



Christian
Reformed
Church

Acts of Synod 2023



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Christian
Reformed
Church

June 9-15, 2023
Calvin University
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508-1407 U.S.A.
Printed in the United States of America.

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FOREWORD

Synod 2023 was held for the first time in the University Chapel on the campus of Calvin University, Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 9-15. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the delegates gathered to worship, pray, fellowship, and deliberate together in a spirit of service and grace. Early in the proceedings the delegates received practical tips to sacrifice neither grace nor truth, and they did a remarkable job of leaning into that throughout the week. The *Acts of Synod 2023*, while providing an accurate account of the work accomplished, cannot begin to account for the relationships built and strengthened, the laughter and tears shared, or the faithful prayers that marked these proceedings.

The *Acts of Synod 2023* contains the following:

- Supplementary reports of the Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the agencies, ministries, institutions, and committees authorized to file them.
- Two overtures.
- Three communications.
- A financial summary.
- Service of Prayer and Praise.
- The minutes of Synod 2023.
- An index for both the *Acts of Synod 2023* and the *Agenda for Synod 2023*.

It is necessary for the user of the *Acts of Synod* to keep the *Agenda for Synod* readily available as a reference. The *Agenda* is not reprinted in the *Acts*. The minutes of synod often make reference to reports and overtures in the *Agenda for Synod*. The pagination continues from the *Agenda* to the *Acts*. Supplementary materials begin on page 631, following preliminary unnumbered pages. A fiscal 2024 financial summary is found on page 899. The minutes of synod follow, beginning on page 905. The index references both the *Agenda for Synod* and the *Acts of Synod*; page numbers in **boldface type** in the index refer to pages in the minutes of Synod 2023.

The pages that follow, as well as the referenced *Agenda for Synod*, bear continuing evidence of service by the Christian Reformed Church in response to a vision adopted by Synod 2005: “The Christian Reformed Church is a diverse family of healthy congregations, assemblies, and ministries expressing the good news of God’s kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide.”

Synod 2023 was significant for many reasons. I would ask that you continue to pray as we process the decisions made at synod, seeking the Holy

Spirit's leading as we consider how to implement them. May the reports and decisions presented here remind us of God's loving faithfulness to us in every generation, place, and context. And may we demonstrate Christ's love in all its fullness to every people and nation, doing so together in "the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Zachary J. King
General Secretary of the CRCNA

COUNCIL OF DELEGATES SUPPLEMENT

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I. Polity matters

A. Council of Delegates membership

1. Appointment of classical delegates

The COD recommends that synod appoint Ryan Blom as the Classis Minnkota delegate to fill out the term of Roger Sparks, to conclude June 30, 2024.

Ryan Blom is deeply committed to Christ and to the well-being of his church. Ryan retired from farming due to cancer and resulting disability. He now uses his time faithfully to care for his family and for the work and ministry of the church and classis. He has served as vice president on the school board of Southwest Minnesota Christian Schools. He currently serves as chair of his council and consistory and as chair of the classical home missions committee.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Mike Johnson as the Classis Rocky Mountain delegate to fill out the term of Kelly Vander Woude, to conclude June 30, 2025.

Mike Johnson is a minister of the Word in the CRC and serves as the founder/president of Ascending Leaders, a leadership training ministry. Mike has served on the council of Community Life CRC in Sugar Land, Texas, and as a member of the Alternate Routes to Ministry synodical study committee in the early 2000s. He currently serves on the board of directors of Ascending Leaders and is considered a leader within Classis Rocky Mountain.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Jeff Dykema as the Classis Arizona delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2026.

Jeff Dykema is a retired CRC minister of the Word and is a member of Missio Dei CRC in El Paso, Texas. Jeff has over 30 years' experience in ministry with the Hispanic community. He has also been active in leadership development and in classical and denominational matters. He has served on the classical home missions committee, on the boards of World Missions and Calvin University, and as a synodical deputy. He currently serves on the board of All Nations Seminary in Juarez, Mexico, and on the board of Pregnancy and Fatherhood Solutions in El Paso.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Andre VanRyk as the Classis B.C. South-East delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2026.

Andre VanRyk has served as elder, treasurer, and chair of council at two Christian Reformed churches. He currently serves as chair of council at Hope Community Church in Surrey, British Columbia. His background includes accounting, and for seven years he worked as the owner and CEO of a mid-sized senior housing and long-term care company. He has also served on Christian school boards and industry boards.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Thea Leunk as the Classis Grand Rapids East delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2026.

Thea Leunk is a retired CRC minister of the Word and a member at Eastern Avenue CRC, where she formerly served as pastor. She also served as both an elder and a deacon at Cincinnati (Ohio) CRC. Thea brings experience in classis and denominational leadership through former appointments on the classis renewal ministry team, as a classis coach, as chair of the Candidacy Committee, as a delegate and pastoral advisor on the board of World Renew, on search committees for Faith Alive and Home Missions positions, on the synodical study committee on Alternate Routes to Ministry, and on various denominational task forces, including service as chair of the Synod Review Task Force. Thea has also served four times as a synodical officer and twice as a woman adviser to synod. She has also been a member of the West Michigan Interfaith Council. Currently she serves on the Thriving Together advisory panel for Pastor Church Resources, the executive team of Classis Grand Rapids East, as the regional pastor for Classis Grand Rapids East, and as a synodical deputy alternate.

Note: The above nominees will be considered eligible for an additional term of three years, subject to the approval of classis and recommendation by the COD Nominating Services Committee.

2. Appointment of at-large delegate

The COD recommends that synod, by way of exception, appoint Michael Ten Haken to serve his second term as a U.S. at-large member until June 30, 2026. Michael is finishing his first term as the delegate from Classis Lake Superior and will begin a new pastoral call outside of Classis Lake Superior this summer.

B. Ministry Board officers and executive committee of the Council of Delegates

At its recent meeting the COD members from their respective ministry boards and the full Council of Delegates elected the following to serve as officers in 2023-2024:

1. CRCNA Canada Ministry Board

President: Greta Luimes

Vice president: Ralph Wigboldus

Treasurer: Henry Eygenraam
Secretary: Roberta Vriesema

2. CRCNA U.S. Ministry Board

President: Michael L. Ten Haken
Vice president: Jill Feikema
Secretary: John R. Lee
Treasurer: Drew Sweetman

3. ReFrame Ministries Canada Ministry Board

President: Greta Luimes
Vice president: Ralph Wigboldus
Treasurer: Henry Eygenraam
Secretary: Roberta Vriesema

4. ReFrame Ministries U.S. Ministry Board

President: Michael L. Ten Haken
Vice president: Jill Feikema
Secretary: John R. Lee
Treasurer: Drew Sweetman

5. Council of Delegates executive committee and officers

Chair: Michael L. Ten Haken
Vice chair: Greta Luimes
Secretary: John R. Lee
Treasurer: Henry Eygenraam

Note: Additional executive committee members are chosen from the various committees of the COD. Normally new committee assignments, committee officers, and the rest of the executive committee would have been chosen by now, and the additional executive committee members would be reported to synod. However, due to the proposed new organizational concept and structure coming to synod as described below, it was decided to wait on new committee assignments. The four-person executive committee cited above will oversee the annual committee assignments after synod decides on the proposed new structure. The selection of committee officers and the remaining appointments to the executive committee will proceed soon after committee assignments are made.

C. Revised organizational concept and structure of the Council of Delegates

The current committee structure of the COD is organized around the five calling areas of the CRCNA (Our Calling). Over time it has become clear that this organization method has not led to an optimal distribution of workload. Issues have also arisen regarding how best to fit the COD's desire for closer relationships on ecclesiological matters with Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, and World Renew into this structure. Further, the current structure was formed before the distinctions between "ecclesiological" and "organizational" governance were sorted out

through the Structure and Leadership Task Force and approved by Synod 2022. For these reasons the COD is proposing a major revision of the organizational concept and structure of the COD, and these matters are laid out in a rewritten COD Governance Handbook.

The proposed new organizational concept calls for COD committees to be organized around the agencies of the CRCNA instead of the calling areas. The structure will include several committees, grouped as Ministry Committees (Congregational Ministries, ReFrame, and Resonate) and General Committees (Executive, Governance, Finance, and Synodical Services). Because Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, and World Renew have their own boards, a Connections Committee of the COD will commit to furthering the COD's relationship with them. The COD will also continue to have Advisory Committees (Banner Advisory and Bible Translations), which will function a little more independently but still report regularly to the COD.

The revised Governance Handbook is currently understood as a draft, considering that some final tweaks will need to be done during the implementation of the organizational concept and resulting structure.

The COD recommends that synod ratify the organizational concept and structure in the revised COD Governance Handbook (Appendix A) and receive the draft handbook as information.

D. COD right of comment regarding Overture 57

Classis Minnkota submitted Overture 57 (Require Council of Delegates to Reverse the Process of Members' Taking Exception to the Statement of Agreement with the Beliefs of the CRCNA) to Synod 2023. The Council of Delegates exercises its right to comment by endorsing the response presented in Appendix B for review by synod.

E. Director of U.S. Ministry Operations

After sustaining an interview by the U.S. Ministry Board, Dan DeKam was introduced to the COD in the position of director of U.S. ministry operations. This position serves to direct and manage the ministry and administrative operations of the U.S. Ministry Office of the CRCNA. Dan will work closely with Al Postma, the transitional executive director-Canada, as well as with the general secretary, Zachary King, and the chief administrative officer, Shirley DeVries. Dan comes with many years of administrative experience in Christian education. For the past eight years he has worked to start and grow the West Michigan Christian Education Collaborative (WMCEC), an organization that brought together four Christian schools to share resources and better sustain Christian education in their part of West Michigan. He will take on this position July 1, 2023.

The COD is grateful to Joel Huyser for his leadership as interim director of U.S. ministry operations for the past year, and for his faithful leadership and service to the CRCNA for over 28 years. Joel will retire on June 30, 2023.

F. Proposed ecclesiastical corporation

Synod 2022 tasked the Council of Delegates with the formation of a separate legal entity to house the Office of General Secretary (*Acts of Synod* 2022, p. 929). The task has not yet been completed because (a) many other projects related to structural changes are in process, and (b) staffing a legal entity may be needed to integrate churches outside of North America into the CRC. Staff have discovered that further progress into this conversation and plan is expedient before finalizing a legal entity for the Office of General Secretary. The Office of General Secretary plans to make progress on this item during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

G. World Renew

1. Bylaw changes for World Renew

The COD forwards to Synod 2023 the bylaw changes submitted by the World Renew-U.S. and World Renew-Canada ministry boards as information in Appendices C1 and C2, respectively.

2. Revised ecclesiastical mandate letters for World Renew

The COD forwards to Synod 2023 the revised ecclesiastical mandate letters from the World Renew-U.S. and World Renew-Canada ministry boards as information in Appendices D1 and D2, respectively.

H. Synodical appointments

On behalf of synod, the COD has ratified the following classical appointments of synodical deputies and alternate synodical deputies*:

<i>Classis</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Term</i>
Columbia	John Van Schepen	Virgil Michael	2026(1)
Illiana	Jim Hollendonner	Bill Sytsma	2025(2)
Georgetown	Jeffrey Scripps	Curt Walters	2026(2)
Lake Superior	Harrison Newhouse	Jack Van Marion	2026(2)
Muskegon	John Medendorp		2024(1)
Niagara	M. Jeff Klingenberg	Janet Ryzendob	2026(2)
Northern			
Michigan	Steven Datema	Todd Kuperus	2024(1)
Zeeland	Terry Slachter	Stephen Terpstra	2026(1)

*Terms of alternate synodical deputies run concurrent with those of the synodical deputies.

I. Judicial Code

1. Judicial Code Committee nominees

The Council of Delegates recommends that synod appoint the following single nominees to two positions on the Judicial Code Committee, each to a first term of three years:

Nonordained persons with legal training

Heidi de Vries is a licensed lawyer currently employed as the general manager of people, legislated services, and planning at the Corporation of the City of Brantford in Ontario. She has served her church, Hope CRC of Brantford, on the pastor search committee, the refugee committee, and the worship committee. She has also served on the pandemic advisory, bazaar, contracts, and community outreach committees for Brantford Christian School. She looks forward to using her gifts as a lawyer for the CRCNA. She has a deep love for the church and a heart for justice, and she believes that just processes are equally important to just outcomes.

Gerritt Wieringa is a lawyer working as senior counsel of ethics, compliance, and investigations at Whirlpool Corporation. He is a member of Munster (Ind.) Church, where he serves on the congregation's safe church team. He also represents Classis Illiana on the Tri-Classis Safe Church Team. He has previously served as a deacon in former churches and as vice president and president of the Highland Christian School board of trustees. He is excited by the prospect of edifying the church using his expertise in solving challenging problems with highly sensitive fact patterns. He is also eager to bring his perspective as a Christian with a physical disability to the table.

2. Review of the Judicial Code

Synod 2019 initiated a plan to review the Judicial Code every five years (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 763). This was delayed in order to allow the Council of Delegates to complete a review of the appeal process, but a task force was formed in late 2022 and has held three virtual meetings since January 2023. The task force is reviewing the existing Judicial Code line by line, making note of any language or portions of the process that would benefit from revision. A report of their work is due for submission to the COD prior to its February 2024 meeting.

J. Bible Translations Committee report

The Bible Translations Committee met on January 30, 2023, fulfilling their requirement to meet yearly to review the "Criteria for Choosing or Evaluating a Translation" document. They have no changes to recommend at this time. The committee will reconvene in 2024.

K. Calvin University—Right of comment regarding overtures addressing gravamen process

Overtures 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64 in the *Agenda for Synod 2023* include references to the confessional-difficulty gravamen process for Calvin University faculty and board members. The university board exercises their right to comment, and the Council of Delegates refers their comments to Synod 2023 in Appendix E as background for synod's discussions.

II. Program and finance matters

A. Resonate Global Mission — Right of comment concerning Overture 12

Classis Southeast U.S. submitted Overture 12 (Develop a Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Membership Decline and Require Annual Reporting of Progress) to Synod 2023. Resonate Global Mission has exercised their right to comment, and the Council of Delegates has endorsed their response as a communication to synod, presented in Appendix F.

B. Congregational Ministries

1. Reorganization

A new name, *Thrive*, is presented for the proposed agency informally referred to as Congregational Ministries. Since this new agency is a department of the CRCNA U.S. and CRCNA Canada ministry organizations, and because there was no previous synodically approved name or legal status, synod is asked simply to take note of the new name.

2. Right of comment concerning Overture 12

Classis Southeast U.S. submitted Overture 12 (Develop a Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Membership Decline and Require Annual Reporting of Progress) to Synod 2023. Congregational Ministries has exercised their right to comment, and the Council of Delegates has endorsed their response as a communication to synod, presented in Appendix G.

C. Rights of comment concerning Overture 3

Classis Southeast U.S. submitted Overture 3 (Refocus Ecclesiological Communication) to Synod 2023. World Renew, Congregational Ministries, and Justice and Reconciliation ministries (Canada) have exercised their right to comment in the following responses. The Council of Delegates forwards these responses for information to synod as communications.

- World Renew Response to Overture 3 (Appendix H)
- Congregational Ministries Communication concerning Overture 3 (Appendix I)
- Justice and Reconciliation ministries (Canada) Response concerning Overture 3 (Appendix J)

D. General secretary communication on racism and biblical justice

Synod 2022 directed the general secretary to “encourage leaders at all levels of the church to continue to provide opportunities for listening, learning, and practicing civil dialogue on the difficult conversations needed to better understand one another’s perspectives on racism and biblical justice; encourage the churches to make use of denominational resources; solicit input from all the classes on providing the above opportunities; and report to Synod 2023, including praise reports about positive progress and prayer requests regarding challenges and concerns” (*Acts of Synod 2022*,

p. 952). The COD shares as information the general secretary's communication on this work as presented in Appendix K.

E. General secretary report on unity as a denomination

Synod 2022 directed the general secretary "to instruct churches and classes to seek and to keep the unity of the church and the denomination in ways that are consistent with biblical principles, our Reformed confessions, and our Ecumenical Charter" and "to gather best practices on pursuing unity from the various classes and to share these with the broader church" (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 858). The Council of Delegates shares as information the general secretary's report on this work as presented in Appendix L.

F. Denominational survey

With the rollout of *Our Journey 2020* (denominational Ministry Plan) in 2015, an annual denominational survey was implemented to help track progress of the Ministry Plan, in addition to metrics recorded along the way. Synod delegates are invited to read an executive summary of the most recent denominational survey at crcna.org/survey/survey-results.

G. Finance matters

1. Ministry shares

- a. The COD approved the allocation of ministry shares within the fiscal-year 2024 budget, based on the 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.

- b. Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined

Synod 2022 instructed the Council of Delegates to examine congregational responses to Ministry Shares Reimagined (*Acts of Synod 2022*, pp. 846-47). The COD shares the report in Appendix M as its response and recommends the following:

- That synod direct the general secretary to provide greater flexibility in the pledge-process cycle.

Rather than focusing on the denomination's fiscal year of July-June, churches will be invited to make a pledge that best aligns with their budget process. The request will be for each congregation to make an annual pledge to the ministry-share program that covers a 12-month period. They will be asked to provide the starting month and ending month of that pledge on the basis of their fiscal year.
- That synod direct the general secretary to determine a base amount that covers core denominational costs.

Staff will annually determine the core costs related to running the CRCNA. A minimal pledge amount will be requested of each congregation based on the size of the church. In addition to the base amount, churches will be invited to pledge additional funding in support of the shared ministry (agencies and institutions) of the CRCNA.

- That synod direct the general secretary to provide to the churches and classes more information on pledges and giving results.

Consistent and clear communication is key to the success of the ministry-share program. As part of this commitment to communication, additional information will be shared with all churches regarding the levels of support that have been pledged and received both for core costs as well as for shared ministry.

2. The Council of Delegates endorses and submits for synodical approval the following lists of organizations recommended for financial support:

- a. The COD recommends that synod ratify the following denominational agencies, institutions, and ministries recommended to the churches for one or more offerings

The Banner

Calvin Theological Seminary

Calvin University — above ministry-share needs

Congregational Ministries

- Centre for Public Dialogue
- Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
- Disability Concerns
- Faith Formation Ministries
- Indigenous Ministries (Canada)
- Pastor Church Resources
- Race Relations
- Safe Church Ministry
- Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action
- Worship Ministries

ReFrame Ministries

Resonate Global Mission (now including Raise Up Ministries) — two offerings per year

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

- b. The COD informs synod that it has approved the renewal of the following accredited organizations for offerings in the churches for 2024. Guidelines adopted by Synod 2002 require an application by non-denominational 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 recommends that synod ratify the following nondenominational organizations recommended for financial support but not necessarily for one or more offerings:

United States

Benevolent organizations

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

Educational organizations

- Ascending Leaders
- Christian Schools International
- Christian Schools International Foundation
- Dordt University
- Dynamic Youth Ministries
 - 1) GEMS
 - 2) Calvinist Cadet Corps
 - 3) ThereforeGo Ministries
- Elim Christian Services
- Friends of ICS (U.S. Foundation of Institute for Christian Studies)
- International Network for Christian Higher Education (INCHE)
- International Theological Education Ministries, Inc. (ITEM)
- The King's University (through the U.S. Foundation)
- Kuyper College
- Redeemer University (through the U.S. Foundation)
- Rehoboth Christian School
- Tent Schools International
- Trinity Christian College
- Zuni Christian Mission School

Miscellaneous organizations

- Association for a More Just Society (AJS)
- Audio Scripture Ministries
- Bible League International
- Center for Church Renewal
- 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.

Canada

Benevolent organizations

- Beginnings Family Services
- Diaconal Ministries Canada

Educational organizations

- Dordt University
- Dynamic Youth Ministries
 - 1) GEMS
 - 2) Calvinist Cadet Corps
 - 3) ThereforeGo Ministries
- EduDeo Ministries
- Institute for Christian Studies
- The King's University
- Kuyper College
- Redeemer University
- Trinity Christian College

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.

- c. The Council of Delegates recommends that synod ratify the inclusion of 222Disciple on the list of accredited organizations recommended for offerings in the churches in the United States.

222Disciple is an organization that aims to foster development of Christian discipleship worldwide, by means of an online training tool that equips believers to make disciples who will then repeat the process to make other disciples. The program is currently provided in English and is being used within the United States. The program has

been translated into Spanish and Hausa (for use by Nigerian pastors), and work is in progress to translate the program into Korean and Portuguese as well.

This organization is part of the Multiply222 Network and is coordinated through Sunlight Ministries, a Christian Reformed Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida. The Council of Sunlight Ministries is the governing board for 222Disciple.

3. Implement insurance for short-term illness

Synod 2022 instructed the general secretary “to curate Human Resources-related best practices and templates including short-term disability options for congregational staff” (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 847). The following resources are available to the churches on the Network (network.crcna.org):

- Canada Edition: *A Guide to Leaves of Absence and Short-term Disability* (network.crcna.org/topic/leadership/council/clergy-mental-health-crisis-your-church-ready-guide-leaves-absence-and)
- U.S. Edition: *A Guide to Leaves of Absence and Short-term Disability* (network.crcna.org/topic/leadership/council/clergy-mental-health-crisis-your-church-ready-guide-leaves-absence-and-0)

Synod 2022 also instructed the general secretary “to study possible denominational and classical benevolence funds for congregations facing short-term disability needs” (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 847). This task was not completed due to the transition from the interim chief administrative officer (CAO) to the newly appointed CAO. This study is now on the task list of the CAO.

4. 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 average cash salary for 2023 for ministers of the Word in the United States is \$61,599, representing a 4.9 percent increase over the 2022 average salary. The U.S. three-year average salary increases to \$59,454 from \$57,998 for ministers retiring as of February 1, 2024.
- b. The average cash salary for 2023 for ministers of the Word in Canada is \$66,178, representing a 4.6 percent increase over the 2022 average salary. The three-year average salary in Canada increases to \$63,904 from \$62,310 for ministers retiring as of February 1, 2024.
- c. The 2024 per-member assessment for the Canadian Plan remains \$37.20 CDN, and the Canadian per-participant assessment remains \$7,704 CDN. Similarly, the 2024 per-member assessment for the U.S. Plan remains \$37.20 USD, and the U.S. per-participant assessment remains \$7,704 USD.

5. Human Resources right of comment concerning Overtures 3, 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64

Overtures 3, 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64 in the *Agenda for Synod 2023* include items that would have implications for human resources in the United States and Canada. Human Resources has exercised their right to comment, and the Council of Delegates forwards their response for information to synod as a communication presented in Appendix N.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod by way of the ballot elect Ryan Blom (Classis Minnkota) and Mike Johnson (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).

B. That synod by way of the ballot elect Jeff Dykema (Classis Arizona), Andre VanRyk (Classis B.C. South-East), and Thea Leunk (Classis Grand Rapids East) to a first term on the Council of Delegates (COD Supplement section I, A, 1).

C. That synod, by way of exception, appoint Michael Ten Haken to serve his second term as a U.S. at-large member until June 30, 2026 (COD Supplement section I, A, 2).

Grounds:

1. Michael is currently serving as president of the U.S. Ministry Board, and considering at present the large changeover of current officers, the U.S. Ministry Board would benefit from continuity in leadership.
2. Michael has accepted a call to a church in another classis.
3. Both Michael and his calling church are open to this possibility.
4. The COD is allowed up to ten at-large members.

D. That synod ratify the organizational concept and structure in the revised COD Governance Handbook (Appendix A) and receive the draft handbook for information (COD Supplement section I, C).

E. That synod recognize the U.S. Ministry Board's appointment of Dan DeKam to the position of director of U.S. ministry operations and express its gratitude to Joel Huyser for his service as interim director of U.S. ministry operations for the past year, and for his faithful leadership and service to the CRCNA for over 28 years (COD Supplement section I, E).

F. That synod appoint Heidi de Vries and Gerritt Wieringa, each to a first term of three years, to the Judicial Code Committee (COD Supplement section I, 1).

G. That synod direct the general secretary to do the following as recommended in the Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined (COD Supplement section II, G, 1, b; Appendix M):

1. provide greater flexibility in the pledge process cycle

2. determine a base amount that covers core denominational costs
 3. provide to the churches and classes more information on pledges and giving results
- H. That synod ratify 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, G, 2, a).
 2. The list of nondenominational organizations, previously accredited, that have been approved for calendar year 2024 (COD Supplement section II, G, 2, b).
 3. The inclusion of 222Disciple on the list of accredited organizations for offerings in the churches in the United States (COD Supplement section II, G, 2, c).
- I. That synod take note of the COD's endorsement of the following actions of the Pension Trustees (COD Supplement section II, G, 4):
1. The average cash salary for 2023 for ministers of the Word in the United States is \$61,599, representing a 4.9 percent increase over the 2022 average salary. The U.S. three-year average salary increases to \$59,454 from \$57,998 for ministers retiring as of February 1, 2024.
 2. The average cash salary for 2023 for ministers of the Word in Canada is \$66,178, representing a 4.6 percent increase over the 2022 average salary. The three-year average salary in Canada increases to \$63,904 from \$62,310 for ministers retiring as of February 1, 2024.
 3. The 2024 per-member assessment for the Canadian Plan remains \$37.20 CDN, and the Canadian per-participant assessment remains \$7,704 CDN. Similarly, the 2024 per-member assessment for the U.S. Plan remains \$37.20 USD, and the U.S. per-participant assessment remains \$7,704 USD.

Council of Delegates of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Andy de Ruyter, chair

Council of Delegates Governance Handbook, Second Edition**Preface**

The second edition of the COD governance handbook implements decisions made by the synod, the Council of Delegates, the Canada Board, and the US Board when the following reports, supplements, and agreements were adopted in 2021 and 2022.

1. The Structural and Leadership Taskforce (SALT) report adopted by the COD in May 2021 and by synod in June 2022.
2. The Ecclesial and Organizational Views supplement to the SALT report adopted by the COD in May 2022 and synod in June 2022.
3. The Ecclesiastical Mandate Letter adopted by the COD regarding the Canada Ministry Organization in May 2022 and synod in June 2022.
4. The CRCNA Joint Ministry Agreement adopted by the Canada and U.S. Ministry Boards in January 2022.
5. The ReFrame Joint Ministry Agreement adopted by the Canada and U.S. Ministry Boards in October 2022

Key changes and edits to the COD governance handbook because of those decisions include:

1. Using an organizational vocabulary that supports the culture of an ecclesial and ministry organization replacing a legal corporate vocabulary.
2. Recognition that there are two governance models in the CRCNA. The COD, as the interim of synod, follows a synodical governance model, and the ministry and institutional boards use an organizational governance model.
3. Changes are made to the COD and the Ministry Board Committee structures to improve role clarity and strengthen oversight of the joint ministry agreements. COD responsibilities associated with organizational *governance and support* are transitioned to the Canada and US Ministry Boards.
4. Three CRCNA offices are defined: Office of General Secretary, Canada Ministry Office, and the US Ministry Office.

Finally, the format of the second edition of the governance handbook was changed to make it more accessible and readable.

Governance and Organizational Vocabulary

The second edition of the governance handbook contains an organizational vocabulary that is aligned with its ecclesial and ministry purposes.

Abbreviations & Terms	Definitions and Explanation
CDN, CA	Two abbreviations for Canada
COD	Council of Delegates. As the synodical interim committee, the Council of Delegates is responsible to provide synodical governance and oversight of the CRCNA Organization. The COD has four membership categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classical members 2. At-large members 3. Organizational guest members (formerly board guests) 4. <i>Ex Officio</i> members
CRA	The Canadian Revenue Agency, a governmental agency that oversees all registered charities in Canada.
CRC	Christian Reformed Church
CRCNA	Christian Reformed Church in North America
CRCNA Offices	The CRCNA has three leadership offices: Office of General Secretary, Canada Ministry Office, and the US Ministry Office.
CRCNA Organization	A general term used to describe the CRCNA and its synodical, ecclesiastical, ministry, and educational organizations, agencies and partners in Canada and the United States.
Educational Boards	The Boards of Trustees of Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary
Educational Institutions	The CRCNA has two synodically mandated educational institutions: Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary.
Fiduciary duties	Members that serve on the COD, ministry, and/or educational boards are legally responsible to fulfill three fiduciary duties: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Duty of care</i>: COD & board members meet the duty of care by exercising their responsibilities in good faith and with diligence, attention, care, and skill. 2. <i>Duty of loyalty</i>: COD & board members meet the duty of loyalty

Abbreviations & Terms	Definitions and Explanation
	<p>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.</p> <p>3. <i>Duty of obedience:</i> COD & board members meet the duty of obedience by carrying out the purposes and mission of the nonprofit organization; complying with federal and 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.</p>
IRS	The Internal Revenue Service, a US governmental agency that oversees all tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations in the U.S.
Joint Agreements	<p>The use of joint agreements was initiated in response to the SALT report recommendation to expand the use of joint ministry agreements to accomplish four key organizational responsibilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and synodical responsibilities between countries, agencies, and institutions. 2. Clarify the governance responsibilities and interrelationships between boards of directors, trustees, and advisers in Canada and the United States. 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. <p>The Office of General Secretary brings together ministry leaders and partners to develop the agreements as well as develop the structures and processes needed to manage the agreements once they are approved.</p>
JMA	Joint Ministry Agreements. The CRCNA joint ministry agreement and the ReFrame joint ministry agreement were approved in 2022 by the Canada Ministry Board and the US Ministry Board.
Ministry Agencies	The CRCNA has four synodically mandated ministry agencies: Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, Resonate Global Mission, and World Renew

Abbreviations & Terms	Definitions and Explanation
Ministry Boards	The CRCNA ministry boards include the Canada Ministry Board, US Ministry Board, ReFrame Ministry Boards, and the World Renew Ministry Boards
Ministry Organization	The CRCNA ministry organization has two ministry organizations: the Canada Ministry Organization and the US Ministry Organization
Ministry Office	The CRCNA Ministry Offices provide administrative and ministry oversight and support services that build a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and effectiveness with ministry organizations, agencies, and partners as they serve CRC congregations in Canada and the US.
Ministry Partners	Ministry Partners Include individuals, experts, task forces, and committees that further the mission and work of the CRCNA Organization.
Ministry Plan	The CRCNA Ministry Plan adopted by synod is entitled <i>Our Journey 2025</i> . A key feature of the Plan are its calling areas and milestones which are designed to guide and unify the mission and ministry of the CRCNA.
Organizational Guests	World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary are each asked to provide two Organizational Guests to attend COD meetings and participate in the Connections Committee.
Process management	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.
Office of General Secretary	As the CRCNA synodical office, the Office of General Secretary provides ecclesiastical and organizational leadership and support that promotes a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and partnership in the CRCNA organization.
Organizational Governance	The responsibility for <i>organizational governance</i> is delegated to the CRCNA Ministry and Educational organizations located in Canada and the U.S. This scope of this delegation was codified in the CRCNA and ReFrame joint ministry agreements adopted in 2022. Organizational governance includes the following responsibilities:

Abbreviations & Terms	Definitions and Explanation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set and ensure organizational direction: mission, vision, and strategy. 2. Ensure adequate resources: board and executive leadership, finances and facilities, human resources, and reputation. 3. Oversee the health of the organization: mission effectiveness, organizational effectiveness, governance effectiveness, and compliance and accountability.
SALT	The Structure and Leadership Taskforce (SALT) produced a report for the COD in 2021. This report was accepted by synod in 2022.
Synodical Governance	<p>As outlined in Church Order and detailed in the COD governance handbook, the COD provides <i>synodical governance</i> and oversight of the CRCNA synodical, ministry and educational organizations. The scope of synodical governance includes the following ecclesial tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Synodical mandates and decisions of synod: Ensure the respective ministry and educational organizations are living into its synodical mandates and other directives by synod. 2. Mission, vision, values: Ensure the ministry and educational organization's mission, vision, and value statements are aligned with synodical mandates and other directives. 3. Ministry plan, strategy and goals: Ensure the ministry and educational organization's ministry strategy and goals plans and goals are aligned with the CRCNA ministry plan. 4. Leadership: Ensure the selection, support, and succession of governance, organizational, and ministry leadership. 5. Annual report to synod: Provide an annual report to synod.
U.S., USA	Two abbreviations for United States of America

CRCNA Vision & Mission

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

As people called by God,

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

We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ.

We love and care for one another as God's people.
We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus.
We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.

CRCNA Ministry Plan

Calling Areas

1. Faith Formation

As a community of believers, we seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to nurture their faith through all ages and stages of life.

2. Servant Leadership

Understanding that the lifelong equipping of leaders is essential for churches and ministries to flourish, we identify, recruit and train leaders to be servants in the Kingdom of God.

3. Global Mission

Called to be witnesses of Christ's Kingdom to the ends of the earth, we start and strengthen local churches in North America and around the world.

4. Mercy and Justice

Hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken, and disadvantaged, we seek to act justly and love mercy as we walk humbly with our God.

5. Gospel Proclamation and Worship

Believing that faith comes through the hearing of God's Word, we proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and seek to worship him in all that we do.

Milestones

In our journey with God, with each other, with our neighbors, and for mission, we desire to be congregations/communities that:

1. Cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline, transforming our lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Listen to the voices of every generation, shaping us for ministry together.
3. Grow in diversity and unity by seeking justice, reconciliation, and welcome, sharing our faith as we build relationships with and honor the cultures of our neighbors and newcomers.
4. Share the gospel, live it missionally, and plant new churches in our neighborhoods as we discover how to connect with our local and global ministry contexts.

Introduction

The purpose of the governance handbook is to be a resource for the members of the Council of Delegates (COD) as it fulfills its synodical mandate to serve in the *interim of the CRCNA synod*.

“Synod shall regulate the work of denominational ministries by way of the Governance Handbook and decisions of the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA” (Church Order Art. 77).

Mandate & Purpose

The mandate of the COD comes from its *relationship to synod*. The COD mandate and its authority as an ecclesiastical body has two dimensions. The first is when the COD *acts on behalf of synod* when synod is not in session, and the second is when the COD *acts on matters assigned to it by synod*.

1. Acting on behalf of synod. Church Order Article 33-b:
“... Synod shall appoint the [Council of Delegates] to act for them in matters which cannot await action by [synod itself and to] . . . submit all their actions to the next meeting of [synod] . . . for approval.”
2. Matters assigned to the COD. The COD “deals with such matters as have been assigned to it by synod as a board of directors. In that capacity the [COD] is synod’s servant to oversee the corporate and ministry functions of the denomination”¹—both in terms of the direct scope assigned to the COD and the complete scope of synod.
3. The Council of Delegates has the authority to revise and update the COD handbook and associated policies as it seeks to carry out its *synodical governance* responsibilities. Significant changes to the COD handbook will be proposed to synod for ratification or adoption.

Synodical Governance

As an ecclesiastical body, the Council of Delegates provides *synodical governance* by means of the authority delegated to it by synod and its synodically-elected membership. Synod 2015 approved the formation of the Council of Delegates when it adopted recommendations presented by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture. Synod 2022 affirmed that the role of the COD is to provide *synodical governance* when it accepted the Structure and Leadership Taskforce (SALT) report.

¹ *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government: 2019 Revision* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian Reformed Church of North America, 2019), p. 141.

Organizational Governance

The responsibility for *organizational governance* is delegated to the CRCNA ministry and educational organizations located in Canada and the U.S. This delegation was an important part of the work of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture in 2014 (Agenda for Synod 2015 pp. 375-376), affirmed in by the Structure and Leadership Task Force in 2022, and codified in the joint ministry agreements adopted in 2022 (CRCNA JMA and ReFrame JMA).

Synodical Governance and CRCNA Organizations

The COD's *synodical governance and oversight* responsibilities of CRCNA synodical, ministry and educational organizations includes the following ecclesial tasks:

1. **Synodical Mandates and Decisions of Synod:** Ensure the respective ministry and educational organizations are living into its synodical mandates and other directives by synod. Regularly review the mandates to ensure they are current and beneficial to the churches.
2. **Mission, Vision, Values:** Ensure the ministry and educational organizations' mission, vision, and value statements are aligned with synodical mandates and other directives.
3. **Ministry Plan, Strategy, and Goals:** Ensure the ministry and educational organizations' ministry strategy and plans and goals are aligned with the CRCNA ministry plan calling areas and milestones. Particular attention is given to the use of joint agreements between administrative, ministry and educational programs and activities that promote collaboration, cooperation, and partnership.
4. **Leadership:** Ensure the selection, support, and succession of governance and organizational leadership as outlined in COD policy and organizational bylaws.
5. **Annual Report to synod:** Provide an annual report to synod that addresses the following topics:
 - a. Organizational governance – As outlined in the organization's bylaws such as board appointments, bylaw changes, and other significant board matters.
 - b. Mandate & mission – How the organization is fulfilling its mandate and mission.
 - c. Ministry plan & ministry goals – How the organization is aligned with the ministry plan and its calling areas and milestones.

- d. Leadership – Leadership plans and changes in leadership structure.
- e. Financial – An annual financial overview including a balance sheet, revenue and expenses, and advancement activities.

CRCNA Organizations

The COD's *synodical governance and oversight* responsibilities include the following CRCNA Organizations:

1. **CRCNA Synodical Organization:** The synodical organization was authorized by Synod 2022. When incorporated, the Office of General Secretary and its associated synodical functions will transition from its current location within the US Ministry Organization.
2. **Ministry Organizations:**
 - a. **Canada Ministry Organization:** The Canada Ministry Organization is organizationally governed by the Canada Ministry Board. This organization oversees the Canada Ministry Office, and jointly oversees with the US Ministry Organization, Thrive and Resonate Global Mission.
 - b. **US Ministry Organization:** The US Ministry Organization is organizationally governed by the US Ministry Board. This organization oversees the US Ministry Office, and jointly oversees with the Canada Ministry Organization, Thrive and Resonate Global Mission.
 - c. **ReFrame Ministries:** ReFrame Ministries is organizationally governed by the ReFrame Ministries Canada Board and ReFrame Ministries US Board. The membership of the Canada and US ReFrame Boards is the same as the membership of the Canada and US Ministry Organization boards.
 - d. **World Renew:** World Renew is organizationally governed by the World Renew Canada Board and the World Renew US Board.
3. **Educational Institutions:**
 - a. **Calvin University:** Calvin University is organizationally governed by the Calvin University Board of Trustees.
 - b. **Calvin Theological Seminary:** Calvin Theological Seminary is organizationally governed by the Calvin University Board of Trustees.

CRCNA Offices

There is a differentiation between the roles of governance and management. The COD as well as the CRCNA Ministry and Educational Boards have the authority and responsibility to govern, set direction, and provide oversight. The COD provides *synodical governance and support*, and the ministry and educational boards provide *organizational governance and support*. The CRCNA leaders are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the CRCNA organization as established in synodical and/or organizational governance policies. Leaders implement the CRCNA Ministry Plan by establishing strategy and ministry goals, and resource budgets. Leaders use *policy and procedures, standards, strategies, goals, and/or guidelines* to ensure clarity, consistency, and coherence through the CRCNA organization.

The CRCNA has three leadership offices that lead, manage, and provide oversight of the CRCNA organization in Canada and the US:

1. **Office of General Secretary:** The Office of General Secretary provides ecclesiastical and organizational leadership and support in Canada and the United States that promotes a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and partnership throughout the CRCNA organization.
2. **Canada Ministry Office:** The Canada Ministry Office provides administrative and ministry oversight and support services that build a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and effectiveness with ministry organizations, agencies, and partners as they serve CRC congregations in Canada.
3. **United States Ministry Office:** provides administrative and ministry oversight and support services that build a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and effectiveness with ministry organizations, agencies, and partners as they serve CRC congregations in the US.

Chapter 1: Council of Delegates

Meetings

The COD shall meet as needed to conduct its business but not fewer than two (2) times per year. Ordinarily, the COD meets in February, May, and October of each year. Meetings may be held virtually or in-person.

The COD is a deliberative body; the body requires the deliberation and conversation of members present. While a member serves as a representative of a classis or the church at-large, he or she is not acting solely on behalf of the classis in voting or reporting. As a body, members are engaged in Spirit-led conversation, discussion, and deliberation. This involves all members asking questions, reflecting on the conversation, and prayerfully arriving at decisions together as a body.

Rules of Order

Ordinarily, the COD shall rely upon parliamentary procedures adopted by synod as found in the Rules for Synodical Procedure, section VIII, in conducting its business; however, adopted self-imposed procedure rules shall supersede the synodical rules. Such procedural rules can be found throughout this handbook.

COD Agenda

The Executive Committee prepares the agendas for COD meetings in advance of the meetings. The agenda provides the scope and sequence for the business conducted at each COD meeting. The agendas generally include matters and recommendations from the COD committees, the Canada and U.S. ministry boards, and a “call for agenda items” from COD members.

Normally matters are added to the agenda only by the concurrence of the COD at the start of a meeting as the agenda is approved. Motions and recommendations normally come through the work of committees and the ministry boards and not from the floor.

COD agendas, including all attachments, reports, and other supporting documentation, are not public until specific matters are adopted by the COD and then included in the COD minutes. Similarly, ministry board decisions are not public until included in the respective minutes and reported to the COD.

Minutes

COD minutes are distributed as soon as available to COD members for review, comment, and/or correction. If no response is received after one week (or if a

response is received and appropriate editing has been completed), the minutes shall be deemed to be approved and distributed to CRCNA ministry and educational board leadership. A similar protocol for approval and distribution of the minutes are used by the ministry and educational boards.

Minutes (and any attachments or accompanying material) of the COD in plenary sessions and of ministry board meetings are considered public (i.e., available to the public) unless the appropriate body and/or the Office of General Secretary determines them confidential.

Minutes and any attachments or accompanying material of COD committees are not official until received formally by the COD at which time they, too, become public unless the body and/or the Office of General Secretary determines them confidential.

When the COD, ministry and organizational boards, and committees meet virtually the meetings will be recorded (See Policy 2.4 Recordings of Meetings).

Decisions of the COD of broad interest are distributed publicly by way of the "COD Highlights."

Committees

Normally committees meet during or just prior to the time when the COD is convened, providing their minutes and recommendations to the COD in as timely a manner as possible. COD committee reports and minutes are not considered public until after the COD has addressed and acted on the report or minutes.

Ministry Boards

The Canada and US Ministry Boards normally meet prior to or during the time when the COD is convened, and in accordance with regulations in Canada, the Canada board holds a fourth meeting during the year, each providing their minutes and recommendations to the COD in as timely a manner as possible. Likewise, ministry boards consider and/or approve actions of the COD at the conclusion of the COD or at the next meeting of the ministry boards following the COD meeting.

Executive Sessions

The COD and ministry boards will normally conduct its meetings in open session. When meetings are open, representatives of the press are welcome to observe the proceedings of the meetings. Meetings of committees of the COD are not open meetings.

Upon the request of any member of the COD or ministry board director, or by declaration of the chairperson, the COD, or its ministry boards, may enter executive session. Board guests are excused when the COD, or its ministry boards, enter executive session. Minutes of executive session remain confidential, except for any part of the decision (or wording) the body may approve for inclusion in the public set of minutes.

There are two types of executive sessions:

Executive session means that (a) the COD will meet with the general secretary and chief administrative officer present and any staff that is deemed would be helpful (b) the ministry board will meet with its executive leader and any staff they deemed would be helpful. Normally, an executive session is included as part of each COD or ministry board meeting.

Strict executive session means that (a) the COD will meet without the General Secretary, Chief Administrative Officer, or other staff present; (b) the ministry board will meet without its executive leader or other staff present. Normally, strict executive session is only called to address matters involving the general secretary, chief administrative officer (for COD) or executive leader (for ministry boards).

Voting Guidelines

When announcing the results of a vote, the following guidelines are to be followed:

Virtual Meeting. The chair announces at the beginning of the meeting that, in the interest of time, matters for information will be ruled by the chair. Electronic voting is used for recommendations that generate discussion or are of significance. Normally the chair only announces the voting results—whether the motion passed or is defeated. Immediately following this announcement, a member may request that the vote counts be announced. As a reminder, the decision of the COD as a deliberative body is binding on all its members—supported by the full body (the exception being members who register a negative vote or a positive vote in the case when the body defeats a motion).

In-person meeting. It has been the custom for the chair to ask for a voice vote for all matters on the COD agenda unless judged by the chair that an electronic vote is needed for a particular matter (if potential for the vote to be close or is too close to call after the voice vote) or if specifically requested by a member of the COD. Normally, the chair only announces the voting results—whether the motion passed or is defeated. Immediately following this announcement, a delegate may request that the vote counts also be announced. As a reminder, the decision of the COD as a deliberative body is binding on all its members—supported by the full body (the exception being delegates who

register a negative vote or a positive vote in the case when the body defeats a motion).

Staff Attendance

The following leadership staff are invited to attend COD meetings while they meet in regular session:

1. Ministry Organizations:
 - a. Executive Director of the Canada Ministry Organization
 - b. Executive Leader of the U.S. Ministry Organization
2. Ministry Agencies:
 - a. Co-directors of Thrive
 - b. Director of ReFrame Ministries
 - c. Director of Resonate Global Mission
 - d. Co-directors of World Renew
3. Office of General Secretary Staff:
 - a. Director of Communications and Marketing
 - b. Director of Synodical Services
4. Educational Institutions:
 - a. President of Calvin Theological Seminary
 - b. President of Calvin University

COD Officers

Each year the Council of Delegates elects four of its members to serve as the COD officers. Officers serve a one-year term beginning July 1 and are eligible to serve six terms. In the spring of each year, following the election of the Canada and US Ministry Board officers, the election of COD officers shall be conducted by ballot.

The four elected COD officer positions include:

1. ***Chairperson.*** The chairperson shall conduct the meetings of the COD. The chairperson is a member of and chairs the COD Executive Committee (but serves on no other COD committee). The chairperson serves as the president of either the Canada Ministry Board or U.S. Ministry Board. The chairperson attends synod as a representative of the COD.
2. ***Vice-chairperson.*** The vice-chairperson shall serve as chair when the chairperson is absent or when the chairperson temporarily steps out of the chair role to join in discussion/deliberation. The vice-chairperson is a member of the COD Executive Committee. The vice-chairperson serves as the president of either the Canada Ministry Board or the U.S. Ministry

Board. The vice-chairperson attends synod as a representative of the COD.

3. **Secretary.** The secretary shall be responsible for recording the actions of the COD in official meetings. The secretary may delegate all or some portion of the duties of secretary to a staff member. The secretary is a member of the Executive Committee and is chair of the Governance Committee.
4. **Treasurer.** The treasurer shall be responsible for the portion of the COD's agenda dealing with financial matters. The treasurer may delegate all or some of the duties of treasurer to a staff member. The treasurer is a member of the Executive Committee and chairs the Finance Committee.

More work will be done to work out the logistics of electing officers for COD in coordination with the Canadian and US Ministry Boards.

Office of General Secretary:

1. **General Secretary.** The General Secretary serves as the chief ecclesiastical officer of the CRCNA and is an *ex officio* member of the COD with privilege of the floor at all meetings. The General Secretary serves as an *ex officio* non-voting member of the COD Executive Committee, all COD committees and task forces. The General Secretary attends synod with privilege of the floor as a representative of the Office of General Secretary and a member of the COD. The Office of General Secretary supports the work of the COD and synod.
2. **Chief Administrative Officer.** The Chief Administrative Officer is an *ex officio* member of the COD with privilege of the floor at all meetings. The Chief Administrative Officer serves as an *ex officio* non-voting member of the COD Executive Committee, all COD committees and task forces. The Chief Administrative Officer attends synod as a representative of the Office of General Secretary. The Chief Administrative Officer supports the work of the COD and synod.

Membership

The Council of Delegates has four membership categories: classical members, at-large members, organizational guest members, and *ex officio* members.

1. Classical Members

Each classis in the CRCNA, with the assistance of the COD Governance Committee, nominates a person to serve on the Council of Delegates. Classis nominees are approved by the COD and appointed by synod to a

three-year term as a voting member of the COD. Classical members are eligible for reappointment to a successive three-year term.

- 11 Canada classes: 11 members
- 37 U.S. classes: 37 members
- 1 binational classis (Lake Superior): 1 member
- **Total number of classical members: 49 members**

2. At-Large Members

The COD Governance Committee, with the assistance of the COD, develops a slate of at-large nominees to serve on the Council of Delegates. When the slate of at-large nominees is approved by the COD, it will be forwarded to synod for appointment. At-large members serve a three-year term as a voting member of the COD. At-large members are eligible for reappointment to a successive three-year term.

The total number of at-large appointments shall range between 2 to 10 members.

- Canada at-large members 6 members
- U.S. at-large members 1 member
- **Total number of at-large members 7 members**

3. Organizational Guests

Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, and World Renew report to synod and are governed by boards that are legally separate from the CRCNA US and Canada,² yet are a part of the CRCNA organization. Because of this relationship, each is asked to appoint two members from their boards to serve as organizational guest members on the Council of Delegates. Organizational guest members are appointed to one-year renewable terms as non-voting members on the Council of Delegates.

- Calvin Theological Seminary 2 members (1 Canada and 1 US)
- Calvin University 2 members
- World Renew 2 members (1 Canada and 1 US)
- **Total number of guest members 6 members**

Organizational guest membership is an integral part of a reciprocal board guest program designed to continue and enhance the *connections* between

² The report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture also claims, “while there would be a continuation of separate boards [for CU, CTS, and WR], we anticipate that the Council of Delegates would continue and enhance connections with these ministries” (p. 376). For example, the 2022 Council of Delegates handbook states, “Further, Calvin University, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew communicate to synod through the COD. Additionally, changes they approve to their mandates, constitutions, and/or bylaws require presentation by the COD as recommendations to synod” (p. 9).

the COD and Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, and World Renew. See COD Governance Policy 2.1: Organizational Guest Member policy for more information.

4. Ex officio members

The General Secretary and the chief Administrative Officer serve as *ex officio* non-voting members of the Council of Delegates and all the COD Committees.

5. Members Unable to Finish a Term

If a classical or at-large member is unable to finish a term, the COD Governance Committee will identify an interim member in collaboration with classis or, in the case of an at-large member, with the COD. The COD will appoint the interim member to serve with the privilege of a vote, until synod elects a new member to fill out the term.

6. Membership Matrix

Membership Type	Membership	CDN	US	Notes
Voting Members				
1. Classical Members	49	11+1	37	▪ Classis Lake Superior is a binational classis, and the member could be from Canada or US.
2. At-Large Members	7	6	1	
Total Voting Members	56	18	38	
Non-Voting Members				
3. Organizational Guest Members	6	3	3	▪ Calvin Theological Seminary

Membership Type	Membership	CDN	US	Notes
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calvin University ▪ World Renew
4. Ex Officio Members	2	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Secretary ▪ Chief Administrative Officer
Total Non-Voting Members	8	3	3	
Total COD Membership	64	21	41	

Member Job Description

Member Qualifications

1. Be a member in good standing of a Christian Reformed Church, if nominated by a classis, the church must be located within the nominating classis.
2. Agree with the COD Membership Policies
 - a. COD Statement of Agreement with the Beliefs of the CRCNA.
 - b. COD Code of Conduct for members
 - c. Conflict-of-Interest Policy
3. Not employed as a CRCNA staff member.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Fulfill the three fiduciary duties of a COD member.
 - a. Duty of care: exercise responsibilities in good faith and with diligence, care, and skill.
 - b. Duty of loyalty: exercise responsibilities in the interests of the CRCNA
 - c. Duty of obedience: carry out the mission and purposes of the CRCNA, comply with applicable federal, state, and/or provincial laws, adhere to the COD governance handbook.

2. Fulfill the synodical governance duties as described in the COD governance handbook.
3. Attend all COD meetings and serve on assigned committees.
 - a. Contribute to and review the agenda and materials prior to meetings.
 - b. Seriously consider serving in a COD leadership role if requested or nominated.
 - c. Attend special functions and events as appropriate.
4. Promote ecclesiastic partnership within the CRCNA.
 - a. As a classical member, attend classis meetings, listen to the concerns and desires of the classis and provide updates to the classis, help facilitate the classis nomination process.
 - b. As a guest member, promote the organizational partnership and connection between Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, or World Renew and the CRCNA.
 - c. As a member of the Canada or U.S. Ministry Board, attend respective ministry board and committee meetings, serve as the key link between the ministry board and classis, listen to the concerns and expectations of classis and provide updates on the work of ministry agencies and educational institutions.
5. Learn about, and become familiar with, the work of the ministry boards, ministry agencies, and educational institutions.
6. Pray for the CRCNA, its leaders, agencies, and ministries, and challenge others to pray as well; give to the work of the CRCNA according to how God has blessed, and challenge God's people also to give; support and encourage the personnel with words of appreciation.

Chapter 2: COD Committees

Introduction to Committees

The Council of Delegates has four types of committees

1. General committees
2. Ministry committees
The ministry committees each represent one of three CRCNA ministry agencies: Thrive, ReFrame, Resonate.
3. Connections committee
The Connections Committee connects with the two educational institutions of the CRCNA (Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University) and World Renew (a ministry agency of the Christian Reformed Church).
4. Advisory committees: *The Banner* Advisory Committee, and Bible Translations Committee

General Committee Procedures

1. The purpose and tasks of each COD committee is outlined in its committee charter. Charters are considered dynamic documents that may be edited and modified by the committee. When the COD approves the committee recommendations, the changes are made to the governance handbook.
2. Meetings of COD committees are not open meetings.
3. The Governance Committee coordinates and monitors committee assignments.
4. COD members are assigned to committees, seeking to address gifts and passions as well as each member's preference.
5. The chairs of the Canada and US Ministry board committees are assigned to similar COD committees to build alignment, connection, and partnership. For example, the chairs of the Canada and the US Governance Committees shall serve on the COD Governance Committee.
6. The following are general committees: Executive Committee, Governance Committee, Finance Committee, Synodical Services Committee

Organizational Guest Members Committee Procedures

1. Guest members are assigned to the connections committee.
2. It is understood that guest members do not speak formally for the board they represent.

3. Guest members are not included in executive or strict executive sessions of the COD.
4. Guest members have the privilege of participating in the committee and plenary meetings but do not vote.
5. See the Organizational Guest Member Policy 2.1 for more information.

Non-COD Committee Members Procedures

1. Nominations of non-COD members shall be coordinated by the Governance Committee. When Committees desire to include non-COD members seats, the committee makes a recommendation to the Governance Committee, specifying the qualities and gifts of those intended for the seats.
2. Non-COD members may serve on COD committees for a term of three (3) years, eligible for reappointment to a second term.
3. Non-COD members are CRC members in good standing.
4. Non-COD members who participate in the work of the committee have the privilege of voting in their committees. Exceptions are noted in Committee Charters.
5. Expenses for non-COD committee members attending committee meetings is outlined in COD Governance Policy 2.1.

Committee Membership Matrix

Committee Type	Committee Membership	Minimum Binational Representation		Guest Members	Non-COD Members	Notes
		CDN	US			
Standing Committees						
<i>Executive</i>	6	3	3	-	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50/50 balance between CDN & US ▪ Chairs of CDN and US Boards Executive Committee
<i>Governance</i>	4	1	1	-	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chairs of CDN and US Boards Governance Committee
<i>Finance</i>	4	1	1	-	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chairs of CDN and US Boards Finance Committee
<i>Synodical Services</i>	6	3	3	-	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50/50 balance between CDN & US

Committee Type	Committee Membership	Minimum Binational Representation		Guest Members	Non-COD Members	Notes
		CDN	US			
Ministry Committees						
<i>Thrive</i>	6	2	2		Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 2 Non-COD members can be appointed. Chairs of CDN and US Boards CM Committee
<i>Resonate Global Mission</i>	6	2	2		Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 2 Non-COD members can be appointed. Chairs of CDN and US Boards Resonate Committee
<i>ReFrame Ministries</i>	6	2	2		Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 2 non-COD members can be appointed. Chairs of CDN and US Boards ReFrame Committee
Connections Committee						
<i>Calvin University, Calvin Theological Seminary, World Renew</i>	10	2	2	6	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Organizational Guest members 4 COD members
Total Needed	42	15	15	6	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unduplicated count Treasurer, secretary serve as chairs of the Finance and Governance Committee.
Total Available	64	21	41		-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unduplicated count Does not include Ex Officio members. Canada and US numbers each include 3 guest members

General Committee Charters

Executive Committee Charter

1. Purpose:

- a. To conduct the business and affairs of the COD or in the interim of COD meetings or in situations where a regular meeting of the COD would be impractical or impossible.
- b. To conduct certain duties and responsibilities delegated by the COD and outlined in this charter.
- c. To serve as the operating board of the CRCNA synodical organization.
- d. To provide counsel and advice to the Office of General Secretary.

2. Membership:

- a. Executive Committee membership is balanced between Canada and the U.S.
- b. The membership includes the following COD members:
 - Chair: same as the chairperson of the COD
 - Vice Chair: same as vice-chairperson of the COD
 - Treasurer: same as the treasurer of the COD and serves as chair of the Finance Committee
 - Secretary: same as the secretary of the COD and serves as chair of the Governance Committee
 - General member: serves as chair of the Synodical Services Committee
 - General member: serves as an at-large-member of the Executive Committee
- c. Executive Committee members are elected to one- year terms and can be re-elected to multiple terms.
- d. If the current membership of the Executive Committee is expanded, it shall be expanded by 2 allowing one member from Canada and one from the US.
- e. The General Secretary and the Chief Administrative Officer are *ex officio*, non-voting members of the Executive Committee. The Director of Synodical Services serves as staff to the Executive Committee.

3. Tasks & Responsibilities:

The Executive Committee serves as a general committee for the COD and as the operating board for the CRCNA synodical organization. In both roles, the Executive Committee has the authority to:

- a. Transact all regular business of the COD in the interim of COD meetings, subject to any prior limitations imposed by the COD or by statute. The Executive Committee may decide issues that cannot be deferred until the next meeting of the COD. All actions of the Executive

Committee are subject to approval of ratification of the COD at its subsequent meeting.

- b. Develop and propose to the COD the Annual COD Agenda which includes goals and priorities.
- c. Develop the agenda for each COD meeting. After issuing a call to COD members for agenda items, the Chair and General Secretary (with the support of the Director of synodical Services) jointly develop a draft agenda to be reviewed by the Executive Committee.
- d. Serve as the adjudication body when decisions of the Canada and U.S. Ministry Organizations require coordination at the request of the Office of General Secretary, Canada Ministry Office, and/or the U.S. Office.
- e. Oversee the performance of the General Secretary and conduct regular performance reviews in accordance with policy. Be appraised of performance reviews of other all key leaders in accordance with policy.
- f. Oversee the compensation program for the General Secretary and all key leaders in accordance with policy.
- g. Oversee the leadership succession, including emergency succession, of the General Secretary, Chief administrative Officer, and other key leaders in accordance with policy.
- h. Provide counsel and advice to the Office of General Secretary.

4. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Executive Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The COD may rule that some or all the minutes formally received are confidential and therefore not made public.

5. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The Executive Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets 8 times per year.
- b. Annual agenda: The Executive Committee develops an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished. The annual agenda shall align, as much as possible with the annual COD agenda.
- c. Consent agenda: The Executive Committee uses a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the Executive Committee.
- d. Delegation: The Executive Committee may make assignments to other general and ministry committees.
- e. Ad hoc sub-committees: The Executive Committee may establish such ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific responsibilities through such sub-committees. The ad hoc sub-committees will meet for a limited duration and disband when the task is accomplished.
- f. Quorum: A majority of the Committee members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.

6. **Oversight:** COD Board Policy Oversight: The Executive Committee oversees the following COD policies:
- a. COD Statement of Beliefs Policy
 - b. Staff Right to Comment Policy

Additional policies will fall under the responsibility of the Executive Committee. At this time COD policies are being reviewed. This work will continue through FY 23-24.

7. **Leadership & Support:**

The General Secretary and the Chief Administrative Officer shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. The Director of Synodical Services supports this committee in a staff capacity.

8. **Review:**

The Executive Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Governance Committee Charter

1. **Purpose:**

The Governance Committee is tasked with enhancing the governance capacity and effectiveness of the Council of Delegates and its committees.

2. **Membership:**

- a. The Governance Committee shall include at least four members from the COD.
- b. The chairs of the Governance Committee from the Canada Ministry Board and the US Ministry Board shall be on this committee.
- c. Non-COD members are not eligible to serve on this committee.

3. **Chairperson:**

- a. The secretary of the COD shall serve as the chairperson of the Governance Committee.
- b. The vice chair shall be elected by the committee members.
- c. The chair and vice chair shall represent Canada and the U.S.

4. **Tasks & Responsibilities:**

- a. Help create board roles and responsibilities
 - Regularly review the COD member job description and board policies that address individual roles and responsibilities and conflict of interest.

- b. Pay attention to board composition.
 - Assess current and anticipated needs related to COD composition
 - Be diligent in addressing the need for a diverse board by addressing geographic, gender, ethnicity, and age diversity reflecting synodically approved guidelines.
 - Identify potential candidates and explore their interest and availability for COD service; maintain a database of candidates that can be used by classes.
 - Nominate individuals for appointment as members of the COD.
 - Work with current COD members to identify potential leadership interests and opportunities.
- c. Encourage board development
 - Provide candidates with information needed prior to election to the COD.
 - Design and oversee the process of board orientation, sharing information needed during the early stages of board service.
 - Offer an ongoing program of board information, education, and team building.
 - Host from time to time a forum for governance leaders from CRCNA synodical and ministry boards to share best governance practices and identify opportunities for partnership and collaboration.
- d. Assess board effectiveness
 - Initiate periodic assessment of board performance.
 - Provide counsel to the board leaders to enhance board effectiveness.
 - Nominate the COD sergeant-at-arms.
 - Periodically review the COD code of conduct.
 - Review the board practices, member participation, and board policy.
- e. Prepare board leadership
 - Take the lead in board leadership succession planning, taking steps to recruit and prepare future board members.
 - Nominate COD members for election as officers.
- f. Committee members and nominations
 - Coordinate the process of assigning COD members to general, ministry, institutional, and advisory committees.
 - Appoint non-COD members to serve on committees.
 - Periodically survey COD members to assist in the committee assignment process.
 - Monitor and support, as necessary, the committee selection process of its chair and vice chair.

- g. Board policy and practices
 - Periodically review the COD governance handbook for COD approval. If significant changes are required, recommend that the COD forward the handbook to synod for approval.

5. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Governance Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The committee may recommend to the COD that some or all the minutes are confidential and, therefore, not made public.

6. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The Governance Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets at least three times per year.
- b. Annual agenda: Develop an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished.
- c. Consent agenda: Use a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the Governance Committee.
- d. Members' slate: Recommend a slate of nominees for the COD by the February meeting to be forwarded to synod for appointment by way of the COD report to synod.
- e. Officer slate: Recommend a slate of nominees for COD officer positions by the May COD meeting.
- f. Database: Maintain a list of persons who may serve as COD members in the future.
- g. Quorum: A majority of the members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.
- h. Resources & guidelines: Rules for synodical procedure, COD governance handbook.

7. Oversight:

COD board policy oversight: The Governance Committee oversees the following board policies:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- COD Code of Conduct for Delegates
- Delegate Nomination Process Policy
- Recordings of Meetings Policy

Additional policies will fall under the responsibility of the Governance Committee. At this time COD policies are being reviewed. This work will continue through FY 23-24.

8. Leadership & Support:

The General Secretary and the Director of Synodical Services shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity.

9. Review:

The Governance Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Finance Committee Charter

1. Purpose:

The Finance Committee ensures the financial health and sustainability of the CRCNA organization by providing oversight, advice, and policy guidance thereby ensuring the financial integrity and addressing risk.

2. Membership:

- a. The Finance Committee shall include at least four COD members.
- b. The chairs of the Finance Committee from the Canada Ministry Board and the US Ministry Board shall be on this committee.
- c. Up to two non-COD members are eligible to serve on this committee.

3. Chairperson:

- a. The treasurer of the COD shall serve as the chairperson of the Finance Committee.
- b. The vice chair shall be elected by the committee members.
- c. The chair and vice chair shall represent Canada and the U.S.

4. Tasks & Responsibilities:

- a. Policy review and management
 - Review the financial policies and practices on a regular basis.
- b. Ensure accurate and consolidated financial records
 - Provide an annual consolidated financial report to the COD and synod for the CRCNA organization. This includes US and Canada Ministry Organizations, ReFrame Ministries, World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary.
 - Receive regular consolidated budget reports at each meeting.
 - Ensure that the ministry boards are contracting with an outside firm to conduct the required and necessary financial audits.
 - Serve as the COD audit committee
- c. Provide guidance and assistance in the development of annual budgets.
 - Collaborate with the US and Canada Ministry Board's Finance Committees.

- Provide revenue and allocation assumptions to the COD by February.
- Provide a consolidated annual budget to the COD in May to forward to synod.
- d. Ministry share system oversight
 - Review and monitor the performance of the ministry share system.
 - Make recommendations to the COD in February regarding ministry share revenue projections and allocations for the upcoming year.
- e. Cash management, pensions, and CRC Loan Fund
 - Review an annual report from the pension boards and the Loan Fund.
 - Regularly review investment, cash management, and other policies to ensure ongoing effectiveness and risk management.

5. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Finance Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The Finance Committee may recommend that some or all the minutes formally received are confidential and, therefore, not made public.

6. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The Finance Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets 4 times per year.
- b. Annual agenda: The Finance Committee develops an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished.
- c. Consent agenda: The Finance Committee uses a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the Finance Committee.
- d. Delegation: The Finance Committee may make assignments to other standing committees.
- e. Ad hoc sub-committees: The Finance Committee may establish such ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific responsibilities through such sub-committees. The ad hoc sub-committees will meet for a limited duration and disband when the task is accomplished.
- f. Quorum: A majority of the members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.

7. Oversight:

COD Board Policy Oversight: The Finance Committee oversees the following COD policies:

At this time all policies are under review and updating related to the new structures. This work will continue through FY 23-24.

8. Leadership & Support:

The Chief Administrative Officer shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity.

9. Review:

The Finance Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Synodical Services Committee Charter

1. Purpose:

Synodical Services Committee is responsible for synodical and ecclesiastical matters involving synod, COD, and classes not assigned to specific COD committees.

2. Membership:

- a. The Synodical Services Committee includes four to six members from the COD.
- b. Non-COD members are not eligible to serve on this committee.

3. Chairperson:

- a. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by the committee.
- b. The chair and vice chair shall represent Canada and the U.S.

4. Tasks & Responsibilities:

- a. Respond to directives provided by synod to the COD.
- b. Respond to directives from the COD that impact synod.
- c. Receive and implement synodical instructions and process synodical matters such as interim appointments, propose themes and/or agendas for synodical gatherings.
- d. Make recommendations to improve and strengthen the overall functioning of the synodical system including the CRCNA regions and classes.
- e. Oversee the training and education program for stated clerks, synodical deputies, and classical treasurers in collaboration with the Finance Committee.
- f. Review the CRCNA yearbook, denominational statistics, and surveys.

- g. Develop and oversee communication plans and activities during and after synod, COD, and classis gatherings.
- h. Review nominations as needed for the Judicial Code Committee, synodical study committees/task forces, and other related COD or syndical committee nominations.
- i. Support the development, implementation, and review of the CRCNA Ministry Plan.
- j. Nominate persons to serve on synodical committees and recommend to the COD for approval.

5. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Synodical Services Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The committee may recommend that some or all the minutes formally received are confidential and therefore not made public.

6. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The Synodical Services Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets 3 times per year.
- b. Annual agenda: The Synodical Services Committee develops an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished. The annual agenda shall align, as much as possible, with the annual COD agenda.
- c. Consent agenda: The Synodical Services Committee uses a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the committee.
- d. Delegation: The Synodical Services Committee may make assignments to other standing committees.
- e. Ad hoc sub-committees: The Synodical Services Committee may establish such ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific responsibilities through such sub-committees. The ad hoc sub-committees will meet for a limited duration and disband when the task is accomplished.
- f. Quorum: A majority of the committee members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.

7. Oversight:

COD board policy oversight: If the Synodical Services Committee was assigned to review one or more COD policies, they will be listed here.

At this time all policies are under review and updating related to the new structures. This work will continue through FY 23-24.

8. Leadership & Support:

The General Secretary and the Director of Synodical Services shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity.

9. Review:

The Synodical Services Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Charters for Ministry Committees

Introduction to Ministry Committees

Ministry Committees provide six *synodical governance and oversight* functions in service to the Council of Delegates. Matters addressed in the ministry and connection committees include:

1. **Synodical Mandates and Decisions of Synod:** Ensure the respective agencies are living into their synodical mandates and other directives by synod. Committees regularly review the mandates to ensure they are current and beneficial to the churches, and process matters related to synodical directives and mandates in preparation for the annual synod.
2. **Mission, Vision, Values:** Ensure the agency mission, vision, and value statements are aligned with synodical mandates and other synodical directives.
3. **Ministry Plan, Strategy and Goals:** Ensure the agency strategy and goals are aligned with the CRCNA ministry plan calling areas and milestones. Committees regularly review and reflect on the agency contributions to the ministry plan of the Christian Reformed Church. As synodically mandated agencies, it is expected that the CRC ministry plan would be a significant factor in the vision and implementation of ministry.
4. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Ensure the agencies are collaborating with each other and identifying ways to do ministry together. In addition, committees regularly review and reflect on the relationship of the agencies with the congregations and assemblies of the CRC.
5. **Leadership:** Ensure the selection, support, and succession of agency leaders as outlined by COD policy and organizational bylaws. Committees review any upcoming leadership transitions that would require approval,

- ratification, etc. of the COD or synod. Reflection on ways that synodical governance can support agency leaders.
6. **Annual Report to Synod:** Provide an annual report to synod that addresses the following topics:
 - a. Mandate & mission – How the agency is fulfilling its mandate and mission.
 - b. Ministry plan & ministry goals – how the agency is aligned with the ministry plan and its calling areas and milestones.
 - c. Leadership – Leadership plans and changes in leadership structure.
 - d. Financial – An annual financial overview including a balance sheet, revenue and expenses, and advancement activities.
 - e. Organizational governance – provide updates, if appropriate, as outlined in the agency's bylaws such as board appointments, bylaw changes, and other significant board matters.
 7. **Reporting Process:** During the meetings of the ministry committees assigned CRCNA leaders will provide a report on the following matters.
 - a. Introduction: A brief reflection on the organization, its leaders, health, and work over the reporting period.
 - b. Synodical directives and mandates: Review of any matters related to synodical directives and mandates, proposals and recommendations for synod, and bylaw changes if applicable.
 - c. Collaboration and partnership: Review of the collaboration with other CRC agencies and institutions and the partnership with CRC congregations.
 - d. Ministry plan: Review of the agency's work related to the ministry plan, strategies, ministry goals, and performance
 - e. Leadership: Review of any upcoming leadership transitions that would require approval, ratification, etc. of the COD or synod. Reflection on ways that synodical governance can support agency leaders.
 - f. Report to synod: Any matters that need to be reviewed by the committee in anticipation of the meeting of synod.
 8. **Note about the Ministry Committees:** The CRCNA organization is made of four agencies and two institutions of higher education: Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, Resonate Global Mission, World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary. Three of these agencies, Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, and Resonate Global Mission, are governed ecclesiastically by synod and the Council of Delegates (in synod's interim). These same three agencies are governed organizationally by the US and Canada ministry boards and their joint ministry agreements. The ministry committees represent three of the four ministry agencies of the CRCNA: Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, and Resonate Global Mission.

In contrast, World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary report to synod and are governed by their own boards composed of members chosen by CRCNA classes and others.³ The Council of Delegates' role with regard to World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary is essentially one of connection or coordination between them, synod, and the rest of the CRCNA agencies (except as specifically granted in their bylaws). This connecting role has been granted to the COD since its inception in 2017.⁴ World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary relate to the COD through the Connections Committee.

Thrive Committee Charter

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Thrive Committee is to provide synodical oversight and support of the Thrive agency.

2. Membership:

- a. The Thrive Committee shall include 4 to 6 members from the COD.
- b. The chairs of the Thrive Committee from the Canada ministry board and the US ministry board shall be on this committee.
- c. Up to 2 non-COD members are eligible to serve on this committee.

3. Chairperson:

- a. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by the committee.
- b. The chair and vice chair shall represent Canada and the U.S.

4. Tasks & Responsibilities:

The Committee carries out the following activities:

³ As part of the creation of the Council of Delegates, Synod 2015 adopted the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture. The report states, "The boards of World Renew, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary would remain the same, due to requirements for recognition and accreditation in their respective fields of endeavor, ability to receive grant funding, and ability to do ministry in context where churches are not welcome" (p. 375). Previously, Synod 1993 similar declared, "Nothing contained herein shall interfere with the authority of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary to govern their respective institutions and to manage their personnel, faculties, educational programs, libraries, and finances according to their respective articles of incorporation and bylaws" (*Acts of Synod 1993*, p. 343).

⁴ The report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture also states, "while there would be a continuation of separate boards [for CU, CTS, and WR], we anticipate that the Council of Delegates would continue and enhance connections with these ministries" (p. 376). For example, the *2022 Council of Delegates handbook* states, "Further, Calvin University, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew communicate to synod through the COD. Additionally, changes they approve to their mandates, constitutions, and/or bylaws require presentation by the COD as recommendations to synod" (p. 9).

- a. Mission: Ensure the organizational elements of the ministry agency are well defined and operationalized: vision, mission, values, strategy, program, and outcomes.
- b. Synodical mandates: Ensure the ministry agency continues to fulfill its synodical mandates; recommendations are made from time to time to update and refresh the mandates as determined by the committee.
- c. Ministry plan: Ensure the ministry agency is strategically addressing the calling areas and the milestones in the CRCNA Ministry Plan.
- d. Collaboration & partnership: Encourage and promote interagency and intercountry collaboration as well as connections with classes and congregations. The ministry agency will provide updates to the committee on their collaborative activities and initiatives.
- e. Leadership: Be involved in the selection of new ministry leadership in the U.S. and Canada as outlined in policy.
- f. Annual report to synod: Submit an annual written report to the COD and synod addressing the following topics:
 - a. Mandate & mission – How the agency is fulfilling its mandate and mission.
 - b. Ministry plan & ministry goals – How the organization is aligned with the ministry plan and its calling areas and milestones.
 - c. Leadership – Leadership plans and changes in leadership structure.
 - d. Financial – An annual financial overview including a balance sheet, revenue and expenses, and advancement activities.

5. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Thrive Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The COD may rule that some or all the minutes formally received are confidential and, therefore, not made public.

6. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The Thrive Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets three times per year.
- b. Annual agenda: The Thrive Committee develops an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished during the coming year.
- c. Consent agenda: The Thrive Committee uses a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the committee.
- d. Joint ministry review: Participate in regular review by all ministry committees identifying opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and partnership.
- e. Delegation: The Thrive Committee may make assignments to other standing committees.

- f. Ad hoc sub-committees: The Thrive Committee may establish such ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific responsibilities through such sub-committees. The ad hoc sub-committees will meet for a limited duration and disband when the task is accomplished.
 - g. Quorum: A majority of the members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.
- 7. Leadership & Support:**
The directors of Thrive U.S. and Canada shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity.
- 8. Review:**
The Thrive Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Reframe Ministries Committee Charter

- 1. Purpose:**
The purpose of the ReFrame Ministries Committee is to provide synodical oversight and support of the ReFrame ministry agency.
- 2. Membership:**
- a. The ReFrame Ministries Committee shall include 4 to 6 members from the COD.
 - b. The chairs of the ReFrame Ministries Committee from the Canada ministry board and the US ministry board shall be on this committee.
 - c. Up to two non-COD members are eligible to serve on this committee.
- 3. Chairperson:**
- a. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by the committee.
 - b. The chair and vice chair of the Reframe Ministries Committee shall represent Canada and the U.S.
- 4. Authority & Responsibilities:**
The committee carries out the following activities:
- a. Mission: Ensure the organizational elements of the ministry agency are well defined and operationalized: vision, mission, values, strategy, program, and outcomes.
 - b. Synodical mandates: Ensure the ministry agency continues to fulfill its synodical mandates; recommendations are made from time to time to update and refresh the mandates as determined by the committee.

- c. Ministry plan: Ensure the ministry agency is strategically addressing the calling areas and the milestones in the CRCNA Ministry Plan.
- d. Collaboration & partnership: Encourage and promote interagency and intercountry collaboration as well as connections with classes and congregations. The ministry agency will provide updates to the committee on their collaborative activities and initiatives.
- e. Leadership: Be involved in the selection of new ministry leadership in the U.S. and Canada as outlined in policy.
- f. Annual report to synod: Submit an annual written report to the COD and synod addressing the following topics:
 - Mandate & mission – How the agency is fulfilling its mandate and mission.
 - Ministry plan & ministry goals – How the organization is aligned with the ministry plan and its calling areas and milestones.
 - Leadership – Leadership plans and changes in leadership structure.
 - Financial – An annual financial overview including a balance sheet, revenue and expenses, and advancement activities.
 - Organizational governance updates as appropriate.

5. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Reframe Ministries Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The COD may rule that some or all the minutes formally received are confidential and, therefore, not made public.

6. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The ReFrame Ministries Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets 3 times per year.
- b. Annual agenda: The ReFrame Ministries Committee develops an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished during the coming year.
- c. Consent agenda: The ReFrame Ministries Committee uses a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the committee.
- d. Joint ministry review: Participate in regular review by all ministry committees identifying opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and partnership.
- e. Delegation: The ReFrame Ministries Committee may make assignments to other standing committees.
- f. Ad hoc sub-committees: The ReFrame Ministries Committee may establish such ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific responsibilities

through such sub-committees. The ad hoc sub-committees will meet for a limited duration and disband when the task is accomplished.

- g. Quorum: A majority of the committee members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.

7. Leadership & Support:

The director of Reframe Ministries shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity.

8. Review:

The Reframe Ministries Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Resonate Global Mission Committee Charter

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Resonate Global Mission Committee is to provide synodical oversight and support of the Resonate Global Mission agency.

2. Membership:

- a. The Resonate Global Mission Committee shall include 4 to 6 members from the COD.
- b. The chairs of the Resonate Global Mission Committee from the Canada ministry board and the US ministry board shall be on this committee.
- c. Up to two non-COD members are eligible to serve on this committee.

3. Chairperson:

- a. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by the committee.
- b. The chair and vice chair of the Resonate Global Mission Committee shall represent Canada and the U.S.

4. Authority & Responsibilities:

The Committee carries out the following activities:

- a. Mission: Ensure the organizational elements of the ministry agency are well defined and operationalized: vision, mission, values, strategy, program, and outcomes.
- b. Synodical mandates: Ensure the ministry agency continues to fulfill its synodical mandates; recommendations are made from time to time to update and refresh the mandates as determined by the committee.
- c. Ministry plan: Ensure the ministry agency is strategically addressing the calling areas and the milestones in the CRCNA ministry plan.

- d. Collaboration & partnership: Encourage and promote interagency and intercountry collaboration as well as connections with classes and congregations. The ministry agency will provide updates to the committee on their collaborative activities and initiatives.
- e. Leadership: Be involved in the selection of new ministry leadership in the U.S. and Canada as outlined in COD policy and organizational bylaws.
- f. Annual report to synod: Submit an annual written report to the COD and synod addressing the following topics:
 - Mandate & mission – How the agency is fulfilling its mandate and mission.
 - Ministry plan & ministry goals – How the organization is aligned with the ministry plan and its calling areas and milestones.
 - Leadership – Leadership plans and changes in leadership structure.
 - Financial – An annual financial overview including a balance sheet, revenue and expenses, and advancement activities.

5. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Resonate Global Mission Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The COD may rule that some or all the minutes formally received are confidential and therefore not made public.

6. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The Resonate Global Mission Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets 3 times per year.
- b. Annual agenda: The Resonate Global Missions Committee develops an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished during the coming year.
- c. Consent agenda: The Resonate Global Missions Committee uses a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the committee.
- d. Joint ministry review: Participate in regular review by all ministry committees identifying opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and partnership.
- e. Delegation: The Resonate Global Missions Committee may make assignments to other standing committees.
- f. Ad hoc sub-committees: The Resonate Global Missions Committee may establish such ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific responsibilities through such sub-committees. The ad hoc sub-committees will meet for a limited duration and disband when the task is accomplished.
- g. Quorum: A majority of the committee members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.

7. Leadership & Support:

The director of Resonate Global Mission shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity.

8. Review:

The Resonate Global Mission Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Charter for Connections Committee

1. Purpose:

Because World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary report to synod and are governed by boards that are legally separate from the CRCNA US and Canada,⁵ the purpose of the COD Connections Committee is to promote connections to and coordination between these three organizations, the Council of Delegates, synod, and the rest of the CRCNA agencies.⁶ This connecting role has been granted to the COD since its inception in 2017.⁷

2. Membership:

- a. The Connections Committee shall include 3-6 members from the COD. Ordinarily, COD members to the committee shall also be delegated guests to the boards of World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin

⁵ The report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture also claims, “while there would be a continuation of separate boards [for CU, CTS, and WR], we anticipate that the Council of Delegates would continue and enhance connections with these ministries” (p. 376). For example, the 2022 Council of Delegates handbook states, “Further, Calvin University, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew communicate to synod through the COD. Additionally, changes they approve to their mandates, constitutions, and/or bylaws require presentation by the COD as recommendations to synod” (p. 9).

⁶ As part of the creation of the Council of Delegates, Synod 2015 adopted the Report of the “Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture”. The report states, “The boards of World Renew, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary would remain the same, due to requirements for recognition and accreditation in their respective fields of endeavor, ability to receive grant funding, and ability to do ministry in context where churches are not welcome” (p. 375). Previously, Synod 1993 similar declared, “Nothing contained herein shall interfere with the authority of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary to govern their respective institutions and to manage their personnel, faculties, educational programs, libraries, and finances according to their respective articles of incorporation and bylaws” (*Acts of synod 1993*, p. 343).

⁷ The report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture also claims, “while there would be a continuation of separate boards [for CU, CTS, and WR], we anticipate that the Council of Delegates would continue and enhance connections with these ministries” (p. 376). For example, the 2022 *Council of Delegates handbook* states, “Further, Calvin University, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew communicate to synod through the COD. Additionally, changes they approve to their mandates, constitutions, and/or bylaws require presentation by the COD as recommendations to synod” (p. 9).

Theological Seminary

- b. The World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary guest delegated to the COD shall serve on this committee.

3. Chairperson:

- a. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall be regular members of the Council of Delegates and shall be elected by the committee.
- b. The chair and vice chair of the Connections Committee shall represent Canada and the U.S.

4. Authority & Responsibilities:

Recognizing that World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary each have their own synodically mandated board structures, the authority of the Connections Committee relates to enhancing the connection, collaboration, and coordination between World Renew, Calvin University, Calvin Theological Seminary, the other CRCNA agencies, synod, classes, and the CRC congregations.⁸ In particular, the coordination and collaboration focuses on synodical mandates, ministry plan engagement, collaboration with other CRCNA agencies, partnership with CRC congregations and classes, etc. As an ecclesial body, the Connections Committee does not comment on matters governed by the organizational boards of World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary. Such matters include budgets/finance, advancement, human resources, and other organizational policies. It also includes academic accreditation and curriculum matters (for Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary) and sectoral certifications, standards, and associations (for World Renew).

- a. Synodical tasks and mandates:
 - Review the synodical mandates of World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary providing feedback as necessary and requested.
 - Review the progress on any tasks assigned by synod to the institutions.
 - Process any changes to bylaws according to the board policies of the three organizations and the Council of Delegates.
- b. Ministry plan: Review efforts of World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary to integrate the synodically approved ministry plan and provide feedback to institutional leaders and boards.
- c. Collaboration & partnership: Encourage and promote collaboration between World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary, and other CRCNA organizations as well as connections with

⁸ See previous footnotes on this page.

classes and congregations. World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary will provide updates to the committee on their collaborative activities and initiatives.⁹

- d. Leadership: Be involved in the selection of new senior leadership for World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary as outlined in the bylaws and policies of their respective boards.
- e. Annual report to synod: Submit an annual written report to the COD and synod addressing the following topics:
 - Mandate & mission – How the agency is fulfilling its mandate and mission.
 - Ministry plan & ministry goals – How the organization is aligned with the ministry plan and its calling areas and milestones.
 - Leadership – Leadership plans and changes in leadership structure.
 - Financial – An annual financial overview including a balance sheet, revenue and expenses, and advancement activities.
 - Organizational governance updates as required and appropriate.
- f. Right of comment: The COD provides an opportunity for World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary to comment on overtures and communications conveyed to synod by classes, churches, and individuals. According to the COD policy (see Chapter 5 Governance Policies), comments presented to the Connections Committee and endorsed or adopted by the COD in plenary will be provided to synod for its consideration according to the rules for synodical procedure.

