study plan:

Mentorship Plan

1. Who will function as this student's mentor for the coming 24 months?

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

2. What ministry engagement will the student have in the coming 24 months?

Endorsement

Do you, the Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT), recommend the applicant for entrance into the Candidacy Process for ministry in the CRC as a Minister of the Word?

- Yes, without reservation.
- Yes, with reservation. (Please elaborate on a separate sheet of paper.)
- No, we do not recommend. (Please elaborate on a separate sheet of paper.)

Feel free to provide any additional comments on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this form.

CMLT Information

CMLT of Classis _____
(Classis Name)

CMLT Chairperson _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone Number _____ Fax Number _____

Email _____

Signature _____

Date _____

After completing and signing this form, please send it directly to the Candidacy Committee of the Christian Reformed Church. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director of Candidacy, Rev. David Koll. Thank you.

**Christian Reformed Church in North America
Candidacy Committee
1700 28th St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407
(dkoll@crcna.org)**

24-Month Candidacy Program
Classis Report #__ of 2
(to be filled out after each of the two required meetings with classis or classis committee)

Student Name: _____

Mentor Name: _____

Classis Involved: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Name and Role of Person Completing this Report: _____

1. **Describe the setting and format of the meeting in brief detail.**
(Was this a meeting with the classis or with a classis committee? Who was present? Where did the meeting take place? etc.)

2. **What was the level of acquaintance with the student by the classis representatives before the meeting took place, and how did the meeting serve to enhance the relationship?**
Tell a story about a meaningful conversation point during the meeting.

3. **What specific words of encouragement or exhortation were offered to the student by the classis representatives?**

4. **Were there any significant concerns expressed by the classis representatives that need to be addressed?** Yes No
If "Yes," please explain and offer a plan of response.

5. **Are there any issues regarding the candidacy process or this potential candidate that were expressed by the classis that require consultation with the director of Candidacy?** Yes No
If "Yes," please explain.

Copy this form for your records and send a copy to

Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy
1700 28th St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407

(or email an e-copy to dkoll@crcna.org)

**24-Month Candidacy Program
Mentor Report: Initial Report**

Student Name: _____

Mentor Name: _____

Name of Church/Ministry Engagement of Student:

Date of Report: _____

- 1. What motivates the student's desire to prepare for ordained ministry?**

- 2. What ministry assignment(s) will be undertaken by the student during the 24-month candidacy process? (Will this assignment also be used for M.Div. credit?)**

- 3. Has a mentor committee been appointed, consisting of two to four persons besides the mentor, which will meet with the student three times each year for two years?**

Yes No

If "No," please appoint a mentor committee before completing this report. Please include the name, email address, and phone number of each mentor committee member.

1. Mentor: _____

2. Elder: _____

3. _____

4. _____

- 4. What are specific areas of concern, if any, that the student or the mentor wishes to address in order to have a successful relationship in this program?**

5. Are the mentor and student aware of the following documents needed in order to orient themselves to the concerns that will be covered in the coming 24 months? Yes No

If "No," please familiarize them with the following before completing this report.

Resource List for the 24-Month Candidacy Program:

- *PQMs (Personal Qualifications for Ministry)*
- *Mentored Ministry Program Goals*
- *Guidelines for Mentors, Mentor Committees, and Classis Interviews*
- *Areas of Focus*

6. This report form was reviewed with the student prior to submission to the director of Candidacy on _____ (date).

Save a copy of this form for your records and send a copy to

(1) Your Classis CMLT Representative

(2) Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy

1700 28th St. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407

(dkoll@crcna.org)

6. Are there any issues in the mentor/student relationship that require consultation with the director of Candidacy? Yes No
If "Yes," please explain.

7. This report form was reviewed with the student prior to submission to the director of Candidacy on _____ (date).

Save a copy of this completed form for your records and send a copy to

- (1) Your Classis CMLT Representative
- (2) Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy
1700 28th St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407
(dkoll@crcna.org)

I. Introduction

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee (EIRC) members are honored to be the representatives of synod in the ministry of ecumenicity and interfaith dialogue. EIRC realizes that because the CRC is part of a global faith community, our ecumenical and interfaith relationships are ongoing and vital with many connections. Some of the relationships are institutional and formal, and others are established and fostered through more casual encounters. But whatever the venues—major ecclesiastical assemblies, multi-lateral associations, worship halls, denominational offices, or coffee shops—“the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3) is experienced and celebrated.

The Ecumenical Charter of the Christian Reformed Church is the foundational statement of the CRC that guides the EIRC in deciding with whom and how we nurture ecumenical relations. The relationships we maintain are not exclusively with denominations that are identical to the CRC. In fact, there is considerable diversity in our fellowship, not only in our church-to-church relationships but also through our affiliation in ecumenical organizations. When one considers our participation in the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT-USA), the Global Christian Forum (GCF), and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), one can sense that the reality of our relationships is more than a confessional expression. Followers of Jesus from a wide variety of traditions, languages, and polities can stand together in obedience and service. When we see the respect and appreciation that is given to the CRC and we show respect and appreciation for our brothers and sisters in other denominational families, we give thanks and praise to God for the way his Spirit continues to break down walls of division that have often marked the history of the church. For every expression of unity in Christ we give thanks.

The foregoing paragraph deserves additional emphasis. Synod 2006 adopted a significantly revised ecumenical charter that was slightly updated in 2010. The thrust of the revisions made in 2006 was that the CRC’s vision of ecumenicity was expanded. Instead of relating primarily to churches very similar to the CRC, the revised charter recognizes that our relationships need to include other Christian and Reformed denominations which, while differing with us in some important perspectives and ethical decisions, are part of the body of Jesus Christ. Such diversity of relationships, as indicated above, can easily be seen in the ecumenical organizations in which we hold membership. However, changing the ecumenical charter is not the same thing as the new reality living in the hearts of CRC members or even embodied by various CRC assemblies. The EIRC is eager to remind Synod 2015 of the current scope of our relationships and invites synod to give thanks for the richness of that diversity and fellowship.

The present two-part name of this committee (ecumenical and interfaith) shows that there are two dimensions to the mandate given by synod. Both are significant and are clearly distinct. Ecumenical relationships exist between the CRC and other Christian traditions. Interfaith dialogue takes place

between Christian churches and faith traditions that have a non-Christian tradition. The EIRC is careful to differentiate between the two dimensions, and it encourages the members and congregations of our denomination to do likewise.

II. Membership and meetings

The members of the EIRC for the current year ending June 30, 2015, are Rev. Andrew Beunk (2017/1); Rev. Anthony Elenbaas (2016/1); Rev. Emmett Harrison (2016/1); Ms. Sharon Jim (2017/1); Rev. Karen Norris (2015/1); Ms. Debra Ortiz-Vásquez (2016/2); Dr. James Payton (2015/1); Dr. Shirley Roels (2015/2), chair; Dr. Jay Shim (2017/2), vice-chair; and Dr. Robert Sweetman (2015/1).

Dr. Steven Timmermans and Dr. Peter Borgdorff serve as ex officio members of the EIRC. Dr. Darren Roorda serves as the ecumenical representative in Canada in his capacity as the Canadian ministries director.

The EIRC met in October 2014 and February 2015. A conference call meeting is scheduled to be held in early April 2015.

III. Nominations for membership

The first term of Dr. James Payton, Dr. Robert Sweetman, and Rev. Karen Norris ends June 30, 2015, and these members are eligible for a second term. The EIRC heartily recommends them to synod for reappointment to a second term.

Dr. Shirley Roels is completing her term of service on the committee. Dr. Roels has faithfully served the cause of ecumenicity for the CRC. The EIRC recommends that synod express its gratitude for her service.

In keeping with the synodical guidelines and requirements for diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, geographical location, and ordination, the EIRC presents the nomination of the Rev. Kathleen Smith to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Dr. Roels.

Rev. Kathleen Smith is well known to synod as the church polity adviser at synod. Rev. Smith graduated from Calvin College in 1980, Calvin Theological Seminary in 2001, and completed her Th.M. in church polity and administration at Calvin Seminary in 2006. Rev. Smith is currently the associate director and program manager for grant programs at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, as well as an adjunct professor of church polity at Calvin Theological Seminary. Especially in her role at the Worship Institute, Rev. Smith will have extensive connections with the global church and can bring a rich exposure to the ecumenical ministry of the CRC.

Note: The EIRC brings a single nominee for approval by synod not only because Rev. Smith has outstanding qualifications but also because the requirements for diversity of gender, ethnicity, geographical location, and ordination for EIRC membership makes the advancement of a two-person nomination difficult.

IV. Information regarding ecumenical relations

A. Fraternal delegates

The EIRC appointed the following fraternal delegates to the assemblies of churches and ecumenical organizations with which the CRC has a relationship or has membership:

1. To the Reformed Church in Japan (RCJ) General Assembly, Rev. Lawrence Spalink.
2. Because the synods of the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church met together in Pella, Iowa, last year, no fraternal delegates were exchanged.
3. To the General Synod of the Reformed Church in South Africa (GKSA), Dr. Peter Borgdorff.
4. To the meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches, Dr. William Koopmans and Rev. Anthony Elenbaas.

B. Representatives and observers to ecumenical organizations

In accordance with the provisions of the Ecumenical Charter of the CRCNA, the EIRC appointed representatives and observers to various ecumenical organizations. These gatherings often provide occasions to connect with representatives of churches with which the CRC is in ecclesiastical fellowship or dialogue, and members of the EIRC take every opportunity to make those connections.

1. Dr. Peter Borgdorff serves as the CRCNA's representative on the board of directors of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).
2. Dr. William Koopmans and Rev. Anthony Elenbaas serve as the representatives of the CRC to the Canadian Council of Churches.
3. Dr. Steven Timmermans and Dr. Peter Borgdorff serve as the CRCNA's representatives to Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT-USA).
4. Dr. Darren Roorda represents the CRCNA to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC).
5. Dr. Peter Borgdorff serves as a member of the executive committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), and Dr. William T. Koopmans serves as an adviser.
6. Dr. Steven Timmermans serves as the CRCNA's representative to the Global Christian Forum (GCF). Dr. Peter Borgdorff serves as a member of the North American Foundation of the GCF.
7. Dr. Peter Borgdorff serves as a member of the board of Sojourners.
8. Dr. James Payton serves as the ecumenical representative on the RCA's Commission for Christian Unity.
9. Dr. Matthew Lundberg serves as the representative on a commission of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A.

10. Dr. John Choi, Dr. Ronald Feenstra, and Dr. Susan Rozeboom serve as representatives of the CRC in its participation in the United States Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue.

V. Multilateral relationships – ecumenical organizations

A. *World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)*

The WCRC as a global ecumenical organization is composed of 230 denominations, all of which have roots in the Reformed tradition and subscribe to the historic Reformed confessions. Together these denominations have a membership of more than 80 million people. With offices in Hanover, Germany, the WCRC is dedicated to building “communion” and relationships among its member churches and to bearing witness to and for those in the world who suffer from all forms of oppression. The latter is summarized and designated in a “commitment to justice” that is deeply rooted in our biblical understanding of what it means to be God’s agents of mercy in his world. While the theological span of the WCRC member-churches is broad—and the cultural influences in the organization are very diverse—it is a privilege for the CRC to be engaged in such a global expression of the body of Christ.

Dr. Setri Nyomi completed his service as the general secretary of WCRC and has moved back to his native country of Ghana. Rev. Chris Ferguson was elected to be the general secretary of WCRC, and he began his tenure on September 1, 2014.

B. *Evangelical Fellowship of Canada*

The CRC in Canada is a member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). The EFC is a national association of evangelical Christians in Canada and offers a constructive voice for biblical principles in life and society. The EFC focuses on bringing evangelical Christians together for greater impact in mission, ministry, and witness. It does so by working closely together for ministry empowerment and by working cooperatively to address the government and the courts on current issues of interest and concern.

C. *Canadian Council of Churches*

The CRC in Canada is also a member of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), the largest ecumenical organization in Canada. The CCC works primarily through its Commissions on Faith and Witness and on Justice and Peace. The CRC has representation on both commissions, and the CRC representatives make the CRC’s voice heard in matters relating to ecumenical relations and to broad concerns within our culture and world. The EIRC has appointed a number of CRC members to be our denomination’s representatives on a variety of commissions and committees of the CCC.

D. *KAIROS – Canadian ecumenical justice initiatives*

While this is not officially classified as an “ecumenical” organization, it functions as one. KAIROS is dedicated to promoting human rights, justice and peace, viable human development, and solidarity. The CRC’s participation is currently funded through the Canadian Ministries Office. Together the members of KAIROS focus on the continuation of Christ’s ministry and mission in the world.

E. *National Association of Evangelicals (USA)*

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) meets twice each year. During these meetings representatives of evangelical denominations, ministries, and congregations discuss matters of common interest and concern. In addition to these membership meetings, the CRC cooperates with the NAE in various commissions and current public policy discussions such as immigration reform and the incarceration of prisoners.

F. *Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. and the Global Christian Forum*

Since fall 2001, church leaders from a wide spectrum of ecclesiastical traditions have been meeting to discuss and create a new kind of ecumenical organization that includes participants from all Christian traditions at the same table: Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT-USA). The present participants in CCT-USA represent five families of churches as follows: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Historic Protestant, Evangelicals/Pentecostals, and Historic Ethnic.

The global expression of this same ecumenical configuration, with perhaps even more diverse participation, is the Global Christian Forum (GCF). Both CCT-USA and the GCF represent an emerging trend in ecumenical formation. Because we live in a global village today and this world needs a more unified Christian witness, these expressions make for an exciting frontier in ecumenical engagement.

VI. **Bilateral relationships**

Relationships with other denominations are an important part of the CRC's witness in and to the body of Jesus Christ. The CRC is in regular contact with many denominations by means of their representatives who gather at a variety of ecumenical events throughout the year. Partnerships and ministry alliances of various kinds allow the CRC to be a participant—and to exercise its voice—in meaningful ways. Continuing contact and consistent interaction make these relationships meaningful and effective.

From time to time, new relationships are suggested and formed. Such developments flow through several stages before a proposal is presented to synod for approval. Synod 2014 approved a formal relationship with the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO) in the United States and with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Egypt (Synod of the Nile). Synod 2014 also approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. Synod 2015 will not be requested to add churches in *ecclesiastical fellowship*, but synod will be asked to add two denominations to the category of *churches in dialogue*. The details of these two denominations are described below.

A. *United Reformed Church in the Congo*

The United Reformed Church in the Congo (URCC) is a denomination of 178 congregations and some 16,000 members with only 22 ordained ministers. The development of this denomination emerged as a result of the French-speaking ministry of Back to God Ministries International. Rev. Kabongo Kalala Malebongo, who serves as the URCC's ecumenical officer, expressed the desire of this church for recognition and fellowship with the CRC. The EIRC recommends that Synod 2015 approve the designation of

the United Reformed Church in the Congo as a church in dialogue with the CRC.

B. Sudanese Reformed Churches

Christian Reformed World Missions has had an extensive relationship with the Sudanese Reformed Churches. Their general secretary, Rev. Patrick Jok Ding Wic, expressed their desire (with the encouragement of our World Missions staff) to be in greater fellowship with the CRC. The EIRC recommends that Synod 2015 approve the designation of the Sudanese Reformed Churches as a church in dialogue with the CRC.

VII. The United States Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue

The Christian Reformed Church is a participant in the United States Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue. Dr. Susan Rozeboom, Dr. Ronald Feenstra, and Dr. Peter Choi are the appointed representatives. The approval (by Synod 2011) of the Common Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Baptism has now led to the next round of dialogue on issues that are ecclesiological in scope. It is expected that this next round will likely be completed in 2016.

VIII. Interfaith dialogue

Interfaith dialogue is a relatively new responsibility for the EIRC, and care continues to be taken to differentiate interfaith dialogue from ecumenical engagement. EIRC member Dr. James Payton serves on the National Muslim-Christian Liaison Committee of Canada. The committee recently consulted with Rev. Greg Sinclair to specifically focus on Christian-Muslim conversation and relationships. On the whole, it is fair to say that the EIRC is in the process of becoming more engaged in the field of interfaith dialogue. The EIRC has made some resources available to assist congregations and/or individuals engaged in interfaith dialogue. These resources can be found by visiting www.crcna.org/EIRC.

Further reflection on the interfaith dialogue mandate has brought several matters to the EIRC's attention. First, in following through on the decision of Synod 2010 concerning interfaith matters, the EIRC adopted the following rationale for organizing the task at hand. *Note:* The following references are based on the Interfaith Dialogue report in the *Agenda for Synod 2010*, pp. 448-49.

A. Introduction

Synod 2009 defined the goal of interfaith dialogue to foster better understanding between persons of different faiths, contrasting this purpose with evangelism: "While the Christian church should never lose its confession that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and should joyfully proclaim that there is no other name given under heaven by which people may be saved, interfaith dialogue must not be a pretext for evangelism. . . . However, it is hoped that when people of other faiths have an accurate understanding of Christian teachings and values and get to know Christian people, they will be intrigued by the Christian worldview and testimony and begin a journey that leads to true reconciliation with God."

In this light, synod provided an interfaith expansion to the EIRC mandate while instructing that the interfaith mandate “should be maintained as a document distinct from the Ecumenical Charter.”

B. Mandate

Therefore, the interfaith mandate component of the EIRC’s work is separate and distinct, requiring a subcommittee of the EIRC to pursue the following four responsibilities provided by Synod 2010:

1. Compile resources for the CRC that will guide interfaith encounters.
2. Monitor and facilitate the interfaith encounters that come through ecumenical activities and within the context of the ministries of the CRC.
3. Provide advice and perspectives for the CRC as requested.
4. When appropriate and opportune, represent the CRC in interfaith dialogues.

C. Protocol

The EIRC shall ensure that it maintains a standing subcommittee of at least four persons (one or more members of the EIRC and two non-EIRC members, one of whom shall be administrative staff) that pursues the mandate and reports to the EIRC at each meeting on its activities and accomplishments.

D. Interfaith dialogue and the RCA

Another matter under discussion is whether it would make sense, in the spirit of the CRC/RCA resolution adopted by both synods in 2014, to engage in interfaith dialogue jointly with a committee of the RCA. In other words, perhaps the EIRC should form a partnership with the RCA’s Commission on Christian Unity to proceed together in further addressing interfaith matters and discussions. At the time of this writing the RCA is also in the process of formalizing a mandate for their interfaith address. It is anticipated that the committee of each denomination will work out a cooperation agreement at an early date.

IX. Ecumenical Faith Declaration

Synod 2012 adopted the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration (EFD). Synod 2013 followed up that decision by providing further guidance to the EIRC (see *Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 573):

- Synod noted the observations provided by the EIRC (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, Appendix A, pp. 225-28) and the criteria contained in it and referred them back to the EIRC “for further discussion within the CRC and with our ecumenical partners before resubmitting the observations and criteria to synod.”
- Synod encouraged the executive director and the EIRC to “explore options for discussing the concept of and criteria for Ecumenical Faith Declarations with our ecumenical partners.”
- Synod gave as its ground that “many of our ecumenical partners have already expressed interest to the EIRC in the concept of Ecumenical Faith Declarations, and it’s important that the CRC continue this discussion with them.”

In the light of synod's decision, the EIRC has continued to consider what an EFD really is. Synod 2012 did not define the category, and it seemed best to the EIRC (as well as to Synod 2013) that the definition of an EFD should be developed in consultation with ecumenical partners. Following the EIRC's initial communications with selected partners, it was decided that a general conference should be held to engage in an in-depth discussion, not only about the merits of an EFD category but also about the meaning of confessions in the life of churches today. Much to the committee's surprise, nearly fifty persons registered for the event that we hosted in Grand Rapids in February 2014. The conference was endorsed and cosponsored by the WCRC, and a broad range of representatives attended from more than a dozen countries around the world. The preliminary definition of an EFD that the EIRC had developed served as the foundational document of the conference. As reported to Synod 2014, the category of Ecumenical Faith Declarations did not find favor with the conferees, nor, by inference at least, with our ecumenical partners.

The EIRC (at the time of this writing) has not completed its consideration of what to propose to synod concerning this matter. The lack of endorsement by the conferees does not, by itself, dictate our course of action. At the same time, it seems questionable to proceed with the creation of an Ecumenical Faith Declaration category when there is little or no support in the ecumenical community for naming it as such. It is possible that the EIRC will formulate a recommendation concerning this matter by way of its supplementary report to synod.

X. Churches in ecclesiastical fellowship and ecumenical visitors at synod

A. Ecumenical visitors

The CRC maintains a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with a wide range of Reformed denominations. A complete list of such churches is attached in the Appendix. Some churches are in a less formal relationship with the CRC; however, those relationships are no less important than others. In addition, the CRC participates in a number of multilateral associations. An exchange of ecumenical delegates at meetings of the broader assemblies is a common occurrence, usually on a rotating schedule, and Synod 2015 will again share in that experience. Several churches and ecumenical organizations have been invited to attend but, at the time of this writing, it is not yet known which ones will actually send representatives.

B. Reformed Church in America—cooperative efforts

The CRC's relationship with the Reformed Church in America (RCA) deserves synod's special mention. Not only do we share a common heritage—a fact that makes the RCA one of our closest ecumenical partners—but the RCA and the CRC also cooperate and collaborate in a variety of ministries and support services. Until now, these cooperative ventures have arisen and have been implemented on an ad hoc basis. The respective synods have on several occasions encouraged cooperation and joint ministry projects when feasible. These cooperative ventures have been multiplied many times over. Such multiplication is, as may be expected, accompanied by complexities to which both denominations are adapting. The executive director of the CRCNA and the general secretary of the RCA have appointed a collaboration

team that will exercise general oversight for the cooperative ventures. This arrangement is judged to provide an improved administrative oversight rather than relying on the emergence of ad hoc agreements at various levels in both denominations. In addition, Dr. James Payton, who also serves as a member of the CRC's Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, serves as the ecumenical representative on the Commission for Christian Unity of the Reformed Church in America. Finally, as indicated above (VIII, D), explorations are currently under way to see whether our two denominations can best engage in interfaith dialogue together.

The synods of both denominations adopted a resolution in 2014 that commits us to further cooperative ventures in the future. In fact, the resolution declares that we will cooperate in every way unless some essential principle prevents us from doing so in a particular case. Because of the significance of the adopted resolution, it is included below—not for a decision by Synod 2015 but, rather, as a reminder of what Synod 2014 decided.

The adopted resolution is preceded by an introduction that, for the purposes of synod's information, is included with the Joint Resolution. Synod 2014 adopted the resolution as a testimony that, overriding all of our historical differences and divergent practices, the CRC and RCA truly are "one in the Spirit, . . . one in the Lord."

**An Introduction to the Joint Resolution
adopted in joint session by
the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America
and
the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America
Pella, Iowa, June 14, 2014**

Background

The Reformed Church in America (RCA) traces its roots to the early part of the 17th century, when it was formed by Dutch immigrants who settled New Amsterdam (now New York City) and migrated up the Hudson River valley and westward into New Jersey. The spiritual heritage of the RCA traces back to the Reformed churches in the Netherlands established in the previous century as the Protestant Reformation made its way through the Low Countries of Europe. By forming themselves into a denomination so early in the history of the United States, the RCA is the oldest Protestant church in the country with a continuing ministry.

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) traces its roots to the middle of the 19th century when yet another wave of Dutch immigrants reached the shores of the United States. Many of these new arrivals moved inland to Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The spiritual heritage of the CRC is similarly traced to the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. Upon their initial arrival in the 1840s, these immigrants were significantly assisted and welcomed by representatives of the RCA. The common heritage of faith seemed at first to be a natural bonding reality even though the early settlers had been in the process of Americanization for more than 200 years.

Nevertheless, the assistance provided by the RCA at that time was substantial and significant.

It seemed at first that the new arrivals from the same family of faith would and should be assimilated into the life and polity of the RCA. For a variety of reasons, differences of opinion emerged, perhaps magnified by distance, which eventually led to the formation of the CRC in 1857. Some designate that development as a split, others designate it as a recognition that the cultural gap between the 17th-century and 19th-century immigrants was simply too great and their experiences too varied to be readily formed into one denomination. For more than one hundred years, the two denominations then followed independent paths and, for the most part, acknowledged each other's existence but had little contact and viewed each other with some measure of suspicion.

Climate Change

What a difference a century makes. The process of Americanization to which all are subject, the common experience of two World Wars, the urbanization of North America, the secularization process in both society and in the lives of church members, as well as many other factors, combined to move both the RCA and the CRC closer together in common experiences. The two churches from the beginning shared a history of faith, theology, confessional grounding, and cultural similarities. On the surface it would seem that, even as separate denominations, we should be able to find a way to cooperate. The climate began to change with early signals in the 1950s—more formally recognized in the 1970s—with continued development to the present day. The contributing factors were many—such as intermarriage, relationships between neighboring congregations, growing fraternal relations among denominational staff persons, formal ecumenical relations, similar viewpoints on social and political issues, and the like. Beginning in the latter part of the 20th century and into the 21st century, a much deeper connection has developed due to increasing mutual appreciation, common involvement in mission, shared partnerships in a number of areas, a growing awareness that what is common in our heritage is greater than our individual differences, and, even more important than any of the preceding factors, a conviction that Christ calls us to a unity that is more basic than the sum of our differences. On several occasions, the synods of both the CRC and the RCA have recognized this biblical perspective and have encouraged greater cooperation and mutual recognition of our common history and ministries. However, such encouragement has been without specificity until the Orderly Exchange of Ministers was adopted in 2005.

The Here and Now

Beginning with a formal agreement between Faith Alive Christian Resources and the RCA in December 2004, there presently are a number of cooperative ventures and partnerships involving various agencies, departments, and initiatives. A complete listing of current cooperative relationships is attached in Appendix E to the EIRC report.

However, despite these multiple cooperative ventures and relationships, no overarching statement has ever been adopted that might serve as a mutually supported agreement between the CRC and the RCA. It is judged that such a resolution could serve both churches well as we face the future. The agreement could serve as a reference point in the journey that longs for healing and reconciliation. It can also serve both as a boundary-setting clarification that this resolution is not intended to lay the groundwork for organic union but rather is a visionary agreement that together we desire to live by the “Lund Principle” (Faith and Order Commission – Lund Sweden, 1952) that commits both denominations to follow the principle that we will “act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel [us] to act separately.” To that end the following resolution is offered and proposed for adoption by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America and the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.



**Resolution on the Relationship
between the
Reformed Church in America
and the
Christian Reformed Church in North America:
Past, Present, and Future**

Presented to the General Synod of the RCA and the Synod of the CRC,
meeting in combined session in Pella, Iowa, June 14, 2014

The Past

Recognizing that the history of our two denominations, since 1857,
has been marked by division and often accompanied by mutual
mistrust, judgmental attitudes toward one another, and an
unholy distance in our fellowship; and

Acknowledging that our dispositions and actions toward one another
often have been marred by sin and have fallen short of the mutual love
and bonds of unity desired by God for the church of Jesus Christ; and

Realizing that the history of our broken relationship has caused
pain and suffering throughout generations within families and
between others divided by this separation, and has presented a
distorted witness within society;

Therefore, we encourage our churches to reflect on the costs of the lack
of faithfulness that have marked the history of separation between our
two denominations, and to prayerfully ask for the healing of memories
and wounds endured by many over the past 157 years.

The Present

Noting the significant growth in partnership and programmatic cooperation between our denominations especially in the past two decades, encompassing a wide range of activities from starting new churches to combining health insurance programs; and

Affirming our relationship of full communion, the exchangeability of Ministers of Word and Sacrament between our congregations, and examples of new congregations belonging jointly to both our denominations; and

Welcoming the growth of trust and the greater effectiveness of ministry that has been the frequent result of our growing cooperation together;

Therefore, we celebrate the new realities being created through expanding initiatives of partnership between the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and we give thanks to God for all those situations in which we are now working together for the sake of God's kingdom.

The Future

Believing that participation in God's mission calls all followers of Christ to deepen bonds of unity and to strengthen our common witness; and

Desiring to obey the persistent biblical call to seek the unity of Christ's body and the reconciliation of relationships with one another, even while we acknowledge long-standing differences remaining between us; and

Understanding that this particular relationship is part of the broader ecumenical journey which beckons us to make more manifest our unity in Christ, which is both God's gift and our obligation;

Therefore, as the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America and the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, we declare that the principle that guides us, and the intention that motivates us, is to "act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel [us] to act separately"; and, further,

We jointly instruct the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church and the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America, in looking to the future relationship between our two denominations, to be guided by this principle.

C. New initiatives

In the spirit of the CRC's Ecumenical Charter, Synod 2014 requested that the EIRC initiate exploratory conversations with churches with which the CRC had an ecclesiastical relationship in the past (e.g., The Presbyterian Church in America, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and others). Initial contact has been established and further conversation is anticipated. It has been seventeen years since some of these relationships were severed. Synod 2014 encouraged that similar conversations be initiated with churches that

separated from the CRC to form another denomination. No formal connection has yet been established with representatives of these churches; however, the encouragement of Synod 2014 will continue to be pursued by the EIRC.

XI. 500th anniversary of the Reformation and 400th anniversary of the Canons of Dort

While planning for the observance of these anniversaries is not the responsibility of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, the events themselves have a significant impact on the ecumenical world as a whole. Observances are being planned in many different venues and by many different organizations. Not surprisingly, Lutheran churches are taking the lead relative to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, sparked by Martin Luther's posting of Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. Observance of the 400th year anniversary of the Synod of Dort (1618-19) is more likely to occur within churches of the Reformed tradition as the year 2018 approaches. The historical committees of both the CRC and the RCA are planning for an appropriate observance of the adoption of the Canons of Dort (formally titled *The Decision of the Synod of Dort on the Five Main Points of Doctrine in Dispute in the Netherlands*).

XII. Recommendations

- A. That Dr. Shirley Roels (chairperson), Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, and Dr. Peter Borgdorff be given the privilege of the floor when matters relating to the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee are being discussed.
- B. That synod express its gratitude to Dr. Roels for serving the cause of ecumenicity for the CRC.
- C. That synod by way of the ballot appoint Rev. Kathleen Smith to serve on the EIRC for a term of three years, effective July 1, 2015.
- D. That synod approve the reappointment of Rev. Karen Norris, Dr. James Payton, and Dr. Robert Sweetman to a second three-year term.
- E. That synod designate the United Reformed Church in the Congo as a church in dialogue with the CRC.
- F. That synod designate the Sudanese Reformed Churches as a church in dialogue with the CRC.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee
Peter Borgdorff, ecumenical officer
Shirley Roels, chairperson
Steven R. Timmermans, ecumenical officer

Appendix

Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, Formal Dialogue, and Other Ecumenical Relationships

I. Provisions of ecclesiastical fellowship

- A. Encourage joint action in Christian endeavors, where possible, and a common Christian witness to the world.
- B. Explore whether the unity we share with such churches may include various forms of organizational expression. The shape of such organizational unity should be determined in keeping with prudence and such circumstances as language, distance, and nonessential differences in formal standards and practices.
- C. Exchange fraternal delegates at major assemblies.
- D. Engage in pulpit and table fellowship.
- E. Exercise mutual concern and encouragement with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.
- F. Communicate on major issues of common concern.
- G. Remain abreast of current developments to assure that such fellowship continues to grow in vibrancy.

Degrees of ecclesiastical fellowship may involve fewer than all seven elements. At present the Christian Reformed Church is in full fellowship with the churches listed below, unless otherwise indicated.

II. Churches in ecclesiastical fellowship

Following is a list of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, referencing the year in which such fellowship was established.

A. *Africa*

1. Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) (1974)
2. Universal Reformed Christian Church (URCC) (1974)
(formerly Church of Christ in the Sudan Among the Tiv)
3. Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) (1983)
(Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika)
4. Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC) (2001)
(Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika)
5. Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Egypt (Synod of the Nile) (2014)
6. Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) (1982)
7. Reformed Churches in South Africa (1974)
(Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika)
8. Reformed Churches in South Africa (Synod Soutpansberg) (1989)
9. Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (2003)
10. Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) (1982)
(Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider Afrika)

B. *Asia, Australia, and Indonesia*

1. Christian Church of Sumba (Indonesia) (1974)
(Gereja Kristen Sumba)
2. Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines (1997)
3. Christian Reformed Church of Myanmar (2011)
4. Christian Reformed Church of Sri Lanka (1974)

5. Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) (1974)
 6. Reformed Church in Japan (RCJ) (1974)
- C. *Europe*
1. Netherlands Reformed Churches (NRC) (1982)
(Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken)
 2. Protestant Church in the Netherlands (via Memorandum of Understanding) (2014)
- D. *North America*
1. Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO) (2014)
 2. Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) (1986)
 3. Reformed Church in America (RCA) (1976)
- E. *Latin America*
- Christian Reformed Church in Cuba (2001)
(La Iglesia Cristiana Reformada en Cuba)
- F. *South America*
1. Evangelical Reformed Church in Brazil (1974)
(Ireja Evangelica Reformada no Brasil)
 2. Reformed Churches in Argentina (1974)
(Iglesias Reformadas en le Argentina)

III. Churches in formal dialogue

It is synod's prerogative to decide with which denominations the CRC will maintain ecclesiastical fellowship, and with which denominations the CRC will be in *formal dialogue*. Following is a list of churches currently in *formal dialogue* with the CRC:

- A. Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa (Uganda)
- B. Christian Reformed Church of Haiti
- C. Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Nkhoma Synod) – Malawi
- D. Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
- E. Evangelical Reformed Church of Burundi
- F. Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC)
- G. Reformed Church in Zambia
- H. Reformed Church of East Africa (Kenya)

IV. Ecumenical organizations

- A. Canadian Council of Churches
- B. Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.
- C. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
- D. Global Christian Forum
- E. National Association of Evangelicals
- F. World Communion of Reformed Churches

V. Churches in other ecumenical relationship

- A. Mennonite Church Canada
- B. Pentecostal Church in Uganda
- C. Presbyterian Church of India – Mizoram Synod

I. Introduction

The Historical Committee is a standing committee of the Christian Reformed Church established by Synod 1934 to oversee the work of the denominational archives and promote publication of denominationally related historical studies. The committee's members are Dr. Lyle Bierma, chair (2017, second term); Dr. Paul Bremer (2016, first term); Dr. Kristin Kobes Du Mez (2016, first term); Dr. Robert Schoone-Jongen (2015, first term); and Dr. Richard H. Harms (ex officio), secretary.

II. Archives staff

Dr. Richard Harms, curator of the archives, which are housed in Heritage Hall at Calvin College, also serves as archivist for the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin College. Other staff include Ms. Hendrina Van Spronsen, office manager; Ms. Laurie Haan, departmental assistant; Ms. Lisa Anderson, department assistant; Dr. Robert Bolt, field agent and assistant archivist; and Ms. Anna Kathryn Feltes, student assistant. They are assisted by volunteers Mr. Phil Erffmeyer, Mr. Ed Gerritsen, Mr. Ralph Haan, Ms. Helen Meulink, Ms. Clarice Newhof, Rev. Gerrit Sheeres, Ms. Janet Sheeres, Ms. Jeannette Smith, and Mr. Ralph Veenstra.

III. Archival work during 2014

We processed and opened for research thirteen additional cubic feet of the research files of Dr. Quentin Schulze, professor of communication arts and sciences at Calvin College and holder of the Arthur H. DeKruyter Chair, which detail Schultze's work on the Bible and communications and St. Augustine and communications; and the thirty-one cubic feet of correspondence from Dr. Alvin Plantinga, the John A. O'Brien professor of philosophy and director of the Center for Philosophy of Religion emeritus at Notre Dame, which provides insight into Christian philosophy during the last three decades of the twentieth century. We also opened the papers of professor of mathematics emeritus Jack Kuipers, renowned scholar of quaternions, a number system defined as the quotient of two vectors in three dimensional space, used on guidance systems as well as virtual reality software; the papers of Dr. Fred Klooster (d. 2003), professor of theology emeritus at Calvin Theological Seminary, focusing on his lifelong work on the Heidelberg Catechism; the teaching and research papers of Dr. Irene Brouwer Konyndyk, professor emerita of French at Calvin College; the papers of Dr. Timothy M. Monsma, missionary, scholar, and pastor, from his twelve years working in Nigeria beginning in 1962; and the papers of Dr. Janel M. Curry, currently provost at Gordon College and previously professor of geography at Calvin College and holder of the Byker Chair in Christian perspectives on political, social, and economic thought.

The records from the following discontinued congregations were received and organized: Good Shepherd CRC of Flushing, Michigan; Crookston (Minnesota) CRC; First CRC (1867-2013) of Muskegon, Michigan; Immanuel CRC (1887-1974) of Muskegon, Michigan; Central Coast CRC (1982-1996) of Arroyo Grande, California; and Maranatha CRC of St. Catharines, Ontario. We also processed records of the CRC's Faith Formation Committee

(2007-2009) and of the council of the CRC in Canada (1971-2003) and seven additional cubic feet of the records of Christian Reformed World Missions.

Finally, we added to the Robert Swierenga papers newly received material consisting primarily of his research files for his Elim Christian School project. The family of Dr. Leonard Sweetman, professor of religion emeritus at Calvin College, also donated an addition to his papers.

We received the journals of Dr. Glenn W. Geelhoed, surgeon and educator who has led more than two hundred health care missions to the developing world, including Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, and South America. He was named Humanitarian of the Year by *George* magazine in 2000, and he received the American College of Surgeons' Volunteerism Award for International Outreach in 2009. Christian Reformed Home Missions transferred 12.5 cubic feet of files dealing with their outreach work from 1962 through 1980. With the installation of a new provost at Calvin College, we received eight cubic feet of records (2005-2012) from that office. Another eight cubic feet (2008-2013) came from the college President's office. When the college's vice president for student life resigned, we received fifty-two cubic feet (1994-2012) from that office. The records of the Kalamazoo Diaconal Conference (1985-1989) and those of the Christian Reformed Church's InterChurch Relations Committee (1988-1989) were accepted. The initial transfer of records from West Park CRC of Cleveland, Ohio, a discontinued CRC congregation, was delivered as well.

IV. Publications

We continue publishing the semiannual paper copies of *Origins*. *Origins*, which is self-funded, also contributed some financial support for the publication of *Minutes of the Christian Reformed Church: 1857-1880*, extensively annotated by Janet Sjaarda Sheeres, transcribed from the handwritten Dutch by Hendrick K. Harms, and translated by Richard H. Harms—co-published with the RCA Historical Series (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, ISBN 978-0-8028-7253-1). We have electronically published another year of *Origins* (2011) via our webpage (www.calvin.edu/hh/origins/Origins_Main_Page.htm).

V. Recognition

A. The committee acknowledges the following individuals who will celebrate significant anniversaries during 2015 and 2016.

1. The committee acknowledges the following individuals who have served a combined 4,936 years in ordained ministry and will celebrate significant anniversaries during 2015:

74 years, 1941-2015	Gysbert J. Rozenboom
70 years, 1945-2015	George D. Vanderhill James W. Van Weelden
68 years, 1947-2015	Clarence Van Ens
67 years, 1948-2015	Carl G. Kromminga, Sr. Howard B. Spaan

66 years, 1949-2015	Albert J. Vanden Pol
65 years, 1950-2015	Lugene A. Bazuin Martin D. Geleynse Dick C. Los Lammert Slofstra
64 years, 1951-2015	Gerard Bouma Leonard J. Hofman Jacob Kuntz MyungJae Lee John T. Malestein Leonard Sweetman Clarence J. Vos Wilmer R. Witte
63 years, 1952-2015	Ralph D. Baker John M. Hofman Herman Leestma Chester M. Schemper Richard D. Sytsma Rits Tadema Samuel Vander Jagt Benjamin Ypma
62 years, 1953-2015	Harry G. Arnold Peter W. Brouwer William A. Huyser Bassam M. Madany Bernard J. Niemeyer Kenneth R. Slager John W. Van Stempvoort Theodore Verseput
61 years, 1954-2015	Alan A. Arkema Louis F. Baker Paul E. Bakker Marvin Beelen Ralph W. Bronkema Floyd R. De Boer Earl D. Dykema John L. Meppelink Neal Punt Sidney H. Rooy Martin Stegink Anthonie Vanden Ende
60 years, 1955-2015	Andrew J. Bandstra Winston C. Boelkins Rodger J. Buining John Bylsma Ike Chang Michiel M. De Berdt

Bert Den Herder
John Hofman
Earl C. Marlink
Jack J. Matheis
Jan D. Pereboom
Carl J. Reitsma
John C. Rickers
Gerard Ringnalda
William Kenneth Stob
Jacob W. Uitvlugt
Wilbert M. Van Dyk

55 years, 1960-2015

Alfred E. Mulder
Joel H. Nederhood
John H. Primus
Raymond C. Swierenga
Frederick J. Van Dyk
Theodore Wevers

50 years, 1965-2015

Josué Abreu
David R. Armstrong
Harold Tinus De Jong
Henry Dykema
Harvey A. Kiekover
Harry Andrew Van Dam
Mike Vander Pol
John Van Hemert
Anthony Van Zanten
Henry Wildeboer
David G. Zandstra
John M. Zinkand

2. The following individuals will celebrate significant anniversaries during 2016. These ministers will have served a combined 4,280 years in ordained ministry.

