

## **AGENDA FOR SYNOD SUPPLEMENT 2021**

Synod 2021 will not meet as planned, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Program Committee of synod (officers of Synod 2019) has designated (in shaded sections within) all matters in this agenda that cannot await action by Synod 2022. A special meeting of the Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America will take place June 11-12 and 15-16, 2021, to decide on these matters (indicated by shading). Other matters in this agenda will be deferred to the agenda for Synod 2022.

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## Council of Delegates Supplement

### I. Polity matters

#### A. Council of Delegates membership

##### 1. Appointment of classical delegates

The COD recommends that synod appoint Roy G. Heerema as the Classis Hudson delegate for a first term of three years.

*Roy Heerema*, a member of Cedar Hill CRC in Wyckoff, New Jersey, is employed as a financial advisor. His previous experience includes serving on the synodical Candidacy Committee and the board of World Renew (as vice president), in addition to various capacities in classis and in his church. He currently is serving as chair of Northeast Community Transformation (NECT).

The COD recommends that synod appoint Jonathan J. Kim, currently appointed by the COD as an interim delegate, as the regular delegate from Classis Ko-Am to fill out the first term of Theodore Lim, to conclude June 30, 2023.

*Jonathan J. Kim* is an assistant pastor (Missionary Works) and member of Ye-Eun Korean Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, California. He has previously served on several synodical study committees and as treasurer for Classis Ko-Am. Currently he serves as a synodical deputy and as a regional advocate for Disability Concerns. Rev. Kim also serves as a news correspondent for *The Banner*. In addition, he has served on the council of The Salt and Light CRC, the Multiethnic Ministries committee, and committees of Hope International CRC, Arcadia, California.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Kelly L. Vander Woude, currently appointed by the COD as an interim delegate, as the regular delegate from Classis Rocky Mountain to fill out the first term of Adrian deLange, to conclude June 30, 2022.

*Kelly Vander Woude* is the pastor of Immanuel CRC in Fort Collins, Colorado. He has served twice as a delegate to synod. In addition, he served as president of the Areopagus Board for Trinity CRC. Ames, Iowa, while serving there as pastor. Currently he serves his church on the consistory, the council, the community outreach committee, and in campus ministry. He also serves on the Classis Rocky Mountain Missions Network.

##### 2. Appointment of at-large delegate

The COD recommends that synod appoint A. Henry Eygenraam as a Canada at-large delegate for a first term of three years.

*A. Henry Eygenraam* is a member of Willowdale CRC in Toronto, Ontario. He is semiretired—consulting with farm and business clients and creating integrated family business succession plans. He was employed as the executive director of Christian Stewardship Services for fifteen years and then served five years as manager of the investment fund and church mortgage program. He has served four times as an elder delegate to synod, serving on the finance advisory committee (as chair or reporter). He presently serves on the Classis Toronto finance committee. He has served on the boards

of two elementary Christian schools and one Christian high school (in executive roles). He also served as president of the local professional association in the insurance and financial planning field, and he has served as an elder and as chair of Willowdale CRC Council. He currently serves on the Intercultural Enfolding Team at Willowdale CRC, which explores cultural challenges and opportunities to enfold new members and others to become part of a blended congregation.

The COD recommends that synod, by way of exception, extend the term of the current COD delegate from Classis Thornapple Valley, Paul R. De Vries, by appointing him as a U.S. at-large member for one year (until June 30, 2022).

*Grounds:*

1. This would provide continuity on the COD as it enters into leadership transitions with the many changes that are taking place, and it would be helpful to have someone who is aware of the issues and is gifted in helping lead the COD through them.
2. The COD Governance Handbook, section 2.132, allows for the appointment of up to ten at-large members on the COD.
3. Paul De Vries has expressed that he is willing to continue.

*B. Corporation officers and executive committee of the Council of Delegates*

At its recent meeting the COD members from their respective corporations and the full Council of Delegates elected the following to serve as officers in 2021-2022:

1. CRCNA Canada Corporation

President: Andy de Ruyter  
 Vice president: William T. Koopmans  
 Secretary: Bev Bandstra  
 Treasurer: Greta Luimes

2. CRCNA U.S. Corporation

President: Michael L. Ten Haken  
 Vice president: Sheila E. Holmes  
 Secretary: John R. Lee  
 Treasurer: Daudi Mutisya Mbuta

3. Back to God Ministries International Canada Corporation

President: Andy de Ruyter  
 Vice president: William T. Koopmans  
 Secretary: Bev Bandstra  
 Treasurer: Greta Luimes

#### 4. Back to God Ministries International U.S. Corporation

President: Michael L. Ten Haken  
 Vice president: Sheila E. Holmes  
 Secretary: John R. Lee  
 Treasurer: Daudi Mutisya Mbuta

#### 5. Council of Delegates executive committee and officers

Chair: Andy de Ruyter  
 Vice chair: Michael L. Ten Haken  
 Secretary: John R. Lee  
 Treasurer: Greta Luimes  
 Heather Cowie  
 Laurie Harkema  
 David A. Struyk  
 Melissa Van Dyk

#### *C. Deputy to the executive director*

The executive director of the CRCNA announced to the COD that he has appointed John Bolt, director of finance and operations, to also serve as a deputy to the executive director, primarily for U.S. ministry operations. The COD had previously approved the creation of such a position. In this new role Mr. Bolt will continue to provide executive oversight for financial operations and will assign day-to-day administrative responsibilities to other members of his current team. This appointment is extremely beneficial to the ongoing health and continuity of denominational and ministry operations. Mr. Bolt will bring ministry experience and leadership to the role and is very familiar with CRCNA operations.

#### *D. Recording of Meetings Policy*

The Council of Delegates adopted a Recording of Meetings Policy necessitated by the virtual meeting format over the past year. The policy will make clear which meetings are recorded, as well as the nature and use of recordings of meetings. The same policy was adopted by the Ministries Leadership Council for use during CRCNA staff-hosted virtual meetings.

#### *E. Code of Conduct for COD members*

Consistent with the COD recommendation that synod adopt a Code of Conduct for ministry leaders in the CRCNA (see *Deferred Agenda for Synod 2020*, pp. 113-16), the Council of Delegates adopted a Code of Conduct for COD members to sign prior to service on the COD. This requirement is similar to that of COD members' signing the Statement of Agreement with the Beliefs of the CRCNA when appointed to the board.

#### *F. Supporting justice ministries*

In response to hearing about harassment and verbal abuse that several CRCNA justice ministries staff have experienced, the Council of Delegates is taking measures to help the denomination address the challenging conversations that have surfaced with respect to justice ministries, including but not limited to the following:

- Encouraging a macro-CRCNA discernment and action plan on building respect and love throughout the leadership and administration as well as the church at large, to respectfully listen to each other and to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Mic. 6:8).
- Considering how to ensure that our denomination encourages a Christ-centered macro-CRCNA discernment and short-, medium-, and long-term action plan on building respect and love throughout the leadership and administration as well as the church at large, to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.
- Ensuring that the U.S. Committee to Provide Guidance and Support for the Office of Social Justice and the OSJ staff evaluate their assets and challenges and provide a candid assessment to the October 2021 Council of Delegates meeting, together with an assessment of how they perceive OSJ's synodically mandated justice initiatives are being received and appreciated by churches and classes.

*G. Report of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT)*

*Note:* This discussion will also be on the agenda for Synod 2022.

The Council of Delegates received the report of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT) after mandating and appointing the task force in October 2020, and then expanding the mandate in December 2020. The COD presents the SALT report in Appendix A as received for consideration by synod. In response to this report, the COD, at its meeting in May 2021, adopted the following recommendations to synod:

*Culture*

A. A motion carries to do the following in order to improve the culture of the CRCNA:

1. Affirm that we desire an organizational culture shaped by partnership, collaboration, cooperation, shared mission, and interdependency between countries, ministry institutions, agencies, programs, and partners. Board members and leaders will be selected who affirm these cultural values.
2. Acknowledge the ongoing challenges the CRCNA organization faces in resolving the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) compliance issues in Canada. SALT understands that solutions to those challenges are necessary, and the task force affirms that the solutions should not unduly impact the CRCNA organizational culture.
3. Recommend that synod also affirm these goals and acknowledge these challenges to improve CRCNA culture.

*Leadership Model and Design*

B. A motion carries to do the following in order to revise the CRCNA leadership model:

1. Establish the position of General Secretary; the leader in this role will serve as *chief ecclesiastical officer*. The General Secretary will report to the COD and will serve as the executive leader of the CRCNA organization. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A to the SALT report.
2. Establish the position Chief Administrative Officer; this role will report to the General Secretary and be responsible and accountable for all administration and ministry operations within the CRCNA organization. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A to the SALT report.
3. Establish the Office of General Secretary. The General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer will be contained in a newly established office called the *Office of General Secretary*. The Office of General Secretary will be responsible and accountable to the Council of Delegates to guide and direct the entire CRCNA organization. While each position has distinct roles and responsibilities as described in the position descriptions, the positions will require working together as partners and having shared leadership responsibilities and accountabilities based on abilities and gifts as well as organizational changes and needs. The new CRCNA leadership model will ensure ecclesiastical, administrative, and ministry integration and will serve together to facilitate the shared governance partnerships and relationships that characterize the denomination's life, ministry, and mission.

*Ground:* Due to the cancellation of Synod 2021, the COD, in the best interests of synod, can create search teams and identify candidates for the three leadership positions, which could aid in a smooth transition to the new structure upon synod's ultimate decision on the matter in 2022 (see Recommendation E, 1).

4. Instruct the executive committee of the COD to implement the above recommendations by creating mandates and respective search teams.
5. Recommend that synod adopt the establishment of the senior leadership positions of General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer, as well as the Office of General Secretary.

#### *Governance Framework and Design*

C. A motion carries to adopt the following with regard to governance framework and design:

1. Begin the work of establishing an Office of Governance to help improve and strengthen the governance framework and design of the CRCNA organization. Just as the Office of Synodical Services supports the CRCNA's ecclesiastical structure, the Office of Governance would support the governance structure of the CRCNA. In partnership with the Office of General Secretary, the Office of Governance would seek to strengthen and support the board members and leaders in Canada and the United States as they carry out their *fiduciary duties* and *governing*

*responsibilities*. The office would be responsible to advance the following activities:

- a. Develop an effective process to recruit, select, and appoint members with appropriate insight and expertise.
  - b. Develop learning and development opportunities that would enable board members to effectively exercise their fiduciary and governing responsibilities.
  - c. Assist ministry leaders to develop effective governance partnerships with their boards.
  - d. Assist board chairs in effectively leading and managing their respective boards.
  - e. Oversee the governance framework of the CRCNA, making recommendations to improve the structure and framework.
  - f. Assist the CRCNA corporations in complying with the Canada CRA and the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules and regulations.
2. Recommend that synod adopt the establishment of an Office of Governance.

#### *Ministry Plan and Joint Ministry Agreements*

*D.* A motion carries to expand the Joint Ministry Agreement process to accomplish the following:

1. Clarify ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and synodical responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions.
2. Clarify the governance responsibilities and interrelationships between boards of directors and advisers in Canada and the United States. Learning and development opportunities will be addressed.
3. Clarify the administrative responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions. This includes oversight and supervision, human resources and staff development, budgets and finance, and so on.
4. Clarify ministry responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions.
5. Affirm that Joint Ministry Agreements will be approved by relevant governing authorities, including boards and executives, before they become effective.
6. Affirm that the process of developing and overseeing Joint Ministry Agreements will be managed by the Office of General Secretary and the Ministries Leadership Council.

### *Canadian Office*

E. A motion carries to adopt the following with regard to the Canadian Office:

1. Establish the Canadian Office of the CRCNA organization. The Canadian Office will be governed by the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors and led by an Executive Director-Canada. The purpose of the Canadian Office is not to mirror the U.S. Office of the CRCNA organization. Instead, it is to implement the CRCNA Ministry Plan in a way and manner that recognizes the ministry needs of Canadian churches and that of their social and cultural context. The Canadian Office is part of the CRCNA organization, and as such the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors is responsible to partner with the CRCNA Council of Delegates, and the Executive Director-Canada is responsible to partner with the Office of General Secretary. A description of the Executive Director-Canada position is contained in Appendix A to the SALT report.

*Ground:* Due to the cancellation of Synod 2021, the CRCNA-Canada Corporation, in the best interests of synod, can create a search team and identify a candidate for the Executive Director-Canada position, which could aid in the smooth transition to the new structure upon synod's ultimate decision on the matter in 2022 (see Recommendation B, 3).

2. The CRCNA-Canada Board will revise and amend its synod-issued charter and related bylaws of 1998 and resubmit them to the COD. The revisions and amendments will in a legally sound way accomplish each of the following:
  - a. The identification of the Canadian Office as a function of shared governance in the CRCNA under the authority of synod.
  - b. The identification of the Executive Director-Canada as the sole director of the CRCNA-Canada charity.
  - c. The identification of the JMA process as the primary instrument by which it exercises direction and control.
3. Recommend that synod adopt the establishment of the Canadian Office and adopt the CRCNA-Canada Board's revised charter and bylaws.

### *Additional Recommendations*

F. A motion carries to acknowledge that on the question of whether Directors and Members of the ReFrame Ministries and CRCNA corporations can be the same members, it rules that when the crossover of CRCNA directors is in the minority of the ReFrame Ministries corporation, it is acceptable.

G. A motion carries to recommend that synod implement use of a denominational Conflict of Interest Policy (similar to the policy in Appendix E to the SALT report, adopted by the Council of Delegates) for delegates to synod.



H. A motion carries to do the following:

1. Review the status of Resonate Global Mission with a view to possible modification in order to make its status equivalent to that of World Renew and ReFrame Ministries. As a result, Resonate would have its own board of directors in the United States and in Canada. The role of the board of directors would be to advise and provide expertise to the Directors of Resonate in Canada and the United States as they develop and implement the Resonate Global Mission Ministry Plan, which is aligned with the CRCNA Ministry Plan. Board size should not exceed 10 to 12 members who have strategic insight and expertise to further the purposes of Resonate Global Mission and its Ministry Plan.
2. Contingent upon the outcome of the preceding recommendation, recommend that synod approve the creation of a Board of Directors for Resonate Global Mission.

I. A motion carries to appoint a task force to oversee the expansion of the Joint Ministry Agreement process for the CRCNA organization. That the COD appoint the SALT reporter, Rev. Frederic Koning, together with Dr. Lloyd VanderKwaak, to serve as facilitators of the task force to ensure that the agreements reflect the SALT report's intent and realize contract documents that undergird the administrative model and satisfy legal and ecclesiastical requirements.

J. A motion carries to amend the COD Governance Handbook regarding background checks and testing. SALT recommends that all finalists for executive leadership positions in the CRCNA submit to psychological testing and criminal and extensive background checks conducted by an independent professional. The candidate should also submit to a medical evaluation designed to evaluate mental, physical, emotional health, and overall fitness for the role in order to rule out the presence of personality disorder, narcissism, and sexual deviancy. No position offers should be made until test reports have been filed and recommendations have been made by an independent professional who does this kind of work.

K. A motion carries not to implement the administrative decision to absorb the current Director of Finance and Operations functions into other positions, and that the Director of Finance and Operations role be retained, given (1) that a healthy organizational structure in the CRCNA, generally speaking, relies on a Chief Financial Officer, as distinguished from a CEO and CAO; and (2) that the skill set and experience of a Director of Finance is not captured in the new model by the role descriptions for the General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer.

L. A motion carries to affirm for reasons of editorial independence that *The Banner* editor-in-chief not report to the Director of Communications and Marketing but report administratively to the Office of General Secretary and editorially to the *Banner* Advisory committee.

#### *H. Denominational gatherings*

An “Inspire Light” event, now planned for August 3-6, 2021, is being offered to pique interest toward attending the next full-scale Inspire gathering, postponed until August 2022 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hosted entirely online, “Inspire Light” will focus on the *Our Journey 2025* milestones. Visit [crcna.org/Inspire](http://crcna.org/Inspire) for more information or to register.

A planning team will soon be appointed to plan for the next Canadian National Gathering, to be held in summer 2023. The main focus of that gathering will be Hearts Exchanged.

#### *I. Approval of director search processes*

The COD approved the implementation of a search for a director of the offices of Social Justice and Race Relations with the hope of filling the role by the end of September 2021. Mark Stephenson, director of Disability Concerns, has been serving as interim director of Social Justice and Race Relations since Reggie Smith, the former director in that role, was appointed to lead the CRCNA’s Diversity ministry.

The COD received notice of the desired retirement of Mark Stephenson from his role as director of Disability Concerns, effective by the end of 2021. Because Disability Concerns’ partnership with the RCA Disability Concerns is integral to the work of this ministry, a team of CRC leaders met with leaders from the RCA to explore the continuation of this partnership. The COD approved the start-up of a search for a new director of Disability Concerns, to be presented to the COD at its October meeting for ratification.

#### *J. Clarification to Bible Translations Committee mandate*

At the spring meeting of the Bible Translations Committee, the committee members noted that their current mandate states that requests to review translations can be made by “any church, classis, or synod of the Christian Reformed Church (CRCNA).” It was unclear how the church or classis would go about making such a request. In response, the COD adopted a revision to the mandate of the Bible Translations Committee to specify that “requests to review a translation should be sent to the Council of Delegates to decide which requests are appropriate to pass along to the committee.”

#### *K. Calvin University proposed bylaw changes*

The COD reviewed proposed changes to the bylaws of Calvin University, adopted the changes as proposed, and recommends the bylaws as presented in Appendix B to synod for adoption. Following is a summary of the changes to these bylaws, communicated to the Council of Delegates by the Calvin University Board of Trustees to align good governing principles with current practice:

- To ensure that the board can identify qualified candidates for board appointment from the North American regions of the CRCNA.
- To preserve a CRCNA trustee majority on the university board.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of board officers and officers of the corporation and to consolidate redundant roles.
- To enable the board to fill vacant board seats with former board members for the remainder of a term when midterm vacancies occur.
- To clarify and improve the procedures for presidential appointment.

- To reflect best practices in higher education governance for an accredited institution of higher learning, consistency with the university's articles of incorporation, and compliance with the laws of the state of Michigan.

### 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 Board of Trustees

Changes to 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 retain the same regional trustee representation at Calvin University. Consolidating the number of regions from 11 to 6, as is practiced with other agency denominations, enables the institution to search from a greater number of classes to identify board members with the qualifications needed to meet academic accreditation standards. In the past there have been occasions when no nominations have been put forward from a given region. This change makes that situation far less likely. The total number of regional trustees (16) does not change, and regional trustees remain in the majority on the Calvin University Board of Trustees.

### 2.2 Vacancies

Vacancies have occurred more frequently over the past several years, primarily due to trustees' moving from one region to another. Often this situation creates an unfilled vacancy for more than a year. The board would like to call on former trustees in good standing from vacant regions to consider serving as temporary replacements representing their respective regions.

### 2.5 Meetings of the university board

This change to the bylaws specifies that meetings of the university board will occur in fall, winter, and spring rather than in October, February, and May. A change to our 2021-22 academic calendar makes it likely that next year's meetings will occur in October, January, and April. This change to the bylaws allows the university to be able to adjust these meetings in the future without changing the bylaws each time the academic calendar changes.

### 2.10 Corporate seal

This change specifies that the corporate seal will be maintained by the president's office rather than by a specific person.

### 2.12 Committees

This change aligns the bylaws with the Association of Governing Boards' best practice to ensure that qualified financial professionals from fields like investment management and accounting may be added to trustee committees as nontrustee members for the purpose of ensuring that the investment committee and audit committee have the expertise needed to provide proper board oversight of university finances.

### 3.1 Role of board officers

#### *Background*

Administrative and board leaders recently reviewed the university's bylaws to determine what may need to be updated to align with current best practices and processes. In the course of that review, a question arose on the optimal structure for board officers and university officers, with particular focus also on the preferred role of the board secretary. The bylaws currently provide that officers of the university board shall be a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer, an assistant treasurer, a secretary, and an assistant secretary. Today the board has appointed trustees to the chair position, vice-chair position, and secretary position only. Administrative leaders hold the offices of treasurer and assistant secretary. Officers of the university established under the bylaws include the positions of treasurer, assistant treasurer, secretary, and assistant secretary, in addition to president and cabinet leadership positions.

The secretary description in the bylaws requires the secretary to give or cause to be given notice of all board of trustees meetings. The secretary shall also record the proceedings of the meetings of the Calvin University Board of Trustees and perform all duties incident to the secretary role and as may be designated by the board of trustees. The board secretary does not currently perform all of these duties, as most are handled by the assistant secretary. Finally, the bylaws also allow the role of assistant treasurer and assistant secretary to be filled but do not require them to be filled.

#### *Proposed change*

Create desired officer structure and update bylaws accordingly as follows:

- The board officers are chair, vice chair, treasurer, and secretary.
- Appoint an administrative treasurer if needed for operational purposes.
- Do not formally appoint an administrative secretary but instead include the operational secretary duties into a current administrative role.
- Modify the board secretary role to be one of review, oversight, and certification only.

### 3.2 Presidential appointment process

Currently, Section 3.2 of the bylaws provides that the president shall be appointed by synod. The proposed modification to Section 3.2 specifies that the president be appointed by the board of trustees instead. this process change aligns to the relationship of the university as employer of the president, improves the ability to recruit a president on a timely basis with clarity regarding the employer relationship, and reflects governance best practices in higher education.

Employers have certain legal obligations, including, in Calvin's case, the responsibility to enter into an employment agreement with the president. The synod should not be legally obligated (directly or indirectly) in a capacity as employer of the president. Potential candidates for the president position will also see this

appointment protocol positively, as it clarifies the employer relationship and also accelerates the hiring and appointment process. The most recent presidential appointment took five months from the time of appointment by the board of trustees to the confirmation by synod. This timeline is not practical for contemporary presidential appointments.

It is understood that this change might be construed by certain constituencies as an action by the university to loosen the relationship ties to the denomination. Importantly, no such intention exists. But, in recognition of potential misperceptions, the above factors should be clearly communicated to those constituencies as the updated bylaws are published and communicated. Also, it should be noted that the denomination's influence and relationship to the university and its president remain prevalent through the denomination's authority to appoint all university trustees, the majority number of denominational trustees on the board, and the protocol for denominational representation on any search committee for a new president.

### 3.4 Removal

This section has been amended to reflect the distinction between governance oversight provided by the university board through the president, and the president's responsibility for operational oversight of the provost and vice presidents.

### 3.6 Chair and vice-chair absence

This revision clarifies that a trustee shall preside at a meeting of the board in the event that the chair and vice chair are absent.

### 3.7-3.8 Presidential roles and responsibilities

These revisions clarify the president's role vis-à-vis the board of trustees and other officers (e.g., vice presidents) of the corporation.

### 3.10 Board secretary responsibilities and elimination of other board offices

These changes clarify the secretary role and differentiate the role from operational administrative support that the university board may require. It clarifies the secretary's role as providing review, oversight, and certification. It also eliminates the roles of assistant secretaries and assistant treasurers to conform with current practice.

### 5.5 Indemnification

Upon review by legal counsel, this section was modified to conform with the Articles of Incorporation of Calvin University and the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act.

#### *L. Addressing the abuse of power*

The Council of Delegates continues to monitor progress under way for initiatives adopted to address abuse of power. The COD received updates from the director of Safe Church Ministry, Amanda Benckhuysen, on the following initiatives:

## 1. Addressing Abuse of Power training for pastors

As part of their candidacy requirements, candidates for ministry are currently completing a pilot training on the prevention of abuse of power. Based on feedback from this group, Safe Church Ministry is planning to revise the training to make it more engaging and impactful by adjusting the balance of content with time for reflection and discussion and by including case scenarios that illustrate a variety of ways power is abused. Safe Church also hopes to move to a cohort model of delivering the training to generate a safe environment for moderated discussion among the participants. The goal is to have the revised course ready to launch in September.

## 2. Code of Conduct

While the proposed code of conduct awaits final approval by synod, Safe Church Ministry is currently commending it to churches in consultations, articles, trainings, courses, and webinars as a resource for establishing a standard of ethical behavior for ministry staff and leaders. It has also been embedded in the prevention of abuse of power training that candidates and eventually pastors will be encouraged to take.

## 3. Prevention of abuse in CRCNA offices

All staff are required to receive training in Preventing Workplace Harassment and Discrimination, a program overseen by Human Resources. Additionally, Human Resources recently secured the services of an independent company, Red Flag Reporting, to whom employees can make an anonymous report regarding ethical violations by staff or COD members. Finally, Human Resources has put together an informational site for staff, "CRCNA Safe Spaces," which includes policies, procedures, and information about how to report a complaint.

## 4. Training at classis and local-church levels

Safe Church Ministry is working with Pastor Church Resources (PCR) to include provision of abuse of power training and active bystander training in a new elder training toolkit that is being developed as part of the Thriving Congregations project. In addition, Safe Church Ministry is working on a shorter version of the prevention of abuse of power training for pastors that can be made available to elders, deacons, and other ministry staff. It is anticipated that this training will be ready to pilot in September.

## 5. Recordkeeping

Safe Church Ministry and PCR staff are developing a system of recordkeeping that allows these ministries to coordinate efforts and trace patterns/outcomes without compromising confidentiality. It is their hope to have something in place in summer 2021. Safe Church Ministry is also planning to meet with Human Resources and Rev. Kathy Smith (Church Order expert) to help design a reporting and intake system that allows for anonymous reporting of misconduct by ministry leaders. Such a system will better allow Safe Church Ministry staff to identify and address patterns of misconduct in specific instances.



## 6. Creating a culture that prevents abuse of power

While this is not solely the purview of Safe Church Ministry, a number of Safe Church Ministry initiatives contribute to healthier and safer cultures in our churches and in the denomination as a whole. These include the following:

- a webinar series, “On Being Safe at Church,” focused on human dignity and what we owe each other as imagebearers of God
- a series of Network articles on “When Spiritual Leaders Do Harm”
- a new congregational assessment tool designed to help churches assess their risk with respect to abuse of power in all its forms (currently in pilot stage)
- an online summer mini-course, “Together Again: Cultivating Safe and Healthy Church Communities after COVID,” cotaught by PCR and Safe Church Ministry staff (with a guest lecture from Office of Race Relations staff), offered as part of the “Ministry in a COVID-Shaped World” series by Calvin Theological Seminary and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
- a new Abuse Awareness Sunday theme, “Not Just a Policy: A Way of Being the Church,” to encourage all participants in congregations to be alert to the ways in which they can participate in abuse awareness and prevention
- resources, training, and consultation regarding restorative practices (see [crcna.org/SafeChurch/restorative](http://crcna.org/SafeChurch/restorative))

## II. Program and finance matters

### A. *Program matters: Denominational Survey 2021*

Each year the CRCNA surveys approximately one-fifth of our denomination’s churches and membership. This survey provides demographic data and helps us listen to individual church members, gauge our ministry as a denomination, and plan for the future. The 2021 annual denominational survey report is now available for individuals and churches to review and study (see [crcna.org/survey/survey-results](http://crcna.org/survey/survey-results)).

### B. *Finance matters*

1. The COD approved the unified budget for the denominational entities, inclusive of the individual budgets of the agencies, the educational institutions, the denominational offices, the Loan Fund, and the Special Assistance Funds of the CRC as presented to the COD Support Services Committee in the report of the COD Budget Review Team.
2. The COD approved the allocation of ministry shares within the fiscal year 2022 budget, based on individual church ministry-share pledges reported by the churches and classes. The COD took note that pledges have been received from several emerging churches for the first time because ministry shares are no longer based on membership numbers.
3. The denominational salary grid

The COD recommends that Synod 2021 adopt the salary grid included below for use in fiscal year 2021-2022, noting that the current pay ranges reflect a 3 percent increase from the previous year. *Note:* The grid reflects the salary structure adopted by the Council of Delegates in 2019.

*Grounds:*

- a. The recommended adjustment to the salary range targets are approximately half of the marketplace salary inflationary increase that has been experienced since they were established in 2018.
- b. These changes are consistent with the compensation levels included in the endorsed fiscal 2022 budget.

## 2021-2022 Salary Grade and Range Structure

Level	U.S. Range		Canadian Range	
	Minimum	Target	Minimum	Target
E1	\$152,440	\$190,550		
E2	\$137,566	\$171,957	\$131,078	\$163,848
E3	\$116,581	\$145,726	\$114,859	\$143,574
H	\$98,798	\$123,497	\$98,447	\$123,059
I	\$83,726	\$104,658	\$84,382	\$105,477
J	\$70,954	\$88,693	\$72,325	\$90,406
K	\$60,131	\$75,164	\$61,991	\$77,489
L	\$50,958	\$63,698	\$53,133	\$66,416

4. The COD approved, and ratified in lieu of synod, the following denominational agencies, institutions, and ministries and recommend them to the churches for one or more offerings, and that World Renew be recommended to the churches for one offering per quarter because the agency receives no ministry-share support.

Denominational agencies, institutions, and ministries recommended for one or more offerings

*The Banner*

Calvin Theological Seminary

Calvin University

Congregational Ministries

- 1) Centre for Public Dialogue
- 2) Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
- 3) Disability Concerns
- 4) Faith Formation Ministries
- 5) Indigenous Ministries (Canada)
- 6) Pastor Church Resources
- 7) Race Relations
- 8) Safe Church Ministry
- 9) Office of Social Justice
- 10) Worship Ministries

Raise Up Global Ministries (Coffee Break/Discover Your Bible, Educational Care, and Timothy Leadership Training Institute)

ReFrame Ministries (formerly Back to God Ministries International)

Resonate Global Mission—two offerings per year

World Renew—four offerings per year because the agency receives no ministry-share support



5. The COD informs synod that it has approved the renewal of the following accredited organizations for offerings in the churches for 2022—year two in a three-year cycle of support (2021-2024). Guidelines adopted by Synod 2002 require an application by nondenominational organizations and synodical approval every three years. Synod indicated that, in the intervening years, organizations are to submit updated financial information and information regarding any significant programmatic changes. Each nondenominational organization requesting approval submitted the required materials for consideration.