5. Minutes & Reports:

Minutes and any attachments of the Connections Committee are not official until they are formally received by the COD. The COD may rule that some or all the minutes formally received are confidential, and therefore, not made public.

6. Committee Procedures:

- a. Meetings: The Connections Committee meetings are set by the chairperson. The committee typically meets three times per year, and one meeting per year will be focused on World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary.

⁹ It is understood that the primary spaces created for collaboration between World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary are CRCNA senior leadership gatherings such as the Ministry Leadership Council, the Canadian Ministries Team, and other coordinating teams. Activities under c. above are primarily reporting the results of such efforts to ecclesial governance and receiving feedback.

- b. Annual agenda: The Connections Committee develops an annual agenda outlining the meeting schedule and the work that needs to be accomplished during the coming year.
- c. Consent agenda: The Connections Committee uses a consent agenda to manage appropriate items that require the review and oversight of the committee.
- d. Joint ministry review: Participate in a regular review to identify opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and partnership across the CRCNA organization.
- e. Delegation: The Connections Committee may make assignments to other standing committees.
- f. Ad hoc sub-committees: The Connections Committee may establish such ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific responsibilities through such sub-committees. The ad hoc sub-committees will meet for a limited duration and disband when the task is accomplished.
- g. Quorum: A majority of the members present and voting shall constitute a quorum.

7. Leadership & Support:

The executive co-director(s) of World Renew and the presidents of Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary shall support this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. It is expected that the executive co-directors and the presidents (or their designees) would participate as needed.

8. Review:

The Connection Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter would be reviewed by committee members, the executive directors of World Renew, the presidents of Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary, and senior CRC staff who will discuss and consult on all changes. Changes will be approved by the COD and the respective boards of World Renew, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary.

Charters for Advisory Committees

***The Banner* Advisory Committee Charter**

1. Purpose:

The purpose of *The Banner* Advisory Committee is to provide advice, feedback, and support to the editor-in-chief in the publishing of *The Banner*.

2. Membership:

The COD Governance Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees to serve on *The Banner* Advisory Committee. The COD shall act on this slate as recommended by the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee

will solicit potential nominees from the General Secretary and the editor-in-chief of *The Banner*.

The membership of the Committee shall be as follows:

- three (3) members of the COD for the duration of their term on the COD.
- three (3) members at large are appointed for a three-year term, renewable for a second term. At-large members will represent areas of expertise including, but not limited to, theological foundations, journalism, and communications.
- Normally three members will be from Canada and three from the U.S.
- Ex officio members without a vote include:
 - The editor-in-chief of *The Banner*,
 - Canada and U.S. Executive Directors (or their designees)

3. Chairperson:

The Chairperson is elected by *The Banner* Advisory Committee annually from its membership.

4. Authority & Responsibilities:

- a. Advise: Advise the editor of *The Banner* on editorial policy, content, and matters that the committee believes affect the publishing of a denominational magazine.
- b. Report: Report to the COD about editorial activities and decisions, as well as reactions, criticisms, and suggestions received.
- c. Monitor: Monitor and report to the COD annually the fiscal welfare and ministry health of *The Banner* as it serves the denomination.
- d. Ensure: Ensure the implementation of approved policies and procedures, recommending to the COD necessary changes to the policies and procedures.
- e. Leadership: When the editorship becomes vacant, the *Banner* Advisory Committee participates in the search for and identification of a new *Banner* editor.
- f. Report to synod: Provide an annual report to the COD and synod.

5. Minutes & Reports:

The minutes of *The Banner* Advisory Committee, including advice given (which shall be recorded in official minutes), shall be distributed to the COD, the General Secretary, and the editor of *The Banner*. If an extraordinary situation calls for intervention, the COD may instruct *The Banner* Advisory Committee in the modification, retraction, or initiation of advice given.

6. Committee Procedures:

Conflict Resolution Policy/Procedure. If a conflict about materials to be published develops between the editor of *The Banner* and the General Secretary, every effort shall be made to seek a resolution at the administrative and staff level.

If a resolution is not achieved and the matter is brought to the attention of *The Banner* Advisory Committee (BAC) by either the editor of *The Banner* or the General Secretary, the BAC may decide a resolution for all parties for publishing purposes; such a decision may be appealed to the COD, which will hear the appeal via a panel of five delegates (none of whom serve on the BAC) appointed by the COD Executive Committee, and the panel will make a recommendation to the COD. If there is still no resolution, *The Banner* editor retains the right to appeal to synod.

7. Oversight & Review:

The Banner Advisory Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, the charter should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Bible Translations Committee Charter

1. Purpose:

Review Bible translations for use in the CRCNA as requested by any church, classis, or synod.

2. Membership:

The COD Governance Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees to serve on the Bible Translations Committee. The COD shall ratify the slate of nominees and recommend to synod for approval. Synodical terms of three years are not applicable to the committee. The membership shall include the following representatives:

- Three members of the theological faculty (Old Testament and/or New Testament) of a seminary with strong ties to the CRCNA.
- English-language stylist who may also be an English-language professor, communications expert, or other such professional who understands the current use of language in contemporary life. If translations are required in other languages, the committee may arrange for a member or consultant(s) proficient in such languages.
- Church leader or pastor who understands the needs of the pulpit.
- Denominational representative appointed by the Office of General Secretary who will serve as convener (non-voting).

3. Chairperson/Convener:

The denominational representative on the committee will serve as the convener. The convener serves without a vote.

4. Authority & Responsibilities:

- The committee will conduct a review using a rubric consisting of criteria to evaluate the translation philosophy and process used by translators for any version of the Bible.
- The committee will review the translation rubric, as well as an assessment of each new translation being reviewed.
- Report to the COD annually for recommendation to synod, indicating recommended use of translations for (a) pulpit, (b) Bible study, and (c) personal devotions.

5. Minutes & Reports:

The minutes of the Bible Translations Committee shall be distributed to the COD and the General Secretary.

The Bible Translations Committee will present an annual report to the COD, if the committee had need to meet, indicating recommended use of translations for pulpit, Bible study, and personal devotions. The COD will forward the annual report to synod for approval.

6. Committee Procedures:

Frequency of meetings. Meet at least annually, usually by video conference. All review requests will first be reviewed by the COD and then forwarded to the committee.

7. Review:

The Bible Translations Committee charter is intended to be a dynamic document and should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the committee. Recommended changes can be made to the COD for review and approval.

Chapter 3: CRCNA Organizations

Background

The CRCNA is a complex binational organization that includes multiple ministry agencies, educational institutions, 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, educational, fiduciary, and governance responsibilities. Many of the ministry agencies, educational institutions, 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.

The CRCNA organization includes multiple ministry and educational organizations incorporated in Canada as registered charities and in the US as tax-exempt nonprofit organizations. Each of these charities and nonprofit organizations has a governing authority commonly referred to as a board of directors or board of trustees who is responsible to provide organizational governance. While each charity and nonprofit corporation are independent from a legal perspective, they are ecclesiastically accountable to the Council of Delegates and to synod.

The current charities and nonprofit organizations that are part of the CRCNA Organization that are legally incorporated in Canada and the United States (Michigan and Illinois) include:

1. Synodical Organization (Office of General Secretary)
 - CRCNA synodical organization (yet to be incorporated)
2. Ministry Organizations
 - Canada Ministry Organization
 - US Ministry Organization
 - ReFrame Ministries (Canada and US)
 - World Renew (Canada and US)
3. Educational Institutions
 - Calvin Theological Seminary
 - Calvin University
4. Related Organizations
 - Canada Pension Fund

- CRC Loan Fund, Inc.
- Delaware Investment Fund LLC
- Diaconal Ministries Canada
- Reformed Benefits Association
- U.S. Pension Fund

Organizational Governance Responsibilities

The boards of directors and boards of trustees are legally responsible to *organizationally govern and oversee* their organization. The legal responsibilities of the board include the following 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 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.*

Synodical Organization

CRCNA Synodical Organization: The synodical organization was authorized by Synod 2022. When incorporated, the Office of General Secretary and its associated synodical functions will transition from its current location within the US Ministry Organization to the new synodical organization.

- Council of Delegates serves as the members of the synodical organization
- COD Executive Committee serves as the operating board of the synodical organization
- The synodical organization is often referred to as the Office of General Secretary

We are currently working with the Miller Johnson law firm, to develop the bylaws. Once this is complete, the CRCNA synodical organization will be incorporated in the state of Michigan as a nonprofit organization. This work has been delayed due to a higher than normal workload in the Office of General Secretary.

Ministry Organizations

The CRCNA has four synodically affiliated ministry organizations:

1. **Canada Ministry Organization:** The Canada Ministry Organization is organizationally governed by the Canada ministry board. This organization oversees the Canada Ministry Office and jointly oversees, with the US Ministry Organization, Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, and Resonate Global Mission.
2. **US Ministry Organization:** The US Ministry Organization is organizationally governed by the US Ministry Board. This organization oversees the US Ministry Office and jointly oversees, with the Canada Ministry Organization, Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, and Resonate Global Mission.
3. **ReFrame Ministries:** ReFrame Ministries is organizationally governed by the ReFrame Ministries Canada Board and ReFrame Ministries US Board. Since the membership of the Canada and US ReFrame Boards is the same

as the membership of the Canada and US Ministry Organization Boards, they generally meet simultaneously.

4. **World Renew:** World Renew is organizationally governed by the World Renew Canada Board and the World Renew US Board.

Organizational Governance

The responsibility for *organizational governance* is delegated to the CRCNA Ministry organizations located in Canada and the U.S. This delegation was an important part of the work of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture in 2014, affirmed in by the Structure and Leadership Task Force in 2022, and codified in the Joint Ministry Agreements adopted in 2022 (CRCNA JMA and ReFrame JMA).

The Canada and US Ministry Boards provide organizational governance of the CRCNA and the ReFrame joint ministry agreements. The joint ministry agreements include three of the four ministry agencies: Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, and Resonate Global Mission.

The Joint Ministry Agreements address the following topics:

1. Ministry planning, goals, and assessment
2. Ministry administration, coordination and support
3. Human resources management
4. Financial management
5. Review and reporting

The boards of World Renew Canada and World Renew US provide organizational governance of the World Renew joint ministry agreement.

1. Canada Ministry Organization

The information presented in this section is taken from the organization's bylaws, ecclesiastical mandate letter, SALT Report, and the current COD governance handbook. It is meant to serve as an introduction for the benefit of the COD.

The Canada Ministry Organization's legal name is Christian Reformed Church in North America Canada Corporation. It is a nonprofit, ecclesiastical corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (S.C. 2009, c.23).

The Canada Ministry Organization is the legal identity and agent of the CRCNA in Canada.

The Board of Directors are those individuals who are selected to serve on the COD from each classis located in Canada, any at-large members of the COD who are from Canada who are elected annually consistent with Church Order Article 45. If the COD member elected in Classis Lake Superior lives in the US, an additional member of that classis will be elected to serve on the Canada Ministry board. The Canada Ministry Organization serves as the legal agent of synod in Canada.

The executive director of the Canada Ministry Office serves as the executive leader of the Canada Ministry Organization. That person is selected, appointed, and supervised by the Canada Ministry Board. Once appointed the Council of Delegates acknowledges the appointment.

2. US Ministry Organization

The information presented in this section is taken from the organization's bylaws, ecclesiastical mandate letter, SALT Report, and the current COD governance handbook. It is meant to serve as an introduction for the benefit of the COD.

The US Ministry Organization's legal name is Christian Reformed Church in North America (USA). It is a nonprofit, ecclesiastical corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501C(3) of the US IRS Code of 1986.

The US Ministry Organization is organized as a membership corporation under the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1986. The members of this corporation are the delegates to synod from classes located in the United States who are elected annually consistent with Church Order Article 45. The US Ministry Organization serves as the legal agent of synod in the US.

The Board of Directors are those individuals who are selected to serve on the COD from each classis located in the United States and any at-large members of the COD who are from the United States.

The director of ministry operations of the US Ministry Office serves as the executive leader of the US Ministry organization. That person is selected, appointed, and supervised by the US Ministry Board. Once appointed, the Council of Delegates acknowledges the appointment.

3. **ReFrame Ministries**

ReFrame Ministries US is a nonprofit corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501C(3) of the US IRS Code of 1986.

ReFrame Ministries is organized as a membership corporation under the Illinois General Not for Profit Corporation act of 1986. The members of this corporation are the delegates to synod from classes located in the United States who are elected annually consistent with Church Order Article 45.

The board of directors are those individuals who are selected to serve on the COD from each classis located in the United States and any at-large members of the COD who are from the United States.

The officers are elected/appointed by the board of directors. All officers shall hold office until successors are elected or until resignation or removal.

The board of directors may form standing and ad hoc committees as are necessary to carry out the corporation's purposes.

Representation from the Office of General Secretary as an invited board guest on the ReFrame Canada and US Boards needs to be addressed.

The bylaws, members, board of directors and officers of the ReFrame US Board and the US Ministries Board are the same. It is recommended that the US Board and the ReFrame US Board meet simultaneously to provide organizational governance of three ministry agencies in a collaborative and cooperative manner. A separate ministry committee for each ministry agency could be established to conduct agency business and committee recommendations be made to the full board for action.

Depending on the Structure of the ReFrame Canada bylaws, the Canada and the ReFrame Ministry Boards may consider the same recommendation to meet simultaneously.

ReFrame Ministries Canada

The description of ReFrame Ministries Canada is being developed in collaboration with the ReFrame Canada and the Canada Ministries Office.

4. World Renew

It should be noted that two members from the COD are guest members of the World Renew Board.

Educational Institutions

The CRCNA has two education institutions:

1. **Calvin University:** Calvin University is organizationally governed by the Calvin University Board of Trustees.
2. **Calvin Theological Seminary:** Calvin Theological Seminary is organizationally governed by the Calvin University Board of Trustees.

It should be noted that two members from the COD are guest members of the Calvin University Board of Trustees and the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

Related Organizations

The CRCNA has several related corporations organized to support the work of the CRCNA:

- Diaconal Ministries Canada
- Reformed Benefits Association
- CRC Loan Fund, Inc.
- Delaware Investment Fund LLC
- U.S. Pension Fund
- Canada Pension Fund

The list of related organizations is dynamic.

Brief descriptions of the purpose and how these organizations are related is under development.

The criteria for an organization to be considered “related” is at least one of the following: staff of the CRCNA organization participate on the board, the CRCNA organization was a key component in establishing the related entity, the entity was mandated by synod or has reporting responsibilities to synod, the entity exists for the purposes of the CRCNA.

Chapter 4: CRCNA Offices

Introduction to Leadership Framework and Offices

The CRCNA has three leadership offices: the Office of General Secretary, the Canada Ministry Office, and the US Ministry Office. These three lead, manage, oversee, and support the CRCNA organization in Canada and the US. As outlined in Table 1, the Council of Delegates, on behalf of synod, governs the Office of General Secretary. The Canada Ministry Board and the US Ministry Board each govern their own offices and supervise their own executive leader.

Table 1: CRCNA Leadership Framework

Governance Type	Governance Authority	Leadership Office	Executive Leaders
Synodical Governance	Council of Delegates	Office of General Secretary	General Secretary Chief Administrative Officer
Organizational Governance	Canada Ministry Board	Canada Ministry Office	Executive Director Chief Administrative Officer
Organizational Governance	US Ministry Board	US Ministry Office	Director of Ministry Operations

As outlined in Table 2, the scope of the Office of General Secretary is binational, including Canada *and* the US. The key function of the Office is to provide overall ecclesiastical and organizational leadership and support to the CRCNA. The General Secretary provides *ecclesiastical* leadership and support and the Chief Administrative Officer provides *organizational* leadership and support.

The Canada Ministry Office and US Ministry Office are each governed by their own board of directors. Each office provides needed administrative support of country-based ministry programs and binational ministry agencies.

Table 2: CRCNA Leadership Office Scope and Functions

Leadership Office	Scope	Key Functions
Office of General Secretary	Binational: Canada, US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide ecclesiastical leadership & support• Provide organizational leadership & support
Canada Ministry Office	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide Canada based leadership & oversight• Manage administrative & support services

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage Canada based ministry programs • Manage binational ministry agencies with the US Office • Manage Joint Ministry Agreements with the US Office
US Ministry Office	United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide US based leadership & oversight • Manage administrative & support services • Manage US based ministry programs • Manage binational ministry agencies with the Canada Office • Manage Joint Ministry Agreements with the Canada Office

Office of General Secretary

1. Mandate:

Synod 2022 established the *Office of General Secretary* by approving the recommendations of the SALT Report.

The Office of General Secretary will be responsible and accountable to the Council of Delegates to guide and direct the entire CRCNA organization. On one hand, the Office of General Secretary is responsible to the Council of Delegates and serve as the synodical office supporting 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. The way that this leadership is achieved is through partnership and collaboration with the ministry agencies, educational institutions, boards, and ecclesial entities.

2. Mission:

As an agent of synod and its Council of Delegates, the Office of General Secretary will provide ecclesiastical and organizational leadership and support that promotes a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and partnership in the CRCNA organization.

3. Scope:

The scope of the Office of General Secretary includes:

- a. **Binational:** engaging with CRC churches and classes throughout Canada and the United States in partnership with the Canada Ministry Office and the US Ministry Office.

- b. **Ecumenical:** engaging with leaders and members of denominations, organizations, and associations who are in or who are seeking ecumenical relationships.
 - c. **Ecclesiastical:** providing leadership and support to CRC churches, classes, Council of Delegates, and synod to promote effective and Spirit-led ecclesiastical governance and practices.
 - d. **Organizational:** providing leadership, guidance and support to CRC ministry agencies, organizations, and educational institutions to promote administrative, and ministry cooperation, integration, and partnership.
- 4. Functions:**
The functions of the Office of General Secretary include:
- a. **Ecclesiastical Leadership & Support:**
 - i. Serve as the synodical office of the CRCNA. Ensure that the acts of synod, the church order, and its mandates, are followed and/or implemented.
 - ii. Support and strengthen the ecclesiastical governance structure of the CRCNA including US and Canadian classes, Council of Delegates, and synod.
 - iii. Provide ecclesiastical advice, guidance and consultation to classes and churches.
 - iv. Develop and nurture ecumenical relationships and participate in ecumenical organizations.
 - v. Root ecclesiastical governance in prayer and spiritual growth
 - b. **Organizational Leadership & Support:**
 - i. Support and strengthen the organizational governance and leadership structures of the Canada Ministry Organization, the US Ministry Organization.
 - ii. Support and strengthen the implementation of the synodically-approved ministry plan and associated organizational strategic plans by fostering collaboration across binational ministry agencies.
 - iii. Support the engagement of CRC congregations with ministry agencies and educational institutions.
 - iv. Form and manage binational policy-making councils that advance collaboration, coordination, integration, and partnership.
 - c. **Joint Ministry Agreements with Ministry Organizations:**
 - i. Develop joint agreements to address ecclesiastical, governance, administrative, and ministry opportunities that build coordination, collaboration, and partnership in a way that enhances the work of the ecclesial system and the binational ministry agencies.
 - ii. Convene the CRCNA and ReFrame joint ministry management

committees ensuring compliance with the joint ministry agreements and the operating manuals.

Canada Ministry Office

1. Mandate:

In 1985, the CRCNA established the CRCNA Canada Corporation to serve as a legal registered charity. CRCNA Canada is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes in compliance with Canadian federal and provincial law, and in accordance with the fundamental principles of Reformed doctrine and government as expressed in the Article 32(d) of the CRCNA Church Order.

In 2022 the CRCNA synod formally established the Canada Ministry Office by approving the recommendations of the SALT Report and the Ecclesiastical Mandate Letter (Appendix A and B). SALT and the Letter described the purpose of the Canada Ministry Office was to focus on implementing the CRCNA Ministry Plan using Joint Ministry Agreements *in a manner that recognizes the ministry needs of Canadian churches and that of their social and cultural context*. SALT recommended that the Canada Ministry Office be led by an Executive Director that reported directly to the Canada Ministry Board and works in *partnership* with the Office of General Secretary to meet the ecclesiastical and ministry expectations of synod and the Council of Delegates.

2. Mission:

The Canada Ministry Office will provide administrative and ministry oversight and support services that build a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and effectiveness with organizations, agencies, and partners as they serve CRC congregations in Canada.

3. Scope:

- a. **Organizational Governance:** The Canada Ministry Office is governed by a board of directors whose membership is constituted by synod from every CRC classis in Canada, from whom the directors as well as directors-at-large are elected. The Canada Ministry board is responsible to provide organizational governance of CRC administration and ministries in Canada.
- b. **Canada Ministry Office:** The Canada Ministry Office provides administrative services needed to operate country-based ministry programs and the binational ministry agencies effectively and efficiently. The Canada Ministry board hires and supervises an executive director that manages the day-to-day affairs of the Canada Ministry Office. The

executive director selects and manages the staff needed to advance its mission and purpose.

- c. **CRCNA Ministry Plan:** The Canada Ministry Office contributes to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the CRCNA ministry plan. The CRCNA Ministry Plan includes ministry strategies and activities that address the needs expressed by CRC churches in Canada. The Canada and US Ministry Office executive leaders jointly supervise the ministry agencies ensuring effective implementation of the CRCNA ministry plan.
 - d. **Joint Agreements:** The Canada Ministry Office uses Joint Administrative and Ministry Agreements to ensure effective collaboration with ministry organizations, agencies, and partners in Canada, United States, and internationally.
- 4. Functions:**
- The functions of the Canada Ministry Office include:
- a. Manage the affairs of Canada Ministry Organization as a registered charity.
 - b. Ensure the administrative services are offered by staff and/or through joint administrative agreements with the US Ministry Office (Table 3).
 - c. Collaborate with local churches and classes to identify and address ministry priorities.
 - d. Develop, contextualize, implement, and evaluate the CRCNA ministry plan to ensure ministry is culturally appropriate in Canada.
 - e. Support the engagement of CRC congregations with ministry agencies and educational institutions.
 - f. Develop and manage joint agreements that address ecclesiastical, governance, administrative, and ministry opportunities to build coordination, collaboration, and partnership.
- Represent and maintain ecumenical and ecclesiastical relationships in Canada in conjunction with the Office of General Secretary.
- g. Serve on binational policymaking and leadership councils and other groups to advance collaboration, coordination, integration, and partnership with the Office of General Secretary, ministry agencies and other ministry partners.

5. Organizational Structure:

- a. The organizational structure of the Canada Ministry Office is designed to address the Canadian context.
- b. The administrative services listed in Table 3 are provided by the Canada Ministry Office staff or through joint administrative agreements with the US Ministry Office.
- c. The work of binational ministry agencies by Canada staff or through joint ministry agreements with the US Ministry Office.
- d. The executive director jointly supervises the directors of the binational ministry agencies with the executive leader of the US Ministry Office as detailed in a joint supervision agreement.

Table 3: Canada Ministry Office Administration

Administrative Departments	Support Services and Functions	
Accounting & Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounts Payable & Receivable• Budget & Planning• Banking• Contract Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial Reporting• Gift Entry• Payroll• Purchasing
Advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry Shares coordination• Church communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct mail & digital fundraising strategy• Major gifts
Church & Member Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CRCNA call center• Order taking & eCommerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Bridge App
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canada Revenue Agency• Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registered charity regulations• Risk management
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Custodial & grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building & mechanical
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment• Benefits administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff learning & development• Leadership transition & succession
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• User & desktop support• Applications support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure & cybersecurity

Administrative Departments	Support Services and Functions	
Technology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management & process reengineering
Management & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Leaders: CM, ReFrame, Resonate • Board support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Coordination & reporting • Ministry planning & coordination
Print & Digital Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand management • <i>The Banner</i> & Faith Alive • Editorial services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailhouse coordination • Print purchasing • Website & social media management
Warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipping & receiving • Inventory management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order fulfillment • Materials recycling

US Ministry Office

1. Mandate:

In 2022, synod adopted a *Supplement to the SALT Report* that addressed the structure of the US Ministry Office. The supplement, written by Colin Watson, Executive Director of the CRCNA, concluded the new Office of General Secretary and the US Ministry Office needed to be organizationally distinct, and the General Secretary would no longer serve as the chief executive of the US Ministry Office. (Appendix C). The supplement recommended that the chief executive of the US Ministry Office would be a part-time Director of Ministry Operations position. The position would be authorized for two years, and the director of Resonate Global Mission would serve in this capacity.

In adopting the supplement, synod agreed that the US Ministry Board would be responsible to appoint a part-time executive leader that is accountable to the board for all the US Ministry Office matters. In the summer of 2022, a half-time director of administrative operations position was established to support the director of ministry operations and the director of technology was appointed to serve in this capacity.

As a status update, the director of ministry operations position will be vacated on June 30, 2023, due to the retirement of Joel Huyser, and the director of administrative operations position was vacated on January 1, 2023, due to the promotion of Shirley DeVries to chief administrative officer.

2. **Mission:**

The US Ministry Office will provide administrative and ministry oversight and support services that build a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and effectiveness with organizations, agencies, and partners as they serve CRC congregations in the US.

3. **Scope:**

- a. **Organizational Governance:** The US Ministry Office is governed by a board of directors whose membership is constituted by synod from every CRC classis in the US, from whom the directors as well as directors-at-large are elected. The US Ministry Board is responsible to provide organizational governance of the CRC administration and ministries in the US.
- b. **US Ministry Office:** The US Ministry Office provides administrative support services needed to operate country-based ministry programs and binational ministry agencies effectively and efficiently. The US Ministry Board hires and supervises an executive leader who is responsible to manage the day-to-day affairs of the US Ministry Office. The executive leader selects and manages the staff needed to advance its mission and purpose.
- c. **CRCNA Ministry Plan:** The US Ministry Office contributes to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the CRCNA Ministry Plan. The CRCNA ministry plan includes ministry strategies and activities that address the needs expressed by CRC churches in the US. The US and Canada Ministry Offices' executive leaders jointly supervise the ministry agencies ensuring effective implementation of the CRCNA ministry plan.
- d. **Joint Agreements:** The US Ministry Office uses joint administrative and ministry agreements to ensure effective collaboration with ministry organizations, agencies, and partners in Canada, United States, and internationally.

4. **Functions:**

The US Office is responsible to perform the following functions:

- a. Manage the affairs of CRCNA US corporation as a tax exempt, nonprofit organization.
- b. To ensure the administrative services are offered by staff and/or through joint administrative agreements with the Canada Ministry Office (Table 4).

- c. Collaborate with local churches and classes to identify and address ministry priorities.
- d. Participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the CRCNA ministry plan.
- e. Support the engagement of CRC congregations with ministry agencies and educational institutions.
- f. Develop and manage joint agreements that address ecclesiastical, governance, administrative, and ministry opportunities to build coordination, collaboration, and partnership.
- g. Serve on binational policymaking and leadership councils and other groups to advance collaboration, coordination, integration, and partnership with the Office of General Secretary, ministry agencies, and other ministry partners.

Table 4: US Ministry Office Administration

Administrative Departments	Support Services and Functions	
Accounting & Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts payable & receivable • Budget & planning • Banking • Contract management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial reporting • Gift entry • Payroll • Purchasing
Advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry Shares coordination • Church communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mail & digital fundraising strategy • Major gifts
Church & Member Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRCNA call center • Order taking & eCommerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan Fund • Ministers Pension Fund
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Revenue Service • Insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered 501(c)3 regulations • Risk management
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodial & grounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building & mechanical
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Benefits administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff learning & development • Leadership transition & succession

Administrative Departments	Support Services and Functions	
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User & desktop support • Applications support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure & cybersecurity • Project management & process reengineering
Management & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency leaders: CM, ReFrame, Resonate • Board support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant coordination & reporting • Ministry planning & coordination
Print & Digital Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand management • <i>The Banner & Faith Alive</i> • Editorial services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailhouse coordination • Print purchasing • Website & social media management
Warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipping & receiving • Inventory management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order fulfillment • Materials recycling

5. **Organizational Structure:** The organizational structure of the US Ministry Office is designed to address the US context.
- The administrative services listed in Table 4 are provided by the US Ministry Office staff or through joint administrative agreements with the Canada Ministry Office.
 - The work of binational ministry agencies by US staff or through joint ministry agreements with the Canada Ministry Office.
 - The executive leader jointly supervises the directors of the binational ministry agencies with the executive director of the Canada Ministry Office as detailed in a joint supervision agreement.

Chapter 5: Governance Policies

Listing of Policies from 1st Edition

The policies listed below are those that are in the first edition of the COD handbook. Once the second edition of the governance handbook is approved by the COD/synod, staff will complete the work needed on the policies.

- All policies need to be edited for wording changes due to structural changes that have taken place.
- Ownership of each policy will be evaluated. Some may need to be owned by the Ministry Boards rather than COD.
- All policies will be put into a standardized format.

Once this work is completed, the policies will be brought to COD for review/approval.

Until COD has had time to review/approve of the new format, COD and the Ministry Boards will continue to function under the existing policies as they appear in the 1st Edition of the COD governance handbook.

As of April 10, 2023, some policies have been reviewed. Those that have been worked on are highlighted in gray. See the Policy Index section of this document (below) for access to those policies.

1. Membership Policies

- a. **Conflict of Interest Policy** (appendix A in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- b. **Statement of Agreement & Covenant for Office bearers** (appendix Q in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- c. **COD Code of Conduct for Delegates** (appendix R in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)

2. Board Organization Policies

- a. **Board Representation Program** (appendix F in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- b. **Governance Chart** (appendix M in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- c. **Delegate Nomination Process Policy** (appendix N in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- d. **Recordings of Meetings Policy** (appendix U in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)

3. Finance Policies

- a. **Financial Reserve Policy** (appendix B in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- b. **Cash Holdings Policy** (appendix B in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- c. **Fundraising Ethical Guidelines** (appendix C in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- d. **Investment Policy** (appendix D in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
- e. **Accreditation Policy for Denominational Support** (appendix E in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)

4. Leadership Policies
 - a. Selection and Evaluation of Leaders (appendix G in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
 - b. Ministry Leadership Council (appendix K in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
5. Ministry Policies
 - a. CRCNA Ministry Evaluation Policy (appendix H in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
 - b. Banner Mandate Policy (appendix I in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
 - c. Binationality in the CRCNA (appendix L in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
6. Staff Policies
 - a. Employment and Compensation
 - Philosophy (appendix J in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
 - b. Employee Gift Policy (appendix O in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
 - c. Church Membership and Confessional Conformity (appendix P in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
 - d. Program and Personnel Reduction (appendix S in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)
 - e. Staff Right to Comment at Synod, COD and Committees (appendix T in the 1st edition of the COD Governance Handbook)

Policy Index

Many policies have yet to be reviewed. In the table below, click the link in the right-most column to see the policy in the new format.

Policy Name	Formerly Found	Type of Modification	Hyperlink to policy document
Recording of Meetings: Obligation to Inform	Appendix U of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	-Put into the new policy format -Removed references to Virtual Staff Gatherings and Meetings Hosted by CRCNA Staff and referred them to HR Directors for inclusion in Employee Handbooks	docs.google.com/document/d/1BmNJnvY8OpynbWaUiKLbIftlaVtc6QjFdWK-vF2AaOM/edit?usp=sharing
Right of Comment	Appendix T of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	-Put into the new policy format -Replaced "executive director" and "ED" with "General Secretary" and "GS" -Shortened it by removing references to the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	docs.google.com/document/d/1SpDAupmuHo4XWWxDh4Wox5RBQyok8X13tq2R810snF4/edit?usp=sharing

Conflict of Interest	Appendix A of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	-Put the existing policy into the new format -Made the Conflict of Interest Statement into an Appendix	docs.google.com/document/d/1d0GVMr8ES5yrZfFrzZDfhTJb4cBL38g8mK_SLzrT2Q/edit?usp=sharing
Delegate Nomination Process	Appendix N of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	-Put the existing policy into the new format -Changed terminology to reflect the terms used in the 2nd Edition of the COD Governance Handbook -The reference to COD's own rules for the composition of the Executive Committee and the implications for other committees has been retained but the details were included because they are in the COD Governance Handbook and this is a COD policy.	docs.google.com/document/d/1qeBQEH8xRgblPnRTzqzPzXUhGgfC04nq5Cyb5bJ_stk/edit?usp=sharing
Church Membership and Confessional Conformity for Personnel	Appendix P of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	-Put the existing policy into the new format -Made the Covenant Statement Appendix A -Aligned this document with others to eliminate confusion Clarified definitions to make it possible for HR departments to implement	docs.google.com/document/d/1jSaBOrQZzkWeNopJczUQj5RmrYM9xsssyV5R4ICLmCc/edit?usp=sharing
Code of Conduct for COD Members	Appendix r of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	-Put the existing policy into the new format	docs.google.com/document/d/1iG2NTS2M_VL3ExXCyyrZN49WepXihp5bucqSU70VbyM/edit?usp=sharing
Statement of Agreement with the Beliefs of CRCNA	Appendix Q of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	-Put the existing policy into the new format	docs.google.com/document/d/1iJoGAjrPw1kzYhmy21VPs4kTogch8piMsNKE2VLkcWo/edit?usp=sharing

Organizational Guest Membership	Appendix F of the 1st Edition of the COD Governance Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Changed the name of the policy from Policy and Protocol for the Connection of Governance between the COD and Other Boards -Put the exiting policy into the new format -Removed components that are now covered in the COD Governance Handbook 2nd Edition related to voting status, executive session participation, and committee assignments 	docs.google.com/document/d/1uHAgppEXOc7-qyXVgWtPxsq4DX2L5dZi4IkbrDYRQjU/edit
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History of COD Governance Handbook Revisions

Handbook Edition #	Handbook Date (of revisions)	Brief Description of Changes	Date Approved by COD/Synod
2nd	Apr 11, 2023	The second edition of the COD governance handbook implements decisions made by the synod, the Council of Delegates, the Canada Board, and the US Board when the following reports, supplements, and agreements were adopted in 2021 and 2022. (see Preface of this edition for further details)	May 4, 2023 (COD), June ____, 2023 (Synod)

Council of Delegates Comments regarding Overture 57

Classis Minnkota has submitted an overture that asks synod “to require the Council of Delegates to immediately reverse the approval of a process for members of the COD to take exception to the COD Statement of Agreement with the beliefs of the CRCNA and call its members to uphold and heartily affirm the CRCNA’s confessions by amending the COD Governance Handbook, bringing its exceptions policy into alignment with the CRCNA Church Order, which requires resolution of gravamen issues” (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 550).

The overture is provided in the context of this question: “Is the intent of this policy to allow a disunity of belief within the COD?” The answer to that question is, No, it is not. In fact, the exception policy and the process under which they are adjudicated is designed to maintain unity.

As synod deliberates on this overture, the COD asks that the body take the following into consideration:

1. Not all members of the Council of Delegates are ordained officebearers. Therefore, requesting an exception is not the same as submitting a gravamen—which applies only to officebearers. This is why COD members sign a Statement of Agreement and not the Covenant of Officebearers. This overture seems to conflate exceptions and gravamina. They are different.
2. Being granted an exception actually strengthens, not weakens, our commitment to the confessions because it requires that the person being granted the exception set aside their disagreement for the sake of the larger body. The policy states that COD members requesting an exception must submit “to the binding nature of the matter for which he/she is seeking an exception” and must commit “to not publicly contradict, teach, or act against the matter for which they are seeking an exception.” Therefore, if an exception is granted, it is understood and expected that deference will be granted to the decisions of synod as part of the member’s service to the Council of Delegates in order to maintain and uphold the unity of the body.
3. The Council of Delegates is committed to transparency in this process. As a result, at its last meeting, in addition to publicly listing the number of exception requests received and granted, the Council of Delegates also agreed to name “the specific confessional reference for exceptions given” (COD Minute 6273, C). This allows for greater transparency to classes and churches. Further, this policy assumes that classes will carefully choose their nominees when they submit names of candidates to the Council of Delegates for consideration.
4. The question of whether or not the COD has the authority to grant exceptions is mentioned in several places throughout the overture. The

overture itself notes that the COD has long had, as part of its synodically approved Governance Handbook, an exception policy. In establishing a *process* for implementing that policy (which was not present previously), the COD is not usurping synod's authority or overstepping its own authority. The approved process is not a Governance Handbook change. Rather, it is a process that the COD is authorized to implement so that the exception policy can be applied in a consistent and transparent manner for all members of the COD.

5. The chair and vice chair of the Council of Delegates will be present at synod to advise and provide further clarification on this (and other) matters. We are happy to make ourselves available to synod and/or the advisory committee to whom this overture is assigned.

Council of Delegates of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America

Note: This communication is submitted to synod per the synodically approved "Right to Comment" policy, which states,

The COD itself (i.e., without staff initiation) may judge that synod would be well served by a formal communication in response to a matter on synod's agenda that affects a ministry that falls under the governance of the COD. If time permits, the COD may ask staff for background information; the communication that emerges may be adopted or endorsed and communicated to synod via the COD's Supplement Report.

**RESTATED BYLAWS
OF
WORLD RENEW**

ARTICLE I

NAME AND PURPOSES

- Section 1.1 Name. This corporation shall be known as World Renew.
- Section 1.2 Primary Office. The primary office of the corporation shall be 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407, or such other location as may be determined by the Board of Directors.
- Section 1.3 Purposes. This corporation is a nonprofit corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law).

The object of this corporation shall be to be the disaster response, ~~and development,~~
~~and justice~~ arm of the religious denomination known as the Christian Reformed
Church in North America (“CRCNA”) and to perform such functions on behalf of
other Christian denominations who enter into agreements with this corporation to
do so.

This corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried
on

- (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3)
of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision
of any future United States internal revenue law); or
- (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section
170(c)(2) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the
corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law).

The corporation has not been formed for pecuniary profit or gain. No part of the
assets, income or profit of the corporation will inure to the benefit of its ~~M~~members,
directors or officers. However, the corporation shall be authorized and empowered
to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and
distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Article I.

No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Upon dissolution of this corporation, any assets which have not been used to satisfy the obligations of this corporation shall be distributed exclusively to corporations (a) exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law) and (b) contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law).

Section 1.4 Statement of Faith. Every ~~Synodical Member, Board of Delegate Member,~~ Director, and Officer of the corporation and the Director of World Renew-U.S. (collectively, the “Adherents”) shall covenant as follows concerning these core beliefs and statements:

We believe the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired work of God, which proclaims the good news of God’s creation and redemption through Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the authority of God’s Word, we submit to it in all matters of life and faith.

We affirm the following three confessions – The Belgic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort – as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the work of God. We affirm the following three creeds – The Apostles Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Nicene Creed – as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith.

We recognize the witness of “Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony.” We recognize the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration.

The Board of Directors may cause any Adherent, who, in the sole judgment of the Board of Directors, ceases to demonstrate covenantal commitment to the core beliefs and statements contained in the Statement of Faith to no longer hold the relevant position.

ARTICLE II

GOVERNANCE

Section 2.1 Governance. World Renew is governed by its Members and by its Board of Directors. World Renew ~~derives its heritage from Reformed theology as articulated by this also an agency of the CRCNA. As such, the Synod of the CRCNA (“Synod”) and its appointed governing body, the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA (the BOT) appoints the membership of the corporation, monitors governance of the corporation, ratifies appointment of the Executive Director, and requires coordination and unity from all the agencies of the CRCNA as they fulfill their respective mandates.~~—Insofar as is possible, with reasonable and necessary allowance as required due to the unique structural and operational circumstances of World Renew, the corporation shall align itself to the administrative rules, regulations, practices, and procedures of the CRCNA which reflect that heritage. ~~In the event of any conflict between those rules, regulations, practices and procedures, the provisions of the law with respect to this corporation shall prevail.~~

Section 2.2 Joint Ministry Agreement. This corporation and World Renew of Canada function jointly under the terms and conditions of a Joint Ministry Agreement (the “Joint Ministry Agreement”) and through a Joint Ministry Council (the “Joint Ministry Council”).

ARTICLE III

MEMBERS

Section 3.1 Membership Corporation. The corporation is organized as a membership corporation under Michigan law.

Section 3.2 Types of Members. ~~The two types of members of this corporation (collectively, the “Members” or “Membership”) shall consist of the members of the Board of Delegates. The members of the Board of Delegates are as follows:~~

~~(a) — The Synodical Members shall consist of the delegates to Synod who are elected annually consistent with the Rules of Synodical Procedure, as Synod may amend from time to time.~~

~~(b) — The Board of Delegates Members are those individuals who are either nominated by or from each Classis in the United States of the CRCNA, are nominated by the Board of Delegates or the Board of Directors to represent a classis, or are nominated as Members-at-Large consistent with policies and procedures as the Board of Directors may adopt from time to time, and as the BOT may approve from time to time. As a result, there of the effective date on which these Restated Bylaws are being adopted, there shall be one up to fifty one (501)~~

Board of Delegates Members positions from, ~~with thirty sixseven (367) being elected from each Classis in the United States of the CRCNA and up to fourteen (14) being Members-at-Large.~~ The Board of Delegates Members collectively shall be known as the Board of Delegates.

Board of Delegates Members shall particularly and carefully reflect the values of the corporation with respect to gender and ethnic equity and representation. Nominations shall also consider the need of the Board of Delegates for certain skills and life experience. Further:

The names of newly appointed Board of Delegates Members shall be appointed by reported to the Synod of the CRCNA from nominations suggested by the Board of Directors in coordination with the Board of Delegates, the Classis, or the individual congregations;

Each Classis in the United States will be granted at least one membership position on the Board of Delegates Member;

The term of Membership for the Board of Delegates Members shall be three years, renewable for a second consecutive ~~three year~~ three-year term;

—The Board of Directors may provide for the one-year extension of the terms of members of the Board of Delegates in special circumstances. Such special circumstances may include, without limitation, pandemic and other disruptions to normal duties, special projects, board skills, and board leadership transitions.

If the extension of such a term would result in the delay in seating a new Classis Delegate, such extension should be approved by no later than the December Board of Directors meeting prior to the end of the term. Members in classes from which there has been a nomination of a new Member may serve as a Member-at-Large for one year.

The number of Members-at-Large may temporarily be increased as necessary to account for extension of terms in such special circumstances. Each annual term shall begin July 1 and end June 30 of the following year;

All Members who are Classis representatives shall be members in good standing in the CRCNA;

~~A majority of Members at Large shall be members in good standing in the CRCNA.~~

Section 3.3 Responsibilities of Members. ~~The Synodical Members shall perform only those responsibilities as may be defined under applicable policies and procedures that Synod or the BOT adopts for World Renew from time to time. The Board of Delegates Members shall elect the individuals who will serve on the Board of~~

Directors, shall be members of the corporation for purposes of the Joint Ministries Agreement, and shall perform such other roles and duties as these Bylaws or Michigan law may define for voting members of a membership-based corporation.

Section 3.4 Meetings of Members. The Board of Delegates Members shall meet annually at the time and place as the Board of Directors shall determine.

Section 3.5 Termination of Board of Delegate Members. Board of Delegate Membership shall be terminated upon any of the following:

- (a) Resignation given in writing to the Secretary of the corporation;
- (b) Upon resolution to that effect, passed by two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at a special general meeting of the Board of Delegate Members called for that purpose;
- (c) Upon expiration of the term of Membership, or when such term of office is terminated by the Board of Delegates ~~and approved by the BOT~~; or
- (d) Upon a Board of Delegates Member (who is not a Member-at-Large) ceasing to be a member of a church of the CRCNA; or
- (e) Upon failure to attend two (2) consecutive meetings of the Board of Delegate Members without prior notice to the Secretary.

ARTICLE IV

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 4.1 Generally. The Directors of this corporation shall be those individuals whom the Board of Delegates elects to be on the Board of Directors of the corporation. The Board of Directors of this Corporation shall be the governing body of the corporation and shall deliberate and determine issues that are in furtherance of the purposes of this corporation, except those issues uniquely reserved by law to the Members.

Section 4.2 Directors and Their Duties. As of the effective date on which these Amended Bylaws are being adopted, the Board of Directors shall have ~~up to~~ no fewer than seven (7) members and no more than nine (9) members. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to determine the number of Directors within said range at its discretion. Any change in the maximum or minimum~~The number of Directors may be changed~~effectuated through amendment to these Bylaws. The function of the Board of Directors is to establish operational policy and to provide monitoring and oversight for compliance with policy and accomplishment of the purposes of the corporation, ~~consistent with the ministry plan of the CRCNA and consistent with the mandate given this agency by the CRCNA.~~

Section 4.3 Determination of Directors.

- (a) The Board of Delegates shall elect the members of the Board of Directors ~~from the~~ membership of the Board of Delegates.
- (b) At least 75% of the members of the Board of Directors shall be members in good standing in the CRCNA.
- (c) One member of the Board of Directors shall be an ordained pastor in the CRCNA, who, in addition to his or her role as a Director, will serve the Board as a Pastoral Advisor.

Section 4.4 Term of Directorship. Directors shall serve for a term to be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors, but a Director's term is not to exceed the maximum of six (6) consecutive years. A Director's term shall not extend beyond that Director's term as a member of the Board of Delegates.

In the event of a vacancy on the Board due to resignation or removal of a Director, the Board of Delegates shall select a successor.

The Board of Directors may nominate former Directors whose terms have been completed to serve as Emeritus Members of the Board of Directors. Emeritus Members shall not have voting rights, but shall have the right to attend all meetings

and speak into all matters before the Board of Directors and the Joint Ministry Council. Additionally, Emeritus Members shall have the right to be present during executive sessions of the Board unless that right is removed by a majority of Board members and to be present during executive sessions of the Joint Ministry Council unless that right is removed by a majority of Joint Ministry Council members from either one or both the U.S. and Canada Corporation. Emeritus Members may serve for up to two years after the end of their term. No Emeritus Member shall be nominated if such nomination would increase the number of Emeritus Members to more than two.

Section 4.5 Termination of Directorship. A Directorship shall be terminated upon the occurrence of any of the following:

- (a) Resignation given in writing to the Secretary of the corporation;
- (b) Upon resolution to that effect, passed by two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at a special general meeting of Directors called for that purpose;
- (c) Upon expiration of the term of office, or when such term of office is terminated by the Board of Delegates ~~and approved by the BOT~~;
- (d) Upon the Director ceasing to be a member of a church of the CRCNA if elected as such; or
- (e) Upon failure to attend two (2) consecutive Board meetings without prior notice to the Secretary.

Section 4.6 Meetings of Board of Directors. The Directors must meet at least annually as part of the annual Board of Delegates meeting, and generally shall hold at least four regular meetings each year. The President of the Board of Directors shall call additional special meetings of the Board as may be requested in writing by at least one-third (1/3rd) of the Directors. The President, or two or more other officers of the corporation, may call additional special Board of Director meetings as may be required.

Section 4.7 Notice of Meetings. All Directors of the corporation are entitled to not less than fifteen (15) days' notice of all additional special Board of Director meetings. Notice shall be in writing and may be by facsimile transmission or electronic transmission, the receipt of which is confirmed. The notice shall contain sufficient information to permit a Director to make a reasonable judgment on the decision to be taken.

Section 4.8 Meetings by Electronic Conference. If all persons who are members of the Board or a committee (as the case requires) consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting and each has adequate access, such persons may participate in a meeting of the Board or committee by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and a person participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

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

Section 4.9 Quorum and Voting. Fifty One percent (51%) of the Directors shall constitute a quorum for the conducting of business at a Board of Directors meeting. Each Director present at a meeting shall have the right to exercise one (1) vote. At all meetings of Directors of the corporation every question shall be determined by a majority of votes unless otherwise specifically provided by the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws.

Section 4.10 Location of Meetings. The meetings of the Board of Directors of the corporation shall be held at the home office of the corporation or elsewhere in Canada or the United States, on such day in each year as the Board of Directors may by resolution determine or as the President may determine.

Section 4.11 Remuneration. Directors shall not receive any remuneration for their services, but may be reimbursed for expenses for their attendance at regular or special meetings of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

Section 5.1 Principal Officers. The principal officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be elected by the Board of Directors from the membership of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may appoint additional officers to perform such duties as are designated by the Board of Directors. The officers of the Corporation shall serve terms as determined by the Board of Directors. The officers of the Corporation shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualify or until their resignation or removal.

Section 5.2 Duties of the President. The duties of the President shall include the following:

- (a) Set agendas for meetings of the Board of Directors, with the assistance of the Executive Director and Administrative Staff, and preside at meetings of the Board of Directors;
- (b) Call special meetings of the Board of Directors consistent with ~~Synodical regulations and~~ the mandates and requirements of law and these Bylaws; and
- (c) Perform other duties as may be specified from time to time by the Board of Directors.

The President shall be an authorized signatory on behalf of the corporation for those matters which arise within the scope of the President's duties.

Section 5.3 Duties of the Vice-President. The Vice-President shall, in the absence of the President, serve in place of the President at all Board of Directors' meetings as well as perform those responsibilities of the President outlined under Section 5.2 of this Article V. The Vice President shall be an authorized signatory on behalf of the corporation for those matters which arise within the scope of the Vice President's duties.

Section 5.4 Duties of the Secretary. The Secretary shall with the assistance of the Executive Director and Administrative Staff, maintain the records of the corporation including minutes of all meetings of the Membership and the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall also have the authority, duties and responsibilities as are prescribed from time to time by the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall be an authorized signatory on behalf of the corporation for those matters which arise within the scope of the Secretary's duties.

Section 5.5 Duties of the Treasurer. The duties of the Treasurer shall include the following:

- (a) To chair the audit review committee of the Board of Directors and monitor conduct of an annual independent financial audit;
- (b) To provide consultation or communication on behalf of the members to regulatory or accountability organizations with regard to financial matters; and
- (c) Such other duties as may be specified from time to time by the Board of Directors.

The Treasurer shall be an authorized signatory on behalf of the corporation for those matters which arise within the scope of the Treasurer's duties.

ARTICLE VI

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Section 6.1 Positions. The Administrative Staff of the Corporation shall include the Director of World Renew U.S. (“Director”) and such other administrative positions as are subsequently created.

Section 6.2 Duties of the Director. The Director shall have the authority, duties, and responsibilities as are prescribed from time to time by the Board of Directors. Except as otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, the Director is responsible for the administration of all of the work of the corporation in the implementation of the objectives of the corporation. The Director shall function within the boundaries of these Bylaws and other policies which the Board of Directors may from time to time adopt. The Director also represents the corporation in the coordination of the work of the corporation with the work of the other agencies of the CRCNA and in the implementation of the Ministry Plan of the CRCNA, ~~under the direction of the Executive Director of the CRCNA (the “ED”).~~

The Director shall be nominated and approved by the Board of Directors, and approved by the Board of Delegates. The appointment shall be ratified by the ~~BOT~~ and Synod of the CRCNA.

The Director shall be an authorized signatory on behalf of the corporation for those matters which arise within the scope of the Director’s duties.

ARTICLE VII

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

Section 7.1 Materials. The ED, or his or her designee, shall be entitled to receive copies of all material relating to the affairs and business of the corporation.

Section 7.2 Presence at Meetings. The ED, or his or her designee, shall be entitled to be present at all Board of Directors meetings and Membership meetings to be a resource person providing advice, information and insight to assist the Board Directors and Members. The ED shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Membership or the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII

COMMITTEES

Section 8.1 **General.** The Members or the Board of Directors may form standing and ad hoc committees as are necessary for the corporation to carry out the purposes outlined under Article I, Section 1.2 of these Bylaws. The committees shall perform those duties which are delegated by the Board of Directors.

Section 8.2 **Audit Review Committee.** The Audit Review Committee shall be a standing committee of the corporation. The Audit Review Committee shall review the annual audit and report its findings to the Board of Directors. The membership of the Audit Review Committee shall include at least two (2) Directors.

ARTICLE IX

INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS

Section 9.1 **Indemnification: Third Party Actions.** This corporation has the power to indemnify a person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party to a threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative and whether formal or informal (other than an action by or in the right of this corporation) by reason of fact that the person is or was a Director, Officer, employee or agent of this corporation, or is or was serving at the request of this corporation as a Director, Officer, Partner, Director, employee or agent of another foreign or domestic corporation, business corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, whether for profit or not for profit, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, penalties, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually reasonably incurred by that person in connection with the action, suit or proceedings if that person acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed by that person to be in or not opposed to the best interests of this corporation, and with respect to a criminal action or proceeding, that person had no reasonable cause to believe that the conduct was unlawful. The termination of an action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed by that person to be in or not opposed to the best interests of this corporation and, with respect to a criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that the person's conduct was unlawful.

Section 9.2 **Indemnification: Actions in the Right of this Corporation.** This corporation has the power to indemnify a person who was or is a party to, or is threatened to be made a party to a threatened, pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of this corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that the person is or was a Director, Officer, employee or agent of this corporation, or is or was serving at the request of this corporation as a Director, Officer, Partner, Director, employee or agent of another foreign or domestic corporation, business corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, whether for profit or not, against

expenses (including actual and reasonable attorneys' fees) and amounts paid in settlement incurred by that person in connection with the action or suit if that person acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed by that person to be in or not opposed to the best interests of this corporation. However, no indemnification shall be made for a claim, issue or matter in which such person shall have been found to be liable to the corporation unless and only to the extent that the court in which such action or suit was brought has determined upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all circumstances of the case, that person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnification for the expenses which the court considers proper.

Section 9.3 Indemnification: Mandatory and Permissive Payments.

- (a) To the extent that a Director, Officer, employee or agent of this corporation has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of an action, suit or proceeding referred to in Section 9.1 or Section 9.2 of this Article IX, or in defense of a claim, issue or matter in the action, suit, or proceeding, that person shall be indemnified against expenses (including actual and reasonable attorneys' fees) incurred by that person in connection with the action, suit or proceeding brought to enforce the mandatory indemnification provided in this Subsection.
- (b) An indemnification under Section 9.1 or Section 9.2 of this Article IX, unless ordered by a court, shall be made by this corporation only as authorized in a specific case upon a determination that indemnification of the Director, Officer, employee or agent is proper in the circumstances because that person has met the applicable standard of conduct as set forth in either Section 9.1 or Section 9.2. That determination shall be made in any of the following ways:
 - (i) A majority vote of a quorum of the Board consisting of Directors who were not parties to the action, suit or proceeding.
 - (ii) If that quorum is not obtainable, then by a majority vote of a Committee of Directors who were not parties to the action, suit, or proceeding. The Committee shall consist of not less than two (2) disinterested Directors.
 - (iii) By independent legal counsel in a written opinion.
 - (iv) By the members.
- (c) If a person is entitled to indemnification under Section 9.1 or Section 9.2 of this Article IX for a portion of expenses including attorneys' fees, judgments, penalties, fines, and amounts paid in settlement, but not for the total amount thereof, the corporation may indemnify the person for the portion of the expenses, judgments, penalties, fines, or amounts paid in settlement for which the person is entitled to be indemnified.

Section 9.4 Indemnification: Expense Advances. Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding described in Section 9.1 or Section 9.2 of this Article IX may be paid by this corporation in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the Director, Officer, employee or agent to repay the expenses if it is ultimately determined that the person is not entitled to be indemnified by this corporation. The undertaking shall be by unlimited general obligation of the person on whose behalf advance are made but need not be secured. The indemnification provisions of Sections 9.1 through 9.4 of this Article IX shall continue as to a person who ceases to be a Director, Officer, employee, or agent and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

ARTICLE X

AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws can be amended at any meeting of the Board of Directors by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote and by a majority vote of the Members of the Board of Delegates. ~~The Board of Directors shall seek the support of the BOT for any amendments to these Bylaws.~~

World Renew-Canada Revised Bylaws

BY-LAW NUMBER 2013-1

A By-law relating generally to the conduct of the affairs of
WORLD RENEW ("the Corporation")

WHEREAS by Letters Patent issued under the Canada Corporations Act R.S.C., 1960 Chapter c.32 and dated the 22nd day of August, 1969, the Corporation was incorporated for the following objects:

- (a) " to receive and maintain a fund or funds and apply and disburse from time to time all or part thereof and/or Income there from for charitable purposes:
- (b) to do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects and in particular:
 - (i) to receive and administer the offerings and contributions of the Christian Reformed Churches of Canada or of any other churches, persons, firms, corporations, or governments for the work of relief for and rehabilitation and development of the needy of the world;
 - (ii) to collect and store materials that may be used for emergency relief such as food, clothing, medical supplies and similar materials;
 - (iii) to supervise and control all emergency relief in such domestic or global areas where a local Church of the Christian Reformed Church of Canada is unable to fulfill the need;
 - (iv) to supervise and control such permanent charitable activities as are designated by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church;
 - (v) to engage in the work of relief for and rehabilitation and resettlement of world refugees;
 - (vi) to acquire, accept, solicit or receive, by purchase, lease, contract, donation, legacy, gift, grant, bequest, or otherwise, any kind of real or personal property and to enter into or carry out agreements, contracts and undertakings incidental thereto;
 - (vii) to hold, administer, manage, sell, exchange or convert any of the real or personal property from time to time owned by the Corporation, and to invest and reinvest any principal in such manner as may from time to time be determined;
 - (viii) to appoint or authorize any chartered bank or trust company to act as trustee or agent for any funds or property, real or personal, held by the Corporation;
 - (ix) To enter into contracts or other agreements, to pledge or obligate its funds and property, real and personal, to do any and all things which will further, either directly or indirectly, the charitable purposes of the Corporation;

- (x) To employ and pay such assistants, clerks, agents, representatives and employees and to procure, equip and maintain such offices and other facilities, and to incur such reasonable expenses, as may be necessary in connection therewith.”

AND WHEREAS by Articles of Continuance, on May 9, 2014 the Corporation was continued under the Not-for-profit Corporations Act S.C. 2009 c.23

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

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED as a By-law of the Corporation as follows:

1. INTERPRETATION

11 Meaning of Words

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

- 1.1.1 the singular includes the plural
- 1.1.2 the masculine gender includes the feminine;
- 1.1.3 “ACT” means the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act S.C. 2009 c.23 as amended, and any statute amending or enacted in substitution therefore, from time to time;
- 1.1.4 “Board” means the Board of Directors of the Corporation;
- 1.1.5 “C.R.C.N.A.” means the Christian Reformed Church of North America, or its successors and assigns;
- 1.1.6 “Christian Reformed Church in Canada” means the churches in Canada belonging to the C.R.C.N.A. denomination;
- 1.1.7 “Classis” refers to a geographical area embracing a number of local churches of the C.R.C.N.A. denomination;
- 1.1.8 “Classis Member” shall mean a Member representing a Classis of the C.R.C.N.A. in Canada elected as hereinafter set out;
- 1.1.9 “Corporation” means World Renew;
- 1.1.10 “Corporation U.S.” means the World Renew., a non-profit corporation incorporated pursuant to the laws of the State of Michigan;
- 1.1.11 “Director” means a person who has been elected to the office of Director in accordance with Article 7, or appointed to fill a vacancy in the office of Director in accordance with Section 7.6;
- 1.1.12 “DOCUMENTS” includes deeds, mortgages, hypothecs, charges, conveyances, transfers and assignments of property, real or personal, immovable or movable, agreements, releases, receipts and discharges for the payment of money or other obligations, conveyances, transfers and assignments of shares, bonds, debentures or other securities and all paper writings;
- 1.1.13 “E.D.” means that person holding the position of Executive Director in the C.R.C.N.A. from time to time;

- 1.1.14 Executive Director of World Renew means that person holding the position of Executive Director and acting as the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation.
- 1.1.15 “EXECUTIVE OFFICERS” means the persons who hold the offices enumerated in section 11.1;
- 1.1.16 “Joint Ministry Council” has the meaning set out in Section 13;
- 1.1.17 “Member” shall mean any Member attending or entitled to attend a meeting, whether as a Classis Member or a Member at Large;
- 1.1.18 “Member at Large” shall mean a Member elected in accordance with Sections 6.5 and 6.6’
- 1.1.19 “Pastor means an Ordained Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church;
- 1.1.20 “Special Resolution” means a resolution passed by a majority of the Directors and confirmed with or without variation by at least two-thirds of the votes cast at a special general meeting of the Members of the Corporation called for that purpose;
- 1.1.21 “Statement of Faith” means the Statement of Faith set out in Section 3.3 and
- 1.1.22 “Synod” shall mean the Synod of C.R.C.N.A.

1.2 Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act

All terms defined in the ACT have the same meanings in this By-law and all other By-laws and resolutions of the Corporation

~~2. C.R.C.N.A. AGENCY~~ 2. HERITAGE

~~The Corporation shall function as part of the C.R.C.N.A and is currently a participant in a joint ministry with the Corporation U.S. and shall seek to insofar as possible align itself to the rules, regulations, practices and procedures of the C.R.C.N.A., provided that in the event of any conflict between those rules, regulations, practices and procedures and the provisions in the ACT or other applicable law in Canada, the provisions of the law shall prevail.~~ World Renew is governed by its Members and by its Board of Directors. World Renew derives its heritage from Reformed theology articulated by the CRCNA. Insofar as is possible, with reasonable and necessary allowance as required due to the unique structural and operational circumstances of World Renew, the Corporation shall align itself to the administrative rules, regulations, practices and procedures of the CRCNA. In the event of any conflict between those rules, regulations, practices and procedures, the provisions of the law with respect to this Corporation shall prevail.

This Corporation and World Renew USA function jointly under the terms and conditions of a Joint Ministry Agreement (the “Joint Ministry Agreement”) and through a Joint Ministry Council (the “Joint Ministry Council”).

3. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE CORPORATION

- 3.1 Subject to the Articles of Continuance and Articles of Amendment of the Corporation, the Corporation shall represent the Christian Reformed Church in Canada and other Churches by engaging the churches in providing resources and developing gifts in collaborative activities of love, mercy,

justice and compassion. Furthermore the Corporation exists to increase the capacity of communities and missional partners to engage in transformative practices that improve, in sustainable ways, the well-being of people made vulnerable by circumstances of poverty, disaster or injustice in a manner that is consistent with available resources.

3.2 Purposes

Without limiting the generality of Article 3.1 above, the purposes of the Corporation shall include:

- 3.2.1 To relieve poverty in developing nations and North America by providing basic necessities of life including food, clean water, medical supplies, clothing and/or shelter to individuals and families who are poor, displaced and/or refugees and victims of disasters;
- 3.2.2 To promote health by providing community members in need and disaster victims in developing nations and North America (e.g. suffering from psychological trauma), with access to health care services, counselling, information, or group support services;
- 3.2.3 To address and prevent specific problems faced by families who are poor and victims of disasters by providing parents, children and youth with life-skills training workshops and programs to address such issues as anger management, conflict resolution and prevention of abuse and violence;
- 3.2.4 To promote and develop economic sustainability in developing nations for the benefit of the public by providing training in small business management, job training, agriculture production, food security, community health services, project management and basic literacy programs;
- 3.2.5 To improve the efficiency of other registered charities, such as the Christian Reformed Church, by providing educational courses, workshops, and training relating to service delivery for staff of its constituent groups, on poverty alleviation and disaster relief;
- 3.2.6 To advance education by training volunteer health workers and birth-attendant in antenatal care, safe delivery, HIV transmission, referral to a clinic or hospital, post-partum and newborn care, nutrition, breastfeeding, hygiene, family planning, immunizations, disease prevention, and address harmful traditional practices;
- 3.2.7 To advance education by providing publicly available literacy training and box libraries;
- 3.2.8 To receive and maintain a fund or funds to apply all or party of the principal and income therefrom, from time to time, to charitable organizations that are also registered charities under the *Income Tax Act* (Canada).

3.3 Statement of Faith

The Corporation hereby adopts the following Statement of Faith which must be affirmed by every Member, Director, the Joint Ministry Council, officer, missionary and other worker of the Corporation:

WE BELIEVE that the Scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are God's infallible written Word. We believe that it was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. We believe that that all the articles and points of doctrine set forth in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agree with the Word of God. We affirm the following three creeds: The Apostles' Creed, The Athanasian Creed, and the Nicene Creed.

We affirm the "Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony"

We affirm the Ecumenical Faith Declaration "The Belhar Confession"

Each Member, Director or officer shall execute and affirm the Statement of Faith:

3.3.1.1. at the time of admission, election or appointment as a Member, Director, or officer, as applicable; and

3.3.1.2 annually at the time of re-election or re-appointment, as applicable.

Any Member, Director or officer who ceases to affirm the Statement of Faith shall automatically cease to hold office as hereinafter provided in this By-law.

4. HEAD OFFICE

The head office of the Corporation shall be in the City of Burlington, in the Province of Ontario, and at such place therein as the Board may from time to time determine.

5. SEAL

The seal which is impressed in the margin hereon shall be the corporate seal of the Corporation.

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Classes: There shall be the following classes of membership in the Corporation, each of whom shall execute and subscribe to the Statement of Faith:

6.1.1. Classis Members; and

6.1.2 Members at Large.

6.2 Composition of Membership: The membership of the Corporation shall consist of the following:

6.2.1 The Classis Members shall consist of one (1) representative from each Classis of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada; and

6.2.2 The Members at Large shall consist of up to thirteen (13) persons, as set out in section 6.6.

6.3 Nomination and Admission of Classis Members

Classis Members shall be selected and nominated by Classis and appointed by Synod, from the nominations suggested by the Nominating Committee of the Corporation, or by the Congregations of the Churches of such Classis or by the Classis.

6.4 Nomination of Members at Large

Members at Large shall be nominated by the Board and appointed by Synod.

6.5 Term of Membership

Classis Members and Members at Large shall normally serve for a term of three (3) years, and shall be permitted to serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

6.6 Consideration for Nomination of Members

The Members at Large shall consist of:

6.6.1 one (1) Pastor in the ~~C.R.C.N.A.~~ Christian Reformed Church in Canada who is a Member at Large and

6.6.2 up to twelve (12) general Members at Large, consisting of:

6.7.2.1. up to six (6) additional Members at Large for areas of heavy church concentration, broad classical geographical areas, or professional expertise; and

6.7.2.2. up to six (6) additional Members at Large to supplement Classis members who are elected to serve on the Board.

In order to ensure as much as possible that Classis Members and Members at Large are able and willing to represent the community and contribute positively and in a complimentary manner to the activities of the Corporation, the following criteria are to be considered in the nominating of persons or candidates for membership in the Corporation:

6.7.3.1 all Classical Members must be members in good standing of a ~~C.R.C.N.A.~~ Christian Reformed Church in Canada congregation;

6.7.3.2 a majority of members-at-large must be members in good standing of a ~~C.R.C.N.A.~~ Christian Reformed Church in Canada congregation.

6.7.4 the professional expertise and/or life experiences of the person in such areas as accounting, education, law, development, counselling or other field of endeavour as will enable the person to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Corporation;

6.7.5 the interest and willingness of the person to serve the church community and the Corporation;

6.7.6 nominations shall, when possible, reflect issues of gender equality and racial or ethnic representation

~~with the C.R.C.N.A.;~~ and

6.7.7 the ability of the person nominated as candidate for election as Classis Member to liaise effectively with the diaconal committee or conference of the Classis such candidate, if elected, is to represent.

6.8 Voting Classes

Each member shall be entitled to vote in any meetings of the Members of the Corporation.

6.9 Transfer of Membership

Except for the transfer of membership from one class to another as otherwise provided in the By-laws of the Corporation, if at all, a membership in the Corporation is not transferable.

6.10 Revocation of Membership

Any Member may be expelled from the Corporation without cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote taken by ballot of the Members present and eligible to vote at an annual or other special general meeting of Members.

6.11 Termination of Membership

A membership in the Corporation automatically terminates upon the happening of any of the following events:

6.11.3 if the person, in writing, resigns as a Member of the Corporation;

6.11.4 if the person other than a Member at Large ceases to be a member of a

~~C.R.C.N.A.~~ Christian Reformed Church in Canada congregation 6.11.5 if the person's

term as a Member at Large as set out in Section 6.6 expires;

6.11.6 if the person ceases to subscribe to the Statement of Faith;

6.11.7 if the Member dies; or

6.11.8 if the person is expelled from the Corporation pursuant to section 6.10.

6.12 Liability of Members

Members shall not, as such, be held answerable or responsible for any act, default, obligation or liability of the Corporation or for any engagement, claim, payment, loss, injury, transaction, matter or thing relating to or connected with the Corporation.

7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

7.1 Board

The affairs of the Corporation shall be governed by a Board composed of a minimum of five (5) Directors and a maximum of ten (10) Directors The number of Directors shall be fixed

from time to time by Special Resolution, of whom one (1) shall be a Pastor, elected as provided for in Section 7.3.

7.2 Elected Directors

Elected Director subject to the provisions of Articles 7.3 and 7.4, shall be elected in the manner set out in Article 8, each of whom, subject to the provisions of the Letters Patent, Articles of Constitution or Articles of Continuance shall hold office until the next annual meeting after election to office or until the successor of the Directors has been elected and qualified.

7.3 Election of Pastor as Director

Subject to the provisions of any By-law creating, or any Special Resolution changing one or both the number and identification of offices of Directors, the one (1) Pastor who is a Member at Large shall be elected as a Director at each annual membership meeting for the term of office set out in Section 8.1.

7.4 Qualifications

Each Director shall:

- 7.4.1 be a Member of the Corporation;
- 7.4.2 execute at the time of election, and annually at the time of re-election, the Statement of Faith;
- 7.4.3 be at least eighteen (18) years of age; and
- 7.4.4 not be an undischarged bankrupt or mentally incompetent person.

If a person ceases to be a Member, ceases to subscribe to the Statement of Faith, or becomes a bankrupt or a mentally incompetent person, the person thereupon ceases to be a Director, and the vacancy so created may be filled in the manner prescribed by section 7.6.

7.5 Minimum Number of ~~CRCNA~~ Christian Reformed Church in Canada Members on the Board of Directors

Notwithstanding the foregoing, at all times the composition of the Board of Directors shall be comprised of enough ~~CRCNA~~ Christian Reformed Church in Canada members that no less than three-quarters (3/4) of the Directors are members in good standing of a ~~CRCNA~~ Christian Reformed Church in Canada congregation.

7.6 Quorum

At each meeting of the Board, a majority of the Board members shall be present in person or by electronic means to constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be adjourned.

7.7 Vacancies

So long as a quorum of the Directors remains in office, a vacancy on the Board may be filled by the Directors of the Corporation with a Member in good standing. If no quorum of Directors exists,

the remaining Directors shall forthwith call a special general meeting of Members to fill the vacancies on the Board.

7.8 Removal of Directors

The Members entitled to vote may, by resolution passed by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at a special general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to pass the resolution has been given, remove any Director before the expiration of the Director's term of office, and may, by a majority of the votes cast at that meeting, elect any person in the place and stead of the person removed for the remainder of term of the removed Director

7.9 Remuneration of Directors

The Directors of the Corporation shall serve without remuneration.

7.10 Responsibility for Acts

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

7.11 Rules and Regulations

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

8. ELECTION OF THE BOARD

8.1 Term of Office

The term of office of Director shall be one (1) year

8.2 Re-election

A Director, if otherwise qualified, is eligible for re-election.

8.3 Elections

At each annual membership meeting, the number of Directors equal to the number of Directors retiring or otherwise ceasing to be a Director shall be elected for the term of office established in section 8.1.

8.4 Nominations

Candidates for the office of Director shall include:

- 8.4.1 the slate of candidates for office proposed by the Nominating Committee;
- and

8.4.2 the persons whose names are put in nomination by any Member entitled to vote at any time before Nominations are closed at the meeting of Members at which the election of Directors is held.

8.5 Election Method

Where:

8.5.1 the number of candidates nominated is equal to the number of offices to be filled, the Secretary of the Meeting shall cast a single ballot electing that number of candidates for the offices; and

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

8.6 Forms

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

9. MEETINGS OF Directors

9.1 Calling Meetings

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

9.2 Notice of Meetings

Subject to the provisions of section 9.3, notice of Board meetings shall be given to each Director by prepaid letter post, telephone, facsimile, email or other electronic method not less than ten (10) days before the meeting is to take place, the giving of which shall be in accordance with Section 21.1.

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

9.3 Regular Meetings

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

94 Meetings by Electronic Conference

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

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

9.5 Voting

Questions arising at any meeting of the Board shall be decided by a majority vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be deemed to have been lost. At all meetings of the Board, every question shall be decided by a show of hands or verbal assent, unless a poll on the question is required by the Chair or requested by any Director. A declaration by the Chair that a resolution has been carried and an entry to that effect in the minutes is conclusive evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of votes recorded in favour of or against the resolution.

10. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

101 Meetings of Members

The Members shall meet annually, at such time as may be decided by the Board, provided that the annual meeting shall be no later than 15 months after the last preceding annual meeting, but not later than six months after the end of the Corporations preceding financial year.

102 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Members shall be held each year within or outside the geographical location of the head office, at a time, place and date determined by the Board, for the purpose of;

10.2.1 hearing and receiving the reports and statements required by the ACT to be read at and laid before the Corporation at an annual meeting.

10.2.2 electing such Directors as are to be elected at such annual meeting;

10.2.3 appointing the auditor and fixing or authorizing the Board to fix the remuneration therefore; and

10.2.4 the transaction of any other business properly brought before the meeting.

103 Meetings by Electronic Conference

If all persons who are Members entitled to vote consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting and each has adequate access, such persons may participate in a meeting of

Members by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as a permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and a person participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

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

10.4 Special General Meeting

The President or two or more Directors may at any time call a special general meeting of Members for the transaction of any business, the general nature of which is specified in the notice calling the meeting. A special general meeting of Members may also be called by the Directors or the President upon the written requisition of the minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the Members entitled to vote.

10.5 Notice of Meetings

Notice of the time, place and date of meetings of Members and the general nature of the business to be transacted shall be given at least 21 days but not more than 60 days before the date of the meeting to each Member (and in the case of an annual meeting to the auditor of the Corporation) by sending the notice by any one of the methods set out in Section 21.1.

10.6 Quorum

Fifty percent (50%) plus one of the Members present in person constitutes a quorum at a meeting of Members, and no business shall be transacted at any meeting unless the requisite quorum is present at the commencement of such business;

10.6.1 Provided however that where:

10.6.1.1. less than fifty percent (50%) plus one (1), but two (2) or more, persons are present in person after one-half hour after the commencement time specified in the notice calling the meeting of Members; and

10.6.1.2 the business transacted is limited to the selection of a Chair and a Secretary for the meeting, the recording of the names of those present, and the passing of a motion to adjourn the meeting with or without specifying a date, time and place for the resumption of the meeting. Then two (2) persons present in person constitute a quorum.

10.7 Voting by Members

Unless otherwise required by the provisions of the ACT or the By-laws of the Corporation, all questions proposed for consideration at a meeting of Members shall be determined by a majority of the votes cast by Members entitled to vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be deemed to have been lost.

10.8 Show of Hands or Verbal Assent

At all meetings of Members every question shall be decided by a show of hands or verbal assent unless otherwise required by a By-law of the Corporation, or unless a poll is required

by the Chair or requested by any Member entitled to vote. Upon a show of hands or verbal assent, every Member entitled to vote, or proxy holder for a Member entitled to vote, present in person shall have one vote. Whenever a vote by show of hands or verbal assent has been taken upon a question, unless a poll is requested, a declaration by the Chair that a resolution has been carried or lost by a particular majority and an entry to that effect in the minutes of the Corporation is conclusive evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of votes recorded in favour of or against the motion.

10.9 Chair

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

10.10 Polls

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

10.11 Adjournments

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

11. **OFFICERS**

11.1 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

There shall be the following EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, each of whom shall be a Director

11.1.1. A President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer, elected for a term of one (1) year by and from among the Board at the first meeting following the annual meeting of the Committee, the EXECUTIVE OFFICERS shall not be entitled to remuneration.

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

11.2 Duties of the President

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

11.3 Duties of the Vice-President

During the absence or inability of the President to act, the duties and powers of the President may be exercised by the Vice-President, or if there are more than one, by the Vice

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

11.4 Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall:

11.4.1 act as Secretary of each meeting of the Corporation and the Board;

11.4.2 give all notices required to be given to Members and to Directors;

11.4.3 be the custodian of the corporate seal of the Corporation and of all books, papers, records, correspondence and documents belonging to the Corporation

11.4.4 perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.5 Duties of the Treasurer

The treasurer shall:

11.5.1 cause to be certified all documents issued by the Corporation;

11.5.2 cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of all assets, liabilities, receipts and disbursements of the Corporation and shall perform the tasks and functions normally performed by a Treasurer; and

11.5.3 perform such other duties from time to time as may be prescribed by the Board.

11.6 Board appoint other Officers

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

11.7 Executive Director of World Renew

The Executive Director of World Renew shall, subject to the authority and direction of the Board and the President, be the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, and shall oversee the general and active management of the operations of the Corporation, and will implement or advise on the implementation of all orders and resolutions of the Corporation, subject to the directions of the Board and the President from time to time.

11.8 Holding More Than One Office

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

11.9 Removal From Office

Any officer may be removed by resolution of the Board at a meeting of which notice of intention to present such resolution has been given to all Directors.

12. E.D. OF THE C.R.C.N.A.

12.1 Receiving Documents

The E.D. shall be entitled to receive copies of all reports, minutes, proposals, agenda and other written material relating to the affairs and business of the Corporation.

12.2 Attending Meetings

The E.D. shall be entitled to be present at all meetings of the Directors and Members for purposes as a resource person providing advice, information and insight to assist the Directors and Members. The E.D. shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Board or Members.

13. JOINT MINISTRY COUNCIL

The Board, together with the Directors of Corporation, U.S., shall form a Joint Ministry Council, which shall supervise and oversee the activities that are conducted jointly by the Corporation, and Corporation, U.S. pursuant to the terms of a joint venture agreement between the Corporation, and Corporation, U.S.

14. COMMITTEES

14.1 Nominating Committee

The Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall:

14.1.1 prepare a slate of one or more candidates for each office of Director that will be vacant and for which an election is to be held at the annual meeting;

14.1.2 accept any additional written nominations for the office of Director any time prior to the holding of annual elections, but this does not preclude the Chair of the annual meeting from accepting further nominations from the floor at the time of the election.

14.1.3 recommend to the Board names of persons to fill vacancies on the Board or on committees that occur throughout the year.

14.2 Audit Review Committee

The Board shall appoint an Audit Review Committee. The Audit Review Committee shall:

14.2.1 be composed of directors who are unrelated to each other. Each committee member shall be free of any relationship that could interfere with his/her independent judgment.

14.2.2 ensure the integrity of the financial information used by the Board and made available to the organization's membership as well as the general public. The committee interacts on behalf of the Board with the independent

auditors, management and internal auditors (if any). This requires open communication with the financial management of the organization.

14.2.3 Select with management the independent auditors who are to examine the books of the organization and make this recommendation to the Board.

14.2.4 Meet as necessary with the independent auditors and management to review the scope and timing of the forthcoming audit, as well as any other pertinent issues.

14.2.5 Review the financial statements with the independent auditors.

14.2.6 Recommend to the Board the approval of the audited financial statements.

14.2.7 Review the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's internal accounting and financial controls with the independent auditors and financial management. Consider ways to improve these controls and whether the accounting and financial policies are adequate. Review the auditor's Memorandum of Recommendations, if any.

14.2.8 Review next year's internal audit plans, if applicable, for adequacy and coordination with the independent audit.

14.2.9 Decide with management the constituencies that are to receive copies of the audit reports and how the information will be presented in the annual report.

14.2.10 Meet separately, if required, with either the independent auditors, the internal auditors or with financial management.

14.2.11 Investigate any issues of concern within its scope of responsibility and report findings to the Board.

14.2.12 Prepare and submit minutes of all meetings to the Board.

14.3 Other Committees

There may be such other committees for such purposes as the Board may determine from time to time by resolution.

14.4 Ad Hoc Committees

There may be such Ad Hoc committees and for such purposes as the Board may determine from time to time by resolution. The existence of each such Ad Hoc Committee shall be terminated automatically upon:

14.4.1 the delivery of its report;

14.4.2 the completion of its assigned task;

14.4.3 a change in the membership of the Board by which it was constituted; or

14.4.4 a resolution to that effect of the Board by which it was constituted; Whichever

first occurs.

14.5.5 Provided however that, in the case of termination pursuant to subsection 14.3.2, the Board may by resolution continue such Ad Hoc Committee.

14.5 Rules Governing Committees

Except as otherwise provided by by-law of the Corporation, all committees are subject to the following:

14.5.1 the Chair and members shall be appointed by the Board, from among the Members of the Corporation who are qualified to hold office;

14.5.2 in addition to the members of a committee appointed pursuant to subsection 14.4.1, the Board may appoint to any committee, persons who are not Members of the Corporation who are qualified to hold office; provided that the total number of such persons shall at all times remain less than one-third of the total number of persons who are members of such committee;

14.5.3 a member of a committee shall serve for a term ending at the annual meeting of Members following appointment, and is eligible for reappointment for one or more additional terms;

14.5.4 a member of a committee who is not otherwise a Member, Director or officer of the Corporation shall execute and subscribe to the Statement of Faith at the time of appointment or any reappointment to a committee;

14.5.5 each committee shall meet at least annually, and more frequently at the will of its Chair or as required by its terms of reference, and as requested by the Board;

14.5.6 each committee shall be responsible to, and report after each meeting to the Board;

14.5.7 subject to any rules established by the Board, each committee may establish its own rules of procedure and may appoint subcommittees.

15. PROTECTION OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

15.1 Directors and Officers Liability Exclusion

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

15.1.1 insufficiency or deficiency of title to any property acquired by the Corporation, or for or on behalf of the Corporation;

15.1.2 insufficiency or deficiency of any security in or upon which any of the

monies of or belonging to the Corporation shall be placed out or invested;

15.1.3 loss or damage arising from the bankruptcy or insolvency of any individual including any individual with whom or which any monies, securities or effects shall be lodged or deposited;

15.1.4 loss, conversion, misapplication or misappropriation of or any damage resulting from any dealings with monies, securities or other assets belonging to the Corporation;

15.1.5 loss, damage or misfortune whatever which may occur in the execution of the duties of the Director's or officer's respective office or trust or in relation thereto; and

15.1.6 loss or damage arising from any wilful act, assault, act of negligence, breach of fiduciary or other duty or failure to render aid of any sort.

15.2 Pre-Indemnity Considerations

Before giving approval to the indemnities provided in section 15.3 herein, or purchasing insurance provided in section 15.4 herein, the Board shall consider;

15.2.1 the degree of risk to which the Director or officer is or may be exposed;

15.2.2 whether, in practice, the risk cannot be eliminated or significantly reduced by means other than the Indemnity or insurance;

15.2.3 whether the amount or cost of the insurance is reasonable in relation to the risk;

15.2.4 whether the cost of the insurance is reasonable in relation to the revenue available; and

15.2.5 whether it advances the administration and management of the property to give the indemnity or purchase the insurance.

15.3 Indemnification of Directors and Officers

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

15.3.1 is a Director; or,

15.3.2 is an officer of the Corporation; or

15.3.3 is a member of a committee (including, for greater certainty, the Joint Ministry Council and the Board of Delegates created pursuant to the joint venture agreement between the Corporation and the Corporation U.S.); or

15.3.4 has undertaken, or, with the direction of the Corporation is about to undertake, any liability on behalf of the Corporation or entity at the request of the Corporation whether in the individuals personal capacity or as a Director or officer or employee or volunteer of such entity;

Shall, upon approval of the Board from time to time, be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of the Corporation, from and against costs, charges and expenses which such individual sustains or incurs;

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

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

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

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

15.4 Insurance

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

15.4.1 property and public liability insurance;

15.4.2 Directors and officers insurance; and,

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

With covering limits and with insurers deemed appropriate by the Board from time to time. No coverage shall be provided for any liability relating to a failure to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the Corporation.

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

16. EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS

16.1 Cheques, Drafts, Notes, Etc.

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

16.2 Execution of Documents

Documents requiring execution by the Corporation may be signed by any two (2) Directors one of whom is an officer AND ALL DOCUMENTS SO SIGNED ARE BINDING UPON THE Corporation without any further authorization or formality. The Board may from time to time appoint any officer or officers or any person or persons on behalf of the Committee, either to sign documents generally or to sign specific documents. The corporate seal of the Corporation shall, when required, be affixed to documents executed in accordance with the foregoing.

16.3 Books and Records

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

17. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

17.1 Board Designate Bankers

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

17.1.1 operate the Corporation's accounts with the banker;

17.1.2 make, sign, draw, accept, endorse, negotiate, lodge, deposit or transfer any of the cheques, promissory notes, drafts, acceptances, bills of exchange and orders for the payment of money;

17.1.3 issue receipts for and orders relating to any property of the Corporation;

17.1.4 execute any agreement relating to any banking business and defining the rights and powers of the parties thereto; and

17.1.5 authorize any officer of the banker to do any act or thing on the Corporation's behalf to facilitate the banking business.

17.2 Deposit of Securities

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

18. BORROWING BY THE CORPORATION

18.1 General Borrowing Authority..

Subject to the limitations set out in the By-laws or in the Letters Patent or Supplementary Letters Patent or Articles of Continuance of the Corporation, the Board may:

18.1.1 borrow money upon the credit of the Corporation

18.1.2 limit or increase the amount to be borrowed;

18.1.3. issue debentures or other securities of the Corporation

18.1.4 pledge or sell such debentures or other securities for such sums and at such prices as may be deemed expedient; and

18.1.5 secure any such debentures, or other securities, or any other present or future borrowing or liability of the Corporation, by mortgage, hypothec, charge or pledge of all or any currently owned or subsequently acquired real and personal, movable and immovable, property of the Corporation, and the undertaking and rights of the Corporation.

18.2 Specific Borrowing Authority

From time to time the Board may authorize any Director or officer of the Corporation to make arrangements with reference to the money so borrowed or to be borrowed and such authorization shall be limited as to time and value and as to the terms and conditions of the loan thereof, and as to the security to be given therefore, with power to vary or modify such arrangements, terms and conditions and to give such additional security as the Board may authorize, and generally to manage, transact and settle the borrowing of money by the Corporation.

19. FINANCIAL YEAR

19.1 Financial Year Determined

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

20. AUDITOR

20.1 Annual Appointment

The members of the Corporation at each annual meeting shall appoint one or more auditors (none of whom shall be a Director, officer or employee of the Corporation), to audit the accounts (including the financial statements) of the Corporation and to report thereon to Members at the annual meeting, to hold office until the close of the next annual meeting, and, if an appointment is not so made, the auditor in office continues in office until a successor is appointed.

20.2 Notice of Intention to Nominate

A person, other than a retiring auditor, is not capable of being appointed auditor at an annual meeting unless notice in writing of an intention to nominate that person to the

office of auditor has been given by a Member not less than ten (10) days before the annual meeting; and the Member shall send a copy of any such notice to the retiring auditor and to the person it is intended to nominate, and shall give notice thereof to the Members, either by advertisement or by notice in the manner set out in Article 21, not less than seven (7) days before the annual meeting.

20.3 Vacancy in the Office of Auditor

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

20.4 Removal of Auditor

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

21. **NOTICE**

21.1 Method of Notice

Except where otherwise provided by in the By-law, notice shall be validly given if given by telephone, or if in writing:

21.1.1 by prepaid letter post,

21.1.2 by facsimile,

21.1.3 by e-mail or

21.1.4 by other electronic method, provided that if one of the electronic methods is used, such notice shall be given during a period of 21 to 35 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held; addressed to the person for whom intended at the last address shown on the Corporation's records; or in lieu of the foregoing, whenever the number of Members is not less than one hundred (100),

21.1.5 by posting such notice non the Web Site maintained by the Corporation

Any such notice shall be deemed given:

21.1.6 in the case of telephone, at the time of the telephone call;

21.1.7 in the case of letter post, on the third day after mailing;

21.1.8 in the case of posting on the Web Site, on the date of posting; and

21.1.9 in all other cases, when transmitted.

21.2 Computation of Time

In computing the date when notice must be given under any provision of the By-laws requiring a specified number of days' notice of any meeting or other event, the date of

giving the notice is, unless otherwise provided, not included.

21.3 Omissions and Errors

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

22. BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS, ETC.

22.1 Requirements for Amendment of By-Laws

The By-Laws of the Corporation may be amended, repealed, altered, or added to by By-law enacted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Board at a meeting of the Board and sanctioned by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast at a meeting of the Members duly called for the purpose of considering the said By-law provided that:

22.1.1 ~~Any repeal, amendment, alteration, or addition to the By-laws the Board shall seek support of the Board of Trustees of the C.R.C.N.A. or its successor;~~

~~22.1.2~~ No such repeal, amendment, alteration or addition to the By-laws shall affect anything theretofore done under or pursuant to the By-laws;

22.1.3 The enactment, repeal, amendment, alteration or addition of or to the By-laws shall not be enforced or acted upon until the approval of the Minister of Industry has been obtained.

22.2 Additional Requirements for By-Law Amendment

In addition to the provisions of Section 22.1, no By-law amendment shall be effective unless there is compliance with the following:

22.2.1 the proposed amendment is delivered to the Head Office of the Corporation at least fifty (50) days prior to any meeting of Members;

22.2.2 the Corporation notifies each Members entitled to vote of such proposed amendment(s) not less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the meeting of Members.

22.3 By Whom By-Law Amendments Proposed

By-law amendments may be proposed by any Member entitled to vote.

23. REPEAL OF PRIOR BY-LAWS

23.1 Repeal

Subject to the provisions of sections 23.2 and 23.3 hereof, all prior By-laws, resolutions and other enactments of the Corporation heretofore enacted or made are repealed.

23.2 Exception

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

23.3 Proviso

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

24. EFFECTIVE DATE

24.1 Effective Date

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

ENACTED by the Directors as a By-law of the **WORLD RENEW** and sealed with the corporate seal this ____ day of _____, 201722.

President - Raymond Prins

Secretary - Margriet Ellen Ridder

CONFIRMED by the Members in accordance with the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* on the 5th day of May, 2017.

President, Raymond Prins

Secretary, Margriet Ellen Ridder

APPROVED by the Minister of Industry on the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Ecclesiastical Mandate Letter

World Renew (U.S.)

Preamble

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is a Reformed denomination composed of approximately 1100 congregations that operates in both the United States and Canada. Justice and mercy are the tangible expressions of loving and caring for our neighbors as God has loved us. They are the ways that we live like Jesus here and now, affirming the goodness of God's image in others and anticipating the overflowing shalom—peace and flourishing—that characterizes God's coming kingdom. As such, the CRCNA places a high value upon promoting justice and mercy within and among its members and congregations.

Background

Reformed churches have as part of their heritage a commitment to serve and a compassion for the needy—a commitment that has its roots in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.¹ Emigrants from those churches took that commitment with them to North America, where many of them joined or planted CRCNA congregations. After World War II, advances in travel and communication brought the critical needs of the world's people to the attention of North Americans. In the face of those needs, CRCNA deacons in North America began to look for ways the church could respond.

As a result of the historic flood of the Red River in Winnipeg and the Red River Valley in 1950, the CRCNA Synod received an overture from Second CRC of Denver, with the support of First CRC of Denver, to "consider the advisability of appointing a Synodical Diaconal Committee."² (Acts, 1950, p. 63). That request was not adopted by Synod.

However, during the 1950s, CRC diaconates and deacons' conferences spent significant time and resources addressing needs as a result of the 1953 flooding in the Netherlands and in Ontario, as well as a tornado in Michigan, a typhoon in Japan, war and subsequent need in Korea, and the needs of Cuban refugees who had made their way to Florida.³

In response to this diaconal work of mercy and the perceived need for involving deacons from throughout the CRCNA, the Grand Rapids Deacons' Conference requested that Synod of 1959 create a permanent worldwide relief organization. Synod appointed a committee to study the matter to report in 1960.⁴ Synod of 1960 acted favorably, recommending the establishment of a "World-wide Relief and Service Committee of [the CRCNA's] deacons' conferences to administer all of our works of mercy in such areas where the local congregation is unable to do so."⁵ The 1960 Synod also appointed a Synodical Committee to consult with existing deacons' conferences and advise the Synod of 1961 regarding the nature, scope, and work of such a "World-wide Service Committee."⁶ Synod 1961 created

¹ "A Heart for the World," *The Banner*, February 3, 2012, quoting Peter Zwart, former diaconal ministries coordinator for CRWRC, accessed online at <https://www.thebanner.org/together/2012/02/a-heart-for-the-world>

² *Acts of Synod*, 1950, p. 63

³ *Acts of Synod*, 1961, p. 26

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

such a committee and gave it a number of tasks, including presenting a detailed organizational plan and constitution for the Committee.⁷

Ecclesiastical Mandate

Synod 1962 established the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (“CRWRC”), known today as World Renew. It did so by approving a Constitution created by representatives of diaconates and deacons’ conferences. That Constitution created an organization governed by a board of directors and incorporated as a separate business corporation according the laws of the State of Michigan.⁸ In approving that Constitution, Synod adopted a mandate for CRWRC from the Constitution “to minister in the name of our Lord to man distressed by reason of the violence of nature, the carnage of war or other calamities of life, and to relieve the suffering of the needy of the world.”⁹

As an ecclesiastical partner, World Renew remains responsible to fulfill that ecclesiastical mandate. It does so through the governance of its corporate boards of directors and a joint ministry council made up of the members of those boards. World Renew maintains its relationship as an agency of the CRCNA by maintaining “as its primary constituency individual members, congregations, and assemblies of the CRCNA, while also seeking to work with other responsive churches.”¹⁰ The CRCNA’s ecclesiastical oversight is exercised by the Council of Delegates in the interim of Synod through a function of connection or coordination between the COD, synod, and the rest of the CRCNA agencies.

In addition, World Renew will contribute to and participate in the formation, development, implementation, and evaluation of the CRCNA Ministry Plan as we continue to work with the CRCNA in our efforts “to minister in the name of our Lord.”

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Acts of Synod, 1962, p. 333; Note also that since that time, a separate Canadian corporation has been established; the two corporations have adopted a Joint Ministry Plan governing how the two corporations work together to fulfill the mandate of Synod.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ World Renew Policies, Section 1: Ends Policy, Paragraph 1.1

Ecclesiastical Mandate Letter

World Renew (Canada)**Preamble**

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is a Reformed denomination composed of approximately 1100 congregations that operates in both the United States and Canada. Justice and mercy are the tangible expressions of loving and caring for our neighbors as God has loved us. They are the ways that we live like Jesus here and now, affirming the goodness of God's image in others and anticipating the overflowing shalom—peace and flourishing—that characterizes God's coming kingdom. As such, the CRCNA places a high value upon promoting justice and mercy within and among its members and congregations.

Background

Reformed churches have as part of their heritage a commitment to serve and a compassion for the needy—a commitment that has its roots in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.¹ Emigrants from those churches took that commitment with them to North America, where many of them joined or planted CRCNA congregations. After World War II, advances in travel and communication brought the critical needs of the world's people to the attention of North Americans. In the face of those needs, CRCNA deacons in North America began to look for ways the church could respond.

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As an ecclesiastical partner, World Renew remains responsible to fulfill that ecclesiastical mandate. It does so through the governance of its corporate boards of directors and a joint ministry council made up of the members of those boards. World Renew maintains its relationship as an agency of the CRCNA by maintaining “as its primary constituency individual members, congregations, and assemblies of the CRCNA, while also seeking to work with other responsive churches.”¹⁰ The CRCNA’s ecclesiastical oversight is exercised by the Council of Delegates in the interim of Synod through a function of connection or coordination between the COD, synod, and the rest of the CRCNA agencies.

In addition, World Renew will contribute to and participate in the formation, development, implementation, and evaluation of the CRCNA Ministry Plan as we continue to work with the CRCNA in our efforts “to minister in the name of our Lord.”

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Acts of Synod, 1962, p. 333.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ World Renew Policies, Section 1: Ends Policy, Paragraph 1.1

Calvin University Response to Overtures 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64

Calvin University is grateful for the opportunity to respond to select overtures received by Synod 2023. We understand that the university's right of response is grounded in Appendix T of the Council of Delegates Governance Handbook, which allows the university's Board of Trustees to initiate comment, and we appreciate the invitation that was extended by denominational staff in this case.

Though Calvin has been invited to comment on a number of overtures, we will focus our comments for this communication on five: Overtures 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64.¹

Comments on Overtures 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64

While we have serious concerns with the operational impacts of various recommendations made in these overtures, we want to focus our comments on their common aim, which is to clarify or revise the denomination's understanding of and approaches to confessional subscription by clarifying, changing, limiting, or eliminating the use of gravamina, or expressions of confessional difficulty.² Operationalizing the recommendations of these overtures would limit or rescind the mechanisms by which officebearers express reservations about or take exceptions to the standards, moving denominational practices in a direction that approaches "strict subscription." This would ultimately require thoroughgoing alignment between personal convictions and church standards both for board members and for those employees who are required to affirm the covenant for faculty members. These overtures assume that the options are thoroughgoing alignment or deposition, that is, strict subscription or separation.

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) established Calvin University and included as one of its purposes that Calvin should "provide courses which are of a positively Reformed character entirely in accord with the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church in North America."³ To ensure that Calvin is governed in a manner that meets these purposes, synod appoints Calvin's Board of Trustees and delegates to them the responsibility to steward the institution.⁴

¹ We are refraining from comment on Overtures 19, 45, 61, and 69. Most of these overtures address questions of whether a matter should be confessional; our concerns in this memo address not *whether* a given matter should be confessional but *how* confessional matters are handled at Calvin University. Therefore, this memo addresses overtures related to expectations regarding confessional subscription.

² See *Church Order* Article 5 for the Form of Subscription, expectations surrounding subscription, and guidelines for expressions of confessional difficulty.

³ Calvin University Articles of Incorporation.

⁴ Synod's authority over the university is clear, but it is also clear that that authority is exercised through delegation to the board.

Among the ways that the Calvin University Board of Trustees accomplishes the aims set by the CRCNA is to require confessional subscription of trustees and all faculty members in tenured, tenure-track, and five-year renewable appointments,⁵ who are required to affirm the Covenant for Faculty Members.⁶ By affirming the covenant, signatories confirm their belief in the Scriptures as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, as well as their belief that the ecumenical creeds and Three Forms of Unity “fully agree with the Word of God.” They also pledge “to be formed and governed by” these standards, indicating that they “heartily believe [the truths expressed in the standards] and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming [their] preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.”⁷ Calvin is blessed with trustees and employees who affirm this covenant and fulfill it.

Notably, however, the covenant includes more than an affirmation of the standards. It also articulates expectations about how signatories and the university will handle differences with the standards and with each other:

“We also promise to present or receive confessional difficulties in a spirit of love and fellowship with our brothers and sisters as together we seek a fuller understanding of the gospel. Should we come to believe that a teaching in the confessional documents is not the teaching of God’s Word, we will communicate our views to the Board of Trustees, according to the procedures prescribed by the *Handbook for Teaching Faculty*. If the board asks, we will give a full explanation of our views. Further, we promise to submit to the board’s judgment and authority.”⁸

This paragraph is the foundation of an approach to confessional differences that is elaborated elsewhere in Calvin’s governing documents, has a significant history and multiple precedents, and has previously received synodical endorsement.

Indeed, Calvin University has historically made multiple provisions for those whose agreement with the church standards is not thoroughgoing. This is reflected in decades—even generations—of records. A book that records the signatures of board members and faculty members also bears numerous asterisks indicating that a signatory took an exception to or had a reservation regarding the standards (e.g., exceptions regarding the practice of infant baptism or teachings on reprobation).⁹ Detailed procedures

⁵ While board members and employees with faculty status (including both regular faculty and some administrative staff) have been required to affirm the Covenant for Faculty Members and thereby affirm the church standards, some faculty and most staff are not required to affirm the Covenant for Faculty Members.

⁶ Synod approved the Covenant for Faculty Members in 2012. Previously, faculty affirmed the Covenant for Office Bearers or the Form of Subscription.

⁷ Covenant for Faculty Members.

⁸ Covenant for Faculty Members.

⁹ Some of these exceptions or reservations were documented in letters to the administration or board, and some were not but were merely the subject of conversations.

for expressions of confessional difficulty are more fully reflected in Calvin's *Handbook for Teaching Faculty*, which outlines the process by which faculty would honor their covenant commitment to inform the board of "weighty concerns related to the implications of Calvin's policies of confessional subscription and academic freedom for any topic or position."¹⁰

The handbook not only outlines the *process* for submission of these weighty concerns but also sketches *four possible outcomes* for that process. Notably, three of those four outcomes do not require separation but allow for continued employment. One of those options, which involves retaining faculty while issuing special guidelines related to their confessional commitments, was the one taken by Calvin University in the wake of Synod 2022. The university issued faculty guidelines requiring them to honor the teachings of the church in their teaching, advising, scholarship, and conduct. We also revised hiring processes to require affirmation of the confessions during candidacy, rather than during the first year of employment. (Notably, we think that if synod were to adopt an approach to confessional subscription that required closer alignment between personal convictions and the church standards, it would be fair to continue employing existing faculty with confessional difficulties while ensuring that all new faculty have a level of agreement expected by synod. Continuing faculty were hired before synod declared some of its teaching on human sexuality to have confessional status, when that teaching had the official status of pastoral advice. Their service at the university has been consistent with all stated university and denominational expectations, and their continued service is subject to the guidelines we issued in Fall 2022.)

In short, the university's positions, policies, and practices have not assumed that the options are either strict subscription or separation.

It is just as important to note that **synod has previously endorsed the university's approach to confessional commitment on at least two occasions:**

- Synod 1996 declared that Church Order Article 29 "does not preclude faculty discussion, debate, or disagreement with the substance of a synodical decision or position taken."¹¹ This declaration was prompted by synod's acceptance of the Calvin College Board of Trustees' recommendation to retain a faculty member whose book was not entirely in agreement with a synodical position.
- Synod 2014 adopted the following motion concerning Calvin's document Confessional Commitment and Academic Freedom: "That synod receive for information and commend to the churches the document *Confessional Commitment and Academic Freedom at Calvin College* . . . submitted in response to the instructions of Synods 2011 and 2012, as being faithful to and honoring synod's own prior work

¹⁰ See section 3.5.1.1.1 of the *Handbook for Teaching Faculty*. (There is no separate outline of requirements for board members whose beliefs may differ from the standards.)

¹¹ *Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 528.

on confessional subscription.”¹² This 2014 commendation is notable for its principal nature and broad application. **Synod not only endorsed the approach outlined in the document—an approach that explicitly differs from requirements of strict subscription or the recommendations of these five overtures—as good for the university, but synod specifically commended it to the churches as consistent with the denomination’s prior teachings on confessional subscription.**

In the end, the overtures forwarded to us make it clear that Synod 2023 will wrestle with the approach to confessional subscription taken by the churches, classes, agencies, and educational institutions of the denomination. We welcome the opportunity to inform those discussions with our understanding that **Calvin University’s current practices are both within the bounds of institutional and denominational precedent and consistent with approaches that have previously received synodical endorsement.** We understand that this matter may require additional study, and we stand ready to supply further information or perspective upon request.

Respectfully submitted,

Calvin University Board of Trustees
Bruce Los, chair

APPENDIX F

Resonate Global Mission Response to Overture 12

I. Introduction

In response to a synodical overture from Classis Southeast U.S. titled “Develop a Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Membership Decline and Require Annual Reporting of Progress” (Overture 12), this report is submitted both as a reply to the concerns raised in the overture and as a visionary plan for a renewal of church planting within the CRCNA over the next 5-10 years.

Membership decline in the CRCNA is an undisputed reality that we face as a denomination. The overture from Classis Southeast U.S. summarizes and shares data that documents this reality. The 2022 *Yearbook* data that shows 811 churches (over 80 percent of our congregations) reporting no new members gained through evangelism is sobering. These realities at the local, congregational level, should be of concern for all of us who serve and support CRCNA congregations.

¹² *Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 542.

II. Looking back at the 2017 overture to synod and the 2018 report in response

A. More engagement needed with the 2018 report

In 2017 synod received an overture from Classis Southeast U.S. titled “Discover Cause for CRC Membership Decline; Develop Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Decline through Church Renewal and Planting; Require Annual Reporting of Progress” (*Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 429-34). In response to this overture, Synod 2017 adopted several recommendations focusing on church renewal, including the following decision: “That synod instruct the executive director to make available a list of current denominational resources related to church renewal, including church planting with emphasis on training for evangelism” (*Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 706).

In 2018 a team made up of leaders from both Resonate Global Mission and Calvin Theological Seminary responded to this decision with a report titled “List of Resources re Church Renewal, Church Planting, and Evangelism Training” (*Agenda for Synod 2018*, pp. 64-75; see also resonateglobalmission.org/ResourceReport). This 2018 report was included as Appendix D in the Council of Delegates report submitted to Synod 2018. Unfortunately the 2023 overture from Classis Southeast U.S. does not acknowledge or engage with this 2018 response to their 2017 overture. In fact, the 2023 overture and its grounds are quite similar to what the classis submitted in 2017.

B. Continuing relevance of the 2018 report

The response of the 2018 report reflects the ongoing perspective Resonate Global Mission has on the issues raised about church renewal, church planting, and membership decline in the CRCNA. The work done in this 2018 report on the realities of the socioreligious context of church renewal with regard to church planting and evangelism, as well as the biblical and contextual theology of evangelism and church planting in the context of church renewal, remains helpful, and we commend this report for its work in these critical areas.

C. Adding emphasis and nuance to the 2018 report

While we commend wholeheartedly the work of the 2018 report, we also want to draw particular emphasis to an important theme of the report and to add some additional nuance in light of the five years that have transpired since the 2018 report.

First, we cannot emphasize strongly enough these words that were part of the “executive summary” of the 2018 report:

Renewal for evangelism and church planting is an act of the Holy Spirit and not the application of “the correct tools” by ministry professionals. If “mission” is God’s and the church exists to participate in God’s mission, then renewal begins and ends with God. The Lord must breathe life into the dry bones of his church (Ezek. 37) and give it

a passion for evangelism and church planting. Such breath reinvigorates Christ's church for mission through prayerful encounters with the Holy Spirit. (*Agenda for Synod 2018*, p. 65)

No amount of human planning, strategies, tools, or resources can bring about the kind of spiritual renewal that is needed for church planting and evangelism in the CRCNA to flourish. Renewal for evangelism and church planting is an act of the Holy Spirit. Not only so, but the mission that the church is invited into is God's mission, and we participate in God's mission at God's invitation. As Christopher J. H. Wright has put so well:

"Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation." (*The Mission of God*, p. 23)

Because it is God's mission that the church participates in, a critical question that we must continually orient ourselves to is the question of discerning what God is doing in our midst and what God is inviting us into as we participate in his mission. Resonate, as a global mission agency, places high priority on forming this posture of discerning the Spirit of God's activity in our midst and has developed resources that help build that capacity among our mission partners (e.g., Go Local). Unfortunately, this type of posture is missing from the overture.

Second, we want to add some additional nuances to the 2018 report. We begin by drawing attention to the sociocultural changes we have witnessed in North American society over the past five years since the report was written, including the COVID-19 pandemic, political and cultural crises, and even the increasingly divisive conversations in our own denomination.

Many of these challenges have only accelerated the post-Christendom dynamics and realities that were named in the 2018 report. Not only can we now say, in the words of the 2018 report, "Thus, increasing numbers of people in our modern context no longer value and recognize the church and its message" (*Agenda for Synod 2018*, p. 67), but we can also affirm that these challenges present new opportunities for evangelism and church planting and urge us toward building our capacity to discern what God is doing and how we might discern the Spirit's activity in our communities and join in committed participation with God's mission.

D. Reaffirming our commitment to the conclusions of the 2018 report

Finally, as we look back on the 2018 report, we want to reaffirm our commitment to its three conclusions (see *Agenda for Synod 2018*, p. 74). The **first conclusion** speaks of the reality that renewal is first and foremost a work of the Holy Spirit and not the fruit of applying the correct tools, strategies, or methodologies by ministry professionals. We reaffirm this conclusion.

At the same time, we want to dig into this conclusion a bit deeper and add some additional nuance. Throughout history and across the globe, spiritual renewal among God's people has often come in concert with renewed passion for prayer and a renewed burden for repentance and a turning away from false gods. Given our experiences and perspectives as a global mission agency, we want to suggest that part of what our post-Christendom context has exposed for us is the reality of idols that we need to name and turn from as Christians in North America. We begin by naming some of the idols that have damaged the witness of God's people to the gospel:

- relying too much on clergy to do mission work, rather than embracing the priesthood of all believers
- barring women from using their gifts and not being responsive to abuse concerns raised by them
- elevating loyalty to political ideologies above fidelity to Christ and his mission
- embracing a consumerism that creates economic hardship for people groups around the world

This is not intended as an exhaustive list. It is meant to stir our imaginations and hearts to the collective work of naming our complicity with cultural idolatry, crying out to the Lord for a renewed spirit of repentance and a renewed hunger for the Lord. Without a heartfelt repentance and turning away from cultural idols, we are unlikely to experience the kind of spiritual renewal that is critical for a renewed passion for evangelism and church planting.

Our commitment to this conclusion of the 2018 report has led Resonate to prioritize the postures and practices of spiritual discernment that are included in the Go Local initiative that Resonate offers congregations. Through this initiative we help to build capacity among and within congregations for missional leaders to discern the activity of the Spirit and the invitations to join God on mission in the local neighborhood. We have also just begun a renewed prioritizing of prayer through the 2023 Prayer Catalysts Summit, and we celebrate the beginnings of what we pray is a movement of prayer that sweeps through our denomination as we collaborate with the CRCNA prayer shepherd in coming years.

The **second conclusion** of the 2018 report named the reality that evangelism and church planting will flourish as we open our imaginations for evangelism and church planting that will more fully reflect our growing multiethnic, multicultural, and diverse contexts. For Resonate, our primary strategy to walk alongside churches and partners in mobilizing mission leaders, who through the Spirit's presence, demonstrate and proclaim the love of Jesus near and far, is informed and shaped by Acts 1:8 and our commitment to bear witness to the gospel "in Jerusalem" (locally), "in all Judea and Samaria" (regionally), and "to the ends of the earth" (globally). Each congregation has their own Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and ends of

the earth horizon for mission, and we see our role as a mission agency to come alongside them and to support them in mobilizing missional leaders who will bear witness in these various horizons of mission.

As we look back on what God has been doing in this regard over the past many years, we have much to celebrate. The following is only a sample of what we are noticing God doing in our midst. We will say more about this growing edge of mission in the next section of this report.

A growing diaspora of Christians and leaders from Latin America to North America has led to a growth of Hispanic leaders and Hispanic ministry within the CRCNA, including in the area of church planting. Currently Resonate is partnering with Consejo Latino to support and equip over 60+ Hispanic leaders with a vision and call for church planting in both the United States and Canada.

In addition to the Latin American diaspora, we are witnessing a growth of diaspora communities and ministry among Farsi-speaking Iranians, Russians, Haitians, Chinese, and Nigerians, to name only some of the communities in which we are working. We are currently partnering with leaders from within these communities to plant churches and to develop holistic gospel ministry initiatives among diaspora communities throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Resonate, as a global mission agency, is committed to following the leading of the Spirit and to stewarding the growing edges of diaspora ministry, or ministering with people groups from around the world who are living here in North America. We recognize that the global church is called by God to all the horizons of mission. God mobilizes his whole church for the whole world. As we witness what God is doing around the globe, we want to pay attention to what God is doing and be in sync with how he is also sending others. From the perspective of North America, we are increasingly called not just to send missional leaders but also to receive them.

The **third conclusion** of the 2018 report calls us to end the separation and compartmentalizing of mission tasks such as evangelism and church planting from worship, preaching, discipleship, and more. To be the Lord's covenant community in the world today, everything we do must be oriented toward proclaiming and demonstrating the good news of Jesus Christ concretely in a world alienated from God.

At the denominational level we have already taken massive and unprecedented steps to lead the church in overcoming this separation and compartmentalization, including the joining of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions in 2017 as well as the launch of Congregational Ministries (now called Thrive) in 2022.

We celebrate the growing collaboration between Resonate and Congregational Ministries (Thrive). "Embodying the gospel as a faith community" cannot be separated from bearing witness "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Grace-shaped communities that

embrace others from different cultural, ethnic, and political perspectives are foundational to our witness.

E. Church-planting efforts in the past decade

Pivoting now from God's mission generally to the work of church planting specifically, there is a lot of growth to celebrate. A 2020 study on church planting in the CRCNA that was conducted by Resonate shows that 128 churches in the CRCNA planted by Home Missions and Resonate from 2011 through 2020 are still operating today. This is a significant proportion of congregations that make up our denomination! Put another way, approximately one of every eight congregations in the CRCNA were planted in partnership with Resonate in the past decade. This reflects not only our ongoing commitment and priority to church planting but also the alarming rate at which congregations are closing. It is striking that this church planting also took place in a time of declining ministry shares. As we imagine the future and look ahead, what might God be able to do through the CRCNA if we seek spiritual renewal, turn away from cultural idols, follow the Spirit's leading, and seek the Spirit's empowerment for a renewed season of evangelism and church planting?

III. Looking ahead

We now want to look ahead and share Resonate's emerging vision for church planting, highlight some of the aspirational goals we are committed to, and bear witness to some hopeful signs of God's activity in the area of church planting.

A. Church-planting vision

Resonate's vision for church planting is to see gospel saturation in our communities. This will be a reality when every woman, man, and child has repeated opportunities to encounter someone whose life has been transformed by the gospel and to see the gospel on display by a local community that embodies it in a holistic way.

The gospel is the good news of God's power breaking into our world, to heal and restore all of life, to make whole all that is broken. Centered on King Jesus, the gospel is embodied by a community of people living on mission who are being transformed by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to this good news in both word and deed and with the entirety of their lives.

We long to see this good news saturate every community *and* every crack and crevice of society. We will tirelessly work toward this end until King Jesus returns and makes all things well.

How will we see this vision realized? It will take a diverse set of church-planting strategies and models for us to see this. That is why Resonate is developing multiple new paths to church planting, including both traditional churches and new types.

What is Resonate's primary role and commitment? At Resonate we are committed to the following:

- working with CRCNA congregations to identify and accompany everyday missionary leaders
- coming alongside these missionary leaders to help activate other missionary leaders and disciple-makers who feel a call of being sent to a specific people or place
- helping these disciple-makers discover how they can live as missionaries in the ordinary spaces and places of their lives among those to whom they are feeling called and sent
- stewarding a healthy ecosystem that supports and mobilizes these missionaries to make disciples and to form new communities
- curating the tools, resources, and partnerships necessary to live into this reality

We long to see more and more CRCNA congregations and missionary leaders partner with Resonate and join this movement.

B. Aspirational goals

We know from past experience that declarations like “We will plant x number of churches over x number of years” are both unlikely to be realized and make promises that are beyond the scope of Resonate’s mandate as a global mission agency.

At the same time, metrics matter. They help us measure our commitments, attend to the visible fruit of our intentional efforts, and bear witness to the signs of the Spirit’s activity. We want to lay out our aspirational goals at Resonate to develop and steward a strong and healthy church-planting ecosystem within the CRCNA. We also want to highlight some core commitments we will need from CRCNA congregations to achieve this vision. We commit to providing annual updates on our progress toward these aspirational goals and commitments that we see from CRCNA congregations.

1. A healthy and strong church-planting ecosystem

As we aspire toward this vision for church planting, Resonate is committed to developing and stewarding a healthy church-planting ecosystem for a diversity of church-planting strategies, leaders, and contexts. The following are the critical elements of this ecosystem, our aspirational goals, and our commitment to steward this ecosystem and build capacity to respond to the movements of the Spirit.

Discernment of a call to church planting

Through our regional engagement and mission teams, we are committed to coming alongside congregations, faith communities, and missionary leaders to discern with them a call to church planting. We will provide the training and coaching for these teams so that they are well equipped to identify and discern this call to church planting and can accompany these

congregations and leaders in discerning next steps of obedience as they respond to this call. We pray that the Holy Spirit would stir in the hearts of many congregations and leaders a call to church planting. We aspire to engage at least 250 leaders over the next five years in discerning a potential call to church planting.

Assessment for church planting

With our regional engagement and mission teams and partners, we are committed to developing and stewarding effective assessment processes for believers who are discerning a call to church planting. These assessments will be designed and stewarded so that they are adaptive and effective for the variety of contexts and church-planting strategies we are supporting.

We are aspiring to create and provide these assessments in English, in Spanish, and in Korean, and we will work with partners to provide these assessments in additional languages as needs arise in the future.

We are committed to scaling and growing our assessment processes and providing regional, accessible options as church-planting momentum grows and needs arise. We aspire to see the Spirit lead us to assess at least 200 potential church planters over the next five years.

Developing local partners

With our regional engagement and mission teams, Resonate is committed to providing the tools, resources, and accompaniment required to build healthy, local partnerships that support church plants. We provide tools, resources, and consultation to parent churches who commit to coming alongside in support of a church plant. We provide tools, resources, and consultation to CRCNA classes so that they understand and can lean into their important role in supporting and welcoming church plants into their classes. We aspire to see the Spirit move and lead us to identify and support over 250 parent churches over the next five years who might respond to the Spirit's call to support a local church plant.

We aspire to provide training and connections that will help our church plants both catalyze and connect with local networks of missional leaders for broad, kingdom-centered and holistic collaboration in their neighborhoods and cities.

As the planting of house churches continues to grow and multiply, we are committed to growing networks and regional hubs to provide support, connection, and collaboration for these churches and their leaders.

Coaching

We are committed to connecting every church plant with a trained and effective coach. We know from our experience and from the research of our partners that church plants with coaching support are more effective and sustainable than those without this support.

With our partners we are committed to providing training opportunities, coaching cohorts, and ongoing support for coaching so that we maintain the capacity to connect every church plant we partner with to a trained and effective coach who is suited for their context and church-planting strategy. We aspire to train over 150 additional coaches over the next five years.

Training

We are committed to connecting every church plant with training opportunities that will equip them for the unique challenges and opportunities they will face in their context and given their church-planting strategy. Our regional engagement and mission teams are committed to providing the relational accompaniment and support that will allow them to connect every church-plant partner with the training opportunities that will best match their training needs, their ministry context, and their unique church-planting strategy.

We will have systems in place to ensure that the training we connect our church plants to is effective and suited to their unique contexts. We also aspire to offer annual Resonate gatherings and events in North America for our church plants to connect and foster relational and regional networks of support and encouragement.

Financial support

Resonate is committed to offering unique and sustainable grant options, designed for each of our three lanes of church planting. These grants provide the financial resources needed to support the church plants in engaging their community, accessing training opportunities, working with a trained coach, purchasing equipment, assisting with some of the financial support for the church planter, developing local leaders, and meeting a variety of other needs. We are also committed to assisting church plants with accessing additional funding support and to providing training to church plants to support their own fundraising efforts.

If the Spirit moves in the ways we aspire to see, we will need ongoing financial support. Based on our current levels of financial support to our partner church plants, we will need at least \$15 million over the next five years to realize our aspirational goals.

Ongoing support

With our regional engagement and mission teams, Resonate is committed to providing ongoing support to our church plants and local partners working to support those plants. We aspire to offer annual reviews, including the evaluation of annual benchmarks.

We aspire to provide continuing-education opportunities on an annual basis and delivered at the regional level. We aspire to offer opportunities tailored to the unique needs and variety of church-planting contexts and strategies.

We are identifying and developing residency opportunities for emerging leaders who are sensing a call to church planting. We aspire to have multiple residency opportunities offered annually, in a variety of global contexts.

We are also developing a partnership with Calvin Theological Seminary to support students called to church planting through the competency-based theological education program that Calvin is developing. We aspire to see at least 25 percent of students who enroll at Calvin Theological Seminary discover a call to church planting.

Church replants/restarts

Finally, as we face the reality of several congregations' reaching the end of their life cycle, we are committed to collaborating with Congregational Ministries (Thrive) to develop a robust and seamless process to support churches who feel a call to "replant" or "restart" their ministries. This process will include but not be limited to an assessment process for leaders called to "replant"; coaching support for churches feeling called to "replant"; training opportunities for leaders who are part of "replants"; and ongoing consultation and support through the "replanting" process. We aspire over the next five years to see the Spirit lead at least 50 congregations through a replanting process.

2. Commitments we need from congregations within the CRCNA

Resonate is currently in an active partnership with over 50 church plants throughout North America. We long to see more churches planted over the next five to ten years. Our commitment is to do all we can to build the capacity of a healthy ecosystem that might be poised to respond to the Spirit's work. As we do this work, we long to partner with CRCNA congregations and help to deepen the church's passion for mission, strengthen its capacity to follow God on mission, and amplify the impact it has through relationships around the world.

Resonate, as a global mission agency of the CRCNA, forms part of this ecosystem that will support a renewal of church planting within the CRCNA. But only healthy churches can plant churches, and unless this vision takes root at the local level, there will be no church-planting movement in the CRCNA. As we imagine the future of church planting in the CRCNA, given all we have reported already, we will need the following commitments from CRCNA congregations.

First, we need you to join us in prayer. As we see the Spirit stir up a renewed passion for prayer and a movement of prayer catalyzers emerging in our denomination, we need more congregations to develop prayer ministries and to commit to concerted, extraordinary prayer and fasting requesting the Lord to bring spiritual renewal to the CRCNA and a renewed passion for evangelism and church planting.

Second, we need more churches willing to become a parent church and to support a church plant in their region. We aspire to see over 50 percent of

CRCNA congregations over the next five years engage with one of our regional engagement teams toward the possibility of supporting a church plant. We aspire to see over 80 percent of CRCNA congregations over the next ten years become a parent church.

Third, we need a commitment to identify, develop, and release missional leaders within congregations for the ministry of church planting. The future of church planting will be one in which everyday missionary leaders are activated and engaged in bearing holistic gospel witness in their ordinary, everyday lives. The microchurch lane of church planting in particular will only thrive and flourish as these everyday missionary leaders are identified, developed, and released to make disciples and to form new communities and new expressions of the church in their neighborhoods, vocational lives, and local contexts.

Fourth, we need a commitment to extend hospitality and welcome at the classis level to church plants and their leaders. This is particularly urgent, given the growing cultural and ethnic diversity of the CRCNA, particularly reflected in our church planting. The cultural, procedural, structural, and linguistic barriers that exclude ethnically diverse leaders must be identified, named, and removed so that a fuller hospitality and inclusion of these leaders in our classes can become a lived reality.

Fifth, we need congregations who are willing to share the use of their buildings with our growing number of multiethnic and multicultural church plants. We also need congregations who are coming to the end of their life-cycle to journey with us through a replanting process and/or invest their financial resources in future church planting.

Finally, we need a commitment to join with us in the hard work of searching our hearts and inviting the Holy Spirit to search our lives. We must emphasize again that the kind of spiritual renewal we seek and need within the CRCNA will most likely be accompanied by a renewed spirit of repentance and a turning away from the powerful cultural idols and religious beliefs of Western culture that have compromised our gospel witness.

IV. Conclusion

The mission work of the CRCNA and its agencies has made great strides in the past six years; however, the numerical decline of CRCNA membership continues. This rightly concerns Classis Southeast U.S. and all of us at Resonate Global Mission.

However, renewal through evangelism and church planting is an act of the Holy Spirit and not denominational agencies or ministry professionals. We have work to do in our own hearts and within our congregations if we wish to fully realize the vision of a growing denomination.

Resonate is committed to stewarding the passion for mission that is stirring up in this denomination, but we need help from every church. We need your prayer, we need you as parent churches for new church plants,

and we need you to cultivate leaders who can undertake mission-focused ministry.

We do not believe that Overture 12 will meet these needs, and we recommend that synod not accede to Overture 12.

APPENDIX G

Congregational Ministries Reflections Related to Overture 12: Develop a Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Membership Decline and Require Annual Reporting of Progress

I. Summary Comment

Overture 12 helpfully identifies a significant and alarming decline in CRCNA membership. The data provided makes clear that the trend is not something new or isolated but, rather, has been accelerating over the past two decades and across the whole CRC. The observations made in this overture align with conversations that the Council of Delegates has had over the past year regarding these trends and the need to develop strategic plans toward reversing the decline. The overture's recommendations share a common trajectory with conversations and efforts already underway among CRC ministry agencies, particularly Resonate Global Mission and Congregational Ministries (Thrive) regarding congregational gospel witness (including church planting) and congregational renewal. We suggest that the CRC would benefit from a comprehensive approach (in which numeric growth is one but not the only measurement) to denominational vitality, taking into consideration a wide range of factors that have been affecting membership within the CRC and different layers of responsibility related to membership.

II. Considerations

In a spirit of encouraging a robust and holistic denomination-wide response to the observations offered by Classis Southeast U.S., we offer the following considerations:

A. By way of context, almost all U.S. Protestant denominations have experienced a decline in membership over the past several decades. Those who study these trends will note a wide range of factors from generational distrust in institutions, decreasing religious loyalties, increasing individualism, decreasing birth rates, and the impact of very public scandals and disagreements over how best to engage justice issues that are important to younger generations. This contextual comment is offered to highlight the complexity of broader cultural factors that are likely part of the membership decline in the CRCNA. So as synod discerns how to respond to this overture, we would encourage an awareness of the broader cultural trends that are affecting this conversation.

B. One of the cultural factors that we can prioritize as a collective community and that we know is affecting membership is the manner in which we disagree with each other. Over the past several years, denominational staff have heard increasing reports of CRC members leaving the CRC because of the ways that pastors, church leaders, and others in their churches, classes, and at synod have talked to and about people with whom they disagree on a theological, ethical, or political manner. Behaviors that include demeaning others, name calling, gossiping, and in other ways fail to honor the dignity of people with whom we disagree is negatively affecting our communal witness to the gospel, and that, in turn, negatively affects our denominational membership. In particular, though not exclusively, among younger generations the belittling behaviors and attitudes that have been tolerated or excused in public gatherings and on social media have served to turn people away from the CRC and are causing people to stumble in their faith. This overture is an occasion for our communal repentance of how we communally have made it easier for people to walk away from our churches and from Jesus Christ through the way we treat each other when we disagree.

C. Within the CRC, membership decisions and actions are placed within the context of discipleship and are the priority and responsibility of the local church council. That means, in our context, the best way for denominational ministry agencies and resources to participate in addressing the situation highlighted by this overture is that they operate with a posture of encouraging, equipping, and in other ways coming alongside Christian Reformed congregations and their ministry leaders (both ordained and lay leaders). In this sense, though denominational ministry agencies are not directly responsible for the membership numbers in the CRC, the various CRCNA ministry agencies (especially Congregational Ministries and Resonate) can provide support, resources, and coaching that will help congregations grow in faithful, holistic, missional discipleship, which tends to lead to numeric growth over time.

D. To this end, both Congregational Ministries and Resonate are already actively working on church renewal and congregational gospel witness (including church planting). The processes, resources, training, and coaching connected with these priorities are positioning the ministry agencies to be more accessible, integrated, and nimble in the ways we engage with congregations. Our shared desire is to see Christian Reformed congregations flourish in a holistic missional discipleship that leads to growth in discipleship and to an expansion of the CRC as an active, growing participant in God's kingdom here and now.

E. We suggest that it is also helpful to keep in mind that discipleship growth and church renewal efforts do not always lead to numeric growth. From Scripture, church history, and our own experiences, we recognize that the Spirit is ultimately responsible for the growth of the church. As one example, none of the particular congregations started by the apostles have continued as institutional realities to the present day. Our sense is

that the goal of discipleship is to grow in faithfulness (personally and communally) with embodying the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ as we follow the Spirit. While that growth tends to come with increased attention to a holistic, missional discipleship, our practices and efforts cannot guarantee numeric growth for our churches. In other words, there is not an easy formula that can automatically produce more disciples.

F. Taking these considerations together, from our perspective, the attention to membership that is called for in this overture is most beneficially directed toward processes of congregational renewal, reengagement of basic faith practices (spiritual disciplines), equipping congregations for missional discipleship and gospel witness (including church planting), and being attentive to the manner in which we disagree with each other. These are the postures, activities, and resources that CRC ministry agencies are currently leaning into as we offer to come alongside Christian Reformed congregations. We will be healthier as a denomination if we can continue to emphasize that the denominational agencies' role is one of equipping and supporting congregations and their ministry leaders, who have the relationships and the responsibility for cultivating discipleship and kingdom growth in partnership with the Holy Spirit within their respective, local contexts.

APPENDIX H

World Renew Response to Overture 3: Refocus Ecclesiological Communication

I. Introduction

World Renew is responding to an overture submitted by Classis Southeast U.S. addressing matters that are core to the success of World Renew, as demonstrated in our tagline, "Living Justice, Loving Mercy, Serving Christ." We must start by stating our appreciation for the current and historical commitment of synod and the Christian Reformed Church in North America's leadership in addressing systemic injustices through many of the CRC's agencies, including World Renew.

II. Considerations

Justice, as is so beautifully and clearly seen throughout the Bible, is rooted in the character and nature of God, and therefore we are called to be justice-loving and justice-doing people. Psalm 146:7 (NRSV) shows the ways God "executes justice for the oppressed." Isaiah 61 says that God loves justice (v. 8) and details God's desire for justice, which is then fulfilled in Jesus as seen in Luke 4:16-21. We as God's people are called to seek and do justice. Isaiah 1:17 (NIV) says, "Learn to do right; seek justice," and Micah 6:8 reminds us that God asks us "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [our] God." As the *Live Just.ly* book states: "To live

justly, and to work for justice, we must encounter God in a personal and powerful way” (p. 6—crcna.org/SocialJustice/resources/live-justly). We are to both see the world as God sees it and to see the world as God intended it to be. “Biblical justice is the state of wholeness due all of God’s creation. Justice is required for shalom. Shalom is (the Hebrew word for) peace, completeness, and wholeness. Where there is justice, there is shalom” (*Live Just.ly*, p. 11), and “where there is shalom, there is justice” (p. 17). Therefore, to ignore and limit our call to justice would be to ignore a central character of God and theme of Scripture.

Synod 1960 of the CRCNA appointed a committee to consider establishing a denominational diaconal agency, and in 1962 synod approved the formation of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, now World Renew. The recognition that the world is not as it should be, and that Christians are called in the name of our Lord to do something about that, has been a constant theme throughout our history. That charge has been repeated to the deacons of the CRCNA and to World Renew, as the denomination's global diaconal agency.

In the approved reports of two synodical study committees (1978: “And He Had Compassion on Them”; 1979: “For My Neighbor’s Good”), proactive justice was highlighted and encouraged. Justice is noted as central to the function of deacon, as noted in the form for ordination: “Be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in our society” (*Psalter Hymnal*, 1987, p. 1005; crcna.org/resources/church-resources/liturgical-forms). This theme was strengthened and redefined in reports by the synodical Office of Deacon Task Force in 2013 (“Diakonia Remixed”) and the subsequent Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon in 2015, which encouraged ordained deacons to educate congregations on how to be deacons and “prophetic critics.” The church's role in society is described in terms of mercy as well as justice, reconciliation, and peacemaking. Mercy and justice together “speak to the healing of relationships and the restoration of shalom”—that is, living in right relationship with God (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, p. 277). There is thus a long and increasingly strong history of justice work as central to World Renew’s work.

The basis of World Renew’s work is to mend and bring about harmony in all our relationships affected by sin—our relationships with God, with others, with ourselves, and with creation—and to dismantle unhealthy, broken, and destroyed relationships, systems, and structures. All of World Renew’s work is done with this justice lens. Social, economic, and political factors are considered in every World Renew program, and where injustice is apparent in any of those, or other spheres, World Renew evaluates with the community and partners what actions to take to rectify that injustice. Providing food and shelter while ignoring broader systemic injustice is a denial of the basic human rights that are endowed to each person created in God’s image, and passage of this overture would stop World Renew’s ability to effectively work for those rights.

Civil society depends on organizations like World Renew to respond to political, economic, and social injustice. This is considered a best practice for community development organizations, and it is because World Renew responds to injustice in community development and disaster response work that we have been invited to participate in United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee meetings, to speak before congressional committees, to present at the UN Commission on Women's Rights, and to advocate in many other similar forums. As a Christ-centered nongovernmental organization, World Renew shares a unique perspective in the public square at local and national levels. As an affirmation of World Renew's effectiveness in this area, we receive significant funding from donors and churches for these justice programs. World Renew's values do not allow us to disconnect meeting basic human needs from doing justice.

We strongly believe that justice is an essential action of followers of Jesus and, thus, of the church. Generosity without justice only perpetuates cycles of poverty, but when justice is done, when relationships are made right, people, families, communities, and whole societies flourish. Throughout the years of World Renew's work in community development and disaster response, the analysis of programs has clearly shown that effective and impactful programs use a comprehensive approach that includes addressing systemic injustices that are so often at the root of poverty and disasters.

If this overture is adopted, it will effectively cancel and discredit most of World Renew's work and the vision upon which it has been founded.

Carol Bremer-Bennett, director, World Renew U.S.
Jamie McIntosh, director, World Renew Canada

APPENDIX I

Congregational Ministries Communication concerning Overture 3: Refocus Ecclesiological Communication

I. Introduction

The current Council of Delegates Governance Handbook, Appendix T provides an opportunity for the leadership of CRCNA agencies and institutions to make comments on overtures to synod that would affect their work and mandate. Congregational Ministries offers this reflection to synod to assist in its deliberations. In summary, we would like to point out the following considerations and concerns related to this overture:

II. Considerations and concerns

A. This overture echoes the concerns and issues brought up at Synod 2018 in Overtures 12-14 and Communication 2. Synod 2018 responded by acknowledging the importance of having a public voice for justice and mercy issues and stating, “We need to continue engaging in the social/political/economic layers of public life.” Synod also encouraged us “to continue to pray for growth in wisdom as we speak prophetically and pursue mercy and justice” (see *Acts of Synod 2018*, pp. 524-25). It is important to note that Overture 3 to Synod 2023 does not present any new evidence or grounds that would justify revising or rescinding past synodical work and endorsement on this matter. As such, it falls short of the standard for reconsideration or revision as outlined in Church Order Article 31.

B. The CRC has repeatedly affirmed that the gospel must be proclaimed in both word and deed, and that an essential part of both proclaiming and living out the good news in this world is to raise our voice to our public officials and faithfully engage in the public sphere (see *Acts of Synod 1978*, p. 63; *Acts of Synod 2006*, pp. 676-77). This belief and position has been reaffirmed on multiple occasions in the history of the CRC—most recently in 2018 (see *Acts of Synod 2018*, pp. 524-28).

C. *Our World Belongs to God*, paragraph 53, expresses that a component of our mission is to “call on all governments to do public justice.”

D. If adopted, the recommendations proposed in Overture 3 would contradict the rich legacy of advocacy and public justice that synod itself has participated in and urged, dating back to the 1800s, and would undermine one of the five calling areas (Mercy and Justice) that synod has approved as integral to the CRC’s mission.

E. The following nonexhaustive list of examples highlights occasions in which previous synods emphasized denominational public advocacy and reaffirmation of this role. These examples serve to underscore the CRC’s historical and ongoing commitment to biblical justice and advocacy, and the vital importance of maintaining this tradition in service of the holistic witness of the gospel:

Acts of Synod 1889 (English translation), pp. 40-41

Acts of Synod 1937, p. 11

Acts of Synod 1941, pp. 131-32

Acts of Synod 1942, p. 139

Acts of Synod 1965, p. 41

Acts of Synod 1966, p. 143

Acts of Synod 1972, p. 64

Acts of Synod 1975, pp. 68-70

Acts of Synod 1978, p. 63

Acts of Synod 1982, pp. 105-6

Acts of Synod 1996, p. 40

Acts of Synod 2000, p. 621
Acts of Synod 2003, p. 687
Acts of Synod 2005, p. 778
Acts of Synod 2006, pp. 676-77
Acts of Synod 2007, p. 581
Acts of Synod 2010, pp. 878-85
Acts of Synod 2011, p. 820
Acts of Synod 2012, p. 756
Acts of Synod 2014, p. 560
Acts of Synod 2017, p. 633
Acts of Synod 2018, pp. 524-25

III. Conclusion

In summary, it is our opinion that the action requested by this overture goes against many decades of synodical decisions on the importance of the church's prophetic voice in our society.

On behalf of Congregational Ministries (Thrive),

Lesli van Milligen, director (Canada)
Chris Schoon, director (U.S.)

APPENDIX J

Justice and Reconciliation Team (Canada) Response concerning Overture 3: Refocus Ecclesiological Communication

I. Introduction

The staff of the Canadian ministries of the CRCNA who are tasked with mandates related to justice and reconciliation appreciate the opportunity to speak to the contents of Overture 3.

This overture addresses matters similar to those raised in Overtures 12-14 and Communication 2 at Synod 2018 regarding ecclesiology and justice. At that time, synod reiterated that advocacy work is part of holistic justice and gospel work. It adopted recommendations (see Articles 66 and 70, *Acts of Synod 2018*, pp. 524-28) that provide a significant framework for the context and oversight of CRC public communications and engagement on matters of public justice.

It might also be of interest to Synod 2023 delegates that synod itself has instructed the majority of justice activity in the CRCNA as a result of the work of study committees. Synod 2018 provided instruction that ministries must continue to center their justice activity on sound biblical principles and theological discernment (see recommendations 7-8, *Acts of Synod*

2018, p. 528). Justice and reconciliation ministries are deliberate about honoring this instruction.

Please also note that the Ministries Leadership Council adopted a detailed protocol in 2020 regarding how it would discern, review, and approve future public statements concerning justice and reconciliation (see crcna.org/joint-crcna-leadership-statements). This protocol includes when a public statement should be considered, who can request that a public statement be made, where the request for such a statement should be sent, who will be involved in deliberation, who will be asked to sign on to such statements, and how much time signatories will receive before the statement is made public. The protocols also include standards for content and where the statements should be posted.

Overture 3 does not provide any new grounds or evidence for rescinding past synodical work or for opening up discussion on this matter now. Further, Overture 3 adds a layer of complexity that could be interpreted to circumvent Synod 2018's reflections on questions of justice and ecclesiology. In addition, the recommendations of the overture to "make no statements" or take "no actions" and, further, to remove reference to justice statements and actions of the CRCNA puts at risk the public witness of the church on core matters of public justice such as civil rights, apartheid, sanctity of life, peacebuilding, and reconciliation.

II. For the specific attention of the Canada Ministries Board of the CRCNA:

In Canada the CRCNA has a long and storied history of public-witness engagement on matters of justice, peace, and reconciliation from a Reformed and biblical foundation. Overture 3 does not engage this context in any meaningful way and suggests that social justice action is biased, based on weak scriptural support and "unvetted."

Since 1968, at the establishment of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, matters of public justice have been a frequent subject of ecclesial discernment and institutional and congregational action in Canada. This has persisted in subsequent governance structures, and most recently Synod 2022 affirmed justice and reconciliation as a core element of ministry in Canada (via approval of the Structure and Leadership Task Force report and *establishing the Canadian office; Acts of Synod 2022*, pp. 926-31).

The proposed directive to remove content and statements on justice (section II, C of Overture 3) could, for example, lead to the removal of CRC Canada statements related to the New Covenant with Aboriginal Peoples (1987, 2007) which has been foundational to much of our public and congregational work on truth and reconciliation and *Hearts Exchanged*.

It also bears mentioning that much of the work of justice and reconciliation work in Canada is done in responsive dialogue with partners and affected communities. These colabourers in Christ's call to justice are often a

prophetic voice to the church and give shape to the public-witness activities of justice and reconciliation ministries. Ceasing public statements and removing content related to them will mute these important voices in our midst and threaten the integrity of the CRC's holistic gospel public witness in Canada. Passage of this overture in its current form would hinder the integrity of contextualized justice and reconciliation ministry in Canada.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Hogeterp,
Justice and Reconciliation Team (Canada)

APPENDIX K

Communication on Racism and Biblical Justice

Dear Members and Congregations of the CRCNA:

Greetings in Christ's name.

Synod 2022 instructed the general secretary to "encourage leaders at all levels of the church to continue to provide opportunities for listening, learning, and practicing civil dialogue on the difficult conversations needed to better understand one another's perspectives on racism and biblical justice; encourage the churches to make use of denominational resources; solicit input from all the classes on providing the above opportunities; and report to Synod 2023, including praise reports about positive progress and prayer requests regarding challenges and concerns" (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 952).

Opposing racism and embracing a biblical vision of ethnic diversity is a calling that our Lord has set before his whole church as a result of Christ's death and resurrection (Eph. 2:11-3:13). This calling, and our reflections on it as a denomination, can also be found in our denominational position statement on race relations (crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/race-relations).

In addition, paragraph 16 of *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony* reminds us, "All spheres of life—family and friendship, work and worship, school and state, play and art—bear the wounds of our rebellion. Sin is present everywhere—in pride of race, arrogance of nations, abuse of the weak and helpless, disregard for water, air, and soil, destruction of living creatures, slavery, murder, terror, war, worship of false gods, the mistreatment of our bodies, and our frantic efforts to escape reality. We become victims of our own sin."

The sin of racism is with the church today and will be with it until Christ returns. For this reason, Christ calls us to be vigilant—constantly examining our hearts and listening carefully to those among us who are harmed by our conscious and unconscious biases. By embracing this calling, we truly worship our heavenly Father, who desires justice more than fasting or sacrifice.

As part of the task assigned to me, I have carefully listened during classis meetings this past fall and winter. I have also listened during conversations with ethnic minority groups in the CRCNA, and I have heard responses given as part of this synodical assignment.

There are many positive examples in the CRCNA of embracing ethnic diversity:

- There are deep friendships between Christian Reformed leaders of different races and ethnicities.
- The continued growth in affiliation and planting of ethnic minority congregations is encouraging.
- Many of our majority-Caucasian congregations host ethnic minority congregations in their buildings.
- A handful of our Christian Reformed classes have integrated ethnic minority members into their leadership as well.
- When taking into consideration the work of our mission-focused agencies such as Resonate Global Mission, World Renew, and Re-Frame Ministries, one could say that most of our denominational resources (including staff time and finances) are used in ways that bless non-anglo people inside and outside North America.

There is much to celebrate.

However, there are also things to lament. The sin of racism is still with us:

- Many ethnic-minority members and leaders within our denomination speak of the deep harm they have experienced through racist acts and comments (both intentional and unintentional) while in CRCNA ministry.
- Ethnic-minority leaders report feeling unwelcome in our governance spaces such as councils, classes, and synod.
- Ethnic-minority group members also often find it difficult to navigate our calling and accreditation systems.

These are our realities.

In addition to all the concrete actions of justice and mercy recommended by Synod 2022 and outlined in our confessions and testimonies, let us pray for the following:

- That we, as a denomination, would repent of how we have not engaged with brothers and sisters from ethnic minorities within our

communities and congregations with appropriate thought, care, or love.

- That political discourse and differences would not obscure our biblical calling to oppose racism and embrace ethnic diversity in our churches.
- That paths would be opened for ethnic-minority members to fully share in the leadership of our congregations, classes, and denomination.
- That God would raise up new generations of ethnic-minority leaders who could help our churches deepen our biblical vision for God's diverse people.

As part of this synodical assignment, Calvin Theological Seminary and the CRCNA's Congregational Ministries have provided two resources:

- The first, developed by the seminary, describes the ways in which its curriculum forms new candidates for ministry to be advocates for biblical diversity (see crcna.org/CTS-Teaching-on-Peace-and-Justice).
- The second resource, created by Congregational Ministries, contains a list of worship materials that can help congregations lament racism and reinforce their biblical vision for ethnic diversity (see network.crcna.org/topic/worship/general-worship/worship-diversity-and-reconciliation).

May God grant us through his Holy Spirit the love, courage, and persistence to root out racism and embrace ethnic diversity in our congregations and communities.

Zachary King
general secretary

APPENDIX L

General Secretary Report on Unity

I. Background

Dear congregations and classes:

Synod 2022 directed me, as general secretary, "to instruct churches and classes to seek and to keep the unity of the church and the denomination in ways that are consistent with biblical principles, our Reformed confessions, and our Ecumenical Charter" and "to gather best practices on pursuing unity from the various classes and to share these with the broader church" (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 858).

In response to these instructions, I sent a pastoral letter (see crcna.org/pastoral-letter-to-the-CRC) to all congregations of the CRCNA in December 2022, encouraging them to share “the lessons they have learned about unity in this fraught time.” The following is a summary of the responses I received from you, and a reflection about what I have learned as a result.

Thank you for taking time to consider this request and for sharing your lessons for the betterment of all. May we all continue to strive for greater unity within the church.

II. Lessons on Unity

Lesson 1: It would be great if unity could be achieved in our denomination simply by instructing the general secretary to make it so. Unfortunately, that doesn’t seem possible. Instead, unity will require intentional efforts on the part of us all.

Lesson 2: Reflecting on unity exposes our disunity. Some responses to my inquiry were sharp. The current issue occasioning our disunity (our denominational position on same-sex sexual relationships) is one that has split many denominations in North America. Some of these responses spoke forcefully of injustices done to LGBTQ people. Others focused on the importance of maintaining the covenant relationship that we have through our synodical decisions and beliefs. A group of responses took the form of lament. They grieved the reality of deep disagreement about what they considered to be the clear teaching of Scripture and church history. Others grieved the hurt they experienced at synod and in classes and congregations. Several responses suggested that seeking unity might not even be wise or possible, saying that the distance between “affirming” and “traditional” positions (with regard to same-sex sex) was so vast that there could be little or no common ground. A search for common ground, they argued, would lead to an untenable compromise for one side or the other.

Lesson 3: There are people who are finding a way to love each other and minister together despite significant disagreement. Many of these have taken clear positions on divisive issues and have had healthy, trust-building interactions among those with whom they disagree. Speaking clearly and respectfully about one’s convictions and listening well to others are key elements in their interactions. Prayer and spiritual connection are common themes with this group. Unity is important to this group, but perhaps more important to them is their fundamental relationship to God, nurtured by prayer and Scripture.

Lesson 4: There are large groups of CRC folks who are aware of the struggle with unity but are moving ahead with life, ministry, and mission. Admittedly, many such groups have high levels of alignment on issues that might divide other congregations and groups. The lesson here is not that the divisive issues we are facing should be marginalized but, rather, that they should not consume all of the energy that could otherwise nourish the life and mission of our congregations.

Lesson 5: The experiences of our immigrant congregations and members help us to find ways forward in times of disunity. At its inception, the CRCNA was an immigrant church. Immigrants find themselves on steep learning curves culturally, linguistically, and socially. Many of the CRCNA's current immigrant groups are similarly oriented toward the difficult work of listening, learning, and discerning about what to hold on to, what to adapt to, and how to be faithful in a new context. This posture correlates strongly with unity.

Lesson 6: Unity requires submission to the confessions and decisions of our ecclesiastical bodies. The lesson was implied even within Synod 2022's direction to me about this task ("to seek and to keep the unity of the church and the denomination in ways that are consistent with biblical principles, our Reformed confessions . . ."). However, this is a controversial point, because some respondents shared their feelings that recent decisions and confessional interpretations were unjust. Nevertheless, it is impossible to move forward together unless individuals and groups recognize and abide by the discernment of the greater body. In order for this biblical form of mutual submission to avoid degenerating, the entire body must demonstrate the love of Christ to those who hold minority viewpoints.

III. Conclusions

As I have traveled through my first year as general secretary, unity has been an issue in my heart, my prayers, and my mind. Like many pastors, I am by nature a "peacemaker," seeking the well-being and unity of those whom I shepherd. We do not relish conflicts, especially intractable ones. The state of our denomination's unity gives us anxiety. But God has challenged us to surrender the church, and particularly the Christian Reformed Church, to him. Christ is the Lord of the church, and he will defend it.

I am comforted and challenged by Ephesians 4:1-6:

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

The future unity of the Christian Reformed Church is beyond me. It is beyond all of us. What we have in front of us is today. Today, we are animated by God's Holy Spirit. Are we living a life worthy of the Spirit's calling? Are we completely humble and gentle, patient, and forbearing? Do we keep unity through the bond of peace? Are we giving glory to the One God, the Lord and Father of all?

I wonder if the deep “lesson of unity” that God is calling us to learn is that unity starts with God, and that by grace it is shared with us. If that is true, then let us seek unity in prayer:

Holy and gracious God,

From before the beginning of time you existed in diversity and unity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one God in three persons, perfectly united in being, will, and purpose.

You created us good, but we broke faith with you and we cursed each other.

In love you sent us patriarchs and prophets; you made us into a people.

In the fullness of time, you sent us your eternal Son, uniting our nature with yours.

Your Son’s suffering, death, and resurrection made us one with you and each other.

But we are stubborn and stiff-necked people—always hating, harming, and grieving you.

We confess our sins of division: between races, sexes, personal preferences, haves and have nots.

Lord Jesus, you prayed for all who will believe in your message, that they may be one, just as you are in the Father and the Father is in you. Jesus, we don’t even know what oneness looks like, let alone how to get there. We are broken and bleeding, longing for your healing, crying out for your Spirit.

Holy Spirit, teach us to be completely humble and gentle, forbearing with one another. Gracious Spirit, make us peaceful and gracious, true sons and daughters of our Father. Loving Spirit, help us to love one another as you love us, breaking the grip of fear.

Whatever happens to our churches in the next two, five, or ten years, may you grant us the deep grace to live out the unity you have achieved.

Amen.

Zachary J. King
general secretary

APPENDIX M

Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined

I. Introduction

Synod 2019 adopted the Reimagining Ministry Shares report, which included a significantly revised ministry-share process requiring a change to the Church Order Supplement (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 789-90; *Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council of Delegates 2020*, p. 464). Instead of setting an annual, per-member amount for churches to contribute, ministry

shares were “reimagined” into a faith-promise system. Each congregation would be asked to pledge the dollar amount that they felt they could contribute to shared ministry.

This new system was implemented just as the COVID-19 pandemic began. Three years later, we’ve seen a significant pullback in the amount of dollars received from ministry shares. At the same time, we have seen a greater number of congregations participate in the program now that contributions can be set at any dollar figure.

A Synod 2022 advisory-committee conversation dealt with ministry shares and ministry-share trends. They recommended that the Council of Delegates examine congregational responses to “ministry shares reimagined,” with particular attention to questions such as the following:

- Why are ministry-share contributions declining, especially in the United States?
- How are churches contributing in alternate ways?
- What other ministry priorities are congregations funding?
- What should we be doing going forward?

Two teams of staff were assembled to address this request. One looked at ministry-shares administration. The other looked at ministry-shares marketing and communications.

Administrative team

Jeff Bolt (convener), Terry Veldboom, Shirley DeVries, Brian Van Doese-laar

Communications team

Kristen VanderBerg (convener), Jeff Bolt, Annie Mas-Smith, Brian Clark, Shawn Brix, Tim Ellens, Victoria Veenstra, Zachary King

The teams utilized several methods to receive feedback on how the churches are responding to the changes made to the ministry-shares program. This included a review of financial data and historical ministry-share campaigns. It also included a table discussion with COD members and stated clerks; a survey sent to churches asking for a member of the leadership (pastor, elder, deacon, or treasurer) to respond to several questions; and focus groups. A total of three focus groups spent an hour each talking about their responses to the survey, providing staff with expanded feedback. The results of this research are shared in this report.

From the information provided to the staff, several improvements will be made to the communication around ministry shares. These include some regular and simple explanations of the ministry-share program, with compelling stories that churches can use to introduce it to new members and/or justify the cost in their budget. Other communications will be targeted more toward persons in administration and leadership, providing

regular updates on how churches can determine their pledge, how much has come in, and how funds have been allocated.

In addition to these improvements in communication, staff are making the following recommendations to the ministry-share program starting in the new fiscal year 2023-24. These recommendations do not change the function or method of the ministry-share program but will enhance the transparency and communication of ministry shares. In addition, they will not require any changes to the Church Order.

II. Recommendations

A. Provide greater flexibility in the pledge process cycle. Rather than focusing on the denomination's fiscal year of July through June, churches will be invited to make a pledge that best aligns with their budget process. The request will be for each congregation to make an annual pledge to the ministry-share program that covers a 12 month period. They will be asked to provide the starting month and ending month of that pledge on the basis of their fiscal year.

B. Determine a base amount that covers core denominational costs. Staff will annually determine the core costs related to running the CRCNA. A minimal pledge amount will be requested of each congregation based on the size of the church. In addition to the base amount, churches will be invited to pledge additional funding in support of the shared ministry (agencies and institutions) of the CRCNA.

C. Provide to the churches and classes more information on pledges and giving results. As stated earlier, consistent and clear communication is key to the success of the ministry-share program. As part of this commitment to communication, additional information will be shared with all churches regarding the levels of support that have been pledged and received for core costs as well as for shared ministry.

The following pages present a summary of the research completed and provide a basis for the above recommendations.

III. Methodology

As part of their work, two teams of staff reviewed and researched the ministry-share program. This work included the following:

A. Looking at trends in denominational giving

- In the United States, direct giving to agencies and ministries has increased since 2015, but the subtotal of ministry shares has declined over time. Churches have started to give directly to agencies and ministries rather than funding general ministry shares.
- Canada has a smaller number of churches. Canadian ministry shares have declined (11%) but not at the rate at which membership is declining (15%).

- When direct giving and ministry-share giving are combined, churches are giving the CRCNA more per member or per church than they have in the past.
- There is an intentionality from ministry leaders to connect and be in relationship with the churches.

B. Holding small group conversations at a Council of Delegates meeting and at the Stated Clerks Gathering

- It is understood that ministry shares are about doing shared ministry.
- The idea of ministry shares is still liked by leadership but lacks a connection between giving and the impact of giving.
- There is a lack of trust in the denomination.
- Excitement comes when people understand what ministry shares are.
- Education is needed, including more videos that show the impact of the work of the ministries and agencies.
- Classes are not having conversations about ministry shares as intentionally as they should be.
- There tends to be a preference that classes have a limited role in collecting and tracking ministry-share giving and gifts.
- Churches tend to give a percentage of their budget (a conservative pledge).
- Churches are not reporting a lower pledge amount only to give more at the end of the year.

C. Reviewing anecdotal evidence from classis meeting visits and conversations with deacons, classis treasurers, and others

- There has been an increase in participation from smaller churches, emerging churches, and ethnic minority churches, even if the dollar amounts are small.
- There has been a rapid decrease in revenue in connection with the upheavals of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent decisions of synod.
- There are administrative limitations in following up directly with congregations.
- The ministry-share pledge process causes a disruption to the budgeting cycle in many congregations who budget by calendar year.
- There is lack of clarity about what is necessary for the minimal function of the CRCNA.
- Churches are looking for practical guidance on what to pledge and give for ministry shares.

- In the past twenty years, churches have shifted their focus and resources to their local communities. Thus they are failing to understand the impact of ministry shares.
- Congregations are withholding ministry shares due to displeasure/disagreement with certain issues discussed and decided at the denominational and synodical level.

D. Reviewing previous campaign and marketing initiatives to promote and increase ministry shares

- Outside consultants and impressive-looking materials are expensive and don't seem to move the needle.
- Often ministry-share campaigns have been short—a year or less—rather than investing in them over a longer period of time.
- Awareness of ministry shares isn't the issue; we need to build ownership of it.
- We need to do a better job of talking about ministry shares when we share stories and resources.

E. Conducting a survey, sent to all CRC congregations, and requesting that the pastor, chair of council, treasurer, or administrator complete it

- 202 responses.
- Good mix of Canadian and U.S. respondents.
- Respondents included pastors (32%), treasurers (21%), and clerks, elders, deacons, chairs of council, etc.
- Responses were overwhelmingly from people whose congregations participate in ministry shares; but there were some congregations who have reduced their giving and provided insight as to why.

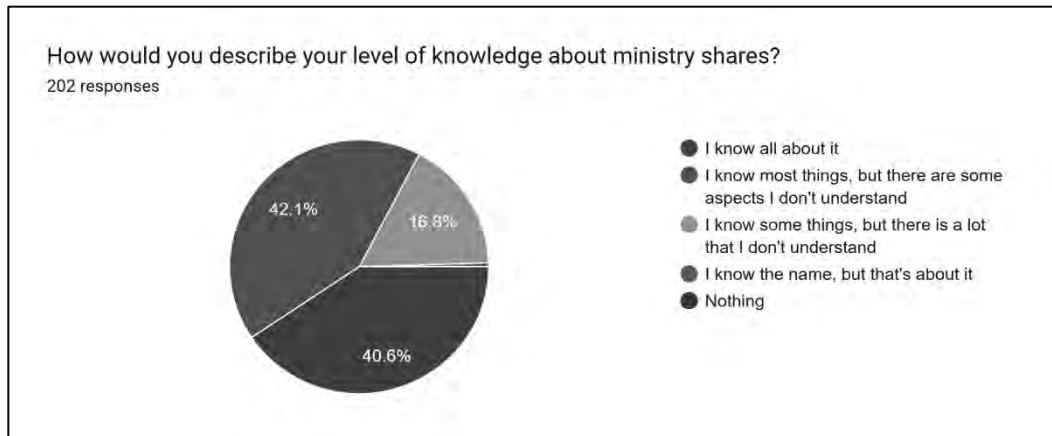
F. Holding focus groups with volunteers who took the survey to delve deeper into survey answers

- Three focus groups were conducted with eight people in each.
- Each focus group spent one hour discussing the survey results and other questions related to ministry shares from both the administrative and communications perspectives.
- Each group revealed a variety of appreciations and critiques and added thoughts and suggestions on the questions asked. It was clear that there is no one way to communicate with or to appeal to all congregations.
- There were also some trends noticed that may provide some suggestions to move forward.

IV. Findings: Knowledge about Ministry Shares

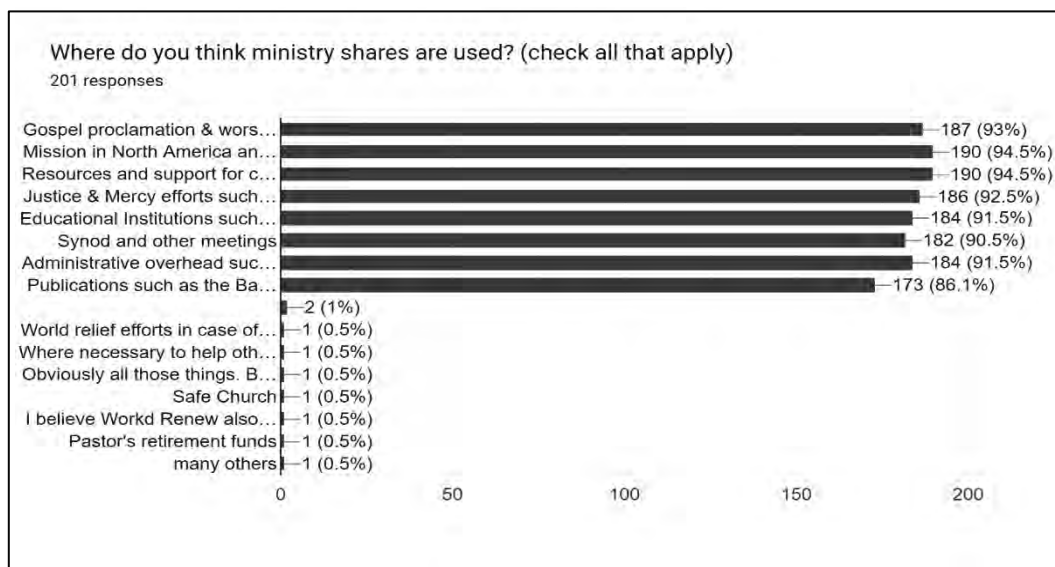
Survey respondents (mostly including pastors, treasurers, and chairs of council), showed a *high level of knowledge about ministry shares*. When asked to identify their own level of knowledge (Figure 1), 40.6 percent said they know all about it, and an additional 42.1 percent said they know most things about it.

Figure 1:



Similarly, when asked on the survey to identify *what ministry shares are used for* (Figure 2), most participants were accurate in their responses. Most even knew that World Renew does not receive ministry shares.

Figure 2:



Participants from more traditional CRC congregations said that their members are aware of what ministry shares are, and generally know what they are used for, but don't have a high level of interest. They don't spend much time or energy thinking about ministry shares or where funds go. In churches where members are newer to the CRCNA or come from a more diverse background, there is no base knowledge about ministry shares.

Focus-group attendees agreed that *everyone in CRC churches should have some awareness about ministry shares*, but the level of detail that individuals need to know will vary depending on position. Most members may need only a basic understanding, but those working on setting church budgets will need to know more.

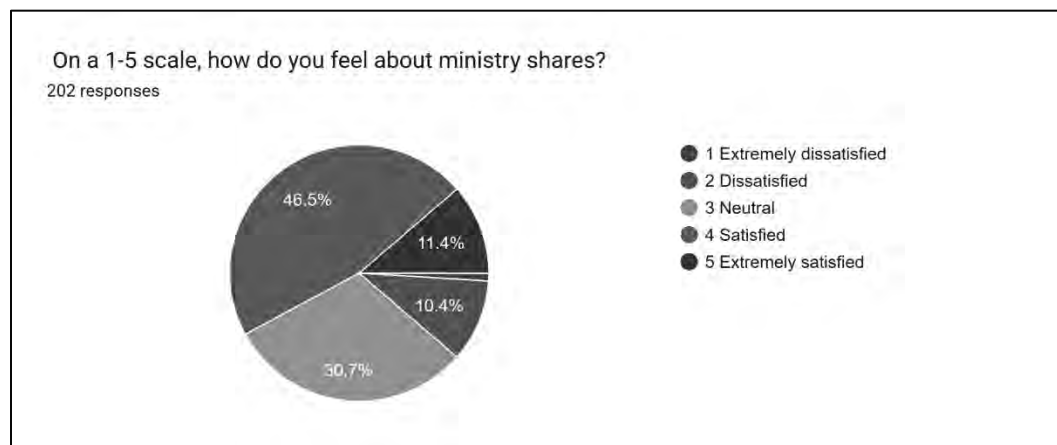
A few concrete recommendations made during the focus groups:

- In church plants and other nontraditional congregations it is important to equip deacons, treasurers, and chairs of council with some promotional material that can explain ministry shares. This will help when presenting the budget at congregational meetings.
- Because there is always turnover in church leadership positions (elders, deacons, chairs), it is important to have explanatory information readily available on the website at all times and to regularly remind churches that it is there.

V. Findings: Satisfaction with Ministry Shares

When asked *how they feel about ministry shares* (Figure 3), respondents overwhelmingly said that they were very satisfied, satisfied, or neutral.

Figure 3:



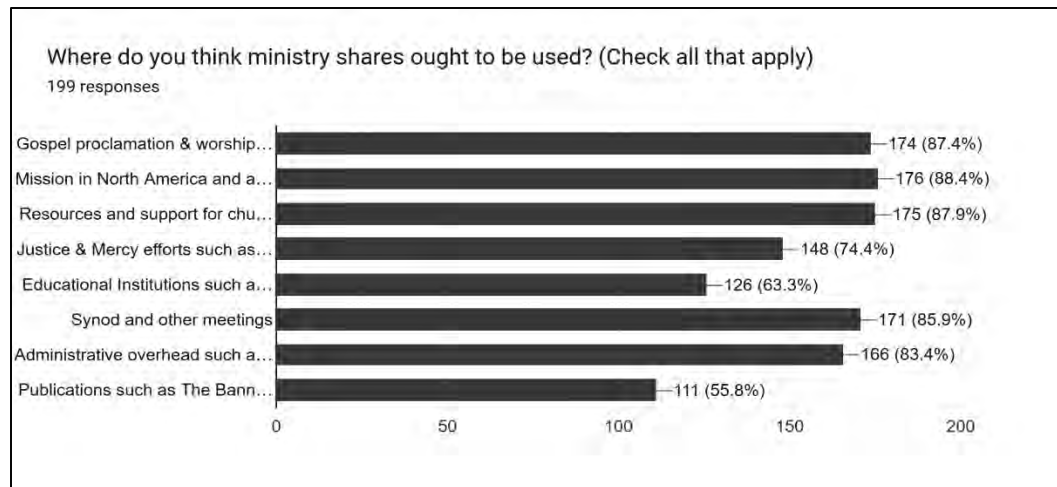
Similarly, when asked *where they thought ministry shares should be used* (Figure 4), the vast majority of respondents selected items that are currently ministry-share funded. While some of these items did not receive votes from all survey takers, they all received support from more than 50 per cent.

It is important to note, however, that 98 percent of the people who responded to this survey attend churches that participate in ministry shares. Their satisfaction level with the program and how it is used may not reflect the opinions of churches that do not participate.

Additionally, open-ended questions on the survey provided some additional helpful insights. When asked to describe ministry shares in their own words, for example, respondents often used language about ministry shares being a “covenant commitment” and part of “doing kingdom work

together.” They said that ministry shares were “shared money for shared ministry.”

Figure 4:



Respondents saw that ministry shares provide an overall benefit of making more ministry possible than individual congregations can do on their own (“a collaborative system to financially support ministry that we could not do alone,” “support each other and impact the world in a bigger way than we could as individual churches,” “joining of hands, hearts, money, and resources to do more work for God’s kingdom together than we can do apart”). They also saw ministry shares as being an efficient and effective fundraising tool (“a fund-raising mechanism for denominational and classical ministries that minimizes fund-raising costs and keeps the churches aware,” “allows us to punch above our weight”).

A small number of respondents, however, expressed negative feelings, saying that ministry shares were “a tax” or “a bill”, they mentioned that churches “had no say in recipients,” and that ministry shares are used for “administration” and “those who administer the fund.”

Similarly, a question that asked about why churches don’t give to ministry shares provided respondents with an opportunity to comment on why they may have reduced their giving.

The first theme that arose out of these responses had to do with priorities. Some churches don’t participate or give minimally because they are small in size, have few members, or simply don’t have the finances. Ministry shares are considered a “last fruit” (not just by small churches), and they get reduced or cut when the rest of the church budget is not met. Similarly, some churches said that their members are not “traditional CRC” and have little knowledge of denominational efforts. In these situations, the church budget is focused on local needs instead.

Another theme had to do with dissatisfaction and withholding ministry shares as a means of protest. Respondents mentioned “unbiblical and un-

Reformed positions held by denominational leaders,” the “historical positions of some staff members,” and specific actions by certain ministries as being instigators for withholding ministry shares. These respondents also mentioned that “if we feel there are some areas of question, we should be able to discern what to request not to contribute to” and noted that this already exists.

A third theme had to do with distrust in how money is used. Some respondents noted concerns about wastefulness, duplication of ministry by multiple agencies, and CRCNA ministries being set in an outdated ministry model that doesn’t meet the needs of today’s congregations.

Similar themes were explored during the focus groups. In each of three conversations, someone raised the topic of reducing the amount of work that the CRCNA tries to do so that we can better afford to do it together. They wondered if some ministries that were started historically may no longer be necessary. They also wondered if some ministries might be able to be done in partnership with another denomination or entity so that the CRCNA does not need to do it all ourselves.

An additional open-ended question on the survey asked respondents what the most compelling reason was for their church’s participation in ministry shares. *Duty, loyalty, tradition, and being part of a denomination* were the biggest themes in this section. Respondents talked about ministry shares being part of our covenant relationship with each other, and that ministry shares make for an efficient way to do ministry together. These answers were helpful to hear and can help us understand the motivations behind giving.

One focus group mentioned that giving ministry shares based on a sense of duty and obligation as part of a denomination only works when people feel that they share the same denominational identity. Today there are different visions of what it means to be Christian Reformed, and that is hurting the ministry-share program.

Focus group recommendations:

- Trust is key. “Right now there is distrust in the system, and that is being reflected in how churches give or withhold their funds.”
- Even churches that don’t like everything that the CRCNA does could get behind covering the “core” costs of being a denomination. Perhaps this needs to be more clearly communicated.
- If churches were unwilling to contribute even the base amount of funds to cover things like synod, the *Yearbook*, a denominational website, etc., there ought to be some follow-up. Classis could have a conversation with such churches to try to help them understand. There was some talk about having consequences for these churches, but there was not agreement on what the consequences should be.

VI. Findings: Ministry Share Challenges

The survey and focus groups revealed several polarities that will have to be managed by the ministry-share program.

There is agreement that there is already a lot of communication and information about ministry shares that is readily available to all churches (survey respondents did not necessarily want more), but this information isn't necessarily getting read or used. A lot of people still don't know enough about ministry shares, and they don't get excited about the ministry we are doing together.

There is general agreement that payment of ministry shares ought to be required as part of membership in the CRCNA (see Figure 5), but there is hesitancy to apply consequences to churches that don't contribute. When asked whether churches that don't give should be denied a seat at classis, and whether classes that don't give should be denied a seat at synod, people overwhelmingly said no (Figure 6).

There is agreement that classes should play a role in promoting the denomination and supporting the ministry-share pledge process, but respondents did not feel that congregations within a classis should hold each other accountable for their participation in ministry shares or their level of giving.

There is support for separating out a core/base cost for running the denomination and requiring churches to pay it, but there is hesitancy to make a complicated system even more complicated by having two tiers.

There is support for allowing churches to have greater say in how their funds (above core costs) are allocated to ministries, but there is hesitancy to make ministries compete with one another and spend more of their time and resources on fundraising.

There is appreciation for the pledge process and that it allows churches of all sizes to participate and to own their level of contribution, but the current pledge cycle does not match the church budget cycle very well and is complicated.

Figure 5:

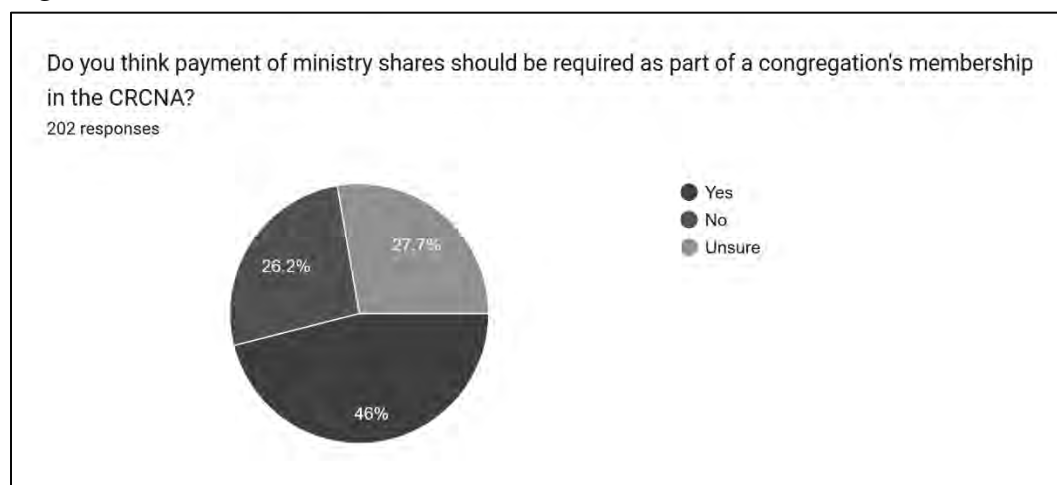
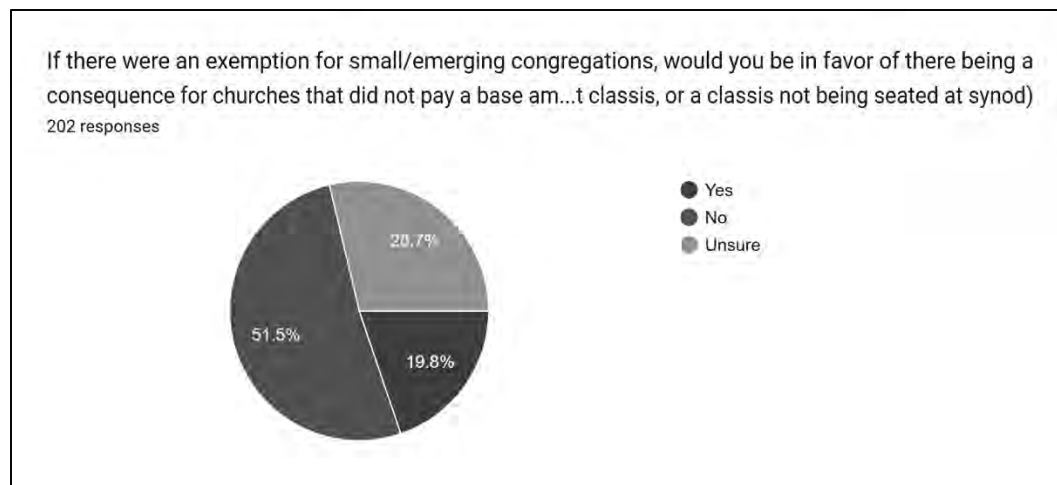


Figure 6:



VII. Ministry Shares Table Discussions

We invited all COD members during a COD meeting in October 2022 to have a conversation about ministry shares. We provided several questions to be considered and asked everyone to share their thoughts in small groups.

At a classis stated clerks gathering in January 2023, a similar conversation was conducted, and the results were recorded.

At both gatherings, the table discussions lasted for about 45 minutes, a Google.docs form was provided for collecting information, and a reporter was appointed to report on the Google.docs form. Provided below are the findings reported from the discussions about each question.

A. Findings

Question 1: Ministry shares enable the denomination to do ministry together as a "shared ministry" on a scale that our churches cannot do alone, even today. Does this excite you?

- Ministry shares bind us together.
- Ministry shares are great, pooling resources.
- The system seems removed from people's passion or experience.
- Failure in communication—people do it out of duty.
- Exciting—we are part of a larger thing.
- Not very exciting, but it's an important commitment.
- Are we getting our money's worth?

Question 2: There are resources to help classes and churches understand the ministry-share program. What information/material would better help you discuss the impact of ministry shares?

- Not enough videos; videos are the way to go.

- When we see the impact of ministries, we find giving increases.
- We need better communication to the deacons.
- Because of turnover, more information needs to be shared.
- Share stories that show people are making a difference with their giving.

Question 3: We found that some churches were giving more than 25 percent of their church budget to ministry shares just to “make the requested number.” How do churches in your classis decide on the amount to give to ministry shares?

- It’s all over the map.
- Churches give a percentage of budget.
- We give the same as last year.
- We don't talk about it.
- We pick a number that sounds good.

Question 4: We currently ask churches to make a pledge and to provide that pledge amount to us through their classis. Would it be a good idea if the classis, rather than individual churches, was asked to make a pledge?

There was **no group** that thought this was a good idea.

Question 5: Ministry Shares Reimagined asked classes to talk about church pledges and helping churches to understand the pledges made for ministry shares. What are churches discussing as it relates to ministry shares? What are churches trying to communicate with their pledging?

- We are talking about the benefits of ministry shares.
- Our classis is not talking about ministry shares.
- Some are stating a lack of trust in the denomination.
- Some are using it to express their displeasure with Grand Rapids.
- No financial report on the denomination is given.
- Churches are happy because they can set and reach their goal.
- We think the pledge system is “stupid” —unnecessarily complicated. Just tell us what we need to give.
- No one is really talking about the pledge system.

Question 6: There are examples of churches being conservative with their pledging. Are churches in your classis being conservative in their pledge with the idea that they might give more at the end of their budget year?

- Yes, because of COVID, churches are having a hard time with their own budget planning.
- There is not an intent to pledge low and give more later.

Human Resources Response concerning Overtures 3, 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64

I. Introduction

According to Appendix T of the Handbook of the current Council of Delegates Governance Handbook, CRCNA agency and institution leaders are accorded the right to comment on overtures that affect the ability of agencies and institutions to carry out their synodically approved mandates. The purpose of these comments is to assist the synodical delegates in their deliberations by informing them of matters that they might not be aware of in connection with such overtures. In this spirit, we offer the following comments in response to statements made in Overtures 3, 50, 51, 54, 55, and 64.

II. Comments

Synod expects that staff working for the denominational agencies and ministry offices (Canada and U.S.) faithfully support the denomination's mission. This expectation is evident in the overtures listed above and through policies enacted by the Council of Delegates (COD) and its predecessor, the Board of Trustees.¹ In 2017 the COD approved a policy for church membership and confessional conformity of personnel. The policy identifies the job duties that require professing membership in a Christian Reformed congregation (or a church in communion with the CRCNA). Alternatively, the policy deems that some positions only require candidates to hold an active Christian faith and be part of a church body. Positions in the category of requiring CRCNA membership (or its equivalent) require that nonordained employees sign a COD-approved covenant statement (ordained staff in these positions have, by nature of their ordination, already signed the Covenant for Officebearers). In addition to this, in 2007 a code of conduct was implemented for all staff members. The Code of Conduct document was vetted by Canadian and American lawyers, and it outlines acceptable and unacceptable behavior for all staff. All staff sign this document annually.

Synod is an ecclesiastical body that acts within the bounds of Church Order. In contrast, the CRCNA agencies and ministry offices are legal entities that must comply with federal and provincial/state laws that govern employment, including standards related to employee beliefs and behaviors. Accordingly, the following constraints apply to actions indicated in the overtures listed above.

¹ Church Order Article 77: "Synod shall regulate the work of denominational ministries by way of the Governance Handbook and the decisions of the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA."

Church Order Article 13-b states that ordained staff who are employed by the CRCNA agencies and ministry offices shall be jointly supervised by the employing entity for job performance and by their calling church (which holds their ministerial credentials) for doctrine and life. Therefore, if ministerial credentials were ever to be revoked, that would be an action taken by the calling church. Further, if a staff person who is ordained holds a job that does not require ordination, it would be discriminatory to terminate that employee on the basis of their ministerial credentials being revoked by their calling church.

The language in the overtures is general when referencing staff and denominational staff. The range of job duties performed by staff working for the agencies and ministry offices is broad. Not all job duties require specific beliefs in order to perform them well. An example of this would be a job that requires a specific technical skill. Legally, if a position requires ordination or compliance with faith statements, the job description duties must demonstrate the need for the requirement. Most agency and ministry office jobs do not require ordination, though many require alignment with CRCNA beliefs. Courts generally hold that hiring and terminating based on religious beliefs is discriminatory when the performance of the job duties does not require specific beliefs. All job descriptions and terms of employment include appropriate requirements.

Specifically regarding Overture 3, no agency or ministry office-job positions or policies contain requirements related to political affiliation. In addition to the concerns raised in this overture, a position description with such requirements would raise serious legal concerns.

III. Summary

In summary, the leadership of the CRCNA, including the Council of Delegates and the ministry boards (i.e., the legal nonprofit corporations in the U.S. and Canada), have put in place reasonable standards to ensure appropriate confessional conformity for employees of the CRCNA. The goal of these policies is to ensure that employees can serve the CRCNA congregations faithfully within the legal context of Canada and the United States.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley De Vries
chief administrative officer

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, 2022, 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 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 audited or reviewed financial statements posted on the CRCNA website.

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
Investment Policy Review
US Investment Summary (in US\$)
As of December 31, 2022

Categories Specified by Investment Policy:

	CRCNA Ministries	CRCNA Resonate Global Mission	Total CRCNA	ReFrame Ministries	World Renew	Calvin University	Calvin Seminary	Loan Fund	TOTAL
A. SHORT TERM CASH									
Bank Balance	29,956	5,052,225	5,082,181	3,311,095	18,896,894	31,297,383	1,280,117	7,452,206	67,319,876
Money Market	1,723,845	-	1,723,845	-	-	8,318,899	3,286,737	-	13,329,481
CDs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B. EXCESS SEASONAL FUND									
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
C. INTERMEDIATE-TERM FUNDS									
CRCNA LLC Liquidity Fund	3,376	(1)	3,163,313	(1)	8,837,439	(1)	6,196,110	-	20,000,855
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D. LONG-TERM FUNDS									
CRCNA LLC Balanced Fund	105,919	(2)	13,961,408	(2)	11,263,419	(2)	-	-	30,480,663
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	-	-	-	21,550	-	-	-	123,452
Equity mutual funds	-	-	-	101,902	(3)	-	-	-	-
U.S. treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds	-	-	-	-	-	145,489,918	2,257,922	-	147,747,840
Publicly traded bonds and notes	-	-	-	-	-	81,646,637	2,716,618	-	84,363,255
(investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bond mutual funds	-	384,852	384,852	-	-	20,067,977	3,005,719	-	23,458,548
CI/BC / TAL overdraft accounts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Real Estate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common stock - non-listed	-	-	-	-	-	5,445,000	30,819,364	-	-
Other Alternatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private equity/hedge funds	-	-	-	-	-	57,354,236	6,462,946	-	63,817,182
Life Insurance cash value	27,710	(4)	27,710	(4)	6,745	(4)	-	-	609,550
E. FUNDS HELD FOR SPECIFIC DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAMS (i.e., Barnabus Foundation, grants)									
Beneficial Interest	-	-	-	1,305,088	4,773,187	-	-	-	6,078,275
Interagency Investments (Obligations):									
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 1,890,806	\$ 22,558,422	\$ 24,449,228	\$ 12,227,090	\$ 43,799,234	\$ 349,620,050	\$ 56,025,533	\$ 7,452,206	\$ 457,308,977

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

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
Investment Policy Review
Canada Investment Summary (IN CDN\$)
As of December 31, 2022

Categories Specified by Investment Policy:								
A. SHORT TERM CASH								
Bank Balance	6,218,991	5,323,823	11,542,814	1,669,889	14,339,086	27,551,789		
Money Market	1,456,333	-	1,456,333	-	-	1,456,333		
CDs	-	-	-	-	-	-		
B. EXCESS SEASONAL FUND								
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-		
C. INTERMEDIATE-TERM FUNDS								
CRCNA LLC Liquidity Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Fixed Income Mutual Funds	7,964,418	-	7,964,418	-	2,000,000	9,964,418		
D. LONG-TERM FUNDS								
CRCNA LLC Balanced Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Equity mutual funds	-	-	-	-	-	-		
U.S. treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds	9,922,873	-	9,922,873	-	-	9,922,873		
Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	7,321,697	-	7,321,697	-	-	7,321,697		
Bond mutual funds	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Bank overdraft accounts	(30,006,500)	-	(30,006,500)	-	-	(30,006,500)		
Real Estate	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Other Alternatives	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Private equity/hedge funds	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Private equity/hedge funds	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Life Insurance cash value	-	-	-	-	-	-		
E. FUNDS HELD FOR SPECIFIC DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAMS (i.e., Barnabus Foundation, grants)								
Beneficial Interest	-	360,874	360,874	3,145	-	364,019		
Interagency Investments (Obligations):								
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Total	\$ 2,877,811.85	\$ 5,684,697.49	\$ 8,562,509.34	\$ 1,673,033.91	\$ 16,339,085.75	\$ 26,574,629.00		

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
Investment Policy Review
Benefit Plans Investment Summary
As of December 31, 2022

	Employees' Savings Plan - U.S. in U.S. \$	Ministers' Pension Plan U.S. in U.S. \$	Special Assist Fund U.S. in U.S. \$	Employees' Retirement Plan - Canada in Canadian \$	Ministers' Pension Plan Canada in Canadian \$	Special Assist Fund Canada in Canadian \$	Consolidated Group Ins Canada in Canadian \$
Categories Specified by Investment Policy:							
SHORT TERM							
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS							
Cash, CDs and money-market mutual funds	-	4,862,769	185,587	395,728	2,565,570	395,445	160,723
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES							
Guaranteed investment contracts	-	-	-	96,959	-	-	-
Stable Asset Income Fund	3,615,746	-	-	-	-	-	-
COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS							
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	79,249,608	-	-	58,301,913	-	-
Diversified/Alternative mutual fund	8,114,300	-	-	3,640,410	-	-	-
Equity mutual funds	19,813,218	-	-	1,001,350	-	-	-
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)							
U.S. treasuries, Canadian gov't bonds or Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	17,572,094	-	-	11,525,249	-	-
Bond mutual funds	5,590,454	-	-	225,945	-	-	-
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS							
	-	14,875,999	-	-	3,578,177	-	-
Total	37,133,718	116,560,470	185,587	5,360,392	75,970,909	395,445	160,723

Footnotes to the December 31, 2022, Investment Summary

1. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized fixed income account (2.01% cash, 97.99% fixed income).
2. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized balanced account (1% cash, 35.9% fixed income, and 63.1% equities)
3. Includes directly owned and donated publicly traded stock or mutual funds.
4. Cash value of life insurance contracts received as gifts.

AGENCY AND INSTITUTION SUPPLEMENTS

Calvin University Supplement

I. Introduction

The Calvin University Board of Trustees met April 19-21, 2023, 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 April meeting, the board thanked five members who are leaving—Bill Boer, Tim Goudzwaard, Rick Mast, Rhonda Roorda, and Ray VanderKooi—for their diligent work on the board and their service to Calvin University.

II. Finance

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved the 2023-2024 budget proposal and an increase in the endowment spending from 4.5 percent to 7 percent for fiscal year 2023-2024.

III. Academic

The Calvin University Board of Trustees ratified or endorsed curricular program revisions, new courses, course revisions, new faculty appointments, faculty promotions, faculty retirements, and faculty completion of service recognitions. They also approved the faculty handbook revision recommendations from the educational policy committee, the professional status committee, and the faculty senate.

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. Alumni trustee

Rhonda Roorda is completing her second three-year term on the board as an alumni trustee. The board recommends the following nominee to serve a three-year term:

James Valk is a 1987 graduate of Calvin University from Paw Paw, Michigan. He earned his bachelor of science degree in accounting. He is the managing director and partner of UHY Advisors LLP in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and has extensive financial board experience. He has served on the Calvin Alumni Association Board and as a

member of the Parent Council. He is a member of Third Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo.

b. At-large trustees

Bill Boer is completing his third three-year term on the board as an at-large trustee. The board recommends the following nominee to serve a three-year term:

Moses Chung is a 1993 graduate of Calvin University from Cypress, California. He earned his bachelor of arts degree in history and music. He earned a master of divinity degree from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1999 and a doctor of ministry in missional leadership in 2013 from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is the director of mission innovation at Resonate Global Mission. He served a three-year term on the board from 2008-2011. He is a visionary thinker skilled with vision casting and fundraising. He is a member of Ttokamsa Mission Church in Los Angeles, California.

Ray VanderKooi is completing his third three-year term on the board as an at-large trustee. The board recommends the following nominee to serve a three-year term:

Anthony (Tony) Brookhouse is a 1989 graduate of Calvin University from Whitinsville, Massachusetts. He earned his bachelor of arts degree in political science. He is a co-owner of Koopman Lumber and Hardware Company, the largest independent lumberyard in the state of Massachusetts. He has a passion for innovation and has extensive leadership experience. He is a member of Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church in Whitinsville.

c. Regional trustees

Region 1

Rick Mast is completing a second three-year term on the board as a Region 1 trustee. The board recommends the following nominee to serve a three-year term:

Jack Beeksmā is a 1978 graduate of Calvin University with a bachelor of arts degree in education. He earned a master's degree in teaching in 1992 while teaching in Nigeria with Christian Reformed World Missions. He spent 35 years teaching in Christian schools in Calgary, Alberta; Nigeria; and Prince George, British Columbia. He has a love of the Reformed faith and has been a lifetime member of the Christian Reformed Church. He served on councils in Calgary and in Prince George. He has a deep gratitude to Calvin University for shaping his faith and giving direction to his life. He is currently a member of the Christian Reformed Church of Prince George.

Region 5

Tim Goudzwaard is completing a three-year term on the board as a Region 5 at-large trustee. The board recommends the following nominee to serve a three-year term:

Adam Ramirez is a graduate of Northwestern College (Iowa) with a bachelor of arts in history and biblical studies. He is from Pipestone, Minnesota. He earned a master in theological studies degree from Calvin Theological Seminary and is currently finishing his doctorate in worship studies from Robert E. Webber Institute. He currently serves as a home missionary and church consultant for spiritual formation and cross-cultural rural ministry with Classis Minnkota at Nueva Vida en Jesus Christian Reformed Church in Pipestone, Minnesota, in collaboration with Resonate Global Mission and the CRC's Consejo Latino. He has a passion for building bridges between the Latino community and the Christian Reformed Church. He is in the process of transferring his membership to Faith Community Christian Reformed Church in Colton, South Dakota.

2. Trustee reappointments

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

Region 3 at-large: Wayne Coleman for a second three-year term

Region 4 at-large: Nathan DeJong McCarron for a second three-year term

Alumni: Perrin Rynders for a second three-year term

At-large: Carl Triemstra for a third three-year term

At-large: Bert Kamp for a third three-year term

B. Board officers

The Calvin University Board of Trustees appointed the following officers of the board for 2023-2024: Bruce Los, chair; Mary Tuuk Kuras, vice chair; Gene Miyamoto, secretary; and Dirk Pruis, treasurer (vice president for finance and administration and chief financial officer).

V. Other

The Calvin University Board of Trustees ratified the decision for President Boer to grant degrees, honors, and certificates upon those recommended by the faculty at the 2023 commencement ceremonies.

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved a revision to the Articles of Incorporation with the appointment of Dirk Pruis as the vice president for finance and administration and chief financial officer.

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved the Council of Delegates Connections Committee Charter. This is part of the Council of

Delegates Governance Handbook, Second Edition, presented in Appendix A of the COD Supplement report.

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved a written communication to the Council of Delegates in response to the Synod 2023 overtures that name Calvin University (see Appendix E of the COD Supplement report).

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to the following persons, as needed, when matters pertaining to education are discussed: the chair of the board, Bruce Los; and the president of Calvin University, Wiebe Boer.

B. That synod also grant the privilege of the floor to the following persons, as needed, when matters pertaining to education are discussed: the provost of Calvin University, Noah Toly; and the chair of the trusteeship committee of the board, Perrin Rynders.

Grounds:

1. As provost, Noah Toly is the chief academic officer and has primary responsibility to administer expectations related to “faculty status” at Calvin University. This includes all expectations of confessional subscription by those employees who must sign the Covenant for Faculty Members. Toly served as the administrator most directly responsible for administering the process for expressions of confessional difficulty, which is outlined in section 3.5.1.1.1 of Calvin’s Handbook for Teaching Faculty.
2. Perrin Rynders chairs the trusteeship committee of the Calvin University Board of Trustees, and this is the committee most likely to lead conversations concerning expectations of confessional subscription for trustees who, like employees with faculty status, must affirm the Covenant for Faculty Members. Rynders also served as cochair of a trustee-commissioned, university-wide task force on human sexuality appointed to respond to Synod 2022 decisions.

C. 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.

D. That synod ratify the decision of the Calvin University Board of Trustees to revise the Articles of Incorporation with the appointment of Dirk Pruis as the vice president for finance and administration and chief financial officer.

E. That synod ratify the decision of the Calvin University Board of Trustees to approve the Council of Delegates Connections Committee Charter (part of the Council of Delegates Governance Handbook, Second Edition, presented in Appendix A of the COD Supplement report).

F. That synod ratify the decision of the Calvin University Board of Trustees to approve the written communication to the Council of Delegates in response to the Synod 2023 overtures that name Calvin University (see Appendix E of the COD Supplement report).

Calvin University
Wiebe Boer, president

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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

I. Board matters

The Loan Fund board of directors presents here a slate of nominees for the second of two positions needed for 2023. The board recommends that synod appoint one of the following nominees to a first term of three years with eligibility for reappointment to a second term.

Position 2

Dale Burghgraef is a member of Westview CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he has served as an elder and as council president. He has also served as president of the West Side Christian School Board, as a member of the West Side Christian School Foundation, as president of the Grand Rapids Kiwanis Club, and as a member of the local chapter of the American Business Clubs. He is a graduate of Calvin University and is employed as development director of West Side Christian School in Grand Rapids, following a thirty-year career with Fifth Third Bank.

Mark Oleen is a member of Bethel CRC in Princeton, Minnesota, where he has served as a deacon, elder, and council chair. He has also served on the board of Rum River Interfaith Caregivers and on the UMMC Fairview Health Services Credentialing and Privileging Subcommittee of the Fairview Northland Hospital board of directors. He is employed as the community banking team lead for Bremer Bank.

II. Recommendation

That synod appoint a board member from the slate of nominees provided to a first term of three years, effective July 1, 2023.

Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.
Brian Van Doeselaar, interim director

World Renew Supplement

I. Board Information

Our annual general membership meeting was held in Burlington, Ont., during the last weekend in April. Among other activities, the Board of Directors (World Renew's governing board) was chosen from the World Renew Board of Delegates, who themselves are nominated and appointed by the classes of the CRCNA. The results of those elections (for the U.S. and Canadian boards, which together make up the Joint Ministry Council) are as follows:

Canadian Board of Directors

Andrew Geisterfer (chair), Dennis DeGroot (vice-chair), Jeffrey Adams, Darryl Beck (treasurer), Harry Bergshoeff, Echo MacLeod, Margaret Van Oord (secretary).

U.S. Board of Directors

Thomas Christian (president), Shanti Jost (vice-president), Jeff Banaszak (treasurer), Rudy Gonzalez (secretary), Ken McBain, Charles Udeh, Chuck Adams (emeritus president and COD representative), Rev. Bonny Mulder-Behnia (pastoral adviser).

Canadian Board of Delegates

Second three-year terms: Margaret Hoogland (Classis Alberta North), Nell Vrolyk (Classis Ontario Southwest), John Batterink (Classis Quinte)

New delegates: Jeffrey Adams (Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Ron VanHeyst (Classis Lake Superior)

U.S. Board of Delegates

Second three-year terms: Jim Groen (Classis Illiana), Gerald Van Wyke (Classis Lake Erie), Bonny Mulder-Behnia (member at large), Jeff Banaszak (member at large), Shanti Jost (Classis Hudson), Charles Udeh (member at large), James Zwier (member at large)

New delegates: Donald Waterlander (Classis Chicago South), John VanScheper (Classis Columbia), Bev Abma (Classis Grandville), Kimberly Starkenburg (Classis Heartland), Albertena Praamsma (Classis Holland), Ronald Vos (Classis Iakota), Jared Yapple (Classis Northern Michigan), Paul Vliem (Classis Lake Superior), Rudy Gonzalez (member at large)

Changes: Thomas Christian (moved from member at large to Classis Grand Rapids South, due to family relocation), James Zwier (moved from Classis Northern Michigan to member at large, due to family relocation)

We thank the retiring Board of Delegate members for their service:

Canada: Joe Hamilton (7 years), Gerda Kits (3 years), Daniel Mack (5 years), Julie Vanden Heuvel (5 years)

U.S.: Monika Grasley (7 years), Rebekah Vanderzee (7 years, president), Lynrae Frens (6 years), Marc Faasse (7 years), Rod De Boer (6 years), Clifford Hoekstra (6 years), Jay DeBoer (6 years), Debra Chee (6 years), Abbie Schrotenboer (6 years), Dale Compagner (6 years), La Vonne Koedam (6 years), Linda German (3 years)

II. World Renew's work

A. Disaster response in Türkiye and Syria

World Renew has received over \$900,000 CDN (\$660,000 USD) for responding to the February 6, 2023, earthquake that affected Türkiye and Syria. World Renew is supporting a larger response led by local churches in Syria that is reaching affected families. Already, church partners have provided 12,500 emergency food baskets, 12,500 emergency hygiene kits, 7,500 blankets, 6,000 pullovers/jumpers, and 7,000 diapers. Because the needs are extensive and will remain so for quite some time, World Renew will continue to support this response for the coming year, including the provision of 1,000 families with food baskets every month, and 1,000 families with hygiene supplies every other month.

Multiple churches in earthquake-affected areas are providing assistance, and you, through World Renew, are partnering with those churches.

B. Disaster Response Services

A highlight in the work of Disaster Response Services has been the closing of the reconstruction site where volunteers repaired 38 homes in Orange, Texas.

In addition, regarding groups of volunteers, we give thanks for an increase from 140 volunteers during spring break 2022 to 295 volunteers during spring break 2023 as a result of our COVID-19 policy changing to meet disaster survivors' needs.

C. Refugee program in Canada

The following statistics reflect the period of January 1, 2023, through May 25, 2023:

- refugees sponsored: 42
- refugees who have arrived: 63
- refugee arrivals according to country of origin: Syria, 21; Afghanistan, 10; Pakistan, 9; Eritrea, 7; Iraq, 7; Ethiopia, 3; Somalia, 6
- refugee sponsorship applications on which the Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Program (RSRP) team is currently working (to be submitted in 2023): 69

- refugees included in applications on which the RSRP team is currently working (to be submitted in 2023): 180

The following statistics are for the period from when an application was submitted through May 25, 2023. It is important to note that RSRP engagement with churches often extends over several years because when an application is submitted, the processing times are lengthy and it can take up to three years before refugees arrive in Canada. RSRP provides support to churches while they wait for refugees to arrive, while they settle newcomers, and while they work on refugee sponsorship applications to submit.

- CRC and “beyond CRC” (bCRC) churches the RSRP team is currently working with (waiting for refugees to arrive, currently resettling newcomers, currently working on refugee sponsorship applications to be submitted in 2023): 69 CRCs; 52 bCRCs
- refugees who have applications submitted with the RSRP and are waiting to arrive: 375

Sponsorship allocation from Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for 2023 is 200 refugees.

World Renew continues to walk alongside people around the world, to manifest Christ’s love, and to support them in order to be an agent of love and mercy for the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

World Renew
Carol Bremer-Bennett, executive codirector, World Renew-U.S.
Jamie McIntosh, executive codirector, World Renew-Canada

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION AND WORSHIP

Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement

The Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees presents this supplement of additional matters relating to the seminary from its February and May 2023 meetings.

I. Board of Trustees

At its meeting on May 18-19, 2023, the board elected the following officers for 2023-2024: David Morren, chair; Rev. Scott Greenway, vice chair; Susan Keesen, secretary.

II. Academics

A. Graduates and new programs

This is the first academic year that we have been able to use fully our remodeled building, which helps us to focus increasingly on community, education, and worship with the use of more technology, better flexibility, and multiple collaborative learning spaces. Synod delegates are invited to an open house the evening of June 13, 2023.

On May 20, 2023, Calvin Theological Seminary conducted its commencement program to honor forty-six students who completed certificate or degree programs. A viewing of the ceremony is available at vimeo.com/830205443.

Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) 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 fourth cohort this summer. A previous synod asked CTS to investigate this degree program as part of a continuing education report—we are glad for the ongoing support of the church. (See calvinseminary.edu/academics/doctor-of-ministry.)

B. Distinguished Alumni Awards – 2023

Reverends Allen and Lynn Likkel were both recognized as Distinguished Alumni Award recipients for 2023. This is the first time that a ministry couple has been so recognized. We highlighted their contributions in identification, assessing, coaching, training, and encouraging church planters for a variety of ministry settings in both the United States and Canada. Their focus on encouraging churches to be communities of the gospel made a generational impact on the Christian Reformed Church in North America through CRC Home Missions, and their faithful work in coming alongside church planters and their families continues.

Rev. Stanley Mast was also recognized as a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient for 2023. We highlighted his contributions in various churches—especially his contribution as pastor of LaGrave Avenue Christian

Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for twenty-two years. He was also recognized for his work as a coach for student preachers and as a contributor for the Center for Excellence in Preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary upon retirement.

Two videos on the ministry and testimonies of the Revs. Likkell and Rev. Mast are available for viewing:

Revs. Allen and Lynn Likkell: vimeo.com/827620542

Rev. Stan Mast: vimeo.com/827620964

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. Matt Tuininga as associate professor of Christian ethics and the history of Christianity and awarded him tenure as a faculty member of Calvin Theological Seminary.
2. Approved the faculty recommendation and hereby submit for interview and approval by synod the appointment of Dr. Gabriela Tijerina-Pike as Latino/a ministry director and as associate professor of New Testament. Dr. Tijerina-Pike's curriculum vitae is found in Appendix A.
3. Approved the faculty recommendation and hereby submit for interview and approval by synod the appointment of Dr. Daniel Daley as assistant professor of New Testament. Dr. Daley's curriculum vitae is found in Appendix B.
4. Approved the formation of a search team for the position of professor of theology due to the upcoming retirement in two years of Dr. Mary Vanden Berg.
5. Noted the celebration of the second bachelor of arts commencement ceremony for fifteen students completing this degree through the Calvin Prison Initiative. This program is part of an ongoing partnership with Calvin University.
6. Noted that Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary are preparing to celebrate their 150th anniversary in the 2025-2026 academic year. Various plans are being developed for a year-long celebration.
7. Noted that the Kuyper Prize sponsored by Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary was awarded to Makoto Fujimura in May 2023 at the Kuyper Conference, held this year at Redeemer University in Ancaster, Ontario.
8. Heard an update from Rev. Shawn Brix, who continues his work as the Calvin Theological Seminary Canadian church relations liaison.
9. Noted the appointment of Rev. Sam (Neulsaem) Ha as the next theological librarian and Meeter Center curator for the Hekman Library.

Rev. Ha is currently a Ph.D. student at Calvin Theological Seminary and is writing his dissertation.

10. Noted the continued development of an arrangement for Dr. Young Ahn Kang to teach and serve students (especially in the Th.M. and Ph.D. programs) from South Korea.

11. Approved a new master of arts degree in clinical mental health counseling to begin in September 2023. The program director is Professor Danjuma Gibson.

12. Approved a new master of arts degree in leadership formation (Spanish language) as part of the Latino/a Ministry Program 2.0, which will include online delivery of three certificates that can be included in the master of arts degree program. The proposed program director is Professor Gabriela Tijerina-Pike.

13. Received an update on the CTS Lilly Pathways for Tomorrow grant, which has focused on Latino/a ministry, lifelong learning, and competency based theological education (CBTE). The CBTE program is now noted as Empower and has focused on pilot partnerships with the Grand Valley State University campus program in Grand Rapids, Michigan (8 students) and with Sunlight Community Christian Reformed Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida (16 students). We look forward to engaging churches and other ministry partners in expanding Empower. Presentations and potential partners and cohorts have been engaged in Classis Red Mesa, western Michigan, southern Ontario, and the Vancouver area.

14. Noted with great appreciation for years of fruitful ministry at Calvin Theological Seminary the service of Professor Sarah Schreiber, who is resigning at the end of this academic year.

15. Reviewed the final features of the major CTS renovation/remodeling project focused on classrooms, the student center, and the chapel for the purposes of upgrading technology, providing flexibility in use of space, and developing collaborative learning environments. We give thanks for the support that has been received above and beyond our annual operating fund.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod, upon a successful interview, appoint Dr. Tijerina-Pike as Latino/a Ministry director and as associate professor of New Testament.

B. That synod, upon a successful interview, appoint Dr. Daniel Daley as assistant professor of New Testament.

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees
Susan Keesen, secretary

APPENDIX A

Curriculum Vitae: Gabriela Tijerina-Pike, Ph.D.

Education

Ph.D., September 2008, University of Aberdeen, The School of Divinity, Scotland

- Dissertation: “The Concepts of God’s Will and Jesus’ Willingness to Die in the Gospel of Luke”
- Exegesis of Luke 22:42 detailing the relevance of Jewish-Hellenistic and Greco-Roman background in the divine and human volition of Jesus Christ
- Supervisor: Dr. Andrew Clarke with counsel from Prof. I. Howard Marshall
- Recipient of two full-merit scholarships
 - Langham Partnerships International
 - Overseas Council International (Charlotte, N.C.)

M.A., December 2000, Seminario Escuela de Estudios Pastorales (ESEPA Seminary), San Jose, Costa Rica

- Major: New Testament Exegesis (Magna Cum Laude)
- Thesis: “Jesus, the Righteous Man”; exegesis on Luke 23:47 addressing the obedience of Jesus to his Father in the eyes of the Gentiles
- Supervisor: Dr. Gary S. Shogren with counsel from Dr. David A. Baer
- Recipient of two full-merit scholarships
 - Overseas Council International (Charlotte, N.C.)
 - Presbyterian Korean Church (Seoul, South Korea), Missionary Scholarship

B.A., May 1997, Centro de Estudios Bíblicos de Monterrey (CEBIM), Monterrey, Mexico

- Major: Missions and Ministry
- December 1990
- B.S., Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Monterrey, Mexico
- Major: Administration and Business Computer Systems

Professional and administrative ministry experience

Director of Latin Ministries, February 2023-present, Calvin Theological Seminary

Academic Director, April 2017-present, Spanish Program, Christian Leaders Institute (CLI)

President, May 2019 - August 2022, Seminario Todas Las Naciones (All Nations Seminary)

Academic Dean, August 2014 - December 2016, Seminario Todas Las Naciones (All Nations Seminary)

Teaching experience

ThirdMill Seminary (English and Spanish Programs), 2022-present, Book of Acts, Pauline Theology, Christology

Christian Leaders Institute, 2017-present, Professor of Ministry

Seminario Todas Las Naciones (All Nations Seminary), 2012-2022, Professor of Bible, Theology, and Ministry

Undergraduate

- Greek I, II
- New Testament Theology
- Old Testament Theology
- Exegesis
- Hermeneutics I, II, III, IV
- Synoptic Gospels
- Pauline Theology
- Parables of Jesus Christ
- Introduction to Philosophy
- Spiritual Formation
- Biblical Theology
- Thesis Research and Supervisor
- Christian Education

Graduate

- Theological Education
- Introduction to Philosophy
- History of the Philosophy of Biblical Interpretation
- Interpretation of Audience
- Analytical Process of Biblical Interpretation (Logic)
- Thesis Research and Supervisor

Other experience

Adjunct Professor of Bible, Theology and Ministry (Spanish)

2013, Indiana Wesleyan University, online program

- Graduate: Gospels and Practical Theology

Juan Wesley Methodist Seminary, 2001, 2002, 2007-2014; Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

- Undergraduate: New Testament Theology and Literature, Synoptic Gospels, Historical Books, Minor Prophets, Lukan Christology, Exegesis and Hermeneutics
- Graduate: Hebrews, Covenant Theology

ESEPA Seminary, 2000, San José, Costa Rica

- Undergraduate: Greek I, II

Writing and editing experience

Writers' instructor, September 2019 – May 2022, Vida a Las Naciones Publishing House, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua; Mexico

Editor, January 2019 – May 2022, Vida a Las Naciones Publishing House, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua; Mexico

Writer of Vida en Él (Publication in Spanish), November 2012 – April 2020, Vida a las Naciones Publishing House, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua; Mexico

- Pastoral Bible Commentary Series, Vida en Él (Life in Him) – adults' version
- Pastoral Bible Commentary Series, Vida en Él Kids (Life in Him) – children's version

2007, *The Gospel of Matthew*, a pastoral commentary (unpublished) (Letra Viva Publishing House)

1994-1998, Mission Bulletin Writer, Castillo del Rey, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

Presentations and seminars

"Origen de la Violencia Estructural: Ausencia de Virtudes Sapienciales" / "Origin of Structural Violence: Absence of Wisdom Virtues," April - July, 2022; Evaluation of Gender Violence, Universidad Autónoma de Juárez; Chihuahua, Mexico

"Estudio Bíblico Inductivo y Deductivo para Niños" / "Inductive and Deductive Bible Study for Children," September 2021; Seminars in Children's Ministry, Ministerio Arcoiris; Guatemala, GU

"The Return to the Creeds: The Critical Need for the Minority World Confessional Church to Finish the Unfinished Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy in the Majority World Church," May 4 - 5, 2021; Multiethnic Symposium, Concordia Seminary; St. Louis, Missouri

"¿A Quién le Damos el poder? Análisis de Lucas 16 de acuerdo a la cultura Mexicana" / "To Whom Do We Give the Power? Analysis of Luke 16 within Mexican Culture," April 21, 2021; Seminar series, Conciencia Ciudadana, Mexico City, Mexico

“Obedeciendo el Mandato de Levíticos 11 en la Formación Teológica” /
 “Obeying Leviticus 11 in Theological Formation,” February 26, 2021;
 Universidad Madero Departamento de Teología, Puebla, Mexico

“Arrepentimiento y Perdón del Liderazgo interdenominational” /
 “Repentance and Forgiveness in Interdenominational Leadership,”
 October 12, 2021; Alianza Evangélica de Ministros de Culto, San Agustín,
 Chihuahua, Mexico

“¿Pescadores o Pastores? Studio de σπουδὴν and ἀρετὴν en 2 Pedro /
 “Fishermen or Shepherd? Study of σπουδὴν and ἀρετὴν in 2 Peter,”
 August 12-14, 2020; Seminar, All Nations Seminary; Juárez, Mexico

“¿Es Mateo 24:12 Pertinente en estos Tiempos? / “Is Matthew 24:12
 Pertinent to Our Times?” July 20-24, 2020; Extraordinary Situations, Open
 Online Seminar

“Dolores de Parto en la Formación Espiritual; Estudio de Gálatas” / “Pains
 of Childbirth in Spiritual Formation; Study on Galatians,” August 15-17,
 2019; Seminar, All Nations Seminary; Juárez, Mexico

“Joven Ministra: Dios te Cuida Durante Tu Vida; Estudio de Isaías 45-47” /
 “Young Female Minister: God Cares for You throughout Your Life; Study
 on Isaiah 45-47,” November 25-26, 2016; Female Students’ Retreat, All
 Nations Seminary; Juárez, Mexico

“Entre Rebelión y Maldad; de Judá a la Ciudad de México según Ezequiel
 1-4” / “Between Rebellion and Evil; from Judah to Mexico City according
 to Ezekiel 1-4,” April 18, 2015; Congress of Publishing Houses in Mexico
 City, Mexico

Missionary experience

Christian Education at Seminario Todas Las Naciones, missionary of All
 Nations Church, Lake View, California (2019-2021)

Evangelism and Disciple-making in Sierra La Huasteca ethnic groups of
 Hidalgo, Mexico (2007-2013)

Evangelism and Disciple-making in rural area, Linares, Nuevo León, Mexico
 (2001-2002)

Evangelism and Disciple-making to Nicaraguan refugees, Alajuelita, Costa
 Rica (1999-2000)

Church Planting in urban area, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico (1992-
 1998)

Other experience

Founder and Director, Pura Vida, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico (2004-
 2014)

Computer programmer, Department of Social Development, Secretaría de
 Desarrollo Social, MBA Place: Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico (1990-
 1992)

Professional Service and Leadership

May 2019 - August 2022

- President, Todas Las Naciones Foundation, USA
- President, Asociación Civil Seminario Todas Las Naciones, Mexico

2011-2018

- Member, Board of Directors, United World Mission (www.uwm.org)

2014 - Present

- Member, ICETE International Council for Evangelical Theological Education

Translation work on commentaries (from Spanish), 2013-2020

<i>Son of God</i>	Matt. 11-20	Feb. 2013
<i>Holy God</i>	Lev. 1-5	Apr. 2013
<i>Holiness on Earth</i>	Lev. 21-27	June 2013
<i>God Loves Powerfully</i>	Rom. 12-16	Aug. 2013
<i>The Great Lord</i>	Ex. 13-19	Oct. 2013
<i>God of All Glory</i>	1 and 2 Peter	Dec. 2013
<i>Believing from Within</i>	Luke 12-19	Feb. 2014
<i>Abiding Despite</i>	Job 5:21	Apr. 2014
<i>Pursuing Amongst</i>	Job 21:38	May 2014
<i>Rejoicing Foremost</i>	Job 38-42; 1, 2, 3 John; Gen. 1:1-5:32	June 2014
<i>What Is Sin?</i>	Gen. 6-22	July 2014
<i>What Is Sinning?</i>	Gen. 23-33	Aug. 2014
<i>What Is Repentance?</i>	Gen. 34-46	Sept. 2014
<i>What Is Forgiveness?</i>	Gen. 47-50; 1-2 Tim.; Ps. 140-150	Oct. 2014
<i>Promise & Promises</i>	Ps. 141-150; Acts 1-7	Nov. 2014
<i>Wonder & Wonders</i>	Acts 8-18	Dec. 2014
<i>Blessing and Blessing Many</i>	Acts 19-28; Ps. 1-2	Jan. 2015
<i>Suffering from God's View</i>	Amos 1-9; 1 Cor. 1-6	Feb. 2015
<i>Who Values the Principles?</i>	1 Cor. 7-16; Ps. 3-9	Mar. 2015
<i>Experience of Others</i>	Josh. 1-14	Apr. 2015
<i>Learning from Others</i>	Josh. 15-24; Prov. 1-3	May 2015

<i>Empowered Servants of God</i>	Eph. 1-6; Neh. 1-8; Ps. 11	June 2015
<i>Willing Servants of God</i>	Neh. 9-13; Phil. 1-4; Ps. 12-20	July 2015
<i>Passibility and Impassibility of God</i>	1 Sam. 1-13; Ps. 10	Aug. 2015
<i>The Heart of Men</i>	1 Sam. 14-23	Sept. 2015
<i>Heart after God's Heart</i>	1 Sam. 24-31; James 1-5	Oct. 2015
<i>Is Good Forgotten?</i>	Judg. 1-9	Nov. 2015
<i>Is Bad Ever Forgotten?</i>	Judg. 10-21; Ps. 21-22	Dec. 2015
<i>We Saw His Glory</i>	John 1-8	Jan. 2016
<i>We Heard His Wisdom</i>	John 9-18	Feb. 2016
<i>We Touched His Compassion</i>	John 19-21; Hos. 1-14	Mar. 2016
<i>Crucified Love</i>	S. of Songs 1-8; Gal. 1-6; Prov. 4; 20; 27	Apr. 2016
<i>Comfort Revealed</i>	Jonah 1-4; Rev. 1-12	May 2016
<i>Peace Revealed</i>	Rev. 13-22; Ruth 1-4; Psalm 23	June 2016
<i>The Sovereign History</i>	Isa. 1:20	July 2016
<i>The Graceful History</i>	Isa. 21-40	Aug. 2016
<i>The Judgment in History</i>	Isa. 41-62	Sept. 2016
<i>History in Eternity</i>	Isa. 63-66; Heb. 1-9; Psalm 24	Oct. 2016
<i>Calling to Holiness</i>	Heb. 10-13; Prov. 5-8	Nov. 2016
<i>Holiness and Courage</i>	Mic. 1-7; Esth. 1-10	Dec. 2016
<i>The Great Love of God</i>	Ps. 27-35; Prov. 9-14	Jan. 2017
<i>The Great Power of God</i>	Mark 1-8; Psalm 25	Feb. 2017
<i>The Great Wonder of God</i>	Mark 9-16; Prov. 15	Mar. 2017
<i>The Truth about Our Sin</i>	Jer. 1-7	Apr. 2017
<i>Who Are We?</i>	Jer. 8-18	May 2017
<i>What Happened to Us?</i>	Jer. 19-29	June 2017
<i>Can We Be Forgiven?</i>	Jer. 30-42	July 2017
<i>This Is the Word of God</i>	Ps. 119	Aug. 2017
<i>Can We Think of God Again?</i>	Jer. 43-52; Ps. 36	Sept. 2017
<i>Understanding God's Will</i>	2 Cor. 1-13; Ps. 37-38	Oct. 2017
<i>Understanding God's Promise</i>	Dan. 1-8; Ps. 39	Nov. 2017

<i>Understanding God's Victory</i>	Dan. 9-12	Dec. 2017
<i>God above All</i>	Ps. 40-62; Col. 1-4	Jan. 2018
<i>Knowing God</i>	Deut. 1-5	Feb. 2018
<i>Understanding God</i>	Deut. 6-15; John 14-17	Mar. 2018
<i>Remembering God</i>	Deut. 16-27	Apr. 2018
<i>Loving God</i>	Deut. 28-34	May 2018
<i>Obedying God</i>	1 Thess.; Ezra	June 2018
<i>Ruling under God</i>	Philemon; 1 Kings 1-9	July 2018
<i>The Passion of Christ</i>	Miscellaneous passages	Aug. 2018
<i>Obedience's Reward</i>	Prov. 15; 1 Kings 10-14	Sept. 2018
<i>Submission's Reward</i>	1 Kings 15-22	Oct. 2018
<i>Hearing God</i>	2 Thess.; 2 Pet.	Nov. 2018
<i>God of Truth</i>	Eccles. 1-12; Luke 2:1-52	Dec. 2018
<i>Christ, Merciful Example</i>	Matt. 1-10	Jan. 2019
<i>Christ, Merciful Maker</i>	Matt. 11-19	Feb. 2019
<i>Christ, Merciful Giver</i>	Matt. 20-28	Mar. 2019
<i>God of My Life</i>	1 Chron. 1-7	Apr. 2019
<i>God of My Will</i>	1 Chron. 8-19	May 2019
<i>God of My Heart</i>	1 Chron. 20-29	June 2019
<i>God of My Faith</i>	1-2 Tim.; Prov. 19	July 2019
<i>Scriptures for All Nations</i>	Parables of Jesus	Aug. 2019
<i>God of Love</i>	2 Chron. 1-15	Sept. 2019
<i>God of Power</i>	2 Chron. 16-29	Oct. 2019
<i>God of Mercy</i>	2 Chron. 30-36; Prov. 20	Nov. 2019
<i>God of Time</i>	Eph. 1-6; Isa. 50-57	Dec. 2019
<i>Faith, Handle with Care</i>	Heb. 1-13; Ps. 63	Jan. 2020
<i>Love Myself</i>	Luke 1-8	Feb. 2020
<i>Love My Neighbor</i>	Luke 8-16	Mar. 2020
<i>Love My God</i>	Luke 16-23	Apr. 2020

APPENDIX B

Curriculum Vitae: Daniel Daley, Ph.D.

Education

Fellowship, 2019-present, University of Leuven, Department of Theology and Religious Studies—focus in biblical studies

- writing a project on kinship and social identity construction in Romans 8-9
- fully funded research fellowship; contributing researcher to the international project Texts, Traditions, and Early Christian Identities

Ph.D., 2019, Trinity College Dublin; advisor: Benjamin Wold

- Department of Religions and Theology—focus in biblical studies
- thesis titled “Inheritance, Inclusion, and Identity in Matthew’s Gospel and Antecedent Jewish Traditions”

M.Sc. by research, 2015, University of Edinburgh, in New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology; advisor: Matthew V. Novenson

- First class distinction; thesis titled “Heirs According to Promise: Inheritance in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians”

M.Th., 2014, University of Edinburgh, in biblical studies; advisor: Matthew V. Novenson

- thesis titled “The Kingdom of God in the Letters of Paul”

BA, 2012, Multnomah University, in biblical studies and theology

- high honors
- minor in New Testament Greek

Related experience

Book publications

- (forthcoming) *Ideal Disciples: A Commentary on Matthew’s Beatitudes*, Baylor University Press, 2023
- *God’s Will and Testament: Inheritance in the Gospel of Matthew and Jewish Tradition*, Baylor University Press, 2021

Peer-reviewed article publications

- “Inheritance, Inclusion, and Identity in Tobit and the Jewish Diaspora,” *Biblica* 102.3, Peeters Publishers, 2021

Other publications

- “Matthew’s Gospel within Jewish Tradition,” *The Bible Today*, Liturgical Press, Jan-Feb. 2023

Teaching experience

Trinity College Dublin (2015-2019) – tutor and assistant lecturer in NT modules: The Historical Jesus and the Gospels; Paul and the Development of Early Christianity; Pauline Letters in Context

Awards

Top-ten finalist, 2021 book of the year award: Center for Biblical Studies, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Languages

- Classical Greek
- Biblical Greek
- Biblical Hebrew
- German

Memberships

- Society of Biblical Literature
- European Association of Biblical Studies
- Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies

Professional presentations

Accepted, July 10-13, 2023, European Association of Biblical Studies Annual Conference, Sicily, Italy, paper titled “Those Who Are Meek: The Dynamics between Present Ethics and Future Hope among God’s Heirs”

July 18, 2022, International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Salzburg, Austria, paper titled “The Inheritance of the Son in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants”

July 5, 2022, European Association of Biblical Studies Annual Conference, Toulouse, France, paper titled “Particular Judgment: Reading Matthew 25:31-46 through the Jewish Repatriation Tradition”

March 30, 2022, European Association of Biblical Studies, Graduate Symposium, Prague, Czech Republic, paper titled “Living in Eternity: Possessing the Future in John’s Gospel”

August 4, 2021, European Association of Biblical Studies Annual Conference, Wuppertal, Germany, paper titled “Inherit the Earth: Creation Care as an Act of Spiritual Vocation”

February 3, 2021, Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense LXIX, Leuven, Belgium, paper titled “Inheritance Concepts in 1 and 2 Maccabees”

July 2, 2019, International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Rome, Italy, paper titled “Glory as Participation: Rethinking Glory in 4QInstruction and Paul’s Letter to the Romans”

February 11, 2019, Irish Bible Association Annual Meeting, Dublin, Ireland, paper titled “The Poor (in Spirit) in 4QInstruction and Matthew’s Gospel”

April 17, 2017, Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies Seminar, Dublin, Ireland, paper titled “Inherit the Earth: An Analysis of 1 Enoch 5:5-9”

Related community involvement

Led groups on free, informal tours through the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, discussing ancient manuscript, scribal, and book culture, as well as ancient religious material culture

Vocational ministry experience

Lead Lake Tahoe Site Pastor, Grace Church Reno, Reno, Nevada (Jan. 2011-Aug. 2013)

- prepared and delivered sermons weekly
- established a new church site, with a planting team, in an underserved area of Lake Tahoe
- led the Tahoe elder team, served on the Reno elder team
- developed small groups and ministries focused on community engagement

Associate pastor for discipleship and theology, Grace Church Reno (Aug. 2007-Oct. 2010)

- regular preaching responsibilities; created and led small group ministry; taught Bible classes
- prepared written administrative and theological material, including small group lessons, discipleship material, elder and intern procedural material, doctrinal statements
- served as an elder
- congregational care, including wedding ceremonies, counseling, and other related activities

English ministries pastor, Reno Korean Presbyterian Church (Aug. 2005-Aug. 2007)

- preached weekly sermons for the second-generation English speakers of a Korean-speaking church
- developed small groups and regular discipleship environments

Recent volunteer ministry experience

Christ City Church Dublin (2015-2019)

- preached frequently in main church gatherings
- taught theological seminars, once per quarter, to engage the congregation in topics relevant to Bible study, sermon series, church history, and exegesis

- engaged in regular discipleship meetings with individual church members to discuss matters of faith, life, and Scripture

CentrePoint Church, Edinburgh (2013-2015)

- prepared and delivered sermons 10-12 times per year in support of the pastor
- taught weekly evening courses for church members in areas such as biblical and systematic theology and biblical interpretation
- regular meetings with individual church members to discuss matters of faith, life, and Scripture

STANDING COMMITTEES

CANDIDACY COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENT

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

A. Candidates for ministry

Each year it is a privilege to meet and interview the applicants for candidacy. The interviews for these candidates were conducted this year by teams of four persons. The Candidacy Committee is pleased to recommend for candidacy the thirty individuals listed below. These include graduates from Calvin Theological Seminary and from other accredited seminaries. Graduates from seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary have completed the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy. Biographical details for each of the candidates can be found in the candidate booklet available for download at crcna.org/candidacy.

The following motion is presented for consideration of these candidates:

That synod declare the following thirty individuals as candidates for ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America, 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).

Tomas Axeland	Esther Park
Rebecca Bokma	Blake Phillips
Joshua Carpenter	Erik Pluemer
Jeremy Engbers	Ryan Poelman
Catherine Ferchau	Jennifer Richards
Dylan Harper	Kurtis Ritsema
Jonathan Hwang	Natasha Specht
William Jones	Adam Sculnick
Kevin Kornelis	Benjamin Snoek
Sung Su Lee	John VanderWindt
Brandon Mick	Jolene Veenstra
Robert Moore	Peter Vos
Anastaze Nzabonimpa	Marissa Walters
Cameron Oegema	Zhengfei (Stone) Wang
Christopher Park	Josephine Wong

B. Extension of candidacy

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

The Candidacy Committee recommends the following eighteen persons for approval of candidacy extension:

Yoon Chul Choi	Daniel F. Meyers
Bradley Diekema	Matthew Mulder
Matthew Guichelaar	Jacob Patton
Carol Hulin	Micah Ringelberg
Jake (Minho) Jeong	Nicole Romero
Kennedy Muli Kailiti	Lynn Song
Eunice Kim	Evan Tinklenberg
Jelle Koersen	Jodi VanWingerden
Hannah Ryou Lee	Wendy Werkman

C. Reinstatement of candidacy

Joseph Hwang was first a candidate in 2012 and extended his candidacy for several years while continuing his Ph.D. studies. He decided to withdraw his candidacy in 2018 when the prospects of completing his Ph.D. and, in turn, teaching full-time seemed more likely. However, his sense of call to congregational ministry has since become very strong, and he now desires to be reinstated as a candidate. We are pleased to affirm his 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 Article 8 process. The Candidacy Committee has concurred on the 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.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Classis</i>	<i>Ordination Denomination</i>
8/10/2022	Sung Jin Ahn	Hudson	Assemblies of God
8/26/2022	John Kim	Hanmi	Presb. Church in Korea
9/7/2022	Hyon Joong Lim	Lake Erie	Presb. Church in Korea
9/30/2022	Jordan Hall	Greater Los Angeles	RCA
10/18/2022	Joshua Lee	Pacific Northwest	Baptist
1/16/2023	Wilson Cunha	Thornapple Valley	Presb. Church of Brazil
1/16/2023	Ryan Landt	Thornapple Valley	RCA
1/20/2023	Samuel Lim	Hackensack	Assemblies of God
2/17/2023	D'Vante Rolle	Pacific Northwest	Int. Ministerial Fellowship
4/17/23	Myunsik Kang	Arizona	Presb. Church in Korea

III. Reorganization of the Commissioned Pastor Handbook

The Commissioned Pastor Handbook is intended to be a helpful guide to the rules, procedures, statements and actions of synod related to the office of commissioned pastor. It is updated as needed to reflect the work of

synod, and it serves alongside the Rules for Synodical Procedure, the Journey Toward Ordination, and other approved statements of practice, providing guidelines for ministry within the CRCNA.

The Commissioned Pastor Handbook was last updated in 2019, and for the following reasons the Candidacy Committee presents to Synod 2023 a reorganized edition (see Appendix):

Over the course of the past two years, the Candidacy director has received several requests from classis leaders for a more clearly organized version of this handbook that would lay out the rules and guidelines for commissioned pastors in a more accessible way. After a close review of the current handbook, the Candidacy director identified the following issues that could contribute to challenges in accessing information:

1. Alongside the rules, statements, and procedures contained in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, there is currently a wealth of information about the historical context of and development of each decision or rule. While this historical information is important and helpful for readers looking to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons and circumstances behind each policy, its prevalence throughout the main body of the handbook tends to bury the guidelines and practical information that classis leaders, commissioned pastors, and prospective commissioned pastors look for in the handbook.
2. Some of the main section titles in the handbook describe the timeline of synod's actions (i.e., "IV. Material Previously Contained in Article 23" and "V. Other Matters Addressed by Synod") rather than specific topics that readers are looking for as they seek to understand the commissioned pastor role and route to ministry.
3. The order in which some information is presented is counterintuitive.
4. In the current organization of the handbook, it is not always possible to find all information about a given topic without reading through multiple sections of the book.

To address these issues, the Candidacy Committee, working through the Candidacy director, and after consulting with CRCNA editing staff and with Kathy Smith (CTS adviser for church polity), proposes the following changes:

1. That explanations of historical context for each decision and regulation be relocated to endnotes so that they can be easily referenced if desired, making the current guidance and information about the commissioned pastor office more readily accessible to most readers.
2. That headings reflecting historic developments and synodical timelines in connection with the development of the office (as noted in point 2 above) be replaced with more specific content- and process-driven titles that will guide readers to the information they need to access—for example, "Discerning the Use of the Office of

Commissioned Pastor," "Preparing the Commissioned Pastor Candidate," and "Guidance Regarding the Office of Commissioned Pastor."

3. That the sections be ordered in a more chronological way so that the handbook begins with information about how to initiate the commissioned-pastor process, then moves through subsequent stages of the process, and then presents important guidelines for commissioned pastors once ordained.
4. That some topics or issues currently repeated or found in multiple places in the handbook be consolidated in one place.

Note: Because the content of the Commissioned Pastor Handbook has been developed and approved by synods throughout the years, great care has been taken not to remove content in the proposed reorganization (except for minor redundancies and transitional sentences that are no longer necessary). So although the proposed edition in the appendix to this report is reorganized, all of the preceding edition's important content remains.

Perhaps the simplest way to understand the reorganization is by comparing the current index with the proposed new index, to see how the structure of the handbook would change if the proposed new edition is approved. Please also see the appendix to this report for a copy of the proposed reorganized handbook in its entirety.

Index of Current Commissioned Pastor Handbook

- I. An Overview of the Development of the Office of Commissioned Pastor and the Use of This Handbook
- II. General Description of the Office of Commissioned Pastor
- III. Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and Their Supplements
- IV. Material Previously Contained in Supplement, Article 23
 - A. Job Descriptions
 - B. Learning Plans
 - C. Qualifications for a Commissioned Pastor (Character, Knowledge, Skills)
 - D. Examination Protocol
 - E. Accountability and Supervision of Commissioned Pastors
 - F. Discipline of Commissioned Pastors as Officebearers
 - G. Moving and Transitions
 - H. Termination of Positions and Personnel
 - I. Appointment to Service in an Established (Organized) Congregation

- J. Use of the Commissioned Pastor Office as a “Bridge” to Becoming a Minister of the Word
- K. Special Mention regarding Chaplaincy and the Office of Commissioned Pastor
- L. Status of Commissioned Pastor Emeritus
- V. Other Matters Addressed by Synod
 - A. Practical Issues Pertaining to Titles, Purpose of the Office, and Timing
 - B. Service of Commissioned Pastors at Synod and on Denominational Boards, Committees, and Task Forces
 - C. Compensation and Benefits
 - D. Retirement and Pension Issues
 - E. Guidance for Video Examination
- VI. Tools Available for Administering the Office of Commissioned Pastor
- VII. Invitation to Share Resources and Concerns regarding the Office of Commissioned Pastor

Index of Proposed Reorganized Commissioned Pastor Handbook

- I. Purpose of Commissioned Pastor Handbook
- II. General Description of the Office of Commissioned Pastor
 - A. Intended purpose of the office
 - B. Title of the office
 - C. Nature of the office
 - D. Brief overview of the process for ordaining a commissioned pastor
- III. Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and Their Supplements
- IV. Discerning the Use of the Office of Commissioned Pastor
 - A. Job descriptions
 - B. Special mention regarding chaplaincy and the office of commissioned pastor
 - C. Appointment to service in an established (organized) congregation (Article 24-a)
 - D. Use of the commissioned pastor office as a “bridge” to becoming a minister of the Word (Article 24-b)
- V. Preparing the Commissioned Pastor Candidate
 - A. Qualifications for a commissioned pastor (character, knowledge, skills)

- B. Learning plans
- C. Classis approval related to timing
- D. Examination protocol
- E. Guidance for video examination
- VI. Guidance regarding the Office of Commissioned Pastor
 - A. Compensation and benefits
 - B. Retirement and pension issues
 - C. Accountability and supervision of commissioned pastors
 - D. Service of commissioned pastors at synod and on denominational boards, committees, and task forces
 - E. Moving and transitions
 - F. Termination of positions and personnel
 - G. Discipline of commissioned pastors
 - H. Status of commissioned pastor emeritus
- VII. Tools Available for Administering the Office of Commissioned Pastor
- VIII. Invitation to Share Resources and Concerns regarding the Office of Commissioned Pastor

IV. Recommendations

- A. That synod declare those persons listed in section I, A as candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.
- B. That synod approve the extensions of candidacy as recommended in section I, B.
- C. That synod approve the reinstatement of candidacy to Joseph Hwang as described in section I, C.
- D. That synod approve the action of the Candidacy Committee in declaration of need for those listed in section II for affiliation under Church Order Article 8.
- E. That synod approve the reorganized edition of the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, described in section III and included in the appendix to this report.

Candidacy Committee
Susan LaClear, director

Commissioned Pastor Handbook**Index**

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I. Purpose of Commissioned Pastor Handbook

This handbook about the office of commissioned pastor in the Christian Reformed Church in North America is intended as a resource for individuals, church councils, and classis leaders as they consider the various ways to make use of this office and the procedures that are involved. This volume reports actions synod has taken and policies synod has approved. It also offers commentary on those actions and policies (noting appropriate sources) as well as historical context, which can be accessed in the endnotes.

As the office of commissioned pastor has evolved over the past decades¹ and may well continue in that process, this handbook is intended to be a guide to and a reminder of the rules and statements of synod related to the office of commissioned pastor. It serves alongside the Rules for Synodical Procedure, the Journey Toward Ordination, and other approved statements of practice providing guidelines for ministry and life within the CRCNA.

II. General Description of the Office of Commissioned Pastor

A. Intended purpose of the office

Commissioned pastors represent one of two pastoral offices recognized by our denomination (the other being minister of the Word). The differences between the two offices involve (a) limits on the scope of ministry for a commissioned pastor, (b) less-specific educational qualifications required for commissioned pastors in solo pastor positions, and (c) no denominationally specified educational requirements for other commissioned pastors.²

Synod intended for the commissioned pastor office “to provide *limited* but *real* ecclesiastical authority for a *specific* ministry role ... for a *particular* area of ministry in God’s kingdom,” whether that be “the local church, mission field, educational institution, etc.” (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 243; see *Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 434).

B. Title of the office

All offices, according to our Church Order, “differ from each other only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor” (Church Order Article 2). This is a biblical and polity principle for the Christian Reformed Church, and misperceptions to the contrary must be so identified and challenged. Just as the office of deacon is no longer viewed in most circles as “second class” to the office of elder, but as a distinct office with a different focus than that of the office of elder, the church must squarely challenge negative misperceptions of the office of commissioned pastor.³

Both *commissioned pastor* and *minister of the Word* are mainly Church Order terms used to designate the two offices. In practice the churches use a variety of other terms to designate those serving in pastoral and staff roles (e.g., Pastor, Reverend, Evangelist, Chaplain, Pastor of Education, Pastor

of Youth, Minister of Congregational Life). The reality is that local classes, congregations, and communities develop their own language to describe both ministers of the Word and commissioned pastors.

This is in keeping with the intent of synod, as stated in the *Acts of Synod 2001* (p. 506) and now in Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a:

The office of evangelist [term used in 2001 for the office now titled *commissioned pastor*] may be understood to have the character of pastoral extension. Evangelists extend the work of pastoral leadership by founding and working in new congregations and by extending the ministry of organized congregations into specialized areas, including, but not limited to, youth ministry, education, pastoral care, worship, and evangelism [see also Church Order Article 24]. . . . By the broader application of the office of evangelist, with its existing regulations, to a variety of ministry positions, the church avoids the multiplication of offices and provides a way of recognizing and regulating a variety of pastoral positions in our churches. These positions may be identified by titles that indicate their ministry distinctiveness such as chaplain, pastor of education, pastor of youth, minister of congregational life, and so forth.

(*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 506)

C. Nature of the office

The office of commissioned pastor is recognized in the Christian Reformed Church as a flexible, very localized ordination into pastoral ministry. As indicated above (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 506), *commissioned pastor* is an “umbrella term” for a variety of ministry positions such as evangelist, chaplain, pastor of outreach, of youth, of congregational life, and more, and may be understood to have the nature of “pastoral extension,” serving to extend “the ministry of organized congregations into specialized areas, including, but not limited to, youth ministry, education, pastoral care, worship, and evangelism.”

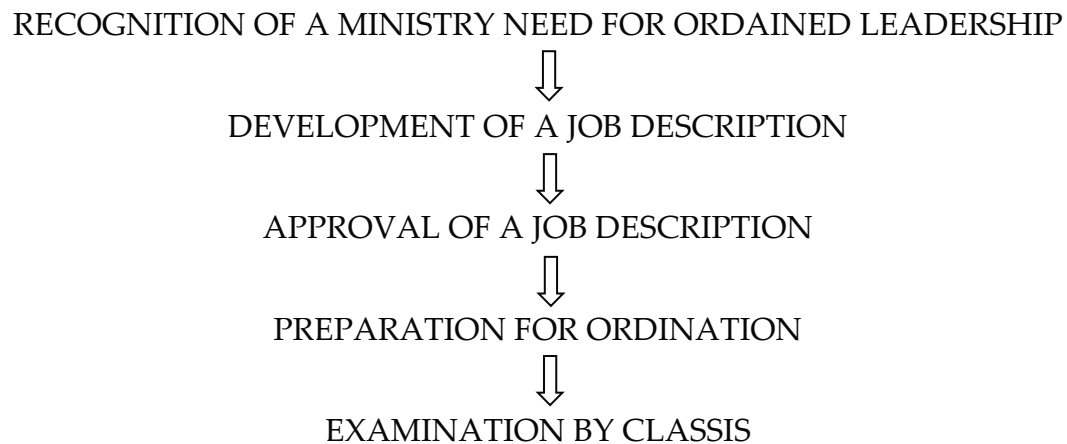
D. Brief overview of the process of ordaining a commissioned pastor

Ordination to the office of commissioned pastor arises out of a local ministry context in which a ministry will (a) show the need for ordained leadership and (b) create a job description. The job description will be considered by the classis in consultation with representatives from three neighboring classes (i.e., the synodical deputies). Once all are agreed that the ministry as described in the job description fits the intention of Article 23 (as described by the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001), the process toward ordination will continue. This process involves verifying relevant ministry skills, designing and engaging in a learning plan (where appropriate), gathering necessary documents, preparing a sermon to be critiqued (if preaching is part of the job description), and preparing for an oral exam at the classis level.

It is noteworthy that up to this point very little has been said about the individual to be ordained. There is an underlying assumption that an individual will emerge who can fit the ministry position being created or recognized. All parties concerned need to be in prayer that such a “match” will occur and be affirmed through this process of discernment.

If your local ministry is doing work that would be well served by the ordained leadership of a commissioned pastor, you are encouraged to speak to the classis leadership in your area. If you are an individual who wishes to be used in ministry as an ordained commissioned pastor, talk to your local church or classis leaders. Seek out especially the members of an area Classical Ministerial Leadership Team. Together as a church, we are actively asking “the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2).

Flow Chart Summarizing the Process of Ordaining a Commissioned Pastor



III. Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and Their Supplements

Article 23

- a. The task of the commissioned pastor is to bear witness to Christ through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, church education, pastoral care, evangelism, and other ministries in order that believers may be called to comprehensive discipleship and unbelievers may be called to faith.
- b. Commissioned pastors shall function under the direct supervision of the council, giving regular reports to it and being present at its meetings, particularly when their work is under consideration.
- c. Commissioned pastors shall be acknowledged as such in their calling churches. Normally, their work on the church council shall be limited to the ministries in which they serve as commissioned pastors.

Supplement, Article 23-a (general notes regarding the administration of the office)

The office of commissioned pastor is applicable to a variety of ministries, provided that these ministries fit the following guidelines adopted by Synod 2001:

“The office of evangelist[*] may be understood to have the character of pastoral extension. Evangelists extend the work of pastoral leadership by founding and working in new congregations and by extending the ministry of organized congregations into specialized areas, including, but not limited to, youth ministry, education, pastoral care, worship, and evangelism. . . . By the broader application of the office of evangelist, with its existing regulations, to a variety of ministry positions, the church avoids the multiplication of offices and provides a way of recognizing and regulating a variety of pastoral positions in our churches. These positions may be identified by titles that indicate their ministry distinctiveness such as chaplain, pastor of education, pastor of youth, minister of congregational life, and so forth.”

(*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 506)

[*Note: In 2001 the office was known as *evangelist*. The title was changed to *ministry associate* by Synod 2003 and to *commissioned pastor* by Synod 2012.]

All commissioned pastor positions must be approved by classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, to determine whether or not the position fits these guidelines adopted by Synod 2001. All commissioned pastors must demonstrate through an examination their ability to function in the ministry to which they are being called.

Examinations for the office of commissioned pastor must follow the guidelines established by synod as described and recorded in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

The Commissioned Pastor Handbook shall be consulted regularly, as it offers guidelines and regulations approved by synod. These include the protocol for examination, the creation of job descriptions, and the standards and qualifications to be met by those seeking to be ordained as commissioned pastors.

(*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 783)

Commissioned pastor job descriptions related to the ministry of chaplaincy must be approved in consultation with Chaplaincy and Care Ministry. The mandate, characteristics, and guiding principles that define chaplains ordained as ministers of the Word are applicable to chaplains ordained under Article 23.

(*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 613)

Article 24

- a. Commissioned pastors may serve in a solo or senior leadership position in an organized church only with the permission of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies, following the synodically approved rules for such an arrangement, which are explained in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.
- b. Commissioned pastors may be called to a position in which the call is for a specified term contingent upon accountable progress toward completion of the requirements for ordination as a minister of the Word. Approval of the classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, is required as to the terms of such a call and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan.
- c. Commissioned pastors who desire to serve beyond their specific field of labor must secure the approval of their councils and classes.
- d. A commissioned pastor position may be eliminated and a commissioned pastor may be released only with the concurrence of the classis that approved the position, with attention to the rules and processes approved by synod.
- e. A commissioned pastor who has reached retirement age may, upon the judgment of classis, be given the title of *commissioned pastor emeritus*.

Supplement, Article 24-a

Commissioned pastors may serve in positions of solo leadership in an established church only in specific circumstances. Three of these circumstances were specified before 2019 in Church Order Articles 23-b, 23-c, and 23-d. A fourth was adopted by Synod 2018. All four are now presented and explained in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook (sections IV, I and J). A classis may decide to make such appointments contingent upon implementation of a learning plan leading toward meeting the qualifications for minister of the Word, as described in Church Order Article 24-b. In all cases in which a commissioned pastor serves in a solo leadership position in an emerging or organized church, it is mandatory that such a person, in cooperation with classis, shall develop and complete a contextualized learning plan for denominational orientation, adopted by classis and approved by the Candidacy Committee, as described in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

Supplement, Article 24-b

In various cases a commissioned pastor may desire or be encouraged to seek ordination as a minister of the Word, following the process prescribed in Article 6, including the required education. Though not expected in all circumstances of persons serving as commissioned pastors, a plan toward candidacy as a minister of the Word may be

beneficial for the pastor and the church. Local ministries in partnership with their classis and synodical deputies may consider the advisability of constructing such a plan, and of using a renewable “term call” for such cases as a way to hold the commissioned pastor accountable to making progress in the plan.

Supplement, Article 24-c

On occasion a commissioned pastor working in a position outside of a local congregation may desire to transition to a different calling church. This scenario and other transitions for commissioned pastors are addressed in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

Supplement, Article 24-d

Synod has offered, on various occasions, guidelines regarding the conclusion of an approved commissioned pastor position, the resignation of a commissioned pastor, and the release of a commissioned pastor. Synod also instructs classes to make an appropriate declaration reflecting the status of any commissioned pastor who concludes service. These guidelines and options regarding status are the same as those for minister of the Word and can be found in Supplement, Article 14-b, c, 2 or in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

Supplement, Article 24-e

A commissioned pastor emeritus may, upon the judgment of classis, retain the authority to perform official acts of ministry in ways consistent with their ordination prior to retirement. Supervision of a commissioned pastor emeritus shall remain with the church last served unless transferred to another congregation with the approval of the classis(es) involved.

(Acts of Synod 2019, p. 783)

IV. Discerning the Use of the Office of Commissioned Pastor⁴

A. Job descriptions

Elements of a Good Job Description⁵

1. A description of the functions and responsibilities that are ministerial in nature (see the first paragraph of Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a).
2. A description of the supervision and lines of accountability for the position.
3. Specific notation of whether preaching and/or administering the sacraments are to be included in the position.

The following observations were received and recommended to congregations and classes as helpful advice in the administration of Church Order Articles 23-24:⁶

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee

- When approving a job description that involves a commissioned pastor serving in a position outside of North America, it would be wise for the classis, the calling church, or the potential commissioned pastor to secure a letter of endorsement from our denominational missions agency. Resonate Global Mission has developed a straightforward protocol for such endorsement, which will assure all parties concerned that the ministry proposed will be done responsibly. It will also enable such commissioned pastors to receive the support and encouragement of our regional missions teams across the globe.
- When approving a job description involving a commissioned pastor serving in a position that has chaplaincy embedded in the work, it would be wise for the classis, the calling church, or the potential commissioned pastor to secure a letter of endorsement from the denominational Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry. Such a letter would be a blessing to the chaplain and the church as it would enable a connection to the growing cadre of endorsed CRC chaplains.
- With the current and broadening use of the office of commissioned pastor it becomes clear that a common description of a commissioned pastor position as “confined to the boundaries of the classis that ordains them” is erroneous. Church Order Article 24-c states that “commissioned pastors who desire to serve beyond their specific field of labor must secure the approval of their councils and classes.” The boundaries or limits placed on a commissioned pastor are determined by the field of labor as defined in the job description, not by geography.
- We suggest that it would be wise for a job description to state explicitly whether a commissioned pastor will preach, and whether the preaching will occur in the form of occasional service as a “pulpit supply pastor” in neighboring churches. There is an erroneous belief that any commissioned pastor who preaches has license to preach anywhere in the classis. The Church Order in Article 23 does not specify this. Rather, limits and boundaries of the work of a commissioned pastor are specified in the job description. If the preaching responsibilities of a commissioned pastor are intended to enable this person to serve as pulpit supply at other churches in the classis, it would be best for the job description to say so and for the classical examination to be of the same nature as those given before granting such licensure.
- Regarding the phenomenon of ministry positions evolving over time beyond their stated job descriptions and the responsibility of classes with regard to such changes:

The Candidacy Committee suggests that this is one of many areas in church life where spiritual discernment and common sense need to guide us, rather than increased procedure and rule. We have observed a number of cases in which a classis interim committee has responsibly deliberated regarding a changing job description, determining whether it has become something new which needs approval by classis, or whether it remains the same at its heart. Classis interim committees are free to share their decisions with classis, or even to present a motion that their judgment regarding a changing job description be approved. Synodical deputies can also be consulted, formally or informally, and they would, of course, be invited to the conversation if indeed a job description were to change so much as to be judged “new.”

(*Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 267)

B. Special mention regarding chaplaincy and the office of commissioned pastor

It bears special mention that one of the most productive uses of the office of commissioned pastor has been in the area of chaplaincy.⁷

From Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a:

Commissioned pastor job descriptions related to the ministry of chaplaincy must be approved in consultation with Chaplaincy and Care Ministry. The mandate, characteristics, and guiding principles that define chaplains ordained as ministers of the Word are applicable to chaplains ordained under Article 23.

For more information and reflection on this issue, consult the *Agenda for Synod 2003*, pp. 67-71 and the *Acts of Synod 2003*, pp. 609-13.

C. Appointment to service in an established (organized) congregation (Article 24-a)⁸

Church Order Article 24-a:

Commissioned pastors may serve in a solo or senior leadership position in an organized church only with the permission of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies, following the synodically approved rules for such an arrangement, which are explained in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

Synodically approved rules for Article 24-a

There are three scenarios in which a commissioned pastor may serve as a lead or solo pastor in an established church through the use of Church Order Article 24-a:

1. Commissioned pastors who are planting a church may continue to serve for “a reasonable period of transition”⁹ after the church becomes an organized congregation.

2. Commissioned pastors who serve in an organized church alongside a minister of the Word may, in exceptional circumstances, move into the senior/solo role if the minister of the Word leaves.
3. In unique ministry contexts a commissioned pastor may be called to serve in an organized congregation.

Regarding scenario 1 above:

Ordinarily, the office of commissioned pastors who serve in emerging congregations will terminate when a group of believers becomes an organized church. However, upon organization and with the approval of the newly formed council and the classis, commissioned pastors may continue to serve the newly organized church until an ordained minister of the Word is installed or until they have served the newly organized church for a reasonable period of transition. Commissioned pastors who continue to serve a newly organized congregation beyond this reasonable period of transition must seek the permission of classis with the concurrence of the synodical deputies.¹⁰

Regarding scenario 2 above:

Commissioned pastors may also serve in organized congregations along with a minister of the Word and may serve as chaplains in institutional settings in the community. Commission pastors who have served an organized congregation along with a minister of the Word may, in exceptional circumstances, with the approval of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies, continue serving that congregation as a solo pastor after the minister of the Word has left.¹¹

Regarding scenario 3 above:

Commissioned pastors may be called to serve as solo pastors in organized congregations if the classis, with concurring advice of synodical deputies, ascertains that such congregations are from a ministry context where the standards for pastoral preparation required by Articles 6, 7, or 8 are not presently practical.¹² The ministry context is ordinarily one in which cultural differences (e.g., ethnic, social, economic, educational, language) between the congregation and its ministry context on the one hand, and the dominant culture of the denomination as expressed in the seminary, other leadership development entities, and broader denominational life on the other hand (a) present significant obstacles to raising up Indigenous leadership in ways that are sustainable by the respective congregations and communities, and (b) have resulted in limited- or non-availability of competent Indigenous leaders trained for ministry via one of the prescribed routes for ministry of the Word.¹³

It is obvious that great wisdom is needed in decisions regarding approval of a commissioned pastor for service as a solo or lead pastor in an organized congregation. In all three scenarios above, the deliberation of

classis and the advice of synodical deputies are required. Terms used in these statements of synod have a purposeful flexibility allowing for a contextual decision.

Required learning plans

It should be noted that *a learning plan is to be approved by the Candidacy Committee and completed in all cases in which a commissioned pastor is approved for service in a solo leadership position, whether in an emerging church or in an established (organized) church.* It is in the interest of the pastor, the ministry, and the denomination for solo and lead commissioned pastors to be well acquainted with denominational distinctives. Thus, Church Order Supplement, Article 24-a says:

Commissioned pastors may serve in positions of solo leadership in an established church only in specific circumstances. Three of these circumstances were specified before 2019 in Church Order Articles 23-b, 23-c, and 23-d. A fourth was adopted by Synod 2018. All four are now presented and explained in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook (sections IV, I and J). A classis may decide to make such appointments contingent upon implementation of a learning plan leading toward meeting the qualifications for minister of the Word, as described in Church Order Article 24-b. In all cases in which a commissioned pastor serves in a solo leadership position in an emerging or organized church, it is mandatory that such a person, in cooperation with classis, shall develop and complete a contextualized learning plan for denominational orientation, adopted by classis and approved by the Candidacy Committee, as described in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

To summarize, there are three scenarios, formerly noted in the Church Order and still valid, by which a commissioned pastor may serve as a lead or solo pastor in an established church. There is also a fourth scenario, referred to unofficially as a “bridge ordination,” to which we now turn our attention.

D. Use of the commissioned pastor office as a “bridge” to becoming a minister of the Word (Article 24-b)

The scenarios in which established churches may call a commissioned pastor (through Church Order Article 24-a) to serve them as a solo or lead pastor are specific and unusual (see section IV, I above for a description of the three scenarios). They are related to particular ministry contexts that are different from the dominant culture of the denomination and its seminary. If none of these scenarios apply, but a church (with approval of its counselor and synodical deputies) discerns a need to call and ordain a commissioned pastor as the solo or lead pastor of an organized church, there is one other synod-approved way to proceed.¹⁴

Church Order Article 24-b:

Commissioned pastors may be called to a position in which the call is for a specified term contingent upon accountable progress toward completion of the requirements for ordination as a minister of the Word. Approval of the classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, is required as to the terms of such a call and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan.