75 years, 1941-2016

Gysbert J. Rozenboom

71 years, 1945-2016

George D. Vanderhill
James W. Van Weelden

69 years, 1947-2016

Clarence Van Ens

68 years, 1948-2016

Carl G. Kromminga Sr.
Howard B. Spaan

67 years, 1949-2016

Albert J. Vanden Pol

66 years, 1950-2016

Lugene A. Bazuin
Martin D. Geleyense
Dick C. Los
Lammert Slofstra

65 years, 1951-2016

Gerard Bouma
Leonard J. Hofman

	Jacob Kuntz MyungJae Lee John T. Malestein Leonard Sweetman Clarence J. Vos Wilmer R. Witte
64 years, 1952-2016	Ralph D. Baker John M. Hofman Herman Leestma Chester M. Schemper Richard D. Sytsma Rits Tadema Samuel Vander Jagt Benjamin Ypma
63 years, 1953-2016	Harry G. Arnold Peter W. Brouwer William A. Huyser Bassam M. Madany Bernard J. Niemeyer Kenneth R. Slager John W. Van Stempvoort Theodore Verseput
62 years, 1954-2016	Alan A. Arkema Louis F. Baker Paul E. Bakker Marvin Beelen Ralph W. Bronkema Floyd R. De Boer Earl D. Dykema John L. Meppelink Neal Punt Sidney H. Rooy Martin Stegink Anthonie Vanden Ende
61 years, 1955-2016	Andrew J. Bandstra Winston C. Boelkins Rodger J. Buining John Bylsma Ike Chang Michiel M. De Berdt Bert Den Herder John Hofman Earl C. Marlink Jack J. Matheis Jan D. Pereboom Carl J. Reitsma John C. Rickers Gerard Ringnalda

	William Kenneth Stob Jacob W. Uitvlugt Wilbert M. Van Dyk
60 years, 1956-2016	Harold Bode Theodore L. Brouwer James A. Bultman John Cooper Sidney Cooper Henry M. De Rooy Milton R. Doornbos John T. Ebbers Norman E. Jones James R. Kok Edson T. Lewis, Jr. Calvin W. Niewenhuis Jacob A. Quartel Clarence Van Essen John G. Van Ryn
55 years, 1961-2016	Alvin Beukema Barry B. Blankers John F. De Vries James C. De Young James M. Evenhouse John D. Hellinga David E. Holwerda Simon J. Kistemaker Gerrit Koedoot Harry Mennega Lester W. Van Essen Edwin Walhout Sierd J. Woudstra John Zantingh
50 years, 1966-2016	Robert Brummel Stanley J. Bultman David M. Doyle Richard Duifhuis John H. Engbers Peter C. Hogeterp Donald J. Klompeen Anthony L. Louwerse Galen H. Meyer John S. Meyer Ronald J. Noorman Arthur J. Schoonveld Nicholas Vander Kwaak Calvin D. Vander Meyden Marvin Van Donselaar Gordon Van Enk

Kenneth J. Verhulst
Duane A. Visser
Robert L. Westenbroek
Homer J. Wigboldy
Henry Zwaanstra

B. We report the following anniversaries of ministries that will occur during 2015 and 2016:

1. In 2015

25th Anniversary 1990-2015	Austin, TX – Sunrise Community Church Hagersville, ON – Hagersville Community Kincheloe, MI – New Hope Community Mill Creek, WA – Mill Creek Community Tacoma, WA – Tacoma Wyckoff, NJ – Cedar Hill
50th Anniversary 1965-2015	Beaverton, OR – Oak Hills Brampton, ON – CrossPoint Chatham, ON – Grace Jenison, MI – Ridgewood Kalamazoo, MI – Northern Heights Mason City, IA – Rolling Acres Middleville, MI – Middleville Muskegon, MI – Calvin Omaha, NE – Prairie Lane South Holland, IL – Peace St. Joseph, MI – St. Joseph Strathroy, ON – Westmount Visalia, CA – First
75th Anniversary 1940-2015	Holland, MI – Montello Park Saginaw, MI – Community
100th Anniversary 1915-2015	Colton, SD – Faith Community Grand Rapids, MI – Creston Grand Rapids, MI – Neland Avenue Grandville, MI – Hope Ogilvie, MN – New Hope
125th Anniversary 1890-2015	Grand Rapids, MI – Oakdale Park Reeman, MI – Reeman Renville, MN – Emden Sioux Center, IA – First
150th Anniversary 1865-2015	Grand Haven, MI – First Holland, MI – Central Avenue Lafayette, IN – Lafayette South Holland, IL – First

2. In 2016

25th Anniversary 1991-2016	El Cerrito, CA – East Bay Korean Houston, TX – Peace Community Madison, WI – Geneva Campus McMinnville, OR – Sunrise Monterey Park, CA – Chinese Nepean, ON – Barrhaven Fellowship Rochester Hills, MI – Han-Bit Korean Surrey, BC – Hope Community Tacoma, WA – True Light
50th Anniversary 1966-2016	Big Rapids, MI – Ferris State University Campus Ministry Kalamazoo, MI – Bronco Campus Ministry Lake City, MI – Lake City New Brighton, MN – Faith Rapid City, SD – Hope South Windsor, CT – Avery Street Troy, MI – North Hills Vergennes, VT – Campaign Valley
75th Anniversary 1941-2016	Arcadia, CA – Hope International Cedar, IA – Christian Reformed Church of Cedar
100th Anniversary 1916-2016	Brooten, MN – Brooten Community Chandler, MN – Chandler
125th Anniversary 1891-2016	Kanawha, IA – Wright Parkersburg, IA – Parkersburg Rock Valley, IA – First
150th Anniversary 1866-2016	German Valley, IL – Grace Valley Holland, MI – Niekerk Pella, IA – First

VI. Reminders

We ask congregations that have observed anniversaries during 2014 or will observe anniversaries during 2015 to send copies of commemorative materials (booklets, historical sketches, video recordings, photographs, etc.) to the archives.

During 2014, official minutes of eighty-six Christian Reformed congregations and two Christian school organizations were received and microfilmed, and the copies were stored in our vault. As always, once filmed, originals were returned to the respective churches. Of the 954 active congregations, 769 (80.6%) have participated in the records microfilming efforts. The greater majority of those who have not participated have not yet been active for ten years.

Official minutes were received from the forty-seven classes in 2014. (*Note:* There are now 48 classes with the formation of a new Korean classis in fall 2015.) Anniversary materials were received from ten Christian Reformed churches. The following classes are to be commended for having had

minutes duplicated from each of their churches that are at least ten years old: Arizona, Eastern Canada, Grand Rapids East, Hamilton, Niagara, Thornapple Valley, and Zeeland. These seven classes are noteworthy for reaching this distinction year after year.

VII. Regional representatives

The Historical Committee has a representative in each classis who acts as a liaison between the committee and churches within that classis. During this past year, communications went to each of our representatives, thanking them for their services throughout 2014 and requesting that they continue to serve another year.

VIII. Meeting with the Historical Commission of the Reformed Church in America (RCA)

At the concurrent synods of the RCA and CRC in June 2014 in Pella, Iowa, the archivists of the RCA and CRC, Russell Gasero and Richard Harms, respectively, met and exchanged information about their programs. During their meeting, it was suggested that a joint meeting of the RCA's Historical Commission and the CRC's Historical Committee be held. On October 22, 2014, the RCA hosted such a meeting, and each group summarized its mandate and current projects. Both groups agreed to investigate the possibility of a joint commemoration of the Synod of Dort during 2018-2019. A representative for the RCA commission and CRC committee will be meeting to discuss this and will report back to a joint meeting of these two groups in 2015.

IX. Recommendations

- A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Dr. Richard H. Harms when matters pertaining to the committee mandate come before synod.
- B. That synod appoint Dr. Robert Schoone-Jongen to a second three-year term.
- C. That synod instruct all churches and classes to send duplicates (photocopies, faxes, or email attachments) of their constitutions and articles of incorporation to the archives. Copies can be sent to Archives, Calvin College, 1855 Knollcrest Circle SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4402; or by fax: 616 526-7689; or by email: crcarchives@calvin.edu.
- D. That synod encourage the 40 classes whose 175 member churches more than ten years old have not had their minutes duplicated to contact the archives to have this done.

Historical Committee
Lyle Bierma, chair
Paul Bremer
Kristin Kobes Du Mez
Richard H. Harms (ex officio), secretary
Robert Schoone-Jongen

I. Brief overview

In previous reports to synod, the Reading Services Committee has brought to synod's attention our ongoing conversation about the long-term viability of this ministry. Although research indicates that there is traffic on our website (available on the denominational website at www.crcna.org under "Resources") we questioned whether the sermons were being used for reading sermons in vacant churches—the reason the committee was established in the first place.

We also noted that it has been difficult finding ministers willing to submit written manuscripts that are generic enough to be used in the wider denomination and that are at least 2,000 words in length as required by the committee's guidelines. (The sermon length requirement of 2,500 words dropped to 2,000 words in 2014.) Is this ministry still worth the time, money, and effort it takes when plenty of other Reformed sermon resources are also available—especially on the Internet—within the CRC?

Last year an attempt was made on the floor of synod to disband the committee with thanks, but the chair ruled the motion premature. He was aware that our committee was planning to do a thorough study of our long-term viability.

This past winter our committee sent a survey to all the churches within the denomination to investigate the use of our resources. Response was minimal. Only 180 of the 1,103 CRC churches responded to the survey. We were unsure of what to make of the poor response. Are we to conclude that the churches who responded are the ones who have/would/hope to use our resources? Results from the survey itself were revealing. Although churches indicated that they use the committee's resources, the usage is rather minimal. Only 28 churches, for example, expect to use our sermons for reading services one to three times within the next three years; only seven churches expect to use them seven or more times.

We believe the time has come to conclude the ministry of the Sermons for Reading Services Committee. We are confident that there are other ways to serve our vacant churches with a more stewardly use of time and resources. We have already noted that plenty of other Reformed sermon resources are readily available—especially online.

We do not envision having to remove our existing sermon website currently maintained by Ministry Support Services (formerly Proservices). Certainly the existing sermons posted can serve our churches for the foreseeable future. Perhaps Calvin Theological Seminary (via its professors and students) and the Center for Excellence in Preaching can submit quality sermons to the website and/or make other helpful sermon resources available. Some churches have become intentional in developing local lay gifts for proclamation under the supervision of the elders as support for the preaching ministry especially in times of vacancy. We encourage this development.

II. Recommendations

A. That synod grant privilege of the floor to Rev. Kory L. Plockmeyer, member of the Sermons for Reading Services Committee, when the report is addressed.

B. That synod dissolve the Sermons for Reading Services Committee with thanks—effective immediately.

Grounds:

1. It is difficult to find ministers willing to submit manuscript sermons that meet the requirements of the ministry of the Sermons for Reading Services Committee.
2. Among vacant churches there is not enough usage of the committee's available sermons to warrant continuing this ministry.
3. There are other Reformed sermons available, especially online.
4. This change will encourage churches to develop lay gifts for proclamation to support the preaching ministry of the church, especially in times of vacancy.

C. That synod request that Ministry Support Services maintain the Sermons for Reading Services website for the foreseeable future and encourage vacant churches to make use of its resources.

D. That synod request Calvin Theological Seminary and the Center for Excellence in Preaching to submit quality sermons to the website and/or make other sermon resources available to the churches.

Sermons for Reading Services Committee
Kenneth F. Benjamins, chair/secretary
John H. Noordhof
Kory L. Plockmeyer
Colin Vander Ploeg

DENOMINATIONALLY RELATED AGENCIES

Thank you for allowing us to share with you some of the highlights of the past year at Dordt College. We value deeply the support of churches across the denomination as we try to provide students with the insights they need to live as Christians in their vocations and daily lives in today's world.

We are thankful for continuing growth in enrollment that allows us to offer and build strong programs serving the wide variety of needs and interests among our students. Last fall's enrollment was again a record high—our total number was 1,459, up 29 students from the previous year. The number of graduate students rose slightly; numbers of international students remained about the same; and numbers of Canadian students decreased slightly.

Probably the most exciting part of the year was the opening of the newly expanded Center for Science and Technology. The design and construction were based on the conviction that theoretical insights must be modeled in responsible service through research, design, pedagogy, and leadership opportunities if they are to affect how science and technology drive our world. The new facilities are stewardly and forward looking. They are also beautiful and full of light. Fundraising has begun for the completion phase, during which the original science building will be completely renovated.

The new building comes at a time when research opportunities and support for students and faculty are growing. Public information from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health shows that Dordt College received the most federal grant funding of any private college in Iowa over the past three years (2012-2014). Thanks to federal grants as well as alumni donations, 2014 marked the third straight year of increases in the number of Dordt students involved in summer and academic-year research projects along with their professors.

Dordt's Andreas Center launched a new online magazine this year, *in all things*, which offers an opportunity for Christians from a variety of places and backgrounds to reflect thoughtfully together on the conviction that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ have implications for our whole lives and for the entire world. The magazine aims to help readers think together about how to live beside people with different viewpoints. Check it out at inallthings.org.

Dordt remains committed to supporting the church and its work not only by preparing students to live as Christians in contemporary society but also by offering opportunities for church leaders and members to grow. Last fall we sponsored a series of worship workshops and a conference on youth ministry as cultural engagement in which speakers and attendees asked how we can minister to young people in a way that addresses their experiences. In February at our annual Day of Encouragement, Dordt alumnus, author, and Western Theological Seminary professor Chuck De Groat spoke about overcoming the fatigue we all experience at some point in our lives.

Thank you for your part in the work we do. We believe that together and with God's blessing our efforts will bring honor to God and renewal to our world.

Dordt College
Erik Hoekstra, president

The Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) was birthed by the Christian Reformed community nearly fifty years ago. We are looking forward to celebrating our Golden Jubilee in two years, by God's grace. This grace is demonstrated to us daily through the prayers and financial support of Christian Reformed congregations, families, and individuals, who continue as the major sustainers of our mission of teaching, research, and community service, along with support generously offered by Christians from other traditions. We cannot accomplish our mission without you.

We are, first and foremost, a graduate school. We are privileged to be able to award the degree of doctor of philosophy, the only Christian Reformed institution in North America (and the only Protestant school in Canada) that may do so. We hold this privilege in trust for the whole Reformed community and seek to honor our bonds with collegial institutions, especially through the Association of Reformed Colleges and Universities and the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education, and we continue to explore collaboration that will bind us even more closely. Indeed, our board has established a Partnering Committee for just this purpose, one of our three strategic priorities.

We currently have twenty-seven students enrolled in our programs—eight Ph.D. (plus several more who have "external status"), fourteen Master of Arts, and five Master of Worldview Studies. Nine of these are new students this year, and at the time of this writing we are reviewing what is once again a healthy cohort of applicants for 2015-16. We also serve students enrolling in single courses, particularly via distance education. The total number of registrations this year is 133, and we are offering twenty-five courses, an increase of almost 50 percent over last year. Part of this increase is possible because of the significant involvement of associate and adjunct faculty, an upward trend we anticipate continuing. Research goes hand in hand with teaching excellence and is central to the execution of our mission. Faculty are expected to contribute 40 percent of their time to this. Collectively, we published thirteen scholarly articles, presented eighteen academic papers, and completed one book manuscript.

ICS's Centre for Philosophy, Religion, and Social Ethics (CPRSE), our research center, has also become our primary vehicle for community outreach and service. We praise God for the remarkable opportunities given to us in this way. CPRSE, in partnership with the CRCNA and the Centre for Community Based Research, continues the Justice and Faith research project. This project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, has moved to the "connection" phase, in which we are engaging the Christian Reformed community in dialogue around this theme in new ways. For example, a one-act play titled *Just Faith?* premiered as our Art Talks! event on February 6 at the University of Toronto's Multifaith Centre and will be presented at community forums across Canada and hopefully also in the United States. Grant funding totaling \$37,200 flowed to the CRCNA Canadian ministries office to support personnel and related expenses. A summary of key informant interviews and a report on the congregational survey are available at www.icscanada.edu/cprse/justice-and-faith. We are hopeful of expanding our project into a national partnership investigating the contours of religious

citizenship, and we value your prayers for the success of our grant application for this venture.

Faculty also made nine presentations in church and community venues and published articles in magazines and on blogs. Students were also active participants in conferences, particularly on our Ground Motive blog (www.groundmotive.net/). A venture that has been warmly received in the broader community is *Changing to Stay the Same: Meditations on Faithfulness and the Witness of the Institute for Christian Studies*, a collection of fifty-two letters by Robert Sweetman to our support community, reorganized according to the liturgical seasons. This rich devotional text is also a window into ICS activities as we strive to remain faithful to our calling to be a Christian academic witness to the wider world.

Donations from our supporting community remained largely steady, though we do need to see an increase in major donors. Advancement is our second strategic priority, and our board has established a committee especially for this purpose, along with three regional task forces (U.S. and Eastern and Western Canada). We have been without a director of advancement for quite some time, and we have moved to rectify this deficiency (an advertisement having been placed in early 2015). We have decreased expenditure while seeking also to improve our revenue stream significantly. New ventures in hybrid forms of course delivery—online courses in conjunction with intensive residential schools—are one important way in which we hope to achieve this goal. Graduate education is expensive and is usually subsidised by undergraduate enrollments, even in institutions receiving public funds. We are limiting enrollment in our Ph.D. program for now to keep costs down, and we are promoting our M.W.S. program more vigorously, particularly online (our third priority). This promotion is directed to many in full-time employment who would like to engage in part-time study, particularly with a view to exploring more intentionally the relation between their faith and their professional responsibilities. We hope to expand such ventures, also as a way of serving the broader, “grass roots” Christian community effectively—something we did more of in the past, the lack of which diminishes our capacity to pursue our vision.

We pray that your deliberations during Synod 2015 will be fruitful in the service of God’s kingdom. We thank you for your support in the particular role we have been called to play in this kingdom.

Institute for Christian Studies
Doug Blomberg, president

Greetings from The King's University! Yes, you read that correctly—our name has been changed to *The King's University*! In July 2014 the Government of Alberta approved a change in our name from *university college* to *university*. This is a significant milestone in our 35-year history. We are delighted and thankful that the government has recognized us for what we are—a full-fledged university with all that this designation means. From humble beginnings in 1979 with just six professors and a few dozen students, we have grown to a reputable liberal arts and sciences institution with over 700 students, more than 4,500 alumni, award-winning professors who conduct significant research with the support of a variety of external funding, and some of the highest student satisfaction marks in Canada in independent surveys. This change validates and legitimizes what we have already been for some time. It also removes the brand confusion created by having *college* in our name after *university*. Further, it puts us on the same stage as other independent universities across Canada. As a community, we couldn't be more pleased—this will serve our students well.

Thanks to \$12 million in donations from four leading sponsors, the Leder School of Business at King's officially launched in September 2014. The initial gifts and pledges of support have allowed King's to expand business course offerings to include six new accounting and finance-related courses, as well as a new course called Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Business. The accounting and finance courses allow students pursuing their accounting designation to complete their studies at King's rather than finishing their degrees elsewhere. An additional faculty member has been hired, and possibilities for future expansion in the program may include professional and distance education, global learning experiences, student entrepreneurship, and corporate leader mentorship. For more information, please visit www.leder.ca.

As we celebrate our 35th anniversary, the King's community is currently in the process of developing a strategic plan for the next five years. King's is at an important place in its development as we define what our priorities will be and set the stage for our future. We give thanks to God for his blessings and look forward to sharing our plans with our supporting community.

This fall, King's enrolled 715 students to study and be a part of our community for the 2014-15 academic year—an increase of 21 students from last year and an all-time record high! It has been encouraging to see two consecutive years of enrollment growth. Increased investment in programs, such as the Leder School of Business and Community Engaged Research, enhanced student recruitment efforts, and continually developing student care programs have helped us recruit and retain more students than ever before in King's history. We are grateful to all of our supporting community for helping to make this a reality.

Over 500 people descended upon The King's University to celebrate Homecoming September 26-28, 2014. The festive weekend celebrated the 35th anniversary of the university and featured everything from alumni athletic games to a music alumni concert and an enormous carnival. On the Saturday night of Homecoming, more than 300 people filled the gym for the annual Community Banquet and Silent Auction. Many Homecoming

guests ended the weekend by joining in worship at Fellowship CRC the next morning.

As we enter a time of financial instability for the province of Alberta, we are budgeting very cautiously for the institution. We continue to use the resources we have been blessed with in the most efficient and effective manner possible. As we anticipate provincial government funding cuts to post-secondary institutions, we reflect on the magnitude and significance of the generous funding that we continue to receive from our supporting community. Thank you to all of the Christian Reformed churches for confirming the value of the work being done at King's by giving generously through ministry shares and other offerings. These gifts represent a significant part of our budget each year. Your commitment to our students and to King's mission to provide "university education that inspires and equips learners to bring renewal and reconciliation to every walk of life as followers of Jesus Christ, the Servant-King" is deeply appreciated. On behalf of the entire King's community, we would like to express our sincere gratitude.

May God bless your work on behalf of his church during Synod 2015.

The King's University

Melanie J. Humphreys, president

The 2014-2015 academic year has been a challenging one for Kuyper College—as well as a blessed one in many ways. The challenge came from a decrease in enrollment by about 20 students fewer than we had projected. To meet this challenge, we trimmed our annual budget and received help from donors to bridge the remaining gap. Other help has been enlisted to support phase one of our new distance education program. Thus, in the midst of challenge, we feel encouraged about the future of Kuyper.

This year has also been one in which we have sharpened our focus on how we may best position the college in light of our newest strategic plan: *Envisioning 2025*. In this planning we are discerning how recent moves or indications coming from the federal government and in the general environment of higher education may have an impact on Kuyper. Of particular note is our concern that financial aid access may be tied to the institution's stance on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender matters; overtures from the federal government to take over the role of accrediting colleges and universities; and the more recent declaration by President Obama that he would like to see free community college education provided to all citizens. The implications of these initiatives draw us to ask, "How will Kuyper College continue to carry out its mission and thrive as an institution if our biblical stance on moral issues would cause us to lose access to financial aid and to lose accreditation?" *Envisioning 2025* lays out the direction the college will take to respond well to such a challenge.

Internal and external challenges aside, the faculty and leadership of the college are highly motivated by the unique mission and programs of Kuyper. The college has a specialized niche in Christian higher education, focusing on ministry and service-related vocations. This emphasis guides the academic programs we offer, and it allows us to provide a deeper and richer educational experience for students called into these areas of kingdom service. Our intent is to strengthen these programs even further over the next several years. As we do so, we will be reaching out to the Christian Reformed Church to hear from you on how we may best support you with programs and graduates that would align well with the CRC's present needs and future goals.

Kuyper College is grateful for the support, guidance, and encouragement we have received from the Christian Reformed Church, and we recognize the valuable role you have had in our 76 years of service to the church. We ask for your continued strong support, for your wisdom, and for your prayers—for our sister institutions as well—as we strive to serve Christ and his church in a way that will reform and transform our culture in a God-glorifying way.

Kuyper College
Nicholas V. Kroeze, president

Greetings from Redeemer University College to the delegates to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. We pray that God will guide and bless you in your deliberations and that your work will be a blessing to Christ's body and his coming kingdom.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, God has blessed Redeemer richly, but we also have faced a significant challenge. Like most post-secondary education institutions in North America, Redeemer experienced an enrollment downturn: our fall semester enrollment count was 763 FTE students, down 12 percent from 867 FTE in September 2013. Similar enrollment declines were experienced at many universities across Ontario, as well as at Council for Christian Colleges and Universities institutions—due in part to the decline in the university-age demographic and to students selecting specialized and career-focused training rather than liberal arts and sciences study.

To some extent Redeemer had anticipated reduced enrollment this year, but this downturn was even more than we had anticipated. Our reduced enrollment meant a revenue shortfall for this year of about \$1.5 million and required us to make some painful adjustments in planning future budgets to avoid growing deficits and debt.

Despite these challenges, Redeemer has been blessed in many ways. Thankfully, in July 2014, we adopted a renewed strategic plan titled "Redeemer 2020," that will help us to achieve Redeemer's mission in today's challenging post-secondary environment. This plan includes three broad strategies:

1. Enhancing our students' experience with new and expanded programs and co-curricular activities. Initiatives include a new Media and Communications program, an expanded (youth) ministry program, a Centre for Experiential Learning, and a Centre for Christian Scholarship focused on developing Christian scholarship that engages public life.
2. Developing our connections, partnerships, and profile to make Redeemer better known for its excellent and distinctive Christian learning and scholarship and to increase our contribution of a Christian perspective on public life in Canada.
3. Strengthening Redeemer's stewardship of resources to ensure its long-term financial health, especially by significantly reducing our debt.

We are deeply grateful that Redeemer's support community has joined us in these efforts and is providing resources to implement this plan. Already we have launched several initiatives:

- The Centre for Christian Scholarship, with plans for a major conference and for awarding a new "Emerging Public Intellectual Award" in fall 2015 (see <http://www.redeemerccs.ca/>).
- Planning for a Centre for Experiential Learning and Career Development to open in fall 2015.
- Launch of a new bachelor of arts major in media and communications beginning in fall 2015.
- Development of a revised, more fully integrated core program.

- The “Telling Our Story” project to upgrade our IT systems, including migration of our database from Unidata to SQL, and a new portal and website scheduled to “go live” in August 2015.
- Implementation of a revised strategic marketing and enrollment plan, including the creation of a new Marketing and Enrollment division with Dr. David Zietsma as vice president of marketing and enrollment.
- A growing national presence, including board members from both eastern and western Canada and new initiatives to strengthen our relations with alumni, parents, and churches.

In addition to these new initiatives, Redeemer welcomed new faculty: Dr. Sarah Reid-Yu in health science, and Dr. Joanne Nazir in teacher education. We also are aiming to fill tenure track faculty positions in business, history, media and communications, religion and theology (ministry focus), and social work.

Redeemer also continues to offer to our wider community a rich variety of special lectures, events, and performances on campus. The ARCU (Association of Reformed Colleges and Universities) lecture was presented by Dr. Craig Mattson, professor of communication arts at Trinity Christian College on January 21, 2015. The title of Dr. Mattson’s lecture was “Buying TOMS, Saving Soles? Christian Attention for Cause Marketing.” The World and Our Calling Lecture was presented by Dr. Reginald Bibby, sociology professor at the University of Lethbridge (“The Future of Religion in Canada: What’s Needed from Christian Leaders?”) on March 4, 2015. Dr. Bibby was also our guest speaker at our 28th annual Ministry Conference on March 3, 2015.

Despite current challenges, we are confident that the strategic efforts we are making will strengthen Redeemer’s impact and growth, and that God’s care and calling for Redeemer will continue to bear good fruit. We are grateful for the students whom God has brought to us and for the privilege we have of leading them into wise discipleship and service. We also are very grateful for the prayers and financial support we receive from the Christian Reformed community, including the ministry shares we receive from area Christian Reformed churches. This support is essential for our mission of providing Christian university education and Christian scholarship from a Reformed Christian perspective. We believe that a strong partnership between church and university is vital for helping our young adults develop in faithful and effective service to Christ’s kingdom.

May God bless the meeting of synod and the CRCNA’s efforts to faithfully nurture the body of Christ.

Redeemer University College
Hubert R. Krygsman, president

We offer our gratitude to former President Steve Timmermans, now executive director of the Christian Reformed Church, for eleven years of exceptional leadership at Trinity Christian College. By the time of Synod 2015, we hope to have named the next president of Trinity Christian College. I have been pleased to serve as interim president during academic year 2014-15. This experience has provided many opportunities to talk about our students, faculty, and graduates in ways that illustrate our mission. A summary of just a few of those stories follows.

Trinity students know that service is an integral part of the holistic education they experience, and we have been named once again to the President's Honor Roll for General Community Service, based on the service of over 84 percent of Trinity's student population. We continue to serve the community in both long-term and short-term ways. For example, each fall, student teams put their classroom learning into practice as they consult with various business and nonprofit "clients." Additionally, the college business department became a founding partner with the Future Founders Foundation, and two Trinity freshmen were selected to participate in the Future Founders Fellowship, which is indeed an honor. It was great fun also to cheer on our women's volleyball team—the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA) Division I champions in 2014.

Faculty and staff are a central aspect of the educational process as they connect with students and encourage them to learn and flourish. Our faculty shine as scholar-teachers. Dr. Lynn Spellman White, our Professor of the Year for 2014, is a top-notch educator who understands the liberal-arts experience for accounting majors, who continue to excel on the CPA exam. Art professor Ryan Thompson co-authored *Bad Luck, Hot Rocks*, which received positive reviews in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New Yorker*. Dr. John Sebestyen (communication arts) was one of 25 educators selected as a directing fellow in the Directing Workshop for Theater Educators at The Juilliard School in New York City.

Alumni contribute and excel in incredible ways as they work and are involved in communities worldwide, using their Trinity education for the renewal of God's world. We celebrated our 2014 nursing graduates' 95-percent pass rate in the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses, which is well above the national average of 83 percent. Kathy Nimmer (1991) was named Indiana's 2015 Teacher of the Year and is one of four finalists for the 2015 National Teacher of the Year Award. In addition, our counseling psychology graduate studies program recognized its first graduating class.

The year also presented challenges, some of which have persisted throughout higher education for several years. Although Trinity's fall 2014 enrollment was its most academically talented in decades and we welcomed many bright and gifted students, the total number of incoming students was below what we had anticipated. Thus, in a fiscally responsible manner, we looked ahead to next year, and we identified ways to trim the 2015-16 budget in order for our operating expenses to match projected enrollment for the coming year. I am thankful for the collaborative discernment process we used, which included wisdom and feedback from committees, leaders,

and our board of trustees, with a focus on the mission of providing the best Christian liberal arts education.

We are thankful for the financial support we receive from Christian Reformed churches that take advantage of the policy allowing a portion of ministry shares for Christian higher education to be directed to their area college. During 2014, we gratefully accepted \$214,033 in funds from CRC churches and classes. We are also thankful for God's leading, which we see in the lives of the extended Trinity community.

Trinity Christian College
Liz Rudenga, interim president

Communities First Association (CFA) is a national, faith-based organization of highly relational, expert practitioners committed to community transformation through the multiplication of skillful leaders in asset-based community development (ABCD). A diverse group of professional community developers, the community advancement coaches of CFA are leaders in their cities, churches, school districts, and local civic and nonprofit organizations. They are committed to a coach-trainer model that infuses high standards of coaching, training, and facilitation of relevant, rigorous, and diverse curricular experiences that will equip the next generation of leaders to help transform communities in the spirit of *shalom* in God's kingdom (see www.cfapartners.org).

CFA is approaching the one-year mark with the leadership of its new executive director, Mrs. Reesheda Washington. In the past year, the board of directors, the staff, and the community advancement coaches, formerly members of CFA, have collaborated extensively to re-vision the organization—from the development of new branding to revisions in structure. CFA has been and continues to be stretched in new and exciting ways. Healthy and productive conversations continue to take place around racial, gender, and class inequality and their context pertaining to asset-based community development, as well as conversations around reconciliation, which is critical to the health and continued development of CFA as an organization.

Spending the past year building relationships and getting a better sense of CFA's strengths and weaknesses, CFA and its affiliates have explored the depth and breadth of possibilities offered by the organization. As such, CFA's logo and website (www.cfapartners.org) have been enhanced to reflect the innovations and growth that the organization has experienced.

Organizationally, it was unanimously determined that CFA will operate as a *nonprofit* moving forward, rather than by means of the *association* model that has been used in years past. Making this seemingly small change creates a more agile and nimble organization, as we move forward with innovations collaboratively, yet efficiently. The move to a nonprofit model of operations also eliminates association dues, thereby creating a more equitable entryway into the organization. For people and organizations interested in ABCD and looking to be certified in the coaching and training of others, CFA will offer training through our redeveloped CFA Vetting and Certification Cohort, which is in its finishing stages of development. This cohort will serve as a four-month intensive training that will introduce participants to ABCD and how it is best used. This cohort will offer a great opportunity to become an expert practitioner in ABCD, while also serving to expand one's own professional network.

Formerly known as members of the association, CFA's community advancement coaches will now be independently contracted to implement asset-based community development for churches, schools, and civic organizations that CFA partners with in their respective cities, in addition to the commendable work they continue to do in their respective local contexts. CFA will also provide its new and current affiliates with professional development opportunities throughout the year and will continue to host its semi-annual gathering. The gathering is held to provide a hands-on professional

development experience and serves as a time for affiliates to gather to share experiences and to inspire one another to continue developing their craft. Additional professional development opportunities will be based on the core competencies that a diverse representation of stakeholders collaborated to create and define.

CFA is currently concentrating its efforts on the implementation of ABCD in neighborhoods, with a specific emphasis on education. In doing so, CFA and its affiliates believe its work will be more effective, continuing its history of doing work in education with renewed hope and inspiration. CFA remains committed to the spirit of shalom and the process of discerning to uncover what God is already up to across the country; we continue to desire to be a vessel for God to pour into, that we might simply come alongside his great and remarkable work in the world. We believe that after much prayer and discernment, our efforts must concentrate on solidifying the organizational identity and foundation, making the vision clear.

Communities First Association
Reesheda Washington, executive director

Diaconal Ministries Canada's (DMC) mission is *to inspire, equip, and encourage deacons, churches, and their partners as they join in God's transforming work in communities*. It is a privilege for DMC to see the Spirit at work, enabling churches to live out their diaconal calling. We are partners in this work, serving the churches in three primary areas: engaging community, equipping deacons, and doing justice.

Engaging community—DMC's goal is to encourage each deacon and each church to join in God's transforming work in each community. For churches seeking to do this, DMC has developed the Community Opportunity Scan (COS) and will walk alongside churches as they use this assessment tool to get to know their neighbors. DMC also offers the Operation Manna Program, which provides coaching and grants for churches to establish and grow their ministries in the local community. Last year the members of 183 Canadian CRCs gave over \$200,000 so that CRCs and ministries might access this program.

Equipping deacons—For each Canadian CRC, DMC offers Diaconal Ministry Developers (DMDs). DMDs are equipped to help deacons, through workshops and conversations, to understand their role, discover their gifts, and develop their leadership skills. DMC is also committed to providing resources that will equip and enable deacons to live out their calling. Whether through work plans, guidelines for preparing an offering schedule, or devotions, deacons will be blessed by the many resources available online at www.diaconalministries.com.

Doing justice—DMC equips and encourages deacons and mobilizes churches to act on justice issues affecting vulnerable people in their communities. Partnerships with other ministries, such as the Office of Social Justice and the Office of Disability Concerns, increase DMC's capacity to serve the churches in their calling to do justice. DMC has also developed online resources that will help churches walk alongside marginalized people in their communities.

In this past year DMC has made significant changes to its website by adding a blog and engaging the social media community through Facebook and Twitter. DMC is also actively engaging with churches in connection with the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon. Through equipping deacons, encouraging churches to engage their community, and doing justice, DMC continues to serve the CRC in Canada. This blessing is made possible by faithful diaconates that support DMC through diaconal ministry shares (separate from CRC ministry shares and based on the number of active, professing members in the Christian Reformed Church within Canada—see www.diaconalministries.com).

Diaconal Ministries Canada
Hans Kater, executive director

Calvinist Cadet Corps

I. New badges

The Cadet program grows each year with the addition of new merit badges. This year is no exception—boys will now have a Spiders merit badge to work on, and they can also earn a new badge for Snowboarding. The Corps now offers 130 badges for grades 4–6 and 22 more for Junior Cadets, grades 1–3.

II. New director

After more than 31 years as the Cadets executive director, Mr. Dick Broene announced his retirement last year. The executive committee set about finding a successor, and in November the committee announced that the new director would be Mr. Steve Bootsma, a Cadet counselor from Kitchener, Ontario. At the time of this writing, Mr. Bootsma is in the process of securing the documentation needed to work in the United States as a Canadian citizen, and we are praying that the transition will go smoothly and that God will provide Steve all he needs to do the job well. We trust that by the time of synod's meeting Mr. Bootsma will be fully engaged in his new position. In the meantime, Mr. Broene will continue to work as director.

III. International events

International camporees take place once every three years, and in 2014 more than 1,100 men and boys assembled in central Alberta for a week of physical and spiritual challenges. God greatly blessed the planning we had done in the years since our previous camporee. As has frequently happened during past camporees, however, we faced a bout of harsh weather. High winds made it too dangerous to remain in our camp, so we moved all 1,100 campers into the Woodynook CRC building in Lacombe overnight. They stayed there without sleeping bags and wearing the clothes they had worn all day, while the wind blew down a half dozen tall trees in camp. But only one tent was hit, and we were grateful for the hospitality of Woodynook church.

Though we have faced some hardships, God has clearly used each of them to his own glory. Memories of the camporees are filled with stories of people helping each other and growing in their spiritual lives, which is exactly the goal of the Cadet Corps. The next camporee (2017) is scheduled to take place in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and we can hardly wait to see what God has in store.

Calvinist Cadet Corps

G. Richard Broene, executive director

GEMS Girls' Clubs

I. Introduction

Since 1958, GEMS Girls' Clubs has offered girls a place to learn and grow as they discover who God created them to be. Our mission is to bring girls everywhere into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. To do that, we inspire and train teams of women to mentor the next generation. GEMS was founded on the principles defined in Titus 2, and we want to grow women closer to God and closer to each other as we equip them to show girls how to live God-honoring lives.

GEMS Girls' Clubs is a place to belong, and girls are welcomed into a vibrant community of mentors and peers who genuinely care about them. GEMS is an exciting, safe environment for girls to learn about God, his Word, and his world!

II. Highlights from 2014

- *Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior* (GEMS) is experiencing growth across North America and the world. GEMS currently has 942 clubs, 24,000 girls, and 5,300 women participating in GEMS clubs. At GEMS, we believe that every girl deserves to know Jesus Christ, and we are bringing the message of salvation to them.
- Continuing to invest in training and equipping women in their mentoring roles as counselors. Approximately 1,600 counselors in North America and 100 in Africa participated in one or more training events.
- GEMS' award-winning magazines (*SHINE brightly* and *Sparkle*) for girls continue to reach both believers and nonbelievers for Christ in North America.
- Building, equipping, staffing, and operating *The Esther School* in Chongwe, Zambia. Currently we have 25 preschool, 25 kindergarten, 25 first-grade, and 25 second-grade students who are now receiving an outstanding Christian education at the school. The building and operation of the school have been made possible through the work of women and girls who are a part of GEMS. A playground was installed this spring. We are praying for a principal, an elementary teacher, and an operations/finance director for The Esther School.

III. Goals and new initiatives for 2015

- To inspire women to be passionate in their calling to mentor girls, building servant leaders for the kingdom of God.
- To inspire women and girls to greater acts of service demonstrating their love for Christ.
- To expand GEMS Girls' Clubs to serve more girls and start more clubs in North America and around the world.
- To use technology to build relationships around the world, improve our website, and add additional curriculum to meet the needs of girls in our world today.
- To continue building and operating The Esther School, a Christian day school in Chongwe, Zambia, built by GEMS Girls' Clubs, adding a third-grade classroom, staff housing, and a guesthouse.

GEMS Girls' Clubs gives thanks to our great God, and we give thanks to the Christian Reformed Church for entrusting beautiful girls and women to our care and nurturing!

GEMS Girls' Clubs

Kristine Palosaari, executive director

Youth Unlimited

43,750—this number has a story to tell—actually many stories, but they are only the introduction to a much larger story. These stories include themes of sacrifice, selflessness, inspiration, life change, pain, understanding, discipleship, faith, friends, fun, brokenness, challenge, and more. These are stories about hope, joy, and peace!

So what does this number represent? It represents stories from Christian Reformed youth leading the church—bringing redemption, restoration, and the love of Jesus to people across Canada and the United States. 43,750 is the number of hours students gave in serving others in the name of Jesus through Youth Unlimited *Serve* mission experiences in 2014. And this is a small sampling because it represents only 1,600 students from approximately 25 percent of the Christian Reformed churches during one week of summer.

Imagine if we had the number of students from the remaining 75 percent of CRC congregations who gave a week of service—that number could be 175,000 hours or more, and yet that still would not tell the whole story. Now imagine if we could add up all the weekly or monthly youth group service projects over the year (raking someone's leaves, serving in a food kitchen for homeless people, sorting clothes, leading vacation Bible school, etc., etc., etc.)! Or, even greater still, what if we could add up the number of times students served someone not only during a youth group event but simply out of obedience and love for Jesus and others! God is working in and through our youth, and we *need* to fan that flame!