The COD approved, and ratified in lieu of synod, the following nondenominational organizations recommended for financial support but not necessarily for one or more offerings:

a. United States

1) Benevolent organizations

Hope Haven  
The Luke Society  
Mississippi Christian Family Services  
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services  
QuietWaters Ministries

2) Educational organizations

All Belong Center for Inclusive Education/Friendship Ministries  
Ascending Leaders  
Christian Schools International  
Christian Schools International Foundation  
Dordt University  
Dynamic Youth Ministries
 

- a. GEMS
- b. Calvinist Cadet Corps
- c. Youth Unlimited

 Elim Christian Services  
Friends of ICS (U.S. Foundation of Institute for Christian Studies)  
International Theological Education Ministries, Inc. (ITEM)  
The King's University (through the U.S. Foundation)  
Kuyper College  
Langham Partnership  
Redeemer University (through the U.S. Foundation)  
Rehoboth Christian School  
Tent Schools International  
Trinity Christian College  
Zuni Christian Mission School

3) Miscellaneous organizations

Association for a More Just Society (AJS)  
Audio Scripture Ministries  
Bible League International

Center for Church Renewal  
 The Center for Public Justice  
 The Colossian Forum  
 Crossroads Prison Ministries  
 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship  
 Mission India  
 Partners Worldwide  
 Pathways to Promise  
 Talking Bibles International  
 World Communion of Reformed Churches  
 Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.

b. Canada

1) Benevolent organizations

Beginnings Family Services  
 Diaconal Ministries Canada

2) Educational organizations

Dordt University  
 Dynamic Youth Ministries  
 EduDeo Ministries  
 Friendship Ministries – Canada  
 Institute for Christian Studies  
 The King's University  
 Kuyper College  
 Redeemer University  
 Trinity Christian College

3) Miscellaneous organizations

A Rocha Canada  
 Bible League – Canada  
 Canadian Council of Churches  
 Cardus  
 Christian Labour Association of Canada Foundation (CLAC)  
 Citizens for Public Justice (CJL Foundation)  
 Dunamis Fellowship Canada  
 Evangelical Fellowship of Canada  
 Gideons International – Canada/ShareWord Global  
 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of Canada  
 OneBook  
 Shalem Mental Health Network  
 World Communion of Reformed Churches  
 Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada, Inc.

6. Exclusion from list of nondenominational organizations approved for offerings

The Council of Delegates gave special consideration and subsequently voted to exclude Bethany Christian Services from the list of nondenominational organizations recommended for renewal on the basis of their willingness to assist same-sex couples with adoptions.

7. New request for inclusion on the list of nondenominational organizations approved for offerings

The Council of Delegates ratified in lieu of synod the inclusion of the following organization on the accredited organizations list:

United States

International Network for Christian Higher Education (INCHE)

INCHE is an organization whose aim is to foster development of Christian higher education worldwide. It does this by sharing information and research, equipping with training and scholarship, and cultivating enduring relationships through networking and mutual exchange. INCHE reaches organizations on six continents in twenty-two nations.

*Ground:* INCHE was previously included on the accredited agency list when it was called the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (IAPCHE); however, IAPCHE has not been included on the list since Synod 2011.

8. Ministers' pension assessment

The COD recommends that synod take note of the following actions of the Pension Trustees endorsed by the Council of Delegates at its May meeting:

- a. The three-year average salary to be used to determine retirement benefits beginning in 2022 for ministers of the Word in the United States is \$56,625 and in Canada is \$61,060. In addition, effective July 1, 2021, all ministers in the Canadian plan having retired between January 1, 2017, and July 1, 2021, will have their monthly benefit adjusted to reflect the three-year "final" average salary at the time of their retirement. A retroactive payment will also be made to bring their cumulative benefits in line with the new monthly benefit level.
- b. That the 2022 per-member assessment for the Canadian Plan remain \$42.96 and that the Canadian per-participant assessment remain \$9,840. Similarly, that the 2022 per-member assessment for the U.S. Plan remain \$37.20 and the U.S. per-participant assessment remain \$7,704.

9. Summary of denominational investments and compliance with investment policy

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

### III. Recommendations

A. That synod by way of the ballot elect Roy G. Heerema to the Council of Delegates as the Classis Hudson delegate for a first term of three years as presented (COD Supplement section I, A, 1).

B. That synod by way of the ballot elect Jonathan J. Kim (Classis Ko-Am) and Kelly Vander Woude (Classis Rocky Mountain) to fill out the respective terms of the previous classis delegates on the Council of Delegates (COD Supplement section I, A, 1).

C. That synod by way of the ballot elect A. Henry Eygenraam to the Council of Delegates as a Canada at-large member for a first term of three years as presented (COD Supplement section I, A, 2).

D. That synod by way of the ballot and by way of exception extend the term of Paul R. De Vries by appointing him as a U.S. at-large member for one year until June 30, 2022 (COD Supplement section I, A, 2).

E. That synod address the following recommendations with regard to the work of the COD in response to the report of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (COD Supplement section I, G; and Appendix A):

1. That synod affirm the following goals and acknowledge these challenges to improve CRCNA culture:
  - a. Affirm that we desire an organizational culture shaped by partnership, collaboration, cooperation, shared mission, and interdependency between countries, ministry institutions, agencies, programs, and partners. Board members and leaders will be selected who affirm these cultural values.
  - b. Acknowledge the ongoing challenges the CRCNA organization faces in resolving the Canada Revenue Agency compliance issues in Canada and recognize that the implementation of the recommendations in the SALT report must address these issues but should not unduly impact the CRCNA organizational culture.
2. That synod adopt the establishment of the senior leadership positions of General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer, as well as the Office of General Secretary.
3. That synod adopt the establishment of an Office of Governance.
4. That synod take note of the adopted process for developing and approving joint ministry agreements.
5. That synod adopt the establishment of the Canadian Office and adopt the CRCNA-Canada Board's revised charter and bylaws.
6. That synod implement use of a denominational Conflict of Interest Policy (similar to the policy in Appendix E to the SALT report, adopted by the Council of Delegates) for delegates to synod.

7. That synod take note that the COD will review the status of Resonate Global Mission with a view to possible modification in order to make its status equivalent to that of World Renew and ReFrame Ministries, and that the purpose of such a review is to ensure internal ministry presence on the Ministries Leadership Council and to foster ministry integration.

*F.* That synod take note of the clarification made to the mandate of the Bible Translations Committee to specify that “requests to review a translation should be sent to the Council of Delegates to decide which requests are appropriate to pass along to the committee” (COD Supplement section I, J).

*G.* That synod adopt the proposed changes to the bylaws of Calvin University as found in Appendix B (COD Supplement section I, K).

*H.* That synod take note of the updates of initiatives with regard to the prevention of abuse of power (COD Supplement section I, L).

*I.* That synod receive the agencies and institutional unified budget as information and note the approval of ministry-share allocations, based on ministry-share pledges reported by the churches and classes (COD Supplement sections II, B, 1-2).

*J.* That synod adopt the 2021-2022 denominational salary grid for senior positions as proposed, noting that the current pay ranges reflect a 3 percent increase from the previous year. (COD Supplement section II, B, 3).

*Grounds:*

1. The recommended adjustment to the salary range targets are approximately half of the marketplace salary inflationary increase that has been experienced since they were established in 2018.
2. These changes are consistent with the compensation levels included in the endorsed fiscal 2022 budget.

*K.* That synod take note of the COD's action to both approve and adopt in lieu of synod the following with regard to organizations requesting to be placed on the recommended-for-offerings list:

1. The list of above-ministry share and specially designated offerings for denominational agencies, institutions, and ministries of the CRC (COD Supplement section II, B, 4).
2. The list of nondenominational organizations, previously accredited, that have been approved for calendar year 2022 (COD Supplement section II, B, 5).
3. Exclusion of Bethany Christian Services from the list of nondenominational organizations approved for offerings (COD Supplement section II, B, 6).

4. That synod ratify inclusion of the following organization on the accredited organizations list (COD Supplement section II, B, 7):

United States

International Network for Christian Higher Education (INCHE)

INCHE is an organization whose aim is to foster development of Christian higher education worldwide. It does this by sharing information and research, equipping with training and scholarship, and cultivating enduring relationships through networking and mutual exchange. INCHE reaches organizations on six continents in twenty-two nations.

*Ground:* INCHE was previously included on the accredited agency list when it was called the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (IAPCHE); however, IAPCHE has not been included on the list since Synod 2011.

- L. That synod take note of the COD's endorsement of the following actions of the Pension Trustees (COD Supplement section II, B, 8):

1. The three-year average salary to be used to determine retirement benefits beginning in 2022 for ministers of the Word in the United States is \$56,625 and in Canada is \$61,060. In addition, effective July 1, 2021, all ministers in the Canadian plan having retired between January 1, 2017, and July 1, 2021, will have their monthly benefit adjusted to reflect the three-year "final" average salary at the time of their retirement. A retroactive payment will also be made to bring their cumulative benefits in line with the new monthly benefit level.
2. That the 2022 per-member assessment for the Canadian Plan remain \$42.96 and that the Canadian per-participant assessment remain \$9,840. Similarly, that the 2022 per-member assessment for the U.S. Plan remain \$37.20 and the U.S. per-participant assessment remain \$7,704.

Council of Delegates of the  
Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Paul R. De Vries, chair

## **Appendix A**

### **Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT)**

*Note:* Discussion of this report will also be on the agenda for Synod 2022.

#### **Outline**

- I. The SALT task
- II. A brief history
- III. Introduction to Reformed polity and ecclesiology
- IV. Introduction to the report
- V. Key Topic 1: Culture
- VI. Key Topic 2: Leadership model and design
- VII. Key Topic 3: Governance framework and design
- VIII. Key Topic 4: Ministry Plan and Joint Ministry Agreements
- IX. Key Topic 5: Canadian office
- X. Recommendations

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Position descriptions
- Appendix B: Charts and narrative
- Appendix C: Abbreviations and Specialized terms
- Appendix D: Ministries Leadership Council
- Appendix E: Conflict of Interest Policy

#### **I. The SALT task**

The Council of Delegates (COD), in a series of decisions in October 2020, approved the creation of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT). The mandate of SALT was to

ensure that the three executive role descriptions it had developed previously are complete, compatible, and meet the demands of Reformed polity as well as address other ecclesiastical considerations; ensure that the three position descriptions include review by Human Resources of the CRCNA in both Canada and the United States to ensure use of appropriate language to reflect the desire of inclusiveness; and present a final report to the COD in February 2021 for recommendation to synod.

A short time later, in a subsequent Executive Committee meeting of the Council of Delegates on November 24, 2020, the SALT mandate was expanded to read as follows:

A motion carries to empower the Structure and Leadership Task Force to take into account the range of legal opinions and provide preliminary guidance to the COD in February 2021 for moving the process forward.

Following the parameters of composition and membership delineated by synod, the task force was formed with the following members: Paula Coldagelli; Andy de Ruyter (facilitator), Paul De Vries (facilitator), Fred Koning (reporter), Michelle Kool, William Koopmans, John Lee (chair), Jose Rayas, Dee Recker (ex officio/nonvoting), and Kathy Smith (ex officio/nonvoting).



The SALT team, in preparing this report, sought to develop a leadership model and organizational design that would promote more durable and productive working relationships among CRCNA leadership and a mission-driven culture throughout the CRCNA organization. The organizational values pursued were role function and clarity; mutuality and reciprocity; communication and trust.

The SALT team recognized the unique structure and design of the CRCNA organization. The CRCNA was founded as an ecclesiastical organization governed by a Reformed polity and ecclesiology. The CRCNA found it necessary to establish nonprofit organizations in Canada and the United States to advance the churches' shared mission and purpose. While each nonprofit organization was authorized by synod, they are legal corporations that must comply with the rules and regulations that govern registered charities in Canada and tax-exempt nonprofit organizations in the United States. These rules vary between states and provinces as well as between the U.S. and Canadian federal governments. Additionally, as these governmental rules evolve and change over time, compliance efforts may be at odds with CRCNA Church Order. This currently is the case with rules and regulations for registered charities in Canada.

## **II. A brief history**

The past is the prologue for the work of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT). The resignation of the previous executive director of the CRCNA, Dr. Steven Timmermans, and the pattern of repeated resignations and unexplained departures of senior leaders since 2011 as well as the reports for the work of the synodical Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) in 2012-2015 have all formed the backdrop to the work of SALT. The recent update to the Canada Revenue Agency regulations regarding charities in Canada, and the discussion as to the nature of the changes required to render the CRCNA-Canada Corporation in full legal compliance seem to have made the completion of SALT's task more pressing than would normally be the case.

The TFRSC report to Synod 2013 provides a perspective that is as helpful today as it was then:

The Christian Reformed Church has from its very beginning in 1857 concerned itself with organizing committees and governing boards as needed on an ad hoc basis to accomplish studies or tasks as deemed appropriate. Continuing organizational development is a necessary byproduct of evaluating the current organizational structure to determine how well this structure will serve in the future. Current organizational structure should be evaluated in the light of what we anticipate in that future. If ministry is our goal and covenantal interdependence is our chosen ministry pattern, then our organizational models need to reflect that choice. Organizational structure is not an end in itself. Organizational structure is not the primary mission of the Christian Reformed Church. It is a tool we use to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the Lord and his people to live out his mission.  
(*Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 348-49)

In developing a renewed leadership model, SALT came to realize that attention to the matters of governance in the CRCNA is best seen as an ongoing duty of CRCNA boards. To date, it has largely been a matter of periodic review that tends to happen in response to specific administrative crises.

SALT also expressed a deep appreciation for the long history of shared ministry that its members have enjoyed as a binational church. Both Canadian and U.S. members have



benefited from working together to contribute to God's mission in North America and beyond. Unity has been the foundation for ministry in Canada since 1905, when the first Canadian CRCNA church was launched in Lethbridge, Alberta. Over the years, ministry priorities and structures within the Canadian side of the CRCNA have changed to respond to changing circumstances, always with an emphasis on maintaining unity. Indeed, SALT acknowledges that a great deal of work has been done over the years in refining ministry priorities and structures to strengthen the capacity of the churches to contribute to the shared mission of the CRCNA.

However, in its research of past synodical decisions regarding governance in the CRCNA, SALT was reminded that some of what had once been decided had not yet been fully implemented. SALT therefore endeavored to work toward the full realization of those decisions once taken by Synod 2000.

Synod 2000 adopted "A Governance Proposal" that integrated the earlier Canadian Ministries Board into a larger and reconstituted Board of Trustees. The *Acts of Synod 2000* (p. 623) declares that the Canada Corporation shall "be responsible for all specific 'in Canada' functions that cannot be, or ought not be, the responsibility of a synodical binational Board." The *Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 62, identified seven functions that flesh out how the Canada Corporation was to implement direction while serving as members of the Board of Trustees (now replaced by the current Council of Delegates). Noteworthy among those functions was the overarching responsibility to exercise judgment "concerning the cultural appropriateness of ministry programs offered in Canada by denominational agencies." In the seven functions, Synod 2000 affirmed that CRCNA-Canada Corporation directors shall perform all the functions of a federally registered charity in Canada and, as directed by synod, of the CRC ministries in Canada. Synod indicated that CRCNA-Canada Corporation directors shall be responsible for providing governance oversight for denominational ministries specific to Canada (see *Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 62).

### **III. Introduction to Reformed polity and ecclesiology**

It was important for SALT to make explicit a number of Reformed polity considerations when contemplating the most senior leadership roles in the CRCNA. These considerations helped define the roles as well as recognize the limits to the authority of the office and the office holder. These considerations also draw attention to the limits of the delegated authority of the CRCNA-Canada and -Michigan corporations, whose charter and bylaw documents make explicit that their continued existence is entirely contingent on the faithful implementation of synodical purposes.

In Reformed polity the local church council holds original authority, which in turn is delegated to classis, which delegates its authority to synod (Church Order Art. 27). Synod is the broadest assembly of the churches covenanting together on ecclesiastical matters. Synod therefore exercises direction and control of ecclesiastical matters and holds the ecclesiastical vision for the CRCNA. Current corporations exist within the CRCNA (most churches and classes are incorporated) because churches, through synod (Church Order Art. 32), have asked for collaborative and nationally contextualized ministry. Synod, however, is not a corporation.

Unlike ecclesiastical assemblies (classis and synod) that have delegated authority over lower assemblies (classes over councils and synod over classes), CRCNA corporations are legal entities whose boards do not function with ecclesiastical authority. They simply lack ecclesiastical standing, for they are legal entities whose purposes are to implement synod's denominational Ministry Plan in all of its complexity and specificity. Therefore, CRCNA

corporations do not have authority over other corporations in the CRCNA, including churches and classes that are incorporated.

Synod has created the Council of Delegates (COD), which is to serve as its interim committee and the governing authority for the CRCNA organization. All CRCNA chartered corporations are subsidiaries of the COD as the CRCNA governance board. The features of Reformed polity and ecclesiology underscore the indispensable role synod needs to play in ecclesiastical, administrative, and ministry integration.

#### **IV. Introduction to the report**

The SALT report contains five key topics followed by a set of recommendations and five appendices.

Briefly, the first key topic focuses on the CRCNA organizational culture and its continued struggle between three cultural models: an ecclesiastical model, a corporate/legal model, and a ministry-focused organizational model.

The second key topic focuses on proposed changes to the CRCNA leadership model. The position of Executive Director of the CRCNA would give way to two new positions, General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer. Both positions would together form the Office of General Secretary.

The third key topic focuses on governance. The CRCNA is a complex binational organization with multiple structures and boards that include hundreds of members and participants. A newly established office on governance will provide guidance that addresses issues of compliance with regulatory issues, training and education of members, and oversight of joint ministry agreements.

The fourth key topic focuses on expanding the use of Joint Ministry Agreements to include ecumenical affairs, governance, administration, and ministry. The expanded use of Joint Ministry Agreements will also include agreements between countries, institutions, agencies, programs, and partners.

The fifth key topic focuses on the Canadian Office of the CRCNA. While the office is currently working to ensure compliance with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the office is also clarifying what it means to be the Canadian arm of the CRCNA.

The report also includes five appendices. The first appendix contains the draft position descriptions for the proposed positions of General Secretary, Chief Administrative Officer, and Executive Director-Canada. The second appendix contains a complete set of the charts used in the report, with additional annotations and narratives; and the third appendix provides a list of abbreviations and acronyms and descriptions. The fourth appendix provides a description of the Ministries Leadership Council, updated to reflect the recommendations in this report; and the fifth appendix contains the current COD Conflict of Interest Policy.

#### **V. Key Topic 1: Culture**

The CRCNA ecclesiastical structure has a well-developed culture defined and shaped by Reformed polity and ecclesiology over many years. CRCNA leaders are well versed in the nuances of this structure and are committed to its culture. Synod nurtures this culture through its

selection of leaders and officers, use of specific language, dependence on the Church Order, commitment to an orderly synodical process, and the use of synodical deputies and recognized experts. The culture of the CRCNA ecclesiastical structure is understood and certain.

The rest of the CRCNA organizational structure is less certain. Past attempts to fix the organizational culture have been less than successful. Boards have been renamed, merged, and, if necessary, eliminated as a way to improve the culture. Leadership positions as well have been renamed and merged, and some have been eliminated as a path to organizational health.

Edgar H. Schein, a recognized expert in organizational culture and leadership, shared the following observation:

In an age in which leadership is touted over and over again as a critical variable in defining the success or failure of an organization, it becomes all the more important to look at the other side of the leadership coin – how leaders create culture and how culture defines and creates leaders.

*(Organizational Culture and Leadership, p. xi)*

The CRCNA organization continues to struggle with the issue of culture. On one hand, we all desire a culture that is shaped by collaboration; cooperation; shared mission; interdependency between ministry institutions, agencies, programs, and partners; and the binationality of the denomination.

On the other hand, there is a shift toward the use of governance by means of corporate and legal models that are creating a culture characterized by dominance, direction, and control. In the struggle to work out parameters of binationality and compliance with the Canada Revenue Agency, cooperation and interdependence have given way to autonomy, independence, control, and *us/them* thinking.

SALT recognizes the challenge the CRCNA organization faces in resolving the CRA compliance issues in Canada and offers some guidance and solutions in this report. Regardless of the challenges, the culture of the CRCNA organization should not be characterized by concepts of dominance, control, and *us/them* thinking that are often present in legal and corporate models. Instead, the culture of the CRCNA organization should be characterized by cooperation, collaboration, and partnership.

Each ministry institution, agency, program, and partner shares in the common mission of the CRCNA denomination and has a shared responsibility to advance the CRCNA Ministry Plan. Dominance, direction, control, and *us/them* thinking have no place in a healthy organizational culture.

Board members and officers, executive, senior, and ministry leaders should consider this:

- Words are important.
- The words we use reveal our mindset and worldview.
- The words we use communicate our view of the future.
- The words we use communicate the culture, the lived experience of organization.
- Leaders can create and improve the culture through their words.
- Culture has the power to define and create its leaders.

We should acknowledge the power of words to shape culture and challenge all CRCNA leaders, board members, and staff to adopt language that is congruent with its vision, mission, and work of ministry in Canada and the United States.

Shared visions emerge from personal visions. The passion and commitment that empowers a shared vision comes from personal visions. If there is a lack of alignment and dysfunction, the shared vision will fail.

(Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*)

While legal status is of concern to regulators, accountants, and tax experts, it should not have the power to shape the culture of the CRCNA organization. Legal language creates a level of complexity that can negatively impact the culture. For example, the continued description of the CRCNA in Canada as the “Canada Corp” does not do justice to the scope and responsibility of the CRCNA-Canada office. The use of the term “Michigan Corp” as a way to distinguish itself from Canada does not do justice to the scope of the CRCNA organization in the United States. Just as we do not describe Calvin University as the Calvin Corp or World Renew as the WR Corp, we should use words that fully describe the scope of ministry boards.

Defining roles and responsibilities is necessary to create clarity, just as identifying areas of mutuality, reciprocity, and cooperation is key to creating partnership. Developing healthy patterns of communication and paying attention to words are key to building organizational trust. All of this gives shape to a positive and healthy culture that is aligned with the values of the CRCNA organization.

## VI. Key Topic 2: Leadership model and design

The current CRCNA leadership model is based on having a single executive leader—the Executive Director (CRCNA)—serving as the chief ecclesiastical officer, chief administrative officer, and chief ministry officer for the CRCNA organization. The Executive Director (CRCNA), who reports to the Council of Delegates (COD), supervises a team of senior leaders who work together to advance the mission and purposes of the CRCNA organization. The SALT team recommends that this current leadership model be changed.

The new CRCNA leadership model will be based on two executive leaders serving in a single office. Rather than having one person—the Executive Director (CRCNA)—be responsible and accountable for all ecclesiastical, administrative, and ministry functions in the CRCNA, the new CRCNA leadership model will be based on two positions.

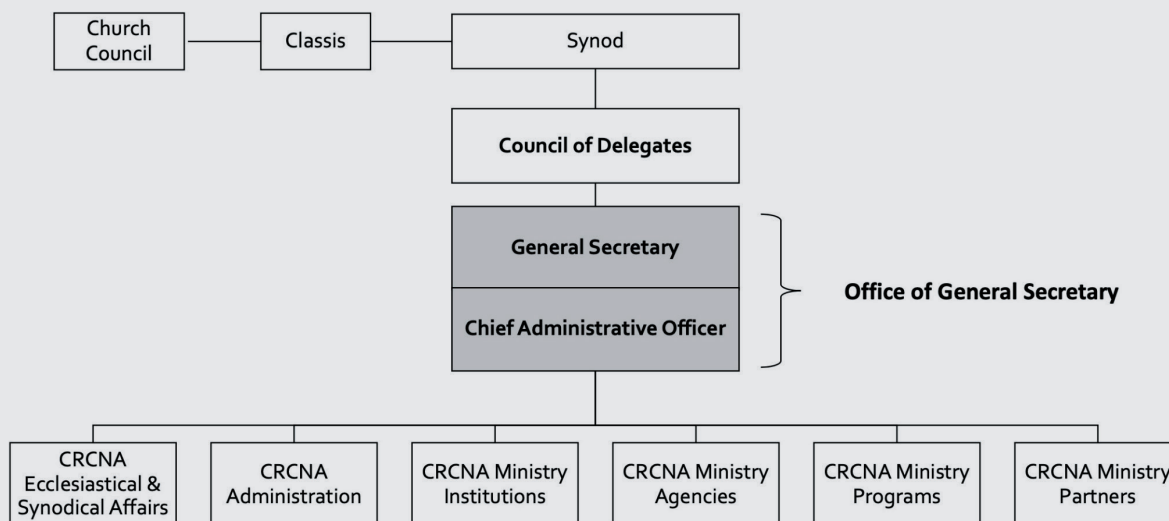
1. The chief ecclesiastical officer will be titled **General Secretary**. This is a familiar title that has been used in the past. The General Secretary will report to the COD and will serve as the executive leader of the CRCNA organization. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A.
2. The second position will be titled **Chief Administrative Officer**. The Chief Administrative Officer will report to the General Secretary and will have responsibilities and accountabilities for all administration and ministry operations within the CRCNA organization. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A.

Both positions—General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer—will constitute a new office called **The Office of General Secretary**. The Office of General Secretary will be responsible and accountable to the Council of Delegates to guide and direct the entire CRCNA

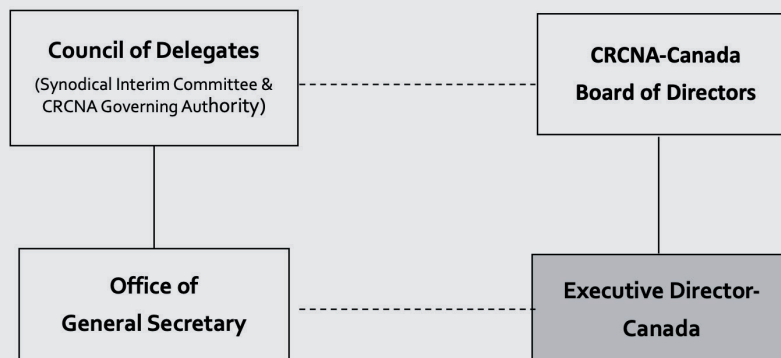
organization. While each position has distinct roles and responsibilities as described in their position description, they will work together as partners and have shared leadership responsibilities and accountabilities based on abilities and gifts as well as organizational changes and needs. The new CRCNA leadership model will ensure ecclesiastical and administrative integration and will serve together to facilitate the shared governance partnerships and relationships that characterize the binational denomination's life, ministry, and mission.

The new CRCNA leadership model will also contain a new leadership position in Canada. SALT recommends that the position of Canadian Ministries Director be discontinued and the position of **Executive Director-Canada** be instituted. The Executive Director-Canada will report to the CRCNA-Canada Board to meet the legal expectations of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and to the Office of General Secretary to meet the ecclesiastical and ministry expectations of synod and the Council of Delegates. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A. This is discussed more fully in Key Topic 5: Canadian Office.

**Chart 1: Office of General Secretary**

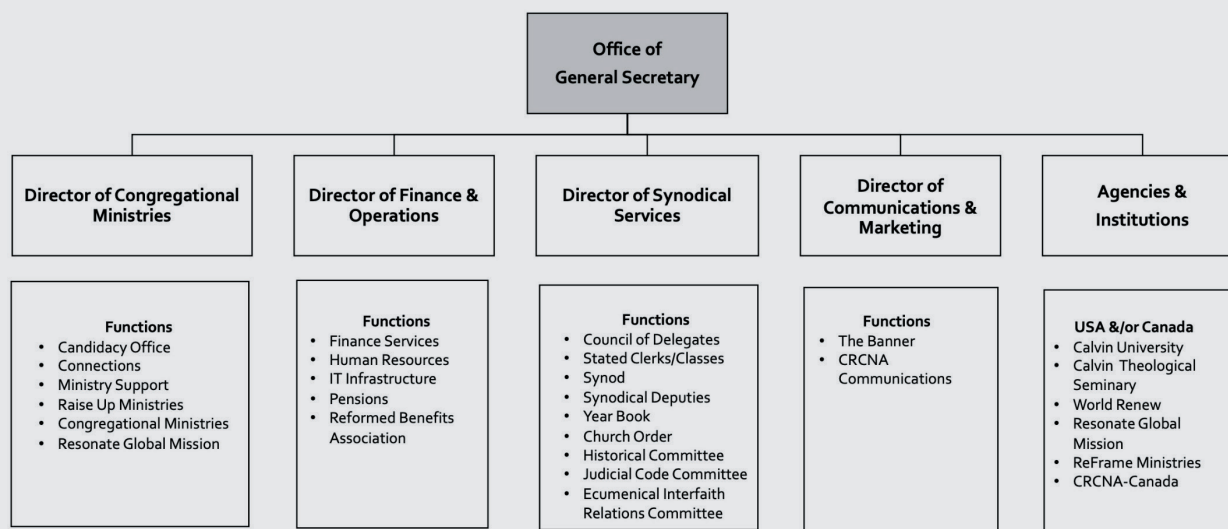


The purpose of Chart 1 is to describe the scope of the Office of General Secretary (in gray). On one hand, the Office of General Secretary is responsible to the Council of Delegates and is to support the synodical and ecclesiastical structure. On the other hand, the Office of General Secretary is responsible to oversee the rest of the CRCNA organization as depicted functionally: administration such as pensions, budget, Human Resources; institutions such as Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary; agencies such as World Renew and ReFrame Ministries; programs such as Mercy and Justice; and partners such as synodical advisers from the seminary. Chart 1 is not meant to be all inclusive but, rather, a description of the scope of the Office of General Secretary.

**Chart 2: CRCNA- Canada Office Structure**

The purpose of Chart 2 is to pictorially describe the operating relationships the Executive Director-Canada (shaded in gray) has with the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors and the CRCNA Office of General Secretary. This is more fully described in Key Topic 5.

While the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors is considered independent from a legal perspective, as a subsidiary corporation that was chartered by the CRCNA synod, it is accountable to the CRCNA Council of Delegates. The Council of Delegates is the synodical interim committee and the governing authority for the CRCNA organization. This is more fully described in Key Topic 3.

**Chart 3: Administrative Positions & Functions**

The purpose of Chart 3 is to describe the scope of the Office of General Secretary (in gray) as it relates to administering the CRCNA organization. The chart identifies the key leadership positions and the related administrative functions under each position. The section listing Agencies and Institutions recognizes that each entity may have their own administrative structures and staff as their organizations require.



*Note:* This chart is illustrative and may not reflect some administrative relationships by exception or changes not yet adopted.

## VII. Key Topic 3 Governance framework and design

### A. Background

The CRCNA is a complex binational organization that includes multiple ministry agencies and partners. This organization has developed and unfolded over many years in response to changing ministry needs and opportunities for growth. As a result, the organization can be difficult to navigate and has become increasingly difficult to manage considering the many administrative, ministry, fiduciary, and governance responsibilities. Many of the ministry agencies and partners are incorporated as nonprofit corporations and are registered and recognized as a charity in Canada by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) and/or in the United States as a tax-exempt organization by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). As such, boards are facing increasing demands and new requirements from federal, state, and provincial governmental units.

