

## Agenda for Synod Supplement 2020

As with the *Agenda for Synod 2020*, the Program Committee for Synod 2020 (officers of Synod 2019) has designated (in shaded sections within) all matters in this agenda that cannot await action by Synod 2021. A special meeting of the Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America will take place June 11-12 and 16-17, 2020, to decide on these matters (indicated by shading). Other matters in this agenda will be deferred to the agenda for Synod 2021.

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## Council of Delegates Supplement

### I. Polity matters

#### A. Council of Delegates membership

##### 1. Single nominee for classical delegate

The COD recommends that synod appoint Thomas Byma as the Classis Greater Los Angeles delegate for a first term of three years.

*Thomas Byma*, a retired property manager, is a member of First CRC in Bellflower, California. He has served as a delegate to synod three times. In addition to serving on the Valley Christian School board, Mr. Byma has served as the president of West Coast Church Resources, as president of Affordable Treasures (a Christian thrift store), and as president of his local church council. He currently serves on the classical student fund committee and on the Salem Foundation Endowment Fund.

##### 2. Reappointment of delegates to a second term

The following COD members are recommended for reappointment to a second term. *Note:* For the purpose of continuity on the COD from year to year, the COD has adopted a schedule to have some board terms end prior to the completion of the second term.

Michelle J. Kool (Classis Alberta North)  
Jose A. Lara (Classis Arizona)  
Samuel D. Sutter (Classis Atlantic Northeast)  
Andy de Ruyter (Classis B.C. North-West) *by way of exception*  
Bev Bandstra (Classis B.C. South-East)  
John Harold Caicedo (Classis California South)  
Brian L. Ochsner (Classis Central Plains)  
Jei Wilson (Classis Chicago South)  
Daudi Mutisya Mbuta (Classis Grand Rapids North)  
David A. Struyk (Classis Grand Rapids South)  
Sheila E. Holmes (Classis Hackensack)  
Theodore Lim (Classis Ko-Am)  
Laurie Harkema (Classis Lake Erie)  
Wendell Davelaar (Classis Northcentral Iowa)  
Arnie J. Stolte (Classis Northern Illinois)  
Bruce DeKam (Classis Northern Michigan)  
Peter J. DeVries (Classis Yellowstone)  
Elsa Fennema (U.S. at-large)

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

At its recent meeting the COD members from their respective corporations and the full Council of Delegates elected the following to serve as officers in 2020-2021:

1. CRCNA Canada Corporation

President: Andy de Ruyter  
 Vice president: Michelle J. Kool  
 Secretary: Aaltje van Grootheest  
 Treasurer: Greta Luimes

2. CRCNA U.S. Corporation

President: Paul R. De Vries  
 Vice president: Sheila E. Holmes  
 Secretary: Samuel Sutter  
 Treasurer: Gary D. Bos

3. Back to God Ministries International Canada Corporation

President: Andy de Ruyter  
 Vice president: Michelle J. Kool  
 Secretary: Aaltje van Grootheest  
 Treasurer: Greta Luimes

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

President: Paul R. De Vries  
 Vice president: Sheila E. Holmes  
 Secretary: Samuel Sutter  
 Treasurer: Gary D. Bos

5. Council of Delegates executive committee and officers

Chair: Paul R. De Vries  
 Vice chair: Andy de Ruyter  
 Secretary: Aaltje van Grootheest  
 Treasurer: Gary D. Bos  
 Heather Cowie  
 Laurie Harkema  
 Michelle J. Kