

## Finance and Administration

Chair: Rev. Paul VanderKlay  
Reporter: Mr. Craig Lubben

### I. Council of Delegates Report

#### A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report, Section III. E, p. 27
2. Council of Delegates Report, Section III. G, pp. 28-29
3. Council of Delegates Report, Section IV. L. pp. 37-38
4. Council of Delegates Report, Section V, including Appendix E, pp. 38, 92-93
5. Council of Delegates Supplement Report, Section II. C-D, F, including Appendices A, B, & C
6. Council of Delegates Supplement Report, Section III. A, including Appendix D
7. Council of Delegates Supplement Report, Section IV. C, including Appendix J

B. *Privilege of the floor*: Michael L. Ten Haken, chair of the Council of Delegates; Greta Luimes, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed when matters pertaining to the Council of Delegates are discussed.

#### C. Recommendations

1. That synod approve the COD recommendation to forgo the creation of a separate legal entity to house the Office of General Secretary (III, E).

##### *Grounds:*

- a. The initial recommendation from the COD to synod (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 929) was made at a time when there were many unknowns.
  - b. Significant changes to the organizational structure were highly anticipated but not yet implemented.
  - c. Significant leadership changes were about to take place. The CRCNA was just beginning to consider implications with regard to churches outside of Canada and the U.S. wanting to join CRCNA classes.
  - d. The concern that not having a separate legal entity to house the Office of General Secretary “could be problematic since it obfuscates the responsibility of synod to clearly direct its ecclesiastical office” has not become manifest while we have been living into the new structure since Synod 2022.
  - e. The Global Vision Team’s recommendations that have been approved by Synod 2024 (*Acts of Synod 2024*, pp. 708-9, 807-9) demonstrate no need for a separate legal entity.
  - f. The creation of a legal entity is not difficult. Maintaining a legal entity comes with administrative overhead. Eliminating a legal entity is more complicated than creating one. It seems prudent to wait until the need is evident before adding a legal layer of complexity to our environment.
  - g. There is a healthy interdependence between the CRCNA U.S. and CRCNA Canada legal entities that might be disrupted by the creation of another legal entity in the CRCNA.
2. That synod receive as information the mandate to the synodical finance and administration advisory committee that was prepared by the Office of General Secretary and approved by

the COD (*Agenda for Synod 2025*, Appendix E, pp. 92-93) in response to the instruction from Synod 2024 (*Acts of Synod 2024*, p.901).

3. That synod receive as information the budgets for fiscal year 2025-2026 for the agencies, institutions and ministries.
4. That synod receive the ministry plan review report in Appendix A in response to the Synod 2024 request to review and evaluate the *Our Journey* ministry plan, in particular the Grow in Diversity Milestone (*Acts of Synod 2024*, pp. 911-12)(COD Supplement, section II, C).
5. That synod note the creation of the COD's Diaspora and Ethnic Ministry Advisory Committee, recognizing that the COD will evaluate the effectiveness of this committee after its first year of work. The committee charter is presented in Appendix B (COD Supplement, section II, D).

*Ground:* This committee provides another potential avenue for deepening relationships and shared ministry efforts within the CRCNA across ethnic and cultural backgrounds, consistent with the principles articulated in previous synodical documents such as *God's Diverse and Unified Family* (see *Acts of Synod 1996*, pp.510-15).

6. That synod receive for information the report on the ministry evaluation schedule as provided in Appendix C, and adopt its recommendations:
  - a. The agency and ministry reports/presentations to synod should continue on a rotating schedule (see proposed schedule below), and the content of the reports/presentations should remain informative and inspirational.
  - b. Instead of pursuing an evaluation of ministry in alignment with the five ministry priorities, create a four-year schedule for reviewing the implementation of the *Our Journey* ministry plan milestones in each ministry, agency, and institution.
  - c. The review of the work of the agency, institution, or ministry will be based on two things: the synodical mandate of the agency, institution, or ministry and its work on the four milestones of the synodically approved *Our Journey* ministry plan. The review will not address organizational aspects such as budget and finance, staffing, structure, or other issues related to the organization. Instead, the review will be focused on the synodical mandate and the challenges, opportunities, and progress made as the agency, institution, or ministry works within its mandate toward the goals of the ministry plan.
  - d. The review will be conducted by a panel consisting of the following: two COD members (one U.S., one Canadian) from the ministry committee (and/or Connections committee), appropriate board members of the institution or agency (if is not governed by the COD and CRCNA ministry boards), and the directors (or their designees) of the agencies or institutions most involved in the focus area of the specific milestone. The chief administrative officer or successor position will initiate this process.
  - e. The scope and purpose of the review:
    - Review the synodical mandate of the agency, institution, or ministry, making any suggestions or recommendations for necessary updates.
    - Review the range of activity in milestone areas to ensure collaboration where possible, that any areas of potential overlap are being addressed, and that significant gaps are identified.
    - Review the metrics related to the activities to ensure that metrics are being used and that they are helpful indicators of progress.

