

INTERDENOMINATIONAL MATTERS AND HERESY

Chair: Andrew R. Sytsma
Reporter: Anthony R. DeKorte

I. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee

A. *Materials*

1. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee Report (sections I, III; VIII, A and C), pp. 274-75, 279-80
2. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee Supplement (sections I and III)

B. *Privilege of the Floor*. William T. Koopmans, chair, and Colin P. Watson, Sr. (ex officio)

C. *Recommendations*

1. That synod express its gratitude to Lenore Maine for serving the cause of ecumenicity for the CRC.
2. That synod receive the following update to the EIRC membership distribution/nomination process description as information (noted in strike-through and italics):

That five members be from Canada and five members be from the United States, with every effort made toward the following regional balance:

- a. That two Canadian members be elected from the *Canada West region classes Lake Superior, Alberta/Saskatchewan, Alberta-North, B.C. South-East, and B.C. North-West.*
 - b. That three Canadian members be elected from the *Canada East region classes east of Classis Lake Superior.*
 - c. That one U.S. member be elected from the *USA East region Eastern regions.*
 - d. That two U.S. members be elected from the Great Lakes region.
 - e. That two U.S. members be elected from the *USA Central and USA West regions west of the Mississippi River.*
3. That synod recognize Kingdom Network, USA, as a *church in dialogue* for the purpose of continued pursuit toward designation as a *church in ecclesiastical fellowship*, and, by way of exception, that while designated as a *church in dialogue*, a church with previous CRCNA/RCA dual-affiliation maintain its affiliation with the CRCNA.

Grounds:

- a. The churches that make up Kingdom Network, USA, share previous background with the Reformed Church in America.
- b. The new denomination intends to work toward the status of being a church in ecclesiastical fellowship, the status its congregations had when part of the RCA.

- c. This is a way to provide an opportunity to work out details as Faith Church – Highland (Ind.) Campus, Calvary Church Oaklawn (Ill.), and any similar ministry that desires to remain part of the CRCNA.
4. That synod, by way of exception, ask the Council of Delegates to appoint a new member at the October meeting to fill the vacancy on the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.

II. Response to Communication 2 (deferred from 2020)

A. *Materials*: Communication 2 (*Deferred Agenda*), pp. 570-71

B. *Recommendation*

That synod receive for information Communication 2 (2020) from Classis B.C. North-West requesting CRCNA and Reformed Church in America leadership to discern potential re-alignment options.

III. Council of Delegates

A. *Materials*: Council of Delegates Report – *deferred from 2020* (section II, A, 15, including Appendix E), pp. 138, 161-71

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 report on the definition of heresy as a fulfillment of the instruction of Synod 2019, consider its recommendations that follow, and express gratitude to the authors of the report for their work and contribution (2020 II, A, 15; Appendix E).
2. That synod commend this report to the churches as a helpful guide to what heresy is and when it might be appropriate to use the term.
3. That synod take note that there is currently considerable diversity of understanding of the term *heresy* in society and in the church.
4. That synod urge caution in using the term *heresy*, while not shrinking back from using the term when necessary.

Grounds:

1. Diverse understandings of the term heresy in both popular culture and the church make it a term easily susceptible to misunderstanding.
 2. There are often other acceptable ways to identify and reject aberrant or false teachings—ways that are less susceptible to ambiguity or misunderstanding.
5. That synod urge any future synod, if it judges a teaching or movement to be heretical, to identify which of the characteristics noted in this report as typically associated with heresy lead to the judgment of heresy.

Grounds:

- a. The exercise of sorting through the characteristics typical of heresy will be helpful in knowing whether the term *heresy* is appropriate in any given case.
- b. Identifying the characteristics that lead to the judgment of heresy will help to inform members of the church and other interested parties why the church offers this strong rejection.