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee¹⁵

- It is wise for the appointed church counselor to direct the attention of the organized congregation desiring to call a person to serve as commissioned pastor to the reality that we have a considerable number of fully qualified and ready candidates for minister of the Word and currently ordained ministers of the Word eligible for call.
- Further, the church counselor is responsible to direct the congregation to the unique criteria cited in Church Order Supplement, Article 23-d (now presented in this handbook as “scenario 3” in section IV, C above). The decision to take this step is not only that of the local council or congregation. It also requires the support of classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies.
- Having offered these first two items of reflection to those inquiring about this matter, the Candidacy Committee has suggested that any such arrangement to call a commissioned pastor to a lead position in an organized church be done with an explicit condition that the commissioned pastor make progress toward attaining an M.Div. degree and approval as a candidate for minister of the Word. The condition can be written into the motion of approval relative to the use of Article 24-b, with a suitable time line, with expectations of reporting, with expectations of support by the calling church, and with recognition that the approval can be reversed at a given point if the conditions are not met. With such understandings as have just been cited, there are some effective relationships currently under way in which a commissioned pastor is serving an organized church while also making progress toward ordination as a minister of the Word. At the appropriate time (i.e., when the person is declared a candidate) these commissioned pastors receive a call to continue to serve, as a minister of the Word, and all the appropriate and normal steps of classical examination are conducted.
- It should be noted that Article 24-b is not intended to apply to all cases in which a commissioned pastor is approved for a lead or solo position in an established congregation (note the three scenarios described in section IV, C above). The statement uses the qualifier “may,” not “shall.” Individual circumstances will vary. Yet this highlights an opportunity that the classis and synodical deputies have to encourage accredited theological education toward meeting the expectations for

the office of minister of the Word. In many cases the pastor, the congregation, the classis, and the church at large will be blessed by such effort.

Note the following words of Church Order Supplement, Article 24-b as it speaks to this:

In various cases a commissioned pastor may desire or be encouraged to seek ordination as a minister of the Word, following the process prescribed in Article 6, including the required education. Though not expected in all circumstances of persons serving as commissioned pastors, a plan toward candidacy as a minister of the Word may be beneficial for the pastor and the church. Local ministries in partnership with their classis and synodical deputies may consider the advisability of constructing such a plan, and of using a renewable “term call” for such cases as a way to hold the commissioned pastor accountable to making progress in the plan.

The Candidacy Committee is eager to serve the church through consultation with local pastors, synodical deputies, and classis functionaries as these conversations are conducted.

V. Preparing the Commissioned Pastor Candidate

A. Qualifications for a commissioned pastor

These are the desired qualifications of a candidate for ordination as a commissioned pastor.¹⁶

Character

The commissioned pastor is mature in Christ. “Christ-likeness” covers all of what it means to be godly. The following guidelines, which are rooted in Scripture (references are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive), suggest many aspects of godly character:

1. **Devoted to Jesus**—The commissioned pastor is “in Christ” (John 15:5), filled with his Spirit (Acts 1:8), and exercises personal spiritual disciplines.
2. **Committed to the church and its mission** (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Tim. 5:22)—The commissioned pastor is a person in Christian community. She/he has been tested and proven. She/he has been recognized as prepared for ministry by the community of believers and evidences accountability to it.
3. **Called and gifted** (Matt. 28:16ff.; Acts 1:8)—The commissioned pastor has a calling from God that is confirmed by the church. That calling provides her/him with a mission, with vision, and with intrinsic motivation. She/he ministers out of giftedness (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12; etc.).

4. **Filled with love** (Matt. 22:37-40)—The commissioned pastor is characterized by love—love of God, love of self, and love of others, including lost and diverse people.
5. **Possesses the fruit of the Spirit** (Gal. 5:22-23)—The commissioned pastor gives evidence of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.
6. **Possesses the qualities of an officebearer** (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)—The commissioned pastor demonstrates such qualities as being reputable, loyal, self-disciplined, respected, hospitable, mature, honest, sincere, teachable and able to teach, emotionally stable, blameless, lover of God and not money, resilient, responsible, not quick-tempered, not overbearing, not quarrelsome, not abusive (of others or substances), managing her/his own household well (including spousal support of ministry), risk-taking, flexible, adaptable, etc.
7. **Has a servant's heart** (Matt. 20:26)—The commissioned pastor is a servant-leader.
8. **Possesses wisdom** (Prov. 1:1-7)—The commissioned pastor lives according to God's design, recognizes Christ as "wisdom from God" (1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3), and seeks wisdom from above (James 1:5; 3:13).
9. **Manages life well**—The commissioned pastor practices good stewardship of time, talents, finances, and physical creation (Gen. 1:27-28; Ps. 8:6-8).
10. **Eager to learn**—The commissioned pastor is a lifelong learner, ever studying God's Word and world (Ps. 19) and demonstrates that she/he has been and is currently being mentored.

Biblical Knowledge

The commissioned pastor has a working knowledge of the Bible in her/his native language, and

1. is able to identify Scripture's main themes (covenant, kingdom of God, *missio Dei*, etc.) and to locate their place in the redemptive history that is centered in Christ;
2. has command of the divisions of Scripture (law, prophets, gospels, epistles, etc.), the historical and literary contexts of each biblical book, and basic hermeneutical principles required to interpret them;
3. is able to demonstrate knowledge of key Scripture passages, and to apply them appropriately to life and ministry.

Based on the above, the commissioned pastor is able to prepare and preach/teach meaningful and motivational messages/lessons that are true to Scripture. The commissioned pastor is able to communicate clearly the gospel to unbelievers and believers.

Theological Knowledge

1. The commissioned pastor has knowledge of doctrinal standards and systematic theology at the level of Berkhof's *Manual of Christian Doctrine*. This would include knowledge of Reformed systematic theology, the ecumenical creeds, and the three confessional standards of the Christian Reformed Church. Furthermore, the commissioned pastor is able to differentiate and defend the Reformed faith biblically from other systems of thought, both Christian and non-Christian. She/he is able to reflect from a biblical perspective on the cultures, circumstances, and events of everyday life and ministry.
2. The commissioned pastor has a basic knowledge of church history (including Christian Reformed Church history and culture) and is able to apply its lessons to present reality and ministry.

Skill—Practice of Ministry

Commissioned pastors give evidence of ministry skills. The skills necessary for ministry are many, and not all commissioned pastors possess them in the same measure. Someone in a ministry position will be expected to demonstrate skills in relation to the particularity of her/his position. Commissioned pastors, whether in specialized ministry within an organized congregation or in new church development, use skills to lead the church of Jesus Christ to fulfill the New Testament purposes of outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and service. Some necessary ministry skills are

1. **Leadership and administration**—The commissioned pastor is able to help people and the church move from where they are to where God wants them to be. To do this, commissioned pastors possess such skills as casting vision; creating ownership; creating functional, organizational systems; resolving conflict; developing gift-based ministries; planning ministry; developing and mentoring leaders; and managing time, money, and people (according to principles of CRC polity).
2. **Outreach**—The commissioned pastor is able personally to share (witness); to defend (apologetics) the faith; and to lead the church in reaching out to the lost, in receiving them, and in developing new churches.
3. **Worship**—The commissioned pastor is able to prepare and deliver messages/teach lessons (homiletics), administer the sacraments, and lead in worship and prayer.
4. **Pastoral Care**—The commissioned pastor possesses relational skills that enable her/him to provide personally and through the church (corporately) pastoral care, visitation, small groups, youth ministry, spiritual counsel, and conduct of weddings and funerals.
5. **Fellowship**—The commissioned pastor is able to foster a nurturing Christian community.

6. **Discipleship**—The commissioned pastor is able to raise up, teach, and nurture disciple-making disciples.
7. **Service**—The commissioned pastor is able to respond to personal and community needs by mobilizing the church for ministry.
8. **Specialized**—The commissioned pastor has any necessary skills specific to her/his particular calling within the church.

(See *Acts of Synod 2004*, p. 619; *Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 373-75)
(Amended *Acts of Synod 2009*, pp. 583-84)

B. Learning plans

A person preparing to be ordained as a commissioned pastor should engage a learning plan consistent with the approved job description. All learning plans originate at the classis level, with significant planning done by the person involved as well as the classis team.

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee regarding learning plans¹⁷

- Article 23-a includes an extended description of ministry standards that classes can use in judging readiness for ministry as an ordained commissioned pastor. These standard qualifications (presented in section V, A of this handbook) can surely guide the preparation phase for anyone contemplating this ordination.
- Previous study reports of synod have referred to a “principle of proportionality” relative to the preparation and readiness for commissioned pastor ordination. A potential commissioned pastor should demonstrate a given area of knowledge and skill in proportion to the degree that such knowledge and skill are part of the approved job description.
- The Candidacy Committee has created a list of training programs and ministries aimed at potential commissioned pastors. The list can be found on the Candidacy Forms and Resources page of the denominational website (crcna.org/candidacy/forms-and-resources). There is opportunity to add to this list, and it has been prepared in the hope that it might be of service to churches, classes, and potential commissioned pastors as they contemplate learning plans.
- Classes have often proceeded too quickly toward an examination for ordination.¹⁸ It is much wiser for a classis to prescribe a series of steps by which a potential commissioned pastor meets members and functionaries of the classis a few different times before a scheduled exam.

Learning plans for commissioned pastors who will serve in solo or lead positions

Commissioned pastors may serve in a solo or lead position in an emerging church or, in some specific scenarios (see section IV, C for guidelines), in an organized church.

One particular concern of the denomination regarding learning plans and the preparation of those seeking ordination to the office of commissioned pastor is that any person serving in a lead role (senior or solo pastor) in a congregation identified with the CRCNA is going to in some way represent the CRCNA. Note, then, the following synodical statements:

Before a person who will serve as the solo pastor of an emerging or an organized church is examined for a position as a commissioned pastor, that person, in cooperation with classis, shall develop and complete a contextualized learning plan, adopted by classis and approved by the Candidacy Committee. Ordinarily the learning plan would include an introduction to the CRC Church Order, CRC history, CRC ministry, CRC creeds and confessions, Reformed hermeneutics, and an introduction to the discipline and art of preaching.¹⁹

Grounds:

- a. This ensures that those who provide primary spiritual leadership in CRC congregations have been adequately trained in the basic denominational information that the church expects of its primary spiritual leaders.
- b. This enables a classis to have flexibility in the training mechanisms it uses for commissioned pastors, as a given learning plan can include many elements and learning experiences.
- c. This balances local flexibility and contextual sensitivity with a denominational voice via the Candidacy Committee, which is advantageous for consistency in denominational awareness among leaders in the CRC.

(Acts of Synod 2013, p. 557)

In a number of cases, however, classes proceeded with an examination for a commissioned pastor serving in a solo pastor role without consulting the Candidacy Committee.²⁰ The Candidacy Committee observed in 2017 that “this specific issue is one in which the denomination, its ministry, and its reputation are well served by consistent practice. It is in the interest of both the denomination and the local church to ensure that commissioned pastors charged with primary leadership at the local level are able to represent and support the denomination’s values” (*Agenda for Synod 2017*, p. 324).

The Candidacy Committee pondered this matter and proposed the following guideline, approved by synod: “At some point prior to any

examination for ordination of a commissioned pastor being considered for a solo pastor position in an emerging or organized church, the classis must ascertain that a learning plan has been approved by the classis and agreed to by the Candidacy Committee, and synodical deputies must affirm through a written report that such approvals have taken place” (*Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 689).

Note also that the nature of the role of synodical deputies in this process is limited.²¹ A classis acts only to affirm that they have evidence that a learning plan has been formed and carried out in consultation with the Candidacy Committee. The synodical deputies concur only that such an action has taken place. It is conceivable, and likely, that such concurrence could be done via email and that the physical presence of the deputies at the classis meeting is not required. The task of synodical deputy concurrence with the classis judgment of fitness for ministry is not required because commissioned pastors, as locally ordained servants, serve under the authority of the local classis, not the denomination.

Material for developing a learning plan for a commissioned pastor is available from the Candidacy Committee office (email: candidacy@crcna.org) and can be found on the Candidacy Forms and Resources page of the denominational website.

C. Classis approval relative to timing

In our use of Article 23 two actions are required by classis: (1) approval of the position and (2) examination and approval of a person to fill the position. Should these actions require two separate meetings? The following advice aims to clarify the two-step process.

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee²²

- It may indeed be wise in some cases for a classis to be sure that the matter of a job description be dealt with in a meeting distinct from a meeting in which a potential commissioned pastor filling the proposed position is examined.
- It is surely wise for any person who has been called to a position as a commissioned pastor to recognize the tentative nature of the call. The call is conditional upon successful examination, as is also the case for candidates for the office of minister of the Word. The call is also conditional upon the approval by classis of the job description.
- Frequently the proposed job description is intimately tied to an individual. In such cases the approval process can unavoidably get personal and potentially awkward.
- Circumstances may sometimes require that both approvals occur at the same classis meeting. Sequentially, of course, consideration of the issue of a position approval would precede the examination of a potential person to fill a position. It may in fact show wisdom on the part of classis and its leadership to schedule both the approval of the position

and the examination of the potential pastor at the same meeting. There are many cases in which classes meet only twice a year, so requiring extended approval time could impede ministry. Funding and approval processes may require more swift action than could be taken over the course of two meetings of classis.

- It is vital to the *highly versatile* nature of the office of commissioned pastor (see the SMCC report to Synod 2007) that the leadership of each classis wrestle with these issues associated with timing, the conditional nature of calls, and the ways best to serve ministry opportunities with responsive nimbleness.
- It also seems wise for the appropriate classis team and the mentor involved in a given case to adequately prepare a person who will be examined by classis for the office of commissioned pastor. Preparation includes completion of an appropriate and agreed upon learning plan. (Remember that in the case of commissioned pastors serving as solo pastors this plan must be created in consultation with the Candidacy Committee.) It is also a gift to provide adequate coaching of a potential commissioned pastor so as to handle with grace the dynamics of a classis meeting and examination.

D. Examination protocol

General guidelines

The Synod of the CRC has adopted guidelines for the examination of persons being ordained to the office of commissioned pastor. A general guideline adopted in coordination with the standards noted in section IV, C above states, “The classis shall ensure that the candidate meets the standards of character, knowledge, and skill adopted by Synod 2000” (*Agenda for Synod 2004*, p. 391). It is important to note that these standards were adopted with the presumption that what has been called “the principle of proportionality” would be applied (see *Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 376, 443). In other words, a potential commissioned pastor should demonstrate ministry skill “in proportion to” what the proposed and approved job description would require.

Gathering documents

Synod has also specified a set of documents that should be presented prior to any examination. These documents were listed in the Church Order Supplement and are now noted in this handbook as follows:

Presentation of the following documents

- a. A council recommendation from the church in which the appointee holds membership
- b. Evidence (diplomas, transcripts, etc.) of formal general education and of specialized training in the ministry area to which the candidate is being called
- c. A copy of the letter of appointment from the church that is requesting ordination of the candidate as commissioned pastor

- d. A copy of the candidate's letter of acceptance

This list of required documents does not need to be seen as exhaustive from a classis point of view. A given classis is free to broaden their list of required documents, as the context of the classis and of a given ministry might require. The Candidacy Forms and Resources page on the denominational website (crcna.org/candidacy/forms-and-resources) includes some tools that a classis may want to consider as templates in the process of preparing a person for an examination as a commissioned pastor.

Pre-examination requirements

- Criminal background check
- Psychological evaluation (required for those being examined for positions involving solo or senior leadership and recommended for all commissioned pastors)²³
- Learning plan

Exam protocol

Synod has specified that the following elements shall also be included in the classical examination:

Where applicable, presentation of a sermon

- a. In an official worship service, preferably on the Sunday preceding the meeting of classis and in the church to which the candidate for ordination has been called, the commissioned pastor shall preach a sermon on a text assigned by classis. Two members of classis shall be present to serve as sermon critics.
- b. A copy of the sermon shall be provided to the classical delegates. In the presence of the commissioned pastor, the sermon critics shall evaluate the sermon and the commissioned pastor's manner of conducting the entire worship service.

Examination in the following areas

- a. Knowledge of Scripture
- b. Knowledge of Reformed doctrine
- c. Knowledge of the standards of the church and the Church Order
- d. Practical matters regarding Christian testimony, walk of life, relationships with others, love for the church, approach to ministry, and promotion of Christ's kingdom

Some additional observations

- By rule of synod the concurrence of synodical deputies is not required for the examination of a candidate for the office of commissioned pastor.

- There is greater flexibility for a classis in the examination for the office of commissioned pastor than there is in the examination for the office of minister of the Word (see the careful protocol for those examinations as articulated in Church Order Article 10). Classes are free to contextualize their examinations for commissioned pastor relative to the number of questioners, the time set aside, the timing of the exam in relation to the rest of the process for ordination, etc.
- See section V, A, 3 in this handbook for further thoughts about the practice of examining commissioned pastors.

E. Guidance for video examination²⁴

The following notes are intended to offer some guidelines for use by classes in examinations of commissioned pastors according to Church Order Articles 23-24. These notes may also provide assistance as classes consider other uses of video technology.

The potential uses of video-conferencing technology cover a broad range:

- a. Sermon reviewers may observe a video of a preached sermon rather than being present in person.
- b. A pre-examination video conference may be conducted with a small team or even one appointed person interviewing the person who will be examined, and then a recording of the video could be distributed to classis delegates before the examination meeting. This process could allow the classis meeting examination to be more focused and perhaps more efficient.
- c. A video-conference option may be used for an examinee, a delegate, and/or a synodical deputy who is not present at the classis meeting (due to extreme distance or prohibitive cost of traveling to the classis meeting).
- d. A totally “virtual” meeting could be conducted by video conferencing, with all delegates participating from their individual computers/devices.

Other uses are likely possible and will be discovered as the use of technology in our daily lives continues to progress.

Additional suggestions

- a. Meeting in person is always preferable to meeting via video conference—the use of video conferencing, at least for the near future, should be the exception rather than the norm. Especially in the setting of examinations and interviews, the nuances of a person’s expression and voice are much stronger in face-to-face settings, and both the person being examined and the other persons present will be best served with an in-person atmosphere. Video meetings are more useful once a relationship has been established.

- b. Synodical deputies have been advised in the past that their physical presence is highly recommended where classis deliberation needs to occur. Yet there are certainly cases where routine matters such as approving a clearly presented job description, or a noncontroversial release of a pastor, or the retirement of a pastor can be done via video conference, or conference call, or email.
- c. Where distance and cost factors are prohibitive, and where a classis is of a unified mind to experiment, video conferencing may be a useful tool, especially in the first few examples described above. Such experimenting may indeed result in experiencing a learning curve that may bless the rest of the denomination.
- d. Any successful experiment and use of video-conference technology will depend on the following:
 - having adequate and experienced technical support available at the time of the classis meeting
 - ascertaining beforehand that the connections, bandwidth, and equipment will be suitable in advance of the meeting (online participants will also need to test their equipment ahead of time to ensure that the technology parameters will be adequate)
 - anticipating and planning for the technical ability to facilitate questions from the assembly, and for managing any needed periods of executive session
 - assigning the technical functions (managing connections, chat questions, etc.) to someone at the meeting who does not already have responsibility for chairing or recording the minutes of the meeting

It should be noted that our CRCNA IT staff have gathered suggestions for well-functioning video-conference meetings and have placed them in a Network article: “Top 6 Tips for Improving Video Conferencing” (see network.crcna.org/church-communications/top-6-tips-improving-video-conferencing)

VI. Guidance regarding the Office of Commissioned Pastor

A. Compensation and benefits

Insurance plans²⁵

In current practice, ministers of the Word as well as commissioned pastors need to negotiate both insurance and retirement plans with their congregations and sponsoring ministries. As churches and ministries seek to support their ordained commissioned pastors by providing a health-care insurance plan, there may be local resources and plans that prove to be very beneficial. Information about the denominational insurance plans available for those ordained as commissioned pastors can be obtained by contacting the Personnel Office of the CRCNA.

Tax benefits

Concerns have been raised that ministers of the Word have benefits with the IRS and Revenue Canada that commissioned pastors do not have, or are not aware of. As a matter of fact, in the policies of the IRS and Revenue Canada, ordination is the key factor, not the ordination called *minister of the Word*. Our denominational office, through the chief administrative officer, is available to consult with and give guidance to any ministry that wants to know how best to make use of the tax benefits that pertain to their commissioned pastor or minister of the Word.

Salary scale

Concerns have been raised that commissioned pastors are underpaid and undervalued. The same concerns have been raised for ministers of the Word. Synod has repeatedly exhorted the churches to adequately pay their pastors. The official letter of call for a minister of the Word speaks of churches offering salary to pastors, “knowing that laborers are worthy of their hire, to encourage you in the discharge of your duties and to free you from material needs while you are ministering God’s Word to us.” Synod spoke to this issue in 2004 when it defined proper support this way: “Proper support of a church’s minister is to include an adequate salary, medical insurance, a housing provision, payment to the denomination’s minister’s pension plan, a continuing education stipend, and other employment-related items” (*Acts of Synod 2004*, p. 611).

Although these particular exhortations apply to those serving as ministers of the Word, the principle behind these exhortations also applies to those serving as commissioned pastors, especially those in full-time service. Since educational requirements for ministers of the Word exceed those of commissioned pastors, it is likely and defensible that the pay scales will vary some between the two. However, this does not justify the underpaying of commissioned pastors. The church is called to provide a living wage for ministers of the Word and commissioned pastors alike.²⁶

B. Retirement and pension issues²⁷

In current practice, ministers of the Word as well as commissioned pastors need to negotiate both insurance and retirement plans with their congregations and sponsoring ministries. In this sense, equity in our policies and regulations in this area between persons ordained as commissioned pastors and as ministers of the Word already exists.

While the denomination has a defined-benefit retirement plan (pension plan) for ministers of the Word, local congregations and ministries are encouraged to create a pension plan for those ordained as commissioned pastors (and any nonordained staff working 20 or more hours per week). A number of options are available for commissioned pastors and the ministries that support them. In the United States these include IRA (Individual Retirement Account) plans and 403b plans. In Canada these include RRSPPs (Registered Retirement Savings Plans). Such plans (in comparison to the defined-benefit plan in place for ministers of the Word)

are defined-contribution plans, and these plans are actually preferred by many for the advantages they offer participants.

A suggested contribution to such a plan is 10 percent of the offered salary and housing allowance, within limits allowed by law. For the sake of reference it can be noted that the Reformed Church in America recommendation to churches is 11 percent, and in the CRC denomination staff who are not ordained ministers of the Word can contribute 6 percent or more of salary within legal limits and will receive up to a 4 percent match for a total of 10 percent or more.

Commissioned pastors and representatives of the ministries that support them are welcome to contact the CRCNA pension and employee benefits office for advice and resources on commissioned pastor retirement planning.

C. Accountability and supervision of commissioned pastors

Synod has declared that the classis shall ensure that commissioned pastors, especially those working at some distance from their calling congregations, will have proper supervision and support for their ministry.²⁸ Whenever an ordained pastor's work brings them outside the bounds of a local congregational ministry, there are challenges in supervision that need to be addressed.

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee²⁹

- Church Order Article 13 addresses this matter for ministers of the Word who serve in a ministry other than their calling church. A distinction in roles is called for wherein the local council supervises "doctrine and life" and the other ministries, institutions, and/or agencies involved supervise the ministry duties and performance. This arrangement also implies ongoing communication as needed between the council of the calling church and the supervising agencies that may be involved. We suggest that this same principle provides adequate guidance for church councils and classes as they face the challenges implicit in supervising commissioned pastors who work beyond the bounds of their calling church.
- It seems wise, then, that a job description should clearly delineate who the appropriate ministries and supervisors are in the case of a commissioned pastor role taking place outside the bounds of a calling church.³⁰ For supervision of doctrine and life it may be helpful to specify in a letter of mutual covenant the frequency and nature of expected reports and visits to the calling church. Ministers of the Word and commissioned pastors who serve outside the bounds of the local church, along with their calling churches, will be enabled to enjoy a meaningful relationship through such explicit statements of understanding. The Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry has a template for such a letter, called a "Covenant of Joint Supervision," and it is available on their website (crcna.org/chaplaincy).

D. Service of commissioned pastors at synod and on denominational boards, committees, and task forces

A commissioned pastor serving as a solo pastor in an organized congregation may be delegated by a classis to synod as a ministerial delegate. In addition, all other commissioned pastors may be delegated to synod as elder delegates. Note the following statements in Church Order Supplement, Article 45, b, 2-3:

A commissioned pastor serving as a solo pastor of an organized congregation may be sent as a ministerial delegate to synod and nominated to serve in other denominational functions where a person must normally be a minister of the Word (see *Acts of Synod 2007*, p. 665).

Commissioned pastors serving in emerging churches and associate staff positions may be delegated as elder delegates to synod and nominated to serve in other denominational functions where a person must normally be an elder³¹ (see *Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 559-60).

Thus, ministry leaders ordained as commissioned pastors are offered the full range of opportunity to serve the broader church as delegates to synod or as appointees to a denominational board or committee. Where the appointment is dependent on a designation as a “minister delegate,” only a commissioned pastor serving as a solo pastor in an organized congregation would be eligible. In appointments where an “elder designation” is required, or no designation is required, all other commissioned pastors would be eligible.

E. Moving and transitions

When commissioned pastors accept another call, their ordination shall require the approval of the classis to which their calling church belongs, to which the commissioned pastors shall have presented good ecclesiastical testimonies of doctrine and life given to them by their former council and classis.³²

1. Do commissioned pastors who move need to be reexamined?³³

Those ordained in the office of minister of the Word may move throughout the denomination without being reexamined, but commissioned pastors require a new examination each time they take a new position. A new congregation, ministry, or classis calling a commissioned pastor from another congregation, ministry, or classis is entitled to such a reexamination, not only as a matter of Church Order regulation but also as a matter of principle. By definition, a commissioned pastor is ordained to, and judged to be qualified for, a particular ministry. A different church and classis must thoroughly discern whether a commissioned pastor is qualified to serve in a different congregation and likely a different role. A different congregation and classis contemplating the call of a commissioned pastor is only being responsible in making a

fresh assessment of a commissioned pastor's qualifications *for this particular congregation and position*.

However, there is room for classis discretion in this area. Note this statement that was formerly included in the Church Order Supplement to Article 23-a (*italics in first sentence added for emphasis*):³⁴

Before examining a person for the office of commissioned pastor *or granting permission to install a previously ordained commissioned pastor in a new position*, the classis, with the concurring advice of synodical deputies, will determine whether or not the position to which the person is being called fits the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001. In addition, the candidates for the office of commissioned pastor must have proven ability to function in the ministry to which they are being called.

In practice, many classes have accepted as sufficient the examination of a "previously ordained commissioned pastor." In such cases the reputation of that person, the similarity of the ministry positions, and/or the recommendation of the previous ministry and classis have been judged by the classis as strong enough to merit no further local examination. Considering the reality that ordination in this office does not transfer, "the person can bring testimonies, but ordination is new with the commissioning to each position" (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 270).³⁵

The reexamination requirement, when balanced with the freedom to forgo the examination under certain circumstances, gives congregations and classes the proper balance of due diligence and flexibility as they contemplate calling a commissioned pastor from another ministry setting.

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee³⁶

- Practically speaking, the first official step in any change to a new assignment is to ascertain that the relevant job description is approved. If it has not been approved previously, such approval requires an action of classis with the concurrence of the synodical deputies.
- Then, judging on the similarity of the previous service of the potential commissioned pastor and the new proposed service, and judging on the effectiveness of the potential commissioned pastor in their previous ministry, the classis leadership could propose that classis offer permission to move toward ordination based on the examination conducted for the previous service.
- A letter of recommendation from a previous ministry and from a previous classis of service is required and should serve usefully for a commissioned pastor to present to a classis leadership team seeking to discern the nature and need of a "reexamination" for a new position in the same or in a different classis.
- Keep in mind that the "default practice" is that of examining a person for each commissioned pastor assignment.

- Recognize the option that a briefer examination, more akin to an interview, may be a useful substitute to a full examination. This would enable the classis to get to know the new commissioned pastor and give occasion to offer prayer for the person and the ministry involved. Although this option is not prescribed in the Church Order for either a commissioned pastor or a minister of the Word who is new to a classis, it might be a beneficial practice at classis for both.

2. Is it possible to move a commissioned pastor's credentials from one calling church to another?

There are cases in which a commissioned pastor who is serving in a ministry outside of a local church may desire to move his/her membership to another church, whose council would then supervise the pastor's doctrine and life.³⁷

The protocol approved by synod mirrors the accepted practice for ministers of the Word who transfer their credentials from one congregation to another while remaining in their same ministry role (outside of a given congregation, in missions, chaplaincy, or some approved agency work). This practice requires statements of agreement from both the current calling church and the new calling church. It also presumes that the job description is not changing. Finally, the transfer is noted in the minutes of whichever classes are involved (for appropriate recordkeeping, awareness, and accountability).

Protocol for transferring credentials of a commissioned pastor from one calling church to another³⁸

1. A commissioned pastor who serves in an approved ministry not lodged in a local church may request transfer of their church membership and transfer of their call from one congregation to another.
2. Both the "sending church" and the "receiving church" must agree to the transfer with the understanding that the receiving church agrees to extend such a call and take over the supervision of the doctrine and life of the commissioned pastor.
3. The call must be approved by the classis and duly noted as part of the history of the approval of the related job description.
4. The job description must remain unchanged, since alteration of the job description would require the approval of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies.
5. If the "receiving church" is in a classis other than that of the "sending church," the "receiving church" classis must approve the transfer and job description, with the concurrence of the synodical deputies, and the receiving classis will have the option of conducting an interview or examination of the commissioned pastor.

3. In what ways can our process encourage and support commissioned pastors as they face transitions in ministry?

Related to the previous item is the challenge of offering appropriate support to commissioned pastors as they face life transitions. In some cases, transitions occur as a person moves from one ordained position to another. In other cases, the transition involves a movement out of ordained ministry or a potential return to ordained ministry after a period of time away from ordained ministry.

The Church Order gives clear, and sometimes complex, processes for ministers of the Word in transition (see *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 318-28). The general principle regarding ordained service is that ordination is tied to ministry rather than to a person. In this regard, an active ordained minister of the Word who is not eligible for retirement and who exits an assigned ministry is given a period of two years to enter another approved ministry assignment (Church Order Article 17-c). That period may be extended on a yearly basis for reasons that are weighty in the judgment of classis with the concurrence of synodical deputies. Ministers of the Word who leave ordained ministry and enter a vocation that is judged to be nonministerial are expected to be released from office within one year of that judgment (Church Order Article 14-d). Any former minister of the Word may be eligible to reenter ordained service with the approval of the classis that approved the release from office (Church Order Article 14-e).

With respect to the sense of calling and the meaning of ordination, the assumptions about ordination for commissioned pastors are similar to those for ministers of the Word; however, when a ministry assignment concludes for a commissioned pastor, there is no specified “period of grace” built into the process. Rather than waiting one or two years, or more, to declare a person as no longer ordained, the expectation is that when a commissioned pastor leaves a ministry assignment, they are no longer considered to be ordained.

There can be, however, an inherent period of grace in the process even for commissioned pastors. The ordination status of a commissioned pastor may not be officially considered as concluded until it is reported to classis and recognized as such. In consideration of this reality, a classis has the option of offering a reasonable period of time, depending on the circumstances, in which a transitioning commissioned pastor can facilitate a transition to either a new ministry or a nonministerial vocational assignment.³⁹

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee

- The Church Order articles on transitions for ministers of the Word offer some helpful principles for grace-filled treatment of commissioned pastors who are in transition (Church Order Articles 14 and 17).

- The report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2016 reflects on various options that a classis and church council can consider as they deal with individual cases of transition (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 268-71).
- It is extremely important for the proper maintenance of records by the classis clerks, and by the synodical office, that classes note in their minutes, with clarity, any action taken regarding a transition of a commissioned pastor. The official transition cannot be recognized until classis declares it to have happened, and delinquency in reporting transitions can create numerous problems.
- Because the offices of minister of the Word and commissioned pastor differ from one another with regard to “automatic portability” (since a minister of the Word is ordained for ministry denomination-wide, and a commissioned pastor is ordained only for a specific ministry task), it is wise for the classis to be deliberative and discerning in the process of acknowledging the transition of a commissioned pastor. Approval of the new ministry position, as well as a thoughtful practice for a contextualized examination for the new position, needs to be taken into account.⁴⁰

F. Termination of positions and personnel

A painful part of church life for a commissioned pastor, for a ministry, and for a classis is any occasion in which a ministry position is eliminated or when a person serving in a ministry position is asked to leave. This is an area in our practice of commissioned pastor ordination where pastoral sensitivity and spiritual wisdom are needed. Each case will have different dynamics, and the relevant supervising bodies and classis leaders need to be in open communication in order to serve the church well.

Although termination can be voluntary or involuntary, the sad reality is that there have been cases in which a commissioned pastor has not been treated fairly in the conclusion of ministry service. Especially when the ministry service is at a local church, our corporate covenants require that we confer together to be sure that the pastor has been treated fairly when terminated. We are all well served by the reminder that, since commissioned pastors are ordained to office, they may not be simply dismissed as at-will employees. People serving in ordained ministry positions, whether ordained as a minister of the Word or as a commissioned pastor, deserve respect and just action regarding matters pertaining to their continuing service. At stake are the morale of our ordained pastors and also the reputation of the church as an agency of justice and mercy.⁴¹

The protocol used in Church Order Article 17 for ministers of the Word offers some helpful principles for determining behavior that honors the ministry, the departing commissioned pastor, and the Lord. Because each situation in the ministry setting of a commissioned pastor is unique (i.e., the length of service, whether the person serves part-time or full-time

or is a volunteer, etc.) and because the office of commissioned pastor is still evolving, a more precise protocol in this area has not been formed and, indeed, may not be needed. Classes, rather, are called to bear in mind the learned wisdom of Article 17 and to discern and decide in each circumstance what factors should come into play as they concur with the conclusion or dismissal of the service of a commissioned pastor.

Synodical guidelines regarding the termination of commissioned pastors⁴²

1. "A calling church that terminates the service of a person in an approved commissioned pastor position must seek the concurrence of the classis in which approval was given."⁴³ The ground given for this statement is as follows: "This provision is consistent with the frequent practice in our polity of the ecclesiastical body's involvement in the beginning and ending of a ministry position or a person's service in that position" (*Acts of Synod 2009*, pp. 583-84). The intent is to create a conversation within the classis (the body that approved the person in the position) that will ensure that appropriate care and respect are being shown by both parties (a ministry and a commissioned pastor) as a relationship is concluded.
2. Classes are instructed to make a determination of the status of any commissioned pastor who concludes service. Note the following comment in Church Order Supplement, Article 24-d:

Synod has offered, on various occasions, guidelines regarding the conclusion of an approved commissioned pastor position, the resignation of a commissioned pastor, and the release of a commissioned pastor. Synod also instructs classes to make an appropriate declaration reflecting the status of any commissioned pastor who concludes service. These guidelines and options regarding status are the same as those for minister of the Word and can be found in Supplement, Article 14-b, c, 2 or in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

The intent here is that a public record is created with regard to the service of all commissioned pastors. When they conclude service, whether the reasons are positive or negative, the church will be well served by being able to know the general disposition of classis toward that service. Commissioned pastors will also be well served by such a public record. For ministers of the Word who conclude service before retirement, there are four categories of designation: *honorably released*, *released*, *dismissed*, and *in the status of one deposed* (see Church Order Supplement, Article 14-b, c, 2). Synod suggested that classes use and note in their minutes one of these designations each time a commissioned pastor concludes service before retirement (see also section IV, L of this handbook).

3. "A commissioned pastor who is released from a calling church may, upon the request of the commissioned pastor or the calling church, and

with the approval of the classis, be assisted by the classis with a system of evaluation and assistance analogous to that described in Church Order Article 17 for ministers of the Word.⁴⁴

Helpful advice from the Candidacy Committee⁴⁵

- It is important to recognize the potential damage that could be done to the spirit of a commissioned pastor who is told that after leaving a ministry position they are no longer ordained. Though this should not come as a surprise, it may well be experienced as such. Such cases require much gentleness, and we urge that they be treated tenderly.
- It is also important to recognize the commitment we have made to tie ordination to a ministry calling, making it rather hard to comprehend the situation of a commissioned pastor without an active call.
- It is possible for classis leaders to pastorally provide time by declaring that the official conclusion of the ministry does not occur until classis has declared it concluded. Thus, there can be a period of adjustment between the action of leaving a ministry and classis' approving the conclusion of that ministry assignment. This is in keeping with the statement "A calling church that terminates the service of a person in an approved commissioned pastor position must seek the concurrence of the classis in which approval was given."
- Particularly for a person in a chaplaincy position as commissioned pastor, it may happen that the position is terminated but the commissioned pastor may actively search for and be able to find a new chaplaincy position. In such a case the commissioned pastor in question, the calling church, and the classis leaders need to be in conversation regarding whether the original call is still in place, adjusted, or terminated. Such a process would not be concluded until completion is affirmed by classis. The ordination of the commissioned pastor could thus be assumed to remain in effect until both the church and the classis rule it otherwise.
- Any commissioned pastor who leaves a ministry assignment and who intends to begin another ministry assignment should be encouraged to express their intentions and desires to the classis leadership. The classis leaders may then decide to postpone their declaration of a "ministry conclusion" for an agreed-upon period of time while the commissioned pastor involved searches for a new ministry assignment. Should this raise issues regarding title or compensation during a period of transition, we trust that such matters would be handled by the classis.
- Our Church Order specifies a protocol to be followed when a minister of the Word is released from a ministry assignment. This protocol is described in Church Order Supplement, Article 17-a, and it involves both the local ministry leaders and the classis in a conversation and journey that seeks to lead toward honorable treatment of a released

minister of the Word as well as healing for the congregation. The Candidacy Committee views this protocol as containing elements that can wisely guide a commissioned pastor's release from service.

- Certainly the circumstances in each case will vary, including the needs of the commissioned pastor, the responsibilities that were given to the commissioned pastor, the length of service, and other factors. For example, a full-time ministry position is likely more appropriately offered a severance package than is a part-time position. These issues need to be weighed as severance is discussed, and as readiness to recommend for future ministry is decided upon. A well-worded note in the minutes of classis describing the reality of concluded service and any appropriately public provisions will serve both the church and the commissioned pastor. This will also provide helpful documentation for denominational records and for potential future ministry.
- In all cases of "termination" (conclusion) of a commissioned pastor's service it is assumed that classis will take note of the change in status through its official minutes.

G. Discipline of commissioned pastors

The Church Order contains the following instructions regarding the discipline of commissioned pastors (Church Order Supplement, Articles 82-84, section e, 1-3):

1. "The suspension or deposition of a ... commissioned pastor shall be imposed by the council with the concurring judgment of the council of the nearest church in the same classis."
2. "If the neighboring council fails to concur in the position of the council of the ... commissioned pastor involved, the latter council shall either alter its original judgment or present the case to classis."
3. "The deposition of a commissioned pastor shall not be effected without the approval of the classis in which the commissioned pastor was approved for ordination."⁴⁶

83-Status of commissioned pastor emeritus⁴⁷

Church Order Article 24-e:

A commissioned pastor who has reached retirement age may, upon the judgment of classis, be given the title of *commissioned pastor emeritus*.

Church Order Supplement, Article 24-e:

A commissioned pastor emeritus may, upon the judgment of classis, retain the authority to perform official acts of ministry in ways consistent with their ordination prior to retirement. Supervision of a commissioned pastor emeritus shall remain with the church last served unless transferred to another congregation under the authority of the classis(es) involved.

It is appropriate to note here that when classis receives notice of the retirement of a commissioned pastor, the act of granting the title *commissioned pastor emeritus* need not be automatic. Surely a commissioned pastor who had not been authorized to preach or to administer sacraments would not be authorized to do so upon retirement. A judgment needs to be made by the classis and the calling church regarding what types of service are appropriate for a given individual in retirement, and that judgment will be influenced by the types of experience and the gifts the person possesses and is desirous of offering. The minutes of classis should reflect any case of a person being given the title *commissioned pastor emeritus* and also the nature of the authority given regarding official acts of ministry. All other commissioned pastors whose retirement is celebrated by classis should be noted in the minutes of classis.

VII. Tools Available for Administering the Office of Commissioned Pastor

The Candidacy Committee website of the Christian Reformed Church in North America offers a variety of tools and resources related to the administration of the office of commissioned pastor. These include forms and instructions for the various routes to ordination (see crcna.org/candidacy/forms-and-resources).

Please contact the Candidacy office (candidacy@crcna.org) if you need any help finding your way to these resources, or if you have any questions regarding the office of commissioned pastor.

VIII. Invitation to Share Resources and Concerns regarding the Office of Commissioned Pastor

The Candidacy Committee is well aware that our use of the office of commissioned pastor is still evolving. Although by definition the office has a local focus and the responsibility for the office needs to remain localized, the Candidacy Committee is open to serving the CRC, its congregations, and its classes as a resource center that can help gather and distribute ideas, practices, and concerns regarding this office. This handbook is one effort at performing that task. If you have any further questions or suggestions that may be of benefit to local congregations and classes, please contact the director of Candidacy so that your suggestions and concerns can be recorded and passed along to other ministries as appropriate.

Contact:

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¹ An overview of the development of the office of commissioned pastor and the use of this handbook:

The CRC denominational Candidacy Committee, in its 2007 report to synod, called upon the church to give the office of commissioned pastor “more use, more status, and more support.” The committee suggested this goal in the context of aiming to return to a more historical use of Church Order Article 7 entry into ordination as minister of the Word, and to use Church Order Article 23 as the route to ministry for persons who do not have the academic training required for ordination as a minister of the Word.

Over the subsequent decade a variety of issues were identified through various formal and informal conversations among leaders, councils, classes, the Candidacy Committee, and synod. A brief review of that discussion, especially at the formal level of synod, would include the following:

- a. In its report to Synod 2009 the Candidacy Committee suggested a variety of initiatives to support and honor persons serving as commissioned pastors, and a number of those initiatives have now been implemented. Many classes now formally acknowledge the retirement of commissioned pastors, and synod acknowledges them in its yearly meeting as classes report information to the Synodical Services office. The denomination’s official magazine, *The Banner*, often highlights the ministries served by commissioned pastors and includes commissioned pastors as contributors. Numerous leaders in the CRCNA are currently ordained as commissioned pastors.
- b. Synod 2015 received an overture from Classis Hamilton requesting clarification in a number of areas regarding the practice, process, and use of the office of commissioned pastor. Synod referred the overture to the Candidacy Committee, prompting key contributions to the discussion via Candidacy Committee reports to Synods 2016, 2017, and 2018. A number of the statements in this handbook reflect actions of synod in response to those Candidacy Committee reports.
- c. More specifically, Synod 2016 approved “observations for our practice” related to twelve areas of clarification regarding the use and practice of the office; Synod 2017 approved statements regarding a number of follow-up matters; and Synod 2019 approved a reformatting of Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and their Supplements as well as an update to this handbook in connection with those changes.

² This statement from the report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2016 was among the “observations for our practice” that synod received and recommended to the churches and classes as helpful advice (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 263; *Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 848).

³ Numerous concerns have come up over the title of this office. *Ministry associate* seemed to some to be a “second class” designation. Synod 2012 addressed this experience of discouragement and approved the current title, *commissioned pastor*, noting the intent to “give encouragement and support to those serving in this office” (*Acts of Synod 2012*, pp. 741-42). An overture from Classis Hamilton to Synod 2015 observed that some people have the impression that the change of the name of the office by Synod 2012 (from *ministry associate* to *commissioned pastor*) indicated a desire to keep commissioned pastors marginalized in some sense. In the words of the overture from Classis Hamilton, some believe the intent was to see the commissioned pastor role as a “mini-minister” or a “minister lite” position. Synod tasked the Candidacy Committee with responding to this overture through its report to Synod 2016 (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 262-275). The committee response is noted there. The grounds for the decision of Synod 2012 to change the title of this office were as follows: “a. Such a change [from *ministry associate* to *commissioned pastor*] will give encouragement and support to those serving in this office. b. Such a change will show a positive response to many who have expressed a feeling of marginalization because of the current title [ministry associate]” (*Acts of Synod 2012*, pp.

741-42). The committee also noted: “The grounds of synod’s action in 2012 go on to cite the statement of Synod 2007 regarding giving ‘more value, more use, and more support’ to those serving in the office.” Thus the report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2016 included a few “observations for our practice” that synod received and recommended to the churches and classes as helpful advice (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 263; *Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 848). The first of those observations states, “It seems wise for each classis, each officebearer, and each ministry context to recognize these affirmations relative to the office of commissioned pastor.”

⁴ Until 2019 the Church Order Supplement for Articles 23 and 24 was quite lengthy. Synod 2018 approved the concept of making greater use of the Commissioned Pastor Handbook as a vehicle to communicate the various detailed rules and practices regarding the office of commissioned pastor. Synod 2019 approved this measure, with the understanding that updates will be made as time continues, with appropriate related notations included in the handbook. This section of the handbook contains numerous statements previously included in the Church Order Supplement. Relevant additional statements received and approved by synod are included under many of the topic areas. The expectation of synod is that these statements remain esteemed and useful in the administration of the office of commissioned pastor. As is stated in Church Order Article 29, decisions of ecclesiastical bodies, including synod, shall be considered “settled and binding.”

⁵ In the past, the Synodical Services office received inquiries seeking help in determining the elements of an acceptable job description. The Candidacy office also received occasional similar requests from classes and local ministries. Synod 2012 therefore added to the Church Order Supplement the following statement now appearing in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

⁶ The Candidacy Committee, in its report to Synod 2016, offered “observations for our practice” in connection with various concerns about job descriptions (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 265-66; *Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 848). This advice was offered in the context of parallel guidance for approval of job descriptions for minister of the Word as presented in Church Order Articles 12-b, 12-c, 13-b, and 13-c.

⁷ The CRC’s Chaplaincy and Care ministry was instrumental in the 2003 change of the office title from “evangelist” to “ministry associate.” Their concern was that the title of the office appropriately honor the unique ministry of the chaplain. Synod 2003 also approved the key statement that validates the work of chaplains ordained as commissioned pastors (see *Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 613); that statement now appears in Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a.

⁸ The office of commissioned pastor began in the CRCNA as a way to ordain persons who had not had the required academic training for ordination as a minister of the Word and were doing evangelistic work in church planting. The office soon expanded to cover a variety of potential ministry positions, as guided by the statement of Synod 2001 quoted in Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a. The phenomenon of commissioned pastors serving as lead or solo pastors in organized (established) congregations has been noted numerous times by the Candidacy Committee, by synod, and by others. There have been some cases in the past few years in which an organized congregation has developed a close relationship with a current commissioned pastor or a current seminary student. The relationship between congregation and potential pastor has been so compelling that the congregation has sought ways to engage the person’s service before the person has become eligible for candidacy as a minister of the Word.

⁹ Synod 2010 received an overture requesting that the phrase “reasonable period of transition” be quantified for clarity. The Candidacy Committee suggested, and synod agreed, that flexibility is a virtue in this matter and that the words should remain unchanged (see *Agenda for Synod 2011*, pp. 328-30; *Acts of Synod 2011*, p. 836). It is important to note, however, that these are exceptional situations and that ordinarily ministers of the Word are called to serve as pastors of organized congregations.

¹⁰ Former Church Order Article 23-b

¹¹ Former Church Order Article 23-c

¹² Former Church Order Article 23-d

¹³ Former Church Order Supplement, Article 23-d (see *Acts of Synod 2008*, p. 520)

¹⁴ The Candidacy Committee, in its report to Synod 2017, proposed a new Church Order article that would allow the office of commissioned pastor to be used as a “bridge ordination” while a person completes the requirements for candidacy as a minister of the Word (see *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 322-23; *Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 689). The proposed article was adopted by Synod 2018 (*Acts of Synod 2018*, p. 465) and now appears as Article 24-b of the Church Order.

¹⁵ The Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2016 (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 273-74; *Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 848) addressed the practice of established churches calling persons as commissioned pastors. The report offered the following “observations for our practice,” received by synod and recommended to churches and classes as helpful advice.

¹⁶ Synod 2004 approved a document to guide classes in defining the qualifications of a person being considered for ordination as a commissioned pastor. The document was included in the Church Order Supplement for a number of years, and it remains here as a synodically endorsed description of the standards for pastoral ministry.

¹⁷ These items of helpful advice were received from the Candidacy Committee by Synod 2016 (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 272-73).

¹⁸ A consult meeting sponsored by the Candidacy Committee in fall 2011 resulted in this agreement that it is wiser for classes not to proceed too quickly toward ordination of a commissioned pastor but to prescribe a series of steps.

¹⁹ The Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2016 observed that the grounds of this approved motion indicate the growing regard that the church has for the office of commissioned pastor.

²⁰ The Candidacy Committee reported to Synod 2017 that this occurred in connection with the 2013 adjustment to the requirement for learning plans.

²¹ The Candidacy Committee called synod’s attention to the limited nature of the role of synodical deputies in this matter of examination for a solo pastor position. The stated hope of synod and the Candidacy Committee is that this approach will mitigate concerns regarding denominational overreach while still ensuring that the interests of the

denomination are served (see *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 318-28; *Acts of Synod 2017*, pp. 685, 688-90).

²² The Classis Hamilton overture to Synod 2015 also reported a lack of clarity in how classis approves a commissioned pastor position and the person seeking ordination under Article 23. In our use of Article 23 two actions are required by classis (approval of the position, and examination and approval of a person to fill the position). Classis Hamilton's overture suggested that a proper approval process should ordinarily involve two classis meetings in order to avoid an awkward situation in which a position is not approved but a candidate is standing ready to be examined to fill the position. Classis Hamilton went on to request in the overture "that synod clarify that a candidate cannot be called to a position that has not been approved by classis with the concurrence of the synodical deputies" (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 435). In offering advice, the Candidacy Committee observed that the Church Order is clear in the area of a two-step process of approval but is perhaps not clear in the way some persons would like. The Church Order Supplement at the time stated, "Before examining a person for the office of commissioned pastor or granting permission to install a previously ordained commissioned pastor in a new position, the classis, with the concurring advice of synodical deputies, will determine whether or not the position to which the person is being called fits the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001." The two steps are clearly defined, although there is no reference to two meetings being required. The Candidacy Committee therefore offered to Synod 2016 the following "observations for our practice," which synod received and recommended to the churches and classes as helpful advice (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 263-65; *Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 848).

²³ Synod 2018 approved that a criminal background check and a psychological evaluation be done for those who are examined for positions involving solo or senior leadership in a given ministry. This is in addition to the requirement that such individuals complete an approved learning plan for orientation in denominational matters (see *Acts of Synod 2018*, p. 465).

²⁴ Synod 2018 instructed the Candidacy Committee to provide guidelines for exams done by video (see *Acts of Synod 2018*, p. 488). The Candidacy Committee consulted classes that had already used video in conducting examinations. In one case, a classis had examined a candidate who was living in Korea. In another case a candidate who was in the military had been examined while on a base in Alaska. The Candidacy Committee also spoke to persons who had technological expertise.

²⁵ The discussion here is adapted from the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2009 (see *Agenda for Synod 2009*, pp. 218-19; *Acts of Synod 2009*, p. 583).

²⁶ Also with regard to salary matters, Synod 2018 received an overture from Classis Niagara seeking to establish an annual compensation survey for commissioned pastors. Synod did not accede to the overture, citing the following grounds: (1) The role of commissioned pastors encompasses many diverse roles and responsibilities that limit the validity of any survey within the CRCNA; (2) The churches can access resources such as the *2018 Compensation Handbook for Church Staff* by Richard Hammar, which provides detailed compensation analyses for most ministry positions (see *Acts of Synod 2018*, pp. 459-60).

²⁷ The following discussion draws from and expands on the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2009 (see *Agenda for Synod 2009*, pp. 218-19; *Acts of Synod 2009*, p. 583). Also regarding retirement plans, Synod 2018 received an overture from Classis Niagara seeking to establish a defined-contribution pension plan for commissioned pastors. While affirming the "intent and need to establish defined-contribution pension plans for

commissioned pastors,” synod did not accede to the overture, citing the following grounds: (1) Centralized administration of multiemployer defined contribution plans require a level of uniformity and coordination not available within our denominational structure. (2) For churches that decide to provide such a plan, the denomination’s pension office has information and resources available to local congregations to assist in establishing individual plans. (3) Assistance in meeting the cost of establishing such plans is available through the Financial Shalom Project (see *Acts of Synod 2018*, p. 460).

²⁸ This statement was included in the Church Order Supplement to Article 23-a prior to 2019. Some issues of accountability, supervision, and even discipline concerning commissioned pastors have been dealt with by synod at various times (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 262-75; *Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 848-49). Complication in supervision is faced in certain ministry assignments of ministers of the Word as well as in those of commissioned pastors.

²⁹ These observations by the Candidacy Committee were received and recommended by Synod 2016 as helpful advice.

³⁰ This point is stated rather explicitly in the 2012 addition to the Church Order Supplement to Article 23-a dealing with “elements of a good job description” (see section IV, A of this handbook).

³¹ Synod 2013 made adjustments to Church Order Article 23-a, removing a reference to commissioned pastors as “elders” (*Acts of Synod 2013*, pp. 556-57). The same synod made clear that commissioned pastors may be delegated to synod and may be appointed to serve on denominational boards and committees, adding this statement as Church Order Supplement, Article 45, b, 3.

³² This statement was in the former Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a.

³³ The Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2009 addressed concerns regarding the need for a new classical examination for commissioned pastors who move from classis to classis, and synod accepted this report (see *Agenda for Synod 2009*, p. 218; *Acts of Synod 2009*, p. 583).

³⁴ The statement here, formerly included in Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a, was part of the General Regulations preceding the material that now appears in section IV, A-D of the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

³⁵ This matter came up again in 2015 through an overture from Classis Hamilton. The overture was referred to the Candidacy Committee, which responded via its report to Synod 2016 (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 262-75; *Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 848-49). In their overture Classis Hamilton asked, “Under what circumstances should a commissioned pastor be reexamined in order to enter a different position under Article 23?” (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 436). The Candidacy Committee responded by observing that the Church Order does not allow for a “transfer” of ordination for a commissioned pastor. Ordination in each position is linked only to that position. Yet the committee report went on to observe that the Church Order Supplement suggested that a classis has some latitude in deciding whether or not to reexamine a commissioned pastor who has previously served in a different ministry.

³⁶ See *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 270-71.

³⁷ The Candidacy Committee reports to Synods 2016 and 2017 dealt with this issue, prompted by the helpful 2015 overture from Classis Hamilton. Classis Hamilton suggested a procedure for the transfer process, and the Candidacy Committee adapted that into a set of guidelines it presented to Synod 2017, which approved them for inclusion in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook. The Candidacy Committee observed that the cases in which such guidelines may be needed are rather rare but that with the evolving use of the office of commissioned pastor such cases may become more common.

³⁸ See *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 320-21; *Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 688.

³⁹ These matters are discussed in detail in the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2016 (Appendix A, sections 6-8; *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 268-71). The Candidacy Committee did not believe it to be wise to add a new layer of Church Order direction in this matter; however, they suggested that Synod 2017 address these issues by approving for insertion in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook the following statements of guidance for churches and classes as they deal with persons who are ordained as commissioned pastors and are experiencing a transition of ministry assignment and vocation (see *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 321-22; *Acts of Synod 2017*, pp. 688-89).

⁴⁰ See Appendix A, section 8 of the Candidacy Committee report, *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 270-71.

⁴¹ Synod 2017 looked at the issue of ways to provide fair treatment of and good practice in cases where a commissioned pastor is terminated. The report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2017 observed that the vulnerability of ordained commissioned pastors has been recognized by previous synods. Synod 2009 approved an addition to the Church Order Supplement (which in 2019 was transferred to this handbook). This statement of synod has proved to be helpful; however, the Candidacy Committee asserted that it is necessary to speak with greater strength and clarity regarding this matter.

⁴² The issue of accountability in discipline came before Synod 2018 in a number of contexts. As it relates to commissioned pastors, two actions of Synod 2019 should be noted in response to concerns raised at Synod 2018 (see Section IV, F of this handbook; see also *Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 783).

⁴³ The report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2009 observed that our denominational regulations for ministers of the Word provide a detailed protocol for ending a relationship between a minister of the Word and a congregation (see Church Order Article 17). The report noted that as the office of commissioned pastor has developed, concerns have arisen that some degree of “protection” or “guidance” be given regarding a congregation that wishes to conclude (or dismiss) the service of an approved commissioned pastor, or regarding a commissioned pastor who wishes voluntarily to conclude service. Synod 2009 inserted this statement into the Church Order Supplement, and this statement is now included here in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook (see *Acts of Synod 2009*, p. 583-84).

⁴⁴ As Synod 2017 approved this statement, it noted the intention of the Candidacy Committee that decisions regarding this area of managing the office of commissioned pastor stay, as much as possible, within the authority of the classis. The statement is carefully worded to apply only to those who express a desire for such support and to those cases that the classis may judge would benefit from such review and support. The protocol of Church Order Article 17, with its supplemental material, is rather extensive and provides wise guidance that can serve as a template for the classis, should it wish to

apply that material to a case involving the release of a commissioned pastor (see *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 319-20; *Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 685).

⁴⁵ See *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 268-70.

⁴⁶ In Church Order Supplement, Articles 82-84, a line was added in section e to clarify that the classis must be involved when a commissioned pastor is deposed (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 783).

⁴⁷ In recent years synod has reviewed and considered the matter of ordination status for persons who retire from service as a commissioned pastor. The Candidacy Committee first formally mentioned this issue in its report to Synod 2016 (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 272, 274). Note the reflections in the report:

Under our current Church Order there is no provision of a “ministerial status” for a commissioned pastor who retires. Church Order Article 18 offers provision for “emeritus” status for ministers of the Word who retire, allowing them to continue performing official acts of ministry.

As we seek to place more value on the office of commissioned pastor and offer more support to those who serve in this office (remember the words of Synod 2007), we recognize that it is a worthy challenge to look for ways to honor and continue to make use of commissioned pastors who retire after having served well. Perhaps not all job descriptions or all persons serving in the office would appropriately lead toward some sort of “emeritus” status. Yet surely those who have served in a solo pastor role, and those who have served in a full-time capacity for a number of years would be appropriately honored in this way. The church could be blessed by their ability to continue as ordained pulpit supply, and those commissioned pastors would be blessed as they retained a pastoral identity.

At least two of our classes have taken the step of creating a category called *commissioned pastor emeritus*. In doing so, they confer this title on respected commissioned pastors in their retirement. The minutes of the classis record this status and indicate that the commissioned pastor has authority to do the official acts of ministry (preaching, administration of sacraments, officiating at weddings, etc.) as long as they are mentally and physically able. These classes are extending the intent of Church Order Article 18 to their treatment of commissioned pastors.

Although this practice is not currently in the Church Order, the Candidacy Committee judges that the practice of conferring *commissioned pastor emeritus* status on a retiring commissioned pastor is within the classical scope of authority and that a classis might well consider doing so. It may well be that the practice may increase and may result in an eventual overture to synod that more officially recognizes the practice.

Synod 2017 considered and approved a formal motion that would establish in our Church Order the practice of conferring on certain commissioned pastors the title *commissioned pastor emeritus* (see *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 318-19, 326-27, and *Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 685). The motion was recommended for approval by Synod 2018. With major refinement of the format of Church Order Articles 23-24 also being considered by Synod 2018, those statements were presented and approved by Synod 2019 as Church Order Article 24-e and its Supplement (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 783).

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENT

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

I. Membership nominations and appointment

A. 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 one nominee for the USA Central position and two nominees for the USA East position.

1. USA Central position

William Krahmke is a member of Pease (Minn.) CRC, where he serves as a praise-team participant, musician, and volunteer youth worker. He has participated on the search team committee, the praise team planning committee, and the youth ministry team at his church. He has served twice as a young adult representative for synod.

2. USA East position

Rev. Sheila Holmes is the pastor of Northside Community CRC in Paterson, New Jersey. She has served in past years on the Board of Christian Reformed Home Missions, the CRCNA Board of Trustees, the Diversity in Leadership Planning Group, the Black and Reformed Leadership Network, the Ecumenical Churches Group in Paterson, the Board of Governors of the American Red Cross, and the Paterson Ceasefire Executive Team. Currently she serves as stated clerk of Classis Hackensack and is finishing her second term on the Council of Delegates. She has traveled to Africa and Israel several times using her education in trauma awareness.

Rev. John Lee serves as the interim pastor for the Reformed Church of Newtown in Queens, New York City, and as an administrator at the Geneva School of Manhattan. He is the board president of Ad Fontes Philanthropy and is a board member of Interserve. In the past he served as board president of Bridges International School.

B. Appointment

In October 2022 the Council of Delegates appointed Jake Bentum to serve a modified first term on the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, effective November 1, 2022, through July 1, 2025, with eligibility for reappointment to a subsequent term.

II. Updated Interfaith Subcommittee mandate

The EIRC Interfaith Subcommittee requested that their mandate be updated to include more engagement with CRC churches. The following mandate was adopted and is presented to synod for information:

The interfaith subcommittee serves the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee (EIRC) by means of the following:

- compiling resources for the CRC that will guide interfaith encounters
- monitoring and facilitating interfaith encounters that come through ecumenical activities and within the context of the ministries of the CRC
- providing advice and perspectives for the CRC as requested
- interacting on a peer-to-peer basis for learning and encouragement with leaders of CRC congregations that are currently involved in interfaith relationships
- when appropriate and opportune, representing the CRC in interfaith dialogues

III. Recommendations

A. 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, 2023.

B. That synod affirm the appointment of Jake Bentum by the Council of Delegates to serve a modified first term, effective November 1, 2022, through July 1, 2025, with eligibility for reappointment to a subsequent term.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee
William T. Koopmans, chair
Zachary J. King, general secretary (ex officio)

OVERTURES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Rule and Declare that the Interpretation of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 Has the Weight of Synodical Authority but Not Confessional Status

The council of Waterloo (Ont.) Christian Reformed Church overtures Synod 2023 to rule and declare that the interpretation of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 adopted by Synod 2022 (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922) has the weight of synodical authority but does not have confessional status.

I. Background

The Human Sexuality Report (HSR) recommended “that synod declare that the church’s teaching on premarital sex, extramarital sex, adultery, polyamory, pornography, and homosexual sex already has confessional status” (*Agenda for Synod 2022*, p. 461). The HSR based this recommendation in part on a passage from the commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism by one of its authors, Zacharias Ursinus, arguing that the church has always included these things in its interpretation of what “unchastity” means in the catechism (*Agenda for Synod 2022*, pp. 457–58).

Synod 2022 wisely did not follow the study committee’s reasoning. A commentary on the catechism, even if written by one of its authors, does not have confessional status. The church has adopted the catechism, not every thought of its authors.

Nevertheless, Synod 2022 did accept the study committee’s interpretation of Q&A 108 of the Heidelberg Catechism and declared it to have confessional status, citing different grounds. One of these grounds is a decision on synodical authority from Synod 1975. Unfortunately, Synod 2022 misread and misapplied this 1975 decision in ways that have consequences far beyond the immediate decision of Synod 2022.

First let us look at what Synod 1975 decided, and then we will turn to what Synod 2022 did.

II. Synod 1975

Synod 1975 was presented with a study committee report on “Synodical Decisions and the Confessions” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, pp. 595–604). This report was commissioned by Synod 1973 “to study the use and function of synodical pronouncements on doctrinal and ethical matters, and their relation to the confessions.” Clearly, as Synod 2022 noted, this study is directly relevant to the question of whether a synodical interpretation of a creed itself has confessional status. This study is indeed relevant, but Synod 2022 misread and misapplied it.

In the study report to Synod 1975, the committee distinguished the relative authority of Scripture, creeds and confessions, and synods:

The authority of the confessions is subordinate to the Scriptures. The authority of synodical decisions is subordinate to the confessions and the Scriptures as the authority of the confessions is subordinate to the Scriptures. Subscription to the confessions is required of all office-bearers and agreement with the confessions is expected of all members of the church. Synodical decisions are "considered settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order." They must be in harmony with the Reformed creeds which the Christian Reformed Church accepts "as a true interpretation of this Word" (Church Order, Arts. 29 and 1). *Thus there is a difference in the nature of the authority of the confessions and synodical pronouncements.* (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 601; emphasis added)

The report illustrates this last point—the “difference in the nature of the authority of the confessions and synodical pronouncements”—by reviewing how earlier synods handled the relationship between confessional authority and synodical authority. On this basis, the committee concludes that synodical decisions have not been given confessional status, “even when the particular decision involved was an interpretation of the confessions” (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 599). The report makes very clear that synodical decisions do not have confessional status.

The difference can be expressed in terms of the latitude given to those who hold church office. The confessions require *subscription*. If one cannot give full consent on a given point taught by a confession, one must follow the procedures for dissent prescribed in Supplement, Article 5 of the Church Order. Synodical decisions, in contrast, require *obedience* but not agreement. Unlike a confession, those who hold office in the church are not required to *subscribe* to the pronouncements of synod.

The 1975 study committee also distinguished among the different kinds of authority that synodical decisions possess. This part of the 1975 report and the decisions made by Synod 1975 seem to have confused Synod 2022. The 1975 committee sorted through various synodical pronouncements and distinguished how those pronouncements should be taken by the church. They identified six kinds of synodical pronouncements: (1) interpretation of a confession, (2) extension of church teaching into a new area, (3) adjudication of doctrinal or moral disputes, (4) public testimony, (5) guidelines for further study, and (6) pastoral advice. Each of these has its own kind of authority, but each remains synodical authority, not confessional authority.

Most of these different uses are transparent. The church knows to take pastoral advice differently than a public testimony supporting a teaching of the church. The point is that the church should use each synodical pronouncement as it is intended.

Synod 1975 adopted the committee’s understanding of synodical decisions. First, it made clear the inherent difference between synodical authority and confessional authority:

Synodical pronouncements on doctrinal and ethical matters are subordinate to the confessions. . . . The confessions and synodical pronouncements have nuances of differences. They differ in their extent of jurisdiction, in their nature of authority, in the distinction of purposes, in the measure of agreement expected, and in their use and function.

(*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603)

Further, in enumerating the six kinds of synodical pronouncement, Synod 1975 made clear their purposes, noting first among these an interpretation of a confession:

The use and function of synodical decisions is explicitly or implicitly indicated by the wording of the particular decision itself:

. . . When a synodical pronouncement is set forth as an interpretation of the confession, this is its use and function. (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603)

Crucially, as this makes clear, the interpretation of a confession does not mean, as Synod 2022 takes it, that the interpretation becomes confessional, but rather that a synodical interpretation of a confession is just that, a synodical interpretation. The interpretation comes with the authority of the synod, not with the authority of the confession.

This is an important and fundamental principle of Reformed polity. If synodical interpretations of a confession are themselves confessional, then what is confessional can be extended infinitely. Each synod could make an interpretation of a confession, and the confession would grow each time, changing the meaning of one's subscription to the confession. For this reason, Reformed polity distinguishes between the authority of the confessions and the authority of synods.

III. Synod 2022

Synod 2022, however, did not observe this difference between confessional and synodical authority. Among its decisions on human sexuality, Synod 2022 declared:

That . . . "unchastity" in Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 108 encompasses adultery, premarital sex, extramarital sex, polyamory, pornography, and homosexual sex, all of which violate the seventh commandment. In so doing, synod declares this affirmation "an interpretation of [a] confession" (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603). Therefore, this interpretation has confessional status. (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922)

This "therefore" seems to be based on the citation of Synod 1975 in the previous sentence. So too is the first ground for the decision:

a. "When a synodical pronouncement is set forth as an interpretation of the confession, this is its use and function" (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603). (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922)

As has been shown, however, this statement from 1975 does not mean that a synodical pronouncement is given the same authority as a confession;

rather, it indicates how the pronouncement is to be used—that is, as an interpretation of a confession. The synodical interpretation is not the confession itself. The confession has confessional status; the interpretation does not.

This means the “therefore” of the Synod 2022 decision is incorrect. Synod argues its case for giving its interpretation confessional status on the basis of a misreading of Synod 1975, which in fact says quite the opposite.

IV. Redressing the Wrong

The Church Order sets a high bar for reconsideration of synodical decisions: “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” (Art. 29). Is Synod 2023 permitted to reconsider the decision of Synod 2022?

We think so. Synod 1975 clearly said that synodical pronouncements do not have the authority of confessions, even if a synodical pronouncement is an interpretation of a confession. Synod 2022 assigned confessional status to its interpretation of a confession, thereby contradicting Synod 1975 and making an error that should be corrected.

Further, Synod 2022 violated Church Order Article 29 by in error reversing the decision of Synod 1975. Synod 1975 clearly said that synodical pronouncements do not have confessional authority. Synod 2022, misreading Synod 1975, in effect reconsidered the actions of Synod 1975 without giving reasons for doing so. Synods of course can and often do change the decisions of previous synods, so Synod 2022 could have changed the level of authority given to interpretations of confessions. But that is not what Synod 2022 did. Instead, Synod 2022 claimed to follow Synod 1975 when in fact it altered a longstanding and important principle: synodical decisions do not have confessional authority.

To make this kind of change without prior consideration by the church and on the basis of what appears to be faulty reasoning is not wise. If synodical interpretations of the confessions can claim confessional status, the church has in effect extended the confessions to whatever the next synod or the synod after that decides is the correct interpretation, subordinating the authority of confessions to that of synods and undermining a long-held principle of Reformed polity.

The effect of this change would be to throw the process of subscription to the confessions into confusion. If officebearers are to subscribe not only to the confessions as written but to synodical interpretations of the confessions, then they cannot be certain to what they are subscribing. The confessions could conceivably change from year to year.

This has been the effect already of the decision of Synod 2022. Suddenly, those who opposed the actions taken by Synod 2022 are uncertain what their previous subscription to the confessions now means. Must they re-subscribe? Is their previous subscription invalid? These questions were

not adequately addressed by Synod 2022, nor can they be. Synod 2022 changed what it means to be confessional, and this change came without due consideration and on the basis of an erroneous reading of a previous synod.

For these reasons, it seems prudent for Synod 2023 to reconsider the decision of Synod 2022 to declare as confessional their interpretation of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108. Synod 2023 should reinstate the principle of Synod 1975 that synodical pronouncements, even when they are interpretations of a confession, do not themselves have confessional status.

V. Overture

We, the council of Waterloo CRC, overture Synod 2023 to rule and declare that the interpretation of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 adopted by Synod 2022 (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922) has the weight of synodical authority but does not have confessional status.

Grounds:

1. The declaration of Synod 2022 that its interpretation of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 has confessional status is based on a misreading of the decisions of Synod 1975.
2. This misreading materially changes the relationship between confessions and pronouncements of synods so that any synod can declare that its interpretation of a confession has confessional status, thereby extending and altering confessional status in ways that are inherently unpredictable and unmanageable for anyone who in good faith has subscribed to the confessions.
3. Synod 2022, by redefining the relationship between the authority of the confessions and the authority of synods, has made a fundamental change in the polity of the church without prior notice to the congregations and classes and without providing a clear rationale for doing so, thereby violating Article 29 of the Church Order.
4. The decision of Synod 2022, for the reasons given above, violates the good order of the Christian Reformed Church, constituting grounds for reconsideration.
5. The declaration of Synod 2022 that its interpretation of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 has confessional status has unsettled the denomination and forced office holders in good standing to leave the Christian Reformed Church, thereby diminishing the peace and orderly life of the denomination.

Council of Waterloo CRC, Waterloo, Ontario
Andrew White, clerk

Note: This overture was submitted to the spring meeting of Classis Huron but was not adopted.

Do Not Accede to the Overture from Classis Zeeland to Redistrict and Dissolve Classis Grand Rapids East

I. Introduction

On February 2, 2023, Classis Zeeland approved an overture that asks Synod 2023 to redistrict the churches of Classis Grand Rapids East (“Classis GRE”), effective immediately, to declare that Classis GRE will complete its work on March 15, 2024, and to dissolve Classis GRE (see Overture 65, *Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 567-70).

In this overture, Classis GRE respectfully asks that synod not accede to the overture from Classis Zeeland.

II. Background

1. Synod 2022 decided the appropriate discipline for Classis GRE and gave its *in loco* committee the mandate to make further recommendations for Classis GRE.

Synod 2022 decided that the appropriate discipline for Classis GRE was admonishment. Synod 2022 appointed an *in loco* committee, whose mandate included the following: “Meet with Classis Grand Rapids East to admonish them . . .” and “. . . make pertinent recommendations for [Classis GRE’s] deliberations and actions” (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 941).

After meeting with the pastors of Classis GRE and attending the September 15, 2022, meeting of Classis GRE, synod’s *in loco* committee made four recommendations in its Neland Avenue CRC *In Loco* Committee Report (see *Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 342-43):

- That Classis GRE acknowledge its admonition.
- That Classis GRE appoint an oversight committee for Neland Ave CRC.
- That Classis GRE continue to pastorally care for those most directly affected by the decisions of synod and classis.
- That Classis GRE communicate its response to its admonition and provide a progress report to Synod 2023.

2. Classis Zeeland has asked synod to adopt its recommendations as an alternative to those of synod’s *in loco* committee.

A. Classis Zeeland did not consider the report of the committee.

Classis Zeeland approved its overture before reviewing the report from synod’s *in loco* committee (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 567). Classis Zeeland gave three reasons.

First, it stated that it had to proceed before the report was publicized “due to the agenda deadlines of both Classis Zeeland and synod”

(p. 567). However, Classis Zeeland, or any other classis, could have responded to the report and the response by Classis GRE *after* they were published, and would have had until May 15 to file a timely response with synod.

Second, Classis Zeeland stated that the Church Order provides no mechanism or right for Neland Avenue CRC to appeal the decision of Synod (p. 567). This is incorrect. Article 30 of the Church Order states that “assemblies . . . may appeal to the assembly next in order if they believe that injustice has been done or that a decision conflicts with the Word of God or the Church Order.” The “assembly next in order” when appealing a decision of a synod is “a following synod, a year later or even beyond” (Henry De Moor, *Christian Reformed Church Order Commentary*, 2nd ed., p. 176).

Finally, Classis Zeeland states that some churches in Classis GRE have declared themselves “welcoming and affirming” (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 567). The overture alleges these churches acted because “it is stated” that Classis GRE is a safe classis for such churches to do so (p. 567). By “it is stated,” Classis Zeeland refers to the opinions of a retired pastor from Classis GRE from a conversation on a YouTube video (p. 567). However, it did not show this is the official position of Classis GRE (it is not), nor that any churches acted for this reason.

These reasons are not a sufficient basis for Classis Zeeland to usurp the role of the *in loco* committee appointed by Synod 2022 and to ask Synod 2023 to follow the recommendations of Classis Zeeland instead.

B. Classis Zeeland did not consider the response of Classis GRE to the report.

At its meeting on January 19, 2023, Classis GRE responded, “Classis receives the work and the report of the committee with gratitude and in particular acknowledges the admonition in the report” (*Minutes of 1-29-23 Meeting of Classis GRE*, 123.1, 2.1, p. 1).

At the same meeting, Classis GRE also adopted an overture in response to the report of synod’s *in loco* committee. This overture agreed with all but one of the committee’s recommendations. In response to the remaining recommendation, it suggested a similar, but more pastoral, alternative. The overture adopted by Classis GRE did the following:

- Outlined how Classis GRE responded promptly and faithfully to Neland’s decision and continues to do so.
- Agreed with the recommendation to continue to provide pastoral care to those most affected.
- Suggested for further consideration by classis that it use the denominational resources of Pastor Church Resources to guide its next steps of discernment in the classis about Neland following

Synod 2023, rather than using an oversight committee. An oversight committee inevitably creates an adversarial posture instead of a pastoral posture of positive engagement.

- Agreed to provide a season of mutual forbearance in the classis while the appeal by Neland Avenue CRC of its discipline by Synod 2022 is pending before Synod 2023.

(Minutes of 1-19-23 Meeting of Classis GRE, 123.2, 2.3, Decision to Adopt a Response to Neland Ave CRC, p. 2.; Minutes of 1-19-23 Meeting of Classis GRE, Appendix, Overture Asking Classis Grand Rapids East to Adopt a Response to Neland Avenue CRC, pp. 7-11.)

In its response, Classis GRE explained that it was not forsaking accountability or challenging the authority of our denominational governance structures (Appendix, p. 11). Classis GRE respects the Church Order, including Neland's decision to appeal its discipline, and will wait to discern any further response about Neland until the outcome of Neland's appeal at Synod 2023 (Appendix, p. 11). Thus, Classis GRE respectfully disagrees with Classis Zeeland's characterization that it is acting in a "rebellious and divisive manner" (Overture 65, *Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 569).

C. The recommendations in the overture by Classis Zeeland conflict with the recommendations of synod's *in loco* committee.

The report of the *in loco* committee states the following:

- Both Neland Avenue CRC and Classis GRE are "important parts of the denomination and are our brothers and sisters in Christ" (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 321).
- "Classis Grand Rapids East is in the best position to disciple its congregations and officebearers . . . even as appeals to a broader assembly are being adjudicated" (p. 325).
- "The classis itself, along with its churches, is in the best position to care for the same-sex married deacon, the officebearers and congregation of Neland, and other members of their classis (p. 343).

Classis Zeeland asks Synod 2023 to implement its recommendations instead as "another possible option, alongside that coming report" (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 567). It states the following:

- that Classis GRE "is no longer effectively serving the body" (p. 570).
- that Synod 2023 should implement an immediate, piecemeal re-assignment of the congregations of Classis GRE to neighboring classes (pp. 569-70).
- that Synod 2023 should declare that Classis GRE "will complete its work on March 15, 2024, and be dissolved" (p. 570).

These statements conflict with the recommendation of synod's *in loco* committee, listed above, that Classis GRE continue conversation, accountability, and pastoral care as a classis, recommendations that were approved by Classis GRE.

III. Misinterpretation of Church Order

Classis Zeeland misinterpreted the Church Order when it asked synod to impose the redistricting of classes without the consent of the affected classes or without any study of the impact on ministries of the affected classes, and when it suggested this as a novel form of church discipline not found in the Church Order.

A. The Church Order and the prior decisions of synod do not support a classis imposing a redistricting on unrelated classes.

Article 39 of the Church Order states:

A classis is a group of Christian Reformed churches that come together to seek, discern, and submit to God's will; offer one another mutual support and accountability; find ways to live out a collective calling within their region; and allow for a healthy and sustained connection to the wider denomination. A classis shall consist of a group of neighboring churches. The organization of a new classis and the redistricting of classes require the approval of synod.

—Cf. Supplement, Article 39

The Supplement to Article 39 states:

... Any request for transfer to another classis may include grounds that go beyond the sole matter of geographic proximity; synod is at liberty to consider such grounds in its disposition of the request.

(*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 561)

Classis Zeeland cites the sentence from the supplement to Article 39 that synod may consider grounds other than geographic proximity in the disposition of a request. Classis Zeeland assumes that this means that *any* classis may make the request to transfer a church or churches to other classes, including requests that impose redistricting upon other congregations or classes without their consent. However, this is incorrect.

The supplement to Article 39 of the Church Order cites a 1996 decision. The context was division among classes about the ordination of women. Several churches sent overtures to synod asking to create new classes. While it is true that synod may consider other factors besides geographic proximity, Synod 1996 decided against the formation of a classis "based on theological affinity" (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 561). Synod held that this "would lead only to further fragmentation within the denomination" (p. 561). A classis provides another advantage: "a framework for churches to work together even when they disagree and . . . a forum for continuing interaction, which may lead to understanding" (p. 561).

Synod 1996 also noted “an obvious concern about disrupting the ministry of classes” (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 560). “Departing significantly from the principle of geographic proximity may well impair effective ministry” (p. 561). Thus, proximity remains the main criterion (see also DeMoor’s *Commentary*, p. 232).

The reasoning of Synod 1996 when it added the supplement to Article 39 illustrates why Classis Zeeland’s reading of the supplement is incorrect. Synod 1996 noted:

Synod already has a procedure in place for a church to affiliate with a classis more congenial to its congregational temperament than the geographical classis is. Since at least 1922 a church has had the freedom to request transfer to another classis, subject to the approval of synod.

(*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 560, emphasis added)

Synod then put the supplement to Article 39 in the Church Order to remind individual churches of its decision and of the option to transfer to another classis based on their own theological convictions. Here, however, Classis Zeeland misunderstood the meaning of the supplement. Instead of the intended meaning that a church may initiate its own transfer, Classis Zeeland assumed it means it can ask for the transfer of churches to other classes according to Classis Zeeland’s theological convictions. Synod 1996’s explanation shows that outside classes’ imposing transfers unilaterally is not what the supplement to Article 39 had in mind.

Synod has already given a firm no to churches who attempt to redistrict other classes unilaterally. In 1930, synod received the overtures of one classis and one consistory who asked synod to redistrict classes. The classis asked synod to redistrict all the classes in the denomination, the consistory asked to redistrict only certain classes. Synod denied both requests. Responding to the request affecting only a few classes, synod said:

Synod holds that this question of possible desirability of the re-distribution of certain classes belongs properly to the classes particularly interested or involved as the logical agencies to take the initiative, and then come to synod for its consent.

(*Acts of Synod 1930*, p. 39, emphasis added)

To the classis that asked to redistrict all the classes in the denomination, synod instructed:

A matter so important, affecting the whole church, should come from more than one classis before synod take any action.

(*Ibid.*)

Synod instructed the consistory making the more limited request that “this matter is *not* within the jurisdiction of synod, as long as the classes involved have not been consulted” (*Ibid.*, emphasis added).

In the case of the “redistricting of classes,” the usual procedure is that a local church initiates a request to move to another classis. Synod then insists that the sending classis as well as the receiving classis must approve. This is typically done by both classes sending an overture to synod to that effect. There is no precedent in the history of the CRC for a request to synod

to redistrict that has not been initiated by the local church(es) involved. Doing so without the consent, involvement, or initiative of the classes affected is what Synod 1930 said it would not do. It is not within the jurisdiction of synod.

B. The Church Order does not allow a classis to impose affiliation, disaffiliation, merger, transfer, or joinder in joint action upon another congregation or classis.

Article 44 of the Church Order states:

- a. A classis may take counsel or joint action with its neighboring classis or classes in matters of mutual concern.
- b. Classes engaging in matters of mutual concern may organize themselves into an ecclesiastical assembly that will function on the level of classis, with freedom to determine the delegation from the constituent classes and the frequency of meetings. Such an assembly's authority, jurisdiction, and mandate shall be approved by synod. It shall have direct access to synod in all matters pertaining to its mandate.

Article 44 clarifies that *classes* may take *joint action* in matters of *mutual concern*. There is no requirement that synod approve such action. Further, classes engaging in matters of mutual concern *may organize themselves* into an ecclesiastical assembly. The requirement that synod approve the arrangement does not negate that these arrangements are voluntary, nor does it support the claim that synod may force five other classes to restructure and work together, as Classis Zeeland has asked Synod 2023 to do.

Similarly, Article 38 of the Church Order also shows that decisions about the affiliations of a congregation are based upon decisions made by the churches themselves and are not imposed:

- “When a non-Christian Reformed congregation wishes to affiliate with the Christian Reformed Church,” it must follow “the procedures and regulations established by synod” (Art. 38-c; emphasis added).
- “When a council and congregation decide to disband . . . the approval of classis is required” (Art. 38-d; emphasis added).
- “When two or more councils and congregations decide to merge, the approval of classis is required” (Art. 38-e; emphasis added).
- “When a council decides to disaffiliate from the denomination, the set process for disaffiliation adopted by synod shall be followed” (Art. 38-f; emphasis added).
- “Particular churches of the Christian Reformed Church in North America may unite to form union congregations with one or more particular congregations of churches in communion, with the approval of classis” (Art. 38-g; emphasis added).
- *Particular churches of the Christian Reformed Church in North America may affiliate with one or more additional denominations in communion,*

with the approval of classis and with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies (Art. 38-h; emphasis added).

Even when a church no longer has sufficient members to provide leadership, that is still only a reason for a classis to *discuss with* a congregation whether it is still appropriate to retain organized status (Supplement, Article 38-d).

In none of these situations does the Church Order provide that an outside classis, church, or even synod may impose these decisions upon another congregation or classis. Instead, the Church Order recognizes that such decisions are made by the congregations or classes involved. In short, they occur “from the bottom up,” not “from the top down.”

C. Allowing one classis to impose these decisions on another would be an impermissible example of lording it over another, in violation of Church Order Article 85.

