

CHURCH ORDER AND RELATED MATTERS

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I. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report – deferred from 2020 (sections II, A, 4, 11, including Appendix C), pp. 135, 137, 154-56
2. Council of Delegates Report – deferred from 2021 (section II, A, 3), p. 232
3. Council of Delegates Report (sections II, A, 3, 8, 10, 16, including Appendix B), pp. 35-36, 37-38, 40-41, 72-75

B. Privilege of the floor: Mr. Andy DeRuyter, chair of the Council of Delegates; Rev. Michael TenHaken, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Mr. Colin P. Watson, executive director; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. Recommendations

1. That synod adopt the following Church Order changes proposed by and presented on behalf of Synod 2019 (indicated by strikethrough and italics; see Agenda for Synod 2019, pp. 357-59; Acts of Synod 2019, pp. 768-71, 812) (2020 II, A, 11; Appendix C):

a. Categories of affiliation

Supplement, Article 8, G

G. Joint Ministry of Ministers from Churches in ~~Ecclesiastical Fellowship~~ Communion

Ministers of denominations in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* with the Christian Reformed Church may be called by way of exception to serve in the Christian Reformed Church while jointly serving ministries within their own denominations. This arrangement requires the approval of classis and the concurrence of the synodical deputies. The specific need for their services must be demonstrated and the pension fund arrangements must be satisfactorily met in the denomination holding the minister's credentials.

Ministers of denominations in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* who so serve churches in the Christian Reformed Church will be accorded the right of delegation to classis and participation in classical committee work for the duration of their time of service in the Christian Reformed Church. This right of delegation and participation shall not extend beyond the boundaries of the classis.

The Christian Reformed Church will by way of exception allow its ministers to be called by a congregation of a denomination in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* if such a minister jointly serves in a congregation of the denomination in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* and in a congregation of the Christian Reformed Church.

(Acts of Synod 1997, p. 663)
 (Acts of Synod 2022, p. ___)

Articles 38-g and -h

g. 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 ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion*, with the approval of classis.
 —Cf. Supplement, Article 38-g

h. Particular churches of the Christian Reformed Church in North America may affiliate with one or more additional denominations in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion*, with the approval of classis and with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies.
 —Cf. Supplement, Article 38-h

Supplement, Article 38-h

The following plan for affiliation shall be adopted by a particular church to affiliate with one or more denominations in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion*:
 (Acts of Synod 2022, p. ___)

Article 49

a. Synod shall appoint a committee to encourage ecumenical relationships with other Christian churches, especially those that are part of the Reformed family, as articulated in the synodically approved Ecumenical Charter of the Christian Reformed Church so that the Christian Reformed Church may exercise Christian fellowship with other denominations and may promote the unity of the church of Jesus Christ.

b. Synod shall designate the churches with whom the Christian Reformed Church is in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~, ~~the churches with whom the Christian Reformed Church is in dialogue~~, *communion or in cooperation*, and the ecumenical organizations in which the Christian Reformed Church holds membership or significantly participates.

Article 59-e

e. Confessing members coming from churches in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* shall be admitted as confessing members of the congregation upon the presentation of certificates or statements of membership after the consistory has satisfied itself concerning the doctrine and conduct of the members.

Articles 66-a and -b

a. Confessing members who move to another Christian Reformed church or to a church in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* are entitled to a certificate, issued by the council, concerning their doctrine and life. When such certificates of membership are requested, they shall ordinarily be mailed to the church of their new residence.

b. Baptized members who move to another Christian Reformed church or to a church in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* shall upon proper request be granted a certificate of baptism, to which such notations as are necessary shall

be attached. Such certificates shall ordinarily be mailed to the church of their new residence.

Article 67

Members who move to localities where there is no Christian Reformed church and no church in ~~ecclesiastical fellowship~~ *communion* may, upon their request, either retain their membership in the church of their former residence, or have their certificates sent to the nearest Christian Reformed church.