As church and youth ministry articles and discussions often point out, today we are faced with the rising challenge of "youth leaving the local church." Those articles and conversations are based on reality. There are fewer youth in many local congregations across Canada and the United States. Youth Unlimited sees evidence of this decline in the number of event registrations each year. Still, while it is important to know the facts and to face reality head on, we might question ourselves about the way we are reacting. We might ask, for example, "Is our focus more on the shrinking number of youth rather than on those who are engaged, invested, and making a great impact for the kingdom of Christ?"

May we be a community of congregations with great hope and trust in our Lord, a community that fans into flames the faith and work of his people, our youth. Let's be quick to listen, offer an encouraging word, provide heartfelt appreciation, and allow our youth some freedom to speak into the future of the church!

The theme of Youth Unlimited's 30 *Serve* experiences and the *Live It* experience this year is "The Other 51," based on John 20:21-22. We are praying that God uses this Scripture and theme to help students understand that their week at *Serve* or *Live It* is not about one week but about taking what

God says and does with them during that week and applying it to the other 51 weeks of the year.

Youth Unlimited is honored to be creating stories with the Christian Reformed Church.

Youth Unlimited
Jeff Kruithof, executive director

Friendship Ministries

Friendship Ministries is an international/interdenominational ministry that empowers the church to share God's love with people who have intellectual disability and enable them to become active members of God's family. Under the leadership of our new executive director, Mr. Tom VanWingerden, we are beginning some exciting new curriculum development projects.

Friendship Ministries provides opportunities for people with intellectual disability to be baptized and make profession of faith using our resource *Expressing Faith in Jesus*. We also provide resources to help our friends grow in faith, including our core Bible study curriculum and studies on the Ten Commandments and Psalms. Many Friendship members have found ways to serve and share with their congregations by ushering, helping to lead worship, and participating in service projects.

There are more than 300 Friendship programs in Christian Reformed churches in Canada and the United States, and many of these programs involve multiple CRC congregations. Some programs also collaborate with churches of other denominations, extending their outreach into the wider community.

We are a worldwide organization:

- There are more than 1,200 Friendship programs in 28 countries.
- Friendship groups are in more than 75 denominations.
- Friendship serves approximately 18,000 people who have an intellectual disability.
- Through *Ministerio Amistad*, the Spanish arm of Friendship Ministries, there are four programs in the Cuba CRC. There are almost 300 programs in Latin America.
- This past year 40 new programs were started. Our goal is to keep up this pace for the next year.

We collaborate with the CRC:

- We are working closely with CRC Ministry Support Services to develop our new materials.
- Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) students in the pastoral care class are required to attend a Friendship group and write a one-page reflection paper. The Friendship executive director meets with the class to help process the experience.
- CTS students may participate in Friendship groups as a service-learning option.

Additional services we provide:

- consultation on including children in church education programs.
- consultation with parents on how to approach the congregation for inclusion of their sons and daughters who have intellectual disability.
- ideas for recruiting volunteers for programs.
- a newsletter and regular blog that provide inspiration and practical tips for new and existing Friendship groups.

Friendship Ministries

Tom VanWingerden, executive director

This year God has used Partners Worldwide to equip and mobilize thousands of businesspeople and entrepreneurs around the world so that all may have life and have it abundantly. We are both humbled and encouraged at the way God has molded and shaped our organization since our birth out of World Renew more than eighteen years ago. To God be the glory!

Partners Worldwide mobilizes long-term, hands-on global relationships to form a powerful Christian network that uses business as the way to create flourishing economic environments in all parts of the world. We create partnerships with community institutions—which are locally owned and run—to provide mentoring, training, access to capital, and advocacy. This builds up permanent local capacity designed to catalyze entrepreneurs and job creators and to celebrate business as a calling to do God’s work. More than ever before, Christian business people are being affirmed, encouraged, and commissioned as Christ’s agents in their sphere of influence—their employees, customers, vendors, and suppliers.

The entrepreneurial and resourceful nature of the business people in our network is amazing. Often under very difficult business climates, they use their business for Christ’s transformation of lives and his restoration of all things: mentoring at-risk youth, starting schools and medical clinics, providing more nutritious and affordable food for their communities, encouraging earth-friendly alternatives to land use, starting community or economic development organizations, or employing people who otherwise couldn’t find a job.

We are seeing the impact of our partnership model around the world: over 56,000 businesses in 25 countries are using their business as their ministry—making an impact on the marketplace, creating jobs, and transforming lives. These businesses have created and sustained over 90,000 jobs, making a direct impact on the lives of more than 250,000 people.

A job changes everything for these families. No longer dependent on aid or handouts, they have a sustainable income to lift themselves out of poverty, providing food, a secure home, education, and medicine for their children and family members. These imagebearers of Christ are catalyzed to live out their calling to serve in business.

In October 2014, we hosted almost 500 people from more than 25 countries to learn more about Partners Worldwide, to strengthen connections within our global network, and to celebrate business as a calling to do God’s work. All attendees were commissioned to make an impact on the marketplace for Christ. It was a powerful time!

Thank you to the Christian Reformed Church for your partnership in our vital ministry. This movement of people serving through their business is gaining tremendous momentum as more people recognize the untapped potential that exists for kingdom transformation that can happen through a flourishing economic environment. The demand for the work of Partners Worldwide far exceeds our ability to respond as we find many opportunities to expand this work—in North America and around the world. Please pray for wisdom for us to be effective and humble servant leaders in the calling we have before us.

We look forward to partnering with more CRC businesspeople and churches to continue creating jobs and transforming lives around the globe to fulfill a unique calling, as our vision statement puts it, “to end poverty so that all may have life and have it abundantly.”

Partners Worldwide
Douglas Seebeck, president

I. Organization and vision

The mission of Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI) is to train pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders worldwide for the purpose of building viable and healthy congregations and communities. In doing so, we follow the guidance of 2 Timothy 2:2: “The things you have heard me teach before many witnesses, commit to faithful people, who shall be able to teach others also.”

TLTI’s vision is to make its core training programs accessible to all areas of the Christian world by 2020. Today we are active on a continuous basis in five of nine global regions, so we have much work remaining to achieve our vision.

While expanding our reach, TLTI also wants to provide training programs of excellent quality and with effective assessments so that we can monitor and validate the improvements in a trainee’s skills. Planned enhancements to our software systems will provide us with unprecedented insight into our training activities.

II. Training programs

TLTI’s core Leadership Training Program consists of seven training manuals that cover the basic areas of ministry. The curriculum includes Caring for God’s People, Christian Stewardship, From Harm to Honor in the Family, Biblical Preaching, Teaching the Christian Faith, Praising God in Work and Worship, and God’s Plan for Sustainable Development. Each manual takes about 16 hours of training time to complete. The training manuals incorporate the inductive style of teaching, which focuses on reading Scripture, asking questions, and discussing topics with peers. Action plans are created to put the learning into practice and to monitor the progress of the trainees. Since flexibility is often needed to accommodate participants’ availability, training can take place in weeklong event-based sessions, weekend or week-day sessions, or church-based weekly sessions. The participants are granted status as a basic trainer or master trainer to certify their completion of training levels.

This year we revised our core Leadership Training Program, creating the 2014 Edition. Our goal with the changes was to build a set of global materials that could be used in all nine regions without significant modifications. With that as a goal, we increased the worldwide representation of references and examples to make them less regionally specific. In this way, trainees can take courses in different regions on their way to becoming TLTI master trainers.

III. Organization and structure

In collaboration with our strategic partners, TLTI did much work this past year on organization and structure. Our goal was to develop a relatively simple organizational model that could scale and grow.

First, we organized TLTI into nine regions globally. Second, within the regions, TLTI designated various Area Training Centers (ATCs) to be the center of training activities within a geographic area, language, ethnic group, or other defined group. Today TLTI has identified over 24 ATCs.

Typically, an ATC is aligned with an established ministry partner who sponsors and supports the training efforts. A ministry partner may be a congregation, denomination, academic institution, mission sending agency, or other organization interested in promoting the trainings. The ATC is also responsible for the informal training groups within the same area. With this structure, ATCs and our ministry partners become training multipliers. Often, most of the costs are paid by participants themselves. The leverage of local resources provides more training at a lower cost and in the long term creates self-sustaining replication.

IV. Partnerships

TLTI's training programs are used extensively in the field by Christian Reformed World Missions, De Verre Naasten (the mission sending agency of various Reformed denominations in the Netherlands), and other agencies or denominations. Our training programs are also used by World Renew and plans are being discussed for use by Back to God Ministries International. TLTI's trainees come from several hundred distinct church organizations—both large and small—around the world.

This past year TLTI signed affiliation agreements with De Verre Naasten and Calvin Theological Seminary to formalize and strengthen its working relationships and mutual commitments. TLTI signed new agreements for ATCs with I.D.E.A. Ministries, a nonprofit based in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

TLTI has also signed an articulation agreement with Miami International Seminary (MINTS), which provides a path for TLTI Master Trainers to receive a certificate from MINTS for their work with TLTI's core Leadership Training Program (plus an additional assignment) and grants credit equivalent to the first year of the MINTS Bachelor of Arts in theological studies.

V. Training outcomes

TLTI's core Leadership Training Program generated 640 master trainers certified worldwide in the past fiscal year. This is an exponential increase from 112 master trainers in FY12-13 and 52 in FY11-12.

VI. Summary

TLTI's global training network and programs are effective tools for pastoral and lay leader training around the world, and the demand for our program is growing. We have been working diligently in the past year to develop a structure that will work well as we grow around the world. We look forward to continued partnerships with the CRC agencies and congregations as we seek to train leaders worldwide.

Timothy Leadership Training Institute
Stephen M. Tuuk, president
and chief executive officer

STUDY COMMITTEES

I. Introduction

Culture never stands still, and the cultural changes evident in the advent of civil same-sex marriage present Christians and the Christian church with a range of challenges and opportunities. Consider the following situations:

- A middle-aged couple—lifelong CRC members—are invited to attend their granddaughter’s same-sex wedding ceremony.
- At the fall sign-up for a church’s Cadet program, a father drops off his two sons and fills out the contact form. The “Father’s Name” and “Mother’s Name” are both ostensibly male names, and one of the boys makes reference to “my dads.”
- A church member who owns a bakery comes to the pastor for advice, having been asked to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.
- Two older men of the congregation—longtime friends and business partners—inform the pastor and the elders that they intend to get a marriage license and wed because of the legal advantages civil marriage offers them.
- A pastor approaches the church council and asks permission to officiate at his son’s same-sex wedding.
- A church’s Facility Use policy makes the sanctuary available to non-members for weddings “solemnized in the Christian tradition.” Same-sex marriage has just been legalized in the state, and some members of council wonder whether the policy should be changed.

These are but a few of the life and ministry situations with which same-sex marriage confronts the church, raising questions from a variety of directions and angles. It is to these situations that our committee seeks to provide pastoral guidance.

II. Mandate

Synod 2013, in response to overtures from two U.S. classes, appointed a study committee to

give guidance and clarification on how members, clergy, and churches can apply the biblical teachings reflected in the *Acts of Synod 1973* Report 42 (cf. also the report to Synod 2002) in light of the legality of same-sex marriage in certain jurisdictions, as well as how to communicate these teachings in a truthful and gracious way within North America.

(*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 617)

The committee was mandated to explore issues and provide advice for pastoral ministry as well as to identify resources and recommend best practices for use by the churches.

Further insight into synod’s intent was evident in the stated grounds for the mandate. Synod observed that the reports of 1973 (on Homosexuality) and 2002 (on Pastoral Care to Homosexual Members) have served the denomination well by establishing biblical principles and foundations. The current committee is to focus its work on the implications of those teachings in light of recent political, legal, and social developments. These developments include the growing public acceptance of same-sex marriage and the potential impact on church membership.

As to process, synod directed the committee to follow the shepherding model pioneered by the Faith Formation Committee. A motion adopted on the floor of synod further instructed the committee

to consult extensively with pastors in Canada and the United States, members of different ethnic minorities, and others who have a broad range of experience and expertise (i.e., biblical, pastoral, ethnic) to both inform and provide feedback regarding the work of the committee.

(Acts of Synod 2013, p. 643)

Upon convening in November 2013, the committee's first task was to establish the parameters of its mandate and to outline a process to meet the expectations of the shepherding model. Concerning its mandate, the committee has interpreted its task as being to focus on issues relating to civil same-sex marriage and the church's ministry. Many persons have assumed that the focus of the committee's work is the issue of homosexuality in a broader sense, or have suggested that the committee cannot fulfill its mandate without opening up larger issues, including the denomination's biblical and theological position on homosexuality. In this latter regard, the committee has been urged by some to ask synod for an expansion of its mandate.

After significant discussion and deliberation, the committee concluded the following regarding its mandate:

1. The social, cultural, and legal dimensions of same-sex marriage pose sufficient challenges for the church and its ministry—sufficient to warrant the work of this committee on its own merits.
2. Synod 2013 was clear in establishing the 1973 and 2002 reports as a biblical and theological baseline for the work of the committee and indicated that it did not want the biblical grounds reopened at this time. Synod 2013 defeated a motion that would have allowed synod to consider expanding the mandate to include reconsideration of the biblical interpretation regarding homosexuality.
3. Broader questions about homosexuality and the church's ministry have proven to be divisive in many Christian denominations. In such situations, addressing ancillary matters well has the potential to move the church and its ministry away from divisiveness and into fruitful areas of ministry.
4. Civil same-sex marriage raises ministry questions, challenges, and in some cases conundrums that force the church, through its leaders and members, to consider how Christ and the gospel can best be manifest in the present cultural situation.

The committee has therefore focused its attention on same-sex marriage and ministry to persons affected (in various ways) by this form of civil institution. We believe this to be the most productive and appropriate understanding of our mandate.

III. Committee process

The committee's work has been extensive and varied. The shepherding model, while offering opportunities for discussion and input unavailable through traditional committee work, requires a significantly greater

investment of time and activity than does the traditional model. It should be noted that the success of the shepherding model through the Faith Formation Committee was related, in part at least, to the length of time that committee functioned—almost twice as long as the typical denominational committee. Our committee has been significantly stretched in its resources to follow the shepherding model and to complete its work in the expected three-year period.

To date, the committee's process has included the following:

- Meetings—The committee has gathered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for two-day sessions on seven occasions, with meetings spaced approximately every 3-4 months. These meetings have given the committee opportunity to remain current on legal and social developments as well as to consult with a variety of persons and community leaders. They have also allowed us to revisit particularly vexing questions and have provided the advantage of active engagement followed by periods of reflection.
- Survey—The committee commissioned a denominational survey through the Calvin College Center for Social Research. Over 4,000 persons responded to the survey, including feedback from approximately 700 pastors. The survey has provided background information on experiences and attitudes among CRC members regarding same-sex marriage and ministry with same-sex oriented persons.
- Consultations—The committee consulted with persons knowledgeable and experienced in areas germane to the committee's work. These persons included leaders in ethnic communities within the CRC, representatives of denominational agencies, persons with legal expertise, same-sex oriented persons who are or were members of the CRC, and others.
- Listening sessions—Committee representatives conducted listening sessions at a dozen classis meetings across Canada and the United States. Similar sessions were held with campus ministry leaders and CRC chaplains, as well as with representatives of the denominational Board of Trustees. These listening sessions provided valuable input to the committee's work. They also began the conversation within the wider church on appropriate ministry in the context of same-sex marriage.
- Committee coordination—We noted the potential overlap between the work of our committee and the Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty (RPL). Since religious liberty questions arise in the context of same-sex marriage, we have met with representatives of the RPL committee to coordinate our work. It is important that the two committees speak the same language and offer compatible recommendations to synod. We appreciate the cooperation of the RPL committee in this regard.

IV. Civil same-sex marriage – Background and status

The cultural shift toward legal acceptance of same-sex marriage in North America has been surprising in its pace and extent. Cultural debates that at the turn of the century seemed intent on exploring the acceptability of civil unions and domestic partnerships in distinction from marriage have been short-circuited. These are no longer options in discussion. It is either

traditional marriage between a woman and a man or marriage between two people irrespective of gender.

In Canada, same-sex marriage moved quickly from provincial enactment to national (i.e., country-wide) adoption. The province of Ontario first formally legalized same-sex marriage in 2003. By the time the Canadian Parliament adopted the Civil Marriage Act in July 2005, ten provinces and one territory had legalized same-sex marriage either by court decision or by legislative action. National adoption of same-sex marriage in Canada happened within a two-year period. It has now been almost a decade since Canada legalized same-sex marriage. Canadian CRC churches have had almost ten years of experience with ministry in a context in which same-sex marriage is legal.

The situation in the United States is more complex and has taken longer to play out. In 2003, Massachusetts was the first state to rule that same-sex couples have the right to marry. This began a slow procession of states (New Jersey in 2006; California in 2008; Iowa in 2009) allowing same-sex marriage either by court decision or legislative action.

The pace of change has quickened dramatically since June 2013, when the U.S. Supreme Court in *United States v. Windsor* ruled a portion of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional. The *Windsor* decision did not entirely settle the legality of same-sex marriage. The court left unclear whether its decision striking down a portion of DOMA was based on constitutional arguments (i.e., violation of equal protection guarantees) or on the grounds that regulation of marriage is a matter best left to the states, a federalism argument.

Since the *Windsor* decision, most state and federal courts have relied on the constitutional equal protection clause to strike down bans on same-sex marriage. When our study committee formed in 2013, less than 20 states recognized same-sex marriages. By February 2015, same-sex marriage was legal in 37 states and in the District of Columbia. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed in January 2015 to hear an appeal of a decision from the Sixth Circuit (covering Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee) and is expected to issue a decision by the end of June 2015.

The decided trend in Western society and in North America in particular is toward cultural and legal acceptance of same-sex marriage. In the late 1900s, opinion polls showed support for same-sex marriage to be a minority position; now polls show well over half of the North American population accepting of same-sex marriage in the civil sphere. The Christian Reformed Church should anticipate that within both the United States and Canada civil same-sex marriage will be legally recognized and will be supported by a majority of the population.

V. Areas of inquiry and approach

The committee intends to complete its report for consideration by the churches by September 2015. In its report, the committee expects that it will provide background and pastoral guidance on an array of issues connected to same-sex marriage. In our classical listening sessions, we have been listening carefully to pastors and church leaders as they reflect on ministry to persons in same-sex relationships (including marriage), on pastoral needs

for carrying out effective ministry, and on the diversity of experiences and settings and their meaning for crafting pastoral guidance.

We anticipate that our report will give focused attention to the following:

1. The institution of civil same-sex marriage—The Christian church needs to think carefully about its relationship with the civil authority. The Reformed tradition, while not entirely of one mind about that relationship, tends to navigate somewhere between the Catholic tradition's insistence on institutional unanimity between church and state (based on the dictates of the natural law) and the Anabaptist inclination to see the two as autonomous. The report will explore the concept of principled pluralism (in a way similar to that of the Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty) and what it means in a context in which both civil government and church have an interest in marriage, family, and the well-ordering of social relations.
2. Same-sex marriage and the covenant community—Civil same-sex marriage affects the Christian church and its ministry in significant and varied ways—from questions about church membership and participation at the Lord's table to baptism and outreach. It affects individual church members as well as pastors and church leaders. It raises questions for church staffing as well as availability of church facilities for public functions. Most importantly, it affects people in the place where the church—the covenant community—intersects a world in need of God's grace. We hope to address questions frankly and appropriately, in a way that embodies the grace at the heart of the gospel as well as the conviction that lives and relationships matter. The Christian community has principles to guide responsible action. It will be important to respect appropriate freedoms in life and ministry as well as to establish boundaries and parameters for covenant life.
3. Legal dimensions and ramifications—The move to civil same-sex marriage in society potentially creates legal issues for churches, pastors, and church leaders. In both Canada and the United States, same-sex marriage is linked to the right of equal protection, with expectations of non-discriminatory treatment in the public arena. At the same time, religious liberty and freedom of religious expression are fundamental rights. Where legal issues arise, their intensity depends on a number of factors. They may be more or less acute depending on the ministry orientation and values of the particular church community. A church may be convicted that its employment policies and facility usage policy should strictly reflect its ethical teachings. Another may view its policies as a means of connecting with the wider community. The pastoral guidance of the committee will identify resources and best practices appropriate to a church's ministry.
4. Summary resources—The committee anticipates including several appendices to its report. Among these will be a summary of survey results that provide helpful information for consideration by the churches. We are also looking at responses to same-sex marriage on the part of other Christian denominations and reviewing resources for use by pastors, leaders, and churches.

VI. Appreciation

The committee wishes to express its appreciation to all who have contributed to our work, especially those classes willing to host listening sessions as well as the Chaplain's Association and the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association. We are grateful to all who have given time to consult with us and to share their insights and expertise. We thank those who completed the survey or who have communicated with us in writing. And we are grateful to those who hold up the committee's work in prayer and who remind us that our work is ultimately about persons in faithful relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

We also express our appreciation to Mr. Joseph Bowman and to Mr. Curtis Witte, members of our committee who stepped down after a year of service. Each made valuable contributions to the committee's work. We are grateful for the Board of Trustees' assistance in placing new members on the committee, and to Mr. Dan Borst, Mr. Ryan Struyk, and Rev. David A. Vroege for their willingness to join the committee's work in mid-course.

VII. Recommendation

That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Rolf T. Bouma, chair, and Ms. Julia Smith, reporter, when the interim report of the Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-Sex Marriage is addressed.

Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance
re Same-Sex Marriage

Dan Borst
Rolf T. Bouma, chair
Jessica Driesenga
Wendy Gritter
John M. Rottman
Julia Smith, reporter
Ryan Struyk
Karl J. Van Harn
David A. Vroege

I. Mandate

Classis Toronto overtured Synod 2013 to appoint a study committee to “equip our church” regarding religious persecution and religious liberty (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 415-16). The overture begins by stating that the growing problem of religion-based persecution of Christians and others across the globe “calls urgently” for the church’s response. The overture then suggests that in order to send a “coherent message” about the injustice of persecution, the church must also study and provide a clear account of the value of religious liberty. But Classis Toronto also notes that “the related issues of religious persecution and religious liberty” are “complex” and “comprehensive.” Considering both the urgency and the intricacies of the problem, Classis Toronto argues that the CRCNA has ample grounds for committing its resources to a careful study and practical recommendations.

Synod 2013 acceded to the overture and appointed the Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 569, 641-42). Synod specifically mandated the committee to:

- a. Provide a Reformed framework that establishes a biblical and theological grounding for religious liberty and the injustice of religious persecution.
- b. Propose individual and group action that empowers the church in our increasingly secularized North American setting to walk alongside and intercede on behalf of those who are subject to religious persecution or denied religious liberty at home or abroad.
- c. Report on [the committee’s] progress to Synod 2015 and provide the completed study to Synod 2016.

(Acts of Synod 2013, p. 641)

The mandate is remarkably ambitious. First, synod asks the committee to cast its vision across the globe, a forthright recognition that geography matters when considering the profoundly varied experience of religion-based conflict. Second, synod asks for a biblical and theological grounding for two concepts—religious liberty and persecution—which are themselves deeply contested among theologians, philosophers, and social scientists. Indeed, the second point is related to the first: Intellectual disagreements often come to light most clearly when we compare perspectives on liberty and persecution cross-nationally. Consider, for example, that while Anglo-American models of human rights justify a robust response to religious persecution, non-Westerners often reject Western notions of rights as too individualistic, at best, or downright imperialistic, at worst.

While these aspects of the mandate are daunting, it is difficult to see how any serious treatment of persecution could avoid addressing them. And the committee’s initial work confirms Classis Toronto’s sense of urgency. The experience of our own denomination is illustrative. For a denomination of its size, the CRCNA has an unusually large international outreach, with staff in numerous ministry fields throughout the world working with hundreds of indigenous ministry partners. In whatever form—traditional evangelistic missions, development work, media ministry—this physical presence has exposed people and infrastructure to threat in many regions that lack robust protections for religious expression. Even in the United States and Canada, where safeguards for religious liberty have been relatively strong, church

leaders and ordinary parishioners have been raising alarms about a gradual erosion in both legal protections and cultural tolerance for faithful Christian living.

The committee's goal is to submit a final report in 2016 that addresses these challenging aspects of the mandate in a way that both edifies and engages the church. Like any report of this kind, we have had to make choices about points of emphasis, lest we chase intellectual rabbit trails and lose our general audience. While we have delved into biblical theology, church history, and confessional frameworks, we have often traded breadth of analysis for a careful focus on what we consider the most salient ideas and insights. (For readers who wish to survey a broader landscape, we are developing extensive appendices.) We have also sought to illustrate the realities of persecution and religious liberty by digging into the lived experiences of members of the CRCNA in North America and abroad. Our recommendations will be multifaceted and multilayered, with suggestions for leaders and ordinary members alike. This preliminary report describes our progress and provides some signposts to the final report.

II. Outline of the report

The committee, which includes academics, clergy, a retired diplomat, and CRCNA ministry partners (some with extensive experience abroad), has met as a whole on three occasions (October 2013, February 2014, and July 2014). We have also developed a division of labor with several smaller groups working together between meetings, complementing many hours of work by individual committee members. In addition, Calvin College has supported the work of the committee by providing research assistance through the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics and the Center for Social Research.

The committee quickly recognized that the mandate raises a host of key questions and tensions:

- What should we do with the overall biblical message—a message Christ himself articulates (e.g., Matt. 5:10-12)—that persecution can be a “blessing” to believers and the church?
- How does that square with the church’s experience of persecution as an injustice that we have some obligation to combat?
- How do we define the basic terms of *persecution* and *religious liberty*?
- How can the church confront legal systems or public officials that condone or perpetrate systematic abuse of religious groups?
- What are the proper limits to those interventions?
- As an organization, are there resources the CRCNA could provide its members and partners—both in North America and beyond—to address their concerns?
- At a more interpersonal level, how might the church address the conditions for intergroup (and even interfaith) conflict, which are so often the root of the problem?

- Does the church have a perspective on pluralism that might help us address the political and social dimensions of persecution?

These are wide-ranging and complex questions, but the study committee has benefited from the fact that Scripture and the historical experience of the church provide keen insight into answering them. In its current draft, after a brief introduction (Part I), we explore three interrelated *contexts* for assessing the problem of religious persecution from a Reformed perspective (Part II). The discussion commences from a focused biblical exegesis (II, a), which sets up theological discussions rooted in church history (II, b) and in the Reformed confessions (II, c). Taken together, these approaches—exegetical, historical, and systematic/confessional—provide a framework for the rest of the report.

Part III of the report tackles the problem of persecution as it is experienced in the world today. We examine many of the key ways in which modern theorists and practitioners have understood definitions of *religious freedom* and *persecution*, and we examine the relationship between these terms. In light of the definitions of these terms, we examine how the modern church has both experienced and responded to persecution. We give special emphasis to the CRCNA's experience in both North America and abroad, using an extensive global survey of the denomination's international ministry partners as a key piece of evidence.

We conclude with recommendations (Part IV) structured around different organizational levels of the church, from the lone parishioner to the denomination as a whole. We have benefited from examining the efforts of other churches and denominations, but we have also noted that those efforts are surprisingly rare. To the extent that we have adapted those peer efforts, we have been mindful of our denomination's unique global footprint and distinctive beliefs and practices.

III. Preliminary conclusions

This preliminary report provides only a sketch of our framework; the final report is in progress. But we have some preliminary conclusions that will likely continue to shape how we craft the final report to Synod 2016.

Our point of departure in Part II is the familiar biblical concept of *shalom*, the state of dwelling freely in full relationship with God and fellow human beings. God created us for these relationships, but the fall has shattered them. The sweep of the biblical narrative suggests that persecution is an inevitable consequence of this loss of *shalom*. The ancient Israelites experienced the brutality of violent suppression and displacement because of their identity as God's chosen people. The dynamic persists in the new covenant, as the early disciples risked their freedom and lives in a struggle to establish the early church in an empire that worshiped another human being as a god.

But we detect a subtle difference between the Old and New Testaments. Persecution in the Old Testament is consistently a result of Israel's disobedient idolatry and related immorality. Persecution in the New Testament is focused less on guilt than as a test of Christianity's integrity and supernatural power. In either case, God's revelation suggests that his redemptive purposes can work through persecution, as epitomized in the person of Christ, who suffered and died at the hands of an oppressive government and

hostile public. But the Bible does not leave us with the message that suffering through persecution should simply be endured—even welcomed and encouraged—as a blessing. Especially for those of us who are generally free to practice our faith, our obligation is to use that freedom to seek *shalom* and to pursue that same freedom for others. The author of Hebrews prompts us: “Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering” (Heb. 13:3).

Even as Christianity emerged as the dominant religious faith in Europe—a story of church history we tell, from Acts to the Reformation, in Part II, b of our report—persecution remained a common part of life, sometimes as the result of grievous conflict among Christian sects themselves. During the Protestant Reformation, many of the founders of our own denomination’s traditions were forced into exile or prison, and the intended audience of their writing and preaching was often persecuted congregations in their home countries. As we know, and as we mention in our report, many of these same Reformation leaders were also complicit in acts of violent suppression of religious dissenters. The experience of church history is chastening, reminding us that persecution is not merely an interreligious phenomenon.

It is also not an overstatement to say that the experience of persecution in church history resulted in the gift of our historic confessions. As we discuss briefly in Part II, c of our report, two of those documents—the Belgic Confession (whose author died a martyr) and the Heidelberg Catechism—were written in response to widening persecutions of Calvinist believers. Along with the Canons of Dort (and related confessions from other pockets of Calvinist believers), what they affirm is presaged, not surprisingly, in our biblical exegesis. We bear the image of God—the basis of *shalom*—but we separate ourselves from that image in the fall. We cannot redeem ourselves; we depend utterly on God’s sovereign grace, which is ultimately expressed in Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection.

For our purposes, these fundamental tenets lead to two key conclusions. First, since only God can save, any human coercion of religion is necessarily futile, and probably idolatrous, claiming for the persecutor a power of correction and salvation that can only rightly belong to God. Second, in matters of religion it is the duty and calling of Christians to steward and advocate freedom of religion as fundamental to this doctrine and to the recognition of the sovereignty of God.

As a committee, we have often found it useful to frame these confessional insights in terms of pluralism. A basic problem of pluralism, to which the Belgic Confession was partially addressed, is whether and how multiple confessional communities could be meaningfully joined in a common polity. This problem—or paradox—has vexed believers of many faith traditions, including members of the Christian Reformed Church. Indeed, it led Synod 1958 to revise the Belgic Confession’s position on the role of state (*Acts of Synod 1958*, pp. 28-31, 174-80), judging as *unbiblical* the original admonition of government to uphold sacred ministry, and to remove and destroy “all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist,” while further “promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ” (Art. 36: The Civil Government). In effect, the modified Article 36 affirmed a different understanding of pluralism: first, Christians should not only expect but actively safeguard confessional pluralism as part of the proper task of government in a world marked by the fall;

and, second, Christians should reasonably expect to live and work alongside persons of diverse and contradictory faiths, who are partners—as surely as our Christian brothers and sisters—in our work to build *just* societies. There is therefore a basic doctrinal call to what some have called interfaith dialogue, or what others in the best meaning of the term simply call pluralist democracy.

The culminating discussion of pluralism in Part II of our report sets up our treatment of the modern experience of persecution in Part III. This section of the report articulates our working definitions of *religion*, *persecution*, and *religious liberty* and surveys the nature and extent of governmental restrictions on and of social hostilities toward religion across the globe today. This is also where we lay out some basic contours of an argument for how religious liberty might be used as a claim against religious persecution.

The basic definitions are not straightforward. Consider *religion*. It is relatively easy to know what a Reformed definition would reject, including any modern conceptualization that relegates and limits religion to “private” life, as if faith commitments have no role in a “neutral” or “secular” public sphere. A distinctively Reformed definition has an Augustinian echo: *the understandings and practices of communities and persons confessed to be acts of obedience to, and love of, God*. This captures several critical pieces of the framework of religion and religious freedom expressed in Part II: it emphasizes, first, that religion is not merely a belief but a public practice; second, that these practices often manifest themselves as exercises of communities, and that institutional religion and its freedoms are therefore an essential part of any definition; and, third, that religion is ultimately about living lives of “ordered love,” as Augustine would say, expressed in that first great commandment, to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and strength. Religion in the Reformed tradition is, therefore, extremely large, arguably encompassing a total world and life view, and an absolute grounding for thought and action. Indeed—as the Reformed philosopher H. Evan Runner put it, life itself “is religion.”

But while this may be a proper way to disambiguate the religious life of Reformed Christians, it does not necessarily reflect religion in a comparative or social scientific sense, which generally envisions religion as a *genus* of which certain *species*, like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and so forth exist. On this account, *religion* for the Reformed Christian may indeed mean something quite different from *religion* for the convicted Buddhist. More broadly, then, we may define religion as the “the understandings and practices of communities and persons confessed to be seeking harmony with the widest reaches of transcendent reality.”¹

How, then, to think about religious liberty? As we use the term, *religious liberty* means at least the capacity to manifest fully, in public and private, one’s religion without interference from the state. But we also know that interference with religious belief and practice is not the exclusive province of political authorities. In fact, as we will show, the most pressing and pernicious problems with religious persecution around the world tend to

¹ Adapted from the above and from Daniel Philpott, Timothy Shah, and Monica Duffy Toft, *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2011).

be a result not of capricious political actors but of major social and cultural hostilities. Consequently, our working definition of religious liberty also entails an affirmative obligation of the state to protect religionists who face a nonstate actor who threatens the expression of their faith.

The foregoing definitions of religion suggest how expansive, and indeed how radical, such a freedom can be. We do, however, elaborate on several conclusions from our understanding of religious liberty. First, religious liberty is always the possession of persons and communities, never the possession of a “religion” as a whole. This is consistent with the notion of pluralism, which rejects the idea that protections for religious freedom ought to be stronger for some faiths at the expense of others. Second, mere social disapproval of one’s religion, even if one takes deep offense at that disapproval, is not a violation of religious liberty. Religious freedom allows believers to manifest their faith without unreasonable interference; it does not immunize them from exposure to intellectual condemnation or even ridicule. Third, while religious liberty should extend broadly, it cannot be strictly absolute, because some religiously motivated behaviors may endanger the freedom of others. Determining the line where “reasonable” accommodation of religion ends is a profoundly difficult challenge and calls for wise legal and political judgment. But drawing those lines is a necessary feature of any state that seeks to balance the goods of peace, order, and freedom.

We define *religious persecution*, then, as “the violation of religious liberty.” If religious liberty protects the faithful from objective threats to religious expression, then persecution occurs when such threats become a reality and the state fails to prevent them. But we issue a very important caveat here. Persecutions, or violations of religious liberty, take place on a long gradient, from limited to extremely severe. To be sure, we recognize that although the rule of law in North America often prohibits the most egregious examples of persecution, real tests of faith can and do occur in secular, if politically stable, environments. On our definition, North American Christians who are compelled unreasonably by state law to take actions that violate religious conscience are, strictly speaking, victims of persecution. But that violation will likely pale in contrast with the real loss of life and liberty that many Christians (and other religionists) face in clearly desperate settings within, for example, Pakistan, Syria, or northern Nigeria today. We do not rob our communities at home from claiming the term *persecution* in highly circumscribed cases. But we urge restraint regarding its comparative severity, by contrast, to persecution faced by our brothers and sisters around the world.

We commit a full section in Part III to chronicling the lived experience of Christians along this gradient in settings across the globe, with ample illustrations. The trends are disturbing not only because the statistics about persecution are grim but also because serious restrictions on faith are not limited to authoritarian regimes. Moreover, persecution is not merely, or even principally, a matter of governmental restriction; increasingly, believers are suffering at the hands of social groups (“nonstate actors”), including neighbors in their own communities. We give special attention to the Christian Reformed Church, largely through analysis of a major survey of CRCNA ministry partners working abroad, *Banner* reporting over the past three decades on religious freedom and persecution both in North America and abroad, and assorted other data sources. A clear conclusion of this section is

that the persecution of Christians is a global phenomenon—and a growing problem for the CRCNA among many other parts of the worldwide body of Christ.

Part IV provides recommendations as a direct response to the second point of our committee's mandate. We begin with an empirical observation: While North American denominations with ministries at home and abroad have a vital stake in addressing persecution, very few have taken up the issue in a serious way. We explore briefly some of the obstacles to action, both political and theological. We reject these arguments, suggesting that (1) the North American church (broadly understood) has a unique combination of motives and resources that make it well suited to act on the related issues of religious freedom and persecution; and (2) while churches are not omniscient, they nevertheless have a key role in teaching and mobilizing vigorous action on issues that matter in public life—and persecution, as we show in Parts II and III of the report, is clearly such an issue.

We conclude with real opportunities to act. The range of such opportunities, of course, is not unlimited. The actions of individuals and churches need not—and generally should not—replicate the work of advocacy groups in national capitals or judicial tribunals. Still, there are many possibilities: strengthening the flow of information about persecution; providing greater resources for highlighting religious freedom/persecution in worship, corporate prayer, Bible study, and adult education (it is worth noting here that one of our members is working diligently on a Bible study for church use, and two other members are writing a short book on persecution that is adaptable to adult education courses); equipping field staff to address restrictions on religious freedom; deepening interfaith networks; directly petitioning governments; and so on. We highlight new church-based experiments in peacemaking and interfaith engagement, some of which the denomination has already adopted.

An effective church response to persecution will not be monolithic. Hence we target these recommendations directly to different levels of denominational structure: individual members, church councils, congregations, classes, denominational agencies, and the denomination as a whole. At this point in our deliberations, we do not intend to recommend that the denomination create a new structure to address persecution. As we will discuss in the final report, we see existing ministries—the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee and the Office of Social Justice, as well as directly affected agencies such as Christian Reformed World Missions, World Renew, and Back to God Ministries International—as having a clear stake and a potential role in addressing the injustice of persecution.

IV. Conclusion

Persecution is indeed an urgent, complex, and comprehensive concern, and the CRCNA has not been immune from its effects. The Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty has sought to understand those effects both in North America and across the globe. Our approach has been to ground our discussion in the richness of the biblical narrative and the Reformed tradition. But we also recognize that the modern experience of persecution requires that we adapt and stretch our analysis of the Bible, church history, and the confessions. The goal is to use the resulting framework to

prompt the church into action. We hope that our recommendations combine strong resolve with careful prudence and that they ultimately reflect our best sense of God's intention for *shalom* in the world.

Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty

Jane Bruin

Kevin den Dulk, chair

Rob Joustra

Jonathan J. Kim

James Payton, Jr. (faculty adviser)

Stephen R. Snow

Naji Umran

Ken Van De Griend

Ruth Veltkamp



I. Introduction and overview of CRC Structure, Culture, and Leadership

Throughout the history of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) there have been defining moments that have carried us to new levels of faithfulness and fruitfulness. We have seen God at work through us and among us. We are grateful for the legacy of sacrifice, service, and innovative ministry that has characterized our story.

The Christian Reformed Church has responded to ministry needs and opportunities through the development of agencies, institutions, and offices in order to effectively and efficiently respond to where God is working and inviting us to join him in mission. The ad hoc development of agencies, institutions, and offices has led to good ministry but also to a structure that has become a complicated “confederacy of nonprofits” rather than a “union of ministries.”

Specifically, the CRCNA operates largely as autonomous agencies and ministries within a culture, structure, and leadership context that is often suspicious of anything that has the scent of centralization at the cost of greater collaboration and missional unity.

A description of board structure is illustrated in the *Agenda for Synod 1973*. The printed agenda for that year includes direct reports to synod from the following boards or committees: Back to God Hour Radio **Committee**, **Board** of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary; Christian Reformed **Board** of Foreign Missions; Christian Reformed **Board** of Home Missions; Christian Reformed **Board** of Publications; and Christian Reformed World Relief **Committee**. In addition, synod received reports from fourteen standing committees, including the Chaplain Committee, Synodical Committee on Race Relations, and Synodical Interim Committee.

The end of the report of the Synodical Interim Committee includes a recommendation that synod “take cognizance of the fact that the entire synodical committee now comprises the Christian Reformed Synod Trustees” (*Agenda for Synod 1973*, p. 224), and this recommendation was adopted by synod (*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 19). This is an important decision in that it signals the transition from a small Synodical Interim Committee to a Board of Trustees.

For the past forty years, the Christian Reformed Church has been going back and forth on the role of agency boards that have “administrative

authority” from synod and the role of a Board of Trustees that also has “administrative authority” from synod. Synod has addressed this issue with statements of encouragement for greater coordination, planning, priority setting, and evaluation of results, as well as development of the current office of executive director; but synod has not directly addressed questions regarding how to resolve issues and concerns that arise from “dual accountability” and “dual administrative authority.”

Over the course of the past forty years, while we have made some administrative adjustments, our ministry context has drastically changed. Ministry is becoming more locally focused and engaged. The membership of the Christian Reformed Church is growing increasingly interested in how denominational offices will assist local congregations to do ministry in their own community in comparison to how denominational offices do ministry “on behalf of the church.” As a result, the conversation is shifting toward how to resource congregations to do ministry as we also affirm that congregations resource ministries at the denominational level.