Each of these nonprofit corporations has a governing authority commonly referred to as a board. The board may be referred to as a Board of Directors, Board of Trustees, or Board of Advisers. The Council of Delegates, on behalf of synod, is the governing authority for the CRCNA organization. As such, all of the nonprofit corporations that are a part of the CRCNA organization are subsidiary and accountable to the Council of Delegates. While each nonprofit corporation is considered to be independent from a legal perspective, they are accountable to the Council of Delegates and to synod from an ecclesiastical and organizational perspective.

**Chart 4: CRCNA Board Structure**

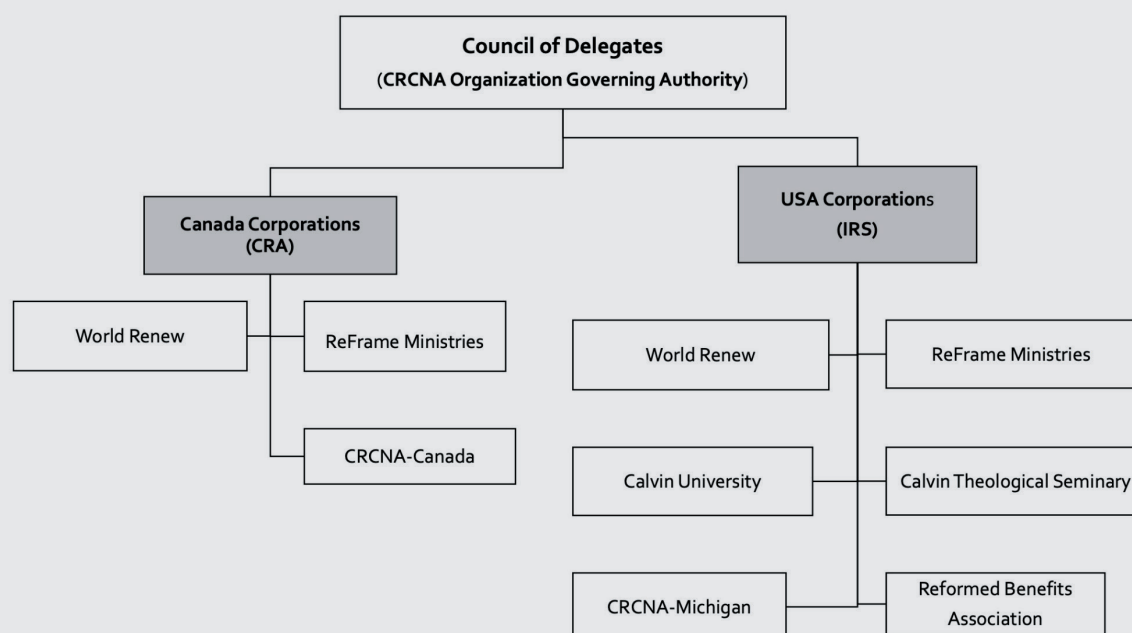


Chart 4 lists the current nonprofit corporations that are legally incorporated in Canada and the United States (Michigan and Illinois). Board membership for each of the nonprofit

corporations listed in Chart 4 are linked to the ecclesiastical structure of the CRCNA organization.

Following is a breakdown of the membership:

#### *Council of Delegates*

- The membership of the Council of Delegates is representative of all the CRCNA classes plus from two to ten at-large members.
- Each classis appoints a single member to the Council of Delegates to fill a three-year term.
- In addition, from two to ten at-large members can be recommended to synod by the Council of Delegates to serve a three-year term.

#### *CRCNA Corporations*

- U.S. (Michigan) Board of Directors: The delegates to synod serve as the members of the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation and elect the board of the corporation. (The Board of Directors of the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation are the Council of Delegates from the U.S.)
- Canada Board of Directors: The Canadian members of the Council of Delegates serve as the members of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation. The same classis appointed members, as well as the Canadian at-large members of the Council of Delegates, constitute the board of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation.

#### *ReFrame Ministries*

- U.S. Board of Directors: The delegates to synod serve as the members of the ReFrame-Illinois Corporation and elect the board of the corporation. (The Board of Directors of the ReFrame-Illinois Corporation are the Council of Delegates from the U.S.)
- Canada Board of Directors: The members of ReFrame Canada Corporation are the Council of Delegates members from Canada. The four officers of the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors serve as the Board of ReFrame Ministries Canada.

#### *World Renew*

- USA Board of Directors
- Canada Board of Directors

#### *Calvin University*

- Board of Trustees

#### *Calvin Theological Seminary*

- Board of Trustees

#### *Reformed Benefits Association*

- USA Board of Directors: The Board is made up of three members elected by the Board of Benefit Services of the Reformed Church in America and three members elected by the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. In addition, the Board of Benefits Services and the CRCNA name one staff person each to serve on the Board with vote. The board members other than the staff serve three-year terms.



Nonprofit organizations incorporated in Canada and/or the U.S. not included in Chart 4:

*Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc. U.S.*

- U.S. Board of Directors: The Loan Fund Board is made up of six members that are nominated by the Loan Fund Board to synod and elected for a three-year term.

*Ministers Pension Plans*

- U.S. and Canada Board of Directors: The CRCNA maintains two defined benefit pension plans for its ministers of the Word serving in the United States and Canada. The plans are administered by the U.S. Ministers Pension Board and the Canadian Ministers Pension Board. Each board has five members, nominated by the pension boards and elected by synod. One member from each board is a minister of the Word. The members serve three-year terms and are eligible to serve three terms.

*Raise Up Global Ministries*

- U.S. Board of Directors: The board of Raise Up Global Ministries is nominated by and elected by the Council of Delegates.

*Note:* There may be other nonprofit corporations not listed that are part of the CRCNA organization and that need to be added.

**B. Membership responsibilities**

There are, perhaps, hundreds of CRC members who volunteer to serve on the many boards of the CRCNA organization. Many of these volunteers are not fully aware of their *fiduciary duties* and *governance responsibilities* as a board member when they begin their board service. Learning and development opportunities should be offered on a regular basis to ensure that boards fulfil their collective *fiduciary duties* and *governance responsibilities*.

1. Fiduciary duties of a board

- a. Duty of care  
Board members meet the duty of care by exercising their responsibilities in good faith and with diligence, attention, care, and skill.
- b. Duty of loyalty  
Board members meet the duty of loyalty by exercising their power in the interests of the organization and not in their own interests or the interests of another entity, particularly with which they may have a formal relationship. Members should avoid the use of organizational opportunities for personal gain.
- c. Duty of obedience  
Board members meet the duty of obedience by carrying out the purposes and mission of the nonprofit organization; complying with federal and provincial or state law applicable to nonprofits and registered charities; doing required filings; adhering to the organization's governing documents, articles of incorporation, and bylaws; and remaining guardians of the organization's mission.

2. Governance responsibilities of a board

- a. Set and ensure organizational direction  
Boards have the responsibility to set and ensure the direction of the organization. As part of the direction-setting process, Boards must develop and/or confirm the

organization's purpose in a clear mission statement. Boards then construct a description of the organization's best future in a vision statement. Ensuring direction also involves developing a strategic plan and ensuring its alignment with the organization's annual operational plans.

- b. Ensure adequate resources  
Boards have the responsibility to ensure that the organization has the resources to implement the mission and achieve the vision. Necessary resources include board and executive leadership, people, money, equipment, facilities, and reputation.
- c. Oversee the health of the organization  
Boards are the stewards of the organization. They must ensure that the organization is in better shape for tomorrow than it was yesterday. Accountability for mission, organizational, and board effectiveness is core to ensuring long-term sustainability in the public interest.

### *C. Governance challenges*

The nonprofit corporations that make up the CRCNA organization are managed by their respective boards and the leadership of the CRCNA. The lines of accountability are not always clear, and thus the task of mission integration has become all the more complex over time. What we have today is a framework that unfolded and developed over many decades, which seems at times to be lacking in guiding principles and overall vision.

The Structure and Leadership Task Force has observed, for example, that World Renew and ReFrame Ministries enjoy their own boards, given their corporate status, while Resonate Global Mission does not. Resonate Global Mission's predecessors—Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) and Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM)—each had their own boards (U.S. and Canada) operating under their own synod-issued “charters” for decades. These entities in turn enjoyed a link of accountability to the then Board of Trustees. SALT believes that the story of historic merger bears retelling, given the desire to fashion a model of executive leadership that can account for the current realities of the CRCNA governance framework.

The recommendations of the synodical Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (2012-2015) led synod to consolidate the many boards of the CRCNA in order to decrease the organizational footprint and break down *silos*. This coincided with the decision to merge CRWM and CRHM, which saw in turn their amalgamation into the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation. Thus, Resonate Global Mission, unlike World Renew and ReFrame Ministries, no longer holds corporate status or its own board. It does, however, like World Renew and ReFrame Ministries, continue to enjoy a “synodical mandate.” This anomaly in the shared governance structure of the CRCNA may have made it harder for Resonate Global Mission to realize the advantages of the Council of Delegates structure and its integration with other ministry agencies and programs under one large board.

This structural oddity may also have served to create an administrative managerial challenge, given that the Leadership Council enjoys eight reserved seats, one for each executive of the “ministry related” CRCNA U.S. and Canada Boards. Resonate Global Mission is now viewed as different in kind, even though most would acknowledge that it is not.

It seems clear to the SALT team that more work needs to be done. The present moment in the history and life of the CRCNA may be an opportune time to provide a more detailed governance framework for the CRCNA organization and some guiding principles. This in turn

would provide incoming executive role holders with policy guidance on “restructuring” and “mergers” of current ministry partners, or when new entities need to be formed, or when other entities (from other denominations) wish to join the CRCNA.

The SALT team recognizes that effective boards and an effective governance framework are critical to the success of the CRCNA organization. A newly established Office of Governance will provide guidance that addresses issues of compliance with Canada and U.S. rules and regulations, training and education of board members, nomination and election of board members, and oversight of joint ministry agreements.

Just as the Office of Synodical Services supports the CRCNA’s ecclesiastical structure, the Office of Governance would support the governance structure of the CRCNA organization. In partnership with the Office of General Secretary and ministry leaders and partners, the Office of Governance would strengthen and support the board members and leaders in Canada and the United States to carry out their *fiduciary duties* and *governing responsibilities*.

The Office of Governance would advance the following activities:

1. Develop an effective process to recruit, select, and appoint members with appropriate insight and expertise.
2. Develop learning and development opportunities that would enable board members to effectively exercise their fiduciary and governing responsibilities.
3. Assist ministry leaders to develop effective governance partnerships with their boards.
4. Assist board chairs in leading and managing their respective boards.
5. Oversee the governance framework of the CRCNA, making recommendations to improve the membership, structure, and framework.
6. Assist the CRCNA corporations to comply with the Canada CRA and the U.S. IRS rules and regulations.
7. Conduct an annual assessment of the governance framework and its effectiveness.

## **VIII. Key Topic 4: Ministry Plan and Joint Ministry Agreements**

### **A. CRCNA Ministry Plan**

The work and ministry of the CRCNA organization is guided by the Ministry Plan. The Ministry Plan is a multiyear plan approved by synod that outlines the strategy and operational priorities for the entire CRCNA organization. Each ministry institution, agency, program, and partner works together to implement the Ministry Plan.

Consider the following:

- a. The CRCNA Ministry Plan is approved by the Council of Delegates and synod.
- b. The Plan contains strategies and priorities for all ministry leaders and partners, including agencies, institutions, programs, and staff.
- c. Agencies, institutions, programs, and partners will align their strategies, plans, and operational priorities with the CRCNA Ministry Plan. All of their unique and specific efforts are critical to the successful implementation of the Ministry Plan.
- d. The CRCNA-Canada board of directors and leaders will ensure that the CRCNA Ministry Plan guides and contextualizes the work and ministry in Canada.
- e. The Ministries Leadership Council provides an opportunity to ensure that all ministry agencies, institutions, programs, and staff are working together to implement the Ministry Plan.

## *B. Joint Ministry Agreements*

Joint Ministry Agreements provide a useful process to implement the CRCNA Ministry Plan. Joint Ministry Agreements can create role clarity, responsibility, and accountability between ministry boards, leaders, and partners. The Joint Ministry Agreements between World Renew-U.S. and World Renew-Canada represent a successful use of Joint Ministry Agreements. Given the unfolding complexity with the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and the clear preferences of the Carter legal advisory, the use of Joint Ministry Agreements will be expanded.

The Joint Ministry Agreement process will be used to clarify roles and responsibilities and to identify areas of common concern and patterns of communication between ministry leaders, agencies, and partners. Chart 4: CRCNA Board Structure describes the various ministry boards chartered by synod. All Joint Ministry Agreements will be approved by the appropriate governing authorities, including boards and executives, before becoming effective.

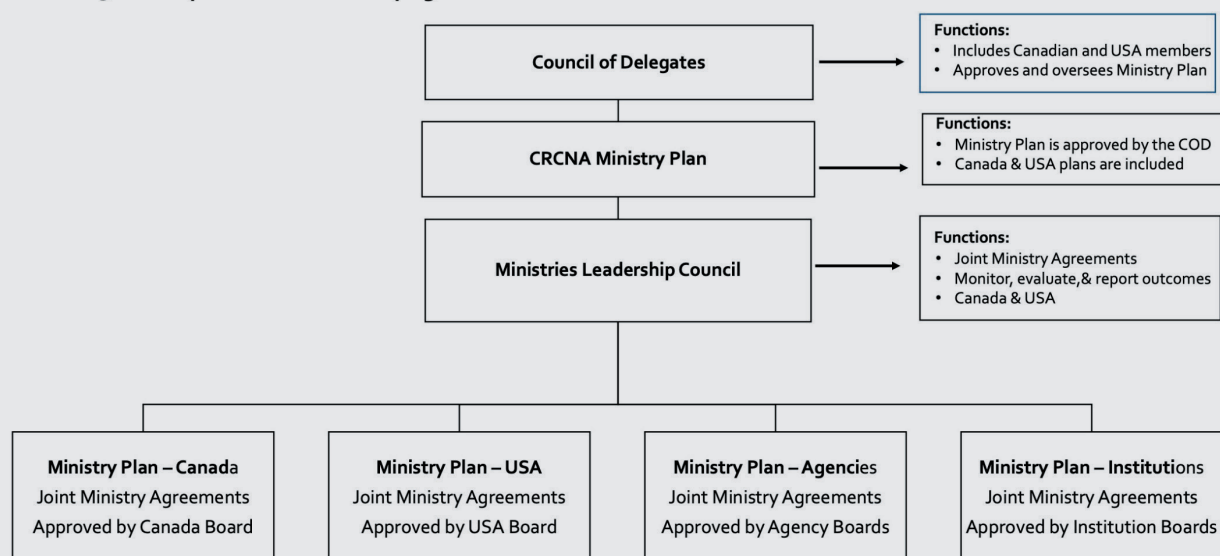
Joint Ministry Agreements have been used by ministry agencies, leaders, and partners to clarify roles, identify areas of shared responsibilities and opportunities, improve communication, and build organizational trust.

The Joint Ministry Agreement process will be expanded to accomplish the following:

1. Clarify ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and synodical responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions.
2. Clarify the governance responsibilities and interrelationships between boards of directors and advisers in Canada and the United States. Learning and development opportunities will be addressed.
3. Clarify the administrative responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions. This includes oversight and supervision, human resources and staff development, budgets and finance, and so on.
4. Clarify ministry responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions.

Joint Ministry Agreements will be approved by relevant governing authorities.

Chart 5: Ministry Plan &amp; Joint Ministry Agreements



The Office of General Secretary will design and expand the Joint Ministry Agreement process to ensure it addresses ecclesiastical, governance, administrative, and ministry partnerships. The Ministries Leadership Council will bring together ministry leaders and partners to develop new ministry agreements and to review and monitor all current ministry agreements. Joint Ministry Agreements are developed by staff and will be reviewed and approved by relevant governing authorities before they become operational. When the Canadian Board approves these agreements, they demonstrate appropriate *direction and control* as required by the CRA.

It is important to note that the function of the Office of General Secretary in the Joint Ministry Agreement process is that of process management. The content of the JMAs is provided by the many boards and ministry partners. The Office of General Secretary is to manage the process by which the JMAs are achieved, and as such this process must reflect the values of shared governance in the CRCNA—the values of clarity, mutuality and reciprocity, communication, and trust. The design and process of the expansion of the Joint Ministry Agreement process accomplished in the context of the Ministries Leadership Council must enjoy the approval and oversight of the Council of Delegates. The JMA process must at a minimum be a robust and informed process by which ministry leaders and partners can truly agree and feel blessed and empowered to meet the opportunities and overcome the challenges of ministry locally and globally in a complex world. The burden of designing and expanding the JMA process is best shared by members of the Ministries Leadership Council, and it should enjoy the input of the Executive Committee of the Council of Delegates.

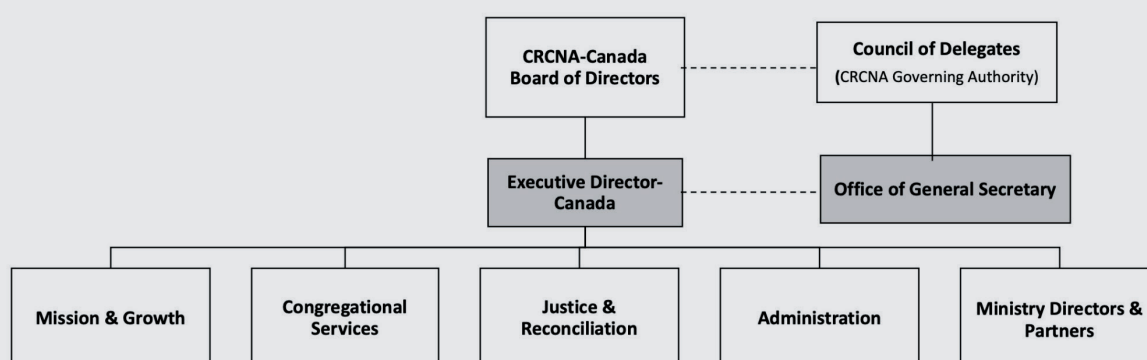
## IX. Key Topic 5: Canadian office

The current CRCNA leadership model for the Canadian Office is a single ministry leader in Canada, the Canadian Ministries Director, reporting to the Executive Director (CRCNA). The SALT team recommends that this leadership model be changed due to rules and recommendations from the Canada Revenue Agency. In the new leadership model, we recommend that the Canadian Ministry Director position be replaced by a new position titled *Executive Director-Canada*. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A.

As described in Chart 6, the Executive Director-Canada will *wear two hats*. She/he will report to the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors to meet the legal expectations of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and to the Office of General Secretary to meet the ecclesiastical and ministry expectations of synod and the Council of Delegates. Together, in *partnership* with the CRCNA-Canada Board, the Executive Director-Canada will oversee and direct the CRCNA ministry leaders, partners, and programs in Canada. Please note that the use of dotted lines in Charts 6 and 7 describes how boards and leaders need to work as *partners* to accomplish a shared mission. These relationships are not defined by *control* or *direction*.

Rather it ought to be understood that the reporting relationship between the Executive Director-Canada and the Office of General Secretary is one of partnership, and the focus is on joining forces and resources as specified in the Joint Ministry Agreements between the Canada CRCNA Board of Directors and the Office of General Secretary. The reporting relationship is one of consultation, coordination, information sharing, and problem solving. It is not a relationship focused on the job performance or the fulfillment of management-issued directives but instead a conversation focused on organizational performance pertaining to synodically approved ministry goals. The General Secretary and the Executive Director-Canada are in an ecclesiastically defined peer relationship in order to coordinate specified resources (identified in the JMA) toward existing ministry and emerging opportunities as identified by the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors, the governance structure charged by synod to make such discriminations/choices on its behalf in Canada.

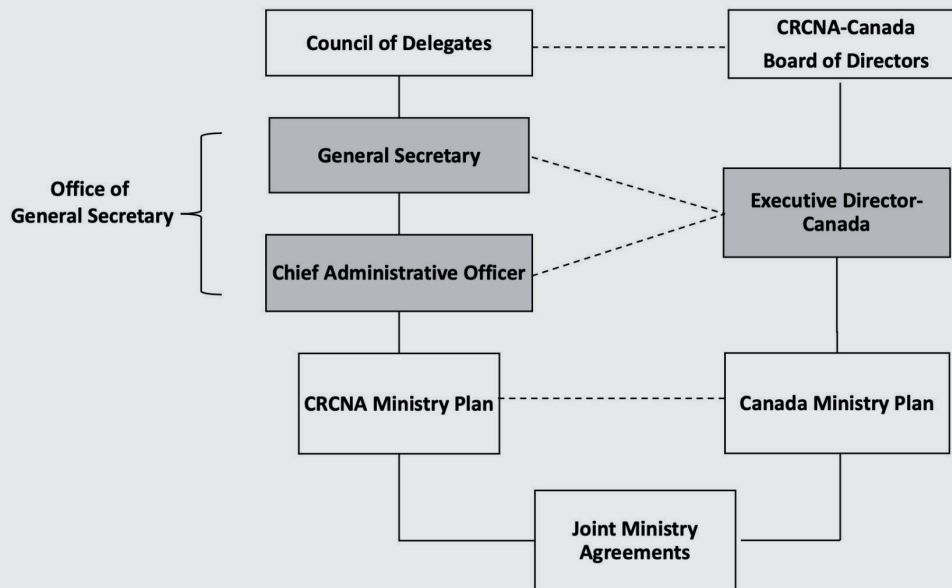
**Chart 6: CRCNA-Canada Office Structure**



The CRCNA-Canada Board and the Executive Director-Canada have responsibilities to work closely with the Council of Delegates and the Office of General Secretary to implement the CRCNA Ministry Plan in Canada and to use the Joint Ministry Agreement process as outlined in Chart 7. The Joint Ministry Agreement process will be used to clarify roles and responsibilities as well as areas of shared responsibilities and opportunities, improving patterns of communication and building organizational trust.



**Chart 7: CRCNA Binational Working Relationships**



The Joint Ministry Agreement process will be expanded to accomplish the following:

1. Clarify ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and synodical responsibilities between Canada and the United States.
2. Clarify the governance responsibilities and interrelationships between boards of directors and advisors in Canada and the United States.
3. Clarify the administrative responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions. This includes oversight, collaboration and supervision, human resources and staff development, budgets and finance, and so on.
4. Clarify ministry responsibilities between countries, U.S. and Canada agencies, and institutions.

Joint Ministry Agreements will be approved by relevant governing authorities, including the CRCNA-Canada Board.

The process of developing and overseeing Joint Ministry Agreements will be managed by the Office of General Secretary and the Ministries Leadership Council. The Ministries Leadership Council includes Canadian and U.S. representation.

The purpose of the Canadian Office is not to mirror the U.S. Office of the CRCNA organization. Instead, it is to implement the CRCNA Ministry Plan through the use of Joint Ministry Agreements in a manner that recognizes the ministry needs of Canadian churches and that of their social and cultural context.

## X. Recommendations

### *Culture*

- A. That the COD do the following in order to improve the culture of the CRCNA:
1. Affirm that we desire an organizational culture shaped by partnership, collaboration, cooperation, shared mission, and interdependency between countries, ministry institutions, agencies, programs, and partners. Board members and leaders will be selected who affirm these cultural values.
  2. Acknowledge the ongoing challenges the CRCNA organization faces in resolving the CRA compliance issues in Canada. SALT understands that solutions to those challenges are necessary, and the task force affirms that the solutions should not unduly impact the CRCNA organizational culture.
  3. Recommend that synod also affirm these goals and acknowledge these challenges to improve CRCNA culture.

### *Leadership Model and Design*

- B. That the COD do the following in order to revise the CRCNA leadership model:
1. Establish the position of General Secretary; the leader in this role will serve as *chief ecclesiastical officer*. The General Secretary will report to the COD and will serve as the executive leader of the CRCNA organization. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A.
  2. Establish the position Chief Administrative Officer; this role will report to the General Secretary and be responsible and accountable for all administration and ministry operations within the CRCNA organization. A description of this position is contained in Appendix A.
  3. Establish the Office of General Secretary. The General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer will be contained in a newly established office called the *Office of General Secretary*. The Office of General Secretary will be responsible and accountable to the Council of Delegates to guide and direct the entire CRCNA organization. While each position has distinct roles and responsibilities as described in the position descriptions, the positions will require working together as partners and having shared leadership responsibilities and accountabilities based on abilities and gifts as well as organizational changes and needs. The new CRCNA leadership model will ensure ecclesiastical, administrative, and ministry integration and will serve together to facilitate the shared governance partnerships and relationships that characterize the denomination's life, ministry, and mission.

*Ground:* Due to the cancellation of Synod 2021, the COD, in the best interests of synod, can create search teams and identify candidates for the three leadership positions, which could aid in a smooth transition to the new structure upon synod's ultimate decision on the matter in 2022 (see Recommendation E, 1).



4. Instruct the executive committee of the COD to implement the above recommendations by creating mandates and respective search teams.
5. Recommend that synod adopt the establishment of the senior leadership positions of General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer, as well as the Office of General Secretary.

#### *Governance Framework and Design*

- C. That the COD adopt the following with regard to governance framework and design:
  1. Begin the work of establishing an Office of Governance to help improve and strengthen the governance framework and design of the CRCNA organization. Just as the Office of Synodical Services supports the CRCNA's ecclesiastical structure, the Office of Governance would support the governance structure of the CRCNA. In partnership with the Office of General Secretary, the Office of Governance would seek to strengthen and support the board members and leaders in Canada and the United States as they carry out their *fiduciary duties* and *governing responsibilities*. The office would be responsible to advance the following activities:
    - a. Develop an effective process to recruit, select, and appoint members with appropriate insight and expertise.
    - b. Develop learning and development opportunities that would enable board members to effectively exercise their fiduciary and governing responsibilities.
    - c. Assist ministry leaders to develop effective governance partnerships with their boards.
    - d. Assist board chairs in effectively leading and managing their respective boards.
    - e. Oversee the governance framework of the CRCNA, making recommendations to improve the structure and framework.
    - f. Assist the CRCNA corporations in complying with the Canada CRA and the United States IRS rules and regulations.
  2. Recommend that synod adopt the establishment of an Office of Governance.

#### *Ministry Plan and Joint Ministry Agreements*

- D. That the COD expand the Joint Ministry Agreement process to accomplish the following:
  1. Clarify ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and synodical responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions.
  2. Clarify the governance responsibilities and interrelationships between boards of directors and advisers in Canada and the United States. Learning and development opportunities will be addressed.
  3. Clarify the administrative responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions. This includes oversight and supervision, human resources and staff development, budgets and finance, and so on.
  4. Clarify ministry responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions.

5. Affirm that Joint Ministry Agreements will be approved by relevant governing authorities, including boards and executives, before they become effective.
6. Affirm that the process of developing and overseeing Joint Ministry Agreements will be managed by the Office of General Secretary and the Ministries Leadership Council.

*Canadian Office*

- E.* That the COD adopt the following with regard to the Canadian Office:
1. Establish the Canadian Office of the CRCNA organization. The Canadian Office will be governed by the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors and led by an Executive Director-Canada. The purpose of the Canadian Office is not to mirror the U.S. Office of the CRCNA organization. Instead, it is to implement the CRCNA Ministry Plan in a way and manner that recognizes the ministry needs of Canadian churches and that of their social and cultural context. The Canadian Office is part of the CRCNA organization, and as such the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors is responsible to partner with the CRCNA Council of Delegates, and the Executive Director-Canada is responsible to partner with the Office of General Secretary. A description of the Executive Director-Canada position is contained in Appendix A.

*Ground:* Due to the cancellation of Synod 2021, the CRCNA-Canada Corporation, in the best interests of synod, can create a search team and identify a candidate for the Executive Director-Canada position, which could aid in the smooth transition to the new structure upon synod's ultimate decision on the matter in 2022 (see Recommendation B, 3).

2. The CRCNA-Canada Board will revise and amend its synod-issued charter and related bylaws of 1998 and resubmit them to the COD. The revisions and amendments will in a legally sound way accomplish each of the following:
  - a. The identification of the Canadian Office as a function of shared governance in the CRCNA under the authority of synod.
  - b. The identification of the Executive Director-Canada as the sole director of the CRCNA-Canada charity.
  - c. The identification of the JMA process as the primary instrument by which it exercises direction and control.
3. Recommend that synod adopt the establishment of the Canadian Office and adopt the CRCNA-Canada Board's revised charter and bylaws.

*Additional Recommendations*

*F.* That the COD acknowledge that on the question of whether Directors and Members of the ReFrame Ministries and CRCNA corporations can be the same members, it rules that when the crossover of CRCNA directors is in the minority of the ReFrame Ministries corporation, it is acceptable.

*G.* That the COD recommend that synod implement use of a denominational Conflict of Interest Policy (similar to the policy in Appendix E adopted by the Council of Delegates) for delegates to synod.

H. That the COD do the following:

1. Review the status of Resonate Global Mission with a view to possible modification in order to make its status equivalent to that of World Renew and ReFrame Ministries. As a result, Resonate would have its own board of directors in the United States and in Canada. The role of the board of directors would be to advise and provide expertise to the Directors of Resonate in Canada and the United States as they develop and implement the Resonate Global Mission Ministry Plan, which is aligned with the CRCNA Ministry Plan. Board size should not exceed 10 to 12 members who have strategic insight and expertise to further the purposes of Resonate Global Mission and its Ministry Plan.
2. Contingent upon the outcome of the preceding recommendation, recommend that synod approve the creation of a Board of Directors for Resonate Global Mission.

I. That the COD appoint a task force to oversee the expansion of the Joint Ministry Agreement process for the CRCNA organization. That the COD appoint the SALT reporter, Rev. Frederic Koning, together with Dr. Lloyd VanderKwaak, to serve as facilitators of the task force to ensure that the agreements reflect the SALT report's intent and realize contract documents that undergird the administrative model and satisfy legal and ecclesiastical requirements.

J. That the COD amend the COD Governance Handbook regarding background checks and testing. SALT recommends that all finalists for executive leadership positions in the CRCNA submit to psychological testing and criminal and extensive background checks conducted by an independent professional. The candidate should also submit to a medical evaluation designed to evaluate mental, physical, emotional health, and overall fitness for the role in order to rule out the presence of personality disorder, narcissism, and sexual deviancy. No position offers should be made until test reports have been filed and recommendations have been made by an independent professional who does this kind of work.