This autonomy for congregations and classes is consistent with Article 85 of the Church Order, which states:

No church shall in any way lord it over another church, and no office-bearer shall lord it over another officebearer.

Broader assemblies are “vehicles of denominational cooperation, not ruling bodies with sovereign sway over all things local” (*Commentary*, p. 431). Reformed church polity holds to the autonomy of the local church, albeit a “relative autonomy,” and “there may be no union which destroys the autonomy of the local church” (*Commentary*, pp. 152-53, citing L. Berkhof in his *Systematic Theology*).

D. Classis Zeeland makes recommendations without any study, discussion, or consent of the affected classes.

Classis Zeeland acknowledges that “the historic geographical alignment of the churches of Classis GRE was logical for the health and unity of the church” (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 569). However, Classis Zeeland now asks for the redistricting to take place immediately (p. 569). Under the proposal in its overture, five different classes would be affected—Classis GRE and the four classes that would be assigned the congregations from Classis GRE. Classis Zeeland offers no analysis of the effects on the ministries of Classis GRE nor the ministries of the receiving classes. It does not show that it has spoken with the affected classes or obtained their approval or consent; nor does it provide a plan of assimilation.

Classis Zeeland only suggests that the ministries and work of Classis GRE be completed or transitioned to the new classes as Classis GRE “deems best” (p. 570). However, Classis GRE does not deem it best to terminate or transition its ministries.

E. Classis Zeeland is asking for a type of discipline not found in the Church Order.

Classis Zeeland is asking synod to impose a novel form of discipline without a basis in the Church Order. In its overture Classis Zeeland states that it is asking to redistrict Classis GRE and complete its work as an act of discipline, not of shared ministry, vision, or efficiency (p. 570) There is no provision of the Church Order that permits one classis to ask synod to dissolve another as a form of discipline.

The member congregations of Classis GRE have different positions about how to respond to Neland Avenue CRC and the decisions of Synod 2022. In making its recommendations, Classis Zeeland makes no distinction in the beliefs and practices of the councils of the member congregations of Classis GRE. All would be subject to Zeeland's unilateral recommendations.

Classis GRE recalls that Classis Zeeland also submitted an overture to Synod 2022 asking that the delegates of Classis GRE be unseated and not allowed to vote (*Agenda for Synod 2022*, pp. 517-19). Synod declined this request (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 942), and instead Synod 2022 appointed its *in loco* committee with the mandate described in Section II above. Classis Zeeland now asks Synod 2023 to permanently unseat delegates from Classis GRE, but using a different method—namely, dissolving Classis GRE. Classis GRE respectfully asks Synod 2023 to decline this request again.

IV. Overture

Classis GRE respectfully asks that Synod 2023 not to accede to the overture adopted by Classis Zeeland that asks synod to redistrict the churches of Classis GRE, effective immediately, to declare that Classis GRE will complete its work on March 15, 2024, and to dissolve Classis GRE.

Grounds:

1. The overture by Classis Zeeland usurps the authority of Synod 2022, which determined the discipline for Classis GRE was admonishment, not dissolution.
2. The overture by Classis Zeeland usurps the authority of synod's *in loco* committee to make recommendations for Classis GRE by asking synod to adopt the recommendations of Classis Zeeland instead.
3. The recommendations in the overture by Classis Zeeland conflict with the recommendations of synod's *in loco* committee, which upheld the importance of Classis GRE in the denomination and its role in ongoing discipling, conversation, or pastoral care for its member congregations.
4. Classis Zeeland lacks standing to ask synod to end the work of one classis and redistribute the member churches. There is no support in the Church Order for this unilateral approach, and synod has declined jurisdiction to redistrict classes when the affected classes have not made the request or consented.

5. Classis Zeeland made no showing about how its proposals will affect the ministries and work of Classis GRE and did not consult the affected classes.
6. There is no basis in the Church Order or in previous decisions of synod for a classis to ask synod to redistrict a classis out of existence as a form of discipline.
7. The actions and recommendations in the overture of Classis Zeeland violate Article 85 of the Church Order, which states that “no church shall in any way lord it over another church, and no officebearer shall lord it over another officebearer.”

Classis Grand Rapids East
Robert A. Arbogast, stated clerk

COMMUNICATION 5

Classis Holland—Response to Appeal 1

Classis Holland submits this communication to Synod 2023 in response to Appeal 1 sent by the council of the Christian Reformed Church of St. Joseph, Michigan (CRCSJ) regarding a Classis Holland decision.

I. Background

On December 20, 2022, the CRCSJ council chair informed the stated clerk of Classis Holland of the council's decision to appeal a decision of Classis Holland, made on October 6, 2022, that an overture submitted by members of the CRCSJ under discipline was legally before classis, even though the CRCSJ consistory had suspended the members' privilege to submit an overture.

II. Response to Grounds

A. No Church Order grounds were given for this decision

True. The appeal early notes the opinion of Kathy Smith, church polity instructor at Calvin Theological Seminary and advisor to Synodical Services, that the members still under discipline could submit the overture to classis because they were still members and possibly it was unclear the overture was submitted before it was clear their privilege to submit an overture was suspended.

Noted at classis was that an overture is submitted to an assembly of the CRCNA: council, then classis, then synod. The consistory is not an assembly of the CRCNA. Consequently, the council, not the consistory, of the CRCSJ responded to the overture when submitted in 2021 and said the overture was not processed because the privilege to submit an overture by members under discipline was suspended. The members understood this council communication as a no to their overture and took the next step to submit their August 10, 2021, overture to classis.

After receiving the overture, Classis Holland's executive team (CET) wrestled with the status of the overture for a year, consulting the Church Order, Rules for Synodical Procedure, Synodical Services, Kathy Smith, and others. The executive team decided to let classis decide if the overture was legally before classis and presented reasons for yes or no answers. On October 6, 2022, classis voted that it was legally before classis and planned to consider the overture in 2023.

Noted at the October 6, 2022, classis meeting were unprocessed overtures, which is what the CRCSJ council decided to do: not process the overture. Unprocessed overtures are addressed in the Rules for Synodical Procedure (section V, B, 7):

7. Unprocessed Overtures or Communications

Overtures or communications of an individual when such a person has been unable first to present such to council and classis. Such matters shall be received as information, provided that the general secretary receives evidence that it was impossible for the communicant to present the matter to council and classis. Synod shall decide whether to act upon such matters received as information.

The Unprocessed Overtures paragraph does not list any reason for not processing the overture—only that the person submitting the overture was unable to present the overture to their council and classis. In this situation, being under discipline with the privilege to submit an overture suspended is in view. However, the Unprocessed Overture paragraph does not give any reasons for not processing an overture and seems to allow for members under discipline, even with the local consistory suspending the privilege to submit an overture, to submit the overture to the general secretary of the CRCNA for action as noted.

Further, Classis Holland acted as synod could act in the Unprocessed Overtures paragraph:

Synod shall decide whether to act upon such matters received as information.

While it is true that no Church Order grounds were given for the October 6, 2022, action of Classis Holland, it is also true that the Church Order, Rules for Synodical procedure, and various opinions were considered.

B. The clear implication of the Church Order was ignored

True. But Classis Holland did not overlook the important role the local consistory plays in discipline and suspension of membership. This was highlighted on the floor of classis for delegates to hear and ask about. Classis Holland respects the original authority of the local church council too. The overture was addressed to the council, not the consistory, and the council decided not to process the overture because the consistory had suspended the privilege to submit an overture by members under discipline. A question arises about the overture's status in the eyes of council, not only the consistory. Council, not the consistory, decided not to process the overture—although the consistory's action to suspend the privilege to submit an overture certainly played a, maybe the, key role in council's action not to process the overture. The normal flow of a processed (or an unprocessed) overture also plays a role in this situation as noted above in section II, A, paragraph 2.

C. The confidentiality of the parties involved was breached on the floor of classis during the discussion period by a member of the CET itself

True. Classis Holland is also concerned about confidentiality in cases of discipline. In this situation, the members had been under discipline for over a year, and it was known to many that suspensions of membership privileges, including not taking communion and not submitting an overture, were operative. Unfortunately, the church's name was mentioned in the discussion and for that classis apologizes. Church Order Supplement, Articles 78-84, point b gives guidelines for confidentiality, and in this situation confidentiality was not as "scrupulously observe[d]" as it should have been.

III. Conclusion and Intention

The October 6, 2022, action of Classis Holland did not intend not to affirm the authority of the local consistory of the CRCSJ or not to consider the Church Order. Discipline is a very serious matter, and our prayer is that reconciliation results. Discipline and the status of this overture are complex, and classis wanted to discuss the status of the overture and decide fairly. If synod sustains the appeal of the CRCSJ council, Classis Holland will submit to the judgment of synod.

Classis Holland
Calvin Hoogstra, stated clerk

COMMUNICATION 6

Classis Huron—Response to Overture 20: Confessional-Revision Gravamen

During its meeting on February 15, 2023, Classis Huron received a confessional-revision gravamen from five officebearers of New Life CRC in Guelph, Ontario. The gravamen was discussed at length, and although some delegates agreed with it, others had various reasons to disagree. The discussion mostly centered on how to proceed with the gravamen. Since there was uncertainty on how to process it and there was insufficient approval to adopt it as a confessional-revision gravamen of Classis Huron, a motion was made to withhold action on the recommendation to adopt the gravamen as an overture to Synod 2023. This motion was carried to allow the authors of the gravamen to submit it directly to Synod 2023, if they chose to do so.

Classis Huron
Fred Vander Sterre, stated clerk

Classis Holland—Response to Overture 34: Confessional-Revision Gravamen

Classis Holland submits this communication to Synod 2023 in response to Overture 34 (a confessional-revision gravamen) sent by the council of Church of the Savior CRC of South Bend, Indiana, as an appeal of a Classis Holland decision.

When this confessional-revision gravamen was received by Classis Holland, we missed that it originated as a gravamen from Church of the Savior CRC and processed it as an overture in the same way we did many other overtures at our February 2, 2023, classis meeting. Had we realized it was a gravamen, we would have handled it differently.

In lieu of being able to offer retrospective fellowship and a more engaged conversation as a classis in order to seek fuller understanding, we submit this response to Synod 2023 so that it is clear that Classis Holland did not seek to withhold justice or suggest disciplinary intent toward the council and congregation of Church of the Savior CRC. While there was substantial engagement with and feedback to the gravamen/overture from a classis-appointed pre-advice committee prior to the meeting, we regret not having a more open and nuanced discussion during the meeting itself.

We are seeking to remedy this situation by sending representatives of Classis Holland to meet with the council of Church of the Savior to engage in this important conversation. They are a beloved part of our classis.

Classis Holland
Calvin Hoogstra, stated clerk

FINANCIAL REPORT

FISCAL 2024 SUMMARY

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH CONSOLIDATED APPROVED BUDGET SUMMARY (in 000s of U.S.\$) FISCAL YEAR ENDING IN JUNE 30, 2024

	Ministry Share	Gift Income	Other Income	Total Income	Program Services	Support Services	Total Expenses	Net Revenue (Expense)
Calvin Theological Seminary	1,392 19.2%	1,950 26.9%	3,900 53.9%	7,242 100.0%	5,022 68.3%	2,334 31.7%	7,356 100.0%	(114)
Calvin University	982 1.2%	4,011 4.8%	78,558 94.0%	83,551 100.0%	77,742 81.8%	17,329 18.2%	95,071 100.0%	(11,520)
Ministry Office (Canada Min Office, US Min Office)	2,558 70.2%	205 5.6%	880 24.2%	3,643 100.0%	791 19.1%	3,343 80.9%	4,134 100.0%	(491)
Office of General Secretary	2,474 65.2%	540 14.2%	782 20.6%	3,796 100.0%	1,331 33.8%	2,603 66.2%	3,934 100.0%	(138)
Loan Fund	- 0.0%	- 0.0%	750 100.0%	750 100.0%	330 45.6%	394 54.4%	724 100.0%	26
ReFrame Ministries	1,028 22.6%	3,105 68.4%	409 9.0%	4,542 100.0%	4,431 68.9%	2,003 31.1%	6,434 100.0%	(1,892)
Resonate Global Mission (includes Raise Up Global Ministries)	2,120 15.3%	10,024 72.2%	1,749 12.6%	13,893 100.0%	15,616 75.3%	5,132 24.7%	20,748 100.0%	(6,855)
Thrive (Congregational Ministries)	4,220 86.0%	688 14.0%	- 0.0%	4,908 100.0%	3,445	1,475	4,920	(12)
Special Assistance Funds	- #DIV/0!	- #DIV/0!	- #DIV/0!	- #DIV/0!	190 100.0%	- 0.0%	190 100.0%	(190)
World Renew	- 0.0%	17,266 43.3%	22,605 56.7%	39,871 100.0%	29,565 74.6%	10,065 25.4%	39,630 100.0%	241
Total	14,774 9.1%	37,789 23.30%	109,633 67.59%	162,196 100.00%	138,463 75.6%	44,678 24.4%	183,141 100.0%	(20,945.00)

REPORT OF SYNOD 2023

SYNOD 2023

SERVICE OF PRAYER AND PRAISE

Church of the Servant CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan

June 11, 2023

5:00 p.m.

(Asterisk [] indicates worshipers may rise in body or in spirit.)*

Gathering

Gathering Song: "The Lord Be with You"

*God's Greeting

*Hymn of Praise: "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Confession and Assurance

*Passing of the Peace

Word

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading: Psalm 37:1-11

New Testament Reading: James 4:6-10

*Hymn of Praise: "Commit Your Way to God the Lord"

Message: Psalm 37

Hymn of Response: "I Will Hide Your Word Inside My Heart"

Prayers of the People

*Affirmation of Faith

Table

Preparing the Table

Offering: Resonate Global Mission

Offertory hymn: "Bring in the Year of Jubilee"

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving . . . to God the Creator . . . for the work
of Jesus Christ . . . for the presence of the Holy Spirit

*The Invitation to the Table

Partaking of Communion

Songs during distribution of the elements: "Bless the Lord, My Soul";
"Food for Pilgrim People"; "Tu Fidelidad/ I Depend upon Your
Faithfulness"; "Who Is Like the Lord Our God"; "In Christ Alone";
"By the Sea of Crystal"

Thanksgiving

Sending

*Benediction

Postlude

Preacher: Rev. Karen Campbell

Liturgist: Klaas Walhout

Scripture readers: Cindy VanderKodde and Jonathan Bradford

Intercessory Prayer: Albert Strydhorst

Liturgist for Communion: Rev. Andrew Mead

Minister of Worship: Maria Stapert Vander Berg

Musicians: Eve Clayton, cello; Josh Honig, vocals; Coni Huisman, piano;
Rich Huisman, violin; Stuart Milliken, recorder; Debra Rienstra, viola;
Ron Rienstra, guitar and bass; Cal Stapert, recorder; Maria Stapert
Vander Berg, violin

Liturgical dancers: Sophie Bartels, Dawn Plescher, Clara Voetberg, Julie
Yonkers

MINUTES OF SYNOD 2023

FRIDAY MORNING, June 9, 2023

First Session

ARTICLE 1

President pro tem Rev. Karen Campbell welcomes the assembly and invites all to join in singing. Members of Church of the Servant's All Nations Worship team lead in singing the following songs in Swahili, Korean, Spanish, and English: "How Great Thou Art," "Alpha and Omega," and "Wamilele." Delegates recite a call to worship and sing "Rejoice, the Lord Is King." After a time of confession and assurance, the assembly sings "Anaweza Bwana." The assembly passes the peace and prays for the illumination of the Spirit by singing "Let Morning to My Ear Bring."

Rev. Andrew Mead provides a message on Philippians 2:1-11, sharing that the distinguishing mark of the Christian is joy, and that the cross of Christ is the only way to this joy. Christ's joy is found in rejoining his Father in heaven and in joining God's people together as one people. The Christian's call to Christlike humility is to share in Christ's joy. Joy does not ease sorrow or heal divisions; rather, the joy that the Lord brings reminds Christians of their purpose.

The assembly responds by singing "I Am Bound, but Only by Your Love," reading an affirmation of faith, and engaging in a time of intercessory prayer while the choir sings "Sema Na." A benediction is offered, and the assembly sings, "Lord, Your Church on Earth Is Seeking."

The president pro tem welcomes delegates, advisers, ecumenical guests, staff, and guests to Synod 2023. The president pro tem introduces Dr. Wiebe Boer, president of Calvin University, who welcomes delegates to the Calvin University campus.

ARTICLE 2

The president pro tem introduces Rev. Sean Baker and Rev. Amanda Benckhuysen, who lead the assembly in a power and privilege training, as adopted by Synod 2019.

ARTICLE 3

The president pro tem asks the general secretary, Rev. Zachary J. King, to call the roll of delegates listed on the credentials of the forty-nine classes:

DELEGATES TO SYNOD 2023

Classis

Delegates

Alberta North

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Henry P. Kranenburg

Michelle Rooker

Michael A. Werkman

Peter Rockhold

Alberta South/Saskatchewan

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Paul J. Droogers

Ryan S. Poelman

Joshua Johnson

Adrian R. de Lange

Arizona

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Ernesto J. Hernandez

Philip G. Fritschle

Jarrad S. McDaniel

Andrew W. Littleton

Atlantic Northeast

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Matthew D. Burns

Clyde H. Williams

Daniel L. Wierenga

Willard H. Barham

B.C. North-West

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Kevin J. VanderVeen

Daniel E. Schultz

Robin de Haan

Willem J. Delleman

B.C. South-East

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Erik M. DeLange

Sonya J. Grypma

Vacant

Katelyn Van Hove

California South

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

John (Harold) Caicedo

John H. Jansen

Serene Rao

Weichuan C. Wang

Central California

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Patrick D. Anthony

Titus E. Davis

Jayne E. McClurg

David E. Vander Meulen

Central Plains

Minister

Elder

Deacon

Other

Brian L. Ochsner

Ivan R. Mulder

Caleb C. Gunsaulus

Brad Bierma

Chicago South

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Neil P. Jasperse
Derk A. Deckinga, Jr.
James C. Bolhuis
Daniel J. Roeda

Columbia

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Joel J. Sheeres
Jeffrey A. Cutter
Doug K. Vande Griend
D. Vance Hays

Eastern Canada

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Daniel A. Meinema
Sonya J. Boersma
Kathleen M. Dixon
Sidney Ypma

Georgetown

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Nate Meldrim
Herb Kraker
Daniel J. Winiarski
David C. Ten Clay

Grand Rapids East

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Michael F. Abma
Michael J. Van Denend
Kathy L. DeMey
Elizabeth A. Vander Haagen

Grand Rapids North

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Matthew A. Pearce
Bryan R. Dam
Todd A. Ritzema
Heather Strooboscher

Grand Rapids South

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Robert L. Boersma
Danny L. Buist
Karel W. de Waal Malefyt
David A. Struyk

Grandville

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Brandon L. Haan
Steve J. Longstreet
James P. Heyboer
Thomas S. VanderPloeg

Greater Los Angeles

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Matthew B. Ford
Jim DenOuden
Lucinda L. Fleming
Ken Kyunghun Hong

Hackensack

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Edward W. Coleman
David J. Apol
Efren S. Echipare
Gabriel Wang-Herrera

Hamilton

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Michael W. Bootsma
Peter Bulthuis
Eric G. Tisch
Cara L. DeHaan

Hanmi

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Sung H. Hur
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant

Heartland

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Jesse L. Walhof
Michael V. Krommendyk
Dan Brunst
John C. Klompier

Holland

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Chad M. Steenwyk
Jodi L. Gillmore
Albertena P. Praamsma
Darren C. Kornelis

Hudson

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Mary B. Stegink
Roy G. Heerema
Vacant
Timothy J. McHugh

Huron

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Henry W. Meinen
Arnold D. Bosman
Bernard H. De Jonge
Victor S. Laarman

Iakota

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Kurt A. Monroe
Stan L. Wynia
Jevon K. Groenewold
Matthew A. Haan

Illiana

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

William R. Sytsma
Joshua D. Dykstra
Timothy C. Turner
Blake I. Campbell

Kalamazoo

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Derek M. Zeyl
Craig H. Lubben
Vacant
Michael D. Koetje

Ko-Am

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Edward W. Yoon
Vacant
Jenny Yoon
Kyung Ho Park

Lake Erie

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Matthew T. Ackerman
Marilyn F. McLaughlin
Mary B. Smith
Nathan J. Groenewold

Lake Superior

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Aaron Greydanus
Gaye A. Hanson
Vacant
Steven A. Zwart

Minnkota

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Scott M. Muilenburg
Donley G. Walhof
Nick E. Sjaarda
Chad E. Werkhoven

Muskegon

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Drew K. Sweetman
Pat J. Cavanaugh
Heidi J. Sytsema
Timothy D. Blackmon

Niagara

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

M. Jeff Klingenberg
Eleanor Sarkany
Henrietta Hunse
Steven J. deBoer

North Cascades

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Bryan A. Dick
Don Korthuis
Drake D. Likkel
Michael T. Jager

Northcentral Iowa

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Randall C. Raak
Duane C. Vanderploeg
Vacant
Herbert W. Schreur

Northern Illinois

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Kyle E. Haack
Craig E. Buma
Timothy J. Wurpts
John L. Hoekwater

Northern Michigan

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Todd F. Kuperus
Kenneth E. English
Vacant
John P. Kostelyk

Ontario Southewst

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Rafik Kamel
Daniel F. Meyers
John Klein-Geltink
Derek Ellens

Pacific Northwest

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Joshua S. Lee
Darrel R. Lagerwey
Yeongjoo Nam
John C. Knoester

Quinte

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Ryan W. Braam
Bill Wybenga
Nellie Westerman
Rita S. Klein-Geltink

Red Mesa

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Stanley W. Jim
Francis B. Nelson
Julia A. Alonzo
Evelyn H. Bennally

Rocky Mountain

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Mark A. Quist
Mary L. Gallegos
Vacant
Christian Sebastia

Southeast U.S.

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

Scott A. Vander Ploeg
James Dykstra
Jeffrey Huntley
Christopher N. Cassis

Thornapple Valley

Minister
Elder
Deacon
Other

David J. Bosscher
Ren Tubergen
Carroll L. Burgess
Paul R. De Vries

Toronto

Minister	Richard A. Bodini
Elder	Sandra V. Williams
Deacon	Julius J. Williams
Other	Maarthen Reinders

Wisconsin

Minister	Jason S. Ruis
Elder	Floyd Leo
Deacon	Deborah Fennema
Other	Young-Kwang Kim

Yellowstone

Minister	Timothy A. Kuperus
Elder	David K. Hoekema
Deacon	Elsa C. Vander Neut
Other	Clair Vander Neut

Zeeland

Minister	Aaron J. Vriesman
Elder	Chuck DeVries
Deacon	Travis Datema
Other	Lloyd H. Hemstreet

The roll indicates that the following delegates are absent: Matthew A. Haan (Iakota), Sung H. Hur (Hanmi), Jayne E. McClurg (Central California), Elizabeth A. Vander Haagen (Grand Rapids East), and Stanley W. Jim (Red Mesa).

Alternate Other officebearer Wayne C. Klein (Iakota) replaces Matthew A. Haan. Alternate Other officebearer Karen Campbell (Grand Rapids East) replaces Elizabeth A. Vander Haagen.

The president pro tem declares that a quorum of the membership is present and that the assembly of Synod 2023 is duly constituted.

ARTICLE 4

The general secretary welcomes and introduces the ecumenical guests who are present or will be arriving later in the week: Cullen Rodgers-Gates, director of development and membership for the National Association of Evangelicals; Moses M. Jawara, president for the Christian Reformed Church in Sierra Leone; and Laura Osborne, coordinator for inter-religious relations for the Reformed Church in America.

The general secretary welcomes and introduces the faculty advisers who are present: Wilson de Angelo Cunha, Ronald J. Feenstra, Jeffrey L. Sajdak, and Kathy S. Smith. Cory Willson is absent with notice.

The general secretary welcomes and introduces to synod the ethnic advisers who are present: Catherine Chan, Hyung Jun Kim, William Krahne, and Darlene Silversmith.

The general secretary also welcomes and introduces to synod the young adult representatives who are present: Samantha Brinkman, Daniel Choi,

Myiah Klinger, Luke Nieuwendorp, Gavin Schaefer, Samantha Sebastia Pina, and Ana Timmer.

The general secretary welcomes Dr. Wiebe Boer, president of Calvin University, and Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, president of Calvin Theological Seminary.

ARTICLE 5

After participating in a practice election, the assembly proceeds to elect officers. The following are elected:

President: Paul R. De Vries

Vice President: Chad M. Steenwyk

First Clerk: Henry P. Kranenburg

Second Clerk: Richard A. Bodini

Rev. Campbell offers prayer for the newly elected officers. The president pro tem welcomes the officers to the podium and congratulates them.

ARTICLE 6

On behalf of the officers, President De Vries thanks synod for the confidence it has placed in them to lead synod and asks for prayer for the coming week.

President De Vries expresses the appreciation of synod to Rev. Karen Campbell and Church of the Servant CRC for their participation in the opening of synod.

Synod recesses for a short break to allow the newly elected officers to review their responsibilities for the first session.

ARTICLE 7

President De Vries shares opening remarks and reads Lamentations 3:24. He encourages the assembly to remember that the Lord is their portion and provides a reflection on good synod behavior.

ARTICLE 8

The president proceeds with the reading of the Public Declaration of Agreement with the Beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The delegates rise to show their assent.

President De Vries makes the following announcements on behalf of the officers of synod:

A. Due to past abuses influencing delegates through email, text, and social media there will once again be a 20-minute delay of the synod webcast. The 20-minute delay also applies to any social media posts from *The Banner* and the communications teams. As always, delegates, advisers, and staff are not allowed on social media during the deliberations, whether during plenary sessions or in advisory committee meetings. The members

and churches of the CRC have entrusted the delegates to listen carefully to God through the other delegates, through their scriptural preparations, and through prayer rather than being pressured to represent the views of people at home.

B. Due to the highly sensitive nature of deliberations on issues regarding human sexuality, particularly those stemming from the recommendations of Advisory Committees 7 and 8, the gallery seating *may* be closed to the public during those deliberations.

C. The Program Committee (officers of Synod 2022) designated the following as consent agenda items:

- the revised COD Governance Handbook
- the World Renew bylaws (U.S. and Canada) and ecclesiastical mandate letters
- the denominational survey summary report
- the condensed financial statements, unified budget, and pension amounts for housing allowance
- the supplementary financial report

D. That synod receive as information all agenda items designated as “consent agenda” by the Program Committee of synod.

—*Received as information*

ARTICLE 9

The general secretary introduces the synod news office staff, *Banner* staff, synod office staff, CRCNA IT staff, worship committee convener, prayer shepherd, Calvin University events staff, denominational leadership, Council of Delegates president and vice president, Korean interpreters, and directors of agencies and ministries present.

ARTICLE 10

The following schedule is presented for information: morning session, 8:15-11:45 a.m.; afternoon session, 1:15-5:00 p.m.; evening session, 7:00-9:00 p.m.; breaks at 9:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 11

The general secretary calls the attention of delegates and visitors to the following matters:

Confidentiality of the executive sessions of synod

The Council of Delegates calls the matter of confidentiality to the attention of Synod 2023 and urges that all necessary precautions be taken to prevent violations of confidentiality.

Synod 1954 stated that “the very principle of executive sessions, or sessions that are not open to the public, involves the practical implication

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

Audio and video recordings of synod

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

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

- A. Representatives of the media are permitted to make video recordings of synodical proceedings provided they observe the restrictions placed upon them by the synodical news office under the direction of the general secretary of synod.
- B. Visitor privileges
 - 1. Members of the gallery (visitors) are at liberty to make audio recordings of the public proceedings of synod provided it is done unobtrusively (i.e., that it in no way inhibits or disturbs either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons . . .).
 - 2. Video recordings are permitted provided the following restrictions are observed:
 - a. Video cameras are permitted only at the entrances . . . not backstage or in the wings.
 - b. Auxiliary lighting is not permitted.
 - c. Video taping [video recording] is to be done unobtrusively (i.e., in such a way that it in no way inhibits or disturbs either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons . . .).

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

ARTICLE 12

The general secretary presents the report of the Program Committee, which recommends the following advisory committees for Synod 2023:

Committee 1—Synodical Services and Structure

Chair: Derek Zeyl; **reporter:** Neil Jasperse; **ministers:** Bernard De Jonge, Steven DeBoer, Paul De Vries, Bryan Dick, Neil Jasperse, Darren Kornelis, Henry Kranenburg, Timothy Kuperus, Kurt Monroe, Scott Muilenburg, David Struyk, Jesse Walhof, Gabriel Wang-Herrera, Derek Zeyl; **elders:** Bryan Dam, Joshua Dykstra, Marilyn McLaughlin, Maarten Reinders, Michael Van Denend; **deacons:** Joshua Johnson, Doug Vande Griend, Dan Wierenga, Gaye Hanson; **young adult representative:** Luke Nieuwendorp; **staff consultant:** Scott DeVries.

Committee 2—Church Order and Related Matters

Chair: Matthew Ford; **reporter:** Ryan Braam; **ministers:** Matthew Ackerman, Ryan Braam, Blake Campbell, Erik DeLange, Matthew Ford, Brandon Haan, Michael Koetje, Victor Laarman, Joshua Lee, Brian Ochsner, Daniel Roeda, Clair Vander Neut; **elders:** David Apol, Sonya Boersma, Mary Gallegos, Michael Jager, Francis Nelson, Ryan Poelman, Michelle Rooker, Clyde Williams; **deacons:** Dan Brunst, Heidi Sytsema, Kathy DeMey, Dan Winiarski; **young adult representative:** Gavin Schaefer; **faculty adviser:** Kathy S. Smith; **staff consultant:** Amanda Benckhuysen.

Committee 3—Education and Candidacy

Chair: Mary Stegink; **reporter:** Kyle Haack; **ministers:** Michael Abma, Richard Bodini, Paul Droogers, Derek Ellens, Aaron Greydanus, Kyle Haack, Ernesto Hernandez, Jeff Klingenberg, Joel Sheeres, Mary Stegink, Kevin VanderVeen, Sidney Ypma; **elders:** Jim DenOuden, Chuck DeVries, Darrel Lagerwey, Craig Lubben, Ivan Mulder, Ren Tubergen; **deacons:** Deborah Fennema, Jeffrey Huntley, Jayne McClurg, Albertena Praamsma, Jenny Yoon; **young adult representative:** Ana Timmer; **ethnic adviser:** Catherine Chan; **staff consultant:** Susan E. LaClear.

Committee 4—Congregational Ministries

Chair: James Dykstra; **reporter:** Daniel Meinema; **ministers:** Brad Bierma, Lloyd Hemstreet, Ken Hong, John Knoester, Andrew Littleton, Daniel Meinema, Henry Meinen, Nate Meldrim, Kyung Ho Park, Chad Werkhoven; **elders:** Pat Cavanaugh, Titus Davis, James Dykstra, Michael Krommendyk, Eleanor Sarkany, Daniel Schultz, Duane Vanderploeg, Wayne Klein; **deacons:** Julia Alonzo, Karel de Waal Malefyt, Serene Rao, Elsa Vander Neut, Michael Werkman, Julius Williams; **young adult representative:** Samantha Brinkman; **ethnic adviser:** Darlene Silversmith; **faculty adviser:** Jeffrey L. Sajdak; **staff consultants:** Chris Schoon, Lesli van Milligen.

Committee 5—Global Mission

Chair: Michael Bootsma; **reporter:** Adrian de Lange; **ministers:** Michael Bootsma, Harold Caicedo, Chris Cassis, Jeong Ha Chun, Jason Crossen, Adrian de Lange, Nathan Groenewold, D. Vance Hays, John Hoekwater,

John Kostelyk, Mark Quist; **elders:** Danny Buist, Roy Heerema, Steve Longstreet, Sandra Williams, Stan Wynia; **deacons:** Kathleen Dixon, Lucinda Fleming, John Klein-Geltink, Drake Likkel, Jarrad McDaniel, Nick Sjaarda; **faculty adviser:** Cory Willson; **staff consultants:** Carol Bremer-Bennett, Kevin DeRaaf, Joel Huyser, Jamie McIntosh, Kurt Selles.

Committee 6—Interdenominational and Financial Matters

Chair: Scott Vander Ploeg; **reporter:** Drew Sweetman; **ministers:** Karen Campbell (for Elizabeth Vander Haagen), Peter Rockhold, Stanley Jim, Timothy McHugh, Randall Raak, Christian Sebastia, Chad Steenwyk, Drew Sweetman, William Sytsma, David Ten Clay, Scott Vander Ploeg; **elders:** Arnold Bosman, Derk Deckinga, Floyd Leo, Daniel Meyers, Donley Walhof; **deacons:** Travis Datema, Efren Echipare, James Heyboer, Todd Ritzema, Mary Smith, Eric Tisch, Nellie Westerman, Timothy Wurpts; **young adult representative:** Daniel Choi; **staff consultant:** Shirley De Vries.

Committee 7—Human Sexuality

Chair: Willem Delleman; **reporter:** Rita Klein-Geltink; **ministers:** Matthew Burns, Willem Delleman, Sung Hur, Young-Kwang Kim, Rita Klein-Geltink, John Klompier, Heather Strooboscher, David Vander Meulen, Thomas VanderPloeg, Aaron Vriesman, Weichuan Wang, Steven Zwart, Evelyn Bennally; **elders:** Peter Bulhuis, Kenneth English, Don Korthuis, Herb Kraker, Herbert Schreur; **deacons:** James Bolhuis, Jevon Groenewold, Carroll Burgess, Timothy Turner, Katelyn Van Hove; **young adult representative:** Myiah Klinger; **ethnic adviser:** William Krahnke; **faculty adviser:** Ronald J. Feenstra; **staff consultant:** Zachary King.

Committee 8—Church Order II

Chair: Jason Ruis; **reporter:** John Jansen; **ministers:** Patrick Anthony, Willard Barham, Timothy Blackmon, Robert Boersma, David Bosscher, Edward Coleman, Cara DeHaan, Rafik Kamel, Todd Kuperus, Matthew Pearce, Jason Ruis, Edward Yoon; **elders:** Craig Buma, Jeffrey Cutter, Philip Fritschle, Jodi Gillmore, Sonya Grypma, David Hoekema, John Jansen, Bill Wybenga; **deacons:** Robin de Haan, Henrietta Hunse, Yeongjoo Nam; **young adult representative:** Samantha Sebastia Pina; **ethnic adviser:** Hyung Jun Kim; **faculty advisers:** Wilson de Angelo Cunha, Kathy S. Smith; **staff consultant:** Al Postma.

The president presents the following on behalf of the officers of synod:

That synod approve the Program Committee Report as amended.

—Adopted

ARTICLE 13

The general secretary calls attention to the *Agenda for Synod* Supplement and an alphabetical list of delegates and advisers that are posted on the site.

ARTICLE 14

Jon Hoekema, CRCNA prayer shepherd, leads in closing prayer. Synod recesses at 12:13 p.m. so that the advisory committees may do their work. The assembly will reconvene Saturday at 8:15 a.m.

SATURDAY MORNING, June 10, 2023

Second Session

ARTICLE 15

The praise team (cajon: Ryan Braam; guitar/vocals: Kyle Haack; guitar: Thomas VanderPloeg; piano/vocals: Eleanor Sarkany; violin: Dan Schultz) leads delegates in worship with singing “Christ, Our Hope in Life and Death” and “How Firm a Foundation.” As the assembly gathers for worship, elder delegate Sandra Williams (Toronto) and the Albers children remind the assembly that through water God created life – creative, beautiful, and holy. God spoke with water through the prophets, showing his power – enduring and mighty. God spoke promises over the waters – comforting and convicting. Jesus shows us God’s love through water. The Holy Spirit calms the storms of life for refreshment and renewal. The triune God gathers all for worship where healing waters flow. The assembly responds by singing “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” Rev. Amanda Benckhuysen greets the assembly, and all present pass the peace.

Rev. Al Postma leads the assembly in a time of confession, based on Psalm 51. Rev. Benckhuysen reminds the assembly of their baptism. Baptism reminds us of the unity found in Christ – Christians have died to sin, are made alive in Christ, and are called to live gratefully as those who have been redeemed and made new. The assembly responds by singing, “Yet Not I, but through Christ in Me” in a wide circle around the chapel.

Rev. Al Postma leads in a blessing, and the assembly responds by singing, “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow.”

The roll indicates that the following delegates are absent: David Bosscher (Thornapple Valley), Danny Buist (Grand Rapids South), Cara deHaan (Hamilton), Gabriel Wang-Herrera (Hackensack), Elizabeth Vander Haagen (Grand Rapids East).

ARTICLE 16

President Paul De Vries welcomes delegates, advisers, ecumenical guests, other guests, staff, and people viewing online. He thanks Woodlawn CRC (which regularly meets in the Calvin University Chapel) for making room for synod to be held in the chapel by moving their worship place for

Sunday morning. All are invited to worship with Woodlawn CRC at their Sunday-morning service at the Covenant Fine Arts Center on campus.

ARTICLE 17

The president presents the following on behalf of the officers of synod:

A. The president requests that if anyone wants to voice an objection to the nomination of someone on the boards and committees ballot, they should approach the officers ahead of time so that preparations can be made to go into executive session.

B. Seating of delegates

1. Classis B.C. Southeast delegated two ministers and two elders. It was decided not to seat Rev. Jason Crossen at the beginning of synod until the officers could weigh in on the situation. The officers have determined that Rev. Crossen will not be seated, but, by way of exception, he will be allowed to sit in his previously assigned advisory committee as an observer.

Grounds:

- a. Seating this person as a delegate would be unfair to the other classes who could not find a deacon delegate and therefore did not send a full delegation.
 - b. While the classis made an honest mistake, this kind of delegation is not currently allowable under the Church Order.
 - c. Since the mistake was caught the day before delegates began traveling, there was little to save by canceling the trip. Rev. Crossen volunteered to be the delegate not seated, and it seemed good to the officers to allow him to be a guest to the advisory committee so long as it was agreeable to the advisory chair and Rev. Crossen would not have privilege of the floor or to vote.
2. Classis Iakota sent their alternate, Wayne Klein, in place of Rev. Matthew Haan with the request that Rev. Haan would be allowed to replace Mr. Klein on Monday morning. The officers carefully weighed this request and determined to accept the seating of Rev. Haan on Monday by way of exception. The officers noted that, per the Rules for Synodical Procedure (section I, E), it is expected that delegates to synod receive permission from the chair to be absent from any session of synod. Since the president (generally serving as chair) is not elected until after synod begins and cannot give permission for late arrivals, there is an expectation that classes will not delegate people in the knowledge that they cannot attend the opening session.
3. Due to situations beyond their reasonable control, delegates Philip Fritschle (Arizona) and Don Korthuis (North Cascades) received permission to miss portions of the final day of synod.

C. The officers have ruled that the unprocessed communication from the Council of New Hope CRC, Lansing, Illinois (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 613-16), is admitted as a communication legally before synod.

D. The officers have ruled that the unprocessed overture from the Councils of High River (Alta.) CRC; Covenant CRC, Calgary, Alberta; Nobleford (Alta.) CRC; and Granum (Alta.) CRC (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 617-20) is not legally before synod.

Ground: This overture was originally written to have implications applying only to the classis. An overture intended to have implications for the whole denomination would have to be substantially rewritten and submitted first to the classis.

E. In response to Synod 2019's instruction to make prayer "a more intentional feature of synod's work sessions" (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 803), the president will announce regular prayer breaks during plenary sessions. It is asked that each classis nominate a prayer person. The president will call upon various classes to lead prayer during these breaks.

F. The officers have determined not to accede to the recommendation from the Program Committee to close the gallery to the general public, unless that be warranted later. People seated in the galleries are expected to maintain the same decorum as delegates.

G. The officers of synod announce the following appointments:

Testimonial Banquet Committee:

Elder delegate Jim DenOuden
Rev. Drew Sweetman

Minutes Review Committee:

Rev. Ryan Braam
Elder delegate Craig Lubben

Worship Planning Committee:

Ethnic adviser Rev. Hyung Jun Kim
Elder delegate Eleanor Sarkany

Sergeant at Arms:

Elder delegate Jodi Gillmore

Hospitality Committee:

Ron Geerlings
Sue Geerlings
Rev. William T. Koopmans

H. The officers have ruled that if requests to record a negative vote are received, the delegate's name, classis, and grounds will be read by the clerks, and only the name and classis will be included in the minutes.

I. That synod take note of the following protests submitted by way of the Credentials for Synod:

Classis Minnkota: "Classis Minnkota and its delegates, Scott Muilenburg, Donley G. Walhof, Nick Sjaarda, and Chad Werkhoven, by rule

of Synod 2007, offer protest to the seating of women delegates to synod for reasons of conscience. We wish to make clear that our protest is not against women or against using their gifts in the church. Recognizing that synod has declared both egalitarian and complementarian positions as biblically faithful interpretations, we uphold the complementarian position, which states that men and women have different roles within the church. Classis Minnkota and its delegates want to communicate how our consciences are provoked by the inherent difficulty in our denomination's "local option" in the fact that only the egalitarian position has been upheld and celebrated at synod, our broadest assembly. Though under protest, we continue to participate because we love the CRCNA and seek God's blessing upon our denomination. The communication sent to this year's synod offers a fuller explanation of Classis Minnkota's convictions."

Classis Zeeland: "Rev. Lloyd Hemstreet from Classis Zeeland protests the seating of women delegates to synod for reasons of conscience. He wishes to make it clear that his protest is not against women or against using the gifts of women but to uphold his understanding of Scripture's teaching regarding the roles of women and men. The communication sent to this year's synod by Classis Minnkota offers a fuller explanation of his convictions."

—*Noted*

ARTICLE 18

After offering prayer, the general secretary presents the ballot for denominational board and committee elections.

A delegate presents the following motion:

That synod table the ballot for board and committee elections until Advisory Committees 7 and 8 finish their work.

—*Adopted*

ARTICLE 19

The morning session recesses at 9:22 a.m. so that delegates can work in advisory committees. Rev. Chad M. Steenwyk, vice president, leads in closing prayer. The assembly will reconvene Monday morning at 8:15 a.m. in the Calvin University Chapel.

MONDAY MORNING, June 12, 2023

Third Session

ARTICLE 20

The praise team (cajon: Ryan Braam; guitar/vocals: Kyle Haack; guitar: Thomas VanderPloeg; piano/vocals: Eleanor Sarkany; violin: Dan Schultz)

leads delegates in worship with singing “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” and “Great Are You, Lord.” Rev. Dave Den Haan gathers the assembly by reading an invitation from Psalm 105:1-4. The assembly responds by singing “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty.”

Rev. Den Haan provides a greeting from God and invites the assembly to pass Christ’s peace. Rev. Den Haan, Michelle Rooker (Alberta North), and Clyde Williams (Atlantic Northeast) use the words of Psalm 27 to lead the assembly in prayer to seek God’s face and in a sung refrain (“O Lord, You’re Beautiful”). The assembly responds by singing “Turn Your Eyes.”

Delegates and advisers are invited to form a large circle around the chapel to receive the blessing of the Lord. The assembly responds by singing “The Blessing.”

The roll indicates that all delegates are present.

ARTICLE 21

The president introduces Andy de Ruyter, president of the Council of Delegates (COD), who addresses delegates on the work of the COD. He gives recognition to Rev. Michael Ten Haken, vice president of the COD, who will become president in July, and Greta Luimes, who will become vice president.

Mr. de Ruyter shares that the COD serves as a representative body of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the ministry of the denomination. He offers thanks for the support and energy of the denominational staff.

Over the past year the COD has worked to implement the recommendations of the Structure and Leadership Task Force, including the need for cultural change in the denominational offices, agencies, and institutions. There have been changes in terminology that strengthen ecclesiastical identity and focus on ministry. This has changed the culture for the better. Mr. de Ruyter thanks Rev. Frederic Koning and Dr. Lloyd VanderKwaak for their assistance in this task.

Mr. de Ruyter celebrates the promotion of diversity and inclusion within the CRC, specifically Classis California South’s welcome of congregations from Venezuela into affiliation. Previous synods have also placed an emphasis on restoration and reconciliation. The COD assembled a Dignity Team focused on redeeming relationships, providing a safe place for persons who have been hurt, and providing opportunities to reestablish trust.

Mr. de Ruyter highlights challenges and opportunities that the COD sees: the funding of denominational ministries and ensuring that synodical mandates and directives are implemented by its agencies and member staff while still following legal requirements. He reminds synod to account for many variables and to choose its language carefully.

He concludes by thanking delegates for their service and shares that the COD will appreciate the clarity of the decisions made at Synod 2023. “The

Acts of Synod 2023 will guide us and make it possible to serve the church faithfully and give us what is required to advance the ministry and mission of the CRC throughout the world.”

President De Vries gives thanks for the service of Mr. de Ruyter as chair of the COD and for the COD’s work.

ARTICLE 22

Zachary J. King, general secretary, addresses the delegates on the State of the Church. He shares that the majority of his work in ministry has been in mission: in Nigeria and Haiti and with Resonate Global Mission. He emphasizes that while it is tempting to say that the state of our denomination is strong, the fact of the matter is that in all of his travels he has yet to encounter a strong church or denomination in and of itself.

Throughout the past year, he says, he has used Jeremiah 29:5-7 to understand the current reality. The context of these verses is that the exiles of Israel in Babylon had lost everything they valued; however, Jeremiah’s message from God was one of hope: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters. . . . Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” God strengthens his people to follow him into mission and ministry. And in the same way God is strengthening the CRCNA to follow his Spirit into mission and ministry through the denominational ministry plan, *Our Journey 2025*, and its four milestones:

- Cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline.
- Listen to the voices of every generation, shaping us for ministry together.
- Grow in diversity and unity by seeking justice, reconciliation, and welcome.
- Share the gospel, live it missionally, and plant new churches in our neighborhoods.

Christ’s Spirit is working through each of these milestones in these disruptive times, strengthening us to follow him into mission and ministry. Rev. King shares challenges, strengths, and opportunities from each milestone.

Rev. King concludes that the Christian Reformed Church in North America has hope precisely because of disruption. There is a strong temptation to focus on survival, but God has called us to something different. The message in Jeremiah 29 set the stage for a new era of vibrancy and growth among God’s people in exile. The scattered people became the springboard for a mission that spread to the ends of the earth. The state of the church is hopeful precisely because we are weak and hard-pressed. In turmoil, God is strengthening the CRC to follow his Spirit into this new time of mission and ministry.

President De Vries gives thanks for Rev. King and his work as general secretary.

ARTICLE 23

Advisory Committee 1, Synodical Services and Structure, Rev. Neil Jasperse reporting, presents the following:

I. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report (sections I, A-D; II, A, 1-5, 7-8, 11; II, B, 1-4, 12-13), pp. 23-36, 38-40, 42-45, 47-49

2. Council of Delegates Supplement (sections I, A-C, E-F, H-J; II, C, E-F), including Appendices A, H, I, J, and L, pp. 631-38, 645-711, 771-77, 779-82

B. Privilege of the floor: Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendations

Rev. Michael Ten Haken, the vice chair of the Council of Delegates and president of the U.S. Ministry Board introduces Mr. Dan DeKam as director of U.S. ministry operations. Mr. DeKam briefly addresses synod.

1. That synod recognize the U.S. Ministry Board's appointment of Dan DeKam to the position of director of U.S. ministry operations and express its gratitude to Joel Huyser for his service as interim director of U.S. ministry operations for the past year, and for his faithful leadership and service to the CRCNA for over 28 years (COD Supplement section I, E).

— *Adopted*

Jarrad McDaniel (Arizona) offers a prayer of thanksgiving for Rev. Huyser and Mr. DeKam.

2. That synod grant all requests for privilege of the floor by the COD, agencies and ministries, educational institutions, standing committees, and study committees of synod contained within the reports to Synod 2023.

— *Adopted*

3. That synod approve all requests for special offerings for the agencies, ministries, and educational institutions of the CRC that are contained within the reports to Synod 2023.

— *Adopted*

4. That synod thank COD members who are retiring from or concluding service on the Council of Delegates for their faithful service and significant contributions to the denomination (I, D).

— *Adopted*

5. That synod approve the interim appointments made by the COD for synodical deputies and alternate synodical deputies (II, A, 1).

—*Adopted*

6. That synod accept the invitation of Lee Street CRC in Wyoming, Michigan, to serve as the convening church of Synod 2024, to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the campus of Calvin University (II, A, 7).

Ground: Lee Street's multicultural focus with both English and Spanish services, as well as their partnerships with local schools and other ministries, offer synod the opportunity to celebrate diversity and outreach in the CRC.

—*Adopted*

7. That synod take note of the *Our Journey 2025* (Ministry Plan) resources, including visuals, conversation cards, and other tools to aid in engaging classes and churches in the excitement and ownership of the ministry plan (II, B, 2).

—*Noted*

Elder delegate Clyde Williams (Atlantic Northeast) offers a prayer of thanksgiving.

II. Historical Committee

A. Materials

Historical Committee Report, pp. 217-27

B. Privilege of the floor

John Bolt, chair, and James A. De Jong, secretary

C. Recommendations

1. That synod endorse the delineation of the respective duties of the general secretary and the Historical Committee regarding oversight of the denominational archives.

Ground: This provides necessary clarification.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod recognize with appreciation the service of retiring member John Bolt, who has served as committee chair for his two terms on the committee.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod recognize with appreciation the service of curator William Katerberg and the Heritage Hall staff and volunteers.

—*Adopted*

4. That synod recognize that the Historical Committee is adding committee members from the Korean church community and Classis Red Mesa, where oral history is being documented.

—*Adopted*

III. Response to Overture 1: Refrain from Reading Repetitious Notes at the Beginning of Synod

A. Materials

Overture 1, pp. 351-53

B. Observations

Any classis or delegate has the right to written protest. However, the repeated reading of these protests has caused pain to some delegates. Therefore, while not acceding to Overture 1, we make the following recommendations.

C. Recommendations

1. If a notice on credentials presents a protest about seating women delegates, the president of synod would name the individual or classis (see Church Order Supplement, Article 45, b, 1) protesting and read the following statement:

We, as delegates, acknowledge that there are a multitude of perspectives and opinions represented among us. We recognize that on the issue of allowing women to serve in the offices of deacon, elder, minister, or commissioned pastor that “there are two different perspectives and convictions, both of which honor the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God” (*Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 731). Some object that there are women seated as delegates; others lament that there are not more women among us. We choose to work together despite these differences.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod declare this to be its response to Overture 1.

—*Adopted*

IV. Response to Overture 3: Refocus Ecclesiological Communication

A. Materials

Overture 3, pp. 356-58

B. Observations

The advisory committee’s discussion of Overture 3 was robust and often agreed with the concerns noted in the overture. We also recognized that past synods have addressed similar concerns. In response to Overture 14 to Synod 2018, titled “Instruct CRC Agencies and Ministries to Stop Political Lobbying on Behalf of the Christian Reformed Denomination,” the

2018 advisory committee noted, “In our calling to be prophetic, we acknowledge that there will not be unanimity and single-mindedness on all political issues and that differences of opinions will arise. We are called to gospel-centered relationships that hold unity as a high value. We are called to the preservation and restoration of unity as the body of Christ. We trust that when differences arise, our means of addressing them will give testimony to our unity in Christ” (*Acts of Synod 2018*, p. 524). The same advisory committee continued by recommending “that synod instruct the Council of Delegates to create a U.S. committee to provide guidance and support to the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action” (p. 527). Although this recommendation was adopted, this present advisory committee thinks that the created committee has not done enough to oversee and guide the communications of these agencies. Further, broader guidance is needed for the entire CRCNA organization on how it ought to communicate on social, economic, or political matters. In light of the ongoing restructuring in the CRCNA organization this advisory committee does not believe the timing is right to create a separate content management committee, as requested by Overture 3.

C. Recommendations

1. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to report directly back to Synod 2024 on how the concerns noted in Overture 3 have been addressed—namely, specifying how and when the CRCNA organization comments and/or makes statements on social, economic, or political matters that synod has not previously specifically addressed.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod urge the CRCNA organization to exercise discretion when responding to social, economic, and/or political matters.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod declare this to be its response to Overture 3.

—*Adopted*

V. Response to Communication 1: Classis Minnkota

A. Materials

Communication 1: Classis Minnkota, pp. 599-600

B. Recommendation

That synod receive this for information.

—*Received as information*

VI. Work of the synodical deputies

A. Ministers from other denominations, Church Order Article 8

1. Synodical deputies J.D. Vande Werken (Atlantic Northeast), T.H. Douma (Northern Illinois), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Jin Sung Ahn**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Hudson, in session on September 20, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Love Global Vision CRC of Clifton, New Jersey.
2. Synodical deputies G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), D.R. Fauble (Grandville), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Wilson Cunha**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Thornapple Valley, in session on May 16, 2023, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Cascade Fellowship CRC of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
3. Synodical deputies P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), S. Elgersma (California South), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Jordan Hall**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Greater Los Angeles, in session on October 25, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Bethany CRC of Bellflower, California.
4. Synodical deputies L.M. Korf (Columbia), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Jeff Kempton**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis California South, in session on March 2, 2023, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Crossroads CRC of San Marcos, California.
5. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), and D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. John J. Kim**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Hanmi, in session on September 13, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Lifestream CRC of Artesia, California.

6. Synodical deputies L.M. Korf (Columbia), B. Lanting (North Cascades), and W.C. Tuininga (B.C. South-East), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Joshua S. Lee**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Pacific Northwest, in session on November 17, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Kent First Korean CRC of Kent, Washington.
7. Synodical deputies D.E. Fakkema (Pacific Northwest), D.L. Recker (North Cascades), and W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Eun Suk Oh**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on October 18, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is New Westminster CRC of Burnaby, British Columbia.
8. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), J.A. Dykema (Arizona), and P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Han Gyu Park**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Ko-Am, in session on September 27, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Urim CRC of Laguna Woods, California.
9. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), and D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Hunjoon Park**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Hanmi, in session on September 13, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Springing Fountain CRC of Buena Park, California.
10. Synodical deputies D.E. Fakkema (Pacific Northwest), D.L. Recker (North Cascades), and W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Sungwoo Park**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on October 18, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Nelson Avenue Community CRC of Burnaby, British Columbia.

11. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), W. Davelaar (Northcentral Iowa), and C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Marno Retief**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis Lake Superior, in session on September 20, 2022, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Emo CRC of Emo, Ontario.

12. Synodical deputies M.J. Borst (Pacific Northwest), A.E. Beunk (B.C. North-West), and B. Lanting (North Cascades), having heard the colloquium doctum (doctrinal conversation) of **Rev. Jason Truell**, in accordance with Church Order Article 8, and having received the favorable recommendation of the Candidacy Committee, concur in the decision of Classis B.C. South-East, in session on March 7, 2023, to declare him eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The calling church is Ladner CRC of Delta, British Columbia.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

— *Adopted*

B. Classical examination of candidates, Church Order Article 10

1. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session October 14, 2022, to admit candidate **Sheri L. Admiraal** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

2. Synodical deputies R.E. Grift (Toronto), K.M. deBoer (Quinte), and P.A. Apoll (Ontario Southwest), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Eastern Canada, in session October 21, 2022, to admit candidate **Brad Bootsma** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

3. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), H. De Vries (Kalamazoo), and R.D. Engle (Lake Erie), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Grand Rapids East, in session November 17, 2022, to admit candidate **Kristy L. Bootsma** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

4. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), D.R. Fauble (Grandville), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Grand Rapids South, in session March 9, 2023, to admit candidate **Tricia Bosma** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

5. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Northcentral Iowa, in session October 18, 2022, to admit candidate **Stewart J. de Jong** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

6. Synodical deputies S.F. Terpstra (Zeeland), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and D.R. Fauble (Grandville), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Georgetown, in session September 8, 2022, to admit candidate **Mark D. Elffers** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

7. Synodical deputies R.E. Grift (Toronto), M.W. Bootsma (Hamilton), and K.M. deBoer (Quinte), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Eastern Canada, in session March 3, 2023, to admit candidate **Ryan Farrell** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

8. Synodical deputies W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), A.E. Beunk (B.C. North-West), and H.J. Vanderburgh (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Alberta North, in session October 14, 2022, to admit candidate **Rebecca G. Hall** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

9. Synodical deputies T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Georgetown, in session October 27, 2022, to admit candidate **Noelle Jacobs** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

10. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Central California, in session October 4, 2022, to admit candidate **Kiseok D. Kang** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

11. Synodical deputies J.D. Vande Werken (Atlantic Northeast), T.H. Douma (Northern Illinois), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Hudson, in session September 20, 2022, to admit candidate **Jooheyng Kim** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

12. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of

Classis Central California, in session October 4, 2022, to admit candidate **Aleah N. Marsden** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

13. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session March 7, 2023, to admit candidate **Seonmok Paul Park** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

14. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis California South, in session September 29, 2022, to admit candidate **Mario R. Perez** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

15. Synodical deputies M.J. Pluimer (Wisconsin), R.T. Vanderwal (Illiana), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Northern Illinois, in session September 21, 2022, to admit candidate **William Roelofs** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

16. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), L.B. Mensink (Grandville), and R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Kalamazoo, in session November 10, 2022, to admit candidate **Kent A. Sanders** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

17. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session October 14, 2022, to admit candidate **Ivan K. Santoso** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

18. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), D.W. De Groot (Iakota), and W. Davelaar (Northcentral Iowa), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Minnkota, in session September 15, 2022, to admit candidate **Joseph J. Steenholdt** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

19. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), and T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Muskegon, in session October 11, 2022, to admit candidate **Rebecca L. Tjapkes** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

20. Synodical deputies R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Grand Rapids South, in session September 8, 2022, to admit candidate **Anthony Vander Schaaf** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

21. Synodical deputies R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), P.T. Westra (Heartland), and C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Minnkota, in session March 2, 2023, to admit candidate **Ryan VanderWees** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

22. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), H. De Vries (Kalamazoo), and R.D. Engle (Lake Erie), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis Grand Rapids East, in session November 17, 2022, to admit candidate **Klaas Walhout** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

23. Synodical deputies M. Bouma (B.C. North-West), B. Lanting (North Cascades), and M.J. Borst (Pacific Northwest), having heard the examination for ordination in accordance with Church Order Article 10, concur in the decision of Classis B.C. South-East, in session October 18, 2022, to admit candidate **Benjamin H. Wimmers** to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

C. Ministers in specialized services, Church Order Article 12-c

1. Synodical deputies D.E. Fakkema (Pacific Northwest), D.L. Recker (North Cascades), and W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of New Westminster Christian Reformed Church of Burnaby, British Columbia, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on October 18, 2022, to approve the position of Head of Formation Conferences as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Ray P. De Lange**.

2. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Faith Christian Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Holland, in session on February 2, 2023, to approve the position of Director of Synodical Services as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Scott DeVries**.

3. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), and G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Vogel Center Christian Reformed Church of Vogel Center, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Northern Michigan, in session on February 13, 2023, to approve the position of Classical Coordinator for Safe Church and Disability Concerns as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Abigail DeZeeuw**.

4. Synodical deputies L.B. Mensink (Grandville), D.L. Spoelma (Holland), and R.D. Engle (Lake Erie), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Madison Square Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Grand Rapids East, in session on July 9, 2022, to approve the position of Professor of Theology and Director of Spiritual Formation with The Foundry as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Jeffrey A. Fisher**.

5. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), D.R. Fauble (Grandville), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Alger Park Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Grand Rapids South, in session on March 9, 2023, to approve the position of Associate Director of the Eugene Peterson Center for Christian Imagination at Western Theological Seminary as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Samuel Gutierrez**.

6. Synodical deputies T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Bauer Christian Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Georgetown, in session on October 27, 2022, to approve the position of Professor of Theological Studies at Kuyper College as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Timothy Howerzyl**.

7. Synodical deputies T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Alive Ministries of Jenison, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Georgetown, in session on October 27, 2022, to approve the position of Campus Minister at Grand Valley State University as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Noelle Jacobs**.

8. Synodical deputies J.D. Vande Werken (Atlantic Northeast), T.H. Douma (Northern Illinois), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Love Global Vision Christian Reformed Church of Clifton, New Jersey, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Hudson, in session on September 20, 2022, to approve the position of Missionary to India as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Tae J. Lee**.

9. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), J.A. Dykema (Arizona), and P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of L.A. Global Mission Church of Los Angeles, California, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Ko-Am, in session on September 27, 2022, to approve the position of Missionary as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Theodore Lim**.

10. Synodical deputies R.D. Engle (Lake Erie), P.J. Van Dyken (Hackensack), and G. Besteman (Southeast U.S.), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of East Palmyra Christian Reformed Church of Palmyra, New York, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Atlantic North East, in session on March 2, 2023, to approve the position of Campus Pastor as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Nicholas Monsma**.

11. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Grace Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Kalamazoo, in session on March 14, 2023, to approve the position of Associate Executive Director for Mission French Africa as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Karis Mpindi**.

12. Synodical deputies S. Cooper (Toronto), M.J. Klingenberg (Niagara), and G. van Leeuwen (Huron), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Hope Christian Reformed Church of Brantford, Ontario, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Hamilton, in session on October 25, 2022, to approve the position of Transitional Executive Director as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Albert Postma**.

13. Synodical deputies M.J. Pluimer (Wisconsin), R.T. Vanderwal (Illiana), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having reviewed the evidence supplied

by the council of Loop Church of Chicago, Illinois, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Northern Illinois, in session on September 21, 2022, to approve the position of Chaplain as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. William Roelofs**.

14. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), and T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Ferrysburg Christian Reformed Church of Ferrysburg, Michigan, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Muskegon, in session on October 11, 2022, to approve the position of Spiritual Care Counselor as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Rebecca L. Tjapkes**.

15. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), having reviewed the evidence supplied by the council of Life in Christ Christian Reformed Church of Salt Lake City, Utah, and having been satisfied that lines of accountability have been established, according to Church Order Article 12-c, concur in the decision of Classis Yellowstone, in session on September 16, 2022, to approve the position of Teacher of Theology with the Serge Organization as consistent with the ministry of the Word. This position is to be filled by **Rev. Kristopher R. Walhof**.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

D. Loaning a minister to another denomination according to Church Order Article 13-c

1. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Central California, in session on October 4, 2022, to approve loaning **Rev. Kiseok D. Kang** to serve Korean United Church of Modesto, California.

2. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Central California, in session on October 4, 2022, to approve loaning **Rev. C.L.*** to serve Evangelical Formosah Church of Houston, Texas.

* Record is protected, and actual name will not be published because of safety concerns.

3. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), satisfied that synodical regulations

have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, to approve loaning **Rev. Daniel J. Rhee** to serve Living Water Church of Houston, Texas.

4. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, to approve loaning **Rev. Seonmok Paul Park** to serve Korean Church of North Denver of Northglenn, Colorado.

5. Synodical deputies A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and D.L. Spoelma (Holland), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Grandville, in session on January 19, 2023, to approve loaning **Rev. Mitchell R. Sheahan** to serve The Bridge Church of Portage, Michigan.

6. Synodical deputies M.J. Pluimer (Wisconsin), J.C. Busscher (Illiana), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Northern Illinois, in session on March 8, 2023, to approve loaning **Rev. Mark W. van Stee** to serve International Protestant Church of Zurich, Switzerland.

7. Synodical deputies J.D. Vande Werken (Atlantic Northeast), G. Besteman (Southeast U.S.), and P. Kornilov (Hackensack), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Hudson, in session on May 18, 2023, to approve loaning **Rev. Benjamin H. Spalink** to serve Grace Church of Ridgewood, New Jersey.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

E. Extension of loan of a minister to another denomination according to Church Order Article 13-c

1. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, to approve the extension of loaning **Rev. Andrew Chun** to serve Korean Christian Church of Denver, Colorado.

2. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, to approve the extension of loaning **Rev. InSuk Hannah Guan** to serve New Gate Church of Aurora, Colorado.

3. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, to approve the extension of loaning **Rev. Daniel Jin Su Hwang** to serve Korean Christian Church of Denver, Colorado.

4. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), L.B. Mensink (Grandville), and R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Kalamazoo, in session on October 18, 2022, to approve the extension of loaning **Rev. Karis Mpindi** to serve St. John Reformed Church of Montreal, Wisconsin.

5. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), J.A. Dykema (Arizona), and P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Ko-Am, in session on September 27, 2022, to approve the extension of loaning **Rev. Byoung Il Song** to serve Korean Christian Church of Denver, Colorado.

6. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), J.A. Dykema (Arizona), and P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), satisfied that synodical regulations have been followed in accordance with Church Order Article 13-c, concur in the decision of Classis Ko-Am, in session on September 27, 2022, to approve the extension of loaning **Rev. Won Seok Song** to serve Ye Eun Presbyterian Church of Korea of South Korea.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

The assembly expresses gratitude for the ministers of the Word who have been received into the various offices of the CRCNA.

F. Release from office to enter a ministry outside the Christian Reformed Church under Church Order Article 14-b

1. Synodical deputies C. Pool (California South), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Shu-Min Cheng** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Greater Los Angeles, in session on May 24, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Shu-Min Cheng** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

2. Synodical deputies C. Pool (California South), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Jeffrey R. Funk** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Greater Los Angeles, in session on May 24, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Jeffrey R. Funk** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

3. Synodical deputies M.J. Pluimer (Wisconsin), J.R. Huizinga (Northern Illinois), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Cary Gephart** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Illiana, in session on September 21, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Cary Gephart** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

4. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Eunjun Jeong** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis California South, in session on September 29, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Eunjun Jeong** is released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

5. Synodical deputies R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and P.T. Westra (Heartland), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Edward Jiang** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Central Plains, in session on February 26, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Edward Jiang** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

6. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), and P.T. Westra (Heartland), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Jin Young Lee** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Northcentral Iowa, in session on September 13, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Jin Young Lee** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

7. Synodical deputies J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Keith A. Mannes** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Holland, in session on October 6, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Keith A. Mannes** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

8. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Allen Pontarelli** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Grandville, in session on September 15, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Allen Pontarelli** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

9. Synodical deputies D.E. Fakkema (Pacific Northwest), D.L. Recker (North Cascades), and W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Charles W. Van Hoffen** in

accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on October 18, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Charles W. Van Hoffen** is released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

10. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), D.R. Fauble (Grandville), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids North), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Richard Visser** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Georgetown, in session on July 21, 2022, to declare that **Rev. Richard Visser** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

11. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Christopher R. Allen** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Central Plains, in session on February 25, 2023, to declare that **Rev. Christopher R. Allen** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

12. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Katrina J. Olson** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, to declare that **Rev. Katrina J. Olson** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

13. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Mark W. Hilbelink** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, to declare that **Rev. Mark W. Hilbelink** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

14. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having heard the discussions relating to the resignation of **Rev. Dominic Palacios** in accordance with Church Order Article 14-b, concur in the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, to declare that **Rev. Dominic Palacios** is released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

G. Release from office to enter a nonministerial vocation under Church Order Article 14-c

1. Synodical deputies J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having heard the discussion of Classis Holland, in session on October 6, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 14-c, that **Rev. Jonathan DeRuiter** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America to enter a nonministerial vocation.

2. Synodical deputies R.D. Engle (Lake Erie), P.J. Van Dyken (Hackensack), and G. Besteman (Southeast U.S.), having heard the discussion of Classis Atlantic Northeast, in session on March 2, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 14-c, that **Rev. Jonathan B. Fischer** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America to enter a nonministerial vocation.

3. Synodical deputies W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), M.L. Bouma (B.C. North-West), and R.J. Toornstra (Columbia), having heard the discussion of Classis Alberta North, in session on March 11, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 14-c, that **Rev. Christopher S. Lee** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America to enter a nonministerial vocation.

4. Synodical deputies T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having heard the discussion of Classis Lake Erie, in session on October 1, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 14-c, that **Rev. SangMyung S. Lee** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America to enter a nonministerial vocation.

5. Synodical deputies P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), S. Elgersma (California South), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the discussion of Classis Greater Los Angeles, in session on October 25, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 14-c, that **Rev. Sam Lee** is honorably released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America to enter a nonministerial vocation.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

H. Return to office of one who was released to enter a nonministerial vocation under Church Order Article 14-e

Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the interview of the applicant and the discussion of Classis Central California, in session on October 4,

2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 14-e, that **Mr. Kyung Lok Jang** is eligible for call to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

I. Release from ministry in a congregation under Church Order Article 17-a

—*Tabled*

Note: Action on the Church Order Article 17-a synodical deputy reports section is tabled until synod addresses this matter in Article 44.

J. Extension of eligibility for call under Church Order Article 17-c

1. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), having heard the discussion of Classis Grand Rapids East, in session on September 15, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Aminah Al-Attas Bradford's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

2. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), having heard the discussion of Classis Grand Rapids East, in session on September 15, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Nathaniel M. Al-Attas Bradford's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

3. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having heard the discussion of Classis Kalamazoo, in session on March 14, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Joshua Amaezechi's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

4. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), and G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), having heard the discussion of Classis Zeeland, in session on May 11, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. John Aukema's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

5. Synodical deputies T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having heard the discussion of Classis Georgetown, in session on October 27, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Mark D. Bennink's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

6. Synodical deputies K. de Koning (Alberta North), W.C. Tuininga (B.C. South-East), and D.J. Swinney (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), having

heard the discussion of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on March 7, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

7. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having heard the discussion of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Todd H. Hilkemann's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

8. Synodical deputies L.B. Mensink (Grandville), L.D. Van Dyke (Muskegon), and R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), having heard the discussion of Classis Northern Michigan, in session on September 27, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Gregory J. Kett's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

9. Synodical deputies G.J. Kamps (Yellowstone), R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), and E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), having heard the discussion of Classis Red Mesa, in session on September 17, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. James H. Kuiper's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

10. Synodical deputies R.E. Grift (Toronto), M.W. Bootsma (Hamilton), and G. van Leeuwen (Huron), having heard the discussion of Classis Ontario Southwest, in session on September 27, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Daryl J. Meijer's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

11. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having heard the discussion of Classis California South, in session on September 29, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Joseph W. Nasvytis's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

12. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having heard the discussion of Classis Kalamazoo, in session on March 14, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Timothy Raakman's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

13. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), having heard the discussion of Classis Grand Rapids East, in session on September 15, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Katrina M. Schaafsma's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

14. Synodical deputies R.E. Grift (Toronto), P.A. Apoll (Ontario Southwest), and K.M. deBoer (Quinte), having heard the discussion of Classis Huron, in session on September 17, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Stephen D. Tamming's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

15. Synodical deputies P.A. Apoll (Ontario Southwest), E.W. Visser (Hamilton), and G. van Leeuwen (Huron), having heard the discussion of Classis Toronto, in session on October 4, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Thomas J. van Milligen's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

16. Synodical deputies J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having heard the discussion of Classis Holland, in session on October 6, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Bryan J. Van Soelen's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

17. Synodical deputies M.B. Stegink (Hudson), P.J. Van Dyken (Hackensack), and G. Besteman (Southeast U.S.), having heard the discussion of Classis Atlantic Northeast, in session on October 6, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Daniel J. Vos's** eligibility for call is extended for one year.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

K. Release from the office of minister of the Word under Church Order Article 17-c

Synodical deputies M.J. Pluimer (Wisconsin), J.C. Busscher (Illiana), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having heard the discussion of Classis Northern Illinois, in session on March 8, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c, that **Rev. Daniel J. Gregory** is released from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

Vice President Chad M. Steenwyk offers prayer for those who are waiting to discern God's call upon their lives.

L. Declaration that a commissioned pastor position fits synodical guidelines under Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a

1. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Crossroads CRC of San Marcos, California, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis California South, in session on September 29, 2022, that the position of

Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Ruben Aguilar**.

2. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Crossroads CRC of San Marcos, California, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis California South, in session on September 29, 2022, that the position of Associate Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Sandra Aguilar**.

3. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Peace Community Church of Houston, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, that the position of Church Planter is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Luis I. Becerra Leal**.

4. Synodical deputies M.J. Klingenberg (Niagara), G. van Leeuwen (Huron), and R.E. Grift (Toronto), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Covenant CRC of Woodstock, Ontario, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Ontario Southwest, in session on May 30, 2023, that the position of Spanish Covenant Ministry Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Julio (Peter) Carrion**.

5. Synodical deputies J.D. Vande Werken (Atlantic Northeast), T.H. Douma (Northern Illinois), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Filipino-American CRC of New York, New York, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Hudson, in session on September 20, 2022, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Edwin Dalupan**.

6. Synodical deputies P.A. Apoll (Ontario Southwest), M.W. Bootsma (Hamilton), and G. van Leeuwen (Huron), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Covenant CRC of St. Catharines, Ontario, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Niagara, in session on October 26, 2022, that the position of Mission Network Developer is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Leah E. DeVos**.

7. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), and W. Davelaar (Northcentral Iowa), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Faith CRC of Pella, Iowa, and having

compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Central Plains, in session on September 16, 2022, that the position of Vermeer Company Chaplain is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Brad Engbers**.

8. Synodical deputies M.J. Pluimer (Wisconsin), R.T. Vanderwal (Illiana), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Ebenezer CRC of Berwyn, Illinois, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Northern Illinois, in session on September 21, 2022, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Diego B. Flores**.

9. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of New Life CRC of Houston, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Diana Gaggero**.

10. Synodical deputies C. Pool (California South), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Ttokamsa Mission Church of Monterey Park, California, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Greater Los Angeles, in session on May 24, 2022, that the position of Administrative/Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Frances Grif-fith**.

11. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Hope CRC of Houston, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, that the position of Chaplain is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Paul Hannemann**.

12. Synodical deputies D.W. De Groot (Iakota), S.M. Muilenburg (Minnkota), and R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Northern Light House CRC of Lincoln, Nebraska, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis

Heartland, in session on September 21, 2022, that the position of Lead Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Jeff J. Heerspink**.

13. Synodical deputies J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Calvary CRC of Holland, Michigan, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Holland, in session on October 6, 2022, that the position of Pastor of Leadership and Care is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Matthew Hochhalter**.

14. Synodical deputies R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), P.T. Westra (Heartland), and C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Covenant CRC of Appleton, Wisconsin, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Wisconsin, in session on March 14, 2023, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Benjamin Hoekman**.

15. Synodical deputies G.J. Kamps (Yellowstone), R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), and E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Church Rock CRC of Church Rock, New Mexico, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Red Mesa, in session on September 17, 2022, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Gary Hoeksema**.

16. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Hope CRC of Houston, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Helen Hoogesteyn de Lopez**.

17. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Princeton CRC of Kentwood, Michigan, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Thornapple Valley, in session on October 21, 2022, that the position of Connections Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Emily Hull**.

18. Synodical deputies M.J. Klingenberg (Niagara), G. van Leeuwen (Huron), and R.E. Grift (Toronto), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Strathroy East CRC of Strathroy, Ontario, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Ontario Southwest, in session on May 30, 2023, that the position of Pastor of Youth and Worship Ministries is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Stefan Human**.

19. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Palo Alto CRC of Palo Alto, California, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Central California, in session on October 4, 2022, that the position of Pastor of Congregational Care is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Annie Jamieson**.

20. Synodical deputies A.E. Beunk (B.C. North-West), M.J. Borst (Pacific Northwest), and L.M. Korf (Columbia), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Sumas CRC of Sumas, Washington, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis North Cascades, in session on October 27, 2022, that the position of Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Russell Kent**.

21. Synodical deputies D.W. De Groot (Iakota), S.M. Muilenburg (Minnkota), and R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Northern Light House CRC of Lincoln, Nebraska, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Heartland, in session on September 21, 2022, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Jonathan Keyzer**.

22. Synodical deputies J.D. Vande Werken (Atlantic Northeast), T.H. Douma (Northern Illinois), and D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Good News Church of New York City, New York, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Hudson, in session on September 20, 2022, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Fred Kim**.

23. Synodical deputies R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of inSpirit Church of Byron Center, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Grand Rapids

South, in session on September 8, 2022, that the position of Pastor of Outreach and Discipleship is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Jessica Kuncaitis**.

24. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Hope CRC of Houston, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Wilmer Lopez**.

25. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Peace Community Church of Houston, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, that the position of Church Planter is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Judith Lopez de Becerra**.

26. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Grace Valley CRC of Las Vegas, Nevada, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis California South, in session on September 29, 2022, that the position of Associate Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Ralph E. Mack**.

27. Synodical deputies L.M. Korf (Columbia), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Bozeman CRC of Bozeman, Montana, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Yellowstone, in session on March 3, 2023, that the position of Educational Consultant and Leader is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Sosthene Maletoungou**.

28. Synodical deputies M.J. Pluimer (Wisconsin), J.R. Huizinga (Northern Illinois), and R.T. Vanderwal (Illiana), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Orland Park CRC of Orland Park, Illinois, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Chicago South, in session on September 21, 2022, that the position of Campus Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Caley Meza**.

29. Synodical deputies L.D. Van Dyke (Muskegon), D.R. Fauble (Grandville), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having examined the written

materials submitted by the council of Coit Community CRC of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Grand Rapids North, in session on March 16, 2023, that the position of Senior Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Adriel Morgan**.

30. Synodical deputies C. Pool (California South), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Ttokamsa Mission Church of Monterey Park, California, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Greater Los Angeles, in session on May 24, 2022, that the position of Church Planter is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Miguel Nava**.

31. Synodical deputies C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), D.R. Koll (Greater Los Angeles), and J.A. Dykema (Arizona), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Peace CRC of Houston, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on March 7, 2023, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Sandra Nemecek**.

32. Synodical deputies T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of First CRC of Detroit, Michigan, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Lake Erie, in session on October 1, 2022, that the position of Church Planting Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Steven Perry**.

33. Synodical deputies G. van Leeuwen (Huron), R.E. Grift (Toronto), and S.A. Van Houten (Hamilton), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Fellowship CRC of St. Thomas, Ontario, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Ontario Southwest, in session on May 31, 2022, that the position of Pastor of Youth and Discipleship is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Jon Pollnow**.

34. Synodical deputies L.M. Korf (Columbia), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Bethel CRC of Manhattan, Montana, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Yellowstone, in session on March 3,

2023, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. James Reed**.

35. Synodical deputies K. de Koning (Alberta North), W.C. Tuininga (B.C. South-East), and D.J. Swinney (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Tapestry CRC of Vancouver, British Columbia, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on March 7, 2023, that the position of Spiritual Health Practitioner is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Sandy Reynolds**.

36. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Oasis Community CRC of Moreno Valley, California, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis California South, in session on September 29, 2022, that the position of Administrative Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Erick A. Rodriguez**.

37. Synodical deputies J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Providence CRC of Holland, Michigan, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Holland, in session on October 6, 2022, that the position of Lead Pastor of The Way Church is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Arturo Rojas**.

38. Synodical deputies K. de Koning (Alberta North), W.C. Tuininga (B.C. South-East), and D.J. Swinney (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Duncan CRC of Vancouver, British Columbia, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on March 7, 2023, that the position of Pastor of Discipleship and Mission is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Daniel Schultz**.

39. Synodical deputies C. Fluit (Atlantic Northeast), P. Kornilov (Hackensack), and M. Stegink (Hudson), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Sunlight Community Church of Port St. Lucie, Florida, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Southeast U.S., in session on October 13, 2022, that the position of Pastor of CIA Boys Club is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Adam Sculnick**.

40. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Bozeman CRC of Bozeman, Montana, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Yellowstone, in session on September 15, 2022, that the position of Commissioned Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Reuben C. Sinnema**.

41. Synodical deputies D.E. Fakkema (Pacific Northwest), D.L. Recker (North Cascades), and W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of The Tapestry of Richmond, British Columbia, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis B.C. North-West, in session on October 18, 2022, that the position of Director of Congregational Care and Administrator is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Lucinda Tecson**.

42. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Sunrise Community Church of Austin, Texas, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, that the position of Community Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Richard Villarreal**.

43. Synodical deputies J.D. Vande Werken (Atlantic Northeast), G. Besteman (Southeast U.S.), and P. Kornilov (Hackensack), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Restore Church of Midland Park, New Jersey, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Hudson, in session on May 18, 2023, that the position of Pastor of Worship and Mission is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Joey Wright**.

44. Synodical deputies L.B. Mensink (Grandville), L.D. Van Dyke (Muskegon), and R.D. Goudzwaard (Thornapple Valley), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Cadillac CRC of Cadillac, Michigan, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Northern Michigan, in session on September 27, 2022, that the position of Associate Pastor for Watershed is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Mr. Jared M. Yapple**.

45. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of First CRC of Denver, Colorado, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination,

concur with the decision of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, that the position of Associate Pastor is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors. The position is to be filled by **Ms. Kristie Yoo**.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

M. Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a commissioned pastors, filling previously approved positions

The following commissioned pastors have been examined by the classes indicated for positions previously approved by synodical deputies (in addition to those listed above in the synodical deputy reports for Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a):

<i>Name</i>	<i>Classis</i>	<i>Date</i>
Ruben Aguilar	California South	Mar. 2, 2023
Chris Avery	California South	Sept. 29, 2022
Edwin Dalupan	Hudson	Oct. 13, 2022
Aleke Dekker	Toronto	Oct. 4, 2022
Sean Folkerts	Alberta North	Oct. 15, 2022
Joel Gagnon	Atlantic Northeast	Oct. 6, 2022
Fred Kim	Hudson	Oct. 13, 2022
Ralph Mack	California South	Mar. 2, 2023
Adam Sculnick	Southeast U.S.	Oct. 13, 2022
Carlos Tamayo	Arizona	Sept. 16, 2022

Recommendation: That synod take note of the above-named persons ordained as commissioned pastors within the classes indicated.

—*Adopted*

N. Service of a commissioned pastor in an organized church as solo pastor under Church Order Article 24-a

1. Synodical deputies D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), T.H. Douma (Northern Illinois), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having examined the request submitted by the council of Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Lansing, Illinois, concur with the decision of Classis Illiana, in session on March 7, 2023, that **Mr. Kyle Beckrich** (commissioned pastor) may serve the congregation as its solo pastor.

2. Synodical deputies E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), J.A. Dykema (Arizona), and P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), having examined the request submitted by the council of Phoenix Korean Presbyterian Christian Reformed Church of Phoenix, Arizona, concur with the decision of Classis Ko-Am, in session on September 27, 2022, that **Ms. Insuk Dunne** (commissioned pastor) may serve the congregation as its solo pastor.

3. Synodical deputies G.J. Kamps (Yellowstone), R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), and E.D. Westra (Greater Los Angeles), having examined the request submitted by the council of Church Rock Christian Reformed Church of Church Rock, New Mexico, concur with the decision of Classis Red Mesa, in session on September 17, 2022, that **Mr. Gary Hoeksema** (commissioned pastor) may serve the congregation as its solo pastor.

4. Synodical deputies D.W. De Groot (Iakota), S.M. Muilenburg (Minnkota), and R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), having examined the request submitted by the council of Northern Light House Christian Reformed Church of Lincoln, Nebraska, concur with the decision of Classis Heartland, in session on September 21, 2022, that **Mr. Jonathan Keyzer** (commissioned pastor) may serve the congregation as its solo pastor.

5. Synodical deputies P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), S. Elgersma (California South), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having examined the request submitted by the council of First Bellflower Christian Reformed Church of Bellflower, California, concur with the decision of Classis Greater Los Angeles, in session on February 23, 2023, that **Mr. Aaron Solomon-Mills** (commissioned pastor) may serve the congregation as its solo pastor.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

O. Calling a commissioned pastor to a specified term under Church Order Article 24-b

1. Synodical deputies D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), T.H. Douma (Northern Illinois), and L.B. Mensink (Grandville), having examined the request submitted by the council of Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Lansing, Illinois, the terms proposed, and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan, concur with the decision of Classis Illiana, in session on March 7, 2023, to call **Mr. Kyle Beckrich** to a specified term.

2. Synodical deputies M.J. Borst (Pacific Northwest), B. Lanting (North Cascades), and P.H. Vander Klay (Central California), having examined the request submitted by the council of Quincy Christian Reformed Church of Quincy, Washington, the terms proposed, and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan, concur with the decision of Classis Columbia, in session on October 5, 2022, to call **Mr. Benjamin Buckley** to a specified term.