In the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) report to Synod 2013, we identified some key themes, principles, and values that are at the forefront of our discernment and discussion. We reaffirm the following:

A. The CRCNA is congregation based

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

B. The CRCNA needs to utilize a team approach

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

C. The CRCNA needs to be nimble

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

II. The work of the TFRSC

A. Overview

What structures, culture, and leadership will most enhance ministry and develop a culture of collaboration? That key question is asked by local churches and is being explored by the CRC as a denomination.

We all desire to glorify God. We all desire to be good stewards of time, talent, and treasure. We all desire to simplify where possible. We all desire to have better communication, fruitful collaboration, and greater capacity for ministry impact. Our answers to this question seek to serve the church—especially the local church.

At the same time, we also observe that what seemed to be effective and efficient at one time may no longer be as effective or efficient for the current times and circumstances. For example, advances in technology and communications now provide different tools and opportunities for effective ministry and organization. We are always navigating between certain principles of ministry and contextual practices of ministry. Answers given in one era may not be the answers to give in the next.

The journey of discernment and discovery will continue, but this is a significant moment in the journey.

Synod 2011 appointed “a CRCNA Structural and Cultural Review Task Force to conduct a review of the organization, culture, and leadership within the CRCNA” (*Acts of Synod 2011*, p. 864). The mandate of the task force, proposed to synod by the Board of Trustees (BOT), included providing advice to the BOT and/or synod regarding short-, medium-, and long-term measures that would improve the culture, structure, and leadership within the Christian Reformed Church.

The task force has presented reports to the Board of Trustees and to synod in 2012, 2013, and 2014. This current report to Synod 2015 is the final report of the TFRSC. We understand that the review of the organization, culture, and leadership of the CRCNA will continue after synod has responded to the recommendations in this report. The task force hopes that its work will provide a useful frame for ongoing development and that the steps taken will provide a strong foundation on which to build.

Throughout the entire process of our work there has been a conscious understanding that how the CRC organizes and does its work is foundational to achieving effective ministry and developing culture. Extensive consultations with all levels of stakeholders were held to understand need and to examine proposed solutions.

Another example of the process for developing our work has been that we were granted a four-year mandate by synod and were given the opportunity to provide reports and recommendations year by year. In addition, we have recommended and synod has granted time for conversations and discernment prior to decision-making; together we have also encouraged continued conversations with stakeholders as a key to the development of a nimble and more collaborative culture.

At the same time that the TFRSC has been working, we have been aware of convergent developments in denominational ministries such as the development of collaborative work groups. The task force notes its appreciation for synod’s willingness to experiment by endorsing concepts, supporting trajectories, and developing a listening posture in a setting known more for governance and decision-making.

B. Synopsis/summary of the TFRSC work

A review of prior reports and recommendations is noted in the following summary. The task force has

1. Developed a new position description for the executive director and provided framing for the search process that led to the appointment of a new executive director by Synod 2014.
2. Identified Five Streams (Faith Formation, Servant Leadership, Global Missions, Loving Mercy and Doing Justice, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship) as ministry priorities that provide focus for all the work done by the Christian Reformed Church, agencies, and ministries. Synod 2013 endorsed the Five Streams for discussion and discernment within the church, its agencies, boards, and planning groups.
3. Brought recommendations on five pathways to cultivate binationality: gathering to discern vision and understanding of our context, developing an organizational culture, senior leadership position, senior staff team to develop collaboration, and governance. Synod 2013 adopted the plan and directed the Board of Trustees to explore implementation.
4. Participated in and provided ongoing input into the development of a congregational services team to better serve churches. This team brings together staff with special expertise through collaborative and cross-agency efforts. In addition, this team has been able to incorporate faith formation initiatives without forming a new agency, provide direction for the Network, lead in building community, and provide better governance and management of offices formerly known as *specialized ministries*.
5. Brought recommendations to change culture through “participatory management” and collaborative tables for consideration by the senior leadership team, which synod adopted in 2013.
6. Developed the shape of an executive leadership team, after exploring different options, that will
 - be oriented toward congregations and classes in a servant leadership posture.
 - be capable of leading a wide variety of functions as a small team.
 - foster collaboration with recognition of the diverse context of churches today.

Based on analysis of needs and options, new position descriptions were drafted, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, for BOT approval. The timing of sequential search processes ensured formation of a team that is committed to and capable of leading the CRCNA into its next chapter:

- Executive director, presented to synod for appointment in June 2014.
 - Canadian ministries director, appointed after the executive director, presented to synod for ratification in June 2014.
 - Director of ministries and administration, to be appointed and ratified on behalf of synod by the BOT in February 2015.
7. Developed a range of proposals for consideration at Synod 2014 on board governance and specifically regarding how agency boards should relate to the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA; this led to a working plenary session of synod and provided feedback for the TFRSC.

8. Brought recommendations regarding development of a nominating committee for boards and board training in policy development, strategic planning, decision-making, and models of governance; these recommendations were adopted by Synod 2014.

Note: Readers of this report are encouraged to refer to earlier reports of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture as found in the *Acts of Synod 2012* (Agenda Supplement, pp. 665-88), *Agenda for Synod 2013* (pp. 348-93), and *Agenda for Synod 2014* (pp. 351-80). These reports are also available online at www.crcna.org/SynodResources. The reports and findings tend to be cumulative, and earlier reports are helpful in the ongoing conversations.

III. Central governance proposal

The primary focus of this report is a proposed reorganization of the governance of the agency boards for Christian Reformed World Missions, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Back to God Ministries International, as well as the governance of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and core ministries under its governance.

The task force recommendation is to address difficulties associated with “dual accountability” and “dual administrative authority” while also aligning the Board of Trustees with the objective of expanded classis representation and, as a result, increased congregational connection.

Finding the best way to structure governance of ministry within the Christian Reformed Church has been an ongoing issue. The Christian Reformed Church has reviewed its structure often. For example, Synod 1971 adopted a series of organizational moves, at the center of which was the expansion of a previous three-member synodical committee into a new Synodical Interim Committee consisting of more than a dozen members representing various regions of the denomination.

Using the year 1971 as a marker, a review of the past forty-four years reveals that the ongoing conversation began to take on a recognizable pattern. Dissatisfaction resulted in the formation of a study committee. A bold proposal was crafted by a study committee and presented to synod. Synod adopted a “halfway” measure and introduced some level of change, but not to the extent proposed by the study committee. A few years later some adjustment was needed, and the cycle began again.

The current task force desires to acknowledge and appreciate the conversation and adjustments that have been made over the past four decades. At the same time, a review of this history leads one to wonder if the time is right for a process and a dialogue in which more than a “halfway” measure could ultimately be adopted.

We wish to highlight the following challenge made in a structure report presented to Synod 1990: “With an increasingly complex administrative structure, the denomination would be well served by a set of common guidelines, a unifying purpose, and a means for planning and implementing an overall strategy” (*Agenda for Synod 1990*, p. 331).

It will also be helpful to recall the insight and challenge gleaned from the “Vision 21” experience described in the structure report presented to Synod 1990:

The key to successful coordination and integration is appropriately designated authority. The Synodical Interim Committee was not able to achieve satisfactory integration of agency work because it was not vested with the authority to see to it that it was done. . . . If the denomination is serious about coordination of resources and work, then it must accept the necessity of an administrative structure that is given the authority of synod to do the work mandated by synod.

(*Agenda for Synod 1990*, p. 337)

If this challenge was true in 1990, it certainly is also true in 2015. Twenty-five years of conversations have continued the culture of a collection of nonprofits rather than a “union of ministry.” Is there a direction that we can discern and agree to take together?

The TFRSC raised this issue of board reorganization for discernment and discussion at Synod 2014. Specifically, the task force laid out three different directions the church could take to 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.

We noted then that we are seeking to work through and avoid the extremes of centralization or decentralization. We also are seeking to provide space for the focused passions of people and ministries while hoping to harness together resources and people for a unified mission. Our task force reports have not been intended to present a panacea, but to indicate ways in which we might move forward together in a new era of ministry.

The three options presented to Synod 2014 for discernment and discussion were the following (see *Agenda for Synod 2014*, pp. 361-63):

- A. Continue with the status quo—the structure of a Board of Trustees and agency boards as they currently exist.
- B. Centralize authority by changing all agency boards to advisory councils and maintaining the authority and make-up of the Board of Trustees.
- C. Revise the structure of both the Board of Trustees and agency boards to align with ecclesiastical structures; develop a classis-based council of delegates with an executive council that replaces the Board of Trustees and change (all or some) agency boards to advisory councils.

The three options were provided for contrast and comparison. Various strengths and weaknesses were highlighted. The options reflected discussions held in advance with each of the agency boards and with some of the advisory committees.

Synod 2014 received a thirty-minute presentation of the three options. Feedback to the TFRSC came from table discussions during a plenary session and via email. An email address was sent out to the churches to allow individual church members to also weigh in with their comments, concerns, and questions.

Having reviewed the feedback from synod (including emailed responses), from a second round of discussions with agency boards and the Board of Trustees, and from other means of consultation, the TFRSC recommends that Synod 2015 adopt a new governance structure based on Option C above.

A. *A new governance structure*

The current 30-member Board of Trustees (12 selected from the regions within the United States, 12 selected from the classes within Canada, and 6 at-large—3 each from the United States and Canada) would transition to a Council of Delegates (COD) in which 48 of the members would come from the classes (one delegate per classis) and 12 additional members would provide specific expertise, skills, and diversity, for a total of 60 COD members. Each classis would have a direct connection to the Council of Delegates.

Like its antecedent (the Board of Trustees), the COD would serve on behalf of synod when not in session, would be responsible for the denomination's Ministry Plan, and would respond to synod's instructions to meet the mission and vision of the CRCNA.¹ The COD would be a policy governance board, in line with the task force's 2014 recommendation for adoption of policy governance by all boards (adopted by synod; see *Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 564).

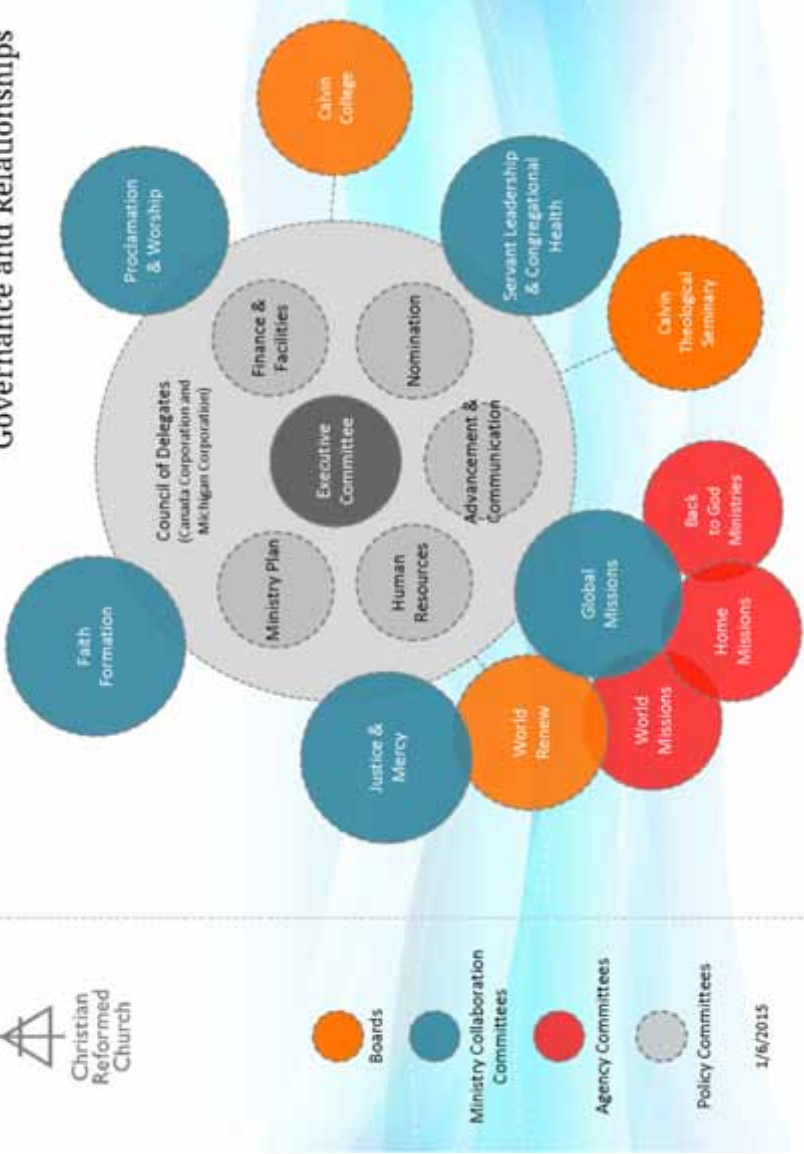
This change would emphasize (1) strategic leadership over administrative detail, (2) outward vision rather than an internal or operational preoccupation, (3) encouragement of diverse viewpoints through collaborative decision-making, (4) clear distinction of council and executive roles, (5) the future over the past or present, and (6) proactivity rather than reactivity.

Note: See Appendix A for policy governance features proposed for the Council of Delegates, Executive Committee, Ministry Collaboration Committees, and Agency Committees.

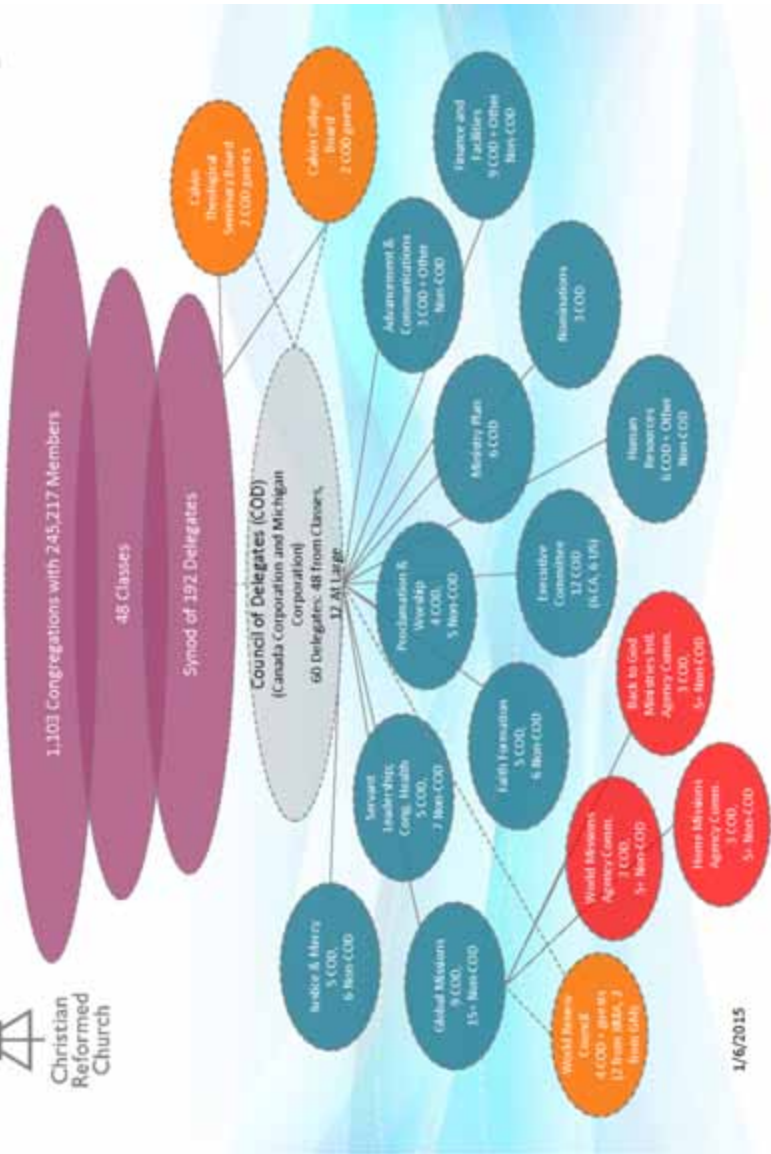
As an aid to understanding this proposal, two diagrams of this new governance structure are included on the next page. Diagram A shows the proposed alignment of governance and relationships with the Council of Delegates, and Diagram B shows the proposed flow of governance alignments and relationships from congregations to classes to synod to the Council of Delegates.

¹ Necessary constitutional and bylaw changes for the BOT of the CRCNA would be modified as necessary for the COD. "The (current) purposes of the Board are to transact all matters assigned to it by synod; to supervise the management of the agencies and committees established by synod and designated in the bylaws of the Board including the planning, coordinating, and integrating of their work; and to cooperate with the educational institutions affiliated with the denomination toward integrating the respective missions of those institutions into the denominational ministry program."

Governance and Relationships



Governance and Relationships



B. Advantages of a Council of Delegates for governance

As we make recommendations to synod regarding a new board governance structure, we recognize that a review of potential advantages of a Council of Delegates is needed. We present the following list of advantages for discussion and discernment:

1. General

- A Council of Delegates that is primarily formed by delegates chosen from every classis fosters more direct connections to congregations and classes.

- This makes the organization of the Council of Delegates supportive of further development of the Five Streams ministry priorities rather than continuation of agency silos.
- It allows for better coordination and implementation of denominational priorities.
- It allows for a big-picture strategic view, beyond any one view by an agency.
- It leads to adaptive change via priority setting that pulls together priorities of the agencies and institutions.
- It addresses the tension of centralization/decentralization by including most helpful elements of each approach.
- It provides space for champions of specific agencies to provide input into programming and link back to classes.
- It facilitates more collaboration by having agencies represented at the same table under the same governance.
- It recognizes binationality by maintaining a function of a Michigan corporation and a Canada corporation as part of ministry planning and governance.
- It continues our commitment to diversity of representation on all boards and committees.
- It recognizes the particular external needs of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew.
- It provides a minimum annual cost savings of \$40,000 or more, depending on frequency of meetings and increased use of technology.
- It increases our focus on congregations.

2. Council of Delegates

- The Council of Delegates model clarifies policy and governance while eliminating dual governance.
- It clarifies how decisions are made and by whom.
- It emphasizes networking/communication.
- It is more nimble to respond to situations when needed and makes it easier to adjust ministry shares or provide reallocation of funding if necessary to align with ministry priorities.
- It provides for the agencies greater access and communication to the Council of Delegates and vice-versa.
- It facilitates ongoing agency collaboration conversations and possible restructuring.
- It clarifies accountability to synod, local congregations, and other organizations.
- It includes a comprehensive nomination committee.
- It focuses on purpose of ministry, not just on structures themselves.
- Agency recommendations can more efficiently move through and be approved by the Council of Delegates or its Executive Committee, saving time and energy.
- It reduces the aggregate board membership.
- It creates closer ties between the Council of Delegates and ministries.
- It retains/includes people of passion for the ministries and allows for advisory groups.

- It retains/includes people with specialized skill sets needed by the ministries.
- It allows for focus on the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team challenges that have been identified.

3. Synod

- The Council of Delegates model clarifies accountability—synod can charge one organization for implementation of ministry priorities.
- Council of Delegates is assigned delegated authority between synods.
- Council of Delegates is more clearly identified as responsible for carrying out strategic priorities of synod.

4. Classes and Congregations

- The Council of Delegates model has representation from all classes.
- It will improve holistic communication with the classes and local congregations.

One consistent question that we have faced is whether this approach is “centralization” with the implication that centralization is a danger to avoid. This proposal eliminates dual authority, which is different than centralization. If the recommendation of the TFRSC is adopted, the result will be a broader and more classically based inclusion of those who will have “delegated” authority of synod.

Agency boards that become Agency Committees as part of larger Global Mission Collaboration Committees will have the same opportunity to speak into the work of an agency with their passion and perspective as before. Agencies will be more clearly accountable to the Council of Delegates as an agent of synod. The current agencies will continue to function as agencies of the Christian Reformed Church while having a different governance structure. Those who make the charge of “centralization” have mistaken a change of governance structure with centralization. Greater collaboration and alignment is not, in itself, centralization.

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## Recommendations

1. That synod approve the formation of a Council of Delegates (with an Executive Committee, Ministry Collaboration Committees, Agency Committees, and Policy Committees) to take the place of the current Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Back to God Ministries International.
2. That synod direct the current Board of Trustees to form a Transition Committee, under the leadership of the executive director, with agency and ministry representation, to facilitate the transition from the Board of Trustees to the Council of Delegates by Synod 2018 or sooner, including
  - presentation of annual reports to synod on the steps and timeline for implementation.
  - review of and possible recommendations for changes to the Church Order, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of the

CRCNA, and the various organizational bylaws (for the United States and Canada) relating to Christian Reformed World Missions, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Back to God Ministries International.

- consideration of other key issues that may arise in the implementation of transition.

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IV. Global mission capability and collaboration

One of the key issues identified in the TFRSC report to Synod 2012 was to discern the appropriate structure needed to enhance global mission capability as it relates to Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, CRWRC (now World Renew), and Back to God Ministries International.

During this time of discernment, the Board of Trustees has gone on record to encourage a global mission conversation. Specifically, the CRCNA Board of Trustees adopted the following motion and grounds at its May 2014 meeting with regard to the global mission agencies:

A motion carries to encourage the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture to examine the possibilities of much closer collaboration and structural unity among the mission-oriented agencies: Back to God Ministries International, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Christian Reformed World Missions.

Grounds:

1. In the context of today's missional reality, the time has come to consider a unification of forces and resources.
2. By combining resources, we may be able to offer a leaner and more effective comprehensive mission program.
3. A single governance structure may strengthen ties and relationships with both the Board of Trustees and supporting congregations.

(BOT Minute 5311)

While this report recommends a single governance structure per the Global Missions Ministry Collaboration Committee nested within the Council of Delegates model, the TFRSC is not presenting recommendations for a "unification of forces and resources . . . to offer a leaner and more effective comprehensive mission program" involving "the mission-oriented agencies." Rather, on their own initiative, the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions are beginning a process of exploring the feasibility of merging into a unified local and global missions agency.

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#### Recommendation

That synod (1) await the proposal now anticipated from the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions (and the endorsement of the Board of Trustees) and, (2) assuming adoption by Synod 2015 or 2016, instruct the ED to (a) follow the implementation plans approved for the unification project, while keeping Back to God Ministries International and World Renew well informed along the way and (b) report to synod as part of the annual report on structural transition.

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V. Advancing the Five Streams and adapting structure around the Five Streams

One of the key moments in our journey was the reception given by Synod 2013 to a presentation on the Five Streams ministry priorities. Delegates suggested adjustments and refinements, but there was broad and consistent affirmation of the proposal to shift toward identifying priorities that will help the church focus on its mission and will serve to connect local ministry with denominational ministry.

Specifically, Synod 2013 approved a recommendation to present the Five Streams as ministry priorities for discussion and discernment within the church, agencies, boards, and planning groups.

We are glad to report that the Five Streams have become a major part of conversations related to collaborative work groups as well as agency work.

The Five Streams provide a context of identifying ministry priorities that relate to and are congruent with the work of ministry in local churches. We have heard a number of examples in which churches have aligned their ministry around the Five Streams priorities.

Most recently, the Board of Trustees aligned its agenda, including discussions and reports, around the Five Streams.

The Five Streams have become an effective communication tool to allow our churches and classes to be increasingly more effective in expressing the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide.

At the same time, we are only at the beginning of this journey. While there is still much work to be done, it appears timely and appropriate to ask Synod 2015 to affirm the trajectory of the Five Streams priorities even as we recommend that the executive director be tasked with continuing to refine and develop how the Five Streams may be a tool not only for communication but also for structure and culture.

The task force presents the following diagram and explanatory paragraphs as one possible way to incorporate the Five Streams to continue aiding our mission as a denomination.

Potential Organizational Development to Reflect the Five Streams

Global Missions	Loving Mercy and Doing Justice	Servant Leadership	Faith Formation	Gospel Proclamation and Worship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home Missions ▪ World Missions ▪ Back to God Ministries Int'l. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban Aboriginal Ministries ▪ Safe Church Ministry ▪ Race Relations ▪ Disability Concerns ▪ Office of Social Justice ▪ Centre for Public Dialogue ▪ World Renew ▪ Diaconal Ministries Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustaining Congregational Excellence ▪ ServiceLink ▪ Pastor-Church Relations ▪ Chaplaincy and Care Ministry ▪ Classis Renewal ▪ Candidacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries ▪ Calvin College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Office of Worship Services ▪ Calvin Theological Seminary

Dotted vertical lines between columns indicate fluidity between streams. In addition, agencies, ministries, and institutions participate often in more than one stream.

Each ministry listed in the Five Streams will continue to be led by an administrative leader (most often a director level position).

In terms of *organizational relationships*, each agency and ministry director reports directly to the executive director of the CRCNA, the Canadian ministries director, or the director of ministries and administration. (*Note: The directors of Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Back to God Ministries International no longer report to autonomous boards.*)

In addition, each agency and ministry that serves congregations (either as a specific focus or via appropriate stream metaphors) includes an advancement function, allowing churches and individuals to recognize the identities of these efforts and provide them with resources via ministry shares as well as gifts and offerings.

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## Recommendations

1. That synod endorse the Five Streams functions as ministry priorities to strategically focus and adaptively organize the work of the Christian Reformed Church in North America while respecting and building on our previous mission efforts, history, and legacy of relationships and member support.
2. That synod instruct the executive director to provide an annual update to its authorized governance board, including recommendations, on how the Five Streams are being used and developed.

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VI. Future role of classis in the CRCNA

A. Background

As a result of listening to stakeholders, the TFRSC identified many issues to be reviewed in 2012, including this one: “Describe the future role of classes, as well as the potential role of regional structures and regional synods” (*Acts of Synod 2012*, p. 676).

The task force recognizes this issue as one yet to be studied, but it also recommends that another body be tasked with this project. As background to this recommendation, the task force presents the following observations and information.

Classis provides an opportunity to seek the will of God through collective deliberation. Bound together in our shared call to be engaged in the mission of God, classis functions as a family gathering to celebrate the work of God in neighboring churches and communities and to support one another through brokenness and pain.

What is the purpose of classis? As described in section II of the report of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon (quoting the report of the Office of Deacon Task Force, *Agenda for Synod 2013*, p. 279): “The

purpose of the major assemblies is not simply governance and adjudication but deliberation about the church's character and ministry."

Currently there are 48 classes in North America (11 in Canada, 36 in the U.S., and 1 with member churches from both Canada and the U.S.), arranged geographically into 12 regions. Each classis has the authority to deal with common matters of concern. Its decisions are binding on the congregations in its respective region. Each congregation is responsible for sending one pastor and one elder (and in some classes one deacon) to a classis meeting. A review of classes would show that some of the classes operate very effectively, while others struggle with things like focus, finances, and energy.

As with many large organizations, structures and relationships within the organization need to evolve to meet the needs or demands of their constituents or congregations. A review of classis, and any changes suggested, should focus on how to better support the ministry of the local congregation and the mutual accountability and ministry of the classis, and how to establish a healthy relationship between the local congregation, regional ministries, agencies, and the denomination.

B. Key question

The *broad question* for study is: What structure best supports the ministry of local congregations and their ecclesiastical relationship and accountability locally, regionally, and denominationally?

Three key foundational questions require attention in order to answer the broader question:

- What is the purpose of classis?
- What should be the functions of a classis?
- What could a revised or alternate model (and organizational structure) of classis look like, based on its purpose and functions?

To this end, it is worth highlighting the work of task forces that have addressed in various ways the nature and purpose of classes, including characteristics and goals the local Christian Reformed Church would like to see in order to support its ministry. The work of these task forces includes the report on Cultivating Binationality in the CRCNA (see *Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 353-60; see also *Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 432, 440-42), the report of the Review of the Canadian Ministries (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 439-40, 448-72), the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force report (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 263-98), and the reports of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, pp. 323-50; *Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 380-410).

Much work has already been done by the Classis Renewal Ministry Team (CRMT) to support classes and explore characteristics that lead to a healthy classis. The mandate of this team is as follows: "The Classis Renewal Ministry Team (CRMT) exists to foster vital, healthy classes within the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRNCA)." This is consistent with the denomination's vision of "a diverse family of healthy congregations, assemblies, and ministries expressing the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide."

Through their work, the CRMT has identified Ten Benchmarks of Healthy Classes:

1. Growth through evangelism
2. Diaconal involvement
3. Paid staff
4. Vision statement
5. Prayer coordinator
6. Classis ministry teams
7. Enhanced agenda
8. Commitment to new church development
9. Leadership development
10. Strategic plan

The Christian Reformed Church must assume a posture that grants gracious space for classes by embracing commonalities and differences. In essence, empowering a classis to be shaped by the needs of the local congregations—their context, ministry opportunities, and resources—so that the mission of the local church can flourish.

To continue reforming as a denomination, we must imagine new ways of empowering the local church and regional ministries. The following are questions for reflection, options to explore, and resources to consult:

- Concerning the level of *administrative tasks* versus *innovation in ministry* that one might expect from an effective classis, we would ask, How much machinery versus delivery?
- How might classis identify and live within the Five Streams?
- How can classis better support struggling congregations and the work of successful congregations?
- How can classis better support new church plants?
- How can the denomination and its agencies better support a classis?
- How can classis better support other existing ministries (diaconal, campus, chaplaincy, etc.) and the work of the denominational office?
- What resources are needed (financial and personnel) to make a classis or regional gathering function well? And how will they be met?

C. *Options for exploration*

1. Coaches for classis (i.e., Classis Renewal Ministry Team model)
 - a. Continue listening posture and conversations with the classis to determine best practices, barriers/challenges, and opportunities/needs that will best support the local congregation.
 - b. Continue conversations on mandate, purpose, and activities of the classis.
2. Visioning at the classis level

Visioning and planning at the classis level should take place so that member churches and related ministries can creatively discern their context and access the necessary resources that will enable them to meaningfully engage in mission.
3. Ways to increase diversity at classis
 - a. Acknowledge the gap between our hopes and current reality.
 - b. Ethnic congregations that are not present at classis.

4. Revised models of classis

a. Ministry clusters

- Smaller gatherings of churches geographically linked.
- Structured or informal body to share in ministry, best practices, resources (including human resources), training, collaboration, congregational development, etc.

b. Regional centers

Network of centers across North America to support congregations and delivery of ministries.

c. Point of contact (lead convener/lead collaborator)

- One-stop shopping for congregations (i.e., one point of contact per ministry stream).
- Assists churches to navigate their contexts while ensuring resources, collaboration, and communication between congregations.

d. Linking local churches, classis, and denominational offices

- Assign members of the Ministries Leadership Council to classis in a relationship building, listening mode to discover and relay best practices, feedback, ministry concerns, and needs to denominational agencies, and to help congregations with networking.
- Regular visits of the executive team with the classes.
- Each classis would have a representative on the Council of Delegates.

D. Resources

- Classis Renewal Ministry Team
- The report on Cultivating Binationality in the CRCNA for material on regional gatherings
- The Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team (SPACT) report
- Diakonia Remixed: The Office of Deacon report
- The Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon report

E. Summary of grounds for a working group on classes

1. The effectiveness of a regional gathering of churches is vital to the health of the ministry of the local church and denomination.
2. The Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team (SPACT) identified the classis as a key ministry challenge; therefore, the classis needs to be addressed and resourced accordingly.
3. “Intentional recognition of commonalities and significant differences allows adequate flexibility in leadership, structures, and policies to respond to each national context as well as regional, local, and ethnic contexts” (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, p. 354).
4. The Classis Renewal Ministry Team is positioned well to identify structural issues and barriers within a classis and to provide coaching to assist in the development of classis, and/or reorganization of classis, so that there can be a flourishing ministry and an effective gathering of churches.

5. A collaborative group (Better Together) is currently addressing some of these issues. Their work should be brought into the conversation that develops.

The task force concludes by affirming the following counsel from the report on Cultivating Binationality (see *Agenda for Synod 2013*, p. 355):

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

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## Recommendations

1. That synod instruct the executive director to appoint and resource a working group (Classis Renewal Group) to build on the work of the existing Classis Renewal Ministry Team, including an examination of the nature, scope, and purpose of classes, with the objective of boldly exploring and innovatively addressing revisions to structures and to the Church Order that will enable classes to flourish.
2. That synod instruct the executive director to present an interim report on the Classis Renewal Group to synod's authorized governance board in May 2016 and a final report to the same group in 2017.

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VII. Review of synod's role in governance of the CRC

The TFRSC was mandated to review "the organization, culture, and leadership of the CRCNA" (*Acts of Synod 2011*, p. 864) from the standpoint of effectiveness in ministry. While the task force has concentrated on the Board of Trustees, agencies, and staff, early listening sessions with stakeholders at all levels also raised questions about the role of synod, for both the current and future context of ministry.

Thus far, the TFRSC has not conducted a review of synod for possible changes to enhance its role in the governance or structure of the CRC. Synod is the broad, annual gathering that brings together representation from each classis, the agencies, the BOT, and selected other representatives to deal with a broad array of issues, strategic direction, agency direction, and ecclesiastical questions. Given the importance of synod in CRC governance, recent changes in technology, and expectations of CRC members, the TFRSC believes that a thorough review of synod's practices and relationships with the BOT and agencies would be very desirable.

A key additional factor that also needs to be weighed during a review of synod is the adopted recommendations regarding the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force report and recommendations of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon if adopted by Synod 2015. Any additional study would also be helpful in identifying how the Five Streams or other overall framing of ministry affects the agenda of synod.

Such a study would be timely, considering that the TFRSC report and whatever action is taken in response by synod should provide a useful

backdrop for a review of synod and of its intersection points with the BOT, agencies, and staff.

The TFRSC is completing its work in time for Synod 2015, but in view of the number of items that are still unfolding and unresolved, we believe that the commission of a subsequent task force would be appropriate in order to conduct a meaningful review of synod.

A. *Overview of synod*

Synod generally meets for one week each June. There are four representatives from each classis, usually two ordained pastors and two elders. A large agenda is prepared and available prior to the gathering, with many topics and issues vetted by an advisory committee before consideration by the body of synod. The turnover of synod delegates is very high—very few delegates serve more than one consecutive year. Under Reformed polity, synod functions with authority as delegated by the individual churches and classes. It then follows that the BOT, full-time executive leadership (through the BOT), and agencies and other CRC-related ministries report to synod.

B. *Suggested matters for discussion*

During its work on the issues and functions of the BOT, agencies, and staff, the TFRSC encountered questions centered on relationships with and responsibilities to synod. Just as the task force was charged with seeking improvements in the ministry delivery and functioning of the work of the BOT, agencies, and staff, it seems appropriate that these relationships and responsibilities be reviewed from the vantage point of synod. It is very clear that synod is very important to the life and operation of the CRC, thus an occasional review of synod seems appropriate. Changes in technology, the means of communication, and the education of CRC members offer opportunities not previously available.

The TFRSC does not wish to restrict an agenda for a potential study and review of synod; however, it feels that some questions could be helpful in considering whether a review committee would be useful. Clearly it would be up to synod to ensure a proper mandate for a review committee. In the course of its work, the task force has discovered some items that might be considered for review:

- What is the role of synod in enhancing vision, mission, and purpose for the CRC today?
- What is the role of synod in the governance structure of the CRC today?
- What are the implications of the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force report and the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon?
- Is there a way to deal with governance and vision in the same gathering, or should there be different venues or gatherings?
- What possible additions or deletions to the functions of synod should be considered?
- Are there viable options to streamline the full synod agenda or the time devoted to certain functions, such as greater use of advisory committees?
- What are the options for the number of delegates to synod?
- Consider how delegates are chosen.

- What options are available regarding the length of synod? (Many younger members cannot take a week away from their family or business.)
- What relationship and communication should exist between synod and the BOT?
- Should the BOT and synod use technology to have a meeting between on-site meetings of synod so that the BOT can inform synod of progress (for example, at the midpoint of the fiscal year)?
- Should synod require the BOT to report to the leadership of synod on an interim basis?
- What assurance is there that delegates to synod will include diversity and a range of needed skill sets?
- Should delegates serve a two- or three-year term to provide greater continuity?
- Should delegates to synod receive periodic reports from the BOT during their term?
- What is the relevance of synod to young people as part of the church today?
- What is the role of synod as a thoughtful, discerning body with regard to issues the church is facing?

C. *Suggested information to be obtained for review*

Given the importance of any review of synod in the CRC, it is critical that a committee have quality information to consider and to form recommendations. The knowledge and views of synod are likely to vary, considering the many different delegates and individuals who participate in the governance of the CRC. Just as the TFRSC benefited from an array of input, we suggest that it is important to solicit input from a variety of sources and to review the polity of higher assemblies of other denominations. An initial list of items to be considered for information may include the following:

- A review of the agendas of at least three recent synods.
- A list of all critical items that synod must act upon each year.
- Discussion of facets of work to be reviewed and information that should be assembled with those who have experienced attendance at synod.
- Interviews and/or questionnaires of recent officers of synod and of personnel in the denomination responsible for organizing synod.
- Interviews and/or questionnaires of recent synodical delegates, including ethnic and faculty advisers and young adult representatives.
- Information from the groups of individuals named above (e.g., officers of synod, staff to synod, advisers and delegates to synod) about what is working well and what changes they might suggest.
- Interviews of BOT officers about their view of the Board's relationship with synod and changes they might suggest for synod or the BOT.
- Suggestions for improvement in the way BOT officers are considered at synod or by subcommittees.
- A compilation of views regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the current size of synod.
- On the basis of the preceding compilation, a discussion regarding the length of synod and what would need to change to reduce its length.

- Research regarding options for selecting participants, especially to ascertain that all needed skill sets are present at each synod.
- A compilation of information on how to involve younger members as delegates.
- A compilation of information from other denominations about the relationship between their equivalent of the CRC synod and their equivalent to the CRC Board of Trustees.

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### **Recommendation**

That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to bring to Synod 2016 a proposed mandate, parameters of composition, and a timeline for a task force to review the practices and functions of synod.

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VIII. Concluding comments

The task force began its work amid considerable anxiety and tension in the CRCNA. Changes in leadership just before Synod 2011 were just one of the factors among many that led synod to form this task force.

The TFRSC believes that the CRC continues on a journey of ministry in which she has been given many blessings that have led us to serve well, but these blessings can be molded into even more effective ministry. Periodic reviews to seek the best use of time, talent, and treasure to aid members in their Christian walk and ministry should include the functioning and structure of all parts of the denomination. A culture of honest assessment and review combined with the willingness to change to more effectively minister in this time and context is one we hope has been encouraged by our work and reports.

The task force is also hopeful that the material presented over the past four years and the recommendations contained therein provide a foundation for the current leadership to continue the course that God has set before us to fulfill his mission as a church.

Note: As an aid to deliberating on this report, the TFRSC has prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers) document, included as Appendix B, and an attachment on Binationality and Board Governance, included as Appendix C.

IX. Recommendations

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

B. That synod approve the formation of a Council of Delegates (with an Executive Committee, Ministry Collaboration Committees, Agency Committees, and Policy Committees) to take the place of the current Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Back to God Ministries International.

C. That synod direct the current Board of Trustees to form a Transition Committee, under the leadership of the executive director, with agency and ministry representation, to facilitate the transition from the Board of Trustees to the Council of Delegates by Synod 2018 or sooner, including

- presentation of annual reports to synod on the steps and timeline for implementation.
- review of and possible recommendations for changes to the Church Order, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA, and the various organizational bylaws (for the United States and Canada) relating to Christian Reformed World Missions, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Back to God Ministries International.
- consideration of other key issues that may arise in the implementation of transition.

D. That synod (1) await the proposal now anticipated from the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions (and the endorsement of the Board of Trustees) and, (2) assuming adoption by Synod 2015 or 2016, instruct the ED to (a) follow the implementation plans approved for the unification project, while keeping Back to God Ministries International and World Renew well informed along the way and (b) report to synod as part of the annual report on structural transition.

E. That synod endorse the Five Streams functions as ministry priorities to strategically focus and adaptively organize the work of the Christian Reformed Church in North America while respecting and building on our previous mission efforts, history, and legacy of relationships and member support.

F. That synod instruct the executive director to provide an annual update to its authorized governing board, including recommendations, on how the Five Streams are being used and developed.

G. That synod instruct the executive director to appoint and resource a working group (Classis Renewal Group) to build on the work of the existing Classis Renewal Ministry Team, including an examination of the nature, scope, and purpose of classes, with the objective of boldly exploring and innovatively addressing revisions to structures and to the Church Order that will enable classes to flourish.

H. That synod instruct the executive director to present an interim report on the Classis Renewal Group to synod's authorized governing board in May 2016 and a final report to the same group in 2017.

I. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to bring to Synod 2016 a proposed mandate, parameters of composition, and a timeline for a task force to review the practices and functions of synod.

J. That synod dismiss the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture
Calvin J. Aardsma
Joel R. Boot, chair
R. Scott Greenway

Tammy Heidbuurt
Julius T. Medenblik, reporter
Peter Meerveld
Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo
William C. Terpstra
Steven R. Timmermans
Katherine Vandergrift
Colin P. Watson, Sr.