K. That the COD not implement the administrative decision to absorb the current Director of Finance and Operations functions into other positions, and that the Director of Finance and Operations role be retained, given (1) that a healthy organizational structure in the CRCNA, generally speaking, relies on a Chief Financial Officer, as distinguished from a CEO and CAO; and (2) that the skill set and experience of a Director of Finance is not captured in the new model by the role descriptions for the General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer.

L. That the COD affirm for reasons of editorial independence that *The Banner* editor-in-chief not report to the Director of Communications and Marketing but report administratively to the Office of General Secretary and editorially to the *Banner* Advisory committee.

#### Structure and Leadership Task Force

Paula Coldagelli  
 Andy de Ruyter (facilitator)  
 Paul De Vries (facilitator)  
 Fred Koning (reporter)  
 Michelle Kool  
 William Koopmans  
 John Lee (chair)  
 Jose Rayas  
 Dee Recker (ex officio/nonvoting)  
 Kathy Smith (ex officio/nonvoting)

## **Appendix A**

### **Position descriptions**

#### **CRCNA Position Description**

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##### **General Secretary**

#### **Scope of the Position**

The General Secretary's responsibility is to nurture the shared mission of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and to ensure the effective implementation of this mission through the CRCNA Ministry Plan in Canada and the United States. The General Secretary will shape and embrace an organizational culture that supports an effective partnership and collaboration between the ministry boards, agencies, partners, and staff that serve the CRCNA. The General Secretary will nurture strong ecumenical relationships and will keep the CRCNA attentive to synod's long-term vision for its mission in the world, both locally and globally.

#### **Reports to**

The General Secretary serves at the pleasure of the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The General Secretary reports directly to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council of Delegates.

#### **Partnerships and Working Relationships**

The General Secretary oversees the CRCNA governance and ministry frameworks and uses the Joint Ministry Planning System to outline the partnerships and working relationships required to implement the CRCNA ministry plans.

#### **Supervises and Oversees**

The General Secretary oversees the ministry leadership team.

#### **Direct Reports**

The Chief Administrative Officer, as a member of the Office of General Secretary, reports to the General Secretary. Other members that report directly or indirectly to the General Secretary will be identified in the table of organization.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **1. Mission**

- a. Serves as an effective partner with synod and the Council of Delegates in nurturing a culture that advances a shared mission for the Christian Reformed Church in North America.
- b. Ensures that each ministry agency and ministry partner is strategically and operationally aligned with the mission.
- c. Nurtures strong ecumenical relationships and will keep the CRCNA attentive to synod's long-term vision for its mission in the world, both locally and globally.
- d. Prompts and mobilizes missional engagement by imagining possibilities, promoting learning opportunities, sharing stories and best practices, and facilitating use of resources for mutual learning

##### **2. Synod and the Council of Delegates**

- a. Board learning and development
  - Promotes an effective governance partnership between synod, the Council of Delegates, ministry boards, and partners in Canada and the United States.

- Ensures that CRCNA boards and their members fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities and compliance with governmental rules and regulations.
- Expands board capacity, builds board leadership, and promotes best governance practices and continuous improvement.
- b. Communications and logistics
  - Makes needed arrangements for the meetings of synod, the Council of Delegates, and synodical study committees and task forces; and functions as operations officer during such meetings.
  - Is responsible for all official proceedings and publications of synod, the Council of Delegates, and synodical study committees and task forces
  - Ensures that the *Acts of Synod* are communicated to ministry leaders and partners, including Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary.
  - Communicates the denomination's mission, vision, and decisions based on synod's actions to the congregations and classes.
  - Communicates with all churches regarding the denominational survey, synod's agenda, and the request for synodical advisers.
  - Provides "a state of the church" address and report to synod.
- c. Functions
  - Has the privilege of the floor at synod and at Council of Delegates meetings in all matters relating to the exercise of this office.
  - Serves synod with information and advice as requested regarding matters that come to the floor of synod.
  - Is present during all executive sessions of synod and of the Council of Delegates, except when matters under discussion affect the person or performance of the General Secretary and the General Secretary is requested to be absent.
  - Serves as an ex officio, voting member of the executive committee of the Council of Delegates (COD), the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, and such other committees as synod or the COD may, from time to time, decide.
  - Provides a report to each synod, offering a vision for the future ministry of the CRCNA.
  - Serves as ecumenical officer and author of church communications and correspondence on behalf of synod.

### 3. Leadership

- a. Serves as a rallying point in times of crisis and as a voice of our shared faith.
- b. Assumes a pastoral stance of nurturing, guiding, and setting the tone for leadership and service in the CRCNA.
- c. Provides pastoral support to all ministry leaders and partners to build and support an organizational culture that promotes partnership, innovation, and accountability.
- d. Provides regular and ongoing communication to the denomination, using multiple media platforms and publications.
- e. In partnership with the Chief Administrative Officer,
  - operates an administrative and ministry leadership system that builds staff capacity, engagement, learning, satisfaction, and succession.
  - oversees capital and operating budgets, ensuring they achieve budget metrics.
  - oversees an integrated system of organizational policies and practices that ensures compliance with decisions made by synod, the Council of Delegates, the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors, and governmental regulatory bodies.

#### **4. CRCNA Ministry Plan**

- a. Serves as leader and partner in the design and development of the CRCNA Ministry Plan, ensuring that it is aligned with the decisions of synod.
- b. Ensures that the culture of Ministry Planning and Integration is based on a cycle of strategic thinking, planning, innovation, and evaluation.
- c. Brings administrative and ministry leaders, partners, and staff together to ensure consistent implementation of Joint Ministry Agreements to advance the priorities of the CRCNA Ministry Plan.
- d. Ensures that the relevant governance groups, including the Council of Delegates, have provided the necessary reviews and approvals.
- e. Ensures that an annual Ministry Plan report is provided to synod, supplying progress updates and identifying future ministry needs, opportunities, and making recommendations.

#### **5. Ecumenical Relations**

- a. Invites ecumenical guests to synod and nurtures and tends those relationships.
- b. Consults and coordinates the ministry leaders and partners on international ecumenical and interfaith matters.
- c. Is responsible for advancing the work of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee by serving as an ex officio member of the committee and serving as Ecumenical Officer of the CRCNA.
- d. Works closely with the Executive Director-Canada as outlined in the Joint Ecumenical Agreement.

#### **6. Synodical Services**

- a. Supervises the offices and staff of Synodical Services to ensure the delivery of services and synodical functions.
- b. Serves as an ex officio member of the Candidacy, Historical, Judicial Code, and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations committees.
- c. Is responsible for the oversight of the budget processes for Synodical Services, synodical study committees, and task forces.

#### **7. Other Duties**

Performs such other duties as synod or the Council of Delegates shall direct.

### **Qualifications**

#### **1. Personal and Professional Characteristics**

- a. Exemplifies a strong, vibrant Christian faith marked by spiritual humility and moral integrity.
- b. Is a member of the CRCNA, or is willing to become such a member.
- c. Understands the life and polity of the CRCNA.
- d. Possesses the ability to provide exceptional leadership within a multiagency and binational denomination.
- e. Has the capacity to listen and learn.
- f. Exhibits the ability to bridge diverse perspectives and inspire trust.
- g. Has executive presence.
- h. Effectively stewards the authority of the position.
- i. Demonstrates sound judgment and wisdom in decision making.
- j. Has compassion for people who are poor, lost, or disenfranchised.



**2. Education and Experience**

- a. An M.Div. degree is a minimal requirement.
- b. Ordination as minister of the Word in the CRCNA.
- c. A minimum of 10 years of parish experience or a combination of chaplaincy, parish, educational, or relevant professional/organizational institutional leadership experience.
- d. Advanced degrees in theology with specialization in missiology, ecumenism, church polity, ecclesiology and/or graduate degrees/professional designations in areas such as communications, business administration, nonprofit leadership, and organizational behavior and development are preferred.
- e. Experience in organizational communication is required.
  - advanced written and oral communication and group presentation skills
  - ability to utilize a variety of media platforms in organizational messaging
- f. Oral or written fluency in a second language is desired: Korean, Spanish, French, or Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese).

**3. Preferred Knowledge and Leadership Experience**

- a. An exceptional knowledge and understanding of Reformed church polity and matters of Church Order interpretation and application.
  - b. A developed understanding of Reformed theology and its relationship to other Christian traditions and major religions and their communities.
  - c. Familiarity with the CRCNA, its history, its churches, its ministers, its lay leaders, and its ministries in both Canada and the United States.
  - d. Ability to move with ease and dignity in North American and international ecclesiastical circles, and to be congenial and cooperative with representatives of other churches as well as with members of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.
  - e. Administrative and organizational ability in such measure as to be able to plan and work collaboratively with individuals and teams.
  - f. Proven success in establishing relationships with individuals and organizations of influence, including partner agencies/churches and volunteers.
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## **CRCNA Position Description**

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### **Chief Administrative Officer**

#### **Scope of the Position**

The Chief Administrative Officer, in partnership with the General Secretary, will communicate a clear and compelling vision that inspires administrative and ministry leaders and ministry partners to advance the binational mission of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). The Chief Administrative Officer will support and participate in the work of synod, the Council of Delegates, and other ministry boards, councils, and task committees. The Chief Administrative Officer will ensure that the CRCNA ministry agencies and partners work in partnership to support and advance the CRCNA Ministry Plan.

The Chief Administrative Officer, as a member of the Office of General Secretary, has the administrative authority and accountability to guide and oversee the leadership, strategy, and performance of the CRCNA administration, ministry agencies, and ministry partners. The Chief Administrative Officer will oversee administrative and support services needed to advance the ministry plan in such areas as governance and compliance, joint ministry plans, finance and budgets, human resources, facilities, and transportation.

#### **Reports to**

The Chief Administrative Officer is accountable to and serves at the pleasure of the General Secretary.

#### **Supervises and Oversees**

The Chief Administrative Officer supervises members of the ministry leadership team.

#### **Partnerships and Critical Relationships**

The Chief Administrative Officer, as a member of the Office of General Secretary, works in partnership with the General Secretary and manages the Joint Ministry Agreement process. Joint Ministry Agreements clarify working relationships and accountabilities. Only when they are approved by the relevant Boards and Councils as outlined in the CRCNA Governance Framework are they considered operational and binding.

- a. General Secretary of the CRCNA: governance agreements, synodical activities, and ecumenical affairs.
- b. Chief Administrative Officer: administrative affairs.
- c. Ministry agency leaders and partners: ministry affairs.

#### **Direct Reports**

Members that directly report to the Chief Administrative Officer include the ministry directors and leaders as well as administrative directors and leaders as identified in the table of organization.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **1. Mission**

- a. Serves as an effective partner with the General Secretary in nurturing a culture that advances the mission and values of the CRCNA.
- b. Ensures that each ministry agency and ministry partner is strategically and operationally aligned with the mission.
- c. Ensures that the mission and values shape the organizational culture.

## **2. Governance**

- a. Serves as an effective partner in the governance and oversight of the CRCNA.
- b. Promotes a governance partnership between synod, the Council of Delegates, the Canada and U.S. boards, and ministry boards.
- c. Expands board capacity, builds board leadership, and promotes best governance practices and continuous improvement.
- d. Carries out board directives and communicates appropriate information to ministry leaders and partners.

## **3. Strategy**

- a. Serves as an effective leader and partner in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the CRCNA Ministry Plan and ensures that it is aligned with the decisions of synod.
- b. Ensures that the joint ministry planning system advances the priorities in the CRCNA Ministry Plan through the relevant ministry agencies and partners in Canada and the United States.
- c. Ensures that the culture of the Ministries Leadership Council is based on a cycle of strategic thinking, planning, innovation, and evaluation in the development and implementation of joint ministry plans.

## **4. Operations**

- a. Builds an organizational culture that promotes innovation and accountability.
- b. Brings administrative and ministry leaders and partners together to ensure consistent implementation of synodical and COD policy decisions in Canada and the United States.
- c. Operates an administrative and ministry leadership system that builds staff capacity, engagement, satisfaction, and succession.
- d. Oversees capital and operating budgets, ensuring they achieve budget metrics and outcomes.
- e. Oversees an integrated system of organizational policies and practices that ensures compliance with decisions made by synod, the Council of Delegates, ministry boards, and governmental regulatory bodies.
- f. Oversees the Joint Ministry Agreement process, including governance, ecumenical, administrative, and ministry agreements.

## **5. Communications and Denominational Affairs**

- a. At the request of the General Secretary, participates in ecumenical, classical, and regional church meetings.
- b. At the request of the Executive Director-Canada, participates in the CRCNA-Canada Board meetings.

## **6. Other Duties**

Performs other duties as assigned by the General Secretary.

## **Qualifications**

### **1. Characteristics and Commitments**

- a. Exemplifies a strong, vibrant Christian faith marked by spiritual humility and moral integrity.
- b. Is a member of the CRCNA, or is willing to become a member.
- c. Understands the life and polity of the CRCNA.

- d. Possesses the ability to provide exceptional leadership within a multiagency and binational organization.
- e. Has the capacity to listen and learn.
- f. Exhibits the ability to bridge diverse perspectives and inspires trust.
- g. Has executive presence.
- h. Effectively stewards the authority of the position.
- i. Demonstrates sound judgment and wisdom in decision-making.
- j. Has compassion for people who are poor, lost, or disenfranchised.

## **2. Education and Experience**

- a. Master's degree in a relevant discipline such as administration, leadership, and organizational development.
- b. Minimum of ten years of professional experience and a career progression marked by accomplishment through leadership roles in complex environments with a proven record of accomplishment.
- c. Minimum of five years of senior-level experience in complex organizations that include oversight of administration and finance operations.

## **3. Leadership Skills and Experiences**

- a. Working with and/or service on a board of directors, preferably in a leadership role.
  - b. Developing and implementing organizational strategy and ministry plans.
  - c. Overseeing complex operations in public, nonprofit, and/or private companies.
  - d. Leading significant organizational change in complex organizations.
  - e. Bringing people of diverse backgrounds and experiences together to achieve shared strategies, priorities, plans, and/or goals.
  - f. Developing people through coaching, mentoring, and learning and development programs.
  - g. Making complex decisions in an environment of shifting demographics and significant cultural change.
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## **CRCNA Position Description**

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### **Executive Director-Canada**

#### **Scope of the Position**

The Executive Director-Canada, in partnership with the Board of Directors of the CRCNA-Canada, will communicate a clear and compelling vision that inspires ministry leaders and ministry partners to advance the binational mission of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) in Canada. The Executive Director-Canada will ensure that the CRCNA-Canada Ministry Plan, approved by the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors, is aligned with the CRCNA Ministry Plan.

The Executive Director-Canada will lead and oversee the ministry leaders and staff in Canada in accordance with CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors approvals and joint ministry agreements as well as those legally required to be performed by a registered charity in Canada.

#### **Reports to**

The Executive Director-Canada reports to and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors of the CRCNA-Canada.

#### **Partnerships and Working Relationships**

The Executive Director-Canada's responsibilities to the CRCNA Office of General Secretary, ministry leaders, and partners are outlined in the relevant Joint Ministry Agreements approved by the Board of Directors of the CRCNA-Canada. The Executive Director-Canada will work with the following CRCNA leaders:

- a. General Secretary of the CRCNA: governance agreements, synodical activities, and ecumenical affairs
- b. Chief Administrative Officer: administrative affairs
- c. Ministry agency leaders and partners: ministry affairs

#### **Supervises and Oversees**

The Executive Director-Canada supervises and oversees the administrative staff, ministry leaders, and partners that serve the CRCNA churches in Canada.

#### **Direct Reports**

Members that directly report to the Executive Director-Canada are identified in the table of organization for the Canadian Office.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **1. Mission**

- a. Serves as an effective partner with the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors and the CRCNA in nurturing a culture that advances a shared mission for the Christian Reformed Church in Canada.
- b. Ensures that each ministry agency and ministry partner is strategically and operationally aligned with the mission.
- c. Prompts and mobilizes missional engagement in the Christian Reformed churches in Canada by imagining possibilities, promoting learning opportunities, sharing stories and best practices, and facilitating the use of resources for mutual learning.

#### **2. Governance**

- a. Serves as an effective partner in the governance and oversight of the CRCNA-Canada.

- b. Promotes a governance partnership between synod, the Council of Delegates, the CRCNA-Canada Board, and Canadian ministry boards.
- c. Ensures that the CRCNA-Canada Board fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities and maintains compliance with governmental rules and regulations.
- d. Expands board capacity, builds board leadership, and promotes best governance practices and continuous improvement.
- e. Carries out board directives and communicates appropriate information to ministry leaders and partners.

### **3. Strategy**

- a. Serves as an effective leader and partner in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of a Canadian Ministry Plan, ensuring it is aligned with the decisions of synod and the CRCNA Ministry Plan.
- b. Ensures that the joint ministry planning system advances the priorities in the CRCNA Ministry Plan through the relevant ministry agencies and partners in Canada.
- c. Ensures that the culture of Ministry Planning and Integration is based on a cycle of strategic thinking, planning, innovation, and evaluation.

### **4. Operations**

- a. Builds an organizational culture that promotes partnership, innovation, and accountability.
- b. Brings administrative and ministry leaders, partners, and staff together to ensure consistent implementation of Joint Ministry Planning Agreements approved by the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors.
- c. Operates an administrative and ministry leadership system that builds staff capacity, engagement, learning, satisfaction, and succession.
- d. Oversees capital and operating budgets, ensuring that they achieve budget metrics and outcomes.
- e. Oversees an integrated system of organizational policies and practices that ensures compliance with decisions made by synod, the Council of Delegates, the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors, and governmental regulatory bodies.

### **5. Communications and Community Affairs**

- a. Serves as the spokesperson for the CRCNA in Canada on matters of communication with the government and of public pronouncement. Engages with provincial and federal authorities in regard to rules and regulations that affect the operations of the CRCNA in Canada.
- b. Participates in local and national ecumenical activity and engages in national partnerships through bodies such as the Canadian Council of Churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and others.
- c. Participates in classical and regional church meetings in Canada in partnership with the General Secretary and consults with congregations, classes, and synodical deputies on matters dealing with church polity, Church Order interpretation, synodical decisions, and ecclesiastical procedures.

### **6. Other Duties**

Performs other duties as assigned by the CRCNA-Canada Board and the General Secretary.

## **Qualifications**

### **1. Characteristics and Commitments**

- a. Exemplifies a strong, vibrant Christian faith marked by spiritual humility and moral integrity.
- b. Is a member of the CRCNA, or is willing to become such a member.
- c. Understands the life and polity of the CRCNA.
- d. Possesses the ability to provide leadership within a multiagency and binational denomination.
- e. Has the capacity to listen and learn.
- f. Exhibits the ability to bridge diverse perspectives and to inspire trust.
- g. Has executive presence.
- h. Effectively stewards the authority of the position.
- i. Demonstrates sound judgment and wisdom in decision making.
- j. Has compassion for people who are poor, lost, or disenfranchised.

### **2. Education and Experience**

- a. Master's degree in divinity, theology, or a relevant discipline such as administration, education, leadership.
- b. Certification in management, accounting, or operations management. An MBA or master's degree in a related discipline is strongly preferred.
- c. Ordained as a minister of the Word or as a commissioned pastor in the CRCNA.
- d. Familiarity with the Christian Reformed denomination as a whole and its Canadian context with regard to its history, churches, ministry leaders, and partners.
- e. Knowledge of the Church Order and is competent in interpreting the same.
- f. Knowledge and understanding of the Canadian regulatory framework for charitable organizations in Canada.
- g. Ten years of ministry experience in church/parachurch-related organizations with five years of senior-level administrative experience.
- h. Oral or written fluency in French is strongly preferred, given that Canada has two official languages.

### **3. Leadership Skills and Experiences**

- a. Working with and/or service on a governing board.
- b. Possessing administrative and organizational ability in such measure as to be able to plan and work collaboratively with others.
- c. Developing and implementing organizational strategy and ministry plans.
- d. Leading significant organizational change in complex organizations.
- e. Bringing people of diverse backgrounds and experiences together to achieve shared strategies, priorities, plans, and/or goals.
- f. Developing people through coaching, mentoring, and learning programs.
- g. Overseeing and integrating regulatory requirements into policies, processes, and joint agreements.

## Appendix B

### Charts and narrative

### Chart 1: Office of General Secretary

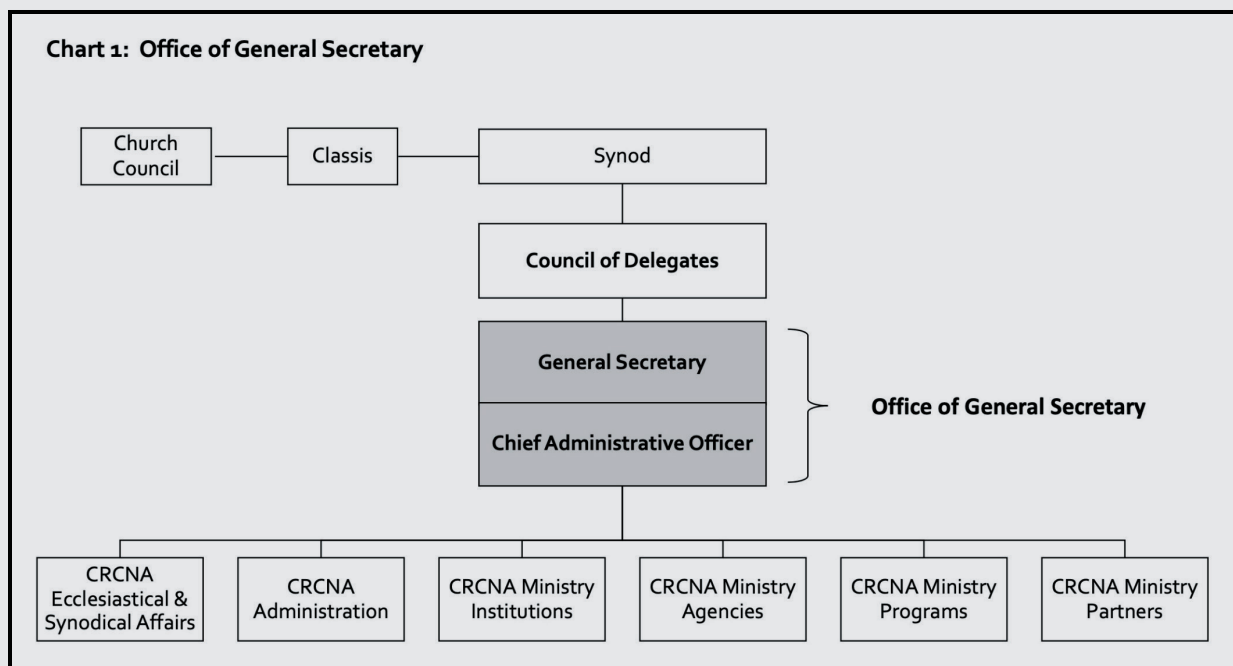


Chart 1 describes the scope of the Office of General Secretary (in gray). The General Secretary and the Chief Administrative Officer are at the intersection where the synodical structure of the CRCNA organization meets the administrative and ministry institutions, agencies, programs, and partners.

### Chart 2: CRCNA- Canada Office Structure

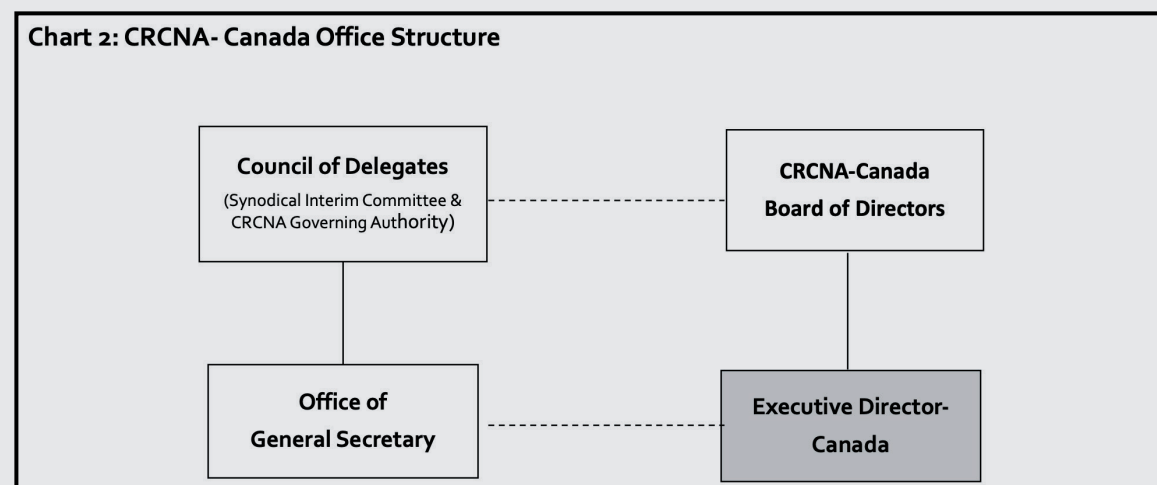


Chart 2 pictorially describes the two types of operating relationships that need to be more fully defined in Joint Ministry Agreements. While the CRCNA-Canada Board of Directors is considered independent from a legal perspective, as a subsidiary corporation chartered by the CRCNA synod it is accountable to the CRCNA Council of Delegates. The Executive Director-Canada (in gray) is accountable to the CRCNA-Canada Board and must partner with the Office of General Secretary.



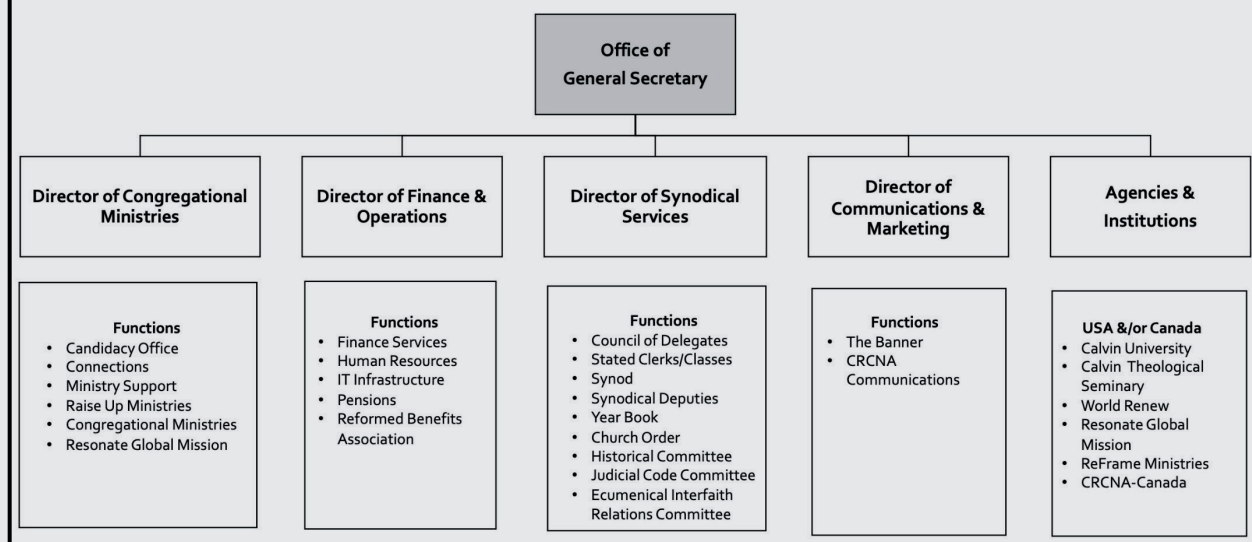
**Chart 3: Administrative Positions & Functions**

Chart 3 identifies the key leadership positions and administrative functions within the CRCNA organization. The listed agencies and institutions have their own leadership staff and administrative functions within the CRCNA organization.

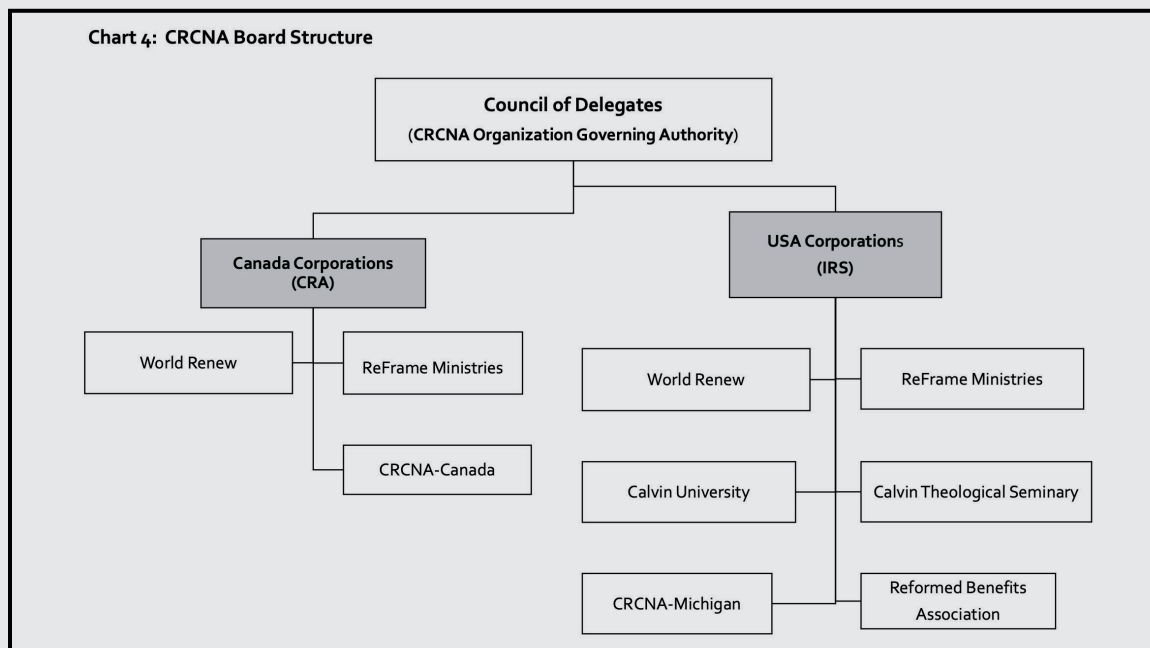
**Chart 4: CRCNA Board Structure**

Chart 4 lists all of the CRCNA-chartered nonprofit organizations that further the mission of the CRCNA denomination. These legally incorporated organizations, listed by country (in gray), must comply with the rules and regulations established in each country for tax-exempt organizations and registered charities.