3. Synodical deputies L.M. Korf (Columbia), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), having examined the request submitted by the council of Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Manhattan, Montana, the terms proposed, and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan, concur with the decision of Classis Yellowstone, in session on March 3, 2023, to call **Mr. James Reed** to a specified term.

4. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), R. De Young (Rocky Mountain), and S. Elgersma (California South), having examined the

request submitted by the council of Bozeman Christian Reformed Church of Bozeman, Montana, the terms proposed, and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan, concur with the decision of Classis Yellowstone, in session on September 15, 2022, to call **Mr. Reuben C. Sinnema** to a specified term.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

P. Commissioned pastors concluding service under Church Order Article 24-d

The following commissioned pastors have concluded service in the classes indicated in the positions to which they were appointed:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Classis</i>	<i>Effective Date</i>	<i>Reason</i>
Benjamin Buckley	North Cascades	Dec. 31, 2022	Honorably released
Shaun Buikema	Illiana	Sept. 21, 2022	Released
Brian D. Bylsma	Quinte	Sept. 27, 2022	Honorably released
Byran Choyce	Grand Rapids East	Nov. 17, 2022	Dismissed
Aaron De Boer	North Cascades	Oct. 20, 2022	Honorably released
Lisa A. DeYoung	Grand Rapids East	Sept. 16, 2022	Honorably released
Justin Dudney	B.C. South-East	Oct. 18, 2022	Honorably released
Kimberley W. Masters	Rocky Mountain	Oct. 15, 2022	Honorably released
David Mosterd	Holland	Oct. 6, 2022	Honorably released
Luis R. Quinonez	California South	Sept. 29, 2022	Released
Eudys R. Rivery	Arizona	Sept. 17, 2022	Released
Carrie A. Rodgers	Georgetown	July 24, 2022	Released
Anthony Vander Laan	Ontario Southwest	Sept. 27, 2022	Honorably released
Bryan D. Vander Tuig	California South	Sept. 29, 2022	Honorably released

Recommendation: That synod take note that these commissioned pastors have concluded service in the classes indicated.

—*Adopted*

Q. Deposition of a minister of the Word under Church Order Article 82-83

Synodical deputies R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), S.M. Muilenburg (Minnkota), and P.T. Westra (Heartland), having heard the grounds submitted by the council of Lebanon Christian Reformed Church of Lebanon, Iowa, and the discussion of Classis Iakota, in session on March 7, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to approve, in accordance with Church Order Articles 82 and 83, the deposition of **Cory L. Van Sloten** from the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

VII. Ministerial and commissioned pastor retirements

A. Ministers

Synod has received notice of the following ministerial retirements:

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Classis</i>	<i>Effective Date</i>
Sung Chang Choi	Ko-Am	Dec. 27, 2022
Thomas A. De Does	Heartland	Nov. 4, 2022
Gary A. De Vries	Lake Erie	Jan. 3, 2023
Jacob De Vries	Huron	Jan. 1, 2023
William C. Hensen	Thornapple Valley	Feb. 8, 2023
Calvin Hoogendoorn	Iakota	Apr. 30, 2023
NamJoong Kang	Ko-Am	Dec. 27, 2022
Michael J. Kooy	Chicago South	Jan. 20, 2023
Loren J. Kotman	Heartland	Dec. 15, 2022
Matthew M. Le	Greater Los Angeles	Dec. 31, 2022
Douglas M. MacLeod	Grand Rapids East	Jan. 6, 2023
David J. Prince	Grand Rapids East	Oct. 31, 2022
David A. Reynolds	Arizona	June 8, 2023
Albert M. Sideco	Hudson	Aug. 28, 2022
Mark Stephenson	Holland	June 30, 2022
Perry J. Tinklenberg	Columbia	Dec. 31, 2022
Derek Van Dalen	Hamilton	Oct. 28, 2022
Kent A. Van Til	Holland	Feb. 2, 2023
Thomas J. Walcott	Wisconsin	Sept. 27, 2022
Raymond Yeo	Rocky Mountain	Oct. 15, 2022
Randal K. Young	Central California	Dec. 27, 2022

B. Commissioned pastors

Synod has received notice of the following commissioned pastor retirements under Church Order Article 24 (emeritus status noted)

<i>Commissioned pastor</i>	<i>Classis</i>	<i>Effective Date</i>
Louis Bosma, <i>emeritus</i>	Ontario Southwest	Dec. 31, 2022
Michael Collins, <i>emeritus</i>	Niagara	May 25, 2022
Robert J. De Vries, <i>emeritus</i>	Muskegon	Jan. 31, 2023
Kathy Kiesser, <i>emeritus</i>	B.C. North-West	Oct. 18, 2022
Chris H. Meehan, <i>emeritus</i>	Grand Rapids North	Feb. 8, 2023
Henry Perez, <i>emeritus</i>	Wisconsin	May 31, 2022
Richard Silversmith, <i>emeritus</i>	Rocky Mountain	Oct. 15, 2022
Anne Vander Hoek, <i>emeritus</i>	Alberta North	Mar. 15, 2023
Clay M. Warren, <i>emeritus</i>	Pacific Northwest	May 31, 2023

C. Recommendations

1. That synod recognize with gratitude the faithful gospel ministry of the 21 ministers of the Word as noted above.

—Adopted

2. That synod recognize with gratitude the faithful ministry of the nine commissioned pastors as noted above.

—Adopted

3. That synod offer a prayer of gratitude for these servants of God, and for the many years of service they represent.

—Adopted

President De Vries offers a prayer of gratitude for the retiring ministers of the Word and commissioned pastors.

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued in Article 44.)

ARTICLE 24

Advisory Committee 4, Congregational Ministries, Rev. Daniel Meinema reporting, presents the following:

I. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report (sections II, A, 10, a and c; II, A, 14; II, B, 5-7, a; II, B, 9-11), including Appendices D-E, pp. 37-38, 42, 45-47, 77-82
2. Council of Delegates Supplement (section II, D), including Appendix K, pp. 637-38, 777-79

B. Privilege of the floor

Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendations

1. That synod take note of the updates provided within the COD report on addressing directives from Synod 2019 regarding abuse of power (II, A, 10, c).
- Noted*
2. That synod adopt the following with regard to Congregational Ministries (Thrive) (II, B, 9 and Appendix D):
 - a. That synod recognize Thrive as a ministry agency of the CRCNA to engage and accompany Christian Reformed congregations as they seek to faithfully and holistically embody the gospel in their respective contexts.
 - b. That synod approve the vision, mission, mandate, and core postures in the reorganization document as the synodical framework for Thrive (Appendix D).

- c. That synod (a) conclude the synodical mandates and directives given to the previously separate ministries in Thrive and (b) instruct Thrive to utilize these historical guidelines as valuable information for understanding synod's intent regarding the desired denominational support for congregations.

—Adopted

II. Thrive (Congregational Ministries)

A. Materials

Reports of Congregational Ministries, pp. 121-24, 128-31, 149-65, 192-94

B. Recommendation

That synod acknowledge the reports of these denominational ministries: CCG/Centre for Public Dialogue, Chaplaincy and Care, Disability Concerns, Diversity, Faith Formation, Indigenous Ministry (Canada), Pastor Church Resources, Race Relations, Safe Church, Social Justice, and Worship—and thank them for their work.

—Adopted

Rev. Jesse Lee Walhof (Classis Heartland) offers prayer.

III. Response to Overture 11: Revise Church Order Article 61; Encourage Churches to Include Lament in Their Public Prayers

A. Materials

Overture 11, pp. 385-89

B. Recommendations

1. That synod not accede to Overture 11.

Grounds:

- a. While lament is an important part of life and worship, it need not be required in every worship service.
- b. Prayers of lament fall under the portions of confession and intercession in our worship resources and therefore are already included in Church Order Article 61.

—Adopted

2. That synod encourage congregations to include prayers of lament in their public prayers.

Grounds:

- a. Our practice of prayer follows the practice and instruction of prayer in Scripture. Throughout Scripture we see evidence of prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession. We also see significant evidence of prayers of lament, both personal and communal.

- 1) Almost one-third of the Psalms are psalms of lament, and almost one-third of those are communal psalms of lament.
 - 2) Job, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk all display prayers of lament.
 - 3) Jesus prayed prayers of lament in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross.
- b. Lament recognizes our pains and struggles while acknowledging God as sovereign.
 - c. Lament brings authenticity to our struggles and gives permission to move beyond simple obedience into a covenant relationship with God.
 - d. Sharing prayers of lament brings the body of Christ together in the reality of life. This practices authentic faith and demonstrates to our children how God is our refuge, even when we can't see him.

— Adopted

(The report of Advisory Committee 4 is continued in Article 29.)

ARTICLE 25

The morning session recesses at 11:47 a.m. Rev. Mark Quist (Rocky Mountain) leads in closing prayer.

MONDAY AFTERNOON, June 12, 2023

Fourth Session

ARTICLE 26

The afternoon session convenes at 1:17 p.m. The praise team (musicians: Joshua Lee, In Yang, Catheryn Jo Kim, Katie Roelofs) leads the assembly in singing "Blessed Assurance" and "How Great Thou Art" in Korean and English.

Rev. Kevin DeRaaf, Resonate Global Mission director nominee, leads the assembly in devotions. After reflecting on the state of our hearts, he reads and reflects on Hebrews 11:8-12. This passage shows that Abraham lived in tents; he never settled in the promised land. His family continued to live a nomadic life, ready to move whenever God would say the word, waiting for the New Jerusalem. The assembly responds by singing "The Kingdom Is Yours."

ARTICLE 27

Rev. Kevin DeRaaf shares about his calling to the position of Resonate Global Mission director. He notes that there is excitement and anticipation at the start of a brand-new story for the Christian Reformed Church, and the future is bright.

Rev. DeRaaf explains that the past six years have been the most invigorating of his ministry career. He gives thanks for the passionate Resonate

staff and volunteers who pray, share the good news, and want to work with, alongside, and be a catalyst for everyone in the Christian Reformed Church as they serve in missions.

Resonate seeks to influence with inspiration (stories of what God is doing around the world), information (measuring the impact of ministry), invitation (for churches to experience what Resonate can offer), innovation (innovative ministry grants), invocation (prophetic role), integral mission (holistic gospel witness), and holy idealism (God is still God). The future is bright because of the missional God who calls all to be witnesses to the world.

ARTICLE 28

Advisory Committee 5, Global Mission, Rev. Adrian de Lange reporting, presents the following:

I. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report (sections II, B, 7, b-c; II, B, 8), including Appendix C, pp. 46, 73-76
2. Council of Delegates Supplement (sections I, G; II, A; II, B, 2), including Appendices C1, C2, D1, D2, F, and G, pp. 635, 637, 714-54, 758-71

B. Privilege of the Floor: Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendation

That synod ratify the nomination of Rev. Kevin DeRaaf as director of Resonate Global Mission, effective July 1, 2023 (II, B, 7, b and Appendix C).

—*Adopted*

Deacon delegate Efren Echipare (Hackensack) offers a prayer of thanksgiving for Rev. DeRaaf and Resonate.

II. ReFrame Ministries

A. Materials

ReFrame Ministries Report, pp. 137-43

B. Privilege of the floor: Kurt Selles, director of ReFrame Ministries

C. Recommendation

That synod encourage congregations to use ReFrame's materials to support their own local ministries and outreach.

—*Adopted*

III. Resonate Global Mission

A. Materials

Resonate Global Mission Report, pp. 144-48

B. Privilege of the floor: Joel Huyser, interim director of Resonate Global Mission, and Kevin DeRaaf, director of Resonate Global Mission

C. Recommendations

1. That synod, along with the Council of Delegates, encourage all Christian Reformed congregations to recognize the following Sundays as significant opportunities to pray for and to receive an offering for Resonate Global Mission: Easter, Pentecost, and the second and third Sundays in September.

— *Adopted*

2. That synod thank Joel Huyser for his 28 years of dedicated service to Resonate Global Mission, World Missions, and the CRCNA.

— *Adopted*

IV. World Renew

A. Materials

1. World Renew Report, pp. 166-79

2. World Renew Supplement Report, pp. 809-11

B. Privilege of the floor: Rebekah Vanderzee, president of World Renew-U.S.; Andrew Geisterfer, president of World Renew-Canada; Carol Bremer-Bennett, executive codirector of World Renew-U.S.; and Jamie McIntosh, executive codirector of World Renew-Canada designee

C. Recommendations

1. That synod commend the report received from World Renew.

— *Adopted*

2. That synod commend the work of mercy carried on by World Renew in fulfillment of their synodical mandate and urge the churches to take at least four offerings per year in lieu of ministry-share support.

— *Adopted*

3. That synod commend the work Peter Bulthuis invested in World Renew's ministry over the past 10 years as both director of church engagement and CORE team leader.

— *Adopted*

Rev. Adrian de Lange introduces Jamie McIntosh, director of World Renew-Canada, and thanks him for his work.

(The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued in Article 33.)

ARTICLE 29

(The report of Advisory Committee 4 is continued from Article 24.)

Advisory Committee 4, Congregational Ministries, Rev. Daniel Meinema reporting, presents the following:

I. Ecclesiastical Marriage Task Force

A. Materials

Report of the Ecclesiastical Marriage Task Force, pp. 251-284

B. Privilege of the floor: Gerry Koning, chair; Gayle Doornbos, reporter; and Loren Veldhuizen

C. Recommendations

1. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to disseminate the report on ecclesiastical marriage to the churches of the CRC to serve as guidance regarding the issue of ecclesiastical marriage.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod strongly advise pastors of the CRC not to solemnize ecclesiastical marriages (as defined in this report) as sanctioned and solemnized solely by the church to the exclusion of the state (civil government) whereby a couple is considered “married in the eyes of the church but not in the eyes of the state.”

Grounds:

- a. The biblical record clearly teaches us to submit to the governing authorities in all matters that do not conflict with the Word of God.
- b. Historically, Reformed churches have acknowledged the role and right of civil authorities to regulate marriage in their jurisdictions.
- c. In both the United States and Canada there could be negative legal consequences for the participants and/or for pastors who solemnize a noncivil or ecclesiastical marriage.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod encourage the churches to respect and honor the marriages of immigrants who did not obtain a civil marriage prior to arriving in Canada or the United States and counsel them in the understanding of Christian marriage and its relationship to civil authority in our countries.

Grounds:

- a. It is not the case that in every country where immigrants have come from that the civil authorities regulate marriage, so it might not have been possible for a civil marriage to occur.
- b. In the interest of grace and acceptance, we want to acknowledge the beautiful marriage traditions that have developed in various cultures.

- c. The law is permissive but not prescriptive in this regard.

—*Tabled*

Note: The above recommendation was discussed and tabled until later in the day.

4. That synod caution pastors against acting as legal experts or offering legal advice, especially with regard to the issue of ecclesiastical marriage, and that synod encourage pastors to advise couples to seek independent legal counsel as necessary.

—*Adopted*

5. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to disseminate a letter of warning to the pastors and councils regarding the potential legal ramifications of solemnizing an ecclesiastical marriage.

—*Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 4 is continued in Article 31.)

ARTICLE 30

Advisory Committee 3, Education and Candidacy, Rev. Kyle Haack reporting, presents the following:

I. Study of Bivocationality Task Force

A. Materials

Report of the Study of Bivocationality Task Force, pp. 285-314

B. Privilege of the floor: Bernard Bakker, chair, and Michael Vander Laan, reporter

C. Recommendations

1. That synod propose to Synod 2024 the following changes to Church Order Articles 14, 15, and 23 and their Supplements for adoption (with additions indicated by underline and deletions by ~~striketrough~~):

a. Proposed Article 14-d

A minister of the Word who has entered upon a vocation which classis judges to be nonministerial and forsakes the calling of a minister of the Word shall be released from office within one year of that judgment. The concurring advice of the synodical deputies shall be obtained at the time of the judgment.

Grounds:

- a. Without this addition, Article 14 implies that a nonministerial vocation is in conflict with the work and ordination of a minister of the Word.

- b. The addition clarifies that forsaking the office is cause for a minister to be released.

—Adopted

b. Proposed Article 15

Each church through its council shall ~~provide for~~ attend to the proper support of its minister(s). ~~By way of exception and with the approval of classis, a church and minister may agree that a minister obtain primary or supplemental income by means of other employment. Ordinarily the foregoing exception shall be limited to churches that cannot obtain assistance adequate to support their minister.~~

Grounds:

- a. The change in phrasing maintains the covenantal relationship between pastor and congregation while giving flexibility with regard to where “proper support” is coming from.
- b. The removed section discriminates against bivocational ministry as an “exception” rather than recognizing it as a desired, missional choice.

—Adopted

c. Proposed Supplement, Article 15

“Proper Support” Defined

Proper support of a church’s minister is to include an adequate salary, medical insurance, disability insurance, a housing provision, ~~payment to the denomination’s ministers’ pension plan~~ payment to an appropriate pension or retirement plan, a continuing education stipend, and other employment-related items.

To “attend to” proper support does not imply that the calling church is responsible to provide all of these items of support. Rather, the calling church is responsible to ensure that the minister has a plan that addresses these items. In many ministries the local church itself accepts these responsibilities in order to facilitate full-time or part-time ministerial service. In other settings—such as church planting, various forms of chaplaincy, bivocational arrangements, multipoint ministries, and so on—the financial plan will include income and benefits provided by a variety of potential sources. The financial plan should be carefully reviewed and signed by the classical counselor when a call to ministry is made or when a pastor and church decide to change their financial arrangement.

~~Guidelines for Churches Whose Ministers Receive Salary Support from Other Employment~~ in Conversations with Pastors about “Proper Support”

- 1. ~~The church is responsible for a total compensation package proportionate to the time spent in ministry to the church (forty-eight hours equals full time). The compensation package shall ordinarily be~~

~~based on synodically stated minimum salary, fringe benefits, and housing costs.~~

- ~~2. Since the compensation package includes a percentage allowance for health insurance, the minister is expected to secure adequate health insurance for the minister and the minister's family.~~
31. The value of the parsonage provided by the congregation may be used for part or all of the compensation package.
42. ~~The minister shall receive pension credits in the Ministers' Pension Fund proportionate to the percentage of time devoted to the duties of the church.~~ Eligibility for full pension credit may be secured if full contribution to the Ministers' Pension Plan is made.
53. ~~The nature and amount of time of the task(s) other than ministry shall be specified shall be mutually discerned by minister(s) and the supervising council. The support plan in the letter of call, including the financial plan, shall be specified in writing, approved by the classical counselor, and normally reviewed annually by the supervising council. The average amount of time expended upon the total of the ministerial and nonministerial tasks shall not normally exceed sixty hours per week.~~
4. The supervising council shall annually attend to nonfinancial support of ministers, including but not limited to physical, emotional, and spiritual support.

Grounds:

- a. These revisions address issues described in section VIII of the task force report ("Financial Considerations").
- b. These revisions provide further clarity to the proposed Article 15.
- c. These revisions promote flexibility while also promoting the covenantal arrangement between the minister and the calling church.

— Adopted

Elder delegate David Hoekema (Yellowstone) offers prayer.

d. Proposed Article 23-d

Each church through its council shall attend to the proper support of its commissioned pastor.

Grounds:

- a. The proposed addition calls for the proper support of commissioned pastors.
- b. The proposed addition parallels the proposal for Article 15.

— Adopted

e. Proposed Supplement, Article 23-d

“Proper Support” Defined

Proper support of a commissioned pastor is to include an adequate salary, medical insurance, disability insurance, a housing provision, payment to an appropriate pension or retirement plan, a continuing education stipend, and other employment-related items.

To “attend to” proper support does not imply that the calling church is responsible to provide all of these items of support. Rather, the calling church is responsible to ensure that the commissioned pastor has a plan that addresses these items. In many ministries the local church itself accepts these responsibilities in order to facilitate full-time or part-time ministry service. In other settings—such as church planting, various forms of chaplaincy, bivocational arrangements, multipoint ministries, and so on—the financial plan will include income and benefits provided by a variety of potential sources. The calling church’s support of the financial plan should be carefully reviewed at the time classis approves the commissioned pastor’s position. This includes a call to bivocational ministry or when a pastor and church decide to change their financial arrangement.

Guidelines for Churches in Conversations with Pastors about “Proper Support”

1. The value of the parsonage provided by the congregation may be used for part or all of the compensation package.
2. The nature and amount of time of the task(s) shall be mutually discerned by the commissioned pastor(s) and the supervising council. The support plan, including the financial plan, shall be specified in writing, approved by classis along with the position description, and normally reviewed annually by the supervising council. The average amount of time expended upon the total of the ministerial and nonministerial tasks shall not normally exceed sixty hours per week.
3. The supervising council shall annually attend to nonfinancial support of commissioned pastors, including but not limited to physical, emotional, and spiritual support.

Grounds:

- a. This addition provides further clarity to the proposed Article 23-d.
- b. This addition promotes flexibility while also promoting the covenantal arrangement between the commissioned pastor and the calling church.

- c. The proposed supplement reflects similar proposed changes to Supplement, Article 15.

—Adopted

2. That synod encourage classical student funding committees (providing financial aid for students seeking to become ministers of the Word—cf. Church Order Article 21) to treat those who are in or anticipating bivocational or other nontraditional ministry arrangements in the same manner as those who are in or anticipating full-time arrangements.

Grounds:

- a. Bivocational pastors and pastors in nontraditional arrangements retain the honor of the office they have been ordained to and remain accountable to the work to which they have been called.
- b. Burdening bivocational pastors and pastors in nontraditional arrangements with financial debts does not serve the church as a whole, nor does it serve the cause of the gospel.
- c. Article 21 states that “the churches . . . in coordination with classis, shall grant financial aid to those who are in need of it” and thus make their decisions based on their knowledge of specific situations.

—Adopted

3. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to create an exit interview/ministry postmortem learning process for classes, churches, leaders, and their families to use when burnout occurs in bivocational ministry.

Grounds:

- a. Exit interviews/postmortems can provide healing to those involved.
- b. Exit interviews/postmortems may help to teach us how to avoid future burnout or breakdown situations between churches and pastors.

—Adopted

4. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to provide a ministry wellness assessment for pastors in bivocational ministry and their supervisory councils to use as part of their regular conversations.

Grounds:

- a. Such an assessment could provide helpful feedback regarding a bivocational pastor’s well-being.
- b. Such an assessment could provide a helpful tool in the regular conversations between a bivocational pastor and the supervisory council.

—Adopted

5. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to work with the pension boards, in consultation with clergy couples, to find a just and equitable solution that recognizes the ordination of both spouses who are ministers of the Word.

Ground: The current rules of the pension plan do not equally recognize and honor the ordinations of clergy couples who are both ministers of the Word.

—*Adopted*

6. That synod encourage all pastors together with their supervisory councils to annually review the “proper support” required for pastors, including the financial plan.

Grounds:

- a. An annual review of “proper support” will help to encourage the ongoing health of pastors and their families.
- b. Annual reviews that include a review of “proper support” will fulfill the requirements regarding the same in proposed Church Order Articles 15 and 23-d and their Supplements.

—*Adopted*

7. That synod encourage church visitors to inquire about the health and welfare of pastors, including whether they have “proper support.”

Grounds:

- a. Inquiry about the health and welfare of pastors will encourage the same.
- b. Inquiry about whether pastors have “proper support” is included in the church visitors’ mandate to ascertain whether a church’s officebearers “observe the provisions of the Church Order” (see Art. 42-b).

—*Adopted*

8. That synod encourage the classes and congregations of the CRCNA to affirm the challenges of bivocational ministry, support the leaders of adaptive changes that are happening in our current ministry settings, and celebrate the dedicated and creative pastoral work many are doing and will do for the sake of the gospel as led by the Holy Spirit.

Ground: Bivocational pastors, those in nontraditional ministry arrangements, and their work require affirmation, support, and celebration by the broader body of believers.

—*Adopted*

President De Vries leads in prayer for bivocational pastors.

II. Calvin University

A. Materials

1. Calvin University Report, pp. 115-20
2. Calvin University Supplement, pp. 803-7

B. Privilege of the floor: Bruce Los, chair of the board, and Wiebe Boer, president

C. Recommendations

1. That synod receive the report for information and note the deep appreciation Calvin University expressed for its relationship with our denomination.

—*Received for information*

2. That synod recognize and appreciate Calvin's commitment to engage with both local and global communities.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod ratify the decision of the Calvin University Board of Trustees to revise the Articles of Incorporation with the appointment of Dirk Pruis as the vice president for finance and administration and chief financial officer.

—*Adopted*

III. Dordt University

A. Materials

Dordt University Report, pp. 231-33

B. Recommendation

1. That synod receive the report for information and note Dordt University's expression of appreciation for the work of our denomination.

—*Received for information*

2. That synod note that Dordt had a record total degree-seeking undergraduate enrollment this past fall.

—*Noted*

3. That synod commend Dordt for producing graduates who are engaged in local churches.

—*Adopted*

Rev. John Hoekwater (Northern Illinois) offers a prayer of thanksgiving for the educational institutions.

(The report of Advisory Committee 3 is continued in Article 32.)

ARTICLE 31

(The report of Advisory Committee 4 is continued from Article 29.)

I. Ecclesiastical Marriage Task Force

The committee presents an amended motion that was tabled earlier in the day:

3. That synod encourage the churches to respect and honor the marriages of Indigenous peoples, as well as those of immigrants who did not obtain a civil marriage under the oversight of their sovereign nations or prior to arriving in Canada or the United States, and counsel them in the understanding of Christian marriage and its relationship to civil authority in our countries.

Grounds:

- a. Indigenous cultural practices existed prior to the governmental authorities of the United States and Canada and are adjudicated under the oversight of sovereign nations.
- b. It is not the case that in every country where immigrants have come from that the civil authorities regulate marriage, so it might not have been possible for a civil marriage to occur.
- c. In the interest of grace and acceptance, we want to acknowledge the beautiful Christian marriage traditions that have developed in various cultures.
- d. The law is permissive but not prescriptive in this regard.

—Adopted

6. That synod accept this report as fulfilling the mandate of the Ecclesiastical Marriage Task Force and dismiss the task force with wholehearted thanks.

—Adopted

Appreciation is expressed to the members of the Ecclesiastical Marriage Task Force. Rev. Edward Yoon (Ko-Am) offers a prayer of thanksgiving.

(The report of Advisory Committee 4 is continued in Article 70.)

ARTICLE 32

(The report of Advisory Committee 3 is continued from Article 30.)

Advisory Committee 3, Education and Candidacy, Rev. Kyle Haack reporting, presents the following:

I. Calvin Theological Seminary

A. Materials

1. Calvin Theological Seminary Report, pp. 181-91

2. Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement, including Appendices A-B, pp. 812-25

B. Privilege of the floor: Dave Morren, chair, and Julius Medenblik, president, when seminary matters are presented.

C. Recommendations

1. That synod receive the report for information and encourage members of synod to tour the seminary to see the refreshed facilities.

—*Received for information*

II. Institute for Christian Studies

A. Materials

Institute for Christian Studies Report, pp. 234-37

B. Recommendations

1. That synod receive the report for information and give thanks with ICS for the faithful work of Professor Robert Sweetman.

—*Received for information*

2. That synod express gratitude for the appointment of Professor Neal DeRoo.

—*Adopted*

III. The King's University

A. Materials

The Kings University Report, pp. 238-39

B. Recommendation

That synod receive the report for information and express appreciation for the research grants King's University received from the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

—*Adopted*

IV. Kuyper College

A. Materials

Kuyper College Report, pp. 240-42

B. Recommendations

1. That synod receive the report for information and note the return to NCCAA programs at Kuyper, which honors athletes who were there and formed the programs.

—*Received for information*

2. That synod note the work of Dr. Howerzyl and the graduate program director.

—*Noted*

3. That synod celebrate Kuyper's dual enrollment program with local Christian high schools and homeschool networks.

—*Adopted*

V. Redeemer University

A. Materials

Redeemer University Report, pp. 243-44

B. Recommendations

1. That synod receive the report for information and celebrate with Redeemer that enrollment has been booming.

—*Received for information*

2. That synod note with interest the co-op program that integrates classroom experience with work experience.

—*Noted*

3. That synod give thanks for the launch of Redeemer's Mental Health Support Action Plan.

—*Adopted*

VI. Trinity Christian College

A. Materials

Trinity Christian College Report, pp. 245-47

B. Recommendations

1. That synod receive the report for information and celebrate the diverse representation at Trinity Christian College, with 40 percent of students and 25 percent of faculty being people of color.

—*Received for information*

2. That synod bring attention to Well-being Wednesday, which encourages students to pursue academic, spiritual, social, emotional, financial, and professional well-being.

—*Adopted*

VII. Candidacy Committee

A. Materials

1. Candidacy Committee Report, pp. 197-202

2. Candidacy Committee Supplement, including Appendix A, pp. 829-74

B. Privilege of the floor: Susan LaClear, director of Candidacy, and an additional member of the Candidacy Committee, if present

C. Recommendations:

1. That synod declare those persons listed in the Candidacy Committee Supplement, section I, A as candidates for ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Their names are as follows: Tomas Axeland, Rebecca Bokma, Joshua Carpenter, Jeremy Engbers, Catherine Ferchau, Dylan Harper, Jonathan Hwang, William Jones, Kevin Kornelis, Sung Su Lee, Brandon Mick, Robert Moore, Anastaze Nzabonimpa, Cameron Oegema, Christopher Park, Esther Park, Blake Phillips, Erik Pluemer, Ryan Poelman, Jennifer Richards, Kurtis Ritsema, Natasha Specht, Adam Sculnick, Benjamin Snoek, John VanderWindt, Jolene Veenstra, Peter Vos, Marissa Walters, Zhengfei (Stone) Wang, and Josephine Wong.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod approve the extensions of candidacy as recommended in the Candidacy Committee Supplement, section I, B. Their names are as follows: Yoon Chul Choi, Bradley Diekema, Matthew Guichelaar, Carol Hulin, Jake (Minho) Jeong, Kennedy Muli Kailiti, Eunice Kim, Jelle Koersen, Hannah Ryou Lee, Daniel F. Meyers, Matthew Mulder, Jacob Patton, Micah Ringelberg, Nicole Romero, Lynn Song, Evan Tinklenberg, Jodi VanWingerden, and Wendy Werkman.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod approve the reinstatement of candidacy to Joseph Hwang as described in section I, C of the Candidacy Committee Supplement.

—*Adopted*

4. That synod approve the action of the Candidacy Committee in declaration of need for those listed in section II for affiliation under Church Order Article 8. Their names are as follows: Sung Jin Ahn, John Kim, Hyon Joong Lim, Jordan Hall, Joshua Lee, Wilson Cunha, Ryan Landt, Samuel Lim, D’Vante Rolle, and Myunsik Kang.

—*Adopted*

5. That synod receive for information that the Advisory Committee received an appeal from a person declined for candidacy, and after discussion with the appellant the appeal was removed.

—*Received for information*

6. That synod approve the reorganized edition of the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, described in section III of the Candidacy Committee Supplement and included in the appendix to the supplement report.

—*Adopted*

7. That synod note a correction: Rev. Marg Reckman, a member of the EPMC Facilitation Team, is listed as from Classis Ontario Southwest. She serves at Bethlehem CRC in Thunder Bay of Classis Lake Superior.

—*Noted*

VIII. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report (sections II, A, 12, b; II, A, 13), pp. 40-41
2. Council of Delegates Supplement (section II, D), including Appendix K, pp. 637-38, 777-79

B. Privilege of the floor: Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendations

1. That synod affirm the work of the Council of Delegates pertaining to church planting in both the RCA and the CRC denominations (section II, A, 12, b).

—*Adopted*

2. That synod affirm the work of the Council of Delegates pertaining to opposing white supremacy and systemic racism (section II, A, 13).

—*Adopted*

3. That synod affirm the work of the Council of Delegates pertaining to the general secretary communication on racism and biblical justice (Supplement, section II, D).

—*Adopted*

Second clerk Rev. Richard Bodini offers a prayer of lament for racism and expresses hope for leaders to be raised up.

(The report of Advisory Committee 3 is continued in Article 36.)

ARTICLE 33

(The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued from Article 28.)

Advisory Committee 5, Global Mission, Rev. Adrian de Lange reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Overture 12: Develop a Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Membership Decline and Require Annual Reporting of Progress

A. Materials

Overture 12, pp. 389-96

B. Recommendations

1. That synod, in humility, acknowledge as of grave importance the troubling trend of membership decline in the CRCNA numerated in Overture 12 and our deep need to prioritize discipleship and evangelism by addressing individuals and communities holistically.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod celebrate the work that Resonate and Thrive are already doing with churches and encourage Resonate and Thrive to collaborate with the churches so that congregations can better grow in discipleship and evangelism in their contexts; that synod celebrate the work of church renewal and planting already underway; and that synod celebrate significant growth in ethnic-minority congregations.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod, with hope, urge the churches to make use of Resonate and Thrive resources, coaching opportunities, and personnel; and that synod encourage the churches to give careful thought to the responses from Resonate and Thrive to Overture 12 (see Supplement, pp. 758-71). Especially significant are six calls to commitment from CRCNA congregations (pp. 767-68).

—*Adopted*

4. That synod thank Classis Southeast U.S. for their passion in highlighting the trend of membership decline in the CRCNA and noting our deep need for church renewal and church planting.

Note: Resonate and Thrive, together with Calvin Theological Seminary, are already working with the churches to address the concerns brought up in Overture 12. As a result, we expect that additional resources will be needed for church renewal and planting in North America and internationally.

—*Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued in Article 37.)

ARTICLE 34

The afternoon session recesses at 5:09 p.m. Rev. Elizabeth A. Vander Haagen (Grand Rapids East) closes in prayer.

MONDAY EVENING, June 12, 2023

Fifth Session

ARTICLE 35

The evening session convenes at 7:00 p.m. The praise team (cajon: Matthew Burns; guitar: Jason Crossen and Derek Zeyl; vocals: Susan

LaClear; piano/vocals: Katie Roelofs; bass: Eric Tisch) leads the assembly in singing “Ten Thousand Reasons/Bless the Lord.”

Rev. Jon Hoekema shares that evening worship times will draw from Psalm 46 to refocus on prayer, Scripture, reflection, and song. Rev. Ernesto Hernandez (Arizona) reads Psalm 46:1-9, and the assembly spends time in guided prayer. The assembly responds by singing “Ancient of Days.”

ARTICLE 36

(The report of Advisory Committee 3 is continued from Article 32.)

Advisory Committee 3, Education and Candidacy, Rev. Kyle Haack reporting, presents the following:

I. Study of Bivocationality Task Force

A. Materials

Report of the Study of Bivocationality Task Force, pp. 285-314

B. Privilege of the floor: Bernard Bakker, chair, and Michael Vander Laan, reporter

C. Recommendations (continued)

9. That synod accept this report as fulfilling the mandate of the Study of Bivocationality Task Force and dismiss the task force with wholehearted thanks.

—*Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 3 is continued in Article 55.)

ARTICLE 37

(The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued from Article 33.)

Advisory Committee 5, Global Mission, Rev. Adrian de Lange reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Overture 12: Develop a Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Membership Decline and Require Annual Reporting of Progress

A. Materials

Overture 12, pp. 389-96

B. Recommendations (continued)

5. That synod consider this to be its response to Overture 12.

Ground: In addition to the preceding rationale regarding Overture 12, we sense a high value for contextual ministry within the CRCNA rather than a top-down approach.

—*Defeated*

A delegate presents the following motion:

That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to work with the Council of Delegates, each agency, and churches and classes to develop a comprehensive unified strategy and plan to arrest and reverse the trend of decline and bring about a positive trend of membership growth to our denomination.

That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to work with the Council of Delegates, each agency, and churches and classes to continually update this plan and to report its progress regarding this plan to synod annually until such time as synod decides that this issue has been satisfactorily addressed.

— *Adopted*

A delegate presents the following motion:

That synod consider this to be its response to Overture 12.

— *Adopted*

Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie) offers prayer.

II. Response to Overture 13: Declare that a Virtual Church Is Not a Church

A. Materials

Overture 13, pp. 397-401

B. Recommendations

1. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to oversee the creation of a report that gives thought to and a theological framework for the possibilities and parameters of a virtual church: “A church which, by design, meets only online.”

- a. This report will require input from (at least) a faculty or staff member of Calvin Theological Seminary, Resonate Global Mission, and Thrive.
- b. This report should address the marks of the true church articulated in the Belgic Confession.
- c. This report might address similarities and differences between online ministry and a virtual church, exploring opportunities and pitfalls for each.
- d. This report should be presented to the COD for discernment.

— *Tabled*

Note: The above recommendation was discussed and tabled to provide time for the introduction of the new codirector of World Renew-Canada. (The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued in Article 41.)

ARTICLE 38

President De Vries introduces Carol Bremer-Bennett, codirector of World Renew-U.S. She shares that World Renew joins with communities in 30 countries to eliminate hunger, poverty, and injustice. She introduces Jamie McIntosh as the new codirector of World Renew-Canada.

Jamie McIntosh addresses synod, thanking codirector Carol Bremer-Bennett. He thanks the World Renew staff and volunteers who serve domestically and abroad, noting that God provides a call for all to offer service and shine the light of Christ. World Renew is part of this mission to bring love, justice, and mercy to people who are precious to God.

Rev. Timothy Blackmon (Muskegon) offers a prayer of commission for Jamie McIntosh and World Renew.

ARTICLE 39

The evening session recesses at 9:04 p.m. Rev. Scott DeVries closes in prayer. Synod will reconvene Tuesday morning at 8:15 a.m.

TUESDAY MORNING, June 13, 2023

Sixth Session

ARTICLE 40

The praise team (cajon: Matthew Burns; guitar: Jason Crossen and Derek Zeyl; vocals: Susan LaClear; piano: Katie Roelofs; bass: Eric Tisch) leads the assembly in singing “Promises.”

Pastor Katie Roelofs shares that God is trustworthy, faithful, and good. She reads Psalm 89. The assembly responds by singing “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” and passes the peace of Christ.

The assembly is encouraged to consider what it means to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves” (Phil. 2:3). Participants break into small groups to pray, expressing gratitude for God’s faithfulness and presenting requests for each other. The assembly forms a circle around the chapel and sings “Goodness of God,” closing with a blessing.

The roll indicates that the following delegate is absent: Travis Datema (Zeeland).

ARTICLE 41

(The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued from Article 37.)

Advisory Committee 5, Global Mission, Rev. Adrian de Lange reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Overture 13: Declare that a Virtual Church Is Not a Church

A. Materials

Overture 13, pp. 397-401

B. Recommendations

1. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to oversee the creation of a report that gives thought to and a theological framework for the possibilities and parameters of a virtual church: “A church which, by design, meets only online.”

- a. This report will require input from (at least) a faculty or staff member of Calvin Theological Seminary, Resonate Global Mission, and Thrive.
- b. This report should address the marks of the true church articulated in the Belgic Confession.
- c. This report might address similarities and differences between online ministry and a virtual church, exploring opportunities and pitfalls for each.
- d. This report should be presented to the COD for discernment.

— Tabled

Note: The above recommendation was discussed and tabled to allow for the introduction of candidates for ministry of the Word.

(The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued in Article 43).

ARTICLE 42

The president of synod welcomes the candidates for ministry to Synod 2023 in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Rev. Susan E. LaClear, director of Candidacy, presents the 2023 candidates for ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. (Names in **bold print** indicate those present at Synod 2023).

Tomas Axeland, **Rebecca Bokma**, **Joshua Carpenter**, Jeremy D. Engbers, Catherine Ferchau, Dylan A. Harper, Jonathan Hwang, **William Jones**, **Kevin Kornelis**, **Sung Su Lee**, Brandon Mick, **Robert Moore**, **Anastaze Nzabonimpa**, Cameron Oegema, Christopher Park, Esther Park, Blake Phillips, Erik Pluemer, **Ryan Poelman**, Jennifer Richards, Kurtis Ritsema, Natasha Specht, **Adam Sculnick**, Benjamin Snoek, **John VanderWindt**,

Jolene Veenstra, Peter Vos, **Marissa Walters**, **Zhengfei (Stone) Wang**, and Josephine Wong.

Rev. LaClear acknowledges guests and delegates who have provided support and encouragement for the candidates. The assembly responds by singing “Be Thou My Vision.” Rev. LaClear, Rev. Moon Kim, Rev. Henry Kranenburg, and Rev. Zachary King lead the Litany of Celebration and Dedication from Philippians 3:4-15 with responses by the candidates.

Rev. Julius Medenblik, president of Calvin Theological Seminary, offers words of encouragement to the candidates, thanking them for following God’s call. Candidates, delegates, and guests respond with the Lord’s Prayer and sing “Your Will Be Done.”

Families and supporting churches of candidates are invited to come forward to lay hands on them.

President De Vries leads in a time of prayer and closes with a blessing.

ARTICLE 43

(The report of Advisory Committee 5 is continued from Article 41.)

Advisory Committee 5, Global Mission, Rev. Adrian de Lange reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Overture 13: Declare that a Virtual Church Is Not a Church

A. Materials

Overture 13, pp. 397-401

B. Recommendations

1. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to oversee the creation of a report that gives thought to and a theological framework for the possibilities and parameters of a virtual church: “A church which, by design, meets only online.”

- a. This report will require input from (at least) a faculty or staff member of Calvin Theological Seminary, Resonate Global Mission, and Thrive.
- b. This report should address the marks of the true church articulated in the Belgic Confession.
- c. This report might address similarities and differences between online ministry and a virtual church, exploring opportunities and pitfalls for each.
- d. This report should be presented to the COD for discernment.

Rev. Nate Meldrim (Georgetown) offers a prayer for discernment before voting.

—*Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Scott Muilenberg (Minnesota).

2. That synod consider this to be its response to Overture 13.

Grounds:

a. Online ministry remains an emerging mission field, but the possibility of virtual community and an entirely virtual church remain untested areas of exploration within the CRCNA.

b. It seems premature to us to end conversation on this topic at this time.

—*Adopted*

II. Response to Overture 14: Adopt Belhar Confession as a Confession of the CRC

A. Materials

Overture 14, pp. 401-3

B. Recommendations

1. That synod not accede to Overture 14 on the grounds that the overture does not provide new and specific grounds since Synod 2017 decided to affirm the Belhar as a contemporary testimony of the Christian Reformed Church.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod recognize that the movement in 2017 of the Belhar Confession into the category of contemporary testimony was a significant step in a journey of ongoing racial reconciliation, and more steps are needed.

—*Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Philip Fritschle (Arizona).

3. That synod encourage churches to make regular use of the Belhar Confession in worship and daily practice, recognizing that, as stated in the *Agenda for Synod 2009*, pp. 282-83, “The history of oppression in our own countries, and the reality of racism and injustice in our own time call for the voice of the Christian church to be heard with unmistakable clarity—to confess that the Lord of life, who entrusted to us the ‘message of reconciliation’ (2 Cor. 5:19), is the Lord of our hopes and aspirations for a just and reconciled people.”

—*Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Philip Fritschle (Arizona).

4. That synod encourage the churches to make use of resources already available from Indigenous Ministries (Canada) and Thrive.

—*Adopted*

Note: The Belhar Confession calls us onward toward this good gospel work, and we exhort our congregations to “stand by people in any form of

suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Belhar Confession, pt. 4).

Rev. David Struyk (Grand Rapids South) offers prayer.

ARTICLE 44

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued from Article 23.)

Advisory Committee 1, Synodical Services and Structure, Rev. Neil Jasperse reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Overture 2: Make a Statement on Assisted Suicide

A. Materials

Overture 2, pp. 354-56

B. Recommendations

1. That synod task the Office of General Secretary to promptly create a position statement on assisted suicide based on the good work of previous synods on abortion (Synods 1972, 1997, 2010, etc.), life issues (Synods 2000, 2003), and previous pastoral advice given (Synods 2000, 2003).

Ground: A position statement does not currently exist for assisted suicide. Since good synodical work exists on this subject matter, such a statement can be created prior to the work of a task force.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod appoint a task force to make a definitive and comprehensive report on the practice of assisted suicide in all its forms. This report will give guidance and pastoral advice on end-of-life matters. This binational task force will consist of two theologians, two health-care professionals, two lawyers, and two additional ad hoc members. This task force is to utilize, but not limit their study to, Scripture, the confessions, the existing studies done on abortion, life issues, and previous pastoral advice given. This task force will shape its work acknowledging that there is a “unique value of all human life,” that there is a “special relationship of man to God as his imagebearer,” and that, in concert with the previous declaration of synod, we “condemn the wanton or arbitrary destruction of any human being at any stage of its development from the point of conception to the point of death” (*Acts of Synod 1972*, pp. 63-64). Further, the task force will take special care to address the concerns noted in Overture 2. The task force will submit its report by February 15, 2025, to be included on the agenda for Synod 2025.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod declare this to be its response to Overture 2.

—*Adopted*

II. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report (sections I, A-D; II, A, 1-5, 7-8, 11; II, B, 1-4, 12-13), pp. 23-36, 38-40, 42-45, 47-49
2. Council of Delegates Supplement (sections I, A-C, E-F, and H-J; II, C and E-F), including Appendices A, H, I, J, and L; pp. 631-38, 645-711, 771-77, 779-82

B. Privilege of the floor: Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendation

That synod ratify the organizational concept and structure in the revised COD Governance Handbook (Appendix A) and receive the draft handbook for information (COD Supplement section I, C).

—Adopted

III. Work of the synodical deputies

A. Release from ministry in a congregation under Church Order Article 17-a

1. Synodical deputies E.W. Visser (Hamilton), S. Cooper (Toronto), and C.G. Lawson (Eastern Canada), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Quinte, in session on September 27, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Heidi S. De Jonge** is released from ministerial service in Westside Fellowship Christian Reformed Church of Kingston, Ontario.
2. Synodical deputies P.J. Van Dyken (Hackensack), M.B. Stegink (Hudson), and G. Besteman (Southeast U.S), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Atlantic Northeast, in session on May 31, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Jonathan B. Fischer** is released from ministerial service in New Hope Church of Bangor, Maine.
3. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Grandville, in session on September 15, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. M. Dale Fopma** is released from ministerial service in Hope Christian Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan.
4. Synodical deputies A.E. Beunk (B.C. North-West), L.M. Korf (Columbia), and B. Regt (North Cascades), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis B.C. South-East, in session on May 19, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with

Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Edward H. Gerber** is released from ministerial service in Willoughby Church of Langley, British Columbia.

5. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), D.J. Roeda (Chicago South), and R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Wisconsin, in session on March 14, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. James A. Hildebrandt** is released from ministerial service in River Rock Community Church (the Alliance of Reformed Churches) of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

6. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), D.R. Fauble (Grandville), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Grand Rapids South, in session on March 9, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Katherine M. Hirschberg** is released from ministerial service in Monroe Community Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

7. Synodical deputies W. Brouwer (B.C. South-East), A.E. Beunk (B.C. North-West), and H.J. Vanderburgh (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Alberta North, in session on October 14, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Ryan Hoogerbrugge** is released from ministerial service in La Glace Christian Reformed Church of La Glace, Alberta.

8. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids East), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Holland, in session on February 2, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Lee Khang** is released from ministerial service in Lao Christian Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan.

9. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Northcentral Iowa, in session on October 18, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Seongjun Kim** is released from ministerial service in Korean Christian Reformed Church of Ames, Iowa.

10. Synodical deputies W.C. Tuininga (B.C. South-East), A.E. Beunk (B.C. North-West), and K. deKoning (Alberta North), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan, in session on March 10, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Allan R. Kirkpatrick** is released from ministerial service in Maranatha Christian Reformed Church of Calgary, Alberta.

11. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R.W. Boersma (Northcentral Iowa), having heard the weighty reasons

provided and the discussion of Classis Minnkota, in session on May 6, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Brian M. Kornelis** is released from ministerial service in Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minnesota.

12. Synodical deputies D.L. Spoelma (Holland), H. De Vries (Kalamazoo), and J.W. Scripps (Georgetown), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Northern Michigan, in session on January 19, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Jeffrey S.M. Kroondyk** is released from ministerial service in Cadillac Christian Reformed Church of Cadillac, Michigan.

13. Synodical deputies J.L. Blom (Grand Rapids North), D.R. Fauble (Grandville), and A. Gelder (Grand Rapids North), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Georgetown, in session on July 21, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Marc Nelesen** is released from ministerial service in Georgetown Christian Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

14. Synodical deputies C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), and C. Vander Neut (Yellowstone), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Rocky Mountain, in session on October 14, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Dominic J. Palacios** is released from ministerial service in Hope Fellowship Christian Reformed Church of Denver, Colorado.

15. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), and W. Davelaar (Northcentral Iowa), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Central Plains, in session on September 16, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Donald R. Ridder** is released from ministerial service in Grace Fellowship Christian Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa.

16. Synodical deputies M.W. Bootsma (Hamilton), P.A. Apoll (Ontario Southwest), and G. van Leeuwen (Huron), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Niagara, in session on October 28, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Darren C. Roorda** is released from ministerial service in Providence Christian Reformed Church of Beamsville, Ontario.

17. Synodical deputies R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), W. Davelaar (Northcentral Iowa), and P.T. Westra (Heartland), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Lake Superior, in session on January 9, 2023, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with

Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Adam Stout** is released from ministerial service in Faith Christian Reformed Church of New Brighton, Minnesota.

18. Synodical deputies S. Elgersma (California South), D.D. Yi (Ko-Am), and J.J. Greydanus (Red Mesa), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Central California, in session on October 4, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Maurice Vander Veen** is released from ministerial service in Modesto Christian Reformed Church of Modesto, California.

19. Synodical deputies G.G. Vink (Grand Rapids South), S.J. Datema (Northern Michigan), and T.N. Leunk (Grand Rapids East), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Muskegon, in session on June 30, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Greg VanderHorn** is released from ministerial service in New Community Church of Newaygo, Michigan (credentials held by Trinity CRC of Fremont, Mich.).

20. Synodical deputies P.T. Westra (Heartland), C.D. Hoekstra (Iakota), and R.W. Sparks (Minnkota), having heard the weighty reasons provided and the discussion of Classis Wisconsin, in session on July 5, 2022, concur in the decision of classis to declare, in accordance with Church Order Article 17-a, that **Rev. Verlan G. Van Ee** is released from ministerial service in Kenosha Christian Reformed Church of Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Recommendation: That synod approve the work of the synodical deputies.

—*Adopted*

ARTICLE 45

Advisory Committee 2, Church Order and Related Matters, Rev. Ryan Braam reporting, presents the following:

Council of Delegates

A. Materials

Council of Delegates Report (sections II, A, 9, a-b; II, A, 12, c), including Appendix B, pp. 36-37, 41, 72-73

B. Privilege of the floor: Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendations

1. That synod express gratitude to John Koot and Doug Vande Griend for their years of service to the Judicial Code Committee (II, A, 9, a).

—*Adopted*

2. That synod approve the interim report of the Church Order Review Task Force (II, A, 12, c and Appendix B)

—*Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 2 is continued in Article 51.)

ARTICLE 46

Advisory Committee 6, Interdenominational and Financial Matters, Rev. Drew Sweetman reporting, presents the following:

I. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report (sections I, E; II, A, 6, 15; II, C), including Appendix F, pp. 33, 36, 42, 49-50, 83-111
2. Council of Delegates Supplement Report (sections II, G, 1-4), including Appendix M, pp. 638-42, 782-93

B. Privilege of the floor: Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendations

1. That synod approve discontinuing the practice and policy of reviewing and recommending charitable organizations to CRC churches for offerings (II, A, 15; II, C, 2; see also Appendix E in COD Governance Handbook).

Grounds:

- a. The annual review process requires a significant amount of staff time and effort.
- b. Information about charitable organizations is readily available online.
- c. There is minimal anecdotal evidence that the list of organizations recommended for offerings is used by our churches.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod direct the Office of General Secretary to provide the criteria currently used by CRCNA staff to the churches to assist in their vetting process of charitable organizations being considered for offerings.

Ground: This is valuable information to retain and will be helpful to the churches, especially as they evaluate local ministries.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod ratify the following with regard to organizations requesting to be placed on the recommended-for-offerings list:

- a. The list of above-ministry share and specially designated offerings for denominational agencies, institutions, and ministries of the CRC (COD Supplement section II, G, 2, a).
- b. The list of nondenominational organizations, previously accredited, that have been approved for calendar year 2024 (COD Supplement section II, G, 2, b).
- c. The inclusion of 222Disciple on the list of accredited organizations for offerings in the churches in the United States (COD Supplement section II, G, 2, c).

— Adopted

4. That synod direct the Office of General Secretary to do the following as recommended in the Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined (COD Supplement section II, G, 1, b; Appendix M):

- a. Provide greater flexibility in the pledge process cycle, allowing churches to determine their pledge cycle based on their fiscal year.

— Adopted

- b. Suggest to the churches what would be a reasonable amount to cover basic/core denominational operational costs as part of their pledge.

— Adopted

- c. Provide to the churches and classes more information on pledges and giving results, including what comprises the basic/core denominational costs.

— Adopted

5. That synod direct the Council of Delegates to continue the Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined by doing the following:

- a. Conduct a survey or make personal contacts targeted to churches that are not currently participating in the ministry-share program.
- b. Conduct a study of other similar denominations (e.g., RCA, PCA, ECO, EPC, the Alliance of Reformed Churches) to compare quotas/ministry shares/requests to work toward a new vision for future ministry funding mechanisms.
- c. Make recommendations for further changes to the ministry-share program based on the findings of the above.

Grounds:

- 1) The recent survey showed that 98.5 percent of respondents were from churches that were participating in the ministry-share program.
- 2) The evaluation of Ministry Shares Reimagined did not consider what other denominations are doing to fund denominational ministry.

- 3) A further reimagined ministry-share system is needed to enable the CRCNA to perform essential functions and to engage in ministry in North America and around the world well into the future.

—*Adopted*

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

A. Materials

1. Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S., pp. 125-27
2. Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. Supplement, p. 808

B. Privilege of the floor: Brian Van Doeselaar, interim director of the CRC Loan Fund

C. Recommendation

That synod appoint a board member from each slate of nominees provided to a first term of three years, effective July 1, 2023.

—*Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 6 is continued in Article 50).

ARTICLE 47

The morning session recesses at 11:44 a.m. Rev. Ryan Braam (Quinte) leads in closing prayer.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, June 13, 2023

Seventh Session

ARTICLE 48

The afternoon session convenes at 1:21 p.m. The praise team (cajon: Matthew Burns; guitar: Jason Crossen and Derek Zeyl; violin: Dan Schultz; piano/vocals: Katie Roelofs) leads the assembly in singing “Your Labor Is Not in Vain.” Rev. Chris Schoon and Rev. Lesli van Milligen lead the assembly in a time of corporate prayer, based on sections of Our World Belongs to God. The assembly responds by singing “Come, Holy Ghost.”

The roll indicates that Travis Datema (Zeeland) is now present.

ARTICLE 49

Rev. William T. Koopmans, chair of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, shares that the Christian Reformed Church in North America is generally introspective. When it comes to ecumenical work, it is refreshing to look outward. Ecumenical relations have to do with building our Christian unity among churches and organizations. He expresses

joy that several ecumenical guests have been able to join us at Synod 2023, despite difficulties that developed in connection with visas and travel.

Rev. Koopmans introduces Rev. Laura Osborne, coordinator for interreligious relations for the Reformed Church in America, who addresses synod. Rev. Koopmans offers prayer.

Rev. Koopmans introduces Rev. Marlin Lomi, chair of the executive board of the Gereja Kristen Sumba (Christian Church of Sumba), who addresses synod via recorded video. Rev. Koopmans offers prayer.

Rev. Zachary J. King introduces Mr. Cullen Rodgers-Gates, director of development and membership for the National Association of Evangelicals, who addresses synod. Rev. King offers prayer.

Rev. King introduces Rev. Moses Jawara, president of the Christian Reformed Church in Sierra Leone, who addresses synod. Rev. King offers prayer.

Rev. Koopmans introduces Dr. Monica Schaap Pierce, executive director of Christian Churches Together, who addresses synod via recorded video. Rev. Koopmans offers prayer.

President De Vries thanks Rev. Koopmans and the ecumenical guests for their presentations and the written reports that they and other ecumenical guests have submitted.

ARTICLE 50

(The report of Advisory Committee 6 is continued from Article 46.)

Advisory Committee 6, Interdenominational and Financial Matters, Rev. Drew Sweetman reporting, presents the following:

I. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee

A. Materials

1. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee Report, pp. 203-16
2. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee Supplement, pp. 875-76

B. Privilege of the floor: William T. Koopmans, chair, and Zachary J. King (ex officio)

C. Recommendations

1. That synod express its gratitude to InSoon Hoagland and Ruth Palma for serving the cause of ecumenicity for the CRC.

— *Adopted*

2. That synod reappoint Yvonne Schenk to a second three-year term.

— *Adopted*

3. That synod receive the report on the World Council of Churches as information, noting that a formal recommendation regarding membership will come to a subsequent synod.

—*Received as information*

4. That synod recognize the Alliance of Reformed Churches as a church in cooperation for the purpose of continued pursuit toward designation as a church in communion, and, by way of exception, that while designated as a church in cooperation, congregations or officebearers with previous CRCNA/RCA dual-affiliation credentials maintain their affiliation with the CRCNA.

—*Adopted*

5. That synod direct the Office of General Secretary to appoint a team of staff and subject-matter experts to work with the Alliance of Reformed Churches to address matters related to *church in communion* status, Church Order matters regarding “orderly exchange” of officebearers (Church Order Supplement, Art. 8), and other matters related to benefits of CRC officebearers. In addition, if a former RCA congregation or network requests it in the next year, this team is authorized to address the same matters with them.

Grounds:

- a. Synod has asked the EIRC to facilitate good ecumenical relations with bodies of former RCA congregations.
- b. This body testifies to being Reformed in persuasion and ministry.
- c. This body describes itself as an association and is developing their vision, values, frameworks, and other documents.
- d. This satisfies the immediate needs of affiliated officebearers and congregations while providing a space for discernment of future relationships.

—*Adopted*

6. 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, 2023.

—*Adopted*

7. That synod affirm the appointment of Jake Bentum by the Council of Delegates to serve a modified first term, effective November 1, 2022, through July 1, 2025, with eligibility for reappointment to a subsequent term.

—*Adopted*

II. Response to Overture 15: Revise Belgic Confession Articles 18 and 34

A. Materials

Overture 15, pp. 403-4

B. Recommendation

That synod not accede to Overture 15.

Grounds:

- a. A similar overture came to Synod 2002. The following ground is quoted from the *Acts of Synod 2002* (p. 499): “Historically, synod has opted for a historical-textual, rather than a ‘too literalistic approach to the Confessions’ in the hope that we would avoid making so many changes to these documents that we end up with confessions that are ‘a barely recognizable polyglot of emendations’ (*Acts of Synod 1959*, p. 183). Our confessions were born in a certain climate of theological debate and can be best understood in light of that history.”
- b. In the past, the Christian Reformed Church has not changed the confessions lightly. Acceding to this overture would have far-reaching repercussions with our relationships with other Christians (e.g., Reformed Baptists).
- c. While the change seems simple, we recognize the widespread usage of our version of the Belgic Confession in other Christian denominations, and we do not want to create undue complexity among those denominations without engaging with them.

—Adopted

Rev. Joel Sheeres (Classis Columbia) offers prayer.

ARTICLE 51

(The report from Advisory Committee 2 continues from Article 45.)

Advisory Committee 2, Church Order and Related Matters, Rev. Ryan Braam reporting, presents the following:

I. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report (sections II, A, 9; II, A, 12), including Appendices A and B, pp. 36-38, 40-41, 54-73
2. Overtures 4-9, pp. 359-81
3. Communication 2: Classis Northcentral Iowa

B. Privilege of the floor: Andy de Ruyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Michael L. Ten Haken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendations

1. That synod adopt the proposed revised CRCNA Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders and adopt the accompanying FAQ document (see Addendum B) with the included introduction and the limited amendments to the text of the Code of Conduct.

Grounds:

- a. Classes and churches have had adequate time to give feedback and input into the Code of Conduct as requested by Synod 2022.
- b. The proposed revised CRCNA Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders and the FAQ document address the feedback, questions, and concerns received from classes and local churches about the Code of Conduct and the implementation plan.
- c. Approving the Code of Conduct fulfills the intentions of Synod 2019 in its directives regarding abuse of power.

[It is also noted that the FAQ document is missing “gentleness” from the fruit of the Spirit listed in FAQ 3 and that the phrase in FAQ 3 saying “with such great power comes great responsibility” is trademarked. “Gentleness” will be added, and the trademarked phrase will be replaced with “the stewardship of such power is a great responsibility.”]

Elder delegate Jim DenOuden (Greater Los Angeles) offers prayer.

—*Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Herbert Schreur (Northcentral Iowa).

2. That synod affirm that the Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders is subservient to Scripture and our confessions and must be interpreted and utilized accordingly.

Grounds:

- a. Romans 12:2: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
- b. Hebrews 4:12: “The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

—*Adopted*

3. That synod propose that Synod 2024 adopt the following revisions/additions to the Church Order and its Supplements (indicated by italics):

Add the following new Article 5-b and Supplement, Article 5-b to the current Church Order Article 5 and its Supplement (the existing Article 5 and its Supplement would become Article 5-a and Supplement, Article 5-a).

Church Order Article 5-b

All officebearers shall uphold the standards of behavior summarized in the CRCNA Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders.

—Cf. Supplement, Article 5-b

Supplement, Article 5-b

[The full text of the CRCNA Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders, as revised and presented in the minutes below.]

—Adopted

4. That synod propose that Synod 2024 revise Church Order Supplement, Article 13-c, section c as indicated by the following addition in italics:

Supplement, Article 13-c, section c

The duties of the minister are spiritual in character and directly related to the ministerial calling, and such duties do not conflict with the minister's commitment to the faith and practice of the Christian Reformed Church as required by one's signature to the Covenant for Officebearers *and as articulated in the Code of Conduct.*

Grounds:

- a. These changes to the Church Order reflect the intention of the Addressing the Abuse of Power Committee to implement a Code of Conduct that all ministry leaders commit to uphold.
- b. Concerns about the original implementation plan (found in Addendum C; see *Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 69-71) were that it gave the impression that the Code of Conduct would be on the same level as the Covenant for Officebearers. This was reflected most clearly in the requirement for officebearers to sign both the Covenant for Officebearers and the Code of Conduct on all occasions stipulated by council, classical, and synodical regulations. The proposed revisions correct that impression by clearly distinguishing between the Covenant for Officebearers and the Code of Conduct.

—Adopted

5. That synod encourage councils and classes to implement the Code of Conduct for all staff (nonordained as well as ordained) and volunteers who are providing leadership in the church or classis.

—Adopted

6. That synod mandate the Office of General Secretary to oversee the development of training modules that orient ministry leaders to the Code of Conduct.

Grounds:

- a. Training modules on the Code of Conduct were requested in the feedback to help churches introduce and orient ministry leaders to expectations and appropriate behaviors.
- b. Training modules will help to ensure that the Code of Conduct shapes the leadership culture of our denomination and has a real impact on addressing the misuse of power.

—Adopted

7. That synod offer sincere thanks and gratitude to the Committee Addressing the Abuse of Power, the Council of Delegates, and the Code of Conduct Review Team for their countless hours and valuable efforts in laying the groundwork for the Code of Conduct.

—Adopted

8. The preceding motions are synod's response to Overtures 4-9 and Communication 2.

—Adopted

Revised Code of Conduct

(Additions in the following approved text are in *italics*. Deletions are in ~~strikethrough~~.)

Introduction [adapted from the FAQ document]

Congregations and ministry leaders are both well served by clearly identifying expectations for Christlike behavior. A code of conduct enables churches to be proactive in educating staff and volunteers about expectations rather than reactive when unspoken expectations are not met.

When implemented well, a code of conduct helps to shape the culture of a congregation, particularly with respect to how people are treated, fostering a culture in our churches where the value of every person is protected and where everyone is free to worship God and grow in faith free from harm.

Key to cultivating a culture of dignity and respect in the church is creating safe and receptive avenues for reporting abuse or misconduct. Those who have been harmed need to be heard and cared for by the church. This posture, however, does not assume the guilt of the accused. Allegations of violations should be examined and assessed through a fair process. The local church council is responsible for deciding the best way to follow up on the allegations.

Ministry leaders have a significant amount of authority and spiritual influence over the people who participate in the ministries of the church. People extend a great deal of trust to ministry leaders, inviting them into their lives at times and on occasions of significant vulnerability: birth, death, sickness, times of fear, doubt, joy, and suffering. It is a rare privilege to come alongside and support

someone in their faith journey, being the presence of Christ to them. The stewardship of such power is a great responsibility—responsibility to use this power in ways that lead to shalom.

Typically, ministry leaders are mature Christians who exemplify good character and integrity, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Still, like all human beings, they are prone to sin, and they make mistakes. Stress, anxiety, burnout, and disappointment may lead them to act out of their old selves rather than their new life in Christ. As a result, they may fail to use their authority in redeeming ways and instead use it in a way that brings about harm. When this happens, the congregation's flourishing and the integrity of the church's gospel witness are affected. For this reason, it is crucial that the church put in place tools and measures of accountability that help ministry leaders use their authority and influence responsibly in order to build up the people to whom they are ministering.

The implementation of the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of the local council that holds the membership or credentials of the ministry leader. A classis has responsibility to implement the Code of Conduct for classical ministry leaders and employees. For CRCNA staff members, this oversight is shared with the Human Resource departments for denominational staff.

The assembly that implements the Code of Conduct is also responsible for determining how to enforce the Code of Conduct and the ramifications for people who violate it based on the gravity of the offense and the harm done. Safe Church coordinators, denominational Safe Church staff, and the Dignity Team are available for consultation and advice as needed.

The Bible is our guide for faith and life. The confessions are systematic summaries and interpretations of the Bible around which we are united as a denomination and which we confess to be faithful and true to the teachings of Scripture. The Code of Conduct is a document that establishes biblical standards of behavior and practices for contemporary realities, addressing appropriate interpersonal relationships, confidentiality, financial integrity, pastoral leadership, and mandatory reporting. It is a summary of Christian standards for contemporary ministry leadership. It clarifies for ministry leaders what is required for healthy and safe ministry, and it communicates to parishioners what they can expect from ministry leadership.

Preamble

~~In Philippians 2, the apostle Paul brings to his Philippian readers the words of a hymn in which Christ Jesus is acknowledged as being, in his very nature, God. Among other things, this means that Christ is the one to whom all power belongs.~~

~~The hymn goes on to say that Christ did not consider equality with God as something to be used to his own advantage. In fact, he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, and humbling himself toward a life-sacrificing kind of obedience. In other words, he used his power for the glory of God and the thriving of others.~~

Mark 10:35-45 displays two very different approaches to the use of power. The disciples are exposed as being power hungry and vulnerable to a worldly expression of power. Jesus intervened by clarifying that a worldly view of power “lord[s] it over” those whom it influences. Jesus proclaimed, “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (v. 43). Jesus displays that power and influence are not negative in themselves but are a gift of God for good. However, Jesus also insists that a misuse of power is not acceptable for leaders in his kingdom. Rather, he demands that they lead as humble servants for the glory of God and the thriving of others. After all, they follow the one who “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (v. 45).

All of us who are united to Christ by faith and who serve in the life of the church are called, in this passage and others (Phil. 2:1-10), to this way of being. Jesus himself, in response to the desire for power expressed by his disciples, called them (and us) to use power to bring glory to God and serve people;—a way of holding power that confronts and contrasts with the ways that the world uses power.

Not only do we have this call from Christ, but we actually have Jesus living and growing within us (Gal. 2:20). As a result, we find ourselves being transformed into the kind of people who hold and use power in a Christ-like way.

That being said, until Christ returns and brings us to perfection, we will continue to wrestle with the urge to misuse power and abuse others. Ugly realities such as verbal, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, and spiritual abuse are found among us. The power that we hold by virtue of our person or our position can always be twisted into the project of building up ourselves and our own kingdoms at the expense of others. This is true for pastors, lay ministry leaders, and church members alike.

In awareness of these ugly realities and in the beautiful hope of Christ’s transforming work, the following code of conduct is offered for ministry leaders. It is shaped by Scripture and by commitments found in our confessional statements and contemporary testimonies. (See Belgic Confession, Article 28; Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A’s 55, 107, 111.) It emerges out of a response by Synod 2018 to patterns of abuse that had been brought to its attention and is aimed at preventing such abuse in the future. May God’s peace be among us.

Code of Conduct

“Ministry leaders” are all officebearers (ordained ministers, commissioned pastors, elders, and deacons), CRCNA staff members, and members of the Council of Delegates. Local church councils are also encouraged to regard all church staff (whether or not they are ordained) and volunteers who are providing leadership in the church as ministry leaders. Ministry leaders have been empowered by God and the church to serve the body of Christ for good. They are called to resist all temptations to abuse their power through the misuse of position, authority, or influence.

Abuse of power is often defined as misusing power to harm another person or using power and influence to take unjust advantage of another person. All abuse by ministry leaders within the church is also spiritual abuse and has spiritual impacts that often heighten the harm caused to individuals and to the family of God. For more on the use and misuse of power, see the report of the Addressing the Abuse of Power Committee (*Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 587-615).

As a ministry leader, I will, to the best of my ability, commit to the following:

Relationships

1. I will speak and act, in all my personal and professional relations, in ways that follow the pattern of Christ, who used his power to serve (1 Pet. 5; Mark 10; Phil. 2; 2 Tim. 4:2).
2. I will respect, love, and treat with integrity and truthfulness people of every position, status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, or ability.
3. I will maintain appropriate emotional, physical, and sexual boundaries in all relationships.
4. I will keep all my relationships free from inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, emotional or sexual intimacy, sexual comments, gestures, or jokes.

Safety

1. I will actively promote a welcoming and respectful environment where all persons are treated with dignity and value *as imagebearers of God*, and where any form of abuse, bullying, or harassment is neither tolerated nor allowed to take place.
2. I will report known or suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of minors or vulnerable adults to the proper authorities.
3. I will support those who disclose physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in a way that empowers the person who has been victimized to seek out justice and healing.

Pastoral Leadership

1. I will promote truthfulness, transparency, and honesty in all of my work.
2. I will use my power, authority, and position to build up the community of believers and seek first the kingdom of God.
3. I will work within my ~~professional~~ *trained* competence, especially in counseling situations, and I will refer individuals to other professionals as appropriate.

[Note the inversion of points 4 and 5 to begin with positive actions.]

4. I will *preach*, teach, admonish, or discipline in ways that are biblical and Christlike, promoting the shalom and flourishing of those to whom I am ministering (2 Tim. 3:16).
5. I will refrain in my *pastoral care and counseling* from using references to Scripture or God to manipulate, coerce, or threaten another person.
6. I will disclose any perceived or actual conflict of interest.

Confidentiality

1. I will maintain and uphold confidentiality appropriately, which means I will hold in confidence whatever information is not mine to share.
2. I will not use information shared with me in confidence in order to elevate my position or to depreciate that of others.

Finances

1. I will ensure that funds for which I am responsible or which are under my control are used for their intended ministry purposes.
2. In all financial matters, including the acceptance of gifts, I will act with scrupulous honesty, transparency, and appropriate accountability.
3. I will appropriately use and encourage accepted accounting practices and regular reviews and/or audits of ministry funds.

In the event that I misuse my power, either intentionally or unintentionally, *in my dealings with others, in word or deed—if I fail “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly” (Mic. 6:8) as outlined in the Scriptures and our confessions*—I will acknowledge the harm that has been caused and the trust that has been broken, and I will actively seek restoration with justice, compassion, truth, and grace. I will humbly submit to the insight and accountability of ~~others~~ *the body that implements this Code of Conduct* to ensure that I use any power entrusted to me fully in service to Christ.

In the beautiful hope of Christ’s transforming work, in all I do, I will seek to use my position, power, and authority prudently and humbly to support and encourage all the members of his body in my care.

Code of Conduct (clean version)

Introduction

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In the beautiful hope of Christ’s transforming work, in all I do, I will seek to use my position, power, and authority prudently and humbly to support and encourage all the members of his body in my care.

(The report from Advisory Committee 2 is continued in Article 65.)

ARTICLE 52

The afternoon session recesses at 5:03 p.m. President De Vries closes in prayer.

TUESDAY EVENING, June 13, 2023

Eighth Session

ARTICLE 53

The evening session convenes at 6:45 p.m. Katie Roelofs leads the assembly in singing “Come, Holy Ghost.”

Rev. Jeffrey Sajdak reads Psalm 46. Rev. Jon Hoekema leads the assembly in guided prayer, focusing particularly on Psalm 46:10.

ARTICLE 54

President De Vries reviews the process for the upcoming interviews of Calvin Theological Seminary professors.

ARTICLE 55

(The report of Advisory Committee 3 is continued from Article 36.)

Calvin Theological Seminary

A. Materials

1. Calvin Theological Seminary Report, pp. 181-91
2. Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement, including appendices A and B; pp. 812-25

B. Privilege of the floor: Dave Morren, chair, and Julius Medenblik, president, when seminary matters are presented.

C. Recommendations

Synod proceeds with the interview of Dr. Gabriela Tijerina-Pike conducted by Rev. Mary Stegink (Hackensack) and, following the completed interview, considers the following recommendation:

1. That synod appoint Dr. Gabriela Tijerina-Pike as Latino/a Ministry director and as associate professor of New Testament.

—*Adopted*

The president of synod congratulates Dr. Tijerina-Pike.

Synod proceeds with the interview of Dr. Daniel Daley conducted by Rev. Derek Ellens (Ontario Southwest) and, following the completed interview, considers the following recommendation:

2. That synod appoint Dr. Daniel Daley as assistant professor of New Testament.

—*Adopted*

The president of synod congratulates Dr. Daley.

The assembly lays hands on Dr. Tijerina-Pike and Dr. Daley. Rev. Harold Caicedo and Rev. Paul De Vries offer a prayer of thanksgiving in Spanish and English, respectively.

ARTICLE 56

The evening session recesses at 9:01 p.m. The assembly sings “The Doxology.” Synod will reconvene Wednesday morning at 8:15 a.m.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, June 14, 2023

Ninth Session

ARTICLE 57

The praise team (cajon: Ryan Braam; guitar/vocals: Kyle Haack; guitar: Thomas VanderPloeg; piano/vocals: Eleanor Sarkany; violin: Dan Schultz) leads the assembly in singing “Yet Not I but through Christ in Me” and “Living Hope.” Ethnic adviser Rev. Hyung Jun Kim and delegates Kathy DeMey and Rev. Sid Ypma call the assembly to worship using Philippians 2:5-8. The assembly responds by singing “In Christ Alone.”

Rev. Elaine May and Rev. Reggie Smith lead in a greeting from God and corporate prayer, using five prayer postures with a sung refrain, “Teach Us Your Ways.”

The assembly forms a wide circle around the chapel. The synod choir provides a choral blessing: “The Lord Bless You and Keep You.”

The roll indicates that the following delegate is absent: Thomas VanderPloeg (Grandville).

ARTICLE 58

Advisory Committee 7, Human Sexuality, Rev. Steven Zwart reporting, presents the following:

Preamble

The Human Sexuality Advisory Committee recognizes the weightiness of the issues it has considered on behalf of Synod 2023 and the broader CRCNA. During its deliberations, our committee appreciated the insights of Communication 3 (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 601-11). In what follows, we summarize some of the most salient points as a background for our recommendations. As Synod 2022 and the Human Sexuality Report recognized, God calls each of us to live holy lives in fellowship with God

and with one another. One important part of holy living is honoring our created, physical bodies, including the sexual dimension of our being. Although Christians have always struggled to be faithful in this area of life, recent years have been especially challenging. As a committee, we echo Synod 2022's confession that our denomination has too often failed to be faithful to God in our sexual lives and, in particular, has failed to serve and walk alongside our LGBTQ+ members and friends. As a committee, we also echo Synod 2022's call to faithfulness in our sexual lives.

As the many overtures to this synod indicate, responses to Synod 2022 have been mixed, particularly regarding its decisions relative to same-sex attraction and activity. Our committee is concerned that the differing views on Synod 2022's decisions both expose differences that have been present for many years and threaten to divide our church. Yet we believe that Jesus Christ has called us as a church to come together in unity and to live in unity as a witness that Jesus was sent by the Father (John 17:20-23). As our differences are reconciled and we as a church move toward unity, our reconciled life together is a witness to the power of the gospel.

To that end, our committee calls all members of the CRCNA to humbly listen to God's Word and to those with whom we disagree. Given the turmoil in our world and the church's inadequate pastoral care, we as a committee call those who agree with Synod 2022's decisions to have patience with those who disagree, bearing "with one another in love" (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 603; Eph. 4:2). Thus, let us as a church be gracious toward those who submit confessional-difficulty gravamina; let us exercise discipline with great care and love; and let us be compassionate, respectful, and loving toward those who decide that they can no longer remain among our membership (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 602-6). Since we as a church must acknowledge that "we have tolerated any number of other areas of nonsexual sin" without exercising faithful discipline, "To begin a program of discipline with sexually active or married LGBTQ+ members, or with those who err in doctrine in this area, after all we have tolerated and overlooked, would be hypocrisy of the worst kind" (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 605-6).

Given the importance of the unity of the church and faithfulness to God's call on our lives, we as a committee call those who disagree with at least some of Synod 2022's decisions to listen to the voice of God in the church. Synod 2022 and the Human Sexuality Report called the church to live faithfully before God and in community, including in our sexual lives. Each of us needs to hear that call and recognize our own failures. Furthermore, as a denomination we are called to respect one another and to respect the decisions of the church. We cannot function well as a church or properly help one another if the "settled and binding" (Church Order, Art. 29) decisions of synod are disregarded or rejected. Although members of our denominations come from diverse places and have diverse opinions on many matters, our goal is not diversity, but a growing unity amid our

diversity: “As countercultural as this may be, then, our unity cannot be located in the freedom of our individual consciences or interpretations but in our ‘complete subjection to the Word of God and the Reformed creeds as a true interpretation of this Word, acknowledging Christ as the only head of his church’” (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, pp. 608-9; Church Order, Art. 1).

We as a committee call our Reformed denomination to work toward true reform in this important area of our lives, which means that we need to engage in patient, humble listening to God and to one another as we encourage one another and pray for God's Spirit to renew us in the image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I. Response to Overture 17: Clarify and Affirm that the CRC's Doctrine of Marriage Is Confessional Doctrine

A. Materials

Overture 17, pp. 406-10

B. Recommendation

That synod not accede to Overture 17.

Grounds:

1. The CRCNA's position on the doctrine of marriage is already clearly articulated and reiterated in the study reports of 1973 and 2022.
2. The CRCNA's website includes our position statement on “Marriage” and shall be regularly updated to reflect decisions of synod.

—*Adopted*

II. Response to Overture 21: In Pursuit of Scriptural and Confessional Unity, Alter Synod 2022's Decision on Confessional Status in Three Ways

A. Materials

Overture 21, pp. 423-29

B. Recommendations

1. That synod not accede to Overture 21, Recommendation A.

Grounds:

- a. It is not necessary to define *chastity* as it is not a word we find in the Heidelberg Catechism.
- b. The Human Sexuality Report adequately describes chastity (*Agenda for Synod 2022*, p. 442).

—*Adopted*

2. That synod declare the above recommendation to be its response to Overture 18, Recommendation A and Overture 18, Recommendation C.

—*Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued in Article 60).

ARTICLE 59

President De Vries welcomes Dr. Wiebe Boer, president of Calvin University, who addresses synod. Dr. Boer thanks the cabinet and staff of Calvin University. Dr. Boer shares that the Christian Reformed Church in North America established Calvin University for the purpose of enriching students' education through a Reformed perspective. The mission of Calvin University is to think deeply, act justly, and live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal.

Calvin University has experienced many accomplishments, including 15 percent growth in students over the past year, upcoming renovations, and the school's upcoming football program. Lives are being transformed, students are learning more about God, and alumni are excelling in their Christian professional development.

However, there are external challenges. The state of higher education shows pressure on Christian higher education. There is financial pressure, and there are fast-moving societal shifts, including declining domestic demographics, rising costs, and declining institutional loyalty.

Despite these challenges, Calvin University is working to strengthen ties within the CRCNA and build stronger collaboration.

President De Vries thanks Dr. Boer, and Vice President Steenwyk offers a prayer of thanksgiving for Calvin University.

ARTICLE 60

(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued from Article 58).

Advisory Committee 7, Human Sexuality, Rev. Steven Zwart reporting, presents the following:

II. Response to Overture 21: In Pursuit of Scriptural and Confessional Unity, Alter Synod 2022's Decision on Confessional Status in Three Ways

A. Materials

Overture 21, pp. 423-29

B. Recommendations (continued)

3. That synod accede to Overture 21, Recommendation B, affirming Synod 2022's "interpretation of the confession" as offering a helpful and representative list of what constitutes "unchastity."

—*Adopted*

4. That synod not accede to overtures that recommend a reversal of the decision of Synod 2022 to impose a definition on the word “unchastity” as found in Q&A 108 of the Heidelberg Catechism (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922).

— *Adopted*

5. That synod declare the above recommendation (4) to be its response to Overtures 26, 28, 35, 37, 38, and 44.

— *Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie).

III. Response to Overture 22: Confessional-Revision Gravamen

A. Materials

Overture 22, pp. 430-32

B. Recommendations

1. That synod not accede to overtures that recommend the removal of the phrase “and homosexual sex” from the list of practices cited to contravene the definition of “unchastity” as it pertains to Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922).

Grounds:

- a. This is in alignment with Synod 2023’s response to Overture 21.
- b. The Human Sexuality Report addresses this (*Agenda for Synod 2022*, p. 442)

— *Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Matthew Ackerman (Lake Erie).

2. That synod declare the above recommendation to be synod’s response to Overtures 34, 36, 42, 43, 45, 47 (Recommendations B and C), and 48.

— *Adopted*

IV. Response to Overture 25: Alter the Action of Synod 2022 regarding Confessional Status of Interpretation of “Unchastity”

A. Materials

Overture 25, pp. 440-43

B. Recommendations

1. That synod not accede to overtures that seek to delay the implementation of the decisions of the Human Sexuality Report.

Ground: We acknowledge the immediacy of the call and mutual accountability of all members of the Christian Reformed Church in North America to follow through with the pastoral care outlined in the Human Sexuality Report for the sake of our witness to Jesus Christ. We do

so in a spirit of lament for failing in our pastoral care to those who identify as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community.

— *Tabled*

Note: The above recommendation was tabled for the report of Thrive.
(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued in Article 64.)

ARTICLE 61

The president welcomes Rev. Lesli van Milligen and Dr. Christopher Schoon, codirectors of Thrive. Rev. van Milligen and Rev. Schoon share that Thrive's mission is to come together to equip and encourage congregations. Thrive combines the small congregational ministries that synod created in the past to address specific needs. This then makes the ministry more accessible, integrated, responsive, and broad to support churches in a holistic way.

ARTICLE 62

The morning session recesses at 11:30 a.m. Victor Laarman (Huron) leads in closing prayer.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, June 14, 2023

Tenth Session

ARTICLE 63

The afternoon session convenes at 1:36 p.m. The synod choir leads in singing "Let Us Pray for Peace."

Jamie McIntosh and Carol Bremer-Bennett, codirectors of World Renew, lead in corporate prayer for concerns around the world. The assembly responds by singing "The Kingdom Is Yours."

The roll indicates that Thomas VanderPloeg (Grandville) is now present.

ARTICLE 64

(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued from Article 60).

Advisory Committee 7, Human Sexuality, Rev. Steven Zwart reporting, presents the following:

IV. Response to Overture 25: Alter the Action of Synod 2022 regarding Confessional Status of Interpretation of "Unchastity" (majority report)

A. Materials

Overture 25, pp. 440-43

B. Recommendations (continued)

1. That synod not accede to overtures that seek to delay the implementation of the decisions of the Human Sexuality Report.

Ground: We acknowledge the immediacy of the call and mutual accountability of all members of the Christian Reformed Church in North America to follow through with the pastoral care outlined in the Human Sexuality Report for the sake of our witness to Jesus Christ. We do so in a spirit of lament for failing in our pastoral care to those who identify as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community.