Appendix A

Policy Governance Features for the Proposed Council of Delegates, Executive Committee, Ministry Collaboration Committees, and Agency Committees

The **policy focus** of the Council of Delegates (COD) would be guided by the following **principles** encompassing relationships, processes, and delegation of authority:

1. The primary purpose and priority of the Council would be to develop, nurture, and maintain the strategic or ministry plan and its associated processes (i.e., mission, vision, and foresight) as adopted by synod, establishing the denomination's aims (or ends).
2. Council decisions should predominantly¹ focus on policy, including the following:
 - a. The development of policies clearly defining the relationship of the Council to the executive director (ED), the denominational ministries, agencies, and committees. These policies encompass executive/management limitations, authorities, and accountabilities.
 - b. A regular and rigorous assessment of the executive director, evaluating the relationship between the Council and the ED and monitoring the ED's performance through the achievement of specified "ends."
 - c. Setting performance indicators of success and progress for the denomination.
 - d. Setting its own governance process, conduct, and assessment, including its performance in meeting the Council's annual work plan.
3. The Council would aim to ensure broad consultation through active and ongoing collaboration with and between CRCNA congregations, delegates, committees, partners, and institutions. The COD would utilize committees, working groups, and advisory groups as necessary to meet this aim (see next page).

¹ Although the Council of Delegates would predominantly focus on policy issues and decisions, it would continue to be responsible for the approval of the denominational budget and other important functions requiring policy oversight or approval (e.g., recruitment of an ED).

4. The Council would define, delegate, and limit rather than react, prescribe, and ratify.
5. In the event of a crisis, the Council would be entrusted to manage the issue(s) at an operational level, where and if necessary.
6. The Council would speak as one voice entrusted by its congregations and synod as their *stewards* to lead the CRCNA through effective and collaborative foresight, planning, and adaptive change.

The Council would need to develop how to implement policy governance, including the role of the Executive Committee; however, a number of policy committees are already suggested in the model for beginning this implementation (see Diagram A in the TFRSC report).

In addition to an Executive Committee (consisting of 4 officers and 8 other COD members—6 Canadian; 6 U.S.), three types of COD committees are proposed:

Policy Committees (Advancement and Communication, Finance and Facilities, Human Resources, Ministry Plan, and Nomination) would provide the COD with (1) recommendations for policy additions and modifications in each area and (2) oversight of ongoing resource functions. While the Ministry Plan Policy Committee would consist of COD members only (given the central responsibility the COD would hold for Ministry Plan development and implementation), the other policy committees would include non-COD members. The Nomination Policy Committee would be responsible for assigning COD members to all committees as well as identifying non-COD membership for committees including such members.

Ministry Collaboration Committees would reflect the Five Streams: Global Missions, Loving Mercy and Doing Justice, Servant Leadership, Faith Formation, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship. Each Ministry Collaboration Committee (MCC) would be mandated to consider policies relevant to its focus and inclusive of the agencies and ministries identified in Diagram A (in the TFRSC report), bringing reports and recommendations for action to the full COD. In addition, each MCC would also be attentive to management and operational aims (or ends), monitoring programs, resource needs, and the strategic planning of the agencies and ministries within its scope and with the aim of supporting and advancing the overall Ministry Plan.² As such, each MCC would be composed of COD members and additional non-COD members (as noted in Diagram B in the TFRSC report); further, the Global Missions MCC would be composed of three component Agency Committees (see below).

Finally, to ensure sufficient attention to the agencies and ministries within each Ministry Collaboration Committee's scope, these committees could possibly meet a third time (perhaps by use of technology), as needed, each year in addition to the two times they would meet just prior to COD meetings.

² Agencies and ministries would have the option of being served by advisory groups—groups that could provide additional representation, ambassador functions, and feedback without serving in formal governance roles.

Agency Committees—As mentioned above, the Global Missions MCC would include three component Agency Committees, one each for Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Back to God Ministries International. These Agency Committees would serve the overall policy purpose of the Global Missions MCC and provide these agencies with an overview of programmatic, resource, and strategic dimensions. The COD members of each Agency Committee would be members of the Global Missions MCC; in addition, each Agency Committee would include five or more non-COD members.

The boards of World Renew, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary would remain the same, due to requirements for recognition and accreditation in their respective fields of endeavor, ability to receive grant funding, and ability to do ministry in contexts where churches are not welcome. (World Renew also does not receive ministry-share funding.)

The organizational implication of this proposed change in governance is that the directors of Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Back to God Ministries International would be accountable to the executive director of the CRCNA and the Council of Delegates rather than to both the Board of Trustees (through the ED) and their own agency board. Yet the identity of each mission agency would remain, and their legal status as separate charitable organizations (in both Canada and the U.S.) would continue (see also section IV in the TFRSC report regarding current conversations between Home Missions and World Missions).

Appendix B

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are the recommendations regarding board structure moving us toward centralization?

We understand that centralization is a key concern; one usual feature of centralization is that fewer people are making more decisions. In the proposal being recommended, the thirty-member Board of Trustees would be replaced by a sixty-member Council of Delegates. A key concern about centralization also has to do with how these members are chosen. The Board of Trustees follows regional representation, but we are recommending that one delegate per classis be appointed to compose the Council of Delegates. The move from regional representation to classical delegation is a move to link local congregations more directly to denominational structure. In addition, it is expected that agencies would still have Ministry Collaboration Committees and agency committees made up of persons who would add significant passion, perspective, and experience to the functions of ministry.

2. Can structure enhance collaboration and mission?

We would not make these recommendations without the conviction that structure can either impede or enhance mission. Collaboration is significantly supported by good structure. The current system is more a confederacy of nonprofits rather than a union of ministries. Good ministry is happening, but questions persist about developing joint plans and supporting new initiatives in the current environment of “siloeed” governance. Every agency,

including the agency directors, is currently accountable to both its agency board and the Board of Trustees (through the ED) as both receive “delegated authority” from synod. In addition, the work of the executive director is hindered by the current system of dual accountability.

3. Would agencies remain with the development of a Council of Delegates?

Yes. The rich history of Back to God Ministries International, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Christian Reformed World Missions is appreciated, and their identities and supportive bases need to be recognized. While there is a recommended change of governance, there is a desire to continue the work in ways that are consistent with the past even while we explore new ways to do ministry in the 21st century.

4. What about potential donor loss that could result from a shift in governance structure?

As noted earlier, agencies would have a change of governance structure, but we anticipate that ministry functions and even “brand” recognition would continue. The continuation of designated gifts to a particular agency would be expected and welcomed. Advancement and development functions for each agency would continue. There would be bylaw changes, but each agency would keep its charitable status and designation.

5. Why would separate boards for World Renew, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary remain?

World Renew, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary have separate needs because of their particular requirements for recognition and accreditation in their respective fields of work, eligibility for grant funding, and access to ministry opportunities where churches are not welcome. While there would be a continuation of separate boards, we anticipate that the Council of Delegates would continue and enhance connections with these ministries. It should also be noted that World Renew does not receive ministry-share funding from the Christian Reformed Church, whereas the other mission agencies do receive ministry-share funding.

6. If this move to the Council of Delegates is approved, what would happen next?

We know that while a direction may be taken by synod, we would need to follow up with details and next steps. Specifically, we recommend that synod direct the current Board of Trustees to form a transition committee, under the leadership of the executive director, with agency and ministry representation, to facilitate the transition from the Board of Trustees to the Council of Delegates by Synod 2018 or sooner.

7. How is binationality addressed in the new proposed board governance structure?

We understand that much has been done in the past few years to improve the way the Christian Reformed Church operates as one church that ministers in two different countries. Appendix C to the TFRSC report provides more details on how binationality is addressed in the new proposed board structure.

8. What would be the cost difference resulting from this recommendation?

Cost is a factor in our recommendations even as we uphold to the continuing key values of meeting together and broad involvement in our governance structure. Our cost analysis has led to the conclusion that there would be, at minimum, a \$40,000 annual savings; the savings could also significantly grow, depending on frequency of meetings and increased use of technology.

9. Where would the ministries known as Specialized Ministries fit into this governance structure?

In the review of our work, we noted the development of a Congregational Services Team. The offices known as Specialized Ministries would be included in this new team. The ministries and offices would continue to function as they do now, but we also anticipate that the use of the Five Streams ministry priorities will provide a pathway for organizing, communicating, and linking their work to local congregations. Specifically, we invite persons to review the *Potential Organizational Development to Reflect the Five Streams* diagram (in the TFRSC report) and recognize that the Five Streams priorities are included in the Ministry Collaboration Committee functions in the proposed Council of Delegates.

10. What is the problem with dual accountability, in which an agency board and the Board of Trustees both receive designated authority from synod?

The blurry line of accountability that exists between agency boards and the Board of Trustees has sometimes led to confusion, duplication, suspicion, and tension.

It may be helpful to identify some concrete examples that illustrate the need to address the “dual authority” that exists between agency boards and the Board of Trustees.

- a. A search for an agency director leads to the identification of a nominee. The agency board recommends the nominee to the Board of Trustees. Currently, the Board of Trustees has the opportunity to interview and either affirm or decline the nominee. If they affirm, it feels like a “rubber stamp.” If they decline, it feels like they have stepped into an agency process and overstepped the authority of the agency board.
- b. An agency identifies a certain goal or aim, such as planting 300 churches over the next ten years. How does this goal become part of a denominational strategic plan and part of the discussion for funding by ministry shares? Is a denominational strategic plan the sum of agency and departmental plans, or is it more? What structure would aid greater collaboration?
- c. An agency director recently asked whether the Canadian ministries director could directly contact persons within the agency without first contacting the agency director. Do members of the Senior Leadership Team who represent synod through the Board of Trustees have the right and responsibility to contact agency personnel as part of their role and authority?

These three examples were presented to and considered by Synod 2014 to illustrate the need to provide better understanding and delineation with regard to accountability.

11. Is this just a matter of “moving the deck chairs on the Titanic”?

This question presupposes that all denominations are in decline and that investing in the ministry of denominations is a “lost cause.” We believe that neither presupposition is fair or appropriate. Culture is important. Structure is important. Leadership is important. Denominations are still instruments that God has used and is using.

A cover story in *Christianity Today* titled “Life in Those Old Bones” (June 2010) by missiologist Ed Stetzer concludes with the following summary:

To paraphrase Churchill’s comments about democracy: Denominations are the worst way to cooperate—except for all the others. They are riddled with weak, ineffective and arrogant leadership, prone to navel-gazing, and often move more slowly than they should. But these aspects are products of human fallibility and sin. Every time churches work together, ego, failure and inefficiency will arise. And when they don’t work together, ego, failure, and inefficiency will arise. People, not denominations, are the source.

Denominations at their best are not places to get something but places to give and to serve. Our gifts, passions and experience have greater influence through a world-wide denominational network. Through a denomination, we can provide resources to people we will never meet, reach places we will never go, and preach the gospel to lost souls who are beyond our personal reach. We can find what we need and give as much as we want—because the key to cooperation is to both give and receive.

A healthy denomination ultimately gives us strength. It’s a home, not a prison. It allows us to share specific theological convictions, practice expressions of ministry relevant to our communities, and serve a common mission in the one thing that brings true unity: the gospel.

Appendix C

Binationality and Proposed Board Governance Structure

Much has been done in the past few years to improve the way the Christian Reformed Church operates as one church that ministers in two countries. The TFRSC has been in the midst of binationality discussions, and a major portion of our report to Synod 2013 addressed this matter by identifying proposed pathways for further development.

I. Introduction

An effective approach to binationality for the purpose of ministry includes the following features:

- Intentional consideration of differences that affect ministry, as well as similarities.
- Structures *and* decision-making processes that allow space for deliberation about each national context, development of differentiated program strategies where needed, and monitoring of relevant indicators of progress for each national context.
- Explicit and regular attention at all stages and levels of decision-making.

Experience has shown that it is not adequate to rely only on equal representation on a board or on legal measures to ensure culturally appropriate strategies for ministry.

The current approach is described in the TFRSC report on binationality (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 353-60), the pathways to binationality strategy approved by the Board of Trustees (*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 432, 440-42), and the revised mandate of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 30).

II. Essential components of an intentional approach to binationality in new board structure

A. Ministry Plan

- The inclusion of more country-specific strategies will embody recognition of differences in context as well as similarities.
- Monitoring indicators of progress for each national context rather than assimilated North American data will foster focused attention on contextual factors that are important for ministry effectiveness.

B. Council of Delegates

- Canadian and U.S. delegates will meet separately on a regular basis to intentionally identify contextual factors and priorities that need consideration for developing and implementing ministry plans.
- Canadian delegates will be the members of the Canada Corporation, the legal entity for Canada. Once a year, they will hold an annual general meeting to receive annual reports on progress in ministry in Canada and to conduct official business, such as review of finances and appointment of an auditor.

C. Executive of the Council of Delegates

- The Executive will have equal representation of U.S. and Canadian members.
- Members from each country will provide input and recommendations regarding ministry priorities and programs in their country context.
- Canadian members will be the Board of Directors for the Canada Corporation, ensuring fulfillment of all components in the mandate from synod and the Council of Delegates and compliance with all legal obligations as required by the Canada Revenue Agency.

D. Ministry Collaboration Committees

- Each committee will ensure that space is provided for intentional deliberation on different contexts in the United States and Canada related to ministry themes under their mandate.
- Recommendations will include nation-specific as well as generic components.
- Agencies registered separately under United States and/or Canadian law will meet separately on occasion for legal compliance and input into ministry plans relating to their country context.

I. Introduction

The Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon was appointed by Synod 2013 to continue and expand on the work of the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force appointed by Synod 2010. In addition, Synod 2013 proposed changes to Church Order Articles 40 and 45 for adoption by Synod 2015 that would include the delegation of deacons to classis and synod.

The Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force report to Synod 2013 can be found in the *Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 263-98 (www.crcna.org/SynodResources). Synod 2013's response to the report can be found in the *Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 620-26 (www.crcna.org/SynodResources).

The mandate given to the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force by Synod 2010 was as follows:

That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to appoint a task force to review the articles of the Church Order relating to the office of deacon at the church and major assemblies, as well as recommend resources that encourage revitalization of the diaconate and its role in the community. The intent of the review would be to encourage, empower, and educate churches and broader assemblies to structure their diaconal ministry in ways that

- allow for effective coordination of ministry efforts that transform the community and the church, as members minister in and with their community. This harnesses "God gifts" in the community for community benefit. The gifts of churches and their members, as well as the gifts lying dormant in the community, need to be stewarded. Church resources can be leveraged in amazing ways if they harness latent community gifts. Helping neighbors steward their resources is another pathway to heart change, significant living, opening conversations, and relationships that draw people to Jesus as Savior, Redeemer, and King.
- select leadership based on gifts commensurate with the office and vision for ministry.
- lead church members to exercise their gifts and so enhance their own faith walk as they minister with community, nation, and world.
- establish terms of deacon tenure that provide for consistent ministry oversight, implementation, and coordination.
- address the place and role of deacons at the broader assemblies.

Grounds:

- a. The current structure and tradition do not address the ministry context or the expectations of the equality of office established in Church Order Article 2.
- b. The mandate in the charge to deacons is difficult to fulfill given the current language in the Church Order.
- c. Past efforts to address this (i.e., asking for stronger classical diaconal committees) have not resulted in churches being the agents of transformation in their communities.

(*Acts of Synod 2010*, p. 829)

The mandate given to the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon by Synod 2013 was as follows:

3. That synod appoint a revised task force to address the following areas for the consideration and approval of synod prior to the adoption of the proposed changes to Articles 40 and 45:

- a. Questions
 - 1) Church Order Article 35 assigns “tasks which belong to the common administration of the church” to the council (pastors, elders, and deacons). What biblical and confessional basis exists for those tasks, which on the congregational level belong distinctively to the office of elder and to the office of deacon (Church Order Art. 35), to be assigned collectively to elder and deacon delegates on the classical and synodical levels?
 - 2) What is the unity that the offices share, and how are the “dignity and honor” of the offices distinguished from how they differ in “mandate and task” (Church Order Art. 2)? What does it mean to have parity of office?
 - 3) How do the distinctiveness of each office, the unique giftedness, the parity of offices, and yet the differences in “mandate and task” influence and shape the agendas of major assemblies that would have both elders and deacons seated?
 - 4) In what ways can the agendas of the major assemblies be shaped for meaningful inclusion and participation by deacons, without tying the hands of the individual classes and their local expression (minimal regulation for maximum engagement)?
 - 5) What changes, highlights, or broadening of the mandate of synod would help make the seating of all officebearers at synod meaningful and beneficial?
- b. Development of a plan for resourcing and revitalizing both elders and deacons, including plans for its implementation.
- c. Recommendations for appropriate changes to the Church Order, including review of the proposed changes within the report of the 2013 Office of Deacon Task Force, considering further changes relating to the other offices, and clarifying a missional vision, all with a view to integrating such recommended changes.

Grounds:

- a. Persistent concerns have been raised about perceived blurring of the lines distinguishing the offices while at the same time highlighting the need for acknowledging the unique giftedness of each office.
 - b. There is a perceived difference in how the report of the Office of Deacon Task Force addresses parity of office and how Church Order Article 2 addresses it.
 - c. Addressing these questions and concerns will help the church integrate the seating of deacons with the intended agenda of the major assembly.
 - d. A plan for resourcing and revitalizing the offices will help ensure that we do not end up simply making changes in the composition of current structures, but make these changes for the purpose of revitalized offices.
 - e. The current Office of Deacon Task Force, as per their mandate, addressed only one of the offices. There is value in doing the same for all the offices, as may be appropriate, so that it is done in a complete and integrated manner rather than piecemeal.
4. That synod, in appointing a new task force, include two members of the current Office of Deacon Task Force, as well as others representing the offices and missional interests of the CRCNA, to address the matters identified in Recommendation 3 above. They will report their findings and recommendations to Synod 2015 and give a progress report of their work to Synod 2014.

Grounds:

- a. Having two members of the current task force will give continuity to the work they have done.
 - b. Adding those with expertise in the other offices, as well as those with expertise in the area of mission, will allow for a fuller and more integrated inclusion of the diaconal office at major assemblies and will help move the “mission” of assemblies in more missional directions. . . .
8. That synod refer the balance of the Office of Deacon Task Force Report, Recommendation G, to the new task force.

(*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 624-26)

II. Parity of office (in response to the questions in 3, a of above mandate)

The mandate given to this task force includes consideration of the five questions listed above (under 3, a in the quote from *Acts of Synod 2013*). These questions seem to us to be closely related to one another. They are all concerned with parity of office—equal in dignity and honor but with distinctive mandates. This section provides the task force’s response to these issues—the biblical and confessional basis for the tasks of elders and deacons, the meaning of parity, and the distinctive roles at the broader assemblies.

“The church has existed from the beginning of the world,” says the Belgic Confession, and throughout its history it has taken on various forms. It even, for a time, after all of its Old Covenant theocratic and monarchical forms, appeared very small, “as though it were snuffed out” (Art. 27). But the gospels then proclaim its New Testament re-formation as an act of abundant grace whereby one who denied being Jesus’ disciple was declared to be the “rock” upon which the church would now be built (Matt. 16:18; John 21:15-17). The Belgic Confession then goes on to obligate all members of this church communally to “bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ” and “serving to build up one another, according to the gifts God has given” (Art. 28). Service and edification, in other words, lie at the heart of all that the church is called by Christ to do in its mission to the world (Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:27; John 13:14; 2 Cor. 4:5). Accordingly, the church’s leaders are mandated continually to “equip his people for works of service” (Eph. 4:12). Equipping the saints—that will be their particular service to the believers as they, all together, “grow in the grace and knowledge” of their Lord (2 Pet. 3:18).

The New Testament does not present us with a normative and rigid pattern of church leadership—institutionalized offices that must be scrupulously maintained at all times and in all places. Instead, the service of leadership arose fairly spontaneously as called for in each new situation. Peter, the rock, stood up and preached his first sermon and, at his bidding, the number of apostles (eyewitnesses to the resurrection) was restored to twelve (Acts 1:15-26). With Christ’s great commission (Matt. 28:19-20) still ringing in his ears, he then stood up once more to *preach* his Pentecost sermon, challenging all to repentance and promising the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39). The rapidly growing Spirit-led community devoted itself not only to “the apostles’ *teaching*” but also “to *fellowship*, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.” Further, these believers “had everything in common” and “sold property and possessions to *give to anyone who had need*” (Acts 2:42-45, italics added). Preaching or teaching, fellowship and the sacraments,

and giving to those in need as stewards of God's gifts—these already point to what *does* appear to be normative for the church of all times: the three dimensions of the church's mission. They are, to use the Greek terms, *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*, which we can describe today in English as gospel proclamation, shepherding in Christian fellowship, and the ministry of mercy and justice. Institutionalized offices have always been shaped around these three elements.

The New Testament reveals permanent dimensions of leadership, not precise and specific offices for all time. This means, for one thing, that we must reexamine our traditional assertion (especially in our liturgical forms) that Acts 6 presents us with the origin of an institutionalized office of deacon. It is possible, of course, that the "seven" were directly involved in "waiting on tables" in some ways, thus exercising a diaconal task. But the context suggests a systemic discrimination in the distribution of food whereby Hebraic Jews were favored over Hellenistic Jews. This injustice would require courageous leadership toward a drastic change of attitude and behavior within the Christian community. The apostles could have taken this on, it was not necessarily outside their "job description," but it was decided instead that the "seven" would do this so that the "twelve" would not be diverted from what their main task was discerned to be: prayer and the ministry of the Word. The situation is dynamic enough to caution us from concluding that ministers are more important than deacons or that ministers may do the work of deacons, whereas deacons may not do the work of ministers.

So when daily food was not distributed fairly, the "seven" were appointed to make things right. Their office or service received no immediate or specific designation—the need arose and the community saw to it. Later, one of the "seven," by the name of Stephen, preached a powerful sermon, sparing no words, and was thereupon stoned as a martyr (Acts 6:12-7:60). Another, named Philip, became a traveling preacher (see Acts 8:1, 5-6), later baptizing an Ethiopian eunuch and teaching him "the good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35). There is nothing in this chapter or in the entire book of Acts that would compel us to believe that the "seven" served in distinctly diaconal roles. There are clear indications, on the other hand, that at least two of the "seven" preached, evangelized, and taught.

The early church was filled with *charismata*, gifts, in new leaders, wherever the Spirit saw fit to bestow them—the most noted, of course, in Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:17-20). Most of the remainder of the Book of Acts speaks of this great missionary and teacher, "who was also called Paul" (Acts 13:9). But there was also Barnabas (Acts 9:27); Tabitha (or Dorcas) of Joppa (Acts 9:36); the prophets in Jerusalem sent to Antioch ("one of them, named Agabus," Acts 11:27-28); "John, also called Mark" (Acts 12:12); "prophets and teachers" in Antioch (Acts 13:1); "elders" in various churches (Acts 14:23), including those in Jerusalem (Acts 15:2) and Ephesus (Acts 20:17); "Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets" (Acts 15:32); Apollos, the teacher from Alexandria (Acts 18:24-25); and "four unmarried daughters" of "Philip the evangelist, one of the seven," who "prophesied" (Acts 21:8-9). In his letters to churches, Paul mentions the *charismata* of prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, and showing mercy (Rom. 12:6-8), as well as the gifts instilled in persons he calls apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, guides, and tongue-speakers (1 Cor. 12:28-30).

When he writes to the church of Ephesus, he refers to Christ's *donata*, the gift of new leaders: "the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers," who together "equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

All of these people with these particular *charismata* emerged at the prompting of the Spirit to provide the leadership required in the early church. There wasn't some divinely authorized Church Order ready to spell out exactly who was who, and with what qualifications and requirements for service, and what, precisely, such a person was called upon to do. As Herman Ridderbos writes in his book *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, some of these leaders and their *charismata* tended only over much time to become institutionalized, at the point where the church became convinced that these and not others have "continual and not just incidental significance for the upbuilding of the community" (p. 445). We even see this happening in the Scriptures themselves, when instructions Paul gives much later to Timothy and Titus insist on appointing overseers, deacons, widows, and elders, all complete with requirements for office (1 Tim. 3:2-13, 5:9-21; Titus 1:5-9). And ever since, it appears, the church has been given the freedom to judge anew, in every age and circumstance, how the Great Commission is to be fulfilled.

Again, we are presented not so much with an exact number and description of the offices but, rather, with three dimensions to fulfilling the Great Commission. That is because there is One, the great Prophet, Priest, and King, who does all this ministry to the world through his people who are prophets, priests, and kings (Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 12). So leadership or the equipping of the saints is not within the "job description" of one office, or two, or three, but is the shared task of all who are ordained. We wish to emphasize here that Christ does his equipping ministry through these chosen vessels. There is a sacredness to being called to serve as officebearers, and all who respond to that calling are therefore ordained by the church as representatives of the risen Lord. Scripture directs believers to "have confidence in [their] leaders and submit to their authority" (Heb. 13:17). The assignment of specific tasks to distinct offices is for the church to sort out in its context in every new age. Whatever that configuration is, however, these leaders and equippers are all publicly ordained—they have been called by Christ through the congregation to govern "according to the spiritual order that our Lord has taught us in his Word" and they are to be "elders and deacons [who] along with the pastors . . . make up the council of the church" (Belgic Confession, Art. 30).

Especially after the Constantinian change, the church's leadership structure took on more specific institutionalized forms that often took their cues from civil government as well as revelation: bishops, archbishops, a pope at the helm, and local deacons and acolytes and, down the road, a host of other offices, as time went on, hierarchically arranged. The Reformation took its cues especially from Scripture but also from its entirely new cultural climate. Luther held to one office—the preaching bishop alone with the remainder of ecclesiastical government deposited into the hands of civil princes. Calvin preferred the ministers of the Word supplemented by civil, then, later, ecclesiastical elders or overseers and two kinds of deacons—administrative

as well as medical (the “*hospitaliers*”) (H. Bouwman, *Gereformeerd Kerkrecht*, Vol. I, pp. 528, 568). In their wake came the Continental Reformed traditions that featured the four offices of doctor, minister of the Word, elder, and deacon, and Presbyterian traditions that insisted on the priority of preaching and teaching elders. There is room to adapt and change as circumstances require. That explains some significant differences between Presbyterian and Reformed polity. It is also why the current Church Order of the CRCNA does not speak of Scripture *requiring* the existence of certain offices and those offices only, but states that at this time in the denomination’s history we *recognize* the offices of minister of the Word, commissioned pastor, elder, and deacon. And to avoid all hierarchy among them, the Church Order proceeds to assert that these offices “differ from each other only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor” (Art. 2). All this points not only to three-dimensional leadership structures, but also to what all offices share—equipment of the saints. That is the scripturally given mandate of Ephesians 4 laid upon all leaders.

Equipment of the saints—that is the “unity that the offices share” (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 625). It is, as previously noted, what leads the Belgic Confession to state that “there should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments” (the church lives by the Word proclaimed), and then to add that “there should also be elders and deacons, along with the pastors, to make up the council of the church” (Belgic Confession, Art. 30). It is what drives the definition of the local assembly in the Church Order of the CRCNA: There “shall be a council” composed of all those ordained within the congregation. This council shall perform “those tasks which belong to the common administration of the church, such as the calling of a pastor, the approval of nominations for church office, mutual censure, meeting with church visitors, and other matters of common concern” (Church Order, Art. 35).

Along with this “common administration,” the Church Order provides for distinctiveness or uniqueness of offices. “In every church there shall be a consistory composed of the elders and the minister(s) of the Word” where “tasks which belong distinctively to the office of elder” are dealt with, and there “shall be a diaconate composed of the deacons” where tasks peculiar to their office are exercised (Art. 35). Prior to this article of the Church Order, the mandates given to the four offices are spelled out for ministers of the Word (Art. 11-12), for commissioned pastors (Art. 23-24), and for elders and deacons (Art. 25). And later, in the sections on “The Task and Activities of the Church” as well as “The Admonition and Discipline of the Church,” the Church Order carefully and deliberately assigns responsibilities to the consistory, the diaconate, or the council as a whole (Art. 51-84). For instance, the consistory must provide leadership in the areas of worship, faith nurture, and pastoral care. It must also exercise discipline of members of the congregation. On the other hand, when it comes to “mutual censure” or “special discipline” (suspension or deposition from office), the council as a whole must be involved (Supplement, Art. 82-84). That, like the approval of nominations for church office, is a matter that concerns common administration. Or again, when it comes to the subsection on “Missions” (Art. 73-77), to the church’s exercise of the Great Commission, the Church Order insists that all

four offices must play distinctive yet also shared or united roles as the entire congregation is equipped by its leaders for service to the world.

To the extent that ministers, elders, commissioned pastors, and deacons share in equipping the saints for ministry and partake in “common administration,” there is parity of office and “dignity and honor” (Art. 2) in all of the offices—not *equality*, since they do not have completely identical functions or roles to play, but *parity*. The Reformation was decidedly anti-hierarchical in its church political focus. It may initially have employed a functional hierarchy, whereby the preaching of the Word was considered more vital for building up the community than, say, providing resources to the needy. Years later, Reformed churches might have insisted that teaching the tenets of newly recovered belief was absolutely a first priority, such that instruction in the confessions from both pulpit and classroom lectern were considered to be more important than supporting worthy Christian causes. That, in part, might explain why the polity of the Reformed churches sometimes spoke of the “consistory and the deacons” and why the parity of office was recognized within and not among the offices. But the polity of the CRCNA has definitely chosen to recognize parity of office. In this, the CRCNA has not necessarily rejected functional hierarchy. After another economic depression, another world war, or a significant spike in humanitarian crises and needs, it might even for a time place a higher priority on the work of the deacons than the preaching of the Word, be it temporarily. But the heritage of the Reformation remains—the CRCNA rejects ontological hierarchy of office.

What is also clear is that the CRCNA currently structures local church government so as to distinguish between council, consistory, and diaconate but that there is no such distinction when it defines the work of the broader assemblies, classis and synod (Art. 39-50). The distinctive tasks of the offices at the local level are not assigned to separate bodies at the regional or binational level. The reason for that, of course, is that the saints, the members of the congregation, are equipped for their ministry at the local level, but not directly at meetings of classis or synod. These are the soldiers fulfilling the Great Commission. Broader assemblies are designed to be like strategy sessions in the generals’ quarters. They are there to deal with matters of common concern that arise from the churches or from reports on activities that are shared at a regional or binational level. It is, one could say, the common administration of the church at a supralocal level. It is all about equipping the saints for ministry.

As the previous Office of Deacon Task Force pointed out, the delegation of deacons to broader assemblies “is not about equal representation, as if there should be some balance of power”; rather, “it is about the *full* representation of the *whole* church which these offices represent. When deacons are missing from major assemblies, the full voice of the church is not heard, nor is the full ministry of the church under discussion. The purpose of the major assemblies is not simply governance and adjudication but deliberation about the church’s character and ministry, a deliberation in which the deacons ought surely to participate” (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, p. 279).

The delegation of deacons to major assemblies is “neither prohibited nor demanded by Scripture and the Reformed confessions,” said Synod 1967 (*Acts of Synod 1967*, p. 93), but “practical considerations” led it and subsequent synods away from implementing the idea. What needs to be

understood more clearly is that more than just “practical considerations” are at stake. We are bound by our creed to three-dimensional office structures, and by denying access to broader assemblies to any one of them we can only impoverish our shared leadership at the denominational level. This is what led Synod 1997 to recommend the delegation of deacons to classis and what led Synod 2013 to propose the delegation of deacons to synod. These assemblies explained:

Integrated word and deed ministry presents a more effective witness to the world. A number of classes are restructuring to accomplish this goal. The delegation of deacons to their meetings will enable them to do so more fully.

(Acts of Synod 1997, p. 621)

Numerous requests over the years have asked that the major assemblies seat deacons in order to have full representation and participation in carrying out the mission of the church.

(Acts of Synod 2013, p. 624)

While it is true that some issues on the agenda of classis or synod are heavily weighted toward one distinctive office, it is also true that in almost every issue all dimensions are present. Sorting out which issues are to be dealt with at different times by elders alone or deacons alone is an impossible task. This is why separate “consistorial” and “diaconal” sessions at classis or synod are not advisable. Instead, delegates in joint session who are aware of their own distinctive calling can exercise due deference in the deliberation and decision-making (see proposed change to Church Order Art. 34, below). But all delegates jointly can use their distinctive competencies as they share in the common administration of the church within their region or throughout North America and the world. It is only when common administration is not acknowledged, when deacons are excluded, for example, from sessions of classis or synod, that other supralocal entities like diaconal conferences spring into being. Such entities are useful and may well continue to be useful, even if deacons are delegated to classes. But history has borne out that deacons can be far more effective when they too are delegated to broader assemblies, joining the ministers of the Word, commissioned pastors, and elders in strategizing for the church’s mission in the world.

Finally, our task force judges that no “changes, highlights, or broadening of the mandate of synod” are required at this time to “make the seating of all officebearers at synod meaningful and beneficial” (Question 5). Deacon advisers to Synod 2014 reported that their presence and participation was in fact meaningful, effective, and stimulating even though as advisers they were unable to vote. In the long run, of course, deacon delegates may well have significant suggestions regarding synod’s mandate and the exercise of its responsibilities that would benefit not only the deacons but all who attend.

III. Revitalization of the offices

The ultimate purpose of our task force is to see a revitalization of practice in the offices of elder and deacon within local congregations. Essential to this task of revitalization is providing recommended resources and training for churches as they seek to cultivate these areas of ministry. The *Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force* catalogued a significant list of resources for the office of deacon. The current task force has added a similar

list of resources for the office of elder. While neither list is exhaustive, each provides a place to start and offers encouragement and guidance for current elders and deacons as they grow into their respective offices. The resource lists are included as Appendix A to this report.

While cataloging and sharing resources with officebearers is essential to the task of revitalization of both offices, a fresh level of coordination and planning between the supporting agencies and institutions of the CRCNA is equally required.

Acknowledging the work and vision of the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force to foster collaboration and networking between denominational agencies and ministries with the goal of a revitalized diaconate, the present task force desires to see implementation of that vision for the offices of both deacon and elder. Prior recommendations encouraged collaboration, and the present task force strongly recommends concrete action steps toward such collaboration.

Given the opportunities for collaboration provided by denominational restructuring and realignment, a plan for resourcing both deacons and elders and implementing that plan must be nimble and responsive to those opportunities.

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Mr. Terry Woodnorth, chair; Dr. Chris Ganski, reporter; and task force members Mr. Andrew Ryskamp and Dr. Mick Vanden Bosch when the report of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon is addressed.

B. That synod adopt the following changes to the Church Order and Its Supplements as indicated:

Note: Italicized text indicates changes from the current Church Order.

Current Article 1-a

a. The Christian Reformed Church, confessing its complete subjection to the Word of God and the Reformed creeds as a true interpretation of this Word, acknowledging Christ as the only head of his church, and desiring to honor the apostolic injunction that in the churches “everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40), regulates its ecclesiastical organization and activities in the following articles.

Proposed Article 1-a

a. The Christian Reformed Church, confessing its complete subjection to the Word of God and the Reformed creeds as a true interpretation of this Word, acknowledging Christ as the only head of his church, and desiring to honor the apostolic injunction that in the churches “everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40) *in order to be equipped “for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:12)*, regulates its ecclesiastical organization and activities in the following articles.

Ground: Adding the quotation from Ephesians 4:12 clarifies that the church has a Church Order not merely for the sake of orderliness but for the sake of ministry.

Current Articles 4-a and -b

- a. In calling and electing to an office, the council shall ordinarily present to the congregation a nomination of at least twice the number to be elected. When the council submits a nomination which totals less than twice the number to be elected, it shall give reasons for doing so.
- b. Prior to making nominations the council may give the congregation an opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons.

Proposed Articles 4-a and -b

- a. In calling and electing to an office, the council shall ordinarily present to the congregation a nomination of *suitably gifted persons* of at least twice the number to be elected. When the council submits a nomination which totals less than twice the number to be elected, it shall give reasons for doing so.
- b. Prior to making nominations the council may give the congregation an opportunity to direct attention to *suitably gifted persons*.

Ground: Adding the phrase *suitably gifted* clarifies that suitability for office is a matter of spiritual giftedness.

Current Article 11

The calling of a minister of the Word is to proclaim, explain, and apply Holy Scripture in order to gather in and build up the members of the church of Jesus Christ.

Proposed Article 11

The calling of a minister of the Word is to proclaim, explain, and apply Holy Scripture in order to gather in and *equip* the members *so that* the church of Jesus Christ *may be built up*.

Ground: According to Ephesians 4, it is God who builds up the church through the equipping ministry of those called to office. These changes bring the Church Order in line with the biblical text.

Current Article 12-a

a. A minister of the Word serving as pastor of a congregation shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship services, catechize the youth, and train members for Christian service. The minister, with the elders, shall supervise the congregation and fellow officebearers, exercise admonition and discipline, and see to it that everything is done decently and in order. The minister, with the elders, shall exercise pastoral care over the congregation, and engage in and promote the work of evangelism.

Proposed Article 12-a

a. A minister of the Word serving as pastor of a congregation shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship services, catechize the youth, and train members for Christian service. The minister, with *other officebearers*, shall supervise the congregation and fellow officebearers, exercise admonition and discipline, see

to it that everything is done decently and in order, exercise pastoral care over the congregation, and engage in and promote the work of evangelism *and diaconal outreach*.

Ground: According to Article 30 of the Belgic Confession, ministers of the Word are called to common tasks with elders *and* deacons in equipping the church. Likewise, the second half of Church Order Article 12-a is intended to give an illustrative list of those tasks that the minister is called to do with other officebearers. Making reference in the article to elders alone is confusing, since some of the tasks belong to other officebearers as well, such as supervising fellow officebearers (see Church Order Art. 82-84 and Supplement, Art. 82-84) and exercising pastoral care (see Art. 65). The proposed language removes this confusion by making a generic reference to other officebearers and including diaconal outreach in the tasks that the minister does in common with other officebearers.

Current Article 25-a

a. The elders and deacons shall serve for a limited time as designated by the council. As a rule a specified number of them shall retire from office each year. The retiring officebearers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the profit of the church make immediate eligibility for reelection advisable. Elders and deacons who are thus reelected shall be reinstalled.

Proposed Article 25-a

a. The elders and deacons shall serve for a limited time as designated by the council. *The length of term should be appropriate for continuity and succession of ministry leadership, accountability for ministry outcomes, and the regular infusion of gifts.* Retiring officebearers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the profit of the church make immediate eligibility for reelection advisable. Elders and deacons who are thus reelected shall be reinstalled.

Ground: While this article was written to give councils flexibility in the length of terms of office, the “as a rule” language has suggested that flexibility is discouraged, and this has hindered the equipping work of some officebearers in some contexts. The proposed revision does not change the meaning of the article—terms should still be limited to a specified period of time—but it does better emphasize flexibility and the purpose for which that flexibility should be employed.

Current Article 25-b

b. The elders, with the minister(s), shall oversee the doctrine and life of the members of the congregation and fellow officebearers, shall exercise admonition and discipline along with pastoral care in the congregation, shall participate in and promote evangelism, and shall defend the faith. The elders also shall nurture in the congregation grateful and obedient participation in the Lord’s Supper through encouragement, instruction, and accountability.

Proposed Article 25-b

b. The elders, with the minister(s), shall oversee the doctrine and life of the members of the congregation and fellow officebearers, shall *provide counsel* and discipline along with pastoral care in the congregation, shall participate in and promote evangelism, and shall defend the faith. *As shepherds of the church, they shall encourage and support the members in their Christian life.* The elders also shall nurture in the congregation grateful and obedient participation in the Lord's Supper through encouragement, instruction, and accountability.

Ground: The proposed revision adds a clearer expression of the elders' calling as shepherds to positively build up the church of Christ.

Current Article 25-c

c. The deacons shall represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people, especially to those who belong to the community of believers, and shall stimulate the members of Christ's church to faithful, obedient stewardship of their resources on behalf of the needy—all with words of biblical encouragement and testimony which assure the unity of word and deed.

Proposed Article 25-c

c. The deacons shall represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people, especially to those who belong to the community of believers. *Deacons shall lead the members in ways that inspire faithful stewardship of their time, talents, and resources and so give life in this world the shape of God's kingdom. Thus deacons shall create and encourage participation in structures and ministries of mercy, justice, and reconciliation, both locally and globally.* All of this shall be done with words of biblical encouragement and testimony.

Ground: The proposed revision gives a more comprehensive description of the mandate for deacons as understood and practiced by many diaconates and described in various deacon handbooks and other resources and in the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons.

Current Article 34

The major assemblies are composed of officebearers who are delegated by their constituent minor assemblies. The minor assemblies shall provide their delegates with proper credentials which authorize them to deliberate and vote on matters brought before the major assemblies. A delegate shall not vote on any matter in which the delegate or the church of which the delegate is a member is particularly involved.