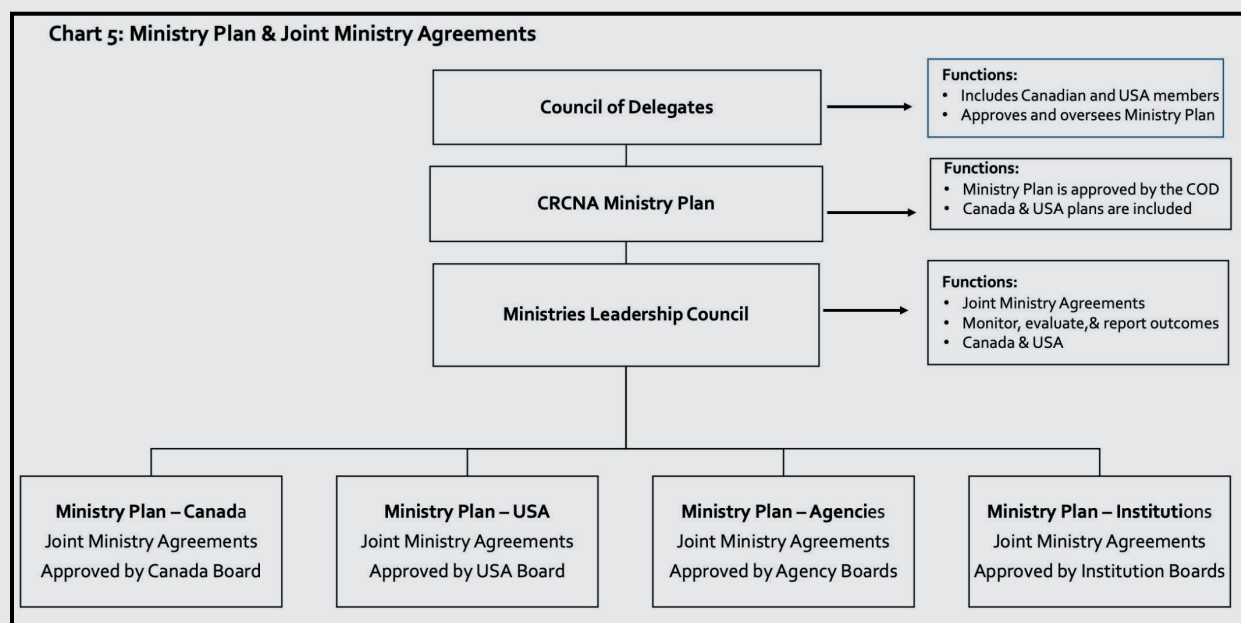


Chart 5 describes the importance of the use of Joint Ministry Agreements as a key process to unite the CRCNA organization around the CRCNA Ministry Plan. The planning process is managed by the Office of General Secretary in the context of the Ministries Leadership Council.

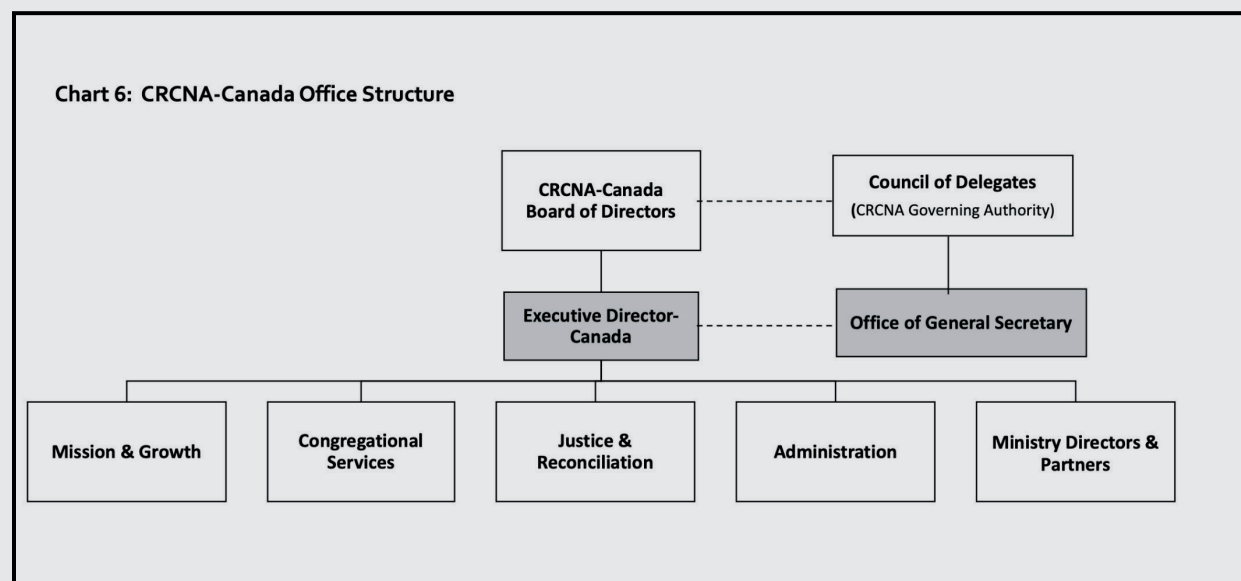
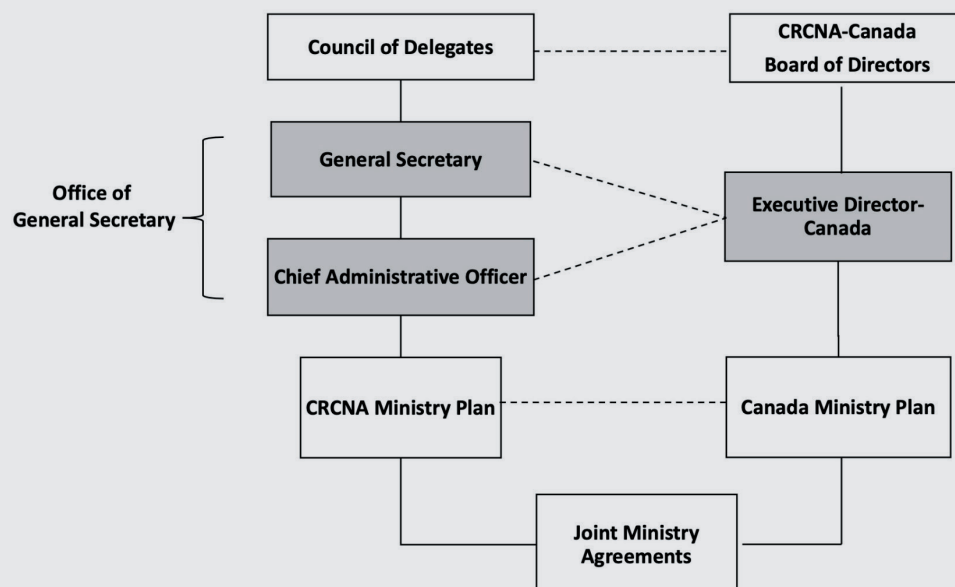


Chart 6 lists the administrative and ministry functions that may be part of the Canadian Office. The Canadian Office should reflect the needs of the Canadian churches in the context of the CRCNA Ministry Plan and not just mirror the U.S. administrative and ministry structure.

**Chart 7: CRCNA Binational Working Relationships**



The focus of Chart 7 is the CRCNA Ministry Plan and the use of Joint Ministry Agreements to structure the binational mission of the CRCNA denomination. These are also the principal means by which the CRCNA-Canada Board can demonstrate direction and control to the CRA in the context of the binational CRCNA denomination.

## Appendix C

### Abbreviations and Specialized Terms

For the purposes of this report, the following abbreviations and specialized terms are used to denote the following:

Abbreviation or Specialized term	Description
<b>CAO</b>	Chief Administrative Officer
<b>COD</b>	Council of Delegates—the synodical interim committee and the governing authority of the CRCNA Organization when synod is not in session
<b>CRA</b>	Canadian Revenue Agency—oversees registered charities in Canada
<b>CRC</b>	Christian Reformed Church
<b>CRCNA</b>	Christian Reformed Church in North America
<b>CRCNA denomination</b>	CRCNA organization, classes, and churches
<b>CRCNA organization</b>	The organizational structure including synod, the COD, leadership, administration, and all ministry boards, institutions, agencies, and partners in Canada and the United States
<b>Fiduciary duties</b>	Board members, individually and collectively, are legally responsible to fulfill three duties: duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience.
<b>Governing authority</b>	The nonprofit corporation's board of directors, board of trustees, or board of advisors
<b>Governance responsibilities</b>	Board members are responsible individually and collectively to fulfill the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Set and ensure organizational direction: mission, vision, and strategy</li><li>2. Ensure adequate resources: board and executive leadership, finances and facilities, human resources, and reputation</li><li>3. Oversee the health of the organization: mission effectiveness, organizational effectiveness, governance effectiveness, and compliance and accountability</li></ol>
<b>IRS</b>	Internal Revenue Service—oversees all 501(c)(3) organizations in the U.S.

<b>JMA</b>	Joint Ministry Agreements
<b>Ministry institutions</b>	Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary
<b>Ministry agencies</b>	World Renew, ReFrame Ministries, Resonate Global Mission, CRCNA-Canada and other CRCNA organizations that are legally incorporated in Canada and/or the United States
<b>Ministry programs</b>	Describes activities that are not legally incorporated but are part of a legally incorporated entity
<b>Ministry partners</b>	Includes individuals, experts, task forces, and committees within the CRCNA denomination. May also include other individuals, programs, and organizations not part of the CRCNA organization.
<b>Organizational trust</b>	Organizational trust drives the development of a positive organizational culture. Building organizational trust occurs when everyone shares commitment to the vision; each person, program, department shares concern for the whole organization; credibility and integrity are key practices; staff are regarded as competent; and individuals and the organization are willing to be accountable.
<b>Process management</b>	Refers to aligning processes with the organization's strategic goals, designing and implementing process architecture, establishing process measurement systems that align with the organization's goals, and educating organizing leaders to manage processes effectively.
<b>SALT</b>	Structure and Leadership Task Force
<b>U.S., USA</b>	United States of America
<b>WR</b>	World Renew

## **Appendix D**

### **Ministries Leadership Council**

***This description of the Ministries Leadership Council has been updated to reflect the recommendations in this report:***

The Ministries Leadership Council (MLC) is a binational gathering of ministry leaders of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and is convened by the Office of General Secretary to advance the vision, mission, values, and objectives of the Christian Reformed Church (including its Ministry Plan), as approved by the Council of Delegates (COD), which governs the agencies, educational institutions, and various ministries of the CRCNA by establishing and maintaining standards and strategies in the context of COD policies that facilitate such advancement, integration, and collaboration.

One of the key responsibilities of the Ministries Leadership Council is to oversee the implementation of the CRCNA Ministry Plan and the use of Joint Ministry Agreements; clarify roles and responsibilities; address issues of mutuality, reciprocity, and collaboration; develop effective patterns of communication; and build organizational trust.

**The membership of the Ministry Leadership Council is listed by position:**

1. the general secretary, who shall be its convener and chair
2. the chief administrative officer, who shall be its vice chair
3. the director of finance and operations
4. the director of synodical services
5. the director of the office on governance
6. the director(s) of human resources
7. the executive director-Canada
8. the director of ReFrame Ministries
9. the president of Calvin University (or their designee)
10. the president of Calvin Theological Seminary (or their designee)
11. the director of Resonate Global Mission
12. the codirectors of World Renew
13. a U.S. leader and a Canadian leader from the Offices of Race Relations and Social Justice
14. a leader representing ministry in Canada
15. the classis renewal coordinator
16. the director of communications and marketing

## **Appendix E**

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

The Council of Delegates (COD) administers a synodically approved Conflict of Interest Policy for all members of denominational governing boards, inclusive of agencies and educational institutions, including its application to its own functioning. All COD members are required to sign a conflict of interest declaration form at the beginning of their service on the COD. The policy also requires notification to be given if any COD member finds him/herself in a conflict of interest situation during a term of service. The COD is required to implement this requirement at the first meeting of the COD following the meeting of synod. The full text of the Conflict of Interest Policy and a sample declaration form are as follows:

#### **A. Background**

1. The COD manages the business and affairs of the agencies and institutions. COD members are fiduciaries who must hold a position of trust and exercise a duty of care, including a general obligation to avoid conflicts of interest.
2. COD members have the duty of guiding the agencies'/institutions' affairs in such a manner as to achieve the objectives of the agency/institution. COD members have a fiduciary duty to act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the agency/institution, as well as to be loyal to the agency/institution.
3. Honesty is the first component of this fiduciary duty. A COD member must disclose the entire truth and avoid fraudulent transactions or misleading representation.
4. Good faith is the second component of this fiduciary duty. COD members must pursue the best interests of the agency/institution. This means that a COD member may not pursue any improper purpose while acting on behalf of the agency/institution.
5. The duty of loyalty and the avoidance of conflicts of interest mean that a COD member must give loyalty to the agency/institution and must not subordinate the interests of the agency/institution to his or her personal interests.
6. Even when conflicts do not exist, COD members should understand that COD decisions may affect the business or affairs of a COD member. The impact is generally financial, but even social or political gain may violate the fiduciary duty. COD members must avoid direct or indirect benefits to relatives, friends, and associates.

#### **B. Policy, purpose, and definition**

1. A COD member must purposefully avoid conflicts of interest unless authorized under paragraphs C.4 and C.5. This policy statement applies to all COD members. Recognizing that synod carefully selects COD members, relying upon the trust of nominating assemblies in their integrity, judgment, and courage, the COD reasonably expects that no member would ever use his or her position for personal gain. However, to avoid any misunderstanding, this policy statement is promulgated and adopted.
2. A conflict of interest exists when a COD member has a personal interest of any kind which has the potential to be inconsistent in any degree with the best interests of the agency/institution. When a COD member's personal interests, whether real or perceived, could



supersede or conflict with his or her dedication to the best interests of the COD, a conflict of interest arises. The test of a conflict of interest is not just in whether a personal interest actually influences a COD member, but also in whether circumstances lend themselves to such a possibility.

Examples:

- a. Conflicting financial interests
- b. Use of confidential information for personal gain
- c. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- d. Use of agency/institutional time and facilities for personal purpose or other activities.

3. COD members must recognize that the appearance of a conflict of interest, even when in fact it may not exist, can be damaging to the agency/institution and must be avoided.

### ***C. Policy statement***

1. A COD member should resign his or her position if he or she reasonably could conclude that any kind of financial or personal obligation might improperly affect his or her judgment on behalf of the board or agency/institution. Each person must examine his or her own activities and those of his or her immediate family to ensure that no condition exists which creates a potential conflict of interest or a potentially embarrassing situation with respect to transactions between the board member and the agency/institution. COD members shall sign and complete the attached Conflict of Interest Statement.

2. Unless the provisions in paragraphs C.3 through C.5 are followed, a COD member shall not solicit or be a party, directly or indirectly, to any financial or other opportunity between the agency/institution and

- a. himself or herself or a family member.
- b. any firm (meaning copartnership or other unincorporated association) of which he or she or any family member is a partner, member, employee, or agent.
- c. any not-for-profit organization of which he or she or member(s) of his or her immediate family is an officer, director, employee, or agent.
- d. any for-profit corporation in which he or she is an officer, director, employee, agent, or stockholder owning more than one percent (1%) or the total outstanding stock of any class if the stock is not listed on a stock exchange, or stock with a present total value in excess of \$25,000 if the stock is listed on a stock exchange.
- e. any trust of which he or she is a grantor, beneficiary, or trustee.

3. In the event that a potential contract or arrangement which could present a conflict situation described in paragraph C.2 is presented to the COD, the affected COD member shall

- a. not participate in any way on behalf of the agency/institution in discussion or negotiation of the contract or arrangement, or in the approval of the contract or arrangement.
- b. promptly discloses in writing any financial, personal, or pecuniary interest in the contract or arrangement to the board or other official body which has the power to approve the contract or arrangement, which disclosure shall be made a matter of record in the COD's official proceeding.

4. A contract or arrangement referenced in Paragraph C.3 must be approved by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the full COD, or of the approving body, in open session without the vote of the affected COD member.

5. The board or other official body which has the power to approve a contract or arrangement must disclose the following summary information in its official minutes as to contracts or arrangements referenced in paragraph C.2:

- a. the name of each party involved in the contract or arrangements
- b. the terms of the contract or arrangements, including duration, financial consideration between the parties, facilities or services of the entity included in the contract, and the nature and degree of assignment of employees of the agency/institution for fulfillment of the contract
- c. the nature of the board member's financial, personal, or pecuniary interest

6. A COD member shall not engage in a business transaction or arrangement in which the member may profit from his or her official position or authority, or benefit financially from confidential information which the member has obtained or may obtain by reason of such position or authority.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

I have read and understand this Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy. There are no present or future potential conflicts of interest other than those listed below. I have and will continue to observe the Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy carefully.

---

Signature

---

Printed Name

---

Date

### **Disclosure(s)**

(Indicate none if applicable; otherwise please give full explanation of the conflict.)

*Note:* Completed forms will be retained for seven (7) years from date of signing.  
Approved December 1998

## Appendix B

### AMENDED AND RESTATED BYLAWS OF CALVIN UNIVERSITY

A Michigan Nonprofit Corporation

(Initial adoption June 18, 1991; latest revision February ~~2019~~2021)

#### ARTICLE I. OFFICES

- 1.1. Registered Office. The registered office of the Corporation shall be located at the address specified in the Articles of Incorporation or at such other place as may be determined by the University Board of Trustees if notice thereof is filed with the State of Michigan.
- 1.2. Other Offices. The business of the Corporation may be transacted at such locations other than the registered office, within or outside the State of Michigan, as the University Board of Trustees may from time to time determine, or as the business of the Corporation may require.

#### ARTICLE II. TRUSTEES

- 2.1. Board of Trustees. The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by the Calvin University Board of Trustees (hereinafter referred to as the “University Board of Trustees”). The members of the University Board of Trustees shall consist of the following:
  - 2.1.1. ~~Eleven (11)~~Six (6) regional trustees who shall be appointed by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (synod), or its designee, in accordance with the procedures set forth in these Bylaws and such procedures, if any, as are adopted from time to time by the synod (“regional trustees”). ~~Eleven (11) regional~~Regional trustees shall be selected by the classes of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, in accordance with such procedures as are adopted by the Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church of North America from time to time, in the numbers from the regions and sub-regions set forth below:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Classis</u>	<u># of Trustees</u>
<del>1 and 2</del>	British Columbia NW British Columbia SE Alberta North Alberta South/Saskatchewan Lake Superior (Canadian)	1
<u>2</u>	<u>Chatham</u> <u>Eastern Canada</u> <u>Hamilton</u> <u>Huron</u> <u>Niagara</u> <u>Quinte</u> <u>Toronto</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Eastern Canada</u> <u>Atlantic Northeast</u> <u>Quinte</u> <u>Hackensack</u>	<u>1</u>

	<u>Hudson</u>	
	<del>Toronto</del>	
	Southeast USA	
	<del>Chatham</del>	
4	<del>Chatham</del> <u>Georgetown</u>	1
	<del>Hamilton</del> <u>Grand Rapids East</u>	
	<u>Grand Rapids North</u>	
	<u>Grand Rapids South</u>	
	<u>Grandville</u>	
	<u>Holland</u>	
	<u>Kalamazoo</u>	
	<u>Lake Erie</u>	
	<u>Muskegon</u>	
	<u>Northern Michigan</u>	
	<u>Thornapple Valley</u>	
	<u>Zeeland</u>	
	<del>Huron</del>	
	<del>Niagara</del>	
5	<del>Columbia</del> <u>Central Plans</u>	1
	<del>North Cascades</del> <u>Chicago South</u>	
	<u>Heartland</u>	
	<u>Iakota</u>	
	<u>Illiana</u>	
	<u>Lake Superior (US)</u>	
	<u>Minnkota</u>	
	<u>Northcentral Iowa</u>	
	<u>Northern Illinois</u>	
	<u>Yellowstone-Montana</u>	
	<u>Wisconsin</u>	
	<del>Pacific Northwest</del>	
	<del>Yellowstone</del>	
6	<u>Arizona</u>	1
	California South	
	Central California	
	Columbia	
	Greater Los Angeles	
	Hanmi	
	Ko-Am	
	<u>North Cascades</u>	
	<u>Pacific Northwest</u>	
	<u>Red Mesa</u>	
	<u>Rocky Mountain</u>	
	<u>Yellowstone-Utah</u>	
TOTAL:		<del>116</del>

- 2.1.2. ~~Ten~~<sup>Five</sup> Regional At-Large Trustees: One representative from region ~~29~~, ~~and~~ two representatives each from regions ~~405~~ and ~~44~~, ~~6~~, 5 representatives from region 4 shall be appointed as regional at-large members using the process for at-large board member appointment set forth below. Since these positions are regional positions, members must be from that particular region and shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive three-year terms. The University Board of Trustees may receive suggested nominations from the classes of each region; provided, however, that the University Board of Trustees shall have absolute discretion in determining its nominations of regional at-large trustees. They shall be appointed by the synod in accordance with the procedures set forth in these Bylaws.

**TOTAL: 10**

- 2.1.3. Up to three (3) individuals who are alumni of the Corporation or its predecessors, who shall be appointed as “alumni trustees” by the synod in accordance with the procedures set forth in these Bylaws.

The University Board of Trustees shall receive two nominations for each open position from the Calvin University Alumni Association. The University Board shall nominate one (1) candidate for each position as an alumni trustee. Alumni trustees shall be appointed by synod upon nomination by the University Board of Trustees. Alumni trustees shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive three-year terms.

- 2.1.4. Up to twelve (12) individuals, who shall serve as “at-large” members of the University Board and shall be appointed by the synod in accordance with the procedures set forth in these Bylaws. At-large trustees shall be appointed by synod upon nomination by the University Board of Trustees. The University Board of Trustees shall nominate one (1) candidate for each position as an at-large trustee.

The University Board of Trustees shall receive suggested nominations from its members and its Trusteeship Committee, the President of the Corporation, and such other sources as the University Board of Trustees may deem advisable; provided, however, that the University Board of Trustees shall have absolute discretion in determining its nominations of at-large trustees. At-large trustees shall not serve more than three (3) consecutive three-year terms.

Trustees assume their responsibilities on the convening date of the first full University Board of Trustees meeting following the meeting of synod.

- 2.2. Vacancies. Vacancies on the University Board of Trustees occurring for any reason, including an increase in the number of trustees, shall be temporarily filled by ~~the synod or its designee~~ University Board of Trustees. The University Board of Trustees shall notify the CRCNA Council of Delegates and Synod of this temporary appointment. A trustee appointed to fill a vacancy occurring for any reason, including an increase in the number of trustees, shall hold office until the first of the following occurs: (1) the expiration of the remainder of the term that the trustee whom he or she replaced was scheduled to serve, or (2) the resignation or removal of such trustee.
- 2.3. Resignation and Removal. A trustee may resign by written notice to the Secretary of the Corporation. The resignation shall be effective upon receipt by the Corporation or at a subsequent

time as set forth in the notice. Any trustee(s) may be removed, at any time with or without cause, by the synod or upon the recommendation of the University Board of Trustees.

- 2.4. Place of Meetings and Records. The trustees shall hold their meetings, maintain the minutes of the proceedings of meetings of the University Board and committees thereof, and keep the books and records of account for the Corporation, in such place or places within or outside the State of Michigan as the University Board may from time to time determine.
- 2.5. Meetings of the University Board. Meetings of the University Board of Trustees shall be held in fall, winter and spring, ~~normally during the months of October, February, and May of each year,~~ respectively, at such time as may be fixed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Corporation. The ~~administrative assistant designated by the President Secretary of the Corporation~~ shall notify the members of the University Board of Trustees of the time and place of the meetings as determined by the University Board of Trustees from time to time. If an annual meeting is not so held, whether because a quorum is not present or for any other reason, the annual meeting of the University Board shall be called in the same manner as hereinafter provided for special meetings of the University Board of Trustees.
- 2.6. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the University Board of Trustees may be held without further notice at such time(s) and place(s) as determined by University Board action and announced or otherwise indicated at any prior meeting at which a quorum is present. Any notice given of a regular meeting need not specify the business to be transacted or the purpose of the meeting.
- 2.7. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the University Board of Trustees may be called by the Chair of the Board or the President and shall be called by one (1) of them on the written request of any three (3) trustees, upon at least two (2) days' notice to each trustee. The notice does not need to specify the business to be transacted or the purpose of the special meeting.
- 2.8. Attendance as Waiver. Attendance of a trustee at any meeting constitutes a waiver of notice of the meeting, except where a trustee attends the meeting for the express purpose of objecting at the beginning of the meeting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.
- 2.9. Quorum and Vote. A majority of the members of the University Board of Trustees then in office constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business, and the vote of a majority of the trustees present at any meeting at which a quorum is present constitutes the action of the University Board of Trustees unless the vote of a larger number is specifically required by law or by the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws. If a quorum is not present, the trustees present may adjourn the meeting from time to time and to another place, without notice other than announcement at the meeting, until a quorum is present. Trustees present at any meeting at which a quorum was present may continue to do business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of trustees to leave less than a quorum.
- 2.10. Corporate Seal. The University Board of Trustees may authorize a suitable corporate seal, which seal shall be kept in the custody of the ~~Secretary, Assistant Secretary~~ President, or other officer designated by the University Board of Trustees.
- 2.11. Compensation of Trustees. Trustees shall be paid no compensation or fees for their services as trustees, except that the Corporation may pay reasonable expenses of attendance at any meeting of the University Board or any committee thereof. Nothing contained in this paragraph shall be

construed to preclude any trustee from serving the Corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation thereof.

- 2.12. Committees. The Chair of the University Board, with the approval of the University Board, may appoint such committees of the University Board as are deemed appropriate.

No person may be a member of a committee at any time unless that person is then a member of the University Board, except for those committees that require non-trustee members due to their professional qualifications (e.g., the Investment Committee). ~~T~~~~hat~~ the President may serve as an *ex officio* member of any committee. All committees shall keep regular minutes of their proceedings and report to the University Board when required.

No committee shall have the power or authority to amend the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the Corporation, adopt an agreement of merger or consolidation, fill vacancies in the University Board of Trustees, fix compensation of the trustees for serving on the University Board or on a committee, or take any other action prohibited to committees by the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act.

- 2.13. Additional Rules and Regulations. The University Board of Trustees may also adopt, by a vote of the majority, other rules and regulations for the operation of the Corporation not inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation and these Bylaws. Currently, the University Board of Trustees has adopted a Board of Trustees Handbook, a Student Handbook, a Staff Handbook, and a Handbook for Teaching Faculty. The rules and regulations set forth in each of these handbooks, as adopted from time to time, shall, to the extent consistent with the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws be binding upon the Corporation, its Board of Trustees, officers, faculty, staff, and students.
- 2.14. Meeting by Communication Equipment. Members of the University Board, or of any committee designated by the University Board, may participate in a meeting of the University Board or of any committee, as the case may be, by using a conference telephone or similar communications equipment, electronic video screen communications, or electronic transmission, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting have been provided notice of the means of remote communication, provided the names of participants in the meeting are provided to all participants and all the participants in the meeting can communicate with each other. Participation in a meeting pursuant to this paragraph shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.
- 2.15. Action Without a Meeting. Notwithstanding any other provision in these Bylaws, any action required or permitted to be taken by the University Board or by any committee at a meeting may be taken without a meeting, without notice or without a vote by unanimous consent of all Trustees or committee members represented by one or more written consents describing the action so taken, signed and dated by each Trustee or committee member, and filed with the Secretary and included in the corporate minutes or filed with the corporate records. Prompt notice shall be given to the University Board members who have not consented to any such action taken without a meeting. For purposes of this Section 2.15, "written consents" shall include consents by members of the University Board or a committee in electronic form and delivered by electronic mail. Such action by consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of such Trustees.

### ARTICLE III. OFFICERS



- 3.1. Officers of the University Board. The officers of the University Board shall be a chair, a vice chair, ~~a treasurer, an assistant treasurer, and~~ a secretary, ~~and an assistant secretary~~, all of whom shall be annually elected by the University Board of Trustees. The Vice President for Finance shall also serve as the Treasurer of the University Board. The Treasurer is not a trustee of the University Board. If the Board of Trustees has designated a chair-elect, that person serves as vice chair of the Board during his/her time as chair-elect.
- 3.2. Officers of the Corporation. The officers of the Corporation shall be a president; a provost; ~~a vice president for administration and finance; a vice president for advancement; a vice president for enrollment management; a vice president for student life; a treasurer; an assistant treasurer; a secretary; and an assistant secretary~~ and vice presidents. The President of the Corporation shall be appointed by the University Board of Trustees synod. The ~~Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary~~ provost and vice presidents shall be ~~selected~~ appointed by the President and ratified by the University Board of Trustees. ~~The Vice Presidents and the Provost, if any, shall be appointed by the University Board of Trustees, upon nomination by the President.~~ Each officer shall hold office until his or her successor is elected and qualified or until his or her earlier resignation or removal. ~~A person may serve as an officer of the Corporation even though that person is not a trustee of the Corporation. The President shall designate an administrative secretary to serve the administrative needs of the University Board. Two or more offices may be held by the same person, and an officer may also hold office in Calvin Theological Seminary.~~
- 3.3. Other Officers and Agents. The University Board of Trustees may appoint such other officers and agents as it may deem advisable, and they shall hold their offices for such terms and exercise such powers and perform such duties as determined from time to time by the University Board. The University Board may, by specific resolution, empower the Chair, the President, or the Executive Committee, if such a committee has been designated by the University Board, to appoint such subordinate officers or agents and to determine their powers and duties.
- 3.4. Removal. The officers described in paragraph 3.1 hereof may be removed at any time, with or without cause, ~~but only by the vote of a majority of the trustees. The President may be removed by the vote of the majority of the University Board of Trustees.~~ Any vice president, or any other subordinate officer or agent elected or appointed pursuant to paragraphs 3.2, may be removed at any time, with or without cause, by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee of the University Board of Trustees. ~~action of the University Board of Trustees or by the committee or officer empowered to appoint such vice president, or subordinate officer or agent.~~
- 3.5. Compensation of Officers. No compensation shall be paid to the officers of the University Board, except as approved by action of the University Board of Trustees. Compensation of officers of the Corporation shall be approved by action of the University Board of Trustees, except that the Corporation may reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by an officer. Nothing contained in this paragraph shall be construed to preclude any officer from serving the Corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefor.
- 3.6. Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair of the University Board of Trustees shall be elected by the trustees from among the trustees then serving. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the University Board of Trustees and shall perform such other duties as may be determined by resolution of the University Board. No person may serve as chair for more than six (6) consecutive years, provided that any person shall be eligible for reelection as chair if such person has not served as chair for at least one (1) annual term after the expiration of his or her

previous term of office. The Vice Chair shall preside at meetings of the University Board and shall perform the duties of the Chair in the event of the Chair's inability or refusal to act. The Vice Chair also shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the University Board. If the Chair and Vice Chair must be absent with with notice, the board may appoint a trustee to preside at a meeting of the University Board of Trustees.