Grounds:

1. This is a necessary step to effect the changes proposed to the ecumenical categories of affiliation and the Ecumenical Charter.
2. These revisions make for substantive changes to the Church Order.

b. Tasks of synod

Article 47

The task of synod includes the adoption of the creeds, of the Church Order, and of the principles and elements of worship. Synod shall approve the liturgical forms, the ~~hymnals~~ *Psalter Hymnal*, and the Bible versions suitable for use in worship. No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes.

Ground: The reference to the Psalter Hymnal, a title that was not used for the most recent hymnal approved by synod, Lift Up Your Hearts, should be changed to a generic reference to hymnals.

c. The Lord's Day

Church Order Articles 51-a and 51-b

a. The congregation shall assemble for worship, ~~ordinarily twice~~ on the Lord's Day, to hear God's Word, to receive the sacraments, to engage in praise and prayer, and to present gifts of gratitude.

b. Each classis shall affirm the rich tradition of assembling a second time on the Lord's Day for worship, learning, prayer, and fellowship by encouraging churches to include these items as part of a strategic ministry plan for the building up of the body of Christ.

Note: The current Articles 51-b and -c would become 51-c and -d respectively; Supplement, Article 51-a would be deleted.

Grounds:

1. These changes would bring the Church Order into harmony with the current practice of the majority of congregations, so that its provisions for public worship are "faithfully observed" (Church Order Art. 86).
2. Though Scripture does not indicate the frequency of worship on the Lord's Day, the proposed Article 51-b highlights the value of a time beyond Sunday-morning worship when the whole congregation may be invited to

assemble as Christ's people and invites the broader assemblies to foster conversations about how this might best be done.

Proposed deletion of Article 54-b

~~a. The proclamation of the Word shall be central to the worship of the church and shall be guided by the creeds and confessions.~~

~~b. At one of the services each Lord's Day, the minister shall ordinarily preach the Word as summarized in the creeds and confessions of the church, especially the Heidelberg Catechism.~~

Grounds:

1. Though it is important for our preaching to reflect the instruction of the Reformed confessions, the current Church Order Article 54-a already requires that preaching be guided by the creeds and confessions, and a specific obligation for catechetical preaching is an unrealistic expectation when the majority of our congregations do not have a second service.
 2. This brings Church Order into harmony with denominational practice (Church Order Article 86).
2. That synod approve the interim appointments made by the COD for synodical deputies, alternate synodical deputies, and the World Renew Board of Delegates (2020 II, A, 4).
 3. That synod approve the interim appointments made by the COD for synodical deputies and alternate synodical deputies (2021 and 2022 II, A, 3).
 4. That synod accept the invitation of Church of the Servant CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to serve as the convening church of Synod 2023, to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the campus of Calvin University (II, A, 8, a).

Ground: Church of the Servant CRC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023.

5. That synod accept the invitation of Covenant CRC in Sioux Center, Iowa, to serve as the convening church of Synod 2025, to be held in Sioux Center, Iowa, on the campus of Dordt University (II, A, 8, b).

Grounds:

- a. Covenant CRC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2024 and had originally asked to host Synod 2024; however, the Dordt University campus will be under construction that summer.
 - b. Synod 2021 was planned to be held on the campus of Dordt University in Sioux Center but was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. That synod express gratitude to Duane Bajema and Aldon Kuiper for their service to the Judicial Code Committee (II, A, 16, a).

II. Response to Overtures 6 and 7: Approve Transfer of San Jose New Hope CRC of Santa Clara, California, from Classis Hanmi to Classis Central California.

- A. *Materials:* Overtures 6 and 7, p. 506

B. Recommendation

That synod approve the transfer of San Jose New Hope CRC of Santa Clara, California from Classis Hanmi to Classis Central California.

Grounds:

- a. These transfers have been requested by the churches and have been approved by both Classes Pacific Hanmi and Central California.
- b. This is in keeping with Church Order Supplement, Article 39.