Proposed Article 34

The major assemblies are composed of officebearers who are delegated by their constituent minor assemblies. The minor assemblies shall provide their delegates with proper credentials which authorize them to deliberate and vote on matters brought before the major assemblies. *In any matter that lies almost exclusively within the mandate(s) of one or two of the offices, the delegates shall exercise due deference in deliberation.* A delegate shall not vote on any matter in which the delegate or the church of which the delegate is a member is particularly involved.

Ground: The proposed language addresses the concern that when all offices are seated in major assemblies, some matters brought to the floor will lie largely outside the calling of one or two of the offices. Likewise, the article should instruct all delegates to be mindful of their gifts and mandate and defer in deliberation to those most competent.

Current Article 35-a

a. In every church there shall be a council composed of the minister(s), the elders, and the deacons. Those tasks which belong to the common administration of the church, such as the calling of a pastor, the approval of nominations for church office, mutual censure, meeting with church visitors, and other matters of common concern, are the responsibility of the council.

Proposed Article 35-a

a. In every church there shall be a council composed of the minister(s), the elders, and the deacons. Those tasks which belong to the common administration of the church, such as *promoting its mission*, calling a pastor, *approving* nominations for church office, mutual censure, meeting with church visitors, and other matters of common concern, are the responsibility of the council.

Ground: Since the article gives only an illustrative list of matters of common concern, there is no need for the article to be comprehensive. However, the proposed language recognizes that the promotion of the church's mission should be preeminent in the common administration of the church.

Current Article 35-b

b. In every church there shall be a consistory composed of the elders and the minister(s) of the Word. Those tasks which belong distinctively to the office of elder are the responsibility of the consistory.

Proposed Article 35-b

b. In every church there shall be a consistory composed of the elders and the minister(s) of the Word. Those tasks which belong distinctively to the office of elder are the responsibility of the consistory. *The consistory shall give an account of its work to the council.*

Ground: The proposed language codifies a common practice: that of elders reporting on their work to the council, just as deacons do (Art. 35-c). This parallel practice between the diaconate and the consistory follows from the principle of the parity of office and from Belgic Confession, Article 30, in which we confess that the governance of the church belongs to the council. A report from the elders to the council also facilitates council oversight of the activities of the elders, as required by the practices of mutual censure and special discipline, both of which are the tasks of the council (Art. 35-a; Supplement, Art. 82-84).

Note: Synod 2013 decided to propose changes to Article 40-a and its Supplement to Synod 2015 (see *Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 623-24).

Current Article 42-b

The church visitors shall consist of one or more teams of officebearers chosen for their experience and counsel, with teams composed of two ministers or one minister and one elder. Their task shall be to ascertain whether the officebearers of the church faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and promote the building up of the body of Christ and the extension of God's kingdom. Churches are free to call on the church visitors whenever serious challenges arise that would benefit from their advice. The church visitors shall provide classis a written report of their work.

Proposed Article 42-b

The church visitors shall consist of one or more teams of officebearers chosen for their experience and counsel. *Team composition shall include a minister of the Word and at least one other officebearer.* Their task shall be to ascertain whether the officebearers of the church faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and promote the building up of the body of Christ and the extension of God's kingdom. Churches are free to call on the church visitors whenever serious challenges arise that would benefit from their advice. The church visitors shall provide classis a written report of their work.

Grounds:

1. Oversight of officebearers belongs in the hands of ministers, elders, and deacons at the congregational level (see Art. 35-b and Supplement, Art. 82-84), and the same should be true at the classical level, especially when all three offices are delegated to the classis.
2. Some matters for which church visitors may be required are matters that lie primarily within the mandate of the office of deacon, and the churches would benefit from having an experienced deacon as one of the church visitors, which the proposed article allows, but does not require.

Note: Synod 2013 decided to propose changes to Article 45 to Synod 2015 (see *Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 624).

Current Article 62

Offerings for benevolence shall be received regularly in the worship services. Offerings also shall be received for other ministries of the congregation and the joint ministries of the churches.

Proposed Article 62

Opportunity shall be given regularly, as part of worship, to offer gifts, both financial and otherwise, to develop and sustain ministries of the congregation, locally within its own community, the shared ministries of the denomination globally, and other causes that the church supports.

Ground: The proposed language offers a more comprehensive description of the nature of offerings and promotes meeting the needs of the poor in a variety of ways—through more than just offerings of benevolence.

Current Article 64-a

a. Each church shall minister to its adult members so as to increase their knowledge of the Lord Jesus, to nurture a mature faith in Christ, and to encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers.

Proposed Article 64-a

a. Each church shall minister to its adult members so as to increase their knowledge of the Lord Jesus, to nurture a mature faith in Christ, to encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers, *and to equip them to fulfill their calling in the church and in the world.*

Ground: The proposed language gives a more comprehensive and missional description of the purpose of nurturing faith in adults, in line with the meaning of Ephesians 4:12.

Articles 73-77

Current Articles 73-a and -b

a. In obedience to Christ's Great Commission, the churches must bring the gospel to all people at home and abroad, in order to lead them into fellowship with Christ and his church.

b. In fulfilling this mandate, each council shall stimulate the members of the congregation to be witnesses for Christ in word and deed and to support the work of home and world missions by their interest, prayers, and gifts.

Current Articles 74-a and -b

a. Each church shall bring the gospel to unbelievers in its own community. This task shall be sponsored and governed by the council. This task may be executed, when conditions warrant, in cooperation with one or more neighboring churches.

b. Each church shall carry on a ministry of mercy. The deacons shall enable the needy under their care to make use of Christian institutions of mercy. They shall confer and cooperate with diaconates of neighboring churches when this is desirable for the proper performance of their task. They may also seek mutual understandings with agencies in their community which are caring for the needy, so that the gifts may be distributed properly.

Current Articles 75-a and -b

a. The classes shall, whenever necessary, assist the churches in their local evangelistic programs. The classes themselves may perform this work of evangelism when it is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches. To administer these tasks, each classis shall have a classical home missions committee.

b. The classes shall, whenever necessary, assist the churches in their ministry of mercy. The classes themselves may perform this ministry when it is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches. To administer this task, each classis shall have a classical diaconal committee.

Current Articles 76-a and -b

- a. Synod shall encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism, and shall also carry on such home missions activities as are beyond their scope and resources. To administer these activities synod shall appoint a denominational home missions committee, whose work shall be governed by synodical regulations.
- b. Synod shall encourage and assist congregations and classes in their ministry of mercy, and shall carry on such work as is beyond their scope and resources. Synod shall appoint a diaconal committee to administer the denominational ministry of mercy. The work of this committee shall be governed by synodical regulations.

Current Supplement, Article 76-a

The synodical regulations referred to in Article 76 may be found in the Mission Order of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions (*Acts of Synod 1992*, pp. 741-46 and subsequent revisions thereof).

Current Articles 77-a and -b

- a. Synod shall encourage and assist the joint world mission work of the churches by regulating the manner in which this task is to be performed, providing for its support, and encouraging the congregations to call and support missionaries. To administer these activities, synod shall appoint a denominational world missions committee, whose work shall be governed by synodical regulations.
- b. The denominational diaconal committee shall extend the ministry of mercy of the congregations and classes worldwide.

Current Supplement, Article 77-a

Synod regulates the work of the world missions committee by way of the Constitution and decisions of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

Proposed Article 73: The Church's Mandate to Ministry

In joyful obedience to the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, the church is called to bear witness to Jesus Christ and his kingdom through word and deed.

Ground: The proposed change states the purpose of the article more succinctly. Word and deed together are integral for a full expression of the church's obedience to the Great Commission. A broader scope to Article 73-b has been moved to Article 74-c.

Proposed Articles 74-a through -d: The Ministry of the Congregation

- a. *Each church shall bring the gospel to non-Christians within the unique context of its own community. The local church is to announce and demonstrate, through word and deed, that God's reign has come; to live as an exhibit of God's healing and reconciling grace; and to extend to all the invitation to experience new life in Christ through repentance and faith.*
- b. *The council shall be responsible to develop a vision and provide training and leadership to equip the church to fulfill her unique evangelistic and diaconal calling. Churches are encouraged to work with neighboring churches, appropriate community resources, classical and denominational resources, and other gifts the Lord has provided to help accomplish her task.*

- c. Each council shall encourage the members of the congregation to support denominational and classical ministries by their interest, prayers, and gifts.
- d. Each church shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.

Grounds: This emphasizes the integration of word and deed in the ministry of the church at the congregational level. It also captures the essence of the proposals in the Office of Deacon Task Force report (2013), but with less complicated wording.

Proposed Articles 75-a and -b: The Ministry of the Classis

- a. The classes shall implement a ministry plan that advances evangelistic and diaconal witness to Christ and his kingdom in its specific region and, when necessary, assist those churches needing support to fulfill their missionary task.
- b. Each classis shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.

Grounds: This emphasizes the integration of word and deed in the ministry of the church at the classical level. It also captures the essence of the proposals in the Office of Deacon Task Force report (2013), but with less complicated wording.

Proposed Article 76: Denominational Ministries

- a. Synod shall encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of word and deed witness to Christ and his kingdom. Synod shall also appoint denominational ministries that engage churches and classes in ministries that are national and global.
- b. Synod shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.

Grounds: This emphasizes the integration of word and deed in the ministry of the church at the denominational level. It also captures the essence of the proposals in the Office of Deacon Task Force report (2013), but with less complicated wording; and it provides flexibility as the CRCNA is currently studying structure for ministries.

It is recommended that the following Supplement, Article 76-a be removed:

~~The synodical regulations referred to in Article 76 may be found in the Mission Order of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions (Acts of Synod 1992, pp. 741-46 and subsequent revisions thereof).~~

Proposed Article 77: Synodical Governance of Ministries

Synod shall regulate the work of denominational ministries by way of the Constitution and decisions of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

It is recommended that the following Supplement, Article 77-a be removed:

~~Synod regulates the work of the world missions committee by way of the Constitution and decisions of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.~~

Ground: The proposed change includes and expands upon the current Supplement, Articles 76-a and 77-a.

C. That synod, upon adoption of the proposed Church Order changes above, adopt the following changes to the Rules for Synodical Procedure:

Note: The change to Church Order Article 34 that calls for delegates to “exercise due deference in deliberation” calls for an accompanying change in the Rules for Synodical Procedure. The following change specifies how the president and delegates to synod will ensure that “due deference” is actually extended. The following are additions to the duties of the president of synod and the delegates to synod when issues are discussed (changes indicated by *italics*).

Proposed new section II, A, 4

4. The president shall ensure that the minister, elder, or deacon delegates exercise due deference when matters arise that lie almost exclusively within the mandate(s) of one or two of the offices.

Note: The present section II, A, 4 and subsequent sections would then be renumbered 5, 6, 7, and so forth.

Proposed new section VIII, J, 2

2. All delegates participate in the deliberations. If matters arise that lie almost exclusively within the mandate(s) of one or two of the offices, the delegates representing the other office(s) shall exercise due deference.

Note: The present section VIII, J, 2 and subsequent sections would then be renumbered 3, 4, 5, and so forth.

D. That synod adopt the following revision to the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons (changes noted in **boldface text**):

Congregation of Jesus Christ:

Today we celebrate God’s gift of faithful leadership for his people. We joyfully thank him for elders and deacons who have served well and completed their terms of office. And we praise him for providing their successors.

In the officebearers of the church we see the love of Christ for his people. As the Lord of the church he appoints leaders **to govern in his name and promote the spiritual well-being of his people.** By his Spirit **he equips these leaders** so that believers may grow in faith, develop disciplined Christian living, serve others in selfless love, and share with all the good news of salvation. **The apostle Paul stated this most clearly when he wrote to the church in Ephesus, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith**

and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-13). And Jesus Christ taught us the spirit of true leadership when he said, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:26-28).

Elders serve by **exercising oversight of the church in Christ’s name. In taking his leave from the elders in Ephesus, Paul counseled them: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Also in Acts we see the apostles and elders of the church providing leadership. Elders must provide true preaching of the Word, instruction for faith formation for both youth and adults, regular celebration of the sacraments, and faithful counsel and discipline while keeping in confidence those matters entrusted to them. And they must promote fellowship and hospitality among believers, ensure good order in the church, and stimulate witness to all people.**

Deacons serve by **leading and equipping the church to serve its members and the world in a rich diversity of ministries, awakening compassion, demonstrating mercy, seeking justice, and collaborating with God’s Spirit for the transformation of persons and communities. In imitation of Christ’s mercy, deacons summon the church to help relieve victims of injustice, equip the church for ministries of reconciliation and peacemaking, seek opportunities for advocacy, and call God’s people to faithful stewardship of the gifts of creation. By this they show that Christians live by the Spirit of the kingdom, fervently desiring to give life the shape of things to come. Deacons are therefore to identify and develop gifts in both the church and community, assess needs, promote generous stewardship, and offer wise and respectful care for the poor. By adding to all this words of encouragement and hope, deacons demonstrate in word and deed the care of the Lord himself.**

The deacons and elders, together with the ministers, are responsible for the general administration of the church.

These tasks of elders and deacons call for believers who are Christ-like, who are mature in the faith, and who exercise their offices with prayer, patience, and humility.

Now we intend to ordain elders and deacons and to install them for terms of service in this congregation. Those appointed to the office of elder are [names] . Those appointed to the office of deacon are [names] .

To express your acceptance of these offices, you are asked to stand, and here in the presence of God and his church, to answer the following questions:

Do you believe that in the call of this congregation God himself is calling you to these holy offices?

Do you believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life?

Do you subscribe to the doctrinal standards of this church, rejecting all teaching which contradicts them?

Do you promise to do the work of your offices faithfully, in a way worthy of your calling and in submission to the government and discipline of the church?

Answer [by each officebearer]: I do, God helping me.

The officiating minister shall then say [the laying on of hands at this point is optional]:

God our heavenly Father, who has called you to these sacred offices, guide you by his Word, equip you with his Spirit, and so prosper your ministries that his church may increase and his name be praised. Amen.

Charge to the Elders

I charge you, elders, as **shepherds of the flock**, to **“hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that [you] can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it”** (Titus 1:9). Be a friend and Christlike example to children. Give clear and cheerful guidance to young people. By word and example, bear up God’s people in their pain and weakness, and celebrate their joys with them. Hold in trust all sensitive matters confided to you. Encourage the aged to persevere in God’s promises. Be wise counselors who support and strengthen the pastor. Be compassionate, yet firm and consistent in rebuke and discipline. Know the Scriptures, which are “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Pray continually for the church. Remember at all times that if you would truly give spiritual leadership in the household of faith, you must be completely mastered by your Lord (1 Tim. 3:2-7).

Charge to the Deacons

I charge you, deacons, to inspire faithful **ministries of service to one another, to the larger community, and to the world**. Remind us that the Lord requires us **“to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [our] God”** (Mic. 6:8). Prompt us to seize new opportunities to **love God, our neighbors, and the creation with acts of generous sharing, joyful hospitality, thoughtful care for the poor, and wise stewardship of all of God’s gifts. Weigh our opportunities for giving and service, that we might use the church’s resources discerningly. Offer wise care to victims of injustice, and teach us holistic responses that respect their dignity and mend the broken relationships and exploitative structures and systems that contribute to poverty. With respectful compassion for the needy and awareness of the often hidden needs of the wealthy, teach us to minister to rich and poor alike, both within and outside the church. Encourage all with words that bring hope to their hearts and with deeds that bring joy into their lives. Show us by your example how to be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in our society, and to be sensitive counselors to the victims of such evils. Let your lives be above reproach, and live as examples of Christ Jesus, looking to the interests of others. And in all your ministries help us anticipate and participate in the renewal of all things when God’s kingdom comes.**

Charge to the Congregation

I charge you, people of God, to receive these officebearers as Christ's gift to the church.

Recognize in them the Lord's provision for healthy congregational life. Hold them in honor; take their counsel seriously; respond to them with obedience and respect; accept their help with thanks. Wholeheartedly participate in the ministries into which they lead you. Sustain them in prayer and encourage them with your support, especially when they feel the burden of their office. Acknowledge them as the Lord's servants among you.

Do you, congregation, pledge to receive them as you have been charged?

Answer [by the congregation in unison]: We do, God helping us.

Prayer

Our merciful Father in heaven, we thank you that you have provided faithful and gifted people to serve as elders and deacons. As these new officebearers assume their responsibilities, fill them with your Spirit, endow them with your wisdom, and grant them strength. Make them faithful workers in your vineyard. Under their guidance may your church grow in every spiritual grace, in faith which is open and unashamed, and in the committed service that promotes your reign in the world. Help them to perform their duties with enthusiasm and humility. In their work, grant them a sense of sustained awe which is rooted in daily adoration of you, their Lord. Through them may your name be honored and your church be served.

Help us, your people, to accept them gladly, encourage them always, and respect them for the sake of your precious Son, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Grounds:

1. These changes incorporate important aspects of the role of deacons as developed by the Office of Deacon Task Force 2013, many of which deacons are already doing.
2. This proposed form includes more references to common aspects of the offices as stated in the Church Order (see, among others, Arts. 4, 5, 9, 10, 14-18, 32, 35-38, 40, and 66) and outlined in the section on Parity of Office within this report.
3. This proposed form provides more appropriate Scripture references regarding the role of elders.

E. That synod take note that the adoption of the above Church Order changes will require associated updates to the "Guide for Conducting Church Visiting" (available at www.crcna.org/SynodResources).

F. That synod, in order to provide for the ongoing revitalization of the offices of elder and deacon, mandate the executive director of the CRCNA to task appropriate agencies and ministries with the development of strategies for the revitalization of the offices of elder and deacon, including

1. A cataloging of all resources offered by our denominational agencies that support the vision of reinvigorated offices of elder and deacon, as well as other appropriate resources offered by other sources.
2. The development of an approach, whether by way of conferences, staff, materials, or other means, that gives energy to initiatives of deacons and elders in churches, classes, and the denomination.

The executive director of the CRCNA shall report to synod on the annual progress of the above efforts of denominational agencies and ministries as all seek to work together for the revitalization of the offices of elder and deacon.

Ground: This is important for the revitalization of the offices of deacon and elder.

- G. That synod accept this report as fulfilling the mandate of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon and dismiss the task force.

Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon

Amanda Bakale
 Roy Berkenbosch
 Henry De Moor
 Chris Ganski, reporter
 Rudy Gonzalez
 Calvin Hoogendoorn
 George Monsma
 Nick Monsma
 Rosetta Polk-Pugh
 Andrew Ryskamp (staff adviser)
 Mick Vanden Bosch
 Terry Woodnorth, chair

Appendix A
Resources for Elders and Deacons

A. *Elder resources*

1. Articles, books, and web resources

The Elder's Handbook by Louis M. Tamminga
A Compassionate Journey: Coming Alongside People with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses by John G. Cook
The Compassionate Congregation: A Handbook for People Who Care by Karen Mulder and Ginger Jurries
The Empty Pew: Caring for Those Who Leave by Louis M. Tamminga
Finding the Right Pastor for Your Church by Dirk J. Hart
The Ministry of the Elder by Robert White
Companions on the Way: A Guide for Elders as They Tend to the Spiritual Needs of People Exploring or Rediscovering the Christian Faith, published by the Reformed Church in America
Moving Your Church Through Conflict by Speed B. Leas
In Life and in Death: A Pastoral Guide to Funerals by Leonard Vander Zee

So You've Been Asked to Make Visits by Louis M. Tamminga
Celebrating the Milestones of Faith by Laura and Robert Keeley
The Church Staff Handbook by Laura Keeley with Henry Kranenburg and Leonard Vander Zee
The Network – Elders (www.network.crcna.org/elders), currently facilitated by Louis M. Tamminga
Effective Leadership in the Church: A Training Tool to Help Congregations, Pastors, and Other Church Leaders Effectively Work Together to Accomplish God's Mission, published by SPE

2. Supporting CRCNA ministries

Pastor-Church Relations (www.crcna.org/pcr)
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (www.crcna.org/spe)
Sustaining Congregational Excellence (www.crcna.org/sce)
Center for Excellence in Preaching (cep.calvinseminary.edu)

3. Training

Sustaining Congregational Excellence Learning Events

In collaboration with Home Missions and Pastor-Church Relations, SCE hosts one-and-a-half-day events across North America that focus on equipping and encouraging leaders from congregations consisting of 150 or fewer adult members. (http://www2.crcna.org/pages/sce_learning_events.cfm)

Elder Leadership Institute

Rooted in the Presbyterian tradition, ELI is a 15-month guided program that begins with readings and conversational assignments prior to a five-day on-site retreat for ruling elders and pastors, with 12 months of further readings and hands-on practice under pastoral support and guidance. (<http://www.elderleadership.org/>)

Healthy Church Coaching

An assessment and discernment tool for church leaders to assess congregational health with the guidance of a trained coach. (<http://www.crcna.org/HealthyChurch>)

Webinars via The Network

Helpful webinars across a range of topics are archived on The Network's Elder page, including several training-specific webinars:

Called to Be an Elder? Now What?

New Elders: Key Understanding and Practices

How to Do the Work of an Elder

Elder Visits in the 21st Century

(search "webinars" at <http://network.crcna.org/elders>)

Continuing Education @ Calvin Theological Seminary

CTS offers continuing education opportunities, including courses and lectures. (www.calvinseminary.edu/ministry-connections/continuing-ed/)

B. Deacon resources

1. Articles, books, and web resources

- Center on Faith in Communities* by Amy Sherman
Restorers of Hope: Reaching the Poor in Your Community with Church-Based Ministries That Work by Amy Sherman
Sharing God's Heart for the Poor by Amy Sherman
Communities First published by Faith Alive
Diakonia: Mutual Helping With Justice and Compassion by Jaap Van Klinken
Faith & Finances: Helping People Manage Their Money by Gary Nederveld and Erica Chung
Generous Justice by Timothy Keller
The Hole in Our Gospel by Richard Sterns
Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People edited by Brian Woolnough, Wonsuk Ma
Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road by Timothy Keller
The New Testament Deacon: Minister of Mercy by Alexander Strauch
The New Testament Deacon (Study Guide) by Alexander Strauch
Resources for Deacons and Church Leaders - Bibliography
Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development by Bryant L. Myers
When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. Website:
<http://www.chalmers.org/when-helping-hurts>. Video interview at
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzUKZajloJY>.
Who Will Lead Us? A Study in the Development of Biblical Offices, with Emphasis on the Diaconate by Leonard J. Coppes
Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (and How to Reverse It) by Robert Lupton
Small Things with Great Love: Adventures in Loving Your Neighbor by Margot Starbuck
The Network – Deacons, currently facilitated by Jack Kooyman

2. Supporting ministries and organizations

- Access of West Michigan (<http://accessofwestmichigan.org/>)
A Bibliography of Mercy Ministry for the Third World and the Rest of Us (<http://www.eldrbarry.net/ug/mercy.htm>)
Start> Becoming a Good Samaritan (<http://www.juststart.org/>)
Bread for the World (<http://www.bread.org/>)
Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) (<http://www.cdda.org/>)
Communities First Association (<http://communitiesfirstassociation.org/>)
Chalmers Center for Economic Development at Covenant College (<http://www.chalmers.org/>)
Churches that Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works (http://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/Churches_that_Make_a_Difference.pdf)
CRC Office of Social Justice (<http://www2.crcna.org/pages/justice.cfm>)
Diaconal Ministries Canada (<http://diaconalministries.com/wp/>)

Evangelicals for Social Action (<http://www.evangelicalsforsocialaction.org/>)
Family Independence Initiative (<http://www.fii.org/>)
Kingdom Causes - City Net (<http://citynet.org/>)
Love INC (<http://www.loveinc.org/>)
Resources for wholistic ministry for your church (http://www.heartsandmindsbooks.com/booknotes/wholistic_ministry_for_your_ch/)
World Renew (<http://www.worldrenew.net/>)

3. Training materials

Communities First Association tools (<http://communitiesfirstassociation.org/tools-archive/>)
Getting Started as a New Deacon webinar (<http://network.crcna.org/deacons/getting-started-new-deacon>)
Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit (<http://willowcreek.com/events/leadership/>)

Appendix B

Deacon/diaconate, elder/consistory, council, classis, and synod roles and responsibilities from the Church Order

This appendix summarizes the various roles and responsibilities as found in the current and proposed Church Order to assist the reader in understanding the full scope of responsibilities of the various offices and assemblies:

A. Deacon/diaconate

The deacon's role and responsibilities:

1. Be an adult confessing member who meets the biblical requirements (Church Order Art. 3-a)
2. Be officially called and ordained or installed to hold and exercise office in the church (Art. 3-b)
3. Signify agreement with the doctrine of the church by signing the Covenant for Officebearers (Art. 5)
4. Serve for a limited time (Art. 25-a)
5. Represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people, stimulate members to faithful stewardship on behalf of the needy (Art. 25-c)
6. Lead the congregation in ways that inspire faithful stewardship of time, talent, and resources (*proposed* Art. 25-c)
7. Call the members to be ambassadors of reconciliation in all areas of life (*proposed* Art. 25-c)
8. Create and encourage participation in structures and ministries that use member gifts in areas of compassion, community transformation, creation care, justice, stewardship, and pastoral care, both locally and globally (*proposed* Art. 25-c)
9. Give an account of the diaconate's work to the council (Art. 35-c)
10. Meet at least once per month (Art. 36-a)
11. Extend pastoral care to all members (Art. 65)
12. Enable the needy under their care to make use of Christian institutions of mercy (Art. 74-b)

13. Confer and cooperate with diaconates of neighboring churches (Art. 74-b)
14. Seek mutual understandings with agencies in their community that are caring for the needy (Art. 74-b)
15. Be subject to general and special discipline (Art. 82)
16. Never lord it over another officebearer (Art. 85)

B. Elder/consistory

The elder's role and responsibilities:

1. Be an adult confessing member who meets the biblical requirements (Art. 3-a)
2. Be officially called and ordained or installed to hold and exercise office in the church (Art. 3-b)
3. Signify agreement with the doctrine of the church by signing the Covenant for Officebearers (Art. 5)
4. Supervise, with the minister, the congregation and fellow officebearers, exercise admonition and discipline, see that everything is done decently and in order, exercise pastoral care over the congregation, engage in and promote the work of evangelism (Art. 12-a and 65)
5. Give approval for a commissioned pastor to serve beyond their specific field of labor (Art. 23-e)
6. Serve for a limited time (Art. 25-a)
7. Oversee the doctrine and life of the members of the congregation and fellow officebearers, exercise admonition and discipline along with pastoral care in the congregation, participate in and promote evangelism, defend the faith, nurture in the congregation grateful and obedient participation in the Lord's Supper through encouragement, instruction, and accountability (Art. 25-b)
8. Encourage and support the members in their Christian life (*proposed* Art. 25-b)
9. Give an account of its work to the council (*proposed* Art. 35-b)
10. Meet at least once per month (Art. 36-a)
11. Regulate the worship services (Art. 52-a)
12. Ensure that the principles and elements of worship approved by synod are observed (Art. 52-b)
13. Appoint those who lead worship services or read a sermon (Art. 53-a and -b)
14. Approve sermons read in a worship service (Art. 53-b)
15. Ensure that baptism is requested and administered to children of confessing members as soon as feasible (Art. 56)
16. Supervise participation in the Lord's Supper (Art. 59-a)
17. Receive testimony of faith, life, and doctrine of those who make a public profession of faith (Art. 59-b)
18. Examine persons from other denominations and determine how to admit them as confessing members (Art. 59-f)
19. Supervise the instruction of youth in Scripture, the creeds, and the confessions of the church (Art. 63-b)
20. Supervise the instruction of adult members (Art. 63-b)

21. Instruct and admonish those under the elder's spiritual care to marry only in the Lord (Art. 69-a)
22. Encourage a spirit of mutual accountability, calling the congregation away from favoritism, division, and selfishness toward hospitality, forgiveness, and unity within the body, especially in conjunction with participation in the Lord's Supper as mandated in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (Art. 79-b)
23. Instruct and remind the members of the church of their responsibility and foster a spirit of love and openness within the fellowship so that erring members may be led to repentance and reconciliation (Art. 79-c)
24. Exercise the authority that Christ has given to his church regarding sins of a public nature or those brought to its attention according to Matthew 18:15-17 (Art. 80)
25. Faithfully disciple members who have sinned in life or doctrine (Art. 81-a)
26. Exclude from membership in the church of Christ those who persist in their sin (Art. 81-a)
27. Inform the congregation and encourage its involvement in both the exclusion from and the readmission to membership (Art. 81-d)
28. Be subject to general and special discipline (Art. 82)
29. Never lord it over another officebearer (Art. 85)

C. *Council*

The council's role and responsibilities:

1. Present officebearer nominations to the congregation (Art. 4-a)
2. Give the congregation an opportunity to direct attention to suitably gifted persons for nomination (Art. 4-b)
3. Supervise the election of officebearers by the congregation and establish election regulations (Art. 4-c)
4. Ordain or install officebearers (Art. 4-d)
5. Stipulate, via regulation, occasions that officebearers shall signify agreement with the doctrine of the church by signing the Covenant for Officebearers (Art. 5)
6. Nominate and call a minister; seek approval of classical counselor; sign the letter of call (Art. 9)
7. Provide ecclesiastical testimonial of doctrine and life for a former minister (Art. 10-b)
8. Give consent for a minister of the Word to leave the congregation for another church (Art. 14-a)
9. Provide for the proper support of its minister(s) (Art. 15)
10. Give approval for and supervise a minister on a temporary leave of absence from service to the congregation (Art. 16)
11. Initiate the release of a minister from active ministerial service in a congregation (Art. 17-a)
12. Provide for the support of a released minister (Art. 17-b)
13. Approve the retirement of a minister (Art. 18-a)
14. Declare a minister emeritus to be eligible for call if the reasons for retirement no longer exist (Art. 18-c)

15. Give approval for a commissioned pastor to continue to serve a newly organized church (Art. 23-b)
16. Directly supervise commissioned pastors (Art. 23-b)
17. Make proper provision for receiving communications, preparing agenda and acts, keeping files and archives, and conducting the financial transactions of the council (Art. 32-c)
18. Provide for the safeguarding of the church's property through proper incorporation (Art. 32-d)
19. Be responsible for tasks that belong to the common administration of the church, such as the calling of a pastor, the approval of nominations for church office, mutual censure, meeting with church visitors, and other matters of common concern (Art. 35-a)
20. Meet at least once per month (Art. 36-a)
21. Exercise mutual censure at least four times per year, assessing and encouraging each other in the performance of their official duties (Art. 36-b)
22. Seek the cooperation of the congregation in the election of officebearers, invite congregational judgment about major matters, call an annual meeting of members (Art. 37)
23. Have the authority to make and carry out final decisions (Art. 37)
24. Consult with classis in the distribution of assets when disbanding (Art. 38-d)
25. Delegate minister/elder/deacon to classis (Art. 40-a)
26. Issue a certificate concerning a confessing member's doctrine and life when the member moves to another church (Art. 66-a)
27. Diligently encourage members to establish and maintain good Christian schools (Art. 71)
28. Urge parents to have their children educated in harmony with a biblical, Reformed vision of Christ's lordship over all creation (Art. 71)
29. Stimulate the members of the congregation to be witnesses for Christ in word and deed and to support the work of home and world missions (Art. 73-b)
30. Sponsor and govern the bringing of the gospel to unbelievers in its own community (Art. 74-a)

D. Classis

The classis's role and responsibilities:

1. Stipulate, via regulation, occasions on which officebearers shall signify agreement with the doctrine of the church by signing the Covenant for Officebearers (Art. 5)
2. Ensure that ecclesiastical regulations have been observed when calling a minister (Art. 9)
3. Receive the account of the classical counselor regarding call of a minister (Art. 9)
4. Approve the ordination of a candidate for the ministry of the Word (Art. 10-a)
5. Examine a candidate for the ministry of the Word concerning doctrine and life according to synodical regulations (Art. 10-a)
6. Approve the installation of a minister (Art. 10-b)

7. Provide ecclesiastical testimonial of doctrine and life for a former minister of the classis (Art. 10-b)
8. Determine whether the work of a minister in other work is consistent with the calling of a minister (Art. 12-c)
9. Release a minister of the Word who resigns from the ministry of the CRC to enter a ministry outside the denomination (Art. 14-b)
10. Give approval for a minister of the Word to be released from office to enter upon a nonministerial vocation (Art. 14-c)
11. Give approval for a former minister of the Word who was released from office to be declared eligible for call and conduct an interview that examines the circumstances surrounding the release and the renewed desire to serve in ministry (Art. 14-e)
12. Give approval for a minister to obtain primary or supplemental income by means of other employment (Art. 15)
13. Give approval for a minister to be released from ministry (Art. 17-a)
14. Give approval for the support of a council of a released minister (Art. 17-b)
15. Declare a minister of the Word who has been released from active ministerial service in a congregation to be released from the ministerial office based on specified criteria (Art. 17-c and -d)
16. Approve the retirement of a minister (Art. 18-a)
17. Declare a minister emeritus to be eligible for call if the reasons for retirement no longer exist (Art. 18-c)
18. Coordinate financial aid for those seeking to become ministers of the Word who are in need of it (Art. 21)
19. Give approval for commissioned pastors to serve in various capacities (Art. 23-b and -c)
20. Give approval for a commissioned pastor to serve beyond their specific field of labor (Art. 23-e)
21. Defines rules for classical procedure (Art. 28-c)
22. Make proper provision for receiving communications, preparing agenda and acts, keeping files and archives, and conducting the financial transactions of classis (Art. 32-c)
23. Provide for the safeguarding of classis property through proper incorporation (Art. 32-d)
24. Appoint a classical interim committee to act for classis in matters that cannot await action by the classis itself (Art. 33-b)
25. Designate a neighboring council for the care of a group of believers among whom no council can yet be constituted (Art. 38-a)
26. Give approval for a council to be constituted for the first time (Art. 38-b)
27. Give approval for a congregation to disband or revert to unorganized status (Art. 38-d)
28. Give approval for the merger of two or more councils and congregations (Art. 38-e)
29. Give approval for churches uniting to form union congregations (Art. 38-g)
30. Be defined as a group of neighboring churches (Art. 39)
31. Meet at least every four months unless determined to be impractical due to great distances (Art. 40-b)

32. Be responsible for appointing persons to provide counsel and advice to churches; appoint church visitors to visit each church yearly; appoint classical counselors to provide advice to any church in the process of calling a minister of the Word (Art. 42-a)
33. Maintain a student fund and a Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (Art. 43-a)
34. Grant the right to exhort within its bounds (Art. 43-b)
35. If so desired, take counsel or joint action with neighboring classes (Art. 44-a)
36. If so desired, organize into an ecclesiastical assembly with other classes (Art. 44-b)
37. Delegate ministers and elders and deacons to synod (*proposed* Art. 45)
38. Nominate synodical deputies (Art. 48-a)
39. Approve an ordained person to administer the sacraments (Art. 55)
40. Assist the churches in their local evangelistic programs, administered by a classical home missions committee (Art. 75-a)
41. Assist the churches in their ministry of mercy, administered by a classical diaconal committee (Art. 75-b)

E. *Synod*

The synod's role and responsibilities:

1. Stipulate, via regulation, occasions on which officebearers shall signify agreement with the doctrine of the church by signing the Covenant for Officebearers (Art. 5)
2. Directly appoint ministers of the Word (Art. 12-b)
3. Ratify the appointment of a minister of the Word to a local church (Art. 12-b)
4. Establish regulations for ministers to be released from active ministerial service (Art. 17-a)
5. Govern a theological seminary through a board of trustees appointed by synod (Art. 19)
6. Establish regulations for students to receive licensure to exhort in public worship services (Art. 22)
7. Define rules for synodical procedure (Art. 28-c)
8. Establish rights for other appeals and adopt rules for processing them (Art. 30-b)
9. Make proper provision for receiving communications, preparing agenda and acts, keeping files and archives, and conducting the financial transactions of synod (Art. 32-c)
10. Provide for the safeguarding of the property of the Christian Reformed Church in North America through proper incorporation (Art. 32-d)
11. Appoint the Board of Trustees to act for synod in matters that cannot await action by synod itself (Art. 33-b)
12. Establish the procedure and regulations for a non-Christian Reformed congregation to affiliate with the Christian Reformed Church (Art. 38-c)
13. Establish the process to follow when a council decides to disaffiliate from the denomination (Art. 38-f)
14. Approve the organization of a new classis and the redistricting of classes (Art. 39)

15. Approve the authority, jurisdiction, and mandate of a classical level ecclesiastical assembly (Art. 44-b)
16. Be defined as an assembly representing the churches of all the classes (Art. 45)
17. Meet annually (Art. 46-a)
18. Be responsible for the adoption of the creeds, the Church Order, and the principles and elements of worship; approve the liturgical forms, the *Psalter Hymnal*, and the Bible versions suitable for use in worship (Art. 47)
19. Appoint ministers to serve as synodical deputies (Art. 48-a)
20. Appoint a committee to encourage ecumenical relationships with other Christian churches (Art. 49-a)
21. Designate the churches with whom the Christian Reformed Church in North America is in ecumenical fellowship and dialogue, and designate the ecumenical organizations in which the Christian Reformed Church holds membership or significantly participates (Art. 49-b)
22. Send delegates to ecumenical bodies (Art. 50-a)
23. Present matters to ecumenical gatherings (Art. 50-b)
24. Ratify decisions of ecumenical bodies (Art. 50-c)
25. Encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism (Art. 76-a)
26. Appoint and regulate a denominational home missions committee (Art. 76-a)
27. Encourage and assist congregations and classes in their ministry of mercy (Art. 76b)
28. Appoint and regulate a diaconal committee to administer the denominational ministry of mercy (Art. 76-b)
29. Encourage and assist the joint world mission work of the churches, provide for its support, and encourage the congregations to call and support missionaries (Art. 77-a)
30. Appoint and regulate a denominational world missions committee (Art. 77-a)
31. Develop guidelines for reinstatement to office for those deposed for acts of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct (Art. 84)
32. Revise Church Order (Art. 86)

AD HOC COMMITTEE

Report of Synod Ad Hoc Committee Regarding Weber Appeal

OVERTURES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Overture 1: Reinstate the Practice of Appointing Women Advisers to Synod and Review the Formula Adopted by Synod 2014 for Ethnic Advisers

I. Introduction

The purpose of this overture is to create a back-up structure for gender diversity in our delegations to synod that is parallel to the one we have established for ethnic diversity. Synod 2014 decided to invite up to seven ethnic advisers to synod when the delegation contains less than twenty-five delegates of ethnic minority, with no less than two appointed each year. This overture asks that we do the same to bring gender diversity to the floor of synod—that we invite women advisers to synod when the delegation contains less than twenty-five women delegates.

II. History of ethnic advisers and women advisers

Much of the following is gleaned from the quite thorough “History of Role of Advisers to Synod” (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, pp. 60-71). In the following we briefly highlight the significant pieces related to this overture.

Synod 1995 received an overture asking for ethnic advisers to be present at synod. That synod “adopted a recommendation that it accede to the overture ‘by including up to seven members from the various ethnic communities in the CRC to serve as advisers to synod and that the Board of Trustees be asked to implement this practice for a period of five years.’” As such, the first ethnic advisers were present for Synod 1996. At Synod 2000 this practice was continued for another five-year period. Synod 2003 appointed a committee to study the practice of appointing ethnic advisers to synod. This committee reported to Synod 2005, which adopted recommendations relating to the ethnic diversity of the CRCNA, including encouraging “each classis to include at least one ethnic minority person in its synodical delegation beginning with Synod 2006” (*Acts of Synod 2005*, p. 748). In addition, Synod 2005 adopted the following recommendation as a way to ensure voices at synod from people of an ethnic minority:

That synod continue the position of ethnic adviser as long as the number of ethnic minority delegates is fewer than twenty-five, after which time it shall be discontinued. The Board of Trustees should appoint as many ethnic advisers as are needed to reach twenty-five, except that no more than seven (and no fewer than two) shall be appointed.

(Acts of Synod 2005, p. 756)

This practice of having both ethnic minority delegates at synod and supplementing this number with ethnic advisers continued all the way through

Synod 2014. Then, for the first time in synodical history, the number of ethnic minority delegates at Synod 2014 exceeded twenty-five. This led Synod 2014 to celebrate, but there was also a concern. According to the synodical decision from 2005 shown above, once that minimum number (25) was achieved, the practice of ethnic advisers would be discontinued. The concern was that following synods might not achieve the same diversity of the delegates. Thus, a motion came from the floor of synod on the second-to-last day (not as a part of the report of Advisory Committee 1), and the following motion was adopted:

That synod reinstate the practice of including ethnic advisers at synod as described in section 1, b, 2 of the Advisory Committee 1 report regarding the Role of Advisers to Synod Report (*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 537-38).