- 3.7. President. Unless the University Board determines otherwise, the President shall be an *ex officio* (non-voting) member of the University Board of Trustees and of any committee thereof and also shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision, direction, and control of the business of the Corporation as well as the duty and responsibility to implement and accomplish the objectives of the Corporation. ~~If neither a chair nor vice chair has been elected or if neither is present, the President shall preside at all meetings of the University Board of Trustees.~~ The President shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the University Board of Trustees. The Vice Presidents of the University shall have such responsibilities and duties as are designated by, and shall report directly to, the President.
- 3.8. Vice President. Each Vice President shall have such power and shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the ~~University Board of Trustees~~President and may be designated by such special titles as recommended by the President and ratified by the University Board of Trustees~~shall approve.~~
- 3.9. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have custody of the Corporation's funds and securities and shall keep full and accurate account of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Corporation. The Treasurer shall deposit all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in such depositories as may be selected by the University Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Corporation as may be authorized by the University Board of Trustees, or the President, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements. In general, the Treasurer shall perform all duties incident to the office of treasurer and such other duties as may be assigned by the University Board of Trustees.
- 3.10. Secretary. The Secretary shall ~~give or cause to be given~~oversee notice of all meetings of the University Board of Trustees and all other notices required by law or by these Bylaws—provided, however, that if the Secretary is absent or refuses or neglects to do so, any such notice may be given by any person so directed by the Chair, President, or by the trustees. The Secretary shall review and certify that record all the proceedings of the meetings of the University Board have been properly recorded by the administrative designee appointed by the President. in one or more books provided for that purpose, ~~and The Secretary~~ shall perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as may be designated by the University Board of Trustees.
- ~~3.11. Assistant Treasurers and Assistant Secretaries. Assistant treasurers and assistant secretaries, if any shall be appointed, shall have such powers and shall perform such duties as shall be assigned to them by the University Board of Trustees or by the officer who shall have appointed such Assistant Treasurer or Assistant Secretary.~~
- 3.12. Bonds. If the University Board of Trustees shall require it, the Treasurer, ~~any assistant treasurer,~~ or any other officer or agent of the Corporation shall give bond to the Corporation in such amount and with such surety as the University Board of Trustees may deem sufficient, conditioned upon the faithful performance of his or her respective duties and offices.

#### ARTICLE IV. CONTRACTS, LOANS, CHECKS AND LEGAL ACTION

- 4.1. Contracts. The University Board of Trustees may authorize the Corporation President, Vice Presidents and any Corporation officer or officers, agent or agents to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.
- 4.2. Loans. No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the Corporation, and no evidences of indebtedness shall be issued in its name, unless authorized by a resolution of the University Board of Trustees. Such authorization may be general or confined to specific instances.
- 4.3. Checks. All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the University Board of Trustees.
- 4.4. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation not otherwise employed, shall be deposited to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the University Board of Trustees may select.

#### ARTICLE V. MISCELLANEOUS

- 5.1. Fiscal. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall end on June 30 of each year or at such other time as may be fixed by resolution of the University Board of Trustees from time to time.
- 5.2. Notices. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of any law, the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws, it shall not be construed or interpreted to mean personal notice, unless expressly so stated, and any notice so required shall be deemed to be sufficient if given in writing by mail, by depositing the same in a post office box, postage prepaid, addressed to the person entitled thereto at his or her address as it appears in the records of the Corporation, and such notice shall be deemed to have been given at the time and on the day of such mailing. In addition, and notwithstanding the preceding, any notice for a University Board meeting or any committee meeting also shall be deemed to be sufficient if delivered by electronic transmission, including but not limited to email to the email address the notice recipient provided to Corporation or the University Board, or notice may be made by any other method not prohibited by the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act.
- 5.3. Waiver of Notice. Whenever any notice is required to be given under the provisions of any law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to said notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent thereto.
- 5.4. Voting of Securities. Securities of another corporation, foreign or domestic, standing in the name of the Corporation, which are entitled to vote may be voted, in person or by proxy, by the Chair or the President of the Corporation or by such other or additional persons as may be designated by the University Board of Trustees.
- 5.5. Indemnification. The Corporation shall indemnify its trustees, officers, and others to the extent provided by the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation and to the extent provided in any

agreements for indemnification heretofore or hereafter executed by the Corporation for the benefit of the party claiming thereunder that are authorized under the Articles of Incorporation and the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act.

#### ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended or repealed, and new bylaws may be adopted only by resolution adopted by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the University Board of Trustees, and adopted and approved by the Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

## **Appendix C**

### **Summary of Denominational Investments and Compliance with Investment Policy**

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

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

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

The accompanying summary and related footnotes constitute the Council of Delegates' response to the first of these requests. In response to the second request, the Council of Delegates reports that on December 31, 2020, all of the agencies and institutions are in compliance with the denomination's investment policy, including the guidance it provides for assets received as a result of gifts or gift-related transactions.

The Council of Delegates' discussions regarding these matters included the following:

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

## 0.7447

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

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA  
Agencies and Institutions  
Investment Summary in US\$  
As of December 31, 2020

Categories Specified by Investment Policy:

Categories Specified by Investment Policy:	Other Denominational Ministries	CRCNA Resonate Global Mission		Total	ReFrame Ministries	World Renew	Calvin University	Calvin Seminary	Loan Fund	TOTAL
A. SHORT TERM CASH										
Bank Balance	(5,610,077)	4,332,400	(1,277,677)	1,997,513	16,188,665	209,273			4,836,369	21,954,143
Money Market	12,337,972	-	12,337,972	-	-	7,439,357			-	19,777,329
CDs	-	-	-	-	-	212,776			-	212,776
B. EXCESS SEASONAL FUND										
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-
C. INTERMEDIATE-TERM FUNDS										
CRCNA LLC Liquidity Fund	3,550	(1)	3,323,168	(1)	1,897,180	28,952	(1)	6,578,823		5,252,850
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-				6,578,823
D. LONG-TERM FUNDS										
CRCNA LLC Balanced Fund	98,358	(2)	13,025,671	(2)	4,790,124	10,762,920	(2)			28,677,073
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	-	-	-	-	-				-
Equity mutual funds	-	-	-	-	33,810	(3)		13,063,845	(3)	13,097,655
U.S. treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds	-	-	-	-	-	3,133	(8)	114,353,253	(8)	150,111,359
Publicly traded bonds and notes	-	-	-	-	-	-		39,209,942		39,209,942
(investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	-	-	-	-	-		-		-
Bond mutual funds	-	-	-	-	-	-		81,171,380		89,562,932
CIBC / TAL overdraft accounts	-	-	-	-	-	-		1,050,000	(7)	1,050,000
Real Estate	-	-	-	-	-	-		-		-
Common stock - non-listed	-	-	-	-	-	2,768,480	(10)	-		-
Other Alternatives	-	-	-	-	-	3,339,274	(9)	-		-
Private equity/hedge funds	-	-	-	-	-	42,735,051	(4)	6,521,455	(4)	49,256,506
Life Insurance cash value	27,710	(5)	27,710	(5)	511,260	21,830	(5)	-		560,800
E. FUNDS HELD FOR SPECIFIC DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAMS (i.e., Barnabus Foundation, grants)										
Beneficial Interest	-	-	445,254	-	1,063,550	-				1,508,804
	-	-	-	-	-	-				-
	-	-	-	-	-	-				-
	-	-	-	-	-	-				-
Interagency Investments (Obligations):										
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	-	-	-	-	-				-
Total	\$ 6,857,513	\$ 21,126,493	\$ 27,984,006	\$ 10,293,437	\$ 27,005,500	\$ 304,502,631	\$ 58,296,803	\$ 4,836,369	\$ 426,810,992	

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



**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA**  
Agencies and Institutions  
Investment Summary (CANADA IN CDNs)  
As of December 31, 2020

**Categories Specified by Investment Policy:**

	Other Denominational Ministries	CRCNA Resonate Global Mission	Total	ReFrame Ministries	World Renew	Calvin University	Calvin Seminary	Loan Fund	TOTAL
<b>A. SHORT TERM CASH</b>									
Bank Balance	2,604,755	3,761,071	6,365,826	994,034	7,940,934	-	-	-	15,300,794
Money Market	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CDs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>B. EXCESS SEASONAL FUND</b>									
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	1,774,682	-	1,774,682	-	-	-	-	-	1,774,682
<b>C. INTERMEDIATE-TERM FUNDS</b>									
CRCNA LLC Liquidity Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	7,960,501	-	7,960,501	-	-	-	-	-	7,960,501
<b>D. LONG-TERM FUNDS</b>									
CRCNA LLC Balanced Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equity mutual funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U.S. treasuries or Canadian govt bonds	7,984,967	-	7,984,967	-	-	-	-	-	7,984,967
Publicly traded bonds and notes	9,934,276	-	9,934,276	-	-	-	-	-	9,934,276
(investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bond mutual funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CIBC / TAL overdraft accounts	(28,321,244)	-	(28,321,244)	-	-	-	-	-	(28,321,244)
Real Estate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Alternatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private equity/hedge funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Life Insurance cash value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>E. FUNDS HELD FOR SPECIFIC DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAMS (i.e., Barnabus Foundation, grants)</b>									
Beneficial Interest	-	349,610	349,610	29,684	-	-	-	-	379,294
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Interagency Investments (Obligations):</b>									
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	-	-	-	2,000,000	-	-	-	2,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,937,937.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,110,681.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,048,618.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,023,717.70</b>	<b>\$ 9,940,934.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 17,013,269.70</b>

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

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA**  
Benefit Plans  
Investment Summary  
As of December 31, 2020

**Categories Specified by Investment Policy:**

**SHORT TERM**  
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS  
Cash, CDs, and money-market mutual funds  
**FIXED-INCOME ISSUES**  
Guaranteed investment contracts  
Stable Asset Income Fund  
  
**COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS**  
Publicly traded common, preferred,  
and convertible preferred stock  
Diversified/Alternative mutual fund  
Equity mutual funds  
  
**FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)**  
U.S. treasuries, Canadian gov't bonds, or  
publicly traded bonds and notes  
(investment grade, at least A-rated)  
Bond mutual funds  
  
**REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS**

Employees' Savings Plan - U.S. in U.S. \$	Ministers' Pension Plan U.S. in U.S. \$	Special Assistance Fund U.S. in U.S. \$	Employees' Retirement Plan - Canada in Canadian \$	Ministers' Pension Plan Canada in Canadian \$	Special Assistance Fund Canada in Canadian \$	Consolidated Group Insurance Canada in Canadian \$
\$ -	\$ 5,278,013	\$ 258,712	\$ 336,664	\$ 7,156,890	\$ 449,331	\$ 119,535
-	-	-	276,874	-	-	-
3,559,397	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	80,824,980	-	-	52,931,632	-	-
7,758,057	7,097,807	-	4,931,871	-	-	-
22,830,893	-	-	952,382	-	-	-
-	20,424,730	-	-	13,300,761	-	-
7,148,751	-	-	126,453	-	-	-
-	11,839,990	-	-	2,713,508	-	-
\$ 41,297,098	\$ 125,465,520	\$ 258,712	\$ 6,624,244	\$ 76,102,791	\$ 449,331	\$ 119,535

Total

### **Footnotes to the December 31, 2020, Investment Summary**

1. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized fixed income account (1.02% cash, 79.33% fixed income, 19.65% mutual funds) for agencies.
2. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized balanced account (3.5% cash, 30% fixed income, 66.5% equities) for agencies.
3. Includes directly owned and donated publicly traded stock or mutual funds.
4. Ownership interest in private equity funds, including unrealized gains and reinvestments. Private equity groups include Venture Capital, Domestic and International Partnerships, Natural Resources, and Distressed Debt.
5. Cash value of life insurance contracts received as gifts.
6. Includes investment in Creative Dining Services, owned jointly with Hope College.
7. Real estate received as a gift or held for investment purposes.
8. Includes equity, commodity, and hedged mutual funds.
9. Includes Tactical Tilt Allocation Fund and other alternative private equity funds.

## **Calvin University Supplement**

### **I. Introduction**

The Calvin University Board of Trustees met May 6-7, 2021, and presents to synod this supplemental report. The board had a successful meeting and completed its scheduled work for committee and plenary sessions. During its May meeting, the board thanked seven members who are leaving—Jan Buikema, Fernando del Rosario, Wendy Hofman, Marge Hoogeboom, Tim Howerzyl, Alicia Sinclair, and Tom Wybenga—for their diligent work on the board and their service to Calvin University.

### **II. Finance**

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved the 2021-2022 budget proposal and received for information the completed Form 990 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

### **III. Academic**

The Calvin University Board of Trustees ratified or endorsed revisions of curricular programs, new courses, and course revisions.

### **IV. Board matters**

The Calvin University Board of Trustees recommends that synod elect new members, reappoint for subsequent terms, and ratify the results of elections held in classes for membership on the Calvin University Board of Trustees.

#### *A. Board membership*

##### **1. Trustee nominations**

###### **a. At-large trustees**

Marge Hoogeboom completed her third three-year term on the board as an at-large trustee. The board presents for appointment the following nominee to serve a three-year term:

*Jonathan (Jona) Eigege* is from Jos, Nigeria, and is a 2015 graduate of Calvin University who majored in international relations and affairs with a minor in business. He was an active member of the Calvin community and served as student body president during his senior year. He earned a master's degree in Africa studies and international economics from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He now works with the Africa Practice at Albright Stonebridge Group, a Washington, D.C.-based commercial diplomacy and strategic advisory firm chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. He would like to go back to the continent of Africa, leveraging his education and experience to foster the understanding, make the connections, and channel the financing needed to unlock African development. His church home is the Lincoln Theater Campus of National Community Church in Washington, D.C.

Wendy Hofman completed her third three-year term on the board as an at-large trustee. The board presents for appointment the following nominee to serve a three-year term:

*Niala Boodhoo* is a 1996 graduate of Calvin University with a double major in philosophy and psychology and a minor in journalism. She has a master of science degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University (1999) and a master's degree in Latin American and Caribbean studies from the Latin American and Caribbean Center of Florida International University (2000). She is currently the host of *Axios Today*, a daily morning news podcast. Since 2000, she has worked for the Associated Press in Miami, for Reuters in London and Washington, D.C., and for the *Miami Herald* and the *Florida Sun-Sentinel*. She was part of the 2019-2020 Knight-Wallace Fellowship program for journalists at the University of Michigan. She also serves as a guest host for *1A*, a national NPR talk show. Niala has served on the Calvin alumni board and as both a board member and a vice president of the Asian American Journalists Association. She currently serves in an advisory capacity to the board of Bookwallah, a Chicago-based nonprofit that builds libraries, particularly for children in orphanages and refugee camps across India. Niala has been an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA) for more than a decade. She also holds a certificate in spiritual direction from St. Thomas University and is a Veriditas-trained labyrinth facilitator.

b. Regional at-large trustee

*Region 9*

Janice Buikema is completing her second three-year term on the board as a regional trustee. The board presents the following nominee to serve a three-year term.

*Heather Van Vugt Ramirez* is a 2003 graduate of Calvin University with a political science major and a minor in communications. She earned her juris doctorate degree from the University of Minnesota in 2007. Previous employment includes running Centro Legal, a nonprofit legal service in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that served all of Milwaukee County. She also served as an intern for Partners Worldwide in Haiti after graduating from Calvin until the beginning of her law studies at the University of Minnesota. She currently serves on the United Performing Arts Fund board in Milwaukee, which raises \$12 million a year for the arts. In addition, she serves on the board of the Grand Avenue Club, Inc., of Milwaukee, a membership organization for people with mental health issues and a place for people to develop life skills. She currently serves as a deacon at City Reformed Church in Milwaukee, a church plant of Brookfield (Wisc.) CRC, which she attended while growing up.

c. Regional trustees

*Region 3*

Alicia Smit is unable to fulfill her term as a regional trustee from Region 3 because she moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts. The board presents the following nominee to serve a one-year term:

*Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman* graduated from Calvin University in 1977 with a major in French. She earned her master of arts degree in 1991 from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, specializing in higher education administration. She was employed for 30 years in a variety of roles in central and divisional academic administration at the University of Toronto and retired in 2020 from her most recent position as chief administrative officer in the faculty of kinesiology and physical education. She currently serves her local congregation, First CRC of Toronto, on their refugee committee, communications team, human resources committee, and Return to Worship COVID Task Force. She also prepares the weekly bulletin. In October 2020 she completed a term as chair of deacons. She has attended First CRC of Toronto since 1978, except while living in Holland and in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

### *Region 7*

Timothy Howerzyl is unable to fulfill his commitment to serve as a regional trustee because he moved to Allendale, Michigan. The board presents the following nominee to serve a one-year term.

*Michael DenBleyker* graduated from Calvin College in 1996 with a degree in civil engineering. He received his Illinois Professional Engineer license in 2001, Arizona Professional Engineer license in 2005, and LEED Accredited Professional registration in 2008. He has more than 20 years of civil engineering design and project management experience, working on a variety of development and infrastructure projects. Mike's prior work experience includes serving as a project manager with V3 Companies of Illinois and as a senior project manager at V3 Companies of Arizona. He currently manages the engineering consultants section at the Arizona Department of Transportation, overseeing the selection and negotiations of engineering contracts for the agency. He is a member of Creation Church in Chandler, Arizona. He has previously served as a member of the Calvin University Board of Trustees, as a deacon and elder at Palm Lane CRC (Scottsdale, Ariz.), and as a deacon at Lombard (Ill.) CRC. He served on the board of directors at Phoenix (Ariz.) Christian School (PK-8) from 2006 through 2010, with positions on the executive, finance, and building committees.

## 2. Trustee reappointments

The board recommends the following members for reappointment for the terms noted:

Region 10: Ben Ipema for a second three-year term  
 Region 10 at-large: Christopher (CJ) Grier, for a one-year term  
 Region 11 at-large: Andrea Karsten for a second three-year term  
 Region 11 at-large: Lois Miller for a second three-year term  
 At-large: Andrew Elliot for a second three-year term  
 At-large: Steven Triezenberg for a third three-year term

## *B. Board officers*

The Calvin University Board of Trustees appointed the following officers of the board for 2021-2022: Bruce Los, chair; Mary Tuuk Kuras, vice chair; Rhonda Roorda, secretary; and Jim English, treasurer (vice president for finance).

**V. Other**

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved the global campus tuition rates, the authority for President Le Roy to grant degrees, honors, and certificates, and emerita status for Provost Cheryl Brandsen, who is retiring.

**VI. Recommendation**

That synod elect new members, reappoint for subsequent terms, and ratify the results of elections held in classes for membership on the Calvin University Board of Trustees.

Calvin University  
Michael K. Le Roy, president



## **Pensions and Insurance Supplement**

### **I. Introduction**

The Canadian Pension Trustees and the U.S. Pension Trustees present this supplement with an additional matter relating to the denominational retirement plans.

### **II. Background**

In 2020 the denomination introduced an additional defined-contribution plan for commissioned pastors and staff at U.S. churches. The plan is a 403(b)(9) plan that offers a housing allowance tax benefit for pastors upon retirement. Commissioned pastors in the denominational agencies and ministries, as well as ministers of the Word (as a supplemental option), have become participants in this new plan.

### **III. Recommendation**

That synod designate up to 100 percent of an ordained pastor's distributions from their CRC 403(b)(9) Retirement Income Plan as housing allowance for United States income-tax purposes (IRS Ruling 1.107-1) on or after July 1, 2021, but only to the extent that the funds are used to rent or provide a home.

Pensions and Insurance

John H. Bolt, director of finance and operations

## **World Renew Supplement**

### **I. Board matters**

#### *A. Classical delegate appointment and transitions - Canada*

The board requests that synod approve the appointment of Margaret Hoogland to serve a first term of three years as a classical delegate for Classis Alberta North to replace Lisa Kuipers, who has moved to British Columbia. In addition, it is recommended that synod also approve the transition of Lisa Kuipers to serve as a member-at-large for the Classis B.C. South-East region.

The board also recommends that synod approve Julie VandenHeuvel to transition from serving as a member-at-large to serving as the classical delegate for Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan.

#### *B. Canada member request revised*

In light of a decision by Louise Boutin that she would prefer not to serve on the World Renew board at this time, the board of World Renew is withdrawing the recommendation to appoint her as a member-at-large for Classis Eastern Canada (previously requested in the World Renew report to Synod 2021).

#### *C. Classical delegate appointments - U.S.*

The board requests that synod appoint the following as U.S. classical delegates to a first term of three years: Glen Talsma (Classis Minnkota) and Arlan Koppendrayner (Classis Lake Superior - U.S.).

#### *D. U.S. member completing term*

World Renew would like to recognize and thank the following board member completing service on the board: LaVonne Koedam (member-at-large).

### **II. Recommendation**

That synod by way of the ballot appoint members to the World Renew Board of Delegates.

World Renew

Carol Bremer-Bennett, director, World Renew-U.S.

Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director, World Renew-Canada

## **Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement**

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

### **I. Board of Trustees**

At its meeting on May 20-21, 2021, the board elected the following officers for 2021-2022: David Morren, chair; Keith Oosthoek, vice chair (pending extension of term for one year by way of exception); Susan Keesen, secretary.

### **II. Academics**

#### *A. Graduates and new programs*

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously affected our global village as well as our ongoing formation and education programs at Calvin Theological Seminary. We are grateful for the investment made many years ago in an online delivery system of education, which became necessary as we moved back and forth to offer in-person classes as well as an online option in addition to our usual online distance classes throughout the entire academic year.

On May 21, 2021, Calvin Theological Seminary conducted a 2020 and 2021 Commencement Program to honor the 61 graduates from 2020 and 89 new graduates in 2021, including 27 students who graduated from our certificate programs, including a certificate program offered in Spanish. A viewing of the ceremony can be found on Vimeo at [vimeo.com/554417377](https://vimeo.com/554417377).

The international reach and scope of the ministry of Calvin Theological Seminary was again illustrated by graduates from the following locales: Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, Rwanda, South Korea, and the United States.

In the past year Calvin Theological Seminary launched a new, completely online certificate program in cooperation with Christian Schools International, and we just celebrated our first graduate from this program. This 15 credit-hour program offers a Certificate in Bible Instruction with required courses in Integrating Faith and Teaching and Teaching Bible, along with 11 hours of other seminary courses. All of these credits will count toward a master's degree in ministry leadership or a master of divinity degree at CTS.

In addition, we have an agreement with the Calvin University Education Program that all of these credits will count toward a master of education degree at Calvin University. We see this certificate as a service to Christian schools binationally and as a gateway to encourage students to consider further CTS Education (see [calvinseminary.edu/academics/certificate-in-bible-instruction](https://calvinseminary.edu/academics/certificate-in-bible-instruction)).

Calvin Seminary has been approved by the Association of Theological Schools to begin offering a doctor of ministry (D.Min.) degree, and we are ready to welcome our second cohort this coming summer. A previous synod asked us to investigate this degree program as part of our continuing education offerings, and we are glad for the ongoing support of the church. (See [calvinseminary.edu/academics/doctor-of-ministry](https://calvinseminary.edu/academics/doctor-of-ministry).)

### *B. Distinguished Alumni Awards – 2020 and 2021*

Rev. John DeVries (founder of Bibles for India, now known as Mission India) and Rev. Stanley Jim (regional director for CRC Home Missions from 2000-2016 and longtime pastor in Classis Red Mesa) were recognized as Distinguished Alumni Award recipients for 2020, but their contributions could not be publically recognized until 2021 due to the pandemic.

For 2021, we also included Rev. Emmanuel Bileya for recognition as a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient following his death (and that of his wife and unborn child) in Nigeria. During the past year, Rev. John DeVries also died, but we were able to honor him posthumously at the 2020/2021 commencement.

Three separate videos on the ministries and testimonies of Rev. DeVries, Rev. Jim, and Rev. Bileya are available for viewing:

Rev. John DeVries: [vimeo.com/554390728](https://vimeo.com/554390728)

Rev. Stanley Jim: [vimeo.com/554390143](https://vimeo.com/554390143)

Rev. Emmanuel Bileya: [vimeo.com/554390480](https://vimeo.com/554390480)

### *C. Board actions*

At its two most recent meetings, the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees took the following actions or took note of the following items for information:

1. Reappointed Dr. Danjuma Gibson as professor of pastoral care and awarded him tenure as a faculty member of Calvin Theological Seminary.
2. Reappointed Matt Tuininga for two years (2021-2023) as associate professor of moral theology.
3. Reappointed Sarah Schreiber for three years (2021-2024) as associate professor of Old Testament.
4. Reappointed Sarah Chun for three years (2021-2024) as dean of International Student and Scholar Services.
5. Reappointed Jeff Sajdak for three years (2021-2024) as dean of students.
6. Noted the intention to hold, at a future date, the first bachelor of arts commencement ceremony for students completing this degree through the Calvin Prison Initiative. The pandemic interrupted plans to hold this ceremony last year for the first class. This program is part of an ongoing partnership with Calvin University.
7. Noted that the Meeter Center of Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary is planning a two-day conference for September 24-25, 2021, to commemorate the Puritans.
8. Noted that the Kuyper Conference and Prize sponsored by Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary is being planned in connection with the Henry Institute for April 5-9, 2022.

9. Heard an update on COVID-19 summer course offerings under the umbrella of “Ministry in a COVID-Shaped World.” These are fully online courses. More information on this joint venture of Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary can be found at [calvinseminary.edu/academics/covid-19-courses](http://calvinseminary.edu/academics/covid-19-courses).
10. Heard an update from Rev. Shawn Brix, who on January 2, 2020, began work as the Calvin Theological Seminary Canadian church relations liaison.
11. The Calvin Seminary Board of Trustees approved a search process for one or more faculty members in the areas of Old Testament (appointment of professor Amanda Benckhuysen as director of Safe Church Ministry for the CRCNA), history of Christianity (upcoming retirement of professor Lyle Bierma), and philosophical theology (anticipated completion of term of service of professor Young Ahn Kang).
12. Finally, the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees received an update about a major renovation/remodeling project that will focus on the classrooms, Student Center, and chapel for the purpose of upgrading technology, providing flexibility in use of space, and developing collaborative learning environments. This project will include updating parts of the building that have not been updated since 1959, and other areas not updated since the last major renovation in 2004. We give thanks for the support that has been received above and beyond our annual operating fund.

#### *D. Board appointments and reappointments*

The board recommends that synod by way of exception extend the term of current board member Keith Oosthoek for one year due to the unexpected resignation of Allen Klein Deters in April 2021 and our desire to provide continuity as well as time to process additional nominees from Region 4.

The board recommends that synod appoint the following nominee to the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees as an at-large member from Region 4 to a first term of three years.

*Brian Verheul* is the owner of Verheul and Associates, Inc., a consulting practice formed to provide litigation support and executive search support. He previously completed a 34-year career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He is currently working under contract for Redeemer University in their Donor Relations Office as a development officer. He is a member of Mountainview CRC in Grimsby, Ontario. He has been a member of eight Christian Reformed churches in various cities across Canada where he has served as a pastoral elder, clerk, youth elder, and chair of council. He has also served on several educational boards, including that of Redeemer University and those of several local agencies.

The board recommends that synod reappoint Charles Veenstra (Region 8 at-large) and David Morren (Region 11 at-large) to a second term.

### **III. Recommendation**

That synod by way of exception extend the term of board member Keith Oosthoek for one year, by way of the ballot appoint the stated nominee as an at-large member of the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, and reappoint members to a second term.

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees  
Heather Garretson, secretary

## Candidacy Committee Supplement

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

#### A. *Candidates for ministry*

Each year it is a privilege to meet and interview the applicants for candidacy. The interviews for these candidates were conducted this year by teams of four or five persons. The Candidacy Committee is pleased to recommend for candidacy the thirty-one persons listed below. These persons include persons who graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary and from other accredited seminaries. Those attending seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary have completed the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC). Biographical details for each of the candidates can be found in the candidate booklet, available for download at [crcna.org/candidacy](http://crcna.org/candidacy).

The following motion is presented for consideration of the candidates presented:

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

Subject to approval, the candidates are normally presented to synod. Because synod will not meet again this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these candidates will be presented for approval by the Council of Delegates during a special meeting in June 2021 on behalf of synod.

Maria L. Bowater  
Mark D. Broadus  
Kelly J. Buist  
David M. Dick  
Chuck J. Dillender  
Bart B. Eisen  
Josiah J. Gorter  
Joshua L. Grimes  
Tyler R. Helfers  
Mackenzie M. Jager  
"Joshua" Hang Jiang  
Timothy K. Joo  
Eunice Kim  
Jooheyng David Kim  
Young-Kwang Kim  
Tim J. Kimbel

Hoonjae Lee  
Jessica E. Maddox  
Frank A. Meneses  
Daniel F. Meyers  
Seon Mok "Paul" Park  
Ryan M. Phan  
William S. Roelofs  
Kent A. Sanders  
David Shao  
Evan J. Tinklenberg  
Lynette A. van de Hoef  
Ryan A. K. VanderWees  
Ben E. Wiersma  
Lea A. Wilkening  
Paul Yang

#### B. *Extension of candidacy*

The rules of synod require that a declared candidate by one synod must request an extension of candidacy status at the following synod if a call has not been accepted. The Candidacy Committee communicates with such persons in order to determine the validity of the request and to offer words of encouragement. Note that two of the twenty-nine names presented are listed by initials only, at the request of these candidates and with permission of



the Candidacy Committee, following the protocol presented with the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2020.

The Candidacy Committee recommends the following twenty-nine persons for approval of candidacy extension:

Ram Aryal	Loice Mueni Minito
Maria D. Beversluis	Matthew Mulder
David Bouma	K.O.
Yoon Chul (Daniel) Choi	Katrina J. Olson
Brad Diekema	Kyle J. Sandison
Steven Dykstra	Ivan K. Santoso
Robert J. Gruessing	Hannah G. Van Rees Saxton
Noelle Meggie Jacobs	Nathaniel A. Schmidt
Travis Jamieson	Sharon R. Smith
S.K.	Lynn Song
Kennedy Muli Kailiti	Joshua P. Stammers
Jiyong "Jonathan" Kim	Rebecca L. Tjapkes
Hannah Ryou Lee	Thomas Van Wyk
Jeff M. Liou	Jantje Fenna Visser-Ellenbaas
Bryzon Wanjala Masiboh	

### *C. Reinstatement of candidacy*

Lisa Meyer was first a candidate in 2012. In 2013 she requested that her candidacy be suspended as her growing family required her attention. In the past few years she has been doing significant volunteer work at her home church, and that church now wishes to offer her an ordained pastoral position. As this congregation has expressed a desire to call Lisa Meyer, and because she has expressed a desire to serve there, the Candidacy Committee interviewed her in April. We are pleased to affirm Lisa Meyer's request for reinstatement of candidacy, and we recommend that synod approve this request.