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: Mike Abma (Grand Rapids East), David Apol (Hackensack), Richard Bodini (Toronto), Michael Bootsma (Hamilton), Pat Cavanaugh (Muskegon), Cara DeHaan (Hamilton), Adrian de Lange (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Kathleen DeMey (Grand Rapids East), Michelle Rooker (Alberta North), Elly Sarkany (Niagara), Heidi Sytsema (Muskegon), Michael Werkman (Alberta North), Elizabeth Vander Haagen (Grand Rapids East), and Derek Zeyl (Kalamazoo).

2. That synod declare the above recommendation to be its response to Overtures 31, 32, 40 (Recommendation B), and 41.

—*Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie).

V. Response to Overture 27: Allow Classes of the CRCNA to Declare Article 65, Item 2 of the *Acts of Synod 2022* Inoperative (majority report)

A. Materials

Overture 27, pp. 448-50

B. Recommendation

That synod not accede to Overture 27.

Grounds:

1. Synod declared in 1973 that “churches should recognize that their homosexual members are fellow-servants of Christ who are to be given opportunity to render within the offices and structures of the congregation the same service that is expected from heterosexuals” (*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 632).
2. To grant churches and classes the privilege of declaring confessional matters “inoperative” would be a violation of the Covenant of Office-bearers.
3. To declare that Article 65, item 2 of the *Acts of Synod 2022* (p. 922) to be inoperative would, in effect, create a local option. Whereas the

“women in office” issue recognizes that Scripture allows for two practices, the same criteria does not apply to homosexual sex.

—*Adopted*

VI. Response to Overture 33: Revise Definition of *Homosexuality* (majority report)

A. Materials

Overture 33, pp. 461-67

B. Recommendation

That synod not accede to Overture 33.

Ground: Overture 33 is a recommitment of Overture 57 from Synod 2022 and, under Church Order Article 31, fails to present sufficient and new grounds for consideration.

—*Adopted*

VII. Response to Overture 39: Reverse Synod’s Endorsement of the Human Sexuality Report (majority report)

A. Materials

Overture 39, pp. 488-92

B. Recommendation

That synod not accede to Overture 39.

Grounds:

1. Overture 39 does not present sufficient and new grounds (Church Order Art. 31) that haven’t already been considered in the Human Sexuality Report and in synod’s deliberations.
2. While Overture 39 calls specific attention to the confessions, the focus of the Human Sexuality Report was to lay a biblical theology of human sexuality, presuming and affirming confessional alignment.

—*Adopted*

VIII. Response to Overture 47: Create Local Option to Allow LGBTQ+ Christians to Participate Fully (majority report)

A. Materials

Overture 47, pp. 515-17

B. Recommendation

That synod not accede to Overture 47, Recommendation A.

Grounds:

1. While synod declared in 1973 that “churches should recognize that their homosexual members are fellow-servants of Christ who are to be given opportunity to render within the offices and structures of the congregation the same service that is expected from heterosexuals” (*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 632), those who practice unchastity contravene the seventh commandment.
2. Synod 2022 affirmed that homosexual sex violates the seventh commandment, and “in so doing,” synod declared “this affirmation ‘an interpretation of [a] confession’ (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603).”

—*Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie).
(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued in Article 66.)

ARTICLE 65

(The report of Advisory Committee 2 is continued from Article 51.)

Advisory Committee 2, Church Order and Related Matters, Rev. Ryan Braam reporting, presents the following:

I. Overture, Communication, and Appeal

A. Materials

1. Overture 10: Provide Procedures for Discipline of Church Leaders, pp. 382-85
2. Appeal 1: Council of the Christian Reformed Church of St. Joseph, Michigan, pp. 621-22
3. Communication 5: Classis Holland—Response to Appeal 1; Supplement, pp. 893-95

B. Recommendations

1. That synod sustain requests A and B of Appeal 1. (Request C has been appropriately addressed.)

Grounds:

- a. Church Order Article 81 gives primary authority to the local consistory in matters regarding church discipline, including the rights and privileges of members.
- b. The local consistory suspended the rights and privileges of membership including the right to submit overtures.
- c. Synod 1991 sought to give consistories greater freedom in exact modes of operation pertaining to discipline (*Acts of Synod 1991*: pp. 715-23; 768-69).
- d. While synodical rules preserve the right of classes to process unprocessed overtures, the overture in question was not “unprocessed”; it was deemed illegitimate by the local consistory.

- e. There are mechanisms of appeal for discipline in the judicial code (Church Order Art. 30.)
- f. We appreciate Classis Holland's acknowledgement of the breach of confidentiality, for which they have apologized.

— Adopted

2. That synod declare this to be its response to Overture 10, Appeal 1, and Communication 5.

— Adopted

3. That synod direct the Office of General Secretary to assemble a task force (or similar body) to design and/or clarify an appeals process for church members under discipline. This body shall address processes for members under general discipline.

Grounds:

- a. Neither Church Order nor the Judicial Code seem to provide clear provisions for members under discipline to appeal a decision regarding their discipline.
- b. While the authority for discipline and its implementation is given to the local consistory, there should be a clearly defined process for members and officebearers to appeal a decision regarding discipline.

— Adopted

ARTICLE 66

(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued from Article 64).

Advisory Committee 7, Human Sexuality, Rev. Steven Zwart reporting, presents the following:

Response to Overtures 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 (Recommendation C), 23, 24, 29, 30, 40 (Recommendation D), 46, 77 (majority report)

A. Grateful acknowledgement

We begin with heartfelt gratitude and affirmation of the collaborative efforts of the whole of Advisory Committee 7, which permitted a broad, collective effort to ensure that every voice was heard and to provide a context to explore the breadth of the weighty material before us.

With such acknowledgement we note that although the motions of both reports will differ, there are many shared concerns from the entirety of the committee.

The committee, with reflective humility in the pursuit of clarity in the matters before us, notably wrestled with the conclusive, unprecedented language of Synod 2022, specifically, "Therefore, this interpretation has

confessional status,” when referring to the “interpretation of [a] confession” related to defining “unchastity” in Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922).

B. Preamble to Majority Report

Our biblical and confessional identity as the CRCNA serves both a foundational and unifying purpose among its assemblies, institutions, and congregants. We appeal to these fundamental trademarks both in times of certainty and in crisis, in order to provide an essential connectedness and accountability so that we may be one, as Jesus prayed.

The decision regarding the “confessional status” of the definition of “unchastity” from Synod 2022 revealed a crisis of necessity years in the making.

Following the Report on Homosexuality from 1973, encouragements and admonitions were put forth to shape a shared journey with those who wrestled with this issue, encouraging shared space yet guiding the church to hold fast to God’s Word in its admonitions.

What we are learning following synod’s decision in 2022 to clarify our confessional identity regarding human sexuality is that although the 1973 report gave biblically rooted guidance to the church regarding care for those who are same-sex attracted, the implementation of that care failed on many levels.

Many of the overtures submitted to Synod 2023 and forwarded to Advisory Committee 7 noted references to misapplied discipline or misunderstandings related to interacting with same-sex attracted members, uncharitable bad-faith efforts toward mutual accountability, and examples of marginalization or even expulsion from the worshiping community in the absence of love and discipleship. The net result of over fifty years of failure in this arena resulted in far too many, who identify as LGBTQ+, being left out, pushed out, or, even worse, abused emotionally and spiritually by confessing Christ-followers. This is further complicated by church-wide collective failure to repent of all sexual sins, such as but not limited to pornography and extramarital sexual sins.

To this end, we detest any misuse of the Scriptures and confessions, which is an abomination before God and an affront to the witness of Jesus Christ.

We believe the declaration of the definition of “unchastity” in the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality (HSR) as an “interpretation of a confession” and therefore having “confessional status” was not a maligned attempt to reinforce the failures of our denomination but rather to call the whole church to “radical obedience” to Christ—both in holding to his Word and in the manner by which we journey together—ALL together. The depth and breadth of lament and pastoral-care guidance in the HSR speaks to such intent.

When appealing to “confessional status,” we believe it is a humble acknowledgment by the HSR and synod that the role of “confessions” in our

identity is useful and instructive in adhering to the truth of Scripture and in its Christ-centered application.

Practically speaking, right use of the confessions through discipline and discipleship results in more room for growth, humble conversations, and the ability to ask honest and fair questions while we all continue to wrestle with our responses—not just to issues surrounding human sexuality but also to all areas of our walk with God. Such discipleship is a lifelong process as we seek to place all areas of our lives under the lordship of Christ.

This goes to the heart of our recommendation. We humbly acknowledge that institutions, interpretations, or confessional implementations cannot change hearts. But lives lived fully devoted to God’s Word, making good use of our creeds and confessions distinctive to our denominational identity, and sacrificial obedience to Jesus Christ can serve as a catalyst to own our failures, deal rightly and humbly with our sin, hold each other mutually accountable in ways that lead to growth in faith in Christ Jesus, and practically provide tangible means through church discipline, biblical discipleship, and even through gravamina toward the oneness of the church Christ prayed for in John 17.

C. Recommendations

1. That synod include this background statement in the official *Acts of Synod 2023*.

Ground: Without this background, we fear that misuse of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality may continue with improper and inconsistent emphasis.

2. That synod not accede to Overture 21, Recommendation C.

Grounds:

- a. Synod 2022 gave due process, according to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, to the matter of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality and its conclusions without any decisions ruling the declaration “confessional status” out of order, leaving such a declaration in place.
 - In accordance with the *Acts of Synod 1976*, synods have the ability to interpret what the confessions teach. *Note:* “No one is free to decide for himself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards. In the event that such a question should arise, the decision of the assemblies of the church shall be sought and acquiesced in” (*Acts of Synod 1976*, p. 69; Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, A, 3).
- b. The theological and biblical components of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality, received for information by Synod 2019, were before

the churches for three years, giving the churches significant “opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes” (Church Order Art. 47) prior to Synod 2022.

- c. This overture does not contain “sufficient and new grounds” (Church Order Art. 31) to reverse Synod 2022’s decisions.

3. That synod consider this its response to Overtures 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 29, 30, 46, and 77, and Communication 4.

4. That synod not accede to Overture 40, Recommendation D.

Grounds:

- a. This overture essentially calls for the CRCNA to redo the approved and adopted work of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality.
- b. Synod 2022 settled the questions of theological position and moved the denomination toward following the pastoral-care guidelines of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality.

According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, the minority report is presented as information by Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink:

Response to Overtures 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 (Recommendation C), 23, 24, 29, 30, 40 (Recommendation D), 46, 77 (minority report)

A. Introduction

We all want to faithfully love and serve our Lord with our whole being—heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We all love the Christian Reformed Church.

We all believe in the supremacy of Scripture.

We all cherish our creeds and confessions.

We all want to secure the long-term integrity of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality as a clear biblical position of the CRCNA.

It is for these reasons that we defend the good process used throughout our denomination’s history as outlined in the 1975 report “Synodical Decisions and the Confessions.”

When any one of us professed our faith, we thought we understood Scripture and the confessions. Since then, through ongoing sanctification and the power of the Holy Spirit, we continue to grow—maturing, climbing, discovering new territory in the beauty and depth of Scripture as we understand it through our creeds and confessions.

What helps us on this journey is the space we are given to wonder, to question, to discover what grace and holy living are and how God transforms hearts and minds to increasingly reflect the heart and mind of Jesus

Christ. On the way, each of us discovers that the boundaries our confessions provide keep us on the path through correction and intentional discipleship.

As we are sanctified, we discover the benefits of grace and truth. We are set free to believe more deeply the gospel message. We are comforted and assured that “I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ” (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1).

Not only do we defend our established process; we wish to defend the necessary space needed to openly wonder, to question, and to discover the deep truths of Scripture together as we understand them through the confessions.

We are concerned for an ongoing stream of overtures and appeals that will undermine the intentions of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality and cause continued confusion in our churches.

You will hear the fullness of this in the recommendations that follow.

B. Recommendations

Heeding the prayer of Jesus in John 17 for the church to be one, these are our recommendations.

1. That synod accede to Overture 21 (Recommendation C), declaring our agreement with Synod 2022 that the interpretation of “unchastity” in Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 is an “interpretation of [a] confession.” We recommend that Synod 2023 revise Synod 2022’s declaration that this interpretation has “confessional status” (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922) and declare instead that Synod 2022’s interpretation of “unchastity” shall be considered “settled and binding” (Church Order, Art. 29) in its use and function as an “interpretation of [a] confession” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603), noting the following:

- a. This is the most significant category of pronouncement on doctrinal and ethical matters available to synod.
- b. “All officebearers and members are expected to abide by these synodical deliverances” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603).
- c. As such, “those who err” (Church Order Art. 78) would be subject to discipline with the understanding that “the purpose of admonition and discipline is to restore [the erring member] to faithful obedience to God and full fellowship with the congregation, to maintain the holiness of the church, and thus to uphold God’s honor” (Church Order Art. 78).
- d. We affirm that “the members of the church are accountable to one another in their doctrine and life and have the responsibility to encourage and admonish one another in love” (Church Order Art. 79-a).

Grounds:

- 1) Synodical decisions “shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order” (Church Order Art. 29).
- 2) At the same time, “No synodical decision involving doctrinal or ethical pronouncements is to be considered on par with the confessions” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 598). That is to say, no synodical pronouncement itself (even an “interpretation of the confessions”) can ever be “elevate[d] . . . to the status of the confessions” (p. 598).
- 3) Instead, “clothed with ‘synodical authority,’ [such pronouncements] serve that precise use and function for which they were specifically designed by synod” (p. 598). At Synod 2022, this pronouncement took the form of an “interpretation of [a] confession” (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 922). As such, “When a synodical pronouncement is set forth as an interpretation of the confession, this is its use and function” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 603). It follows, then, that Synod 2022’s “interpretation of [a] confession” does not itself have “confessional status” but is rather “settled and binding” (Church Order, Art. 29) in its “use and function” as an “interpretation of the confession.”
- 4) Synod 1975’s Report 47 (“Synodical Decisions and the Confessions”) states, “Such an interpretation given by synod must be regarded as the official interpretation, and is, therefore, binding for every officer and member of our denominational group. . . . *One cannot place one’s personal interpretation of the Confessions or a part thereof above the official interpretation of synod. That would make void the significance and power of the Forms of Unity*” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 598; quoting *Acts of Synod 1926*, pp. 191-92; emphasis ours). All teaching, preaching, discipleship, and discipline within CRCNA churches should therefore conform itself to the “settled and binding” character of this interpretation.
- 5) Two things follow from the above and should be recognized by all members and officebearers in the CRCNA:
 - As the 1975 report says, “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’” (p. 598). On the one hand, it should be acknowledged that the “measure of agreement expected” is different for a synodical pronouncement than it is for a confessional doctrine: “Full agreement with the *confessions* is expected from all members of the church and subscription to the confessions is required of all officebearers by signing the Form of Subscription. While *synodical decisions* are ‘settled and binding,’ subscription to synodical decisions is not required. Registering a negative vote with regard to a synodical decision is permissible,

although this is not tolerated with respect to the confessions” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, pp. 601-2). As this makes clear, disagreement with a synodical decision is possible/allowable, even as that decision remains “settled and binding” on the church.

- With that said, it should also be acknowledged that in making the decisions it did, Synod 2022 was attempting to call local churches, officebearers, and members *away* from such disagreement and back toward unity on this doctrinal/moral subject. In this way, Synod 2022 attempted to use the confessions as what we say they are—Forms of *Unity*. As the 1975 report says, “The well-being of the church is fostered when there is substantial unity with respect to all the decisions of synod” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 602).

In sum: By declaring its *interpretation* to have “confessional status,” Synod 2022 blurred lines that are clear in the 1975 report, setting a potentially confusing precedent for future synodical pronouncements on doctrinal and ethical matters. Revising Synod 2022’s decision in the way described above brings it in line with the position of the 1975 report on the relationship between synodical decisions and the confessions. At the same time, it honors synod’s intent to clarify the meaning of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 in the strongest way possible, so as not to allow divergent practice at the local church level by appeal to the suggestion that previous synodical deliverances were “pastoral advice” that can be set aside. As such, the purpose of this recommendation is to revise Synod 2022’s decision so as to bring it in line with the conclusions of the 1975 report, while affirming the “settled and binding” authority and significance of its interpretation of “unchastity” in Q&A 108.

2. That synod declare the above recommendation to be its response to Overtures 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 29, 30, 40 (Recommendation D), 46, and 77, and Communication 4.

President De Vries offers prayer.

Following the rules of procedure, synod returns to consideration of the recommendations of the advisory committee’s majority report.

Response to Overtures 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 (Recommendation C), 23, 24, 29, 30, 40 (Recommendation D), 46, 77 (majority report)

C. Recommendations

1. That synod include the majority report’s background statement in the official *Acts of Synod 2023*.

Ground: Without this background, we fear that misuse of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality may continue with improper and inconsistent emphasis.

Rev. Brandon Haan (Grandville) offers prayer

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: Richard Bodini (Toronto), Bernie De Jonge (Huron), Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie), Derek Zeyl (Kalamazoo).

2. That synod not accede to Overture 21, Recommendation C.

Grounds:

- a. Synod 2022 gave due process, according to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, to the matter of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality and its conclusions without any decisions ruling the declaration “confessional status” out of order, leaving such a declaration in place.
 - In accordance with the *Acts of Synod 1976*, synods have the ability to interpret what the confessions teach. *Note:* “No one is free to decide for himself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards. In the event that such a question should arise, the decision of the assemblies of the church shall be sought and acquiesced in” (*Acts of Synod 1976*, p. 69; Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, A, 3).
- b. The theological and biblical components of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality, received for information by Synod 2019, were before the churches for three years, giving the churches significant “opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes” (Church Order Art. 47) prior to Synod 2022.
- c. This overture does not contain “sufficient and new grounds” (Church Order Art. 31) to reverse Synod 2022’s decisions.

—*Tabled*

(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued in Article 69.)

President De Vries offers prayer for various requests from delegates’ local congregations.

ARTICLE 67

The afternoon session recesses at 5:42 p.m. Second Clerk Richard Bodini (Classis Toronto) closes in prayer.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, June 14, 2023

Eleventh Session

ARTICLE 68

The evening session convenes at 7:01 p.m. The assembly sings “He Will Hold Me Fast.”

Samantha Brinkman, young adult representative, reads Psalm 46. The assembly spends time in reflective prayer on Psalm 46:11 and responds by singing “Be Not Afraid.”

ARTICLE 69

(The report of Advisory Committee 7 is continued from Article 66.)

Advisory Committee 7, Human Sexuality, Rev. Steven Zwart reporting, presents the following:

Response to Overtures 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 (Recommendation C), 23, 24, 29, 30, 40 (Recommendation D), 46, 77 (majority report)

C. Recommendations (continued):

2. That synod not accede to Overture 21, Recommendation C.

Grounds:

- a. Synod 2022 gave due process, according to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, to the matter of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality and its conclusions without any decisions ruling the declaration “confessional status” out of order, leaving such a declaration in place.
 - In accordance with the *Acts of Synod 1976*, synods have the ability to interpret what the confessions teach. *Note:* “No one is free to decide for himself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards. In the event that such a question should arise, the decision of the assemblies of the church shall be sought and acquiesced in” (*Acts of Synod 1976*, p. 69; Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, A, 3).
- b. The theological and biblical components of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality, received for information by Synod 2019, were before the churches for three years, giving the churches significant “opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes” (Church Order Art. 47) prior to Synod 2022.
- c. This overture does not contain “sufficient and new grounds” (Church Order Art. 31) to reverse Synod 2022’s decisions.

William Krahne, ethnic adviser, leads in prayer before the vote.

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: David Apol (Hackensack), Matthew Ackerman (Lake Erie), Richard Bodini (Toronto), Craig Buma (Northern Illinois), Pat Cavanaugh (Muskegon), Bryan Dam (Grand Rapids North), Cara De Haan (Hamilton), Bernard De Jonge (Huron), Rita Klein-Geltink (Quinte), Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie), Sonya Grypma (B.C. South-East), Daniel Meinema (Eastern Canada), Elly Sarkany (Niagara), Heather Strooboscher (Grand Rapids North), Heidi Sytsema (Muskegon), Tom VanderPloeg (Grandville), Katelyn Johanna Van Hove (B.C. South-East), and Sid Ypma (Eastern Canada).

3. That synod consider this its response to Overtures 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 29, 30, 46, and 77, and Communication 4.

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: Nathan Groenwold (Lake Erie) and Thomas VanderPloeg (Grandville).

4. That synod not accede to Overture 40, Recommendation D.

Grounds:

- a. This overture essentially calls for the CRCNA to redo the approved and adopted work of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality.
- b. Synod 2022 settled the questions of theological position and moved the denomination toward following the pastoral-care guidelines of the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality.

Rev. Julius Medenblik, president of Calvin Theological Seminary, leads in prayer before the vote.

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: Maarten Reinders (Toronto), Heather Strooboscher (Grand Rapids North), Heidi Sytsema (Muskegon).

ARTICLE 70

(The report of Advisory Committee 4 is continued from Article 31.)

Advisory Committee 4, Congregational Ministries, Rev. Daniel Meinema reporting, presents the following:

Overtures 40, 70, and 71

A. Materials

1. Overture 40 (Recommendations A and C): Address Harm Done to LGBTQ+ persons, pp. 493-97
2. Overture 70: Commit to Love, Charity, and Grace in Disagreement; Equip Congregations to Minister Pastorally with LGBTQ+ People, p. 585

3. Overture 71: Prevent and Reduce Harm to LGBTQ+ Persons, pp. 586-88

B. Recommendations

1. That synod affirm our commitments to manage disagreements within our congregations, and among churches, with love, charity, and grace, and to ensure that all who seek to follow Christ are afforded a respectful place to honestly share their views and listen to those of others.

President De Vries offers prayer.

—*Adopted*

2. That synod urge our congregations to, in accordance with Scripture and our confessions, be places of belonging for LGBTQ+ members seeking to follow Christ.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod instruct all congregations of the CRCNA to show love to all people groups, including our LGBTQ+ members and neighbors, by condemning hateful or demeaning speech and violent or demeaning actions.

Rev. Sid Ypma (Eastern Canada) offers prayer.

—*Adopted*

4. That synod direct the Office of General Secretary to develop resources and tools, or endorse existing external resources and tools, that align with our Reformed doctrinal standards (as articulated in previous synodical decisions), to equip congregations for pastoral ministry with and to our LGBTQ+ members and neighbors.

—*Adopted*

5. That synod consider this its response to Overtures 40 (Recommendations A and C), 70, and 71.

Grounds:

- a. All people are created in the image of God and should be treated accordingly. This truth impels the church to show dignity and respect for every person.
- b. The Christian Reformed Church has often failed in the way it relates to LGBTQ+ people. This is articulated in the discussion on homosexuality found in the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality, which states: “It is a sad truth that the Christian community, including our Christian Reformed denomination, has failed in its calling to empathize with, love, and bear the burdens of persons who are attracted to the same sex, making it very difficult for them to live a life of holiness” (*Agenda for Synod 2022*, p. 407).

—*Adopted*

ARTICLE 71

The evening session recesses at 10:07 p.m. Delegates sing “Jesus Loves Me.” Synod will reconvene Thursday morning at 8:15 a.m.

THURSDAY MORNING, June 15, 2023

Twelfth Session

ARTICLE 72

Delegates gather by singing “All Creatures of Our God and King” and “O God Beyond All Praising,” played on the organ by Norma de Waal Malefyt.

Katie Roelofs shares God’s greeting, and Rev. Zachary King, general secretary, reads Philippians 2:1-11. The assembly responds by singing “He Is Lord” and spends time in prayer.

The assembly sings “At the Name of Jesus.”

The roll indicates that all delegates are present. Rev. David Struyk (Grand Rapids South) leaves synod in protest. Rev. Jeff Klingenberg (Niagara) is excused from synod due to a family emergency; prayer is offered for Rev. Klingenberg and his family.

ARTICLE 73

Advisory Committee 8, Church Order II, Rev. Todd Kuperus reporting, presents the following:

Response to Appeal 2: Neland Avenue CRC

A. Materials

Appeal 2, pp. 622-27

B. Introduction

The council of Neland Avenue CRC of Grand Rapids, Michigan, submitted an appeal in response to Synod 2022’s instruction “to immediately rescind its decision to ordain a deacon in a same-sex marriage, thus nullifying this deacon’s current term” (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 926). In its appeal the council noted that it “does not agree that Neland’s decision to ordain a deacon in a same-sex marriage constitutes breaking covenant with the denomination we love” (*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 623). It also noted it “feels a strong covenantal relationship with the Christian Reformed Church” and believes that “God himself is calling this deacon to this holy office” (p. 623).

We carefully reviewed the documents submitted, and we invited representatives of Neland Avenue CRC and of the *in loco* committee to (separately) offer brief verbal presentations and respond to questions from our advisory committee; we are grateful for their sincere and thoughtful responses.

After prayerful deliberation, Committee 8 has determined the following recommendation.

C. Recommendation

That synod not sustain Neland Avenue CRC's appeal.

Grounds:

- a. Neither the Church Order nor the *Acts of Synod 1980* provide the necessary grounds for Neland Avenue CRC's appeal. The Church Order clearly stipulates that only those "who meet the biblical requirements" (Church Order Art. 3) are eligible to serve as officebearers in the Christian Reformed Church. Thus, while local congregations have the responsibility to elect their own officebearers, they do not have the right to elect anyone who does not meet the biblical requirements: "No one is free to decide for oneself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards" (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, A, 3). Synod has the authority to declare the biblical requirements for officebearers.
- b. "The Synod of 1980 declared that it is indeed proper according to Reformed Church polity for either classis or synod to intervene in the affairs of a local congregation, if the welfare of that congregation is at stake" (*Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 55). Synod also has the authority to intervene in a lower assembly if the well-being of the churches in common is at stake (Church Order Art. 27-b and 28-b).
- c. According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, section V, B, 12, "All other matters may be considered which synod by a majority vote declares acceptable."

(The report of Advisory Committee 8 is continued in Article 75.)

ARTICLE 74

President De Vries thanks President Moses Jawara of the CRC in Sierra Leone for his time at synod.

ARTICLE 75

(The report of Advisory Committee 8 is continued from Article 73).

Advisory Committee 8, Church Order II, Rev. Todd Kuperus reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Appeal 2: Neland Avenue CRC

C. Recommendation (continued):

That synod not sustain Neland Avenue CRC's appeal.

Grounds:

- a. Neither the Church Order nor *Acts of Synod 1980* provide the necessary grounds for Neland Avenue CRC's appeal. The Church Order clearly stipulates that only those "who meet the biblical requirements" (Church Order Art. 3) are eligible to serve as officebearers in the Christian Reformed Church. Thus, while local congregations have the responsibility to elect their own officebearers, they do not have the right to elect anyone who does not meet the biblical requirements: "No one is free to decide for oneself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards" (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, A, 3). Synod has the authority to declare the biblical requirements for officebearers.
- b. "The Synod of 1980 declared that it is indeed proper according to Reformed Church polity for either classis or synod to intervene in the affairs of a local congregation, if the welfare of that congregation is at stake" (*Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 55). Synod also has the authority to intervene in a lower assembly if the well-being of the churches in common is at stake (Church Order Art. 27-b and 28-b).
- c. According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, section V, B, 12, "All other matters may be considered which synod by a majority vote declares acceptable."

Rev. Jon Hoekema, CRCNA prayer shepherd, offers prayer.

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: Matthew Ackerman (Lake Erie), David Apol (Hackensack), Steven deBoer (Niagara), Bernard de Jong (Huron), Erik DeLange (B.C. South-East), Kathy DeMey (Grand Rapids East), Kathleen Dixon (Eastern Ontario), Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie), Dan Meinema (Eastern Canada), Daniel Meyers (Ontario Southwest), Elly Sarkany (Niagara), Mary Stegink (Hudson), Heather Strooboscher (Grand Rapids North), Heidi Sytsema (Muskegon), Elizabeth Vander Haagen (Grand Rapids East), Thomas VanderPloeg (Grandville), Sid Ypma (Eastern Canada).

The vice president assumes the chair.

II. Report of the *In Loco* Committee

A. Materials

1. Neland Avenue CRC *In Loco* Committee Report, pp. 317-48

2. Council of Delegates Supplement (sections I, D and K; section II, G, 5), including appendices B, E, and N; pp. 634, 636, 643, 712-13, 755-58, 794-95

B. Privilege of the floor

In Loco Committee members Paul De Vries, chair, and William Koopmans

C. Recommendations

1. That synod adopt the following with regard to the work of the *In Loco* Committee:

- a. That synod instruct Neland Avenue CRC to immediately rescind any and all decisions to ordain officebearers who are in a same-sex, sexual marriage/relationship, thus nullifying any current or future terms of such officebearers.
- b. That synod instruct Neland Avenue CRC to uphold our shared denominational covenants and procedures as laid out in the Church Order and the Covenant for Officebearers.
- c. That synod instruct Classis Grand Rapids East to guide the Neland Avenue CRC congregation and leadership into alignment with the biblical guidelines affirmed by Synod 2022 regarding same-sex, sexual relationships.
- d. That synod instruct the members of the denomination to recommit themselves to the methods and processes that we have adopted in the Covenant for Officebearers and the Church Order.
- e. That synod declare the work of the Neland Avenue CRC *In Loco* Committee completed.
- f. That synod thank the *In Loco* Committee for their work.

Elder delegate Floyd Leo (Wisconsin) offers prayer.

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: Matt Ackerman (Lake Erie), Steven deBoer (Niagara), Heidi Sytsema (Muskegon), Tom VanderPloeg (Grandville).

2. That synod create a new *in loco* committee to continue the oversight of Classis Grand Rapids East and Neland Avenue CRC in complying with the synodical decisions of 2022.

- a. We recommend that at least two members of the 2022 *In Loco* Committee be included and that the remaining members be appointed by synod.
- b. Evidence of this compliance will consist of the following:
 - A letter of repentance by Neland Avenue CRC to the churches of the CRCNA acknowledging their breaking of covenant and seeking reconciliation.

- A public written statement from Neland Avenue CRC through the Office of General Secretary acknowledging their commitment to Recommendations 1, a and 1, b (adopted above).
 - A public written statement from Classis Grand Rapids East through the Office of General Secretary acknowledging their commitment to Recommendation 1, c (adopted above).
 - These documents must be completed by December 31, 2023.
- c. If the new *in loco* committee has judged that Neland Avenue CRC has not met these compliance expectations, then Classis Grand Rapids East must enforce discipline of noncompliant officebearers under the supervision of the *in loco* committee, according to Articles 82-84 in the Church Order.
 - d. If the new *in loco* committee has judged that Classis Grand Rapids East has not met their compliance expectations, then no delegates from Classis Grand Rapids East will be seated at Synod 2024 and until a future synod has determined that compliance has been met.

Grounds:

- 1) Neland Avenue CRC and Classis Grand Rapids East are important parts of the denomination and are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We want to see them restored to full fellowship with the CRCNA.
- 2) It is vital to maintain confessional unity in the CRCNA.
- 3) “Church discipline for correcting faults” is one of the marks of “the true church” (Belgic Confession, Art. 29).
- 4) “Having heard the instructions of Synod 2022, Neland Avenue CRC has determined not to comply” (*In Loco* Committee Report, *Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 325).
- 5) “Classis Grand Rapids East is in the best position to disciple its congregations and officebearers, even when no formal appeal has come from a member of the congregation and even as appeals to a broader assembly are being adjudicated. The fact that this has not happened is not promoting the spiritual well-being of Neland Avenue CRC or the other churches. . . . As of March 2023, Classis Grand Rapids East has not complied with the instruction of Synod 2022” (*In Loco* Committee Report, *Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 325).

Chris Cassis (Southeast U.S.) offers prayer.

—*Defeated*

The following negative votes are registered: Nathan Groenewold (Lake Erie), Darren Kornelis (Holland), Mike Krommendyk (Heartland), Todd Ritzema (Grand Rapids North), and Jesse Lee Walhof (Heartland).

3. That synod declare this to be its response to Overtures 52, 65, 72, and 78.

Rev. Derek Ellens (Ontario Southwest) offers prayer.

—*Adopted*

The following negative votes are registered: Chuck DeVries (Zeeland), Joshua Dykstra (Illiana), Lloyd Hemstreet (Zeeland), Kurt Monroe (Iakota), Jesse Lee Walhof (Heartland), Chad Werkhoven (Minnkota), and Donley Walhof (Minnkota).

(The report of Advisory Committee 8 is continued in Article 78).

ARTICLE 76

The morning session recesses at 11:56 a.m. Rev. Peter Rockhold (Alberta North) leads in closing prayer.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, June 15, 2023

Thirteenth Session

ARTICLE 77

The afternoon session convenes at 1:05 p.m. Vice president Steenwyk offers prayer.

The following delegate is indicated as absent in protest: Katelyn Van Hove (B.C. Southeast)

ARTICLE 78

The vice president assumes the chair.

(The report of Advisory Committee 8 is continued from Article 75.)

Advisory Committee 8, Church Order II, Rev. Todd Kuperus reporting, presents the following:

I. Response to Overtures 56 and 59: Call Churches to Repent of Affirming Same-Sex Relationships; Instruct Classes to Begin the Process of Special Discipline

A. Materials

Overtures 56 and 59, pp. 547-49, 557-59

B. Recommendations

1. That synod instruct all classes to guide into compliance the officebearers of their constituent churches who publicly reject the biblical guidelines affirmed by Synod 2022 regarding same-sex relationships.

Grounds:

- a. Church Order Article 3 states that officebearers must meet the biblical requirements, and Synod 2022 has clarified those requirements.

- b. Regarding our confessions, the Covenant for Officebearers states that “we heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them” (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5).
- c. Church Order Article 27-b assigns the classis authority over the councils of its constituent churches; therefore synod, which has authority over the classes, must instruct classes to discipline when their churches promote blatant heterodoxy, and hold the classes accountable for exercising discipline.

— *Adopted*

2. That synod remind all church visitors throughout the CRCNA of their authority and responsibility to, in a spirit of love and grace, guide officebearers into alignment with the biblical guidelines, including but not limited to all areas of human sexuality.

Ground: Church Order states that the task of church visitors “shall be to ascertain whether the officebearers of the church faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and promote the building up of the body of Christ and the extension of God’s kingdom” (Church Order Art. 42-b).

— *Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Daniel Meyers (Ontario Southwest).

(The report of Advisory Committee 8 is continued in Article 80.)

ARTICLE 79

(The report of Advisory Committee 2 is continued from Article 65).

Advisory Committee 2, Church Order and Related Matters, Rev. Ryan Braam reporting, presents the following:

Council of Delegates (majority report)

A. Materials

Council of Delegates Report (section II, A, 12, a), p. 40

B. Recommendation

That synod adopt the following change to Church Order Article 45 proposed by Synod 2022 (additions indicated by *italics*):

Synod is the assembly representing the churches of all classes. Each classis shall *ordinarily* delegate one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one other officebearer to synod. A *classis may send no more than two delegates bearing the same office.*

Grounds:

- a. This permits needed flexibility for classes in constituting their delegations to achieve full participation at synod.
- b. Recent history has demonstrated a persistent difficulty in classes' sending a full delegation to synod.
- c. The principles of Christian fellowship and unity call us to act in ways that promote justice and equality and maximize the voices present at synod, especially from minority-majority classes, rural or geographically distant classes, and smaller classes that have struggled to send a full delegation under the present system.
- d. Retaining four delegates while allowing a maximum of two per office maintains diversity of office while also maintaining a full complement of deliberative voices at synod.

According to the Rules of Synodical Procedure, the minority report regarding this matter is presented as information by Rev. Matthew Ackerman.

Council of Delegates (minority report)

A. Materials

Council of Delegates Report (section II, A, 12, a), p. 40

B. Recommendation:

That synod not adopt the change to Church Order Article 45 proposed by Synod 2022.

Grounds:

- a. This change will likely reduce the numbers of deacon delegates to synod because "ordinarily" does not carry binding weight.
- b. Deacons offer a unique perspective on ecclesiastical matters, particularly our ministries of mercy and justice. They offer relief to people in need, both within and outside of the church, and teach that benevolence is a quality of life in Christ, not merely a matter of financial assistance. They are charged with weighing opportunities for giving and service and using the resources of the church discerningly. They exemplify the love of Christ by showing compassion and mercy to those in need and treating them with dignity and respect. They are called to be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in society, and to equip the church for ministries of reconciliation and peacemaking.
- c. The practical challenges of finding deacon delegates should not take precedence over the benefits of having deacon delegates.
- d. Deacon delegates have only been seated at six synods, which is not enough time for these changes to be fully embraced by the denomination (i.e., some classes still do not seat deacons, some congregations do not have deacons, etc.).

- e. Deacons tend to add diversity to synod, as the office is more likely to include younger members and women than do the offices of elder or pastor.

Following the rules of procedure, synod returns to consideration of the recommendation of the advisory committee's majority report.

Council of Delegates (majority report)

B. Recommendation

That synod adopt the following change to Church Order Article 45 proposed by Synod 2022 (II, A, 12, a) (additions indicated by italics):

Synod is the assembly representing the churches of all classes. Each classis shall *ordinarily* delegate one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one other officebearer to synod. A *classis may send no more than two delegates bearing the same office.*

Grounds:

- a. This permits needed flexibility for classes in constituting their delegations to achieve full participation at synod.
- b. Recent history has demonstrated a persistent difficulty in classes' sending a full delegation to synod.
- c. The principles of Christian fellowship and unity call us to act in ways that promote justice and equality and maximize the voices present at synod, especially from minority-majority classes, rural or geographically distant classes, and smaller classes that have struggled to send a full delegation under the present system.
- d. Retaining four delegates while allowing a maximum of two per office maintains diversity of office while also maintaining a full complement of deliberative voices at synod.

—Adopted

The following negative votes are registered: Elly Sarkany (Niagara) and Heather Strooboscher (Grand Rapids North).

Rev. Cara DeHaan (Hamilton) offers prayer.

ARTICLE 80

(The report of Advisory Committee 8 is continued from Article 78.)

Advisory Committee 8, Church Order II, Rev. Todd Kuperus reporting, presents the following:

Response to Overtures 49-51, 53-55, 57-58, 60-64, 66-69, 73-76 (majority report)

A. Materials

Overtures 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 74, 75, and 76; pp. 522-46, 550-56, 559-66, 571-84, 590-98

B. Introduction

The concept of the confessional-difficulty gravamen (CDG) was created within the CRC to allow officebearers to honestly question doctrinal matters contained in our confessions, giving them space to wrestle with the biblical accuracy of these doctrines while also ensuring that there would be a season of pastoral care provided for the officebearer in his/her struggle and search for clarification.

A CDG occurs when “a subscriber expresses personal difficulty with the confession but does not call for a revision” (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, 1). This kind of gravamen is submitted by a subscriber to a church council for “examination and judgment.” A CDG is defined as “a personal request for information and/or clarification of the confession” (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, B, 2). Therefore, “examination and judgment” of a CDG occurs when the subscriber receives the information and/or clarification being sought—either from the church council, the classis, or concluding with synod.

Since (1) “no one is free to decide for oneself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards” (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, A, 3) and (2) the person signing the Covenant for Officebearers must affirm “without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God” (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, A, 1), the process initiated by a subscriber submitting a CDG should be time-bound and time-sensitive and should result in a final decision whereby some terminal action takes place. This is true because signing the Covenant for Officebearers requires all subscribers to affirm that the doctrines in the standards “fully agree with the Word of God,” to promise “to be formed and governed by them,” and to “heartily believe and . . . promote and defend their doctrines . . .” (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5).

This reflects the nature of a CDG as seen in the historical development of this type of gravamen in the Harry Boer case from Synod 1976. Synod 1976 understood the confessional-difficulty gravamen as a personal request for help in resolving one’s doubts. And the way a council, classis, or synod was to do that was by providing the officebearer with the “information and/or clarification” of the confessions (Church Order Supplement, Art. 5, B, 2). What Synod 1976 did not say and what no synod has ever said is that this type of gravamen is a way for someone to take exception to the church’s creeds and confessions.

The CRC does not allow gravamina as exceptions to the standards. While the creeds and confessions of the CRCNA are neither inerrant nor exhaustive, they are a comprehensive summary of everything deemed essential for the faith and life of our denomination.

Note: We wish for synod to recognize that Advisory Committee 8 had agreement on Recommendations 1, 3-a, 3-c, and 6-12.

C. Recommendations

1. That synod allow all officebearers delegated to Synod 2023 to remain seated as delegates.

Ground: Prior to Synod 2023 there was confusion surrounding the nature and use of a CDG. Now that it has been clarified, each officebearer can serve until at least the end of 2023.

2. That synod amend the Church Order Supplement to clarify the proper use of a CDG and provide a timeline for its process (changes are underlined).
 - a. Amend Church Order Supplement, Article 5, 1
 1. *A confessional-difficulty gravamen*: a temporary gravamen in which a subscriber expresses personal difficulty with the confession but does not call for a revision of the confessions, and
 - b. Amend Church Order Supplement, Article 5, A, 1
 1. The person signing the Covenant for Officebearers affirms without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God. “Without reservation” means that the CRC does not allow gravamina as exceptions to the confessions themselves or to what synod has determined to have confessional status.
 - c. Amend Church Order Supplement, Article 5, B, by adding a point 3:
 3. A confessional-difficulty gravamen is a personal request for help in resolving a subscriber’s doubts about a doctrine contained in the confessions. It is not a request for an assembly to tolerate a subscriber’s settled conviction that a doctrine contained in the confessions is wrong. Therefore, in all instances of confessional-difficulty gravamina, no assembly may exempt a subscriber from having to affirm all of the doctrines contained in the standards of the church.

Grounds:

- 1) There is not, nor has there ever been, a provision in the Church Order allowing a subscriber to take an exception to the standards.
 - 2) There is already a provision in place to revise the confessions if they are found to be in error.
 - 3) Although the creeds and confessions of the CRCNA are neither inerrant nor exhaustive, they are a comprehensive summary of everything deemed essential for the faith and life of our denomination.
3. That synod approve the following process for a CDG:
 - a. During the time the officebearer has a CDG, the individual must teach, act, promote, defend, and live in unity with the confessions in all areas. The individual may not contradict the confessions

openly and deliberately while the gravamen is still unresolved, and the individual must diligently work toward resolving their confessional difficulty.

- b. Based on the process laid out in Church Order Supplement, Article 5, B, 1, a council has six months, or until the next classis meeting, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the CDG is forwarded to classis, classis shall have six months, or until agenda items for the next synod must be submitted, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the CDG appears before synod, synod's decision will be binding and the subscriber will have until the end of that calendar year to either (1) affirm the standards, (2) file a confessional-revision gravamen, or (3) resign from office.
- c. If applicable, ministers can be honorably released at the conclusion of the CDG process.

Ground: It is necessary to have a delineated process that guides churches, classes, and synod according to the purposes of gravamina.

4. Since synod has already made a judgment regarding the definition of "unchastity" in Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108, that synod instruct those who have submitted a CDG with respect to the definition of "unchastity" to resolve their difficulty by affirming the standards, resign, or be suspended from office by the end of 2023. This would also include, if applicable, their resigning from their position(s) in broader assemblies, boards, or committees.

Grounds:

- a. The process explained above has already happened in part during 2022-2023.
- b. The decision regarding the definition of "unchastity" has already been examined and judged by Synod 2022. Therefore, the above amendment and timeline do not apply.
- c. There is no need to file a confessional-revision gravamen unless new grounds are provided, since synod has affirmed the definition of "unchastity" as settled and binding.

5. That synod instruct councils to begin special discipline of officebearers who are suspended from office at the end of 2023 if they refuse to adhere to the definition of "unchastity" reflected in the standards.

Grounds:

- a. Church Order Articles 82-84 and their Supplements state the appropriateness and process for the special discipline of officebearers.

- b. “Special discipline shall be applied to officebearers if they violate the Covenant for Officebearers, are guilty of neglect or abuse of office, or in any way seriously deviate from sound doctrine and godly conduct” (Church Order Art. 83).
 - c. Not adhering to the definition of “unchastity” reflected in the standards is a serious deviation from sound doctrine.
6. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to send a special communication to the churches detailing the proper use and timelines for a CDG, including the process for those who submitted a CDG regarding the definition of “unchastity.”

Grounds:

- a. Not all churches pay close attention to the *Acts of Synod*.
 - b. This is an important decision with time-bound implications for members who submitted a confessional-difficulty gravamen based on the definition given in the denominational FAQ document.
7. That synod instruct the Office of General Secretary to amend the “Frequently Asked Questions about Synod 2022 and the Human Sexuality Report” to accurately reflect the use of a gravamen.

Ground: A retraction is in order when something is mistakenly printed.

8. That synod instruct classes to help churches implement discipleship for their congregations in the teachings of the standards.

Grounds:

- a. This allows the CRC to grow in unity around what truly unifies it—namely, the standards that locate the CRC within the larger body of Christ.
 - b. This allows churches to build up future officebearers who can wholeheartedly agree to the standards.
9. That synod allow Calvin University to continue their current course of action with respect to their faculty taking exceptions to their Covenant for Faculty, while encouraging Calvin University to diligently oversee alignment with our confessional standards.

Grounds:

- a. While Calvin University is an educational institution of the CRCNA, their faculty do not work directly under the Covenant for Officebearers.
- b. There is a one-hundred-year history of allowing exceptions to the Covenant for Faculty. And the Faculty Handbook has specific processes already laid out.
- c. There are considerations of academic freedom and tenure that do not apply in a church setting. “The Faculty member shall be judged only by the confessional standards of CU, and by the professional

standards appropriate to his or her role and discipline” (Calvin University Faculty Handbook, 3.5.4).

- d. “When the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church has issued a formal interpretation of the confessions, that interpretation shall be binding for Calvin University” (CU Faculty Handbook, 3.5.1.1).

10. That synod instruct the Council of Delegates to review its practices regarding the Statement of Exception in light of decisions made by Synod 2023 to the Church Order Supplement, Article 5, and revise their practices and handbook regarding guidelines for exceptions (Appendix Q of the COD Governance Handbook) as necessary to fully align with the spirit of the use of gravamina.

Grounds:

- a. Since the COD is an interim committee of synod, synod needs to provide clarity to the executive committee of the COD in evaluating exceptions to the creeds, confessions, and contemporary testimonies.
- b. The COD should reflect as closely as possible the same standard for subscription as the churches.

11. That synod encourage Calvin Theological Seminary to clarify its position on synod’s decision regarding the confessional status on same-sex marriage by December 2023.

Ground: This will help build trust among the churches and institutions.

12. That synod defer to Synod 2024 the creation of any task force, study committee, or ad hoc committee as proposed by Overtures 68, 75, and 76.

Grounds:

- a. Our desire is that no churches leave the denomination but be reconciled back into covenant with the churches of the CRCNA. Our desire is for reconciliation, not disaffiliation.
- b. In light of recommendations being made to Synod 2023 by Advisory Committee 8, it is important to wait to see if these proposed changes and mechanisms are effective, thus changing the need or direction for any task force or committee.
- c. Synod already has authority to intervene in a lower assembly if the well-being of the churches in common is at stake (Church Order Art. 27-b and 28- b). According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure (section V, B, 12), “All other matters may be considered which synod by a majority vote declares acceptable.”
- d. Synod may (or may not) need to revisit the need in a year, but it seems wise to wait at least a year.

13. That synod consider this to be its response to Overtures 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 74, 75, and 76

According to the Rules of Synodical Procedure, the Advisory Committee 8 minority report is presented as information by Rev. Robert Boersma.

Response to Overtures 49-51, 53-55, 58, 60, 62-64, 66-67 (minority report)

A. Materials

Overtures 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 58, 60, 62, 63, 64, 66, and 67; pp. 522-46, 553-56, 559-60, 563-66, 571-73

B. Recommendations

1. That synod add the following points 3 and 4 to Church Order Supplement, Article 5, B:

- a. "3. The officebearer is expected to submit to the church's confessions and judgments and must not teach, disciple, care, or counsel against the doctrine for which they are filing a gravamen."
- b. "4. The gravamen will be revisited yearly by the council (from date of filing) so that the officebearer may both (1) continue to serve in faithful ways—including but not limited to delegation to larger assemblies—and (2) work actively toward full realignment with the confessions."

Grounds:

- 1) We are, and wish to remain, a confessional denomination. This recommendation fosters a strengthened commitment to the confessions, because it requires that subscribers filing a gravamen set aside their difficulty for the sake of the larger body.
- 2) Since its establishment, the gravamen process has served our denomination well, but, as of late, some confusion around this process may have led to a misuse of this process. This recommendation provides clarification while assuming good intent from the subscriber.
- 3) Church Order articulates a balance between local authority and communal accountability (Art. 27). This recommendation upholds the "original" authority of the local council (Art. 27-a) to provide oversight of the life and doctrine of officebearers.
- 4) Scripture encourages us to continue to grow and learn (2 Pet. 3:18; Phil. 1:9; Prov. 1:5). Similarly, our Reformation heritage encourages us to continually be reformed by the Spirit of God through the Word. This recommendation thus appropriately allows for humble wondering and doctrinal wrestling within the accountability structures of council, classis, and synod. "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

5) Jesus declares, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:30). This recommendation clarifies our accountability to one another without placing an undue burden on officebearers. This “easy yoke” facilitates our efforts to welcome and use the leadership gifts of those who join our churches from other faith traditions and through evangelism.

6) As Classis Holland notes in Communication 3,

The Covenant for Officebearers asks two things of someone with a confessional difficulty: (1) to present it “in a spirit of love and fellowship with our brothers and sisters as together we seek a fuller understanding of the gospel,” and (2) to “promise to submit to the church’s judgment and authority.” Notice what it does *not* ask—namely, to *agree* with the church’s judgment, but rather to *submit* to it. As we read it, this should allow someone with a private disagreement to serve, so long as (1) they will not teach, disciple, care, or counsel against the church’s teaching, and (2) if called upon in private or public, they will teach the church’s doctrine and not their own private belief. If churches will *not* allow this—that is, if they refuse *a priori* to grant a confessional-difficulty gravamen in this area of doctrine and teaching, *even if the officebearer submits to the church’s judgment and authority, as expected in the Covenant for Officebearers*—then this seems to us abusive in its own right, and an abject failure to humbly and patiently “bear with one another in love” (Eph. 4:3) and to “pursue what makes for peace” (Rom. 14:19). If a provision exists in the Church Order for a confessional difficulty, then that provision should be available regardless of the difficulty, at the judgment and discretion of the local church in consultation with the officebearer.

(*Agenda for Synod 2023*, p. 605)

2. That synod consider this to be its response to Overtures 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 58, 60, 62, 63, 64, 66, and 67.

Rev. Paul De Vries (Thornapple Valley) offers prayer.

ARTICLE 81

After beginning deliberations, the following delegates leave under protest: elder delegate Sonya Boersma (Eastern Canada), Rev. Adrian R. de Lange (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Rev. Sid Ypma (Eastern Canada), Rev. Derek M. Zeyl (Kalamazoo), Rev. Steven deBoer (Niagara), Rev. Dan Meinema (Eastern Canada).

The officers rule that overtures 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73, 74, 75, and 76 are deferred to Synod 2024. Advisory Committee Reports 8E (majority and minority) and 8D will be forwarded as a communication to Synod 2024.

The following protest is registered: Chad Werkhoven (Minnkota).

The president resumes the chair.

ARTICLE 82

The general secretary presents the ballot for denominational board and committee elections, and the delegates vote electronically.

Note: The results of the boards and committees ballot are included after the minutes.

The officers present the following recommendations related to the denominational board and committees list:

1. That synod task the officers of synod and the advisory committee chair and reporter and one other advisory committee member per the Rules for Synodical Procedure, to complete the appointment of the Assisted Suicide Task Force within two weeks following adjournment of synod.

— *Adopted*

2. That the U.S. delegates to synod (only) appoint the U.S. Council of Delegates members as directors of both the ReFrame Ministry Board and the CRCNA U.S. Ministry Board.

— *Adopted*

3. That synod approve the following synodical deputies (interim appointments already made by the Council of Delegates were approved earlier):

<i>Classis</i>	<i>Deputy</i>	<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Term ends</i>
Columbia	Rev. John Van Schepen	Rev. Virgil L. Michael	2026(1)
Grand Rapids			
South	Rev. Paul Sausser	Rev. Edward C. Visser	2026(1)
Zeeland	Rev. Terry D. Slachter	Rev. Stephen Terpstra	2026(1)
Georgetown	Rev. Jeffrey W. Scripps	Rev. Curtis A. Walters	2026(2)
Grand Rapids			
North	Rev. Jerry L. Blom	Rev. Henry Admiraal	2026(2)
Hanmi	Rev. Tukoon Timothy Jung	Rev. Jeong Ha Chun	2026(2)
Hudson	Rev. Mary B. Stegink	Vacant	2026(2)
Huron	Rev. Hendrick De Vries	Rev. Daniel S. Sarkipato	2026(2)
Lake Erie	Rev. Randall D. Engle	Rev. Christopher B. Lanham	2026(2)
Lake Superior	Rev. Harrison A. Newhouse	Rev. Jack Van Marion	2026(2)
Niagara	Rev. M. Jeff Klingenberg	Rev. Janet A. Ryzebol	2026(2)
Northern			
Illinois	Rev. Timothy H. Douma	Rev. John R. Huizinga	2026(2)

— *Adopted*

ARTICLE 83

The president of synod, Rev. Paul De Vries, expresses thanks to his fellow officers of synod. He also thanks Calvin University staff for the arrangements and hospitality provided throughout synod.

The president expresses gratitude to the synod office staff, including staff operating projection and recording minutes on the synod floor. The president thanks the transportation coordinator and the many volunteers who have assisted. The president expresses thanks to the CRC IT helpdesk staff, news office staff, and *Banner* staff. He also expresses thanks and appreciation to the Korean interpreters for their assistance to Korean delegates. He recognizes members of the synod-appointed committees, specifically the Worship Planning Committee.

The president expresses appreciation for the faculty advisers, including the parliamentarian, ethnic advisers, young adult representatives, ecumenical guests, the president of Calvin University, the president of Calvin Theological Seminary, the Council of Delegates chair and vice chair, and synod's staff consultants.

The president expresses gratitude and special thanks to the delegates for taking time out of their busy schedules to be of service to the church.

The vice president expresses appreciation and thanks to the president on behalf of synod.

The general secretary, Rev. Zachary J. King, expresses the gratitude and thanks of synod to the four officers and presents them with gifts.

ARTICLE 84

Synod 2023 concludes its deliberations, and President De Vries reminds the assembly of the church in Corinth. Even though there were divisions everywhere, the apostle Paul asked them to seek full restoration with and to encourage one another. Although the church in Corinth was broken, they were called to rejoice. In the same way, delegates, advisers, and the Christian Reformed Church in North America are reminded still to rejoice and know that Christ is still the Lord of the church.

President De Vries closes in prayer and offers a blessing.

ARTICLE 85

Synod 2023 adjourns at 3:06 p.m.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES BALLOT RESULTS

This listing reflects the results of the synodical elections and appointments by way of the Denominational Boards and Committees ballot on Thursday afternoon, June 15.

I. Officers, functionaries, and convening church for Synod 2024

A. Officers

1. General secretary: Zachary J. King
2. Chief administrative officer: Shirley DeVries
3. Director of synodical services: Scott DeVries

B. Functionaries

Arrangements for Synod 2024: Jeanine Holquist, Event Services, Calvin University.

C. Convening church

Convening church for Synod 2024: Lee Street CRC, Wyoming, Michigan.

II. Synodical deputies

<i>Classis</i>	<i>Deputy</i>	<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Term ends</i>
Alberta North	Rev. Kornelis (Neil) De Koning	Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis	2024(1)
Alberta South/ Saskatchewan	Rev. David J. Swinney	Vacant	2024(1)
Arizona	Rev. Jeffrey A. Dykema	Vacant	2025(2)
Atlantic Northeast	Rev. Joel D. Vande Werken	Rev. Christopher A. Fluit	2024(2)
B.C. North-West	Rev. Andrew E. Beunk	Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma	2024(1)
B.C. South-East	Rev. Wout Brouwer	Rev. William C. Tuininga	2025(1)
California South	Rev. Scott Elgersma	Rev. Patrick Guarracino	2025(1)
Central California	Rev. Paul H. Vander Klay	Rev. Eric J. Dirksen	2024(2)
Central Plains	Rev. Brad Bierma	Vacant	2024(2)
Chicago South	Rev. Daniel J. Roeda	Rev. Michael J. Kooy	2025(1)
Columbia	Rev. John Van Schepen	Rev. Virgil L. Michael	2026(1)
Eastern Canada	Rev. David A. Vroege	Rev. Charles Gregg Lawson	2024(1)
Georgetown	Rev. Jeffrey W. Scripps	Rev. Curtis A. Walters	2026(2)
Grand Rapids East	Rev. Alvern Gelder	Rev. Thea N. Leunk	2024(2)
Grand Rapids North	Rev. Jerry L. Blom	Rev. Henry Admiraal	2026(2)
Grand Rapids South	Rev. Paul Sausser	Rev. Edward C. Visser	2026(1)
Grandville	Rev. L. Bryce Mensink	Rev. Douglas R. Fauble	2025(2)
Greater Los Angeles	Rev. Erick D. Westra	Rev. David R. Koll	2025(2)

Hackensack	Rev. Petr Kornilov	Rev. Paul J. Van Dyken	2024(1)
Hamilton	Rev. Michael W. Bootsma	Rev. Doug Nieuwstraten	2025(1)
Hanmi	Rev. Tukoon Timothy Jung	Rev. Jeong Ha Chun	2026(2)
Heartland	Rev. Phillip T. Westra	Rev. Brian M. Hofman	2024(1)
Holland	Rev. David L. Spoelma	Rev. Christopher J. De Vos	2024(2)
Hudson	Rev. Mary B. Stegink	Vacant	2026(2)
Huron	Rev. Gary van Leeuwen	Rev. Sidney Couperus	2025(2)
Iakota	Rev. Clifford D. Hoekstra	Rev. Daniel W. De Groot	2024(1)
Illiana	Rev. James C. Hollendoner	Rev. William R. Sytsma	2025(2)
Kalamazoo	Rev. Hendrick De Vries	Rev. Daniel S. Sarkipato	2026(2)
Ko-Am	Rev. Daniel Duyoung Yi	Vacant	2025(1)
Lake Erie	Rev. Randall D. Engle	Rev. Christopher B. Lanham	2026(2)
Lake Superior	Rev. Harrison A. Newhouse	Rev. Jack Van Marion	2026(2)
Minnkota	Rev. Roger W. Sparks	Rev. Scott M. Muilenburg	2024(1)
Muskegon	Rev. Leslie D. Van Dyke	Rev. John C. Medendorp	2024(1)
Niagara	Rev. M. Jeff Klingenberg	Rev. Janet A. Ryzebol	2026(2)
North Cascades	Pastor Bryan Lanting (CP)	Rev. Donald L. Recker	2025(1)
Northcentral Iowa	Rev. Russell W. Boersma	Rev. Wendell Davelaar	2024(2)
Northern Illinois	Rev. Timothy H. Douma	Rev. John R. Huizinga	2026(3)
Northern Michigan	Rev. Steven J. Datema	Rev. Todd Kuperus	2024(1)
Ontario Southwest	Rev. Philip A. Apoll	Rev. Norman J. Visser	2024(1)
Pacific Northwest	Rev. Matthew J. Borst	Rev. Douglas E. Fakkema	2025(2)
Quinte	Rev. Kenneth M. deBoer	Rev. Joshua C. Tuininga	2025(1)
Red Mesa	Rev. John J. Greydanus	Rev. David J. Dykstra	2024(1)
Rocky Mountain	Rev. Roger De Young	Rev. John Terpstra	2025(2)
Southeast U.S.	Rev. Gerrit Besteman	Rev. Scott A. Vander Ploeg	2025(2)
Thornapple Valley	Rev. Ronald D. Goudzwaard	Rev. Paul R. De Vries	2025(2)
Toronto	Rev. Richard E. Grift	Rev. Samuel Cooper	2024(1)
Wisconsin	Rev. Mark J. Pluimer	Vacant	2025(2)
Yellowstone	Rev. Clair Vander Neut	Rev. Gilbert J. Kamps	2024(2)
Zeeland	Rev. Terry D. Slachter	Rev. Stephen Terpstra	2026(1)

III. Denominational boards

A. Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

<i>Classis</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Term ends</i>
Alberta North	Amy Nydam	2025(1)
Alberta South/ Saskatchewan	Debbie Karambowich	2025(2)
Arizona	Jeff Dykema	2026(1)
Atlantic Northeast	Anthony T. Selvaggio	2025(1)
B.C. North-West	Hyung Jun Kim	2026(1)
B.C. South-East	Andre VanRyk	2026(1)

California South	H. John Jansen	2026(1)
Central California	Mark VanDyke	2024(1)
Central Plains	Thomas R. Wolthuis	2025(1)
Chicago South	Vacant	
Columbia	Rob J. Toornstra	2024(1)
Eastern Canada	Daniel A. Meinema	2024(1)
Georgetown	Jeanne Kallemeyn	2024(1)
Grand Rapids East	Thea Leunk	2026(1)
Grand Rapids North	Ronald L. Karelse	2026(1)
Grand Rapids South	Jessica R. Maddox	2025(1)
Grandville	Rachel Bouwkamp	2026(2)
Greater Los Angeles	Thomas Byma	2026(2)
Hackensack	Joyce G. Jackson	2026(1)
Hamilton	William T. Koopmans	2025(2)
Hanmi	Paul K. Im	2024(2)
Heartland	Loren Veldhuizen	2026(1)
Holland	Wayne A. Brower	2024(2)
Hudson	Roy G. Heerema	2024(1)
Huron	Peter Meerveld	2024(2)
Iakota	John R. Lee	2024(2)
Illiana	Jill Feikema	2026(2)
Kalamazoo	Michael D. Koetje	2025(2)
Ko-Am	Jonathan J. Kim	2026(2)
Lake Erie	Matthew Ackerman	2025(1)
Lake Superior	Vacant	
Minnkota	Ryan Blom	2026(1)
Muskegon	Drew Sweetman	2026(2)
Niagara	Janet deVries	2026(1)
North Cascades	Arie A. Vander Zouwen	2025(2)
Northcentral Iowa	Herbert W. Schreur	2025(1)
Northern Illinois	Bonnie Zigterman	2026(1)
Northern Michigan	Jim Winkel	2026(1)
Ontario Southwest	Nathaniel Van Denend	2026(2)
Pacific Northwest	Sherry Fakkema	2024(2)
Quinte	Vacant	
Red Mesa	Tabitha D. Manuelito	2026(1)
Rocky Mountain	Mike Johnson	2026(1)
Southeast U.S.	Jesus Bayona	2025(2)
Thornapple Valley	Casey Jen	2024(1)
Toronto	Michael Irshad	2024(1)
Wisconsin	Paula Coldagelli	2024(2)
Yellowstone	Steve Bussis	2025(1)
Zeeland	Tyler J. Wagenmaker	2024(2)

Canada at-large

A. Henry Eygenraam	2024(1)
Greta Luimes	2025(2)
Melissa Van Dyk	2026(2)
Roberta Vriesema	2025(1)
Ralph S. Wigboldus	2024(2)*

United States at-large

Christian Sebastia	2026(1)
Michael Ten Haken*	2026(2)

Ex officio Zachary J. King, general secretary

*By way of exception (see COD Supplement Report, section I, A, 2)

B. Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees

Note: Members of the Calvin Theological Seminary regional board are elected from the following twelve regions:

Region 1—Classes B.C. North-West and B.C. South-East

Region 2—Classes Alberta North, Alberta South/Saskatchewan, and Lake Superior (Canadian congregations)

Region 3—Classes Eastern Canada, Quinte, and Toronto

Region 4—Classes Hamilton, Huron, Niagara, and Ontario Southwest

Region 5—Classes Columbia, North Cascades, Pacific Northwest, and Yellowstone

Region 6—Classes California South, Central California, Greater Los Angeles, Hanmi, and Ko-Am

Region 7—Classes Arizona, Red Mesa, and Rocky Mountain

Region 8—Classes Central Plains, Heartland, Iakota, Lake Superior (U.S. congregations), Minnkota, and Northcentral Iowa

Region 9—Classes Chicago South, Illiana, Northern Illinois, and Wisconsin

Region 10—Classes Georgetown, Holland, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Northern Michigan, and Zeeland

Region 11—Classes Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids North, Grand Rapids South, Grandville, Lake Erie, and Thornapple Valley

Region 12—Classes Atlantic Northeast, Hackensack, Hudson, and Southeast U.S.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Term ends</i>
Region 1	E. Alan van der Woerd	2025(1)
Region 2	Cecil Van Niejenhuis	2026(1)
Region 3	Louise Boutin	2025(1)
Region 4	Mark Verbruggen	2025(1)
Region 5	Sue Imig	2025(1)

Region 6	Julius Umawing	2024(1)
Region 7	Theresa Rottschäfer	2024(2)
Region 8	Robert D. Drenten	2024(2)
Region 9	Paul Boersma	2024(2)
Region 10	Arthur J. Van Wolde	2024(1)
Region 11	Scott Greenway	2026(2)
Region 12	Kristin (Kris) J. Vos	2025(1)

Regional at-large (eligible for two three-year terms)

Region 4	Brian Verheul	2024(1)
Region 8	Charles Veenstra	2024(2)
Region 10	Vacant	
Region 11	David Morren	2024(2)

At-large

Heather Garretson	2025(3)
James Jones	2025(1)
Susan Keesen	2026(2)
Hessel Kielstra	2025(2)
Christian Oh	2026(2)

C. Calvin University Board of Trustees

Note: Members of the Calvin University regional board are elected from the following six regions:

Region 1—Classes Alberta North, Alberta South/Saskatchewan, B.C. North-West, B.C. South-East, and Lake Superior (Canadian congregations)

Region 2—Classes Eastern Canada, Hamilton, Huron, Niagara, Ontario Southwest, Quinte, and Toronto

Region 3—Classes Atlantic Northeast, Hackensack, Hudson, and Southeast U.S.

Region 4—Classes Georgetown, Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids North, Grand Rapids South, Grandville, Holland, Kalamazoo, Lake Erie, Muskegon, Northern Michigan, Thornapple Valley, and Zeeland

Region 5—Classes Central Plains, Chicago South, Heartland, Iakota, Illiana, Lake Superior (U.S. congregations), Minnkota, Northcentral Iowa, Northern Illinois, Wisconsin, and Yellowstone (Montana congregations)

Region 6—Classes Arizona, California South, Central California, Columbia, Greater Los Angeles, Hanmi, Ko-Am, North Cascades, Pacific Northwest, Red Mesa, Rocky Mountain, and Yellowstone (Utah congregations)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Term ends</i>
Region 1	Jack Beeksma, <i>pending COD ratification</i>	2026(1)
Region 2	Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman	2025(2)
Region 3	Edward Wayne Coleman	2026(2)
Region 4	Andrea Karsten	2024(2)

Region 5	Kathleen Ridder	2025(1)
Region 6	Gary D. Bos	2024(1)
Regional at-large (up to ten total)		
Region 2	Lambert (Tony) Kamphuis	2025(1)
Region 4	Eugene (Gene) Miyamoto	2025(1)
	Carolyn Van Allen	2025(1)
	Benjamin Ipema	2024(2)
	Lois Miller	2024(2)
	Nate DeJong McCarron	2026(2)
Region 5	Adam Ramirez, <i>pending COD ratification</i>	2026(1)
	Heather Van Vugt Ramirez	2024(1)
Region 6	Kevin Adams	2024(1)
	Bryan Dik	2025(2)
Alumni	Alice Klamer	2025(2)
	Perrin Rynders	2026(2)
	James Valk	2026(1)
At-large	Niala Boodhoo	2024(1)
	Jonathan (Jona) Eigege	2024(1)
	Andrew Elliot	2024(2)
	Lambert Kamp	2026(3)
	Bruce Los	2025(3)
	Carl Triemstra	2026(3)
	Steven Triezenberg	2024(3)
	Mary Tuuk-Kuras	2025(2)
	Mindy Vanden Bosch	2025(1)
	Rachel Vander Veen	2025(3)
	Tony Brookhouse	2026(1)
	Moses Chung	2026(1)

D. World Renew Board

<i>Classis</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Term ends</i>
Alberta North	Margaret Hoogland	2026(2)
Alberta South/ Saskatchewan	Jeffrey Adams	2026(1)
Arizona	Marv Faber	2025(2)
Atlantic Northeast	Emily Boldenow Fortuna	2025(1)
B.C. North-West	Vacant	
B.C. South-East	Dennis DeGroot*	2025(2)
California South	Vacant	
Central California	Ron Schrotenboer	2025(1)
Central Plains	Carol Van Klompenburg	2024(2)
Chicago South	Donald Waterlander	2026(1)
Columbia	John VanSchepen	2026(1)

Eastern Canada	Echo Macloed*	2024(1)
Georgetown	Vacant	
Grand Rapids East	Vacant	
Grand Rapids North	Vacant	
Grand Rapids South	Vacant	
Grandville	Bev Abma	2026(1)
Greater Los Angeles	Vacant	
Hackensack	Ken McBain	2025(1)
Hanmi	Vacant	
Hamilton	A. Raymond Anema*	2024(2)
Heartland	Kimberly Starkenburg	2026(1)
Holland	Albertena Praamsma	2026(1)
Hudson	Shanti Jost*	2025(2)
Huron	Mary Blydorp	2025(2)
Iakota	Ronald Vos	2026(1)
Illiana	James Groen	2026(2)
Kalamazoo	Vacant	
Ko-Am	Sungjin Kim	2025(2)
Lake Erie	Gerald Van Wyk	2026(2)
Lake Superior (Can.)	Ron VanHeyst	2026(1)
Lake Superior (U.S.)	Paul Vliem	2026(1)
Minnkota	Glen Talsma	2024(1)
Muskegon	Carl Bergman	2025(2)
Niagara	Vacant	
North Cascades	Vacant	
Northcentral Iowa	Doug Kallemyn	2025(2)
Northern Illinois	Vacant	
Northern Michigan	Jared Yapple	2026(1)
Ontario Southwest	Nell Vrolyk	2026(1)
Pacific Northwest	Vacant	
Quinte	John Batterink	2026(2)
Red Mesa	Vacant	
Rocky Mountain	Vacant	
Southeast U.S.	Winouze Jean-Louis	2025(2)
Thornapple Valley	James Boldenow	2025(2)
Toronto	Vacant	
Wisconsin	Vacant	
Yellowstone	Vacant	
Zeeland	Vacant	
Pastoral adviser (U.S.)	Bonny Mulder-Behnia*	2026(2)
Pastoral adviser (Can.)	Vacant	
At-large Canada	Darryl Beck*	2024(1)
	Harry Bergshoeff	2025(1)
	Andrew Geisterfer*	2024(2)

	Jane Vander Velden*	2026(2)
	Margaret VanOord*	2024(2)
At-large U.S.	Jeff Banaszak*	2026(2)
	Thomas Christian*	2025(1)
	Charles Udeh*	2026(2)
	James Zwier	2026(2)
	Rudy Gonzalez	2026(1)

Board member emeritus Chuck Adams (to 2024)

*Also a member of the Board of Directors

Joint Ministry Council = 7 members from U.S. Board, 8 members from Canada Board

IV. Service committees

A. Candidacy Committee

Rev. Henry Kranenburg (2025/1), Rev. Andy Sytsma (2025/1), Rev. Andrew Beunk (2024/1), Pastor Caleb Dickson (2024/1), Pastor Debra Chee (2024/1), Judy Cook (2025/2), Rev. Felix Fernandez (2025/2), Rev. Moon Kim (2026/2), Rev. Lora Copley (2026/1), Rev. Susan LaClear (staff), Rev. Jul Medenblik (ex officio, as the Calvin Theological Seminary representative), and Zachary King (ex officio, as general secretary).

B. Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. Committee

Jeffrey Feikens (2025/2), Carl Kromminga (2025/1), Layla Kuhl (2024/1), Howard Van Den Heuvel (2024/2), Wayne Postma (2026/1), Dale Burghgraef (2026/1), and Brian Van Doeselaar (ex officio member).

C. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee

Jake Bentum (2025/1), Lyle Bierma (2025/2), Joy Engelsman (2024/1), Ruth Hofman (2024/1), James Joosse (2024/2), William Koopmans, chair (2024/2), William Krahne (2026/1), Shirley Roels (2025/1), John Lee (2026/1), and Yvonne Schenk (2026/2), Zachary King (ex officio, as general secretary), and Al Postma (ex officio, as transitional executive director-Canada).

D. Historical Committee

Dr. James A. De Jong (2024/2), Dr. Herman DeVries Jr. (2025/2), Dr. Tony Mann (2025/2), Christian Oh (2026/1), Stanley Jim (2026/1), and Janet Sheeres (2026/1).

E. Judicial Code Committee

Deloris Carter (2026/2), Rev. Bomsu Kim (2026/2), Rev. Richard Bodini (2024/1), Edward Bosveld (2024/2), Rev. Cindy de Jong (2024/2), Kim Rhodes (2024/1), Robert D. Drenton (2025/1), Sarita Vandernaalt (2025/1), Amy Vander Vliet (2025/2), Heidi de Vries (2026/1), Gerritt Wieringa (2026/1), Dexter W. Young (2025/2), Rev. Zachary J. King (adviser).

F. Ministers' Pension Funds committees

Canadian Pension Trustees

Hessel Kielstra (2024/1), Jacob Vanden Pol (2024/1), Rev. Michael VanderKwaak (2024/2), Rev. Daryl DeKlerk (2025/1), Dick Vreugdenhil (2025/2), Kathy Wassink (2025/3).

U.S. Pension Trustees

John H. Bolt (2025/1), Lloyd Bierma (2026/3), Darrel Raih (2024/2), Rev. Drew Sweetman (2025/1), Alan Van Dyke (2025/2).

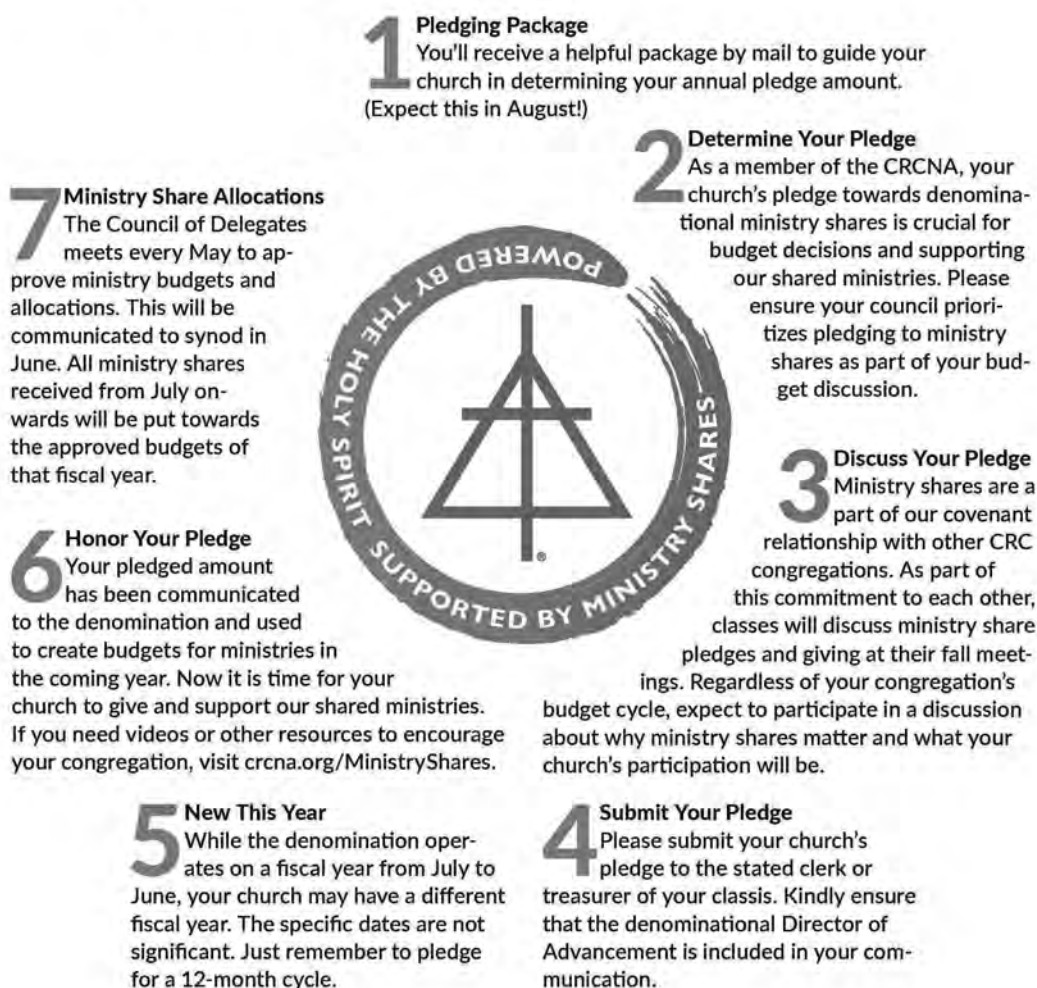
V. Synodical task force

Assisted Suicide Task Force (scheduled to report in 2025)

Membership to be determined by the officers of Synod 2023

DENOMINATIONAL MINISTRY SHARE SYSTEM

Ministry Shares Annual Cycle



crcna.org/MinistryShares



ORGANIZATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2024

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

Canadian Business Number

1. *The Banner* 856901285 RR0002
2. Calvin Theological Seminary (per Schedule VIII)
3. Calvin University — above ministry-share needs (per Schedule VIII)
4. Thrive (formerly Congregational Ministries) 856901285 RR0002
5. Centre for Public Dialogue 856901285 RR0002
6. Indigenous Ministries (Canada) 856901285 RR0002
7. ReFrame Ministries 13240 2090 RR0001
8. Resonate Global Mission (now including Raise Up Global Ministries)
— two offerings per year 856901285 RR0002
9. World Renew — four offerings per year because the agency receives no
ministry-share support 118857366 RR0001

Nondenominational organizations recommended for financial support but not necessarily for one or more offerings

Note should be made of the action of Synod 1992 related to the financial support provided by Christian Reformed churches relative to these agencies:

... in light of the growing number of agencies seeking recommendation for financial support, [synod] remind[s] the congregations of the synodical decision of 1970 wherein “synod urge[d] all the classes to request their churches to pay denominational causes before making gifts to nondenominational causes on the synod approved accredited list.

Grounds: Our denominational causes should have priority in our giving. . . .

(*Acts of Synod 1970*, p. 81)

United States

A. Benevolent organizations

1. Hope Haven
2. The Luke Society
3. Mississippi Christian Family Services
4. Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services
5. QuietWaters Ministries

B. Educational organizations

1. Ascending Leaders
2. Christian Schools International
3. Christian Schools International Foundation
4. Dordt University
5. Dynamic Youth Ministries
 - a. GEMS
 - b. Calvinist Cadet Corps
 - c. ThereforeGo Ministries
6. Elim Christian Services
7. Friends of ICS (U.S. Foundation of Institute for Christian Studies)
8. International Network for Christian Higher Education (INCHE)
9. International Theological Education Ministries, Inc. (ITEM)
10. The King's University (through the U.S. Foundation)
11. Kuyper College
12. Redeemer University (through the U.S. Foundation)
13. Rehoboth Christian School
14. Tent Schools International
15. Trinity Christian College
16. Zuni Christian Mission School

C. Miscellaneous organizations

1. 222Disciple
2. Association for a More Just Society (AJS)
3. Audio Scripture Ministries
4. Bible League International
5. Center for Church Renewal
6. Center for Public Justice
7. The Colossian Forum
8. Crossroads Prison Ministries
9. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
10. Mission India
11. Partners Worldwide
12. Pathways to Promise
13. Talking Bibles International
14. World Communion of Reformed Churches
15. Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.

Canada

<i>A. Benevolent organizations</i>	Canadian Business Number
1. Beginnings Family Services	11880 2388 RR0001
2. Diaconal Ministries Canada	89309 3377 RR0001
<i>B. Educational organizations</i>	
1. Dordt University	(per Schedule VIII)
2. Dynamic Youth Ministries.....	88992 0799 RR0001
a. GEMS	
b. Calvinist Cadet Corps	
c. ThereforeGo Ministries	
3. EduDeo Ministries	88945 9970 RR0001
4. Institute for Christian Studies	10750 8434 RR0001
5. The King's University.....	10808 5911 RR0001
6. Kuyper College.....	(per Schedule VIII)
7. Redeemer University	12331 3660 RR0001
8. Trinity Christian College	(per Schedule VIII)
<i>C. Miscellaneous organizations</i>	
1. A Rocha Canada.....	86663 8943 RR0001
2. Bible League – Canada	10822 2084 RR0001
3. Canadian Council of Churches	11883 0512 RR0001
4. Cardus.....	11892 9207 RR0001
5. Christian Labour Association of Canada Foundation (CLAC)	82284 7026 RR0001
6. Citizens for Public Justice (CJL Foundation)	89438 3512 RR0001
7. Dunamis Fellowship Canada	85540 0966 RR0001
8. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada	10735 3922 RR0001
9. Gideons International – Canada/ShareWord Global	10808 2991 RR0001
10. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of Canada	10751 3160 RR0001
11. OneBook	81317 5957 RR0001
12. Shalem Mental Health Network	13056 6011 RR0001
13. World Communion of Reformed Churches	
14. Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada, Inc.	10822 3371 RR0001

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(Page numbers in **boldface type** refer to the minutes of synod; page numbers in regular type refer to agenda and supplementary materials.)

Abbreviations and acronyms

in the *Agenda for Synod 2023* and the *Acts of Synod 2023*

ALC – Administrative Leadership Council
ARNOVA – Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action
BIPOC – black/Indigenous/people of color
BTGMI – Back to God Ministries International
CAO – Chief administrative officer
CCG – Committee for Contact with the Government
CDG – Confessional-difficulty gravamen
CDN – Canadian (currency)
CEO – Chief executive officer
CFGB – Canadian Foodgrains Bank
CICW – Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
CIMC – Canadian Indigenous Ministry Committee
COD – Council of Delegates
CORE team – Constituency Relations team (World Renew)
COVID-19 – Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRA – Canada Revenue Agency
CRC – Christian Reformed Church
CRCNA – Christian Reformed Church in North America
CRWRC – Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
CTS – Calvin Theological Seminary
CU – Calvin University
CWP – Climate Witness Project
DC – Disability Concerns
DCM – Director of communications and marketing
DOI – digital object identifier
DRS – Disaster Response Services
DSD – disorders of sexual development
DSS – Director of synodical services
ECO – Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians
EIRC – Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee
EPC – Evangelical Presbyterian Church
EPMC – Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy
ESV – English Standard Version
FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions
FTE – full-time equivalent

FY – fiscal year
 GKN – Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland
 HR – Human Resources
 HSR – Human Sexuality Report
 ICS – Institute for Christian Studies
 IRC – Interchurch Relations Committee
 IRS – Internal Revenue Service (U.S.)
 IT – Information technology
 JCC – Judicial Code Committee
 JMA – joint ministry agreement
 JMC – Joint Ministry Council
 LGBTQ – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer
 MEPMC – Modified Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy
 MLC – Ministries Leadership Council
 MLK – Martin Luther King, Jr.
 MSS – Ministry Support Services
 NCCAA – National Christian Collegiate Athletic Association
 NIV – New International Version
 NRSV – New Revised Standard Version
 OGS – Office of General Secretary
 OSJ – Office of Social Justice
 PCA – Presbyterian Church in America
 PCR – Pastor Church Resources
 PDF – portable document format
 RBA – Reformed Benefits Association
 RCA – Reformed Church in America
 REC – Reformed Ecumenical Council
 RES – Reformed Ecumenical Synod
 RSRP – Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Program
 SALT – Structure and Leadership Task Force
 SEAPI – Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander
 UN – United Nations
 USD – U.S. dollars
 VBS – vacation Bible school
 VSLA – volunteer savings and loan association
 WARC – World Alliance of Reformed Churches
 WCC – World Council of Churches
 WR – World Renew
 YNMA – Your New Ministry Agency

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