(*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 576)

All this leads to our current practice (*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 537-38), which will be utilized for the first time at Synod 2015:

Ethnic advisers are representative voices of ethnic minority communities in the membership of the CRC that are not adequately represented in the delegations by the classes. Up to seven such ethnic minority non-voting advisers may be appointed, subject to the selection rules as adopted by Synod 2005 (see Rules for Synodical Procedure, section III, D). The number of seven (or proportion of) such persons shall be appointed as long as the total number of ethnic minority delegates is less than twenty-five persons. The number of ethnic minority advisers appointed shall be less than seven if the number of voting delegates from ethnic-minority origin exceeds eighteen delegates. However, in no instance shall the appointment of ethnic minority advisers be less than two. In order to provide for an appropriate notification timeline for those appointed to serve, the number of ethnic minority advisers to be appointed shall be based on a previous three-year rolling average of diversity presence at synod.

- a) Advisers shall be assigned to an advisory committee as proposed by the executive director and approved by the Program Committee of synod.
- b) The parameter of service of the adviser, in advisory committee or plenary session, is to be in keeping with the general regulations of synod.

It should be noted here that this “unique formula for ethnic advisers” (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 58) was submitted to Synod 2014 via the Board of Trustees Report (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 55) and given to synodical Advisory Committee 1 to discuss. The committee discussed and recommended changes to some of the other newly established guidelines for faculty advisers, deacon advisers, young adult representatives, and such. But since the advisory committee was told that the practice of ethnic advisers was going to be discontinued, the Advisory Committee did not discuss this new unique formula. They did, however, recommend that synod retain these “draft guidelines for ethnic advisers in the event that Ethnic Advisers are reinstated in the future” (*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 537, emphasis added). This is why the current overture suggests that these *draft* guidelines be reviewed by a synodical advisory committee in the near future, with gratitude that the Board of Trustees has done good work, but also recognizing that this new formula has never undergone the good process of scrutiny by an advisory committee.

Note: For verification that the advisory committee *did not* review these guidelines, see the 24th minute of the synod YouTube video for the session “Monday AM 3 – Synod 2014” where reporter Greg Janke responds to a

question by Hector Garcia, saying, “What you have in front of you in that section dealing with the guidelines for ethnic advisers is the language that we received from the Board of Trustees. We made no changes to it . . . and that’s one of the reasons we wanted to leave it as draft, because we really didn’t deal with it, with that particular section.” That video can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTMlUkwLz7g&index=17&list=PLOuKlnOF5iTC6i_7Q_eSyxIKYWplpuDuJ.

In summary, synod has desired to enrich its deliberation by ensuring ethnic diversity when it assembles. Synod has decided that twenty-five delegates of ethnic minority is the minimum number to reach that goal. When that number is not met, synod will invite ethnic advisers to supplement the ethnic diversity for the good of the church.

As we turn to the history of women advisers to synod, we note that synod opted to follow almost the exact same procedures for women advisers as synod had established for ethnic advisers. Synod 2000 decided that “synod make provision to have up to seven women from various regions in the CRC serve as advisers to synod” (*Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 387). The “History of Role of Advisers to Synod” notes, “In effect, synod copied the practice of appointing ethnic advisers to synod,” and in 2001, synod adopted “qualifications and responsibilities [that] were identical to those for ethnic advisers” (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 68; see *Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 493).

As noted above, Synod 2005 set a minimum number of twenty-five for ethnic minority delegates, retaining ethnic advisers until that number was met. But Synod 2005 did not set a minimum number of women delegates, presumably because women were not allowed to be delegates at that time.

In 2007, synod decided to welcome women as delegates. Synod 2008 discontinued the practice of women advisers. When the Board recommended such action, they listed as a ground that “the number of women delegates now exceeds the number of women appointed to serve synod as advisers” (*Agenda for Synod 2008*, p. 24). The advisory committee supported discontinuing women advisers with a different ground: “Women advisers are no longer needed when we have women delegates who can fully participate instead of only advising.” In the end, Synod 2008 accepted a third wording for the recommendation, still discontinuing the practice of women advisers, but listing as the grounds simply that “Synod 2007 approved the appointment of women delegates” (*Acts of Synod 2008*, p. 479; see also *Agenda for Synod 2014*, pp. 68-69.)

In summary, synod has historically desired to enrich its deliberation by ensuring gender diversity when it assembles. It has historically paralleled its practice of women advisers to its practice of ethnic advisers. But currently there are significant differences. At present, there is no guarantee of gender diversity, as it has been assumed that welcoming women delegates will fulfill that goal. Synod has decided that twenty-five delegates of ethnic minority is the minimum number to achieve its goals for ethnic diversity. Currently, there is no number of women delegates set as a minimum to achieve the goal of gender diversity.

Finally, it is noted that, according to the synodical office, data for the number of women delegates over the past six synods are as follows:

Year	# of Women Delegates	# of Total Delegates
2009	16	185
2010	17	186
2011	17	188
2012	15	182
2013	19	186
2014	16	187

III. Overture

With all this in mind, Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan overtures Synod 2015 to

A. Reinstate the practice of including women advisers to synod in a way that parallels what we have established for ethnic advisers (see *Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 537-38, 576), including that twenty-five women delegates be set as the minimum representation for synod to achieve its goal of gender diversity.

Grounds:

1. Synod desires to enrich the work of synod through gender diversity (*Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 387; *Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 699).
2. Currently, there is no guarantee of gender diversity at synod. Reinstating this practice will ensure gender diversity at synod.
3. Synod has decided that twenty-five delegates of ethnic diversity is a good minimum number of delegates to achieve its goal of ethnic diversity. This overture parallels that practice, accepting the same number of women delegates as a minimum in order to achieve synod's goal of gender diversity.

B. That synod review the formula adopted by Synod 2014 for ethnic advisers, which may now be adopted for women advisers.

Grounds:

1. Because of the unique way that this came to the floor of synod in 2014, this formula was never reviewed by a synodical advisory committee. It was only passed on as "draft guidelines" (emphasis added) for a possible future time.
2. This new formula is sufficiently different from the old formula and practice that it would be prudent to review these guidelines through our regular synodical process. After all, the Board of Trustees called it a "unique formula."

Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan
J. Cameron Fraser, stated clerk

Overture 2: Approve the Transfer of Chelwood CRC from Classis Rocky Mountain to Classis Red Mesa

Classis Red Mesa overtures Synod 2015 to approve the transfer of Chelwood CRC, Albuquerque, New Mexico, from Classis Rocky Mountain to Classis Red Mesa.

Grounds:

1. When Classis Red Mesa was formed more than thirty years ago, the council of Chelwood CRC decided to remain with Classis Rocky

Mountain. The council, even with the knowledge that Chelwood CRC would be the only congregation in New Mexico not to join Classis Red Mesa, made this decision in deference to the desire of our Navajo and Zuni brothers and sisters to have a classis of their own. Although those reasons were legitimate in 1982, they are no longer weighty in 2015.

2. Chelwood CRC has entered into ministry partnership with Mr. Jerome Sandoval from Naschitti (N.Mex.) CRC to help them more effectively connect with unconnected Navajo and Zuni young people in and around Albuquerque. This effort would be aided through classical alignment with Classis Red Mesa.
3. Due to considerable distances and scheduling challenges, it has been difficult for Chelwood CRC to maintain full participation as part of Classis Rocky Mountain. The meetings of Classis Red Mesa are held at more convenient times and more accessible locations, which would more easily enable full participation on the part of Chelwood CRC.

Classis Red Mesa

John J. Greydanus, stated clerk

Overture 3: Permit Transfer of Membership of Chelwood CRC from Classis Rocky Mountain to Classis Red Mesa

Classis Rocky Mountain overtures Synod 2015 of the Christian Reformed Church in North America to approve the transfer of membership of Chelwood CRC, Albuquerque, New Mexico, from Classis Rocky Mountain to Classis Red Mesa.

Grounds:

1. Chelwood CRC is currently the only active CRC in the state of New Mexico that is not a member of Classis Red Mesa.
2. When Classis Red Mesa was formed more than thirty years ago, the council of Chelwood CRC decided to remain with Classis Rocky Mountain. The council did this in deference to the wishes of our Navajo and Zuni brothers and sisters' desire to have a classis of their own, knowing full well that Chelwood would be the only congregation in New Mexico not to join Red Mesa. Although those reasons were legitimate in 1982, we do not believe they are as weighty in 2015.
3. Chelwood CRC has entered into ministry partnership with Mr. Jerome Sandoval from the Naschitti (N.Mex.) CRC to help us more effectively connect with unconnected Navajo and Zuni young people in and around Albuquerque. We believe that effort would be aided through classical alignment with Red Mesa.
4. Practically speaking, it has been difficult to maintain full participation at the meetings of Classis Rocky Mountain since they take place at inconvenient times and require more than a one-day commitment. The meetings of Red Mesa are held at more convenient times and places to enable our full participation.

Classis Rocky Mountain

Mark W. Hilbelink, stated clerk

Overture 4: Add a New Subsection to Church Order Article 38 Regarding Multiaffiliated Churches

I. Background

In March 2012, Pillar Church in Holland, Michigan, approved a plan of dual affiliation with both the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America (RCA). In May 2012, Classis Holland of the CRC and the Holland Classis of the RCA approved that plan, affirming that Pillar Church is affiliated with both denominations. To live out our calling to be a unifying presence and work for the common good of both denominations, Classis Holland offers this overture to amend the CRC Church Order to provide an avenue for other CRC churches to affiliate with the RCA and/or other denominations in ecclesiastical fellowship in order to be more faithful and effective in mission to God in their particular situation.

II. Overture

Classis Holland overtures synod to add the following new subsection to Church Order Article 38, defining how an individual congregation can form affiliations with denominations in ecclesiastical fellowship while also maintaining affiliation with the CRC. Other churches in ecclesiastical fellowship are included in this proposal to parallel the language and substance of Church Order Article 38-g. Thus, this proposal allows for “multiaffiliated” churches. This proposal follows the language and pattern of Article 38-g, which addresses a situation in which two or more churches merge into a union church. Our proposal addresses a situation in which one church develops formal affiliation with more than one denomination.

Proposed Article 38-h

Particular churches of the Christian Reformed Church in North America may affiliate with one or more additional denominations in ecclesiastical fellowship, with the approval of classis.

—Cf. Supplement, Article 38-h

Proposed Supplement, Article 38-h

The following plan for affiliation shall be adopted by a particular church to affiliate with one or more denominations in ecclesiastical fellowship:

- a. The following plan is adopted by the _____ Christian Reformed Church of _____, effective as of the date when the congregation has approved the plan by a two-thirds majority of those present at a regularly called congregational meeting with such notice and quorum as is required by its rules of procedure and when the local classis of the CRC and the local governing body of the additional denomination has approved the particular plan of affiliation.
- b. The purpose of this affiliation is to provide for the worship of almighty God, instruction in the Christian faith, and

outreach and diaconal ministry by a congregation which is organizing as a dual or multiaffiliated church.

- c. The dual or multiaffiliated church shall be known as the _____ Church.
- d. The dual or multiaffiliated church shall be subject to the constitution of each denomination involved as set forth in subsections *m*, *n*, *p*, and *q* below.
- e. The council shall annually report its active membership count and other statistics to the respective denominations as required by each denomination.
- f. In the case of an organized church, initially the officers (elders and deacons) shall be those officers in active service at the time of the change in affiliation. They will undertake to perform their responsibilities as indicated in subsections *d* above and *m*, *n*, *p*, and *q* below.
- g. Following the change in affiliation in an organized church, or when an emerging church organizes as a dual or multiaffiliated church, officers will be elected according to the rules of procedure approved in the resulting church.
- h. The minister(s) of the resulting church shall be full and responsible members of each assembly (judicatory) of immediate jurisdiction and shall be subject to discipline as provided below in subsection *n*.
- i. The dual or multiaffiliated church shall make changes in its Articles of Incorporation to include the substance of subsections *b*, *c*, and *d* and the confessional standards of the affiliated churches.
- j. While recognizing the basic right of any giver to designate the cause or causes to which a gift shall go, the council of the dual or multiaffiliated church shall annually propose to the congregation a general mission or benevolence program which shall be divided equitably among the officially approved causes of each denomination. The proportions shall be as the council shall decide in response to the request of the broader assemblies (judicatories).
- k. Per capita ministry shares (assessments) shall be paid to each classis and synod (and equivalent governing bodies) on the basis of the total confessing membership of the church, equally divided among the denominations involved.
- l. All members of the church shall be under the discipline of the elders, according to rules agreed upon in harmony with the constitution of each denomination where they coincide, and in harmony with the mandatory provisions of the constitution of one denomination where the other is permissive,

and at the choice of the elders where the provisions may be contradictory.

- m. Appeals against the actions of the council shall be made to one assembly or judicatory only (classis), at the choice of the members, and all subsequent appeals or complaints shall be in the assemblies of the members' original choice, and decisions so finally made shall be binding on the council and on the members.
- n. The minister(s) shall be subject to the discipline of the council and the governing assemblies of the denomination within which that minister is ordained, provided that when an assembly begins an action, it shall invite a committee from the others to join in formulating and pressing the charges. In the event of appeal, the case shall be finally decided by the broadest assembly to which the appeal is taken in the church which commenced the action, and that decision shall be equally binding on the council and classis.
- o. The minister(s) shall participate in the denominational pension plan of the denomination within which that minister is ordained and in compliance with its requirements.
- p. Protests/complaints against the actions of the council may be taken under the constitutional provisions of only one denomination, according to the choice of the complainant; once a complaint is registered with an assembly (judicatory), no other denomination shall accept jurisdiction in the same matter.
- q. The plan of affiliation that is formed may be dissolved by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at two separate congregational meetings held not less than one year and not more than two years apart, subject to the concurrence of the classes (regional assemblies) involved. In case of dissolution of the plan, all property of the church, real and personal, shall be divided according to a formula established at the time of purchase or the plan of affiliation. If a written formula does not exist, then the acquired property shall be divided equally between the classes (regional assemblies) of jurisdiction, unless a classis or presbytery chooses to waive its right to the property.
- r. Wherever the constitutions of the denominations differ, the mandatory provisions of one shall apply in all cases when the others are permissive. Wherever there are conflicting mandatory provisions (except as provided in subsection *l* above), the council of the dual or multiaffiliated church shall petition the assemblies (judicatories) of immediate jurisdiction to overture their respective broadest assembly to resolve the conflict either by authoritative interpretations or by constitutional amendment.

- s. No provision in this document shall be construed as modifying or amending the Church Order/Constitution of this church in its application to any but dual or multiaffiliated churches organized under this provision, their members, officers, or ministers.

Grounds:

1. Permitting congregations to enter into an additional denominational affiliation is a natural extension of the current regulations regarding *union congregations* (Article 38-g) and *calling ministers from the Reformed Church in America* (Supplement, Article 8, D).
2. There are unique circumstances in some areas of our denomination that provide “good cause” for a congregation also to be affiliated with another. Pillar Church in Holland, Michigan, given its history, is a clear case of such unique circumstances. Currently, the collaborations in Kingdom Enterprise Zones will lead to churches planted with a CRC/RCA identity from their beginning, and the union church provision is not intended for their situation. This addition will allow for a clear path to affiliate with both the RCA and CRC.
3. These arrangements facilitate service of the Lord Jesus Christ by working for the common good and harmony of the denominations involved in the dual or multiaffiliation. Affiliations with the RCA provide one important example of living out the Joint Resolution on the Relationship between the RCA and CRCNA, adopted by Synod 2014, and contribute to the healing of the historic rift between the CRC and the RCA.
4. Following the lead of Church Order Article 38-g, this provision of the Church Order depends on the decisions of synod to define the denominations that are in ecclesiastical fellowship and, thus, to serve as the gatekeeper for all dual and multiaffiliations.

Classis Holland

Anthony L. Louwerse, stated clerk

Overture 5: Instruct and Admonish Consistories Concerning Actions of “All One Body”

I. Introduction

Central to the identity of the church is unity. Much of the history of the Christian Reformed Church in North America testifies to the struggle to maintain unity. As a confessional church with Reformed polity, the CRCNA strives to heed biblical admonition and to preserve unity in the church. Creeds, confessions, contemporary testimonies, Church Order, and church assemblies all work together to fashion a unified church body, operating within this world in a deliberate and orderly manner.

In his high priestly prayer, Jesus prayed for those whom the Father had given to him, desiring “that they may all be one” (John 17:21). The apostle Paul admonishes the church to “make every effort to do what leads to peace”

(Rom. 14:19). Paul further instructs the church, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

Also central to the identity of the church is holiness, that biblical standard which encompasses both moral purity and separation. The apostle Peter says, “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Furthermore, Paul says that God “chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Eph. 1:4).

Maintaining unity and holiness in the church is a never-ending struggle this side of heaven. Because of the importance and weight of such struggles, the CRCNA handles matters relating to the unity and the holiness of the church in a defined and orderly way. The CRC Church Order provides for assemblies and procedures whereby the church seeks to preserve unity and holiness.

Interwoven with the deliberation and order of the church is the biblical admonition to “obey your leaders and submit to their authority” (Heb. 13:17). All congregants and officebearers in the CRCNA promise to submit to the authority of the church. Without such submission, unity and holiness cannot be maintained.

How must the church respond when the unity and holiness of the church are threatened by the words and actions of those unwilling to submit to the church’s authority? Within the past several years in the CRCNA, there has arisen an organized group of church members calling themselves All One Body. The stated purpose of this group is to change church doctrine with regard to the acceptance of homosexual acts and relationships. The mission of this group has been aided specifically through the actions of Eastern Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., and Calvin CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., by providing regular meeting space and hosting events and speakers. All One Body does not hide their direct advocacy for the acceptance of monogamous homosexual unions in the church. Neither do Eastern Avenue CRC or Calvin CRC hide their facilitation of All One Body.

Consider the following:

1. The website of All One Body states that “All One Body affirms and celebrates with all Christians who unite in committed, monogamous relationships patterned after Christ’s bond with his church.”
2. The website of All One Body states that they promote “the unrestricted membership and full participation in all dimensions of church life by all persons who confess Christ as their Savior and Lord, whether they are single or faithful partners in a committed, monogamous union, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT).”
3. The website of All One Body states that they meet monthly at Eastern Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids.
4. The website of All One Body lists their board members as Sheryl Mulder, Cara Oosterhouse, Grace Joldersma, John Chapin, and Art Jongsma. Each provides a testimony of their beliefs which are at odds with the doctrinal position of the CRCNA regarding homosexuality.

5. A January 16, 2012, *Banner* article titled “Michigan Group Responds to Synod’s Decision on Homosexuality” states that All One Body was formed as a reaction to the decision of Synod 2011 not to revisit (thereby affirming) the church’s teaching on homosexuality.
6. This *Banner* article states that the group has met since September 2011.
7. This *Banner* article states that the group provides presentations at Sunday school classes.
8. This *Banner* article states that All One Body board member Art Jongsma of Calvin CRC “has made presentations on alternative interpretations of key scriptural references,” thus publicly and openly opposing church doctrine.
9. This *Banner* article identifies All One Body co-president Sheryl Mulder as an elder at Eastern Avenue CRC (at that time).
10. In the public comments to this *Banner* article on January 18, 2012, All One Body co-president Cara Oosterhouse states that [homosexual attraction] “has been created by our God and given to us as a gift.”
11. On February 25, 2014, in the public comments of the February 21, 2014, *Banner* article titled “Where Have They Gone?,” All One Body board member Art Jongsma states that anything less than full inclusion of LGBT Christians and their partners is “an abomination.”
12. On March 7, 2014, in the public comments of this *Banner* article, Art Jongsma states that in the doctrinal position of the CRCNA regarding homosexuality, Scripture is “judgmentally misapplied” to LGBT Christians.
13. On October 25-27, 2012, All One Body hosted a three-day conference titled “Building an Inclusive Church.” The conference was held at Eastern Avenue CRC. The conference was put on by the Institute for Welcoming Resources, whose stated purpose is “to achieve the full acceptance and participation of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of the Church.” The Institute for Welcoming Resources further states that they want to create churches where people know that “they’re okay, just like they are.”
14. On September 17, 2014, an event that was organized by All One Body and held at Calvin CRC (Grand Rapids) featured speaker Dr. Amy Plantinga Pauw. Dr. Plantinga Pauw’s talk was a repetition of an address she delivered as early as November 1, 2013, that advocates for full inclusion of practicing homosexuals and their partners in the church.
15. On September 25, 2014, *The Banner* covered the presentation by Dr. Amy Plantinga Pauw in an article titled “Grand Rapids Event Advocates Full Participation of Practicing Gay Church Members.”
16. This *Banner* article notes that the decision of Synod 2011 not to reexamine the CRCNA position on homosexuality led to dissatisfaction that “led some members of Christian Reformed churches to form All One Body.” Now instead of submitting to the church’s authority, this group,

with the knowledge of their host churches, is fomenting discord and disunity. This is not harmless “dialogue”; this is unequivocal advocacy for sin within the church.

17. On September 27, 2014, in the public comments of this *Banner* article, Cara Oosterhouse references a blog post on the All One Body website wherein the author attempts to establish that the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Mark 3 is actually being committed by those who stand in the way of full acceptance of unrepentant practicing homosexuals. She goes on to say that we should “heed the warning of Jesus in Mark.”
18. On July 12, 2013, *The Banner* featured an article by Merrill Nosler titled “Being Gay and Christian.” In the article Ms. Nosler speaks of her struggles with homosexuality, her agreement with the position of the CRC, and her decision to “trust God’s Word.” On July 30, 2013, Cara Oosterhouse posted a public comment following the article in which she admonishes Ms. Nosler for her understanding of Scripture and assures her that she does “not need to live a celibate life.” Oosterhouse goes on to say, “For those of you who are gay or lesbian and feel called to having a life partner and a family, by all means, follow that call.”
19. The blog at the All One Body website has dozens of posts with various forms of advocacy for homosexual sex and denial of biblical gender norms.
20. The Facebook page of All One Body is replete with hundreds of entries advocating acceptance of homosexual practice and repudiating biblical gender norms. Reading their website and Facebook page can only lead to one conclusion: while All One Body speaks of a desire for dialogue, what they practice is advocacy and what they advocate for is sin.

Should the church be expected to be silent and allow this group, these individuals, and these facilitating churches to continue this pattern of rebellion and provoking of discord, disunity, and division within the church? The unity and holiness of the bride of Christ are at stake. We would not allow other groups to advocate the open practice and acceptance of pornography, adultery, malice, slander, or any other sin within the CRCNA. The sins of homosexual sex and the denial of God’s created order must not be afforded special status in the church as sins that can be openly advocated.

II. Statements of affirmation and denial

In presenting the following overture, we affirm and deny the following:

We affirm the dignity and worth of all people, created in God’s image.

We deny that recognition of dignity and worth necessitates unconditional approval of sinful behavior.

We affirm a deep love for all who profess Christ as their Lord and Savior.

We deny that love requires unconditional approval of sinful behavior.

We affirm the need for the church to preserve unity and holiness.

We deny that unity and holiness are preserved by overlooking sin.

We affirm that this overture is motivated by love: Love for God,
for neighbor, and for the church.

We deny that this overture is motivated by fear or hatred.

We affirm that the gospel is good news for all repentant sinners.

We deny that the gospel is good news for any unrepentant sinner.

We affirm that discipline is intended for loving correction and restoration.

We deny that discipline is intended for punishment or retribution.

We affirm that all Christians must struggle against temptation to sin
as we progress in sanctification.

We deny that any Christian will ever be free of temptation to sin prior
to glorification.

We affirm that dialogue about matters of faith and practice can and will
build up the body of Christ.

We deny that all dialogue is morally neutral or that advocacy for sin is
above reproach.

We affirm a place of welcome and spiritual nourishment in the church for
all repentant sinners.

We deny that the church is called to enfold any unrepentant sinner.

III. Overture

Classis Minnkota overtures synod (1) to instruct the consistories of Eastern Avenue CRC (Grand Rapids) and Calvin CRC (Grand Rapids) to exercise discipline with respect to those in their congregations who are publicly advocating homosexual practice through their membership in All One Body, in accordance with the provisions of Church Order Article 81-a; and (2) to admonish the consistories of Eastern Avenue CRC and Calvin CRC for hosting meetings of a group whose goals and purpose promote behavior that synod has declared to be sinful.

Grounds:

1. To advocate homosexual practice is to advocate sinful behavior (according to the decision of Synod 1973) and is worthy of discipline. Past synods have affirmed the established teaching of the church regarding same-sex sexual relations on multiple occasions (1973, 1994, 1999, 2002, 2011, 2013). Report 42 (*Agenda for Synod 1973*, pp. 609-33) concludes the following:
 - a. "The Scriptures teach us that God created us male and female" (p. 611).
 - b. "This is the created order in which male and female polarity form an integral part of being human" (p. 615).
 - c. "Homosexuality must be interpreted as a consequence of our broken world due to the invasion of sin in the creation" (p. 616).
 - d. "We conclude that the New Testament passages which make reference to homosexual behavior are in harmony with the judgment of the Old Testament: homosexual acts are sinful" (p. 621).
 - e. "From the viewpoint of the New Testament the inability of the homosexual to enter into a marriage relationship does not bar him from meaningful living in Christ, and the opportunity to be accepted as a person any less than the unmarried heterosexual" (p. 626).

- f. "The task of the church is to come with compassion to those who bear a heavy cross and encourage them with the means of God's grace; bring them the saving word of forgiveness when they stumble and fall; admonish them in love so they may repent and be renewed; embrace them in the warmth of Christian fellowship so they may find strength and support to bear their burden" (p. 630).
 - g. "Love for the homosexual neighbor does not allow us to soften the severity of this demand" (p. 631).
 - h. "Obedience to the revealed will of God will bring its own reward" (p. 631).
 - i. "The gospel of God's grace in Christ is to be proclaimed to [the homosexual] as the basis for his forgiveness, the power of his renewal, and the source of his strength to lead a sanctified life" (p. 632).
 - j. "Christians who are homosexual in their orientation . . . should recognize that their sexuality is subordinate to their obligation to live in wholehearted surrender to Christ" (p. 632).
 - k. "The church should speak the Word of God prophetically to a society and culture which glorifies sexuality and sexual gratification" (p. 633).
2. The stated goals and actions of All One Body promote disunity and division within the church.
 3. The members of All One Body are acting in defiance of the decisions of Synod 1973 (which Synod 2013 declined to reconsider).
 4. All One Body is promoting the acceptance and even celebration of sin within the church. The members of this organization are advocating for the acceptance of sinful behavior in Sunday school classes beyond the bounds of their own congregations.
 5. All One Body members promote disunity by leveling the serious charge against the CRCNA that it is committing blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.
 6. Members of All One Body who belong to the CRCNA are not honoring the authority of the church.
 7. The stated purpose of All One Body is to change church doctrine, yet they refuse to submit to the process established by the church for altering doctrine of the church.
 8. Church Order Article 78 reads: "The purpose of admonition and discipline is to restore those who err to faithful obedience to God and full fellowship with the congregation, to maintain the holiness of the church, and thus to uphold God's honor."
 9. Church Order Article 79-a reads: "The members of the church are accountable to one another in their doctrine and life and have the responsibility to encourage and admonish one another in love."
 10. Belgic Confession Article 29 states that one of the marks of the true church is that "it practices church discipline for correcting faults."
 11. Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 83 identifies "Christian discipline toward repentance" as one of the two keys of the kingdom.
 12. Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 85 notes that Christian discipline is applicable to "those who, though called Christians, profess unchristian teachings or live unchristian lives."

13. Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 87 reads as follows:

Q. Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and unrepentant ways?

A. By no means. Scripture tells us that no unchaste person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous person, no drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like will inherit the kingdom of God.

14. Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 108 reads as follows:

Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

A. That God condemns all unchastity, and that therefore we should thoroughly detest it and live decent and chaste lives, within or outside of the holy state of marriage.

15. Isaiah 5:20 says, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.” The members of All One Body call good what is evil (homosexual practice), and call evil what is good (the church’s teaching on the sin of homosexual practice). Eastern Avenue CRC and Calvin CRC are helping to promote this inversion of biblical values.

16. In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul deals with sexual immorality within the church and makes the following points:

a. Pride in sexual immorality has no place in the church (vv. 2, 6).

b. Paul passed judgment from a distance because the particulars of the sin were not disputed (v. 3).

c. Discipline is the proper response (vv. 4-5).

d. Sin allowed to remain affects the whole church (vv. 6-8).

e. The church must not associate with unrepentant sinners (Paul says, “Do not even eat with such people”) (vv. 9-11).

f. The church must remain pure and “expel the wicked person from among you” (v. 13).

17. The phrase “expel the wicked person from among you” echoes the repeated commands in Deuteronomy whereby the Israelites were to maintain the purity of God’s chosen people (Deut. 13:5; 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; 24:7).

18. All One Body’s wide-reaching advocacy of sinful behavior on the Internet and in public forums, and the personal advocacy of sinful behavior to a member of another CRC congregation in the official publication of the CRC makes this not merely a personal, congregational, or even classis-wide issue; this is a matter that is impacting the churches of the CRCNA as a whole. This requires synod to act.

19. All One Body has been meeting since 2011 and continues unabated by any local disciplinary action. The leadership of Eastern Avenue and Calvin CRCs, rather than disciplining these members in the direction of submitting to God’s norms, have provided forums at which the group has publicly advocated for this sinful behavior. It is therefore unreasonable to believe that the consistories of Eastern Avenue CRC or Calvin CRC of their own initiative will engage in the disciplining/disciplinary actions prescribed in Church Order Article 81-a. This article states: “Members who have sinned in life or doctrine *shall be*

faithfully disciplined by the consistory, and, if they persist in their sin, shall be excluded from membership in the church of Christ.”

20. The welfare of the congregations of these members (and congregations throughout the denomination) is at stake. It is spiritually damaging for members to openly defy church authority, foment discord, promote teachings at odds with church doctrine, and promote the practice and acceptance of sin without consequence.
21. There is a precedent for synod to declare that members who advocate and practice specific sinful behaviors “must be reckoned as disobedient to Christ and be dealt with according to the provisions of the Church Order regarding Admonition and Discipline” (*Acts of Synod 1968*, p. 19). Synod 1968 made this declaration to counter the racial prejudice in American society that was present also in our churches and openly advocated by some members. The rapidly growing cultural pressure upon our churches and church members to regard homosexual behavior in committed relationships as a morally acceptable alternate lifestyle warrants synod’s action in response to the advocacy being carried out by the members of All One Body.
22. The actions of the church councils of Eastern Avenue CRC and Calvin CRC in providing a forum for the advocacy of this lifestyle promotes division and disunity within the CRCNA. It is in violation of our denominational covenant, which calls us to consider decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies settled and binding unless they are proven to be in conflict with the Word of God or Church Order (Church Order Art. 29). These actions are therefore worthy of synod’s admonition.

Classis Minnkota

LeRoy G. Christoffels, stated clerk

Overture 6: Encourage All CRC Classes and Congregations to Recognize the Ordination of the Executive Director as a Commissioned Pastor

I. The overture

That Synod 2015 encourage all CRC classes and congregations to recognize by way of exception the ordination of Dr. Steven R. Timmermans as a commissioned pastor in carrying out the responsibilities of his position as executive director of the CRCNA.

Grounds:

1. Ordination as a commissioned pastor is an appropriate response to the expectation expressed by Synod 2013 that the new executive director “is or becomes an officebearer in the CRC” (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 576).
2. This action affirms an exception to the prevailing practice of commissioned pastors serving only within the boundaries of the classis that ordains them.

II. Background

Synod 2013 “grant[ed] the Board of Trustees permission to consider the possibility, by way of exception to the rule, of a non-clergy nominee for the

position of ED [executive director], providing that person is or becomes an officebearer in the CRC" (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 576). Upon recommendation of the BOT, Synod 2014 approved the nomination of Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, a nonclergy nominee, as executive director of the CRCNA. Dr. Timmermans and his family have established membership with the First CRC of Grand Rapids, Michigan. In a letter dated November 21, 2014, Dr. Timmermans informed the First CRC council that he felt called to the office of commissioned pastor, and he made the following requests for assistance and approval (Classis Grand Rapids East, Minute V, B, 2):

- That First CRC call him to the office of commissioned pastor in his role as executive director and request the approval of Classis Grand Rapids East by way of examination and approval for ordination to the office.
Note: This same communication specified that the responsibilities of the executive director are to include "the role of *preaching and/or administering the sacraments*" and went on to say that "while not a core activity of the role of executive director, as a commissioned pastor, Dr. Timmermans's ministry would include preaching and administering the sacraments particularly as a representative of the denomination."
- That First CRC also request that Classis Grand Rapids East ask Synod 2015 to authorize, by way of exception, that the executive director's ordination as a commissioned pastor be recognized by all the classes of the denomination.

On December 1, 2014, the council of First CRC, Grand Rapids, voted to call Dr. Timmermans as a commissioned pastor while serving in the position of executive director of the CRCNA, and to request favorable action by classis in keeping with the intent of the above requests. (See the Executive Director Position Description below. See also Church Order Articles 24-a, 24-b, and 13-b.)

In its regular session on January 15, 2015, Classis Grand Rapids East decided to approve the Position Description of the Executive Director of the CRC as consistent with the guidelines for the office of commissioned pastor adopted by Synod 2001, with the following understandings:

- 1) The First CRC council will supervise Dr. Timmermans with regard to doctrine and life, and the Board of Trustees will hold him accountable for meeting the responsibilities outlined in the position description.
- 2) The responsibilities of the executive director as a commissioned pastor will include occasional preaching and administering the sacraments.

Grounds:

- a) The responsibilities of the position are ministerial in nature or support the work of others in ministry as described in Church Order Article 24-a and, thus, are consistent with the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001 for the office of commissioned pastor.
- b) The scope of the executive director position argues for applying Church Order Article 24-b for a commissioned pastor after the wisdom of Church Order Article 13-b for a minister of the Word by differentiating supervision of doctrine and life by the council of First CRC from accountability for meeting the responsibilities of the position by the Board of Trustees.

The synodical deputies concurred with the above decision with its understandings and grounds, as attested to in their letter accompanying this overture (see below).

The following additional information was noted in relation to the decision of classis:

- Understandings 1 and 2 *in effect* become part of Dr. Timmermans's position description in keeping with his ordination as commissioned pastor.
- The examination of Dr. Timmermans, scheduled for May 21, 2015, will include the evaluation of a sermon preached on an assigned text.
- Synodical deputies have agreed to be present for Dr. Timmermans's examination and will be asked to concur with the decision of classis regarding the outcome.

When considering the above overture, Classis Grand Rapids East was aware that on December 3, 2014, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees had decided to recommend that the Board of Trustees communicate to synod its support of an overture to this effect. It also is readily acknowledged that this overture is contingent on Dr. Timmermans's approval for ordination to the office of commissioned pastor.

Classis Grand Rapids East
Alfred E. Mulder, stated clerk

Note: See also a Communication from the Synodical Deputies and the CRC Executive Director Position Description, which follow.

Appendix A

Communication from Synodical Deputies

Date January 8, 2015

To Classis Grand Rapids East

From Synodical Deputies:

Rev. Henry Kranenburg, Classis Hamilton

Rev. John Schuurmann, Classis Northern Illinois

Rev. David Spoelma, Classis Lake Erie

1. We would concur with recommendation "a" of Classis GR East with the following notes:
 - a. The submitted position description is a synodically approved position that requires an "ordained minister of the Word" (item *E*) and as such already assumes "functions and responsibilities that are ministerial in nature" (Supplement, Article 23-a). Since the intent is to adjust this position description for a commissioned pastor (CP), it would be helpful to have a current position description that fits the hiring of one who is not an ordained minister of the Word in the CRCNA and includes the items synod has identified as meeting the "Elements of a Good Job Description" (Church Order Supplement to Article 23-a).

- b. If the submitted position description is not changed for Classis approval, recommendation “a” should identify that this position as CP includes preaching and administering the sacraments.
2. We appreciate the reasoning that comes with the request for the presence of Synodical Deputies for the examination of Dr. Timmermans, given the intent of recommendation “b.” We will intend to be there for that examination, or work with the Stated Clerk of Classis GR East to ensure a replacement is found if we are not able to attend. We add the following notes for clarification:
 - a. We recognize that our presence and potential concurrence to the examination is not a necessary presence, and makes no change in the parameters of the specific field of labor. We see the request for our presence as a courtesy extended by Classis GR East to represent the interests of the denomination, given the desire of Classis GR East to have all classes make use of Dr. Timmermans in his capacity as a CP and by this means offer symbolic concurrence.
 - b. We note that the intended overture to synod asks that synod ‘encourage’ the classes and congregations to recognize Dr. Timmermans as a CP; this reflects that the authority for Article 23 authorizations lie with the individual classes.

Appendix B

Position Description of the Executive Director of the CRCNA

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.

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*.

Summary of Position

The Executive Director is accountable to the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and is responsible for nurturing a shared and vibrant vision for the mission of the Christian Reformed Church, and for insuring the effective implementation of this mission through the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church and the work of the various boards, agencies, and institutions of the CRCNA.

Nature and Scope

The Executive Director is called to keep the Christian Reformed Church attentive and responsive to a long-term vision for its mission in the world, both locally and globally. This includes providing a report to each synod, offering a vision for the future ministry of the Christian Reformed Church and recommendations for its implementation.

The Executive Director provides direction, supervision, and nurture to the staff of the various agencies, ministries, and institutions that serve the Christian Reformed Church. He or she is responsible to see that the staff works faithfully and cooperatively to carry out the mission of the Christian Reformed Church. The Executive Director also seeks to build a spirit of close collaboration and common vision between the various boards, ministries, and institutions that serve the Christian Reformed Church.

Leadership Profile and Qualifications

A. Strategic priorities

Possess a strong desire and demonstrated ability to seek, discern, communicate, and implement God's vision for the future of the CRCNA.

B. Professional qualifications

Possess the ability to provide visionary, servant leadership within a multi-agency denomination.

C. Personal qualifications

Exhibit dynamic skills in collaborative relationship building and participatory management with the ability to bridge diverse perspectives and inspire trust.

D. Spiritual qualifications

Exemplify a strong, vibrant, personal Christian faith marked by spiritual humility and moral integrity.

E. Educational and ordination qualifications

Be or become by transfer an ordained minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Adopted 2012

Overture 7: Provide Clarification Regarding Church Order Article 23

Classis Hamilton overtures synod to provide further explanation and clarification regarding the following five areas associated with Church Order Article 23:

1. The principle

There is a misunderstanding of the principle of Church Order Article 23. Because there is a long and complicated history behind this article, the church is sometimes confused by its current intended purpose. Synod 2012 changed the name of the office associated with Article 23 from *ministry associate* to *commissioned pastor*, giving the impression that Article 23 now allows people to be ordained into a "mini-minister" or "minister-lite" position. This is not the intended purpose of the name change. The intended purpose of Article 23 is to provide *limited* but *real* ecclesiastical authority for a *specific* ministry role (be it in education, music, mission/evangelism, chaplaincy, etc.) for a *particular* area of ministry in God's kingdom (be it the local church, mission field, educational institution,

etc.). We believe synod should reaffirm and clarify the intended purpose of Article 23.

2. Classical approval

There is lack of clarity on how classis approves the position and the person seeking ordination under Article 23.

- a. The process for approving an Article 23 position involves two steps. First the *position* must be approved (with the concurrence of synodical deputies); then the *person* called to this position must be examined and approved. It has become frequent practice that these two steps occur on the same day at the same classis meeting. We believe this is not in accordance with the spirit of the Church Order. An Article 23 position should be thoroughly critiqued and approved *before* a candidate can even be legitimately called (and approved) for such a position. A proper approval process should ordinarily involve *two* classis meetings—at the first meeting the *position* is critiqued and approved, providing the *right* for a candidate to be called to it; at the second meeting the person is then examined and approved. An awkward situation occurs when a position is not approved (or should not be approved) but a candidate is standing ready to be ordained into it. Classis requests that synod clarify that a candidate cannot be called to a position that has not been approved by classis with the concurrence of the synodical deputies.
- b. Sometimes it is difficult to discern what constitutes a legitimate job description. Classis requests that synod provide more guidelines to help a classis evaluate a proposed job description for a commissioned pastor position.
- c. It sometimes happens that *after* a job description has been approved by classis, the position approved begins to change and evolve into something different. Neither the Church Order, nor the Supplement, provides guidelines for how classis should be involved in this. How much change is allowed before classis should review a commissioned pastor's job description? Classis requests that synod specify an appropriate procedure and mechanism to evaluate and approve changes that need to be made to a previously approved job description.

3. Supervision

There is lack of clarity over how a commissioned pastor is supervised with integrity.

- a. Some commissioned pastors work among several agencies, ministries, and parachurch organizations that supposedly connect together. Sometimes it is difficult to see *where* or *how* the supervision takes place. Classis requests that synod reaffirm that a proposed Article 23 position should clearly indicate not only that lines of accountability are in place but also how the lines of supervision operate together to form a consistent whole.
- b. Our current Church Order does not provide enough guidance for how a local church ought to supervise the doctrine and life of a

commissioned pastor. For example, how does a local church supervise a missionary who lives in a foreign country? How does a council supervise his or her preaching and the administration of the sacraments? (Incidentally, this concern applies to ministers of the Word who work as missionaries as well.) Classis requests that synod provide guidelines, methods, and procedures that churches can adopt for their unique circumstances so that classis and synodical deputies can be confident that honest and real supervision will take place.