## **II. Article 8 candidates approved**

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

Date	Name of applicant	Classis	Former denomination
9-3-20	Kim, Jung Min	Alberta North	Korean Presbyterian Church
9-3-20	Barham, William H.	Atlantic Northeast	Reformed Church in America
9-3-20	Wright, Matthew W.	Central California	Presbyterian Church (USA)
9-14-20	Peramulla, Chenaniah R.	Central California	Mennonite Brethren of India
9-14-20	Peramulla, Merlin	Central California	Mennonite Brethren of India
9-14-20	Sebastia, Christian	Rocky Mountain	Apostolic Church of Venezuela
9-14-20	Sebastia, Eukarys	Rocky Mountain	Apostolic Church of Venezuela
9-28-20	Brady, Greg S.	Rocky Mountain	Presbyterian Church (USA)

9-30-20	Guan, Hannah	Rocky Mountain	Association of Evangelical Churches
10-13-20	Lee, Kwang Bae	Hudson	Evangelical Church Alliance
1-20-21	Sideco, John Albert	Hudson	CRC of the Philippines

### III. EPMC Facilitation Team update

As mentioned in our report to Synod 2021, an Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) Facilitation Team formed in fall 2020 and will work under the authority of the Candidacy Committee. They have been meeting monthly and are making good progress in understanding the challenges and needs of the EPMC. They also have conducted interviews of all persons presented as potential EPMC candidates for approval by Synod 2021.

Their hope is to be ready to serve in the admission and support processes beginning in fall 2021. Toward that end, they are working on a number of documents. These include the following:

- an application form that includes the licensure process for EPMC applicants
- a document showing the process for the EPMC from admission to candidacy
- an assessment chart to assist in constructing a personalized learning plan for each EPMC applicant

These documents are not yet in final form but are available on request to anyone who is interested. The EPMC Facilitation Team, along with the Candidacy Committee, is committed to implementing a transition from the previous program into the updated program in a way that serves the church well. We do not want to disrupt or create an adverse experience for any participants and for any partners in the program. We anticipate that our update to Synod 2022 will be able to include much more detail.

### IV. Committee membership

The committee's report to Synod 2021 noted that a committee position is vacant because of the passing of Rev. Henry Jonker. The committee reported that it would be considering nominees to fill that position and would offer a slate of two nominees in its supplemental report. The Committee recommends that synod appoint a member from the following slate of nominees:

*Rev. Andrew Beunk* serves at New Westminster CRC in Burnaby, British Columbia (Classis B.C. North-West). He has served the regional and denominational church in a variety of capacities, including service on the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and on the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, as well as service as a synodical deputy, a regional pastor, a delegate to synod, and a mentor to persons moving toward ordination. He is well acquainted with the history and direction of the work of the Candidacy Committee.

*Rev. Jack Van de Hoef* serves at Bethel CRC in Brockville, Ontario (Classis Eastern Canada). In his career he has served in various classical positions in four different classes. He has been a delegate to synod on several occasions, and he has served as a synodical deputy. He is well acquainted with the history and direction of the work of the Candidacy Committee.

The committee is also pleased to note and to celebrate the appointment of Rev. Susan E. LaClear as the new director of candidacy. This appointment takes place as the current director

is retiring after thirteen years of service. Rev. LaClear has just completed six years of service as a committee member and brings wonderful gifts to this role. With the appointment of two new committee members in regular rotation, plus the new appointment noted above, the committee will begin a new chapter this fall. We pray for God's blessing on this transition, and we are grateful for the provision of gifted, committed persons to serve the church in this work.

The Candidacy Committee expresses gratitude to David Koll for faithfully serving in the role of director of Candidacy for thirteen years. He has been an encouragement to many in their journey to ministry and has served our denomination well. We especially appreciate his passion for and leadership in the area of diversity. Throughout his tenure as director he developed the EPMC program, which has made a vital impact on our congregations. His commitment to equipping and empowering leaders from various ethnic backgrounds has resulted in many leaders embracing a Reformed perspective and joining the CRC. We have been richly blessed through his service to the denomination.

## **V. Recommendations**

- A. That synod declare the persons listed in section I, A as candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
- B. That synod approve the extensions of candidacy as recommended in section I, B.
- C. That synod approve the reinstatement of candidacy of Lisa Meyer as described in section I, C.
- D. That synod approve the action of the Candidacy Committee in declaration of need for the persons listed in section II for affiliation under Church Order Article 8.
- E. That synod take note of the EPMC Facilitation Team update as noted in section III of this report.
- F. That synod by way of the ballot appoint one person from the slate of two nominees to fill the position vacated by the passing of Rev. Henry Jonker, and that synod also rejoice in the provision of a new director of candidacy, Rev. Susan E. LaClear.

Candidacy Committee  
 Mark W. Hilbelink, chair  
 David R. Koll, director

## **Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee Supplement**

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee presents this supplement of additional matters related to ecumenical relationships and interfaith interactions.

### **I. Nominations for membership**

In keeping with the synodical guidelines and requirements for diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, geographical location, and ordination among the membership of the committee, the EIRC presents a slate of two nominees for both the Eastern Canada position and the Western U.S. position.

#### *Eastern Canada position*

The EIRC recommends that synod elect one member to a first term from the following slate of nominees:

*Rev. Zachary DeBruyne* is a chaplain and multifaith coordinator at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario. He is currently serving on the Disciples Making Disciples committee through Classis Niagara. He served on the leadership team of a Presbyterian Church in America church plant in Ottawa, Ontario; was part of the lead intern-team at Encounter Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and served as a seminary intern at Cascade Fellowship CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*Rev. Ruth Hofman* is an ordained pastor and campus minister. Previous experience includes serving on the Classis Toronto home missions committee and on the synodical Committee to Study Ordination and “Official Acts of Ministry” (1999); she also served as a Reformed Ecumenical Council delegate. Currently she is a Jane Finch Church Coalition cochair and a representative at the Interfaith Council and Interfaith Dialogue at York University, Toronto. She has served as an ex-officio member of church councils.

#### *Western U.S. position*

The EIRC recommends that synod elect one member to a first term from the following slate of nominees:

*Rev. Joy Engelsman* is currently serving as a multivocational pastor. This includes the following roles: missionary through Youth for Christ International - Leadership Training for Africa Youth for Christ; frequent pulpit supply for churches in the Front Range; coach/consultant through Worship Ministries and Pastor Church Resources; mentor and coach to Denver Seminary students and other ministry professionals; owner/operator of a small business creating clergy attire. Previous experience includes serving on the boards of Christian Reformed World Missions and Christian Reformed Home Missions. She served on the Governance Review team that helped to move the denomination from governance of separate boards to the current CRCNA structure of the Council of Delegates. She served many years on the Ministries North Committee of Classis Rocky Mountain and on the Cherry Creek High School Band Parents Association. Currently Rev. Engelsman is in her fourth year serving on the board of Quiet Waters Ministries, of which she is currently vice president. For nine years she was copastor of First Christian Reformed Church in Denver, Colorado.

*Rev. Bonny Mulder-Behnia* is the executive pastor at Rosewood CRC in Bellflower, California. Previous experience includes serving as a board member of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators, as a staff member of CRC Publications, as a synod news officer, as part of the leadership team of Classis Greater Los Angeles, and as first clerk of Synod 2015. Currently she serves on the World Renew - U.S. Board of Directors. Her local church council experience includes serving as a voting member of the governing board, as a staff liaison with the deacons, and as a pastoral member of the shepherding elders.

## **II. Recommendation**

That synod by way of the ballot elect two new members from the slates of nominees presented to serve on the EIRC for a first term of three years, effective July 1, 2021.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee  
William T. Koopmans, chair  
Colin P. Watson, Sr., executive director (ex officio)

## Communication 6: Classis Grand Rapids East

*Note:* At its May 20, 2021, meeting, Classis Grand Rapids East adopted the following communication to Synod 2021 for inclusion in the supplemental agenda. The communication originated with Neland Avenue CRC and has not been edited. Classis affirms this communication from Neland Avenue and is deeply grateful for it.

In May 2020, Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church (Neland Church) elected to the office of deacon one of our members who is married to a person of the same sex. By this communication to Synod 2021, Neland Church seeks to more fully explain how we came to this decision and to address some of the questions, concerns, and charges expressed in synodical overtures and in direct communications we have received.

### I. Background

Neland Church has made its home on the corner of Neland and Watkins on the southeast side of Grand Rapids, Michigan, for 105 years. In the early years, this corner was on the outskirts of the city, the closest CRC congregation to the former campus of “Calvin College and Seminary.” In addition to that distinction, which brought many students and professors to its membership and helped solidify its ties to the denomination, Neland Church was also distinctive for its English-language worship services—meeting a growing need for the second generation of Dutch immigrants. From the beginning, these twin values—denominational commitment and serving the needs of the community—have been a part of our DNA, guiding Neland Church through a century of changing physical, social, and cultural landscapes.

In the 1960s and '70s Neland was faced with a choice: move to the suburbs where most of its members lived, or commit to being part of the changing neighborhood. When Neland chose to stay put, a new motto was adopted: “There is a place for you at Neland.” It has been on our welcome sign ever since. And it has shaped our aspirations ever since. No matter your age, ethnicity, race, marital status, gender, political persuasion, socioeconomic status, personal history . . . there is a place for you here. A place that goes beyond the pews and programs, a place for you to discover and use your God-given gifts, a place for God to work in you and through you. Welcome and inclusion in the name of Christ are at the heart of who we are, as our newest mission statement reflects: *Neland Church seeks to be a community of hope where all will experience and extend the deep welcome of Christ.*

While we own this ideal as part of our identity, we cannot claim that we’ve always succeeded, or that it’s always been easy. In many ways, engaging various tensions has also been a part of our DNA. In the '60s and '70s, Neland’s geography placed it in the middle of racial tensions. In the '80s and '90s Neland Church engaged the debates about women in office, with church members advocating both for and against. Professors who were Neland members, like Allen Verhey and Harold Dekker, made Neland privy to the details of doctrinal controversies within the denomination. Neland has often wrestled with disagreement and experienced the pain that frequently accompanies it, but we have also sought to embrace the tensions rather than avoid them—to persevere in a way that produces character and hope (Rom. 5:4). Somewhere along the way, we started referring to ourselves as a “faith family”—and, like any family, we have hurt and offended each other, loved and cared for each other. As we’ve navigated the friction and continued to “stay put” with each other, we’ve experienced the gift of growing in our understanding of what it means to say that we are bound together in Christ alone. Those bonds run deeper than agreement. Those bonds make Neland a family that deeply loves and trusts one another, and truly enjoys serving God together the best way we know how in this



place. Those bonds continue to stretch us as we aspire to show each other and our community what the “deep welcome of Christ” looks like.

At Neland, experiencing and extending that deep welcome looks like a lot of different things. We have ongoing Bible study groups and catechism classes. Our Wednesday evenings are filled with the noise of GEMS and Cadets, as they finish projects in the woodshop and play games in the gym. Our Sunday evening worship includes prayer about our community’s joy and sorrow, occasional teaching series on the Heidelberg, and special intergenerational “WE” events using the curriculum offered by Faith Alive Christian Resources. Our high school group, dubbed TNG (The Next Generation), goes cross-country skiing and makes visuals for our worship space and invites the congregation to join them for board game nights. Our Children in Worship leaders encourage our young ones to wonder about the stories of the Bible. Our Pastoral Care Assistants bring our fellowship out the doors of our building and into people’s homes, holding wrinkled hands and rocking newborn babies and supporting those who are in crisis. The Anti-Racism Team helps us recognize and work against the ways that racism affects our church and community. The Missions Committee coordinates our support of and communication with Resonate, World Renew, and a dozen missionaries across the country and around the globe. The Creation Care Team helps us to be better stewards of God’s world. We have formed a close connection with a school and orphanage in Haiti, which has welcomed our painters and doctors and sewers and dentists into their community. We participate in a partnership of local churches who take turns hosting homeless families for a week at a time. We have a knitting group, a Tuesday walking group, and monthly book and movie clubs. We have sponsored refugee families. We love to sing together—from the ancient hymn to the new worship song to the “Hallelujah Chorus” every Christmas. We love to eat together—during household potlucks every Sunday and during baby showers for the newest members of the family. For the past year, we have tried to figure out what family life looks like when we can’t be together—and have come up with “Fire Pit Fridays,” cookie decorating via Zoom, a gigantic car parade for a staff retirement, the sewing and distribution of thousands of masks, and “Camp to Go” for kids during the summer.

Family life provides lots of opportunities to practice and experience the truth of Colossians 3:12-14—“Holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience . . . bear with each another and forgive one another . . . and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Family life is joyful and messy. We are a collection of our best and worst impulses, intentions, desires, efforts, and actions. We make mistakes. We try to forgive each other. We celebrate the highs together; we bring food to each other during the lows. We take a long time making decisions. We rush to offer help when needs arise. We occasionally pause to assess and evaluate and refocus what we’re doing. We disagree and discuss and deliberate. We try to understand one another. Sometimes we do; other times we don’t. Yet Christ holds us together as we “work out our salvation with fear and trembling,” trusting that “it is God who works in us to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Phil. 2:12-13).

## **II. Neland’s engagement with LGBTQ+ matters**

For almost ten years now, Neland’s family life has included deep dialogue about how to love our LGBTQ+ family and friends both within Neland and beyond—dialogue that has reflected our commitment to Scripture as well as our varying perspectives. As with many other things in our history, the dialogue came to us in the form of names and faces, members over the years whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual and/or whose gender identity is not cisgender (when one’s sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex).



For Neland, LGBTQ+ is not an “issue” but has a name, many names, beloved children of God in our congregation, some young, some old, some single, some married, some out of the closet, some not, and some in between.

For many LGBTQ+ people, the church has not been an easy place to be. The stories of LGBTQ+ people in the church (even when their actions do not conflict with the official position of the church), more often than not, include fear, rejection, shame, self-loathing, grief, doubt. That has been true at Neland Church. In many ways and like many churches, Neland has not been a safe place for those who are LGBTQ+. But Neland Church has been safe enough that gradually, especially over the past ten years, some LGBTQ+ members and their families have taken more risks than ever before. As they shared their experiences, Neland began to better understand the deep pain of those who are not heterosexual and cisgender. And all of us—including those in our congregation who disagree with same-sex marriage (SSM)—began to ask serious questions about how we could better follow synod’s pastoral guidance in 1973 to care for LGBTQ+ people and incorporate them in the life of our congregation.

Over the past ten years Neland has been learning and listening related to LGBTQ+ matters; but it was in 2015 that the council recognized the urgent need to foster intentional dialogue among the congregation. That spring, council supported the nomination to deacon of a member who was in a committed same-sex relationship, and then retracted that nomination a couple of weeks later. It was obvious that we needed to create space for having difficult conversations—conversations that would be grounded in Scripture and in our love for Christ and for each other; conversations that would help us listen to and understand one another; conversations that would acknowledge a growing diversity of viewpoints among our members. As a result, council approved the formation of a Generous Spaciousness Committee, comprising people who reflect the variety of perspectives at Neland, “to help facilitate discussion, study, and discernment on the ways Neland ministers with, uses the gifts of, and includes those who are LGBTQ+.”

Under the prayerful guidance of Council, the committee has sought to foster such discussion, study, and discernment. Adult education sessions have regularly brought in biblical scholars and scientific experts who speak from a variety of viewpoints. Council retreats have dedicated time to learning, listening, and restorative circles. Several Colossian Way small groups have discussed sexuality and gender. Synodical reports, the Classis Grand Rapids East report on SSM from 2016, and the pastoral guidelines of synod have been carefully studied. We have listened to each other’s stories, and we have studied Scripture together. We have wondered together whether the Spirit is prompting new interpretations of Scripture that are God-honoring. We have spent much time in prayer, seeking God’s will and the Spirit’s leading. And in the process, what has become clear to us more than anything else is the assurance that Christ is both our sure foundation (Matt. 7:25) and our “only comfort in life and in death” (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1).

### **III. Responding to Synod 2016**

One year after the formation of the Generous Spaciousness Committee, a congregational survey revealed a broad range of views on same-sex relationships, from traditional (40%) to affirming (40%) and in between (20%). The survey also showed us that many were hurting within the dialogue. Those who held the CRC’s traditional view reported feeling less safe to voice their opinion during discussion, and council recognized its pastoral responsibility to provide safety for these members. Another portion of our congregation felt hurt and vulnerable as a result of the pastoral guidance of Synod 2016 (including that SSM members could or

should be disciplined), and some feared that because they or a loved one are part of the LGBTQ+ community, they might no longer be welcome at Neland or in any CRC. Council recognized its pastoral responsibility to care for these members too.

In a letter to the Neland congregation in the fall of 2016, council named its pastoral responsibility to all members and pledged to continue to reflect upon Synod 2016's pastoral recommendations. The letter concluded:

But Council also wishes to state clearly that this congregation's motto is still "There is a place for you at Neland." Even when we disagree, Neland Church will continue to be a place where all who seek God are welcome to experience God's love in our worship, to experience God's grace at the communion table, and to serve God together with the gifts God has given them.

Council was responding to Synod 2016's pastoral advice—namely, that SSM members should be disciplined, which includes the possibility of withholding the sacrament and even excommunication. (See *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 440-443, esp. the reference to Church Order Article 81-a on p. 442.) Despite a broad range of opinion about SSM within our membership, council made it clear that SSM members of Neland were not objects of discipline and were members in good standing.

#### **IV. Members in good standing and eligibility for office**

Neland's nomination process for elders and deacons, for as long as most of us today can recall, has been to provide the congregation with a list of eligible members and to request that all members prayerfully submit nominations; after nominations have been received, council carefully considers the nominations and finalizes a slate of elders and deacons that is presented to the congregation for approval at the annual congregational meeting. Up until 2020, Neland's council did not include SSM members on the final slate, despite their status as members in good standing and despite the congregation's frequent and numerous nominations of SSM members in the yearly process. Each year many on council found it increasingly difficult to justify the functional, though not official, exclusion of SSM members from consideration for office. In 2019 council received the report of an ad hoc committee appointed to assess the congregation's varying perspectives about these difficulties. Neland also sought the counsel of advisors from Classis Grand Rapids East, with the counsel given focusing on Neland's process for nominating elders and deacons. After prayerful consideration and many months of careful conversation, council's decision was that it could no longer justify excluding SSM members from the final slate to be approved by the congregation, since they had never been placed under discipline.

One important factor in that decision was council's efforts to understand past decisions of synod, which led to the realization that the CRC position on homosexuality and same-sex marriage is based on synodical decisions given as pastoral guidance—a category synod itself identified as different from decisions of confessional interpretation (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 44). This means that synod's pastoral guidance is of a somewhat different weight and authority than synodical decisions considered to be interpretations of the confessions. And it displays synod's confidence that local congregations are communities of integrity who are uniquely positioned to care for the body both individually and as a whole.

In the spring of 2020 the nomination process again indicated that many members supported a Neland SSM member for the office of deacon. When council selected her to be on

the final slate of deacons for congregational ratification, the congregation overwhelmingly voted to select her as deacon. This individual, in the years prior to her marriage in 2016, served as a deacon twice before, including as chair of the deacons, and has been a key leader in Neland's overall ministry for decades. She is spiritually gifted and mature. Christ's light is evident in her life. In spite of the pain she has experienced within the church and the vulnerability she now experiences from being in the spotlight and being condemned by many who do not know her, she continues to be a testimony of the fruit of the Spirit that can grow in the soil of God's unconditional acceptance embodied and made incarnate in the Christian community.

## **V. Neland's ongoing journey**

We continue to be a congregation with differing points of view on LGBTQ+ matters. We grieve the loss of members who needed to find a different church to call home (both those who believe Neland has been too progressive and those who believe Neland has been too conservative), and we know that grief has accompanied their decisions. Disagreement causes pain and sorrow. But we also possess a deep mutual respect and love for one another, and a commitment to a common mission to love God and our neighbor because Christ loves us. We can testify to a unity that is deeper than agreement, to the mysterious truth that "in Christ all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). Neland knows that it is Reformed and always reforming, on a lifelong journey, seeking to be faithful to God's Word while we continue to learn from God's world. As we rely on the Spirit and search Scripture for God's will in our community, we hold to Jesus' promise that the Spirit is continually working to "lead us into all truth" (John 16:13).

## **VI. Engaging our denomination**

Neland's journey of ongoing listening and learning now includes our engagement with the denomination we have loved and valued from the beginning. In recent months, Neland Church has received many communications regarding our ordination of a SSM deacon. To date, Neland has received in writing

- 25 communications from church councils, 22 of which disapproved and three of which supported Neland's ordination of a SSM member to the office of deacon.
- one communication from a classis which disapproved of Neland's ordination of a SSM member to the office of deacon.
- 16 written communications from individuals, two of which disapproved and 14 of which supported Neland's ordination of a SSM member to the office of deacon.
- a letter from the Council of Delegates expressing its concern regarding Neland's actions.

Neland's action has also been the subject of eight overtures and one communication included in the *Agenda for Synod 2021* (Overtures 4-11 and Communication 2; in response, this communication is offered for the Supplement to the *Agenda for Synod 2021*).

Though the tone and scope of these communications vary widely, Neland sincerely appreciates the concerns that lie behind these communications and believes that every writer of every communication earnestly seeks God's will in these matters as well as God's will for Neland Church. In the Question and Answer section below, we seek to concisely answer many questions, concerns, and charges Neland has received.

*A. Why did Neland install a SSM deacon when that is contrary to synod's pastoral advice?*

Neland found itself caught—between growing differences about biblical convictions, and loving and caring for all of its members, and adherence to denominational pastoral advice. We take no joy in disagreeing with the pastoral advice recommended by synod in 2016 (to discipline SSM members), especially on such a controversial issue. Yet we are also grateful for the space this pastoral advice afforded, allowing us to find a way forward that emphasizes the true nature of our unity as a body of believers.

Many have suggested that Neland is splitting hairs to distinguish between synodical decisions that are in the category of pastoral advice and ones that are interpretations of the confessions. That distinction comes from Synod 1975, which considered the nature of various types of synodical decisions and their relationship to the confessions. This occurred in the wake of several very significant issues that were addressed in the early 1970s, including office and ordination, neo-Pentecostalism, women's ordination, and homosexuality. The report to Synod 1975 (p. 426) said,

All synodical decisions "shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order" (Art. 29). But there is an obvious difference between the use and function of a pronouncement as interpretation of the confessions and a decision involving "guidelines" or "pastoral advice." It is the wording of synod's decision which usually indicates the precise character of its decision, and this wording of the decision determines its use and function. No synodical decision involving doctrinal or ethical pronouncements is to be considered on a par with the confessions.

Synod itself has made this distinction and has instructed the church to look at the wording within each synodical decision to understand its use and function. The fact is that all synodical pronouncements on homosexuality to date have been in the category of pastoral guidance—a reality that is now being reinforced by the efforts of some in the denomination to change the status of these pronouncements to that of a confessional interpretation.

*B. Why couldn't Neland have waited until Synod 2021 and its addressing of the Human Sexuality Report (HSR)?*

Our primary focus has been navigating the tension over whether SSM members in good standing should be excluded from eligibility for office—tension that exists both within our congregation and between Neland and the denomination. When Synod 2016 adopted as pastoral advice a portion of the minority report and appointed a study committee, Neland had already been wrestling with these questions for nearly five years, and hoped for similar wrestling on the denominational level that would lead to pastorally sensitive guidance in these matters. However, the committee's composition of only those who adhered to synod's position statement in 1973 indicated little desire to engage the full scope of the conversation. And the committee's interim report in 2019 offered no indication that Synod 2021 would change the CRC's position stated in 1973, nor that it would offer any real answers for the questions with which we had been wrestling. Therefore we assumed that these conversations and tensions would be ongoing beyond Synod 2021, and the majority of Council felt that it was incumbent upon Neland to find a way forward that would allow our congregation to find its unity within the tension.

*C. What makes Neland think it has the right to pick and choose which pastoral advice of synod it will follow?*

Synod 1975 made clear that according to the Church Order, “All synodical decisions ‘shall be considered settled and binding,’” which places Neland or any other church under a burden to “abide by” all synodical decisions, not just the ones it likes. Neland’s actions raise the question of how and whether the denomination has mechanisms for making accommodations for a congregation’s biblical conscience. Does the CRC have any room for a church’s biblical convictions that may differ from a denominational position?

The Supplement to Church Order Article 3-a says that “every classis shall respect the prerogative of its constituent churches to call and ordain officebearers *according to their own biblical convictions*.” Neland finds it significant that the CRC has a mechanism for respecting a church’s “biblical convictions” and allowing for different views and practices regarding the selection of officebearers. While the context of the Supplement, Article 3-a was the issue of women in office, and the envisioned biblical convictions were ones judged acceptable by synod, that issue is not the only one that Christians have biblical convictions about. As outlined in our answer to section J below, there are serious biblical scholars and theologians who have sound biblical convictions about the permissibility of same-sex marriage. And Neland is not the only congregation with members who are expressing biblical convictions that differ on this issue, prompting requests for reexamining these pastorally agonizing situations. Certainly this is one of the challenges of living together in an increasingly diverse denomination and world. While Neland members do not agree about the clarity of the Bible on this issue, we do agree about the foundational truth that the Bible is God’s infallible Word, God’s story of grace and love made clear to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—and that we have been called to participate in that story as it unfolds here and now.

*D. What right does Neland think it has to change our denomination’s settled position on marriage and homosexuality?*

Neland does not have the right to change our denomination’s position on marriage and homosexuality and is not seeking to do so. We understand and keenly appreciate the denomination’s resistance to such change and the pain such a change would cause the denomination. We also do not expect synod to agree with our decision, but we hope that synod, by taking no action in response to overtures that ask synod to intervene in a local church’s matters in ways denominational polity has not allowed, will in effect acknowledge that Neland’s decisions have been undertaken in good faith, seeking to hold in tension denominational loyalty, biblical conscience, and provision of pastoral care for our congregation. Neland is asking the denomination for its trust, not for agreement with our actions or a change in the denominational position.

*E. Doesn’t Neland see how installing a SSM deacon is going to split our denomination?*

This is an extremely important question—a question frequently asked in the communications Neland received, and a question asked with deep pain and agony.

In short, we believe that it is simply not true that people with different positions on SSM cannot coexist in the same denomination. We believe it because we have lived it.

Consider any number of married couples who disagree on this issue: John believes the Bible without question forbids all same-sex marriage, while Susan believes the Bible permits



same-sex marriage. John is grieved that Susan doesn't see how she is disobeying Scripture in holding her position; Susan is grieved that John doesn't see how Scripture prioritizes love in service to one another. Do they get a divorce over this disagreement? Of course not. What binds them together in marriage is deeper and stronger than their disagreement on this issue. Anyone who is happily married knows that one key to a happy marriage is figuring out how to "agree to disagree," especially on weighty matters. Healthy married couples do it all the time.

Although Neland Church has lost some members (both those who think Neland has been too progressive and those who think Neland has been too conservative on this issue), we still have many people who strongly disagree about these things. But our unity in Christ, our mutual respect and deep love for one another, and our commitment to our common mission as the church are bonds that run deeper than agreement on this issue. For the most part, we're a joyful bunch of people gratefully serving the Lord.

We will not deny that this issue is a divisive one. But we believe there is nothing inherent in Neland's actions that is splitting the denomination. The CRC and its Church Order are strong in their judgments about schismatic activity, and Neland has no interest in schism or division of any kind. We believe that as a denomination we can, as with women in office, "agree to disagree." And Neland, along with countless other churches throughout the denomination, fervently prays that we will.

*F. If you, Neland Church, disagree with the CRC on this issue, why don't you just leave the CRC?*

Because Neland Church loves the CRC too much and Neland Church loves LGBTQ+ people too much.

Neland Avenue CRC is self-consciously, and at its core, Christian Reformed in its identity, its theology, its worship, and its ministry. For the past 105 years and still today, it has been actively committed to the leadership and mission of our denomination. Our members work and serve in the denomination in a variety of positions. Our resources support CRC missionaries and fund ministry shares. We are committed to the mission and vision of this unique body of churches. Neland views its relationship with the CRC with appreciation and does not concede that its decision constitutes "breaking covenant" with the CRC. On the contrary, Neland acted out of the hope that our denomination's understanding of covenant is stronger and deeper than any one issue. We love the Christian Reformed Church. We are a Christian Reformed Church in every way.

We also love LGBTQ+ people too much to simply abandon this conversation within the denomination. We know that there are LGBTQ+ people in our congregations who suffer under the weight of the current denominational position and the Human Sexuality Report. We are grateful for God's LGBTQ+ children in our congregation who have bravely come out, trusting their church to love them and not harm them. And we grieve that their decisions to do so are fraught with fear and uncertainty and pain. It is very likely that every CRC congregation has LGBTQ+ children of God, children loved by God and seeking to be loved by their church. Neland desires to do what synod has been calling the denomination to do since 1973—namely, create a more loving and safe place for LGBTQ+ people to flourish in the CRC. We feel a strong calling to abide by and live into that important part of the CRC's position on LGBTQ+ matters. And we are hopeful that synod's acknowledgment of our intent in good faith could help the denomination offer a witness to the strength and depth of unity in Christ.

*G. In 2005 First CRC of Toronto was threatened with disaffiliation if it did what Neland has done. Why should synod not declare Neland Avenue CRC to be disaffiliated from the Christian Reformed Church?*

In 2002 First Toronto CRC announced that it was going to declare people living in same-sex committed relationships eligible for ecclesiastical office. The church's decision was appealed to classis and synod, and synod appointed a "committee in loco" to deal with this matter. The committee was given power by synod to act as if it were synod (and even to call a "synod in loco" of four classes in the region) to ensure that First Toronto CRC was in compliance with the CRC position on homosexuality. Before even calling a synod in loco, the committee told the Toronto church that it (the committee) interpreted not abiding within the pastoral guidelines of 1973 and 2002 as effectively disaffiliating from the denomination, and recommended that Classis Toronto give the church one month to indicate its compliance with the CRC position. Before classis acted upon that recommendation, the church agreed to stay within the denominational guidelines as far as council membership.