- f. The panel writes and submits a report to the Ministries Leadership Council (for information), their ministry (and/or Connections) committee for the COD's review, and synod (as part of the COD's report).

*Grounds:*

- 1) Each agency, institution, or ministry report to synod provides delegates with an opportunity to learn and engage with the agency, institution, or ministry in ways that inspire both the delegates and the agency, institution, or ministry staff. This practice is valuable.
- 2) Synod 2018's directive intended to prioritize the work done across the CRC's spectrum of agencies, ministries, and educational institutions to reduce redundancy, reduce the denomination's footprint, and help prioritize the work being done at the churches' request (*Acts of Synod 2018*, p. 455). This work continues to be done through the implementation of the ministry plan (*Our Journey*) with emphasis on its four milestones (rather than on the five ministry priorities).
- 3) Based on the recommendations and the implementation of the Structure and Leadership Task Force report, a robust joint ministry agreement process has been put into place for agencies governed by the COD and the CRCNA ministry boards (see *Minutes of the Council of Delegates 2021*, pp. 531-33; *Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 930). These joint ministry agreements are written annually. They contain goals and key activities for each agency (tagged with relevant milestones). Progress reports are written and evaluated multiple times each year by a committee of cross-functional staff. Twice a year, the convener of these committees (the chief administrative officer in the Office of General Secretary) writes a report and submits the report to the ministry boards. This process provides monitoring that is even broader than the scope of the original request by Synod 2018.
- 4) Although Synod 2018 used the term *evaluation*, the review process proposed is more robust today than what was implemented before Synod 2023. Together with the joint ministry agreement processes, it creates the evaluation that synod intended in a way that amounts to a stewardly use of resources.

7. That synod receive for information the Ministry Support Services report (III. G., pp. 28-29).

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

### **A. Materials**

1. Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. Report, pp. 181-182
2. Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. Supplement Report

### **B. Privilege of the floor.** CRC Loan Fund's director or board members

### **C. Recommendations**

1. That synod, by way of the ballot, appoint one new board member from the slate of two nominees presented, and reappoint Carl Kromminga to a second three-year term.
2. That synod authorize the Council of Delegates (COD) to review and approve any amendments the Loan Fund board of directors proposes to its Articles of Incorporation, stated purpose, and place in the CRC denominational structure. Following COD approval, the revised documents should be submitted to Synod 2026 for ratification.

*Grounds:*

- a. The Loan Fund's current Articles of Incorporation and bylaws do not specify denominational oversight mechanisms for reviewing and updating its governing documents.
- b. Since the Loan Fund operates exclusively in the United States, its relationship to the broader CRC ministries should be clarified in light of recent efforts to "create role clarity, responsibility, and accountability between ministry board, leaders and partners" (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 928; *Deferred Agenda for Synods 2020-2021*, p. 307).
- c. Expanding lending to CRC-related organizations, including Christian schools, aligns with synod's longstanding support for Christian education (Church Order Article 71; *Acts of Synod 2005*, pp. 765-74), though the current Articles of Incorporation limit Loan Fund activity to CRC churches (*Acts of Synod 1983*, p. 565; *Acts of Synod 1985*, p. 806).
- d. Broadening eligibility for loans and loan participation would help the Loan Fund increase its volume, maintain fiscal sustainability, and better serve the needs of CRC congregations.
- e. Submitting an amended purpose statement to synod for ratification ensures consistency with denominational governance norms and honors the Loan Fund's historical accountability to synod.

### **III. Pensions Ministries**

#### **A. Materials**

- 1. Pensions Report, pp. 183-187
- 2. Pensions Supplement Report

**B. *Privilege of the floor.*** Members of the Canadian Pension Trustees, the U.S. Pension Trustees, the CRCNA's chief administrative officer, and the U.S. managing director of CEB Services

#### **C. Recommendations**

- 1. That synod, by consenting to the pension report found in *Agenda for Synod 2025* pp. 183-187, will have designated up to 100 percent of a minister's early or normal retirement pension or disability pension for 2025 as housing allowance for United States income-tax purposes (IRS Ruling 1.107-1), but only to the extent that the pension is used to rent or provide a home.
- 2. That synod, by consenting to the pension report, will have designated up to 100 percent of an ordained pastor's distributions from their CRC 403(b)(9) Retirement Income Plan in 2025 as housing allowance for United States income-tax purposes (IRS Ruling 1.107-1), but only to the extent that those funds are used to rent or provide a home.