4. Termination and transfer of ministry

Some are led to believe that a commissioned pastor retains his or her office even though he or she no longer serves that particular ministry. Classis requests that synod clarify that once a commissioned pastor leaves a specific ministry role, the office associated with that ministry is terminated. In addition, classis requests that synod clarify that a person can retain his or her office only if the classis has granted special permission due to special circumstances (e.g., the commissioned pastor leaves one field of service to join another that is virtually identical to the first). Under what circumstances should a commissioned pastor be reexamined in order to enter a different position under Article 23?

5. Moving credentials from one calling church to another

Occasionally a commissioned pastor leaves his or her calling church to join another. The Church Order does not address how the credentials ought to be transferred. Classis requests that synod clarify that a transfer can happen only under the following conditions:

- The sending church and the receiving church agree to the transfer—with the understanding that the receiving church agrees to take over the supervision of the doctrine and life of the commissioned pastor.
- The job description remains unchanged. Alteration of the job description requires the approval of classis and the concurrence of the synodical deputies.
- Classis formally approves the transfer.

Classis Hamilton

John J. den Otter, stated clerk

Overture 8: Amend Church Order Supplement, Article 84 to Include Address of Sexual Abuse

I. Background

In recent years, disturbing reports of sexual abuse and/or sexual misconduct perpetrated by those who occupy positions of authority in congregations have been the cause of much discussion in ecclesiastical settings. Each incident represents individuals, families, and faith communities who have been devastated by such a tragedy. The Christian Reformed Church has not been immune to this sad reality, and our denomination has committed to ensuring that congregations are safe places for individuals of all ages to grow as disciples of Jesus. Our denomination also expects that all who hold office in the church exercise their authority with integrity, and the CRC Church

Order includes guidelines for the suspension and/or deposition of officebearers who misuse the authority of their office in any way.

Church Order Supplement, Article 84 specifically addresses regulations for the reinstatement of officebearers guilty of sexual misconduct. While there are some points in this Supplement to be commended, the Supplement as a whole is inadequate in its treatment of this subject—both in terms of what is currently stated as well as in terms of additional definitions and guidelines that need to be included. Fundamental to the intentions of this overture is the recognition that all officebearers occupy positions of power and authority in the context of congregational ministry, and that any pastoral relationship that transgresses healthy boundaries by including activities of a sexual nature or sexualized behavior represents a misuse of power on the part of those who hold office.

In addition, one of the motivations behind this overture is the recognition that greater clarity is needed in the Supplement, particularly as it relates to making a distinction between *sexual misconduct* and *sexual abuse*. A careful and clear distinction between these terms would assist our denomination, classes, and congregations in their handling of this difficult subject, particularly as it relates to the possible reinstatement of officebearers who have committed acts of sexual misconduct or abuse. Further, this distinction would communicate greater pastoral sensitivity to those who have suffered as victims of sexual abuse on the part of officebearers.

In its current form, the Church Order Supplement, Article 84 reads as follows:

Current Supplement, Article 84

Regulations for Reinstatement of Office Bearers Guilty of Sexual Misconduct

When reinstatement is requested by a former officebearer who confessed to or was determined to be guilty of sexual misconduct leading up to suspension and deposition from office:

1. Reinstatement to office shall be denied to individuals who:
 - a. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual misconduct against a minor.
 - b. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual misconduct against more than one victim in a single church or community.
 - c. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual misconduct in more than one community or church.
 - d. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual misconduct and other related ungodly conduct.

Examples of related ungodly conduct include but are not limited to engaging in adult or child pornography, engaging a prostitute for sexual contact, exhibitionistic or voyeuristic behavior, attending a nudist camp, sexual addiction, and so forth.

2. Councils and classes shall not reinstate a former officebearer suspended or deposed for sexual misconduct or ungodly conduct not covered in items 1, a-d without receiving the advice of legal counsel concerning the church's liability and the advice of a Christian licensed psychologist concerning the likelihood of an officebearer's reoffending.

Note: In Church Order Article 84 and its Supplement, the expression *sexual misconduct* is defined as: The sexual exploitation of a parishioner, minor or

adult, regardless of age or consent, for the purposes of sexual gratification and maintaining control over the person. The expression *determined abuser* is defined as: An officebearer who either confesses to or is adjudicated to be guilty of sexual misconduct by a court of competent jurisdiction or an ecclesiastical assembly.

(*Acts of Synod 2004*, pp. 611-12)

II. Overture

Classis Chatham overtures Synod 2015 to amend Church Order Supplement, Article 84 as follows:

Proposed Supplement, Article 84

Regulations for Reinstatement of Officebearers Guilty of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Abuse

1. When reinstatement is requested by a former officebearer who confessed to or was determined to be guilty of sexual misconduct leading up to suspension and deposition from office, reinstatement to office shall be denied to individuals who confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual misconduct and other related ungodly conduct.

Examples of sexual misconduct include but are not limited to engaging in the dissemination of adult pornography, engaging a prostitute for sexual contact, exhibitionistic or voyeuristic behavior, sexual addiction, and so forth.

2. When reinstatement is requested by a former officebearer who confessed to or was determined to be guilty of sexual abuse leading up to suspension and deposition from office, reinstatement to office shall be denied to individuals who
 - a. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual abuse against a minor.
 - b. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual abuse against more than one victim in a single church or community.
 - c. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of sexual abuse in more than one community or church.
 - d. Confessed to or are determined to be guilty of engaging in sexual activity, regardless of consent, with someone other than his or her spouse and with whom he or she has a pastoral relationship.
3. Councils and classes shall not reinstate a former officebearer suspended or deposed for sexual abuse, misconduct, or ungodly conduct not covered in items 1-2 without receiving the advice of legal counsel concerning the church's liability and the advice of a Christian licensed psychologist concerning the likelihood of an officebearer's reoffending.

Note: Many legal definitions exist for the term *sexual abuse*, and civil punishment for those determined by a court of law to be guilty of sexual abuse may vary from one jurisdiction to another. Ecclesiastical policies and procedures cannot measure a person's guilt by a legal standard, and it is not the intent of this supplement to determine an officebearer's guilt as it relates to the possible violation of criminal code. An ecclesiastical process can, however, find an officebearer to be guilty of ungodly conduct, misuse of power and of spiritual authority, sexually inappropriate behavior, and neglect or abuse of office. Thus, for the purposes of this document, the term *sexual abuse* is defined as follows:

- a. The use of one's authority or power as an officebearer, either explicitly or implicitly, to exploit by force, coercion, or manipulation an individual with whom he or she has a pastoral relationship for the purpose of engaging in activities of a sexual nature.

Examples of activities of a sexual nature include, but are not limited to, sexual touch, kissing, fondling, the possession or dissemination of child pornography, sexual intercourse, or rape.

- b. Any sexualized behavior within a church context between an officebearer and someone other than his or her spouse with whom he or she has a pastoral relationship, regardless of age or consent, for the purpose of achieving inappropriate emotional intimacy, sexual gratification, and/or gaining power and control.

Examples of sexualized behavior include, but are not limited to, the examples of activities of a sexual nature listed above, as well as unwanted sexual attention, unsuitable demands, displays of offensive material, suggestive gestures and remarks, or other related intimidating behavior.

Grounds:

1. In its current form, Church Order Supplement, Article 84 defines sexual misconduct in a way that includes acts that are more properly defined as *sexual abuse*. As such, the Supplement diminishes the severity of sexual abuse and is pastorally insensitive to its victims. Specific and clear distinctions between sexual misconduct and sexual abuse are needed to correct a Supplement that is currently unclear.
2. By definition, officebearers occupy positions of leadership and authority in a local church, and every relationship in a pastoral setting will always involve what may be referred to as an "imbalance of power." As such, any pastoral relationship between an officebearer and a parishioner that involves activities of a sexual nature or sexualized behavior always represents a transgression of healthy boundaries and the misuse of power on the part of the officebearer and should therefore be regarded as an example of sexual abuse.

In a pastoral relationship, the unequal balance of power precludes the possibility of consent as far as activities of a sexual nature or sexualized behavior are concerned.

3. In its current form, Church Order Supplement, Article 84 suggests that an officebearer who has committed sexual misconduct against a single victim may be reinstated. Not only is the term *sexual misconduct* inadequate in the Supplement's characterization of what is more accurately regarded as "sexual abuse" (a point which the current Supplement's use of the term *victim* even connotes), but any inference to the possible reinstatement of an officebearer who, in reality, has committed sexual abuse ought to be removed from the Church Order.
4. When applied to officebearers, special discipline does not have as its final goal reinstatement to previous positions of spiritual leadership. While it is certainly true that God's forgiving grace is extended to all sinners, including officebearers who commit sexual misconduct and/or sexual abuse, restoration to positions of leadership in the church is neither wise for church communities in which such a significant breach of trust occurred, nor pastorally considerate of those who have suffered as victims.
5. The vision of our denomination's Safe Church Ministry, as stated in the *Agenda for Synod 2014*, p. 235, reads as follows:

In all Christian Reformed churches, the infinite value of each person is honored; people are free to worship and grow in a safe place, free from any threat of abuse. And where abuse has occurred, the church always responds with compassionate justice that fosters healing.

The adoption of this overture will serve our denomination well in its commitment to ensuring that this vision is implemented.

Classis Chatham
Ron Middel, stated clerk

Overture 9: Adopt Proposed Church Order Changes by the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon, with Revisions

I. Background

Classis B.C. South-East wants to commend the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon for their thoughtful and timely work. Classis heartily endorses the intent of the report to give deacons not just greater representation at major ecclesiastic assemblies but also a greater voice in all ministries of the church—in particular those ministries that are entrusted to them in Scripture and as reflected in the Church Order. We want to underscore our appreciation for the report's rootedness in Ephesians 4, elevating the primacy of Scripture for ministry engagement over the orderly management of ministry as mandated by the Church Order. We believe that while the impact of the report's recommendations may not be significantly noticed in the short run, they will make a significant positive change to the entire

ministry of the church in the years and decades to come. The recommendations in the following overture are minor compared to our enthusiastic reception of the report, and they should be received as such.

II. Overture

Classis B.C. South-East overtures synod to make the following changes to the proposed Church Order revisions (with the classis' proposed changes appearing in underlined text):

1. That the proposed Article 1-a be changed.

Proposed by the Task Force

" . . . the apostolic injunction that in the churches 'everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way' (1 Cor. 14:40) *in order to be equipped 'for works of service, so that they body of Christ may be built up' (Eph. 4:12),* regulates its ecclesiastical organization and activities in the following articles."

Classis proposal

" . . . the apostolic injunction that officebearers are 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up' (Eph. 4:12), and to do so 'in a fitting and orderly way' (1 Cor. 14:40), regulates its ecclesiastical organization and activities in the following articles."

Grounds:

- a. This change will help prioritize the ultimate task of officebearers, which is not primarily to do things "in a fitting and orderly way" (regulation) but to build up the saints for works of service (engagement).
 - b. This change acknowledges the stated value of "minimal regulation for maximum engagement" as part of the task force's mandate (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 625).
2. That the proposed Article 76 be changed:

Proposed by the Task Force

" . . . ministries that are national and global."

Classis proposal

" . . . ministries that are binational and global."

Ground: This change emphasizes the important binational character of our denomination.

3. That the difficult word "ontological" (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 386) be changed to "essential" or another suitable synonym to make the report more readable.
4. By leaving it out, the task force implicitly assumes that the proposed change to Article 40 will be adopted by synod. Classis wonders if this change should have been included in the report:

Article 40

a. The council of each church shall delegate a minister and an elder to the classis. If a church is without a minister, or the minister is prevented from attending, two elders shall be delegated. Officebearers who are not delegated may also attend classis and may be given an advisory voice.

Note: The following changes (*in italics*) will be considered by Synod 2015 for adoption (see *Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 623).

a. The council of each church shall delegate a minister, an elder, *and a deacon* to the classis. If a church is without a minister, or the minister is prevented from attending, *another elder* shall be delegated *in place of the minister*. Officebearers who are not delegated may also attend classis and may be given an advisory voice.

Classis B.C. South-East
Lubbert van der Laan, stated clerk

Overture 10: Adopt a Modified Version of the Charge to Deacons

The 2015 report of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon, in following up on the 2013 report of the Diakonia Remixed: Office of Deacon Task Force, recommends significant changes in the Church Order and in the charges to officebearers, the overall thrust of which we endorse. However, Classis Lake Erie overtures synod to review and reconsider some of the recommended changes to the ordination form concerning the Charge to the Deacons.

The 2015 report recommends the following Charge to the Deacons:

I charge you, deacons, to inspire faithful **ministries of service to one another, to the larger community, and to the world.** Remind us that **the Lord requires us “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [our] God” (Mic. 6:8).** Prompt us to seize new opportunities to **love God, our neighbors, and the creation with acts of generous sharing, joyful hospitality, thoughtful care for the poor, and wise stewardship of all of God’s gifts. Weigh our opportunities for giving and service, that we might use the church’s resources discerningly. Offer wise care to victims of injustice, and teach us holistic responses that respect their dignity and mend the broken relationships and exploitative structures and systems that contribute to poverty. With respectful compassion for the needy and awareness of the often hidden needs of the wealthy, teach us to minister to rich and poor alike, both within and outside the church. Encourage all with words that bring hope to their hearts and with deeds that bring joy into their lives. Show us by your example how to be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in our society, and to be sensitive counselors to the victims of such evils. Let your lives be above reproach, and live as examples of Christ Jesus, looking to the interests of others. And in all your ministries help**

us anticipate and participate in the renewal of all things when God's kingdom comes.

Classis endorses the major change in the Charge to the Deacons to use Micah 6:8, which expresses the goals of the deacons and the entire church more comprehensively than the Scripture reference in the present form for ordination. However, Classis Lake Erie proposes that other changes be less significant, as follows:

I charge you deacons, to inspire faithful **ministries of service to one another, to the larger community, and to the world.** Remind us that **the Lord requires us "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [our] God" (Mic. 6:8).** Teach us to be merciful. Prompt us to seize new opportunities to worship God with offerings of wealth, time, and ability. Realize that benevolence is a quality of our life in Christ and not merely a matter of financial assistance. Therefore, minister to rich and poor alike, both within and outside the church. Weigh the needs of causes and use the church's resources discerningly. Be compassionate to the needy. Respect their need for dignity; hold in trust all sensitive matters confided to you. Encourage them with words that create hope in their hearts and with deeds that bring joy into their lives. Be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in our society, and be sensitive counselors to the victims of such evils. Let your lives be above reproach; live as examples of Christ Jesus; look to the interests of others.

Grounds:

1. The classic, concise, and beautiful language found in the current Charge to the Deacons comprises a well-written expression of the deacons' calling.
2. The changes are already expressed in the Church Order. The proposed changes contain language that is both superfluous and trendy.

Classis Lake Erie

Robert A. Arbogast, stated clerk

Overture 11: Delay Decision on Allowing the Seating of Deacons at Classical and Synodical Meetings

Classis Southeast U.S. overtures synod to delay the proposal to Synod 2015 to allow deacons to be seated at all classical and synodical meetings.

Grounds:

1. We recognize the unique responsibilities of the offices of elder and deacon, and we do not want to demean either office. Deacons and elders have distinct roles assigned to them in the work of the church. Historically elders have been assigned to be overseers of the church, and to combine these offices at the classical and denominational levels is a major change in the structure of the church.

2. We realize that the churches have been given two years to discuss this issue within the churches, but in many cases this has not been sufficient to truly determine the ramifications of such a move.

Classis Southeast U.S.

Vernon G. Vander Zee, stated clerk

Overture 12: Do Not Adopt Church Order Changes Requiring the Delegation of Deacons to Classes and Synod

I. Background

In 2010, synod instructed “the Board of Trustees to appoint a task force to review the articles of the Church Order relating to the office of deacon at the church and major assemblies, as well as [to] recommend resources that encourage revitalization of the diaconate and its role in the community” (*Acts of Synod 2010*, p. 829). As the appointed Task Force observed in its report to Synod 2013, these two tasks were intimately related. Synod was essentially asking the task force to recommend changes to the Church Order which might “encourage revitalization of the diaconate and its role in the community.”

In 2013, the appointed task force reported that it had come to believe that requiring the delegation of deacons to both classes and synod would encourage revitalization of the diaconate. Yet, many questions arose at Synod 2013 about whether the task force had provided adequate reasons for such a monumental change to historic Reformed church polity. Specifically, Synod 2013 asked the task force to explain “what biblical and confessional basis exists for those tasks, which on the congregational level belong distinctively to the office of elder and to the office of deacon (Church Order Art. 35), to be assigned collectively to elder and deacon delegates on the classical and synodical levels?” (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 625). In light of this question, Synod 2013 appointed a revised task force to provide an answer to this question.

In essence, the revised task force’s answer to Synod 2013’s question is that the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is justified in giving uniquely “elderly” tasks to deacons at classis and synod, because “the assignment of specific tasks to distinct offices is for the church to sort out in its context in every new age” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 384). The task force argues that this is the case because “the New Testament does not present us with a normative and rigid pattern of church leadership—institutionalized offices that must be scrupulously maintained at all times and in all places” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 382). In other words, the Task Force argues that the Scriptures do not require the CRC to have any specific number of church offices. Instead, the number of offices that the CRC has and the tasks that the CRC assigns to them are based solely on pragmatic considerations that may change from generation to generation. Thus, according to the task force, if the CRC finds it pragmatic in 2015 to give deacons all the same tasks as elders at the classical and synodical levels, then the CRC may legitimately do so. Indeed, the task force’s argument would permit Synod 2015 to legitimately abolish the offices of elder and deacon altogether, even at the local level, if synod were to find some pragmatic reason for doing so.

The council of Dorr Christian Reformed Church believes that the goal of diaconal revitalization is a worthy one which we would like to see realized. We commend the vast majority of the revised task force's 2015 report. We do not believe, however, that the task force has provided an adequate answer to the question posed to it by Synod 2013. Instead, we believe that the task force's proposed answer is based on claims that are incompatible with both Scripture and the Belgic Confession.

II. Rationale

A. *The task force's understanding of church office is incompatible with Scripture and the Belgic Confession*

As noted above, the task force's answer to Synod 2013's question rests on the claim that "the New Testament does not present us with a normative and rigid pattern of church leadership—institutionalized offices that must be scrupulously maintained at all times and in all places" (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 382). This claim, however, is incompatible with both Scripture and the Belgic Confession.

The New Testament clearly distinguishes for us two offices: the offices of elder and deacon (1 Tim. 3:1-13). Furthermore, Scripture clearly distinguishes these offices on the basis of the different tasks they perform. The very titles that Scripture gives to these offices indicates the unique tasks that Christ wants them to fulfill on his behalf. In the New Testament, the terms *elder* and *overseer* are most likely synonymous (cf., 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). Christ uniquely tasks elders with supervising or overseeing the entire ministry of the church in order to ensure that God's people are fully equipped to grow more and more into Christ's image (Eph. 4:11-12).

Although Scripture clearly distinguishes the office of deacon from the office of elder, the office of deacon is not as fully described in the New Testament. Nevertheless, Scripture's use of the title *diakonos* (i.e., "servant") to describe this office gives us some insight into what Christ has uniquely tasked this office to do. The related term *diakonia* (i.e., "service") is used repeatedly throughout the New Testament to denote special relief efforts organized by the churches on behalf of the poor and the needy (Acts 6:1-3; 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12-13; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). On the basis of this connection the church has reasonably inferred that Christ has uniquely tasked the office of deacon with organizing and coordinating these special relief efforts.

This scriptural description of the offices of elder and deacon is the one presented to us in Belgic Confession Articles 30-31. Belgic Confession Article 30 states that the "spiritual order" taught by Scripture requires that "there *should* . . . be elders and deacons, along with the pastors, to make up the council of the church" (emphasis added). Thus, the Belgic Confession does not view the offices of pastor, elder, or deacon as optional for a true church. These offices constitute "God's holy order," and any true church will strive to have these offices (Belgic Confession, Art. 31).

Thus, the task force's claim that "the New Testament does not present us with . . . institutionalized offices that must be scrupulously maintained at all times and in all places" is false (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 382). And the task force's further claim that "the assignment of specific tasks to distinct offices is for the church to sort out in its context in every new age" is also false

(*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 384). According to Scripture and the Belgic Confession, Christ requires every church to have three specific offices, and these offices are distinguished from one another on the basis of the different tasks that Christ requires them to perform.

B. The task force has failed to adequately distinguish the tasks that elders and deacons would perform at synod

Since both Scripture and the Belgic Confession distinguish the offices of elder and deacon on the basis of their possessing unique tasks, we must therefore conclude that the task force's proposal for how to delegate deacons to classes and synod fails to adequately distinguish the offices of elder and deacon at the classical and synodical levels. According to the task force, the distinction between the offices can be maintained at these levels if elders and deacons exercise "due deference in the deliberation and decision-making" process (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 387). This suggestion, however, fails to address the fact that deacons would be performing a task at the classical and synodical levels that is the sole responsibility of elders, namely, providing managerial and theological oversight for the entire ministry of the church. Simply suggesting that deacons respectfully consult the elders before performing a task unique to the office of elder is not an adequate solution.

III. Overture

For these reasons, the council of Dorr CRC overtures Synod 2015 not to adopt the following:

1. Synod 2013's recommended changes to Church Order Articles 40 and 45.
2. The Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon's recommended changes to Church Order Article 34.
3. The Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon's recommended changes to the Rules for Synodical Procedure.

Grounds:

- a. The task force's understanding of church office is incompatible with Scripture and the Belgic Confession.
- b. The task force has failed to adequately distinguish the tasks that elders and deacons would perform at synod.

IV. Alternative suggestion

In its Synod 2013 report, the Office of Deacon Task Force correctly stated that "the purpose of the major assemblies is not simply governance and adjudication but deliberation about the church's character and ministry" (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, p. 279). While we disagree with the task force that this implies that deacons *ought* to participate in this deliberation, we agree that participation of deacons at the major assemblies may "help to nurture and advance the missional dimension of these deliberative assemblies" (p. 279). We can include deacons in this deliberation without compromising Scripture and the Belgic Confession. One way Synod 2015 could do this would be by requiring the continued appointment of deacon advisors to future synods and by encouraging the churches to encourage their deacons

to attend classis, where, according to Church Order Article 40, deacons already “may be given an advisory voice.”

Council of Dorr CRC, Dorr, Michigan
Jamie Dennett, clerk

Note: The above overture was submitted to the January 15, 2015, meeting of Classis Grandville but was not adopted.

Note: The following two overtures (13-14) appear to present no new grounds for reconsideration since a review of Synod 2014’s deliberations indicates that all matters presented in these overtures were part of its decision-making process and that Synod 2015 should therefore first decide whether reconsideration is warranted by reason of “sufficient and new grounds” (Church Order Art. 31).

Overture 13: Classify the Ecumenical Relationship with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands as That of a Church in Dialogue

I. Background

For many years the CRCNA has struggled to reach a stable consensus regarding the nature and classification of our relationship with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN). Indeed, the debate even predated the PCN by several decades as it regarded our relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN), which is now a constituent of the PCN. The CRCNA appears to be divided into two main schools of thought on this issue. One group focuses on the common elements of faith and history that we share with the PCN, and our desire for unity (clearly stated in our Ecumenical Charter). The other group emphasizes the importance of remaining true to our understanding of God’s Word. Based on the pattern of voting at synods over the years, these two schools appear to be represented in roughly equal proportions in the CRCNA.

It is important to recognize that neither group is “right” and neither is “wrong.” Indeed, the question of how to define our relationship with the PCN is not even a question of right and wrong. Rather, the task is to define our relationship in such a way that it is agreeable to both groups so that as one body we can move past this debate. A successful solution will create a constructive ecumenical relationship with the PCN, affirming that which we share in common while acknowledging the significance of the differences which distinguish us. The decision by Synod 2014 to declare ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCN addresses the former, but not the latter.

II. Overture

Classis Atlantic Northeast overtures synod to classify the ecumenical relationship with the PCN as that of a “church in dialogue,” in which the nature of the relationship is defined by the existing Memorandum of Understanding.

Grounds:

1. The existing relationship of a “church in ecclesiastical fellowship” fails to acknowledge the significant biblical and theological differences separating the CRCNA and the PCN. Of particular concern, as expressed by Synod 2005, are the PCN’s understanding of Scripture and hermeneutics, the mission to the Jews, and Christology and the Atonement (*Acts of Synod 2005*, p. 764). In addition, the PCN’s allowance of practicing homosexuals to be ordained into the offices of the church (“The Uniting Protestant Churches in the Netherlands and homosexuality,” official statement of the PCN, 2004, downloaded from www.pkn.nl) is “incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Scripture” (“Homosexuality,” CRCNA position statement, downloaded from www.crcna.org). The relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship does not reflect the seriousness of these differences. It also fails to provide a clear witness to the CRCNA’s understanding of biblical teaching on these issues. Therefore the existing relationship is not a suitable long-term solution to the problem of defining our relationship with the PCN.
2. The existing Memorandum of Understanding creates a framework for an affirming, constructive relationship with the PCN, and should therefore be maintained.
3. The proposed relationship is aligned with the ecumenical charter of the CRCNA, which states “there are churches with which the CRC is in a stage of exploration for a closer relationship, or with which there is a memorandum of understanding, which are called churches in dialogue” (*Ecumenical Charter of the CRCNA*, Preface, par. 6).

Classis Atlantic Northeast
Edward C. Visser, stated clerk

Overture 14: Return the Protestant Church in the Netherlands to the Ecumenical Relationship of a Church in Dialogue

I. Historical background

As our denomination’s Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) noted in its 2006 report to synod, “the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the former Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN) were integrally linked as churches since the 1890s when the GKN was formed.” For many years there was a “family connectedness” in our relationship. Strains in our relationship became noticeable in the 1970s. There were differences in our understanding of the doctrine and interpretation of Scripture. As the IRC stated, “Tension increased when the GKN permitted gays and lesbians living in committed relationships to serve as officebearers in GKN churches. The provisions of ecclesiastical fellowship were gradually reduced from the former six (full relationship) to two (partial relationship)” (*Agenda for Synod 2006*, p. 267).

The first restrictions on our relationship with the GKN were imposed in 1983, when synod decided “that the elements referring to pulpit and table fellowship no longer apply, except at the discretion of the local consistories,

based on the Holy Scriptures, the confessions, and decisions of synod (such as those of 1973 concerning the issue of homosexuality)" (*Acts of Synod 1983*, p. 679). In 1996 in response to an overture from Classis Minnkota and many similar overtures, synod decided "that the CRCNA further restrict its ecclesiastical fellowship with the GKN for a minimum of two years by refraining from a. '[E]xchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies.' b. Initiating new 'joint action in areas of common responsibility.'" The same synod instructed the IRC to intensify discussions with the GKN regarding issues that have troubled our relationship (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 520; see *Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 707).

In 2001 merger talks were taking place between the GKN and two other Dutch churches. Synod 2001 asked the IRC to report to Synod 2003 and either to recommend that full ecclesiastical fellowship with the new denomination be restored or to provide "reasons why full restoration of ecclesiastical fellowship . . . would not be appropriate at this time" (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 514). In 2003 synod adopted the recommendation of the IRC "that synod declare that the current restricted relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GKN be retained until the new Protestant Church in the Netherlands has formally begun and the IRC has had time to assess what relationship is appropriate for the CRC to maintain with the new denomination" (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 603).

The Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) came into being in 2004. A subcommittee of the IRC visited the Netherlands in that year and was present for the first synod of the PCN. The IRC reported to Synod 2005:

Continuing tolerance of homosexual practice in the PCN is, in the judgment of the CRC, contrary to the Scriptures and in conflict with the decisions of Synod 1973. In the meeting between representatives of the CRC (IRC subcommittee) and the PCN in May 2004, the PCN delegation made it clear that this issue is not currently being rethought in the PCN. The PCN's unwillingness to enter into any further discussion on this important matter continues to be a significant disappointment to a relationship of mutual accountability.

(*Agenda for Synod 2005*, p. 237)

The IRC recommended "that synod maintain a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the newly formed Protestant Church in the Netherlands with continuing restrictions on table and pulpit fellowship" (*Agenda for Synod 2005*, pp. 243-44). Synod did not adopt this recommendation. Instead, it asked for clarification of the ecumenical charter. It also instructed the IRC "to clarify for synod the current position of the PCN in the following areas, making use of their officially published documents: a. Scripture and hermeneutics. b. Homosexual practice. c. Mission to the Jews. d. Christology and the Atonement." The IRC was to "make a recommendation regarding our relationship to the PCN, based on its findings, to Synod 2006" (*Acts of Synod 2005*, p. 764).

In 2006 the IRC recommended and synod adopted a revised ecumenical charter. (The charter was again revised in 2010.) Among other things, this charter sought to move away from the stance of calling ecumenical partners to account for deviations or practices found to be objectionable. Also in 2006 the IRC recommended that the PCN be restored "to the status of a church in full ecclesiastical fellowship" (*Agenda for Synod 2006*, p. 276). Synod, however, decided to "declare that the Protestant Church in the Netherlands

(PCN) will retain the status of a church in restricted ecclesiastical fellowship." The grounds for this decision were (1) "The PCN's interpretation of Scripture regarding homosexuality remains an essential problematic issue" and (2) "Restricted ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCN allows us to still share our common history and confessions and to work together ecumenically while retaining a mutual relationship of influence" (*Acts of Synod 2006*, p. 713).

In 2008 the IRC judged that it was "time for Synod 2008 to make a definitive decision concerning our relationship to the PCN." They argued that the new ecumenical charter of 2006 "at its core, redefines the nature of ecclesiastical fellowship." They asked synod to "approve a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN)" (*Agenda for Synod 2008*, pp. 183, 185). In response, Synod 2008 did not approve this recommendation. Then synod took two actions. First, it declared "that it is the desire of the CRC to develop and maintain a relationship with the PCN that: "a. Is in the spirit of our Ecumenical Charter. b. Does not obscure the seriousness of the issues that led to restrictions placed on the GKN prior to the formation of the PCN—issues that appear to continue today in the PCN." Second, it directed "the IRC to attempt to develop a mutually acceptable process to work with the PCN toward a long-term relationship between the CRC and the PCN and report the progress to synod annually" (*Acts of Synod 2008*, pp. 512-13).

II. The decision of 2014

After 2008, progress toward defining the CRCNA's relationship with the PCN was slow. In 2014 the EIRC (formerly IRC) in their report in the *Agenda for Synod 2014*, presented a memorandum of understanding that had been developed between the CRCNA and the PCN. This memorandum included a commitment to do the following: "1. Deal honestly and transparently with each other, seeking the 'unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace' (Eph. 4:3). Such honest and transparent dealings can address both 'faith and order' and 'life and work'; 2. Consult each other on major issues that affect the global Christian church (especially those churches that are part of the Reformed family); 3. Collaborate concerning supportive relationships with churches and/or ministry partners that have relationships with both the CRCNA (or its agencies) and the PCN; 4. Encourage staff interaction and mutual learning in ministry areas. . . ." The EIRC recommended that this memorandum of understanding be approved. Nothing was said about the PCN becoming a church in ecclesiastical fellowship (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, pp. 260, 267, and 268-69).

Then by way of the agenda supplement for Synod 2014, which the churches of the CRCNA did not see prior to synod, the EIRC recommended: "That synod, upon the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN), classify the relationship with the PCN beyond the category of a church in formal dialogue to that of a church in ecclesiastical fellowship." Synod approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the CRCNA and the PCN. Then, by a close vote, synod adopted the recommendation to classify the relationship with the PCN as that of a church in ecclesiastical fellowship. The following ground was given for this decision:

Though recognizing the differences we have with the PCN on various issues—differences we also have with numerous other churches we are in relationship with through the WCRC [World Communion of Reformed Churches]—the thrust of our Ecumenical Charter leads us to have fellowship with a denomination with which we share much history and confessional unity.

(*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 565)

Thus our restriction of pulpit and table fellowship with the GKN and PCN, in place for over thirty years, was removed.

We find this decision to classify the PCN as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship without any restrictions problematic and troubling for the following reasons:

1. Although the PCN contains within it congregations and organizations (the Gereformeede Bond and the Evangelisch Verband) that show a measure of spiritual vibrancy, the PCN as a denomination continues to tolerate those who live ungodly lives and those who teach false doctrine without repentance.

Specifically, the PCN allows local congregations to ordain those engaging in homosexual behavior to ecclesiastical office and ministers to bless same-sex unions.¹ Since its formation as a denomination, the PCN has shown no inclination to consider changing its position on this issue.

Also, within the last few years, the PCN has failed to discipline ministers who teach heresy. For example, in 2007 Rev. Klaas Hendrikse published the book, *Geloven In Een God Die Niet Bestaat: Manifest Van Een Atheïstische Dominee* (*Believing in a God Who Does Not Exist: Manifesto of an Atheist Pastor*). Rev. Hendrikse is on record as saying, “God is for me not a being but a word for what can happen between people. Someone says to you, for example, ‘I will not abandon you’, and then makes those words come true. It would be perfectly alright to call that [relationship] God.”² In 2010 Classis Zierikzee of the PCN “decided that preacher Klaas Hendrikse’s views do not fundamentally differ from those of other liberal theologians in the Protestant Church” and therefore declined to take action against him.³ In response to this, in 2011 the PCN published a “pastoral guidance” brochure entitled *Spreken over God* (*Speaking about God*), which affirmed that God is personal and triune.⁴ But later in the same year, another book by Rev. Hendrikse was published: *God Bestaat Niet en Jezus Is Zijn Zoon* (*God Does Not Exist and Jesus Is His Son*). In this book, among other things, Rev. Hendrikse denies Jesus’ bodily resurrection. In discussing this book, Rev. Hendrikse chided the PCN for lacking the courage to remove him from the ministry. In response, Dr. Arjan Plaisier, secretary of the general synod of the PCN, wrote: “If a minister thinks that the church teaches or expects things from office-bearers which he or she

¹ See the document “The Uniting Protestant Churches in the Netherlands and homosexuality” <http://www.protestantsekerk.nl/Lists/PKN-Bibliotheek/The-Uniting-Protestant-Churches-in-the-Netherlands-and-homosexuality-2004.pdf>.

² Mohler, Albert, “Does Your Pastor Believe in God?” <http://www.christianity.com/11601617/>.

³ “Dutch church retains atheist preacher,” *Radio Netherlands Worldwide*, <http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/dutch-church-retains-atheist-preacher>.

⁴ English translation: <http://www.protestantsekerk.nl/Lists/PKN-Bibliotheek/Speaking-about-God-pastoral-guidance-brochure-20110101.pdf>.

cannot share or accomplish in their conscience, it is for the office-bearer to ask him/herself the question whether it is still possible to exercise the office within this church in accordance to the vow.”⁵ While it is true that ministers should have the integrity to leave the church if they no longer believe its teachings, it is equally true that the church should discipline those who teach false doctrine (Rom. 16:17-19; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; Tit. 3:9-11; 2 John 9-11).

Synod 2008 was concerned that we “develop and maintain a relationship with the PCN that . . . does not obscure the seriousness of the issues that led to restrictions placed on the GKN prior to the formation of the PCN—issues that appear to continue today in the PCN” (*Acts of Synod 2008*, p. 512). In our view, classifying the PCN as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship without any restrictions *does* “obscure the seriousness of the issues.”

2. A second reason that synod’s decision to classify the PCN as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship is problematic is the manner in which the EIRC brought its recommendation to synod. The EIRC knew that our relationship with the GKN and its successor the PCN has been troubled for more than thirty years. They knew that both in 2006 and in 2008 synod had refused to give the PCN the status of a church in unrestricted ecclesiastical fellowship. Why, then, did they bring their recommendation to change our ecumenical relationship with the PCN only in the agenda supplement, thus giving churches and classes no opportunity to reflect on it or respond to it? According to Church Order Article 29, “Decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be reached only upon due consideration.” We do not believe that “due consideration” was given when churches and classes had *no* opportunity to give this matter *any* consideration.

III. Overture

Classis Minnkota overtures synod to return the Protestant Church in the Netherlands to the ecumenical relationship it had with the CRCNA prior to 2014, namely, that of a church in dialogue.

Grounds:

1. The EIRC’s recommendation regarding reclassifying the PCN as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship did not appear in its report in the *Agenda for Synod 2014*. Thus churches and classes were unable to reflect on this recommendation or to respond to it, and the decision of synod to reclassify the PCN as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship was reached without the due consideration required by Church Order Article 29.
2. It is not appropriate for the CRCNA to be in an ecumenical relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCN because
 - a. The PCN continues to condone homosexuality (homosexual practice) as an acceptable alternate lifestyle for members of the church

⁵ Plaisier, Arjan, “Comment on time: Rev. Hendrikse: ‘God does not exist en Jesus is his son’” <http://www.protestantsekerk.nl/actueel/Nieuws/nieuwsoverzicht/Paginas/Comment-on-time-Rev-Hendrikse-God-does-not-exist-and-Jesus-is-his-son.aspx>.

- and also officebearers. Officially, the church states that it has taken no position on the issue. Scripture, however, clearly teaches that homosexual practice is sinful (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10). The CRCNA also officially considers homosexual practice to be a sin, which if persisted in, could lead to church discipline and excommunication (*Acts of Synod 1973*, pp. 50-53).
- b. Although the PCN has published the pastoral guidance brochure *Spreken over God (Speaking about God)*, which describes God as personal and triune, the denomination tolerates and has failed to discipline ministers who do not believe in the existence of the transcendent and sovereign God of the Bible.
 3. Returning the PCN to the ecumenical relationship of a church in dialogue allows the CRCNA to continue to “deal honestly and transparently” with the PCN, while witnessing that our disagreements on various issues are both significant and serious. As the ecumenical charter states: “This classification [of a church in dialogue] is for a relationship with Christian churches with which the CRC has mutual interests, or with which the CRC has a ministry partnership even though a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship is not envisioned. In cases where a ministry partnership is involved, the agreement shall be described in a specific ‘memorandum of understanding’ between the two churches.”⁶ As of 2014 we have such a memorandum of understanding with the PCN.

Classis Minnkota
LeRoy G. Christoffels, stated clerk

⁶ Ecumenical Charter of the CRCNA, <http://www.crcna.org/ministries/denominational-ministry-programs/eirc-ecumenical-and-interfaith-relations-committee-1>.

Communication 1: Classis Hamilton

In session February 24, 2015, Classis Hamilton delegates discussed a concern raised by one of its member churches about the makeup of the synodical Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-sex Marriage.

We recognized with sadness a climate of uncertainty, distrust, and question about how we are to resolve, let alone live within, the widely diverse opinions associated with the work of this committee and our intentions as a denomination to both be pastoral and give pastoral advice.

While we do not have answers for the work of this synodical study committee, Classis Hamilton acknowledged that some decisions have fostered the difficult climate in which we find ourselves. One specific concern brought to the floor of classis is the appropriateness of having members on this synodical study committee who appear to have advocated for positions outside the parameters of previous synodical decisions (1973 and 2002) or the mandate of the current synodical study committee (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 616-17) through public writing. Some activities of the committee membership have raised the level of uncertainty and distrust regarding the work and forthcoming recommendations from the synodical Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-sex Marriage.

Classis has not discussed the work of the synodical study committee, nor have we discussed the capacity of individual committee members to meaningfully contribute to the work of this committee. However, we believe that having members serve on the synodical study committee whose personal and public beliefs appear to fall outside the foundational parameters of the committee, namely to “guide and clarify application of the biblical teachings” expressed within the 1973 and 2002 synodical reports, has raised uncertainty about the committee’s work on behalf of synod and the congregations of the CRCNA. In our context, some external activities of committee members have raised concerns about the ability of this particular study committee to gain the confidence of some of our churches, which in turn has contributed to heightened distrust and detracted attention from the important work of the committee.

We are not requesting any action from synod. However, given the weight of our denominational discussions around same-sex relationships and as we have experienced within Classis Hamilton, we want to communicate our concern regarding this matter to synod.

Classis Hamilton,
John J. den Otter, stated clerk

Communication 2: Classis Heartland

Classis Heartland expresses its concerns to Synod 2015 that, while there is benefit to having diaconal input at synod, it is noted that many deacons have young families and also do not have the time or freedom from their jobs to travel and serve at synod. Currently Classis Heartland has difficulty finding elder delegates to attend synod. Several churches have difficulty providing—or are not able to provide—deacons for a half-day classis meeting. For these reasons, Classis Heartland notes that it may be very difficult to find those who would be available to serve as deacon delegates to synod.

Classis Heartland

Robert D. Drenton, stated clerk