Neland suggests that there were two major flaws in the denominational committee's actions with First CRC of Toronto. First, the "committee in loco" did not follow our denomination's synodical decisions and polity when it proposed such a disproportionate action against a congregation disagreeing with synod's *pastoral advice*. (The nature of pastoral advice has been explicated above, see answer in section A.) Second, the committee's logic that a church can so easily disaffiliate itself from the denomination goes against our most basic ecclesiological and Church Order principles in the CRC, as well as our understanding of the church as the body of Christ. The CRC has a rich and beautiful ecclesiology—a theology of *the church as the body of Christ*. When we partake of communion, we partake of the body of Christ as the body of Christ. The unity of the body of Christ is a sacred mystery, far deeper than honest disagreement of well-meaning Christians on a complex ethical matter. It's also significant that our Church Order makes no provisions for such precipitous acts of forced disaffiliation. The Church Order only has provisions for a church that *seeks* disaffiliation, and that is a complicated and lengthy process because disaffiliation is so contrary to what it means to be the body of Christ. Disaffiliation is tantamount to dismemberment of the body, to extend Paul's 1 Corinthians 12 metaphor of the church as one body with many parts. The silence of the Church Order on any mechanism to disaffiliate an entire congregation against its own will is theologically significant.

Finally, it's very significant and unfortunate that the "committee in loco's" radical concept of forced disaffiliation was never tested by the assemblies in a way that arguably would have altered its proposal. In fact, Classis Toronto *withheld action* on the committee's recommendation "that Classis Toronto regretfully inform the Council of First CRC that if it does not accept the current position of the Christian Reformed denomination with respect to guidelines pertaining to homosexuality, council in effect removes the congregation of First CRC from the denomination." While the matter was dropped because First CRC Toronto agreed to stay within the denominational guidelines, the radical concept of forced disaffiliation was never endorsed by any assembly of the CRC.

*H. In the history of the CRC, there have been times when the broader assemblies (classis, synod) did impose discipline on officebearers when their councils would not. Why shouldn't synod do that with Neland's council members?*

This has been clarified and tested several times in recent years, but it's a very important question that deserves a detailed answer here.



In CRC polity, discipline is the responsibility of the local church, and assemblies cannot reach in to impose discipline except upon appeal (and then only if the welfare of the church is at stake). This concept has been tested several times, most recently in 2015, when Classis Minnkota overtured 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” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 427).

Synod 2015 did not accede to the overture for the reasons stated in the grounds—that “synod cannot instruct a classis or a council to exercise discipline, except upon appeal” and that “the discipline of church members is the responsibility of the local council” (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 674). Those points are applicable to this discussion as well. Synod 2015 cited the *Acts of Synod 1988* (p. 613; also quoted in the *Manual of CRC Government*, p. 278) in saying that if a council is concerned about the views of an officebearer in another church or classis, it can communicate its concerns to that officebearer’s council, but if his or her council does not take any action regarding those concerns, the matter ends. The exact quote from Synod 1988 follows:

When a *consistory* judges that it has sufficient grounds of suspicion against an officebearer not under its supervision, it may communicate such to that officebearer’s consistory or the synodical board under which the officebearer serves. If the officebearer’s consistory and/or synodical board then judges that the grounds of suspicion are insufficient to require further explanation, the procedure ends. If the suspicions are judged to be sufficient, the consistory must follow the regulations of the Church Order.

Following Synod 2015, Classis Minnkota did send letters of concern to the churches named in its overture; likewise, Neland Church has received letters of concern from a number of churches and classes, as noted above. But, as also noted above, Neland’s council has not disciplined any of its officebearers, and to date its decisions have not been appealed. In the absence of an appeal to the next assembly in order (per Church Order Article 30), classis and synod do not have the right to reach in to the local church to impose discipline. If the council’s decision were appealed by a member of Neland to classis and to synod, then synod might be asked to judge whether the welfare of a local church is at risk due to noncompliance on this issue of pastoral guidance.

*I. Article 29 of the Church Order says, “The decisions of the assemblies shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order,” so it requires that Neland prove the denomination’s current position on homosexuality disagrees with the Word of God or the Church Order. Why hasn’t Neland done so?*

Neland has taken its cue from how the denomination navigated women’s ordination. When synod made it possible for women to be ordained to all the offices in 1995, synod didn’t say that the historical interpretation was wrong, but that it was not the only interpretation that could be reached through a Reformed approach to Scripture. In the same way, Neland is not trying to prove the denomination’s position is wrong or change the denomination’s official position. It is seeking the denomination’s acknowledgment of differing interpretations.

*J. How does Neland biblically defend its ordination of SSM members?*

Neland realizes that many fellow members of the CRC find it incomprehensible that one could read the Bible in a way that would lead one to favor the full participation of SSM people in the life of the church. We understand this, because that viewpoint is very much present at Neland and because we have been doing our best to listen to each other over the course of our decade-long dialogue. In answering this question, our purpose is not to judge the traditional view, but rather to offer a brief explanation of the decision process that many at Neland have made in affirming SSM.

For many, the first prompt to reconsider the traditional position is getting to know and love LGBTQ+ people or realizing that people they already know and love are LGBTQ+. When people learn through personal relationships how painful the church's position has been for LGBTQ+ people, it often leads them to look again at what the Bible says. A key "aha" moment for many who are reexamining their position is encountering in a new way the absolute centrality of Jesus' love command, the truth that "love does no harm to a neighbor" (Rom. 13:10), and the reality of Jesus' radical compassion for the outsider, the ones cast out by society and the church. The unconditional love of God in Christ becomes the overarching lens through which Scripture is read, as they seek to understand the redemptive revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

Those reevaluating their position also reexamine the Scripture passages that explicitly condemn homosexual acts. A key realization for many is learning more about the sexual perversions that lie behind those condemnations, like temple prostitution, slave-sex, sex with young boys, and sexual excess that was demeaning and exploitative. One quickly appreciates Scripture's radical condemnation of those things and totally understands Paul's righteous indignation in Romans 1! Another realization is that these passages are not talking about faithful, same-sex attracted, Christian believers—couples who love each other and desire to make a lifelong commitment that would enable them to enjoy all the graces and spiritual disciplines of Christian marriage.

While not everyone at Neland agrees with these conclusions, this brief description illustrates some typical factors that lead people to affirm SSM. It certainly does not answer every exegetical question; it merely attempts to demonstrate the seriousness with which many people approach their interpretation of Scripture regarding this issue. Those wishing to read more on Christian arguments for SSM can refer to a number of books—from very accessible ones like *A Letter to my Congregation* by Ken Wilson, *Changing Our Mind* by David Gushee, and *The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage* by Mark Achtemeier; to more in-depth studies like *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships* by James Brownson and Classis Grand Rapids East's *Report on Biblical and Theological Support Currently Offered by Christian Proponents of Same-Sex Marriage*.

## **VII. Conclusion**

In 1973, when synod formulated the position on homosexuality that guides our denomination still today, an important piece of its work was an admonition to the churches to extend loving support and encouragement to our homosexual members, recognizing that they "are, like all Christians, called to discipleship and to the employment of their gifts in the cause of the kingdom" (*Agenda for Synod 1973*, p. 632).

More than two decades later, in 1999, the synodically appointed Committee to Give Direction about and for Pastoral Care to Homosexual Members found that our churches had largely failed this part of our faith family. The committee identified synod's guidelines for "whole-hearted embrace . . . patient understanding . . . and the loving support and encouragement of the church . . . to include homosexuals in its fellowship," and concluded that "over the years, the church at large has not attempted to create these kinds of conditions on anything like a broad scale. For this reason alone, it would be fitting for the CRC to seek God's forgiveness" (*Agenda for Synod 1999*, p. 244).

Another two decades later, the church needs to come to terms with the fact that we are still in need of that forgiveness. Neland Church is in need of that forgiveness. The church has largely still failed to provide care for our LGBTQ+ members in such a way that they feel safe and valued, lovingly supported and encouraged. In our listening and learning together at Neland, we have lamented the ways in which we have contributed to the pain of our family members, and we have searched Scripture and sought the Spirit's leading for ways in which we can do better.

We believe that a willingness to have these difficult conversations is a good way to do better. As we have surrendered ourselves (our needs, opinions, desires, preferences) to God and to each other, we have found ourselves witnessing the amazing ways that God is faithful, "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" (Eph. 3:20). It is precisely because of the difficult nature of these conversations that we can see how the Spirit is at work; the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23) that we have experienced through each other have certainly not been products of our own ability, but rather, obvious gifts of the Spirit.

Our willingness to listen to and learn from each other has also brought us another gift: the honest and vulnerable stories offered by a few members who now feel they can better trust us, and the stories of a few others outside our church who are looking for someone to trust. One of those stories came from someone we call "Michael"—a CRC member who anonymously reached out to Neland to share his story. (Not knowing his identity, we chose the name *Michael* because the author of this letter told us he's in his sixties, and Michael is the most popular name for men of that age.) Michael tells a story of living for decades within the CRC while adhering to the denomination's admonition to live a celibate life. It is a story of deep pain and sadness; a story of being part of a wonderful church family yet unable to share all of himself with them; a story of the fear of being fully known, rather than receiving assurance from the church that he is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). We do not know Michael's true identity, yet we recognize in his story many pieces of the stories we've heard over the past decade; Michael's lived experience is indicative of the profound need to better minister to and enfold the CRC's LGBTQ+ members. Thus, while the decision to include his (unaltered) letter as an appendix to this communication (see Appendix A) was a difficult one for council, because there are many at Neland who would not agree with all of Michael's statements about the HSR, we believe his letter reflects the stories of our own members who are longing for a church that offers the deep welcome of Christ.

These are the stories that pastoral guidance must engage. And synod, time and again, has recognized that its guidance is offered into specific stories, into specific communities who can be trusted to honor our covenants with each other while responding to the particular situations and needs of our faith families. We are grateful for the foresight of past synods, who, rather than setting rigid boundaries, created space for us to engage the tensions in a way that has allowed us to discover anew that we are bound together by Christ alone. And we are hopeful that synod

will once again proclaim the church's source of unity rather than its uniformity, declaring with confidence that disagreement on these ethical issues does not undermine our unity in Christ.

We at Neland Church are committed to continuing to talk about these things together. We expect and hope that our denomination will do the same. We don't know a lot of things, including where this conversation will lead our congregation or the CRC. But a couple of things we do know: First, unity in the church is important enough that Jesus himself prayed for it, because our unity is one way in which the world will come to know the love of God (John 17:20-23). Second, LGBTQ+ people are in our congregations. And whether we know who they are or not, they have been hurting for a very long time.

In the face of tension and divisive issues, we don't always know exactly how to find that unity, but we are convinced that it begins with a deep conviction of Christ as our center. Neland's willingness to wrestle with each other and with this issue has given us the gift of solidifying our bonds in Christ—and if we “have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,” then our joy will be made complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind, doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, in humility valuing others above ourselves, not looking to our own interests but each of us to the interests of the others, and in our relationships with one another, having “the same mindset as Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:1-5).

Classis Grand Rapids East  
Robert A. Arbogast, stated clerk

## Appendix A

### Letter from “Michael”

As referenced in section VII. Conclusion, we received the following anonymous letter from a member of the CRC. (Not knowing his identity, we chose to call the author of the letter “Michael” because he told us he’s in his sixties, and Michael is the most popular name for men of that age.) Michael attempted to submit his letter to denominational officials for inclusion in the *Agenda for Synod*, but learned that individuals cannot be heard at the synodical level unless they go through a local congregation and classis. Having heard about Neland’s decision, and fearful about the ramifications of approaching his own council, Michael asked if Neland could bring his letter to synod. While the decision to include his (unaltered) letter as an appendix to this communication was a difficult one for council, because there are many at Neland who would not agree with all of Michael’s statements about the HSR, we believe his letter reflects the stories of our own members who are longing for a church that offers the deep welcome of Christ. We do not know Michael’s true identity, yet we recognize in his story many pieces of the stories we’ve heard over the past decade; Michael’s lived experience is indicative of the profound need to better minister to and enfold the CRC’s LGBTQ+ members.

*February, 2021*

*Dear Committee of the Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality Report,*

*I am sad, frustrated, disillusioned and exhausted, maybe weary is the best word. Not the reaction I expected when I thought about reading the latest report on sexuality from my church. It seemed like we were moving in a direction of more nuance and compassion when it came to dealing with sexual issues like homosexuality and the broader range of LGBTQ issues. After all, many articles and reports, along with letters to editors in church publications over the past decade or so suggested movement toward a better understanding of gay matters and therefore a “deeper dive” into the church’s outlook in this area would produce more a meaningful response for LGBTQ Christians in the CRC. I see now, that is not the case.*

*I grew up in the CRC, born and baptized. I am now in my sixties. I have been a Christian my whole life. Like most Christians, I have had moments of intense joy and fulfillment in my relationship with God, and times when my faith was weaker.*

*I have struggled with my homosexuality since my earliest moments of sexual awareness. I loathed that fact that I was gay. I can say that in my case, (and I believe most) I never chose to be gay. I was born this way, just like straight people are born attracted to the opposite sex. I literally spent years trying to change my sexual orientation. Spent years praying for this to be taken from me. Spent years denying it, suppressing it, keeping it secret, all in an effort to not have this ruin my life. I failed, and God never answered my countless prayers for change.*

*I feel shame in being gay, so much so that I am still “in the closet.” The massive stigma around homosexuality as I grew up, both in my family’s eyes and the church, meant that openly acknowledging my orientation was not possible, at least in my mind. However one thing I could do was shelter my family from this brokenness. I am grateful that my parents were able to pass without the trial of having to deal with a son who is gay.*



*I have built a life where friends, family and co-workers view me as single. I enjoy and am edified by my relationships with them, and I know I am appreciated by them in turn. But I also know that “coming out” would change the relationship. I can tell by the views they express both overtly and subtly that is the case.*

*For many years I sought a more content life where my homosexuality would not represent a constant struggle. I witnessed how secular society opened up and learned to welcome and accept the LGBTQ community, at first by removing prejudices (can't be kicked out of your apartment or lose your job for being gay) to creating actual inclusion where secular marriage is recognized. Strangely, even as a Christian, these sweeping changes helped ease my burden. At least I did not feel as stigmatized by the world around me. I did not feel as alone, seeing gay people on popular media and even in the workplace. It is ironic that secular society provides LGBTQ persons more unconditional acceptance and affirmation than does the church. Even for someone in the closet, this societal acceptance does help, and I'm fortunate to have lived long enough to get to the point where I feel I am no longer judged by both society and the church.*

*The primary blessing I have received from all my years of membership and participation in the Christian Reformed Church has been the joy of worship each Sunday and meeting God. The church has instructed me in the doctrine of my faith and been a place where I have been a blessing in ministries to others in our community.*

*That said, church has not been a place I ever felt deep community. I know how our members feel about gay persons. They have no reason to be guarded or careful around me, so I do know. It's not born out of malice, it's just how they feel. But that is enough to ensure a gay person never feels truly included. It's not that the congregants are bad people. They aren't. They are loving, compassionate people, genuinely looking to live Christian lives of love and discipleship, like me. I do love them. Yet with that, I have a hard time experiencing real community. Oh I can participate in all the ministries, (babysit, Sunday School, serve as elder and deacon, programs for the homeless, senior ministries, etc., etc.); there is always a place to serve. But church life / community, has always revolved around married people and their children. My church does not even effectively provide community for singles. I know there is negligible talent to accommodate anyone gay. This is not a criticism, just reality. Indeed I am not certain every congregation can be all things for everybody. Therefore I glean from church what I can ... worship with other saints and a place to receive instruction in my walk with the Lord. And that is a blessing.*

*I am not, nor have ever been, sexually active. Put simply, I am in obedience with the 1973 CRC opinion on homosexuality where the sex act is the sin, not the orientation. I always felt that if I couldn't eliminate the orientation, I could at least be celibate as that is what the church taught. But obedience to abstaining from sex has brought me no happiness. This has deeply troubled me, as the Bible suggests this is God's will. Why then is it so burdensome and joyless?*

*Feeling this lack of fulfillment is driven in large part from the realization I may not fall in love with another person. The Bible, as I have been taught, makes that clear. Oh sure, I can have close friendships and loving family relationships, but not “true love” . . . that love where you commit your life exclusively to another person and vow to*

*share all life brings together as a couple. That love where you know that you will never leave that person and he will never leave you. That love that creates a family of your own. That love that shares an intimacy that you can only have with one other person.*

*Finding that life partner is not for us. This is a profound reality that I think straight people simply don't appreciate. Just think that the love songs on popular radio, numerous TV shows, even silly "rom-com" movies; all deal with this "wonderful thing called love" that is denied to gay Christians. It's inescapable, we're saturated with it. Indeed going a step further we are effectively cut off from physical contact, other than a hand shake or occasional (awkward) hug. Because of our homosexuality, many gay Christians experience the sorrow of knowing they will be childless, perhaps similar to a married couple who find they are not fertile, and we can't even share that grief with a spouse.*

*I am always struck by the first thing people say as they reflect on their life after a close call, a milestone moment, or serious illness: What are they most thankful for and what was the most cherished thing they experienced on this earth? They mention their family, their spouse, all of the time. Any theology that denies gay Christians this most precious of things, must effectively deal with the magnitude of that, or it is of dubious value.*

*I honestly thought the church was gaining sympathy regarding these issues. As I mentioned, Banner articles and letters to the editor, along with other commentary led me to believe that my church may be moving to a place where we rethink homosexuality, as the current approach has not worked for so many. And then I read the report.*

*It plunged me into despair. It threw me back to reliving the struggles of my twenties and thirties where I so desperately wanted to purge myself of homosexuality. I have not had those feelings for years and it's been agony reliving them. I realize now I was naive and had been living with the real hope things would get better for gay CRC Christians, but this report has made clear there is no change for us. A hard truth indeed.*

*My despair does not come merely from the report's assertion that gay sex is a grave sin. It comes from the inadequacy of the report's response in framing how a gay Christian must then live. Remember I have been living a celibate life and participating meaningfully in my church and yet I am not fulfilled. I am following what our theology has taught and for over 50 years it has brought me no peace. I'm obedient but not happy. I may not be a theologian, but I have been in relationship with my loving Father my whole life and I have a hard time concluding this has been His will for my life. The report spends an inordinate amount of time on the creation account and in it God says it is "not good for the man to be alone" and that made me wonder, so why is it good for me to be alone?*

*It would be helpful if the report would answer why my God denies me the joy of finding the person with whom I could fall in love and share my life. On a very simplistic level I can discern the consequences for all other sins. I can appreciate why they are sins and why our loving Father wants us to avoid them. Sin hurts our relationship with God, others and ourselves. Adultery betrays the commitment of*



*marriage. Lying destroys trust and community. Gossip and slander damage relationships and good fellowship. Pre-marital sex spoils exclusive intimacy and runs the real risk of crisis pregnancies. I could go on with dozens . . . all are obvious. In all these sins, God's love is evident in why we are to obey His law. Indeed following God's law leads to joy for us as Christians. I have experienced that. Our Father does not create arbitrary and cruel commands for us to follow. So why can't I see God's love in the prohibition for same sex love? The sinful consequence of "marital" gay sex is not clear to me. But I do clearly experience the consequence of celibacy, as acutely as the consequence of any transgression. I have been unable to discern any "fruit" from my obedience and the love in this theology is simply not evident.*

*I know I fall short and must rely on God's grace in my life. I am tempted by sinful desires. I must avoid pride, but often fail. I frequently lack compassion or am short with someone. I put my needs before those of the Lord. I am not always truthful. I do repent of these sins and genuinely experience God's love and forgiveness. But with my same sex attraction there is never a redemptive moment. Consider this; routinely walking down the street, a straight Christian may see an attractive person of the opposite sex and, while not crossing the line to lust, can acknowledge the sexual appreciation. As the report so thoroughly covers, this affirms that they are in alignment with God's natural order. Conversely, as a gay person, my same experience of walking down a street and noticing an attractive same sex person becomes a reminder I am unnatural, not in alignment. I may not have sinned, but experience the admonition nonetheless.*

*Perhaps we need to acknowledge that gay Christians must expect to experience a diminished life. It's possible Jesus' reference to "poor in spirit" reflects our state. I do know we are not promised lives free from sadness and suffering. We live in a sinful broken world. As such gay Christians may need to accept they are commanded to miss out on the joys most people will experience. This would be a more logical conclusion from the theology promoted in the report. If true, the report must make this clear to us as gay Christians. At least that would be honest.*

*The report however, does not do that, and instead proposes gay Christians can find fulfillment in any number of alternative relationship models. Let me offer an example: One suggestion offered is that gay Christians could have close relationships with married couples, even sharing their living space. I have been on trips with married people. I have shared accommodations with them and their kids. I have stayed with family and friends with their children for days at a time. While I enjoyed all those occasions, they also left me with a sense of how incomplete my life was. I could witness firsthand what I was missing and felt my loneliness even more acutely. Promoting a situation where a gay Christian observes daily what they can't have, may not be a solution.*

*Another section references celibate partnerships. What precisely is that? Is it a relationship where a same sex couple could perhaps enjoy a secular marriage to gain civic benefits, legal rights and support each other even if they are not married before God? While sex is not involved, all the other advantages of commitment and intimacy could be realized, at least to some extent. Would this adhere to the theology's commands? No practical details are provided in the report, yet this is the type of nuance I was hoping would be addressed.*

*One of the suggestions for congregational ministry to gay persons in actual relationships with each other is to welcome them in the church service but then over time, as they presumably grow in faith, they will be convicted of their sin and stop any sexual behaviors, ultimately ending their relationships. What do we do if they continue to enjoy attending, but never feel the call to terminate their relationship? To what degree may they participate in the congregational life of the church? Must we ask them to leave at some point?*

*The report spends time suggesting congregants regularly visit and invite gay brothers and sisters over for meals and holidays. It encourages participation in small groups and inclusion in ministries. While this is nice and good in and of itself, how is this helpful? Many gay persons are not necessarily lacking in social contacts. The problem is we do not have permission to access a deep committed relationship. To suggest a holiday meal and regular visits can somehow provide a substitute for that, is frankly insulting and demonstrates a deep lack of comprehension. It's the drive home from that meal or small group meeting where the isolation and loneliness can set in. The notion that fostering a more robust and inclusive church community can somehow be a substitute for exclusive relationship is deeply flawed. For those of you who are married, can you imagine doing without your spouse and family and feeling confident the CRC church community could effectively meet your physical and emotional needs for love and intimacy?*

*The report alludes to a series of living arrangements and relationship types, such as "live in a community of believers," "intimate friendships," "communal housing," and even opposite sex marriage as long as both partners know about the same sex attraction. It seems the report is simply throwing out any number of one-off scenarios and rather odd living structures that may have occurred, presumably sound good and might work. Yet I would consider these marriages "high risk" and the other examples as untested at best. Are these to be considered pervasive, sustaining models? What evidence does the CRC have to support that these living arrangements and ministry suggestions described in the report, will indeed be edifying? This has echoes of the well-intentioned, but ultimately misguided, program efforts (e.g. Exodus, Homosexuals Anonymous) of the past; and it seems the CRC is in real danger of doing more harm than good by hinting at these unvetted suggestions.*

*Are we positive this report is accurately reflecting the Spirit's will? I am not. After a 60 odd year journey with my Lord, I supposedly have gained some measure of wisdom and discernment and the last thing I'd want to do is lead those younger than I astray. I am certain we are missing something. Any opinion can seem good, logical, Biblical. Yet what if there has been no fruit? Have we learned nothing? My fear is after another generation we will find that we are still hurting people, leading to incomplete melancholy lives. And we will need to re-examine this yet again.*

*I know it is "too late" for me, I will never have a life partner. Realistically, my life will not change no matter what this report concludes. But my despair is born out of the fear I have for those twenty year old gay Christians facing the prospect of sad, diminished lives in a church that is not responding to them in a practical loving way that helps them discover God's will for their own full life. The CRC has followed this theology for the past fifty years. If it truly reflects God's will, surely we would have had ample evidence by now of joyous, fulfilled gay Christians thriving in the CRC.*

*While I may not know the answer, I also know when I am not hearing the answer.  
This is one of those times.*

*In Christ,  
A Gay CRC Christian Brother*

## Appendix B

### Neland Congregational Letter, August 2020



August 2020

Dear Neland Congregation,

Earlier this summer we marked our usual transition of leadership, installing gifted members to serve in our council. But we note the significance that for the first time this year one of our newly appointed deacons is a member of a same sex marriage (SSM). This has caused us to be reflective on Neland's identity and mission, and the journey that has brought us to this point. We hope these reflections help to clarify things, and shed more light than heat on this matter.

As a church, Neland has been through many challenging chapters, and faced many challenging issues over its history – from the racial tensions of the 1960's-70's, to the debates over women in church office in the 1980's and '90's, to the church's relationship with LGBT+ persons in recent years. These periods have been times of much pain and disagreement, but also of learning to live in tension, with more grace and humility and truth. And so, while we acknowledge that Neland's journey toward LGBT+ inclusion has resulted in another period of strain, we trust in God's promise that "*in Christ all things hold together.*" (Col 1:17)

### Our Journey Together

- Over a decade of active dialogue in our congregation, under the prayerful guidance of Council and a Generous Spaciousness Committee.
- Both biblical and scientific experts consulted. Many educational events and speakers from a variety of viewpoints.
- Much time spent in prayer, seeking God's will and the Spirit's leading.
- Several specific council retreats on LGBT+ concerns, and restorative circles.
- Great patience from our SSM members, and participation from many congregants of various viewpoints.
- Thoughtful engagement with the Classis GR East report, synodical reports, and pastoral guidelines of Synod.
- A 2016 survey of positions in the congregation, revealing a broad range of views from traditional (40%) to affirming (40%), and in between (20%).
- Several *Colossian Way* small groups on Sexuality and Gender, and a Sunday evening series on navigating adaptive challenges/change.
- An extensive study and report by our Nominations Committee in 2019.
- Requested and received assistance from church advisors from Classis GR East.
- Lament over the gradual departure of some of our members who felt we needed to nail down either more '*traditionalist*' or more '*affirming*' positions.
- An increasing number of nominations for SSM members from the congregation each year.
- Much greater congregational participation in the selection and election of office-bearers this year (2020), and a very strong affirmation vote of all nominees (each received over 87%).

## Where We Stand Today

1. **Identity:** Neland is a 100+ year old intergenerational Christian Reformed Church.
  - We are reformed and always reforming. We believe Christ sent us the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. No church has ever “arrived.”
  - We are a people on a journey, seeking to remain faithful to God’s *Word* as we also learn more from God’s *world*. This includes matters of gender and sexuality.
2. **Mission:** Neland seeks to be a place where all will experience the deep welcome of Christ, especially in these divisive times. We lament that so often the church has pushed away LGBT+ persons or refused to incorporate their gifts.
3. **Gifts:** We are a place where all members may fully use the gifts God has given them for the common good, and receive God’s means of grace. We see the Spirit at work in our SSM members as much as any other.
4. **Unity:** We don’t all agree on SSM, or on having a SSM member in leadership. However, we also don’t believe that having a uniform position on this matter is necessary to maintain unity as a body of Christ. The gospel runs deeper. In opening a space for dialogue on this issue over the past decade Neland members have grown to appreciate the important commitments that each holds dear, and to realize that “all things hold together *in Christ*,” and not in our hard-fought opinions. In Christ, our default position should be one of gracious inclusion and hospitality; our differences need not divide.
5. **Humility and Gratitude:** Thus, although we are humbled that we could not come to complete agreement on this issue, we are grateful that *there is a place at Neland for all God’s children to serve with all their gifts*.

## Q & A

### 1. Is Neland “getting out ahead” of Synod, or breaking the rules of our denomination?

- a. Neland remains strongly committed to the CRC, its theology, its mission. We are hardly a “rebel” congregation, but remain deeply invested in denominational ministries, including Calvin University, Calvin Seminary, and our mission agencies.
- b. While Neland continues to work hard to follow the pastoral advice on LGBT+ inclusion of Synod 1973 and 2002, our council found it could not do what Synod 2016 advised: namely, consider SSM persons deserving of church discipline. The SSM person we have elected and affirmed as deacon is clearly gifted and spiritually mature. She has been a deacon twice before, and on our Admin Committee as chair of deacons, in the years prior to her marriage. She was nominated by many in the congregation. Although some in our council are not in favor of SSM, none would make a motion to put her under discipline. So Council concluded that as a member in good standing she should be eligible for office just like any other adult confessing member. The congregation overwhelmingly voted to affirm her nomination.
- c. Our understanding is that all synodical reports and decisions related to homosexuality have been *pastoral advice* given to the churches (1973, 2002, and 2016). According to Calvin Seminary’s Adjunct Professor of Church Polity, Kathy Smith, who spoke with our congregation in several educational sessions, this is of a less binding nature than confessional or church order matters (Synod 1975). Unlike the women-in-office issue, there are no church order articles that explicitly regulate what congregations may or may not do with respect to LGBT+ and SSM members. So we do not believe we have crossed any line of orthodoxy, only pastoral advice.

## 2. Does this decision mean that Neland is an “*affirming*” church?

That depends on what is meant by the word “affirming.” . . . Affirming of LGBT+ persons and that all members may use their gifts to serve God? *Yes! Certainly.* Affirming in the sense that all Neland members support a particular stance on SSM? *No.* We will continue to be a community with diverse opinions on that.

## 3. Does Neland still believe in the authority of Scripture?

Absolutely! We continue to rely on God’s Word as our only rule in faith and life. However, not all of us believe that scripture is as clear on the question of SSM as many of us once believed. Our classis (Classis GR East) submitted to Synod a very thorough report in 2016 that shows a wide range of biblical interpretations one can support with a reformed view of scripture. Many respected reformed/evangelical scholars now support the full participation of LGBT+ persons in the life of the church, including those who are SSM. We also await the report of our denominational study committee on human sexuality, though we regret that they were not given full freedom to consider questions of biblical interpretation.

Thus, given the present reality of a range of opinions within the CRC and the church at large, we do not believe it is right to bind all consciences in our congregation to one position. Could the Spirit be leading Christ’s church into more truth? Challenging as it may be, we must be open to taking that journey together.

Family in Christ, it *is* difficult to live in tension on these important matters, but we firmly believe “There is a place for you at Neland” – that’s not just a motto. We believe that God has the strength to maintain our unity, in the midst of our differences, because “all things hold together in Christ.”

Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or would like to talk more about this letter. Our journey is certainly not done! And pray with us that God will work in us together just what is pleasing to him: more and more of Christ’s perfect love.

Yours in Christ,  
*Neland’s Council and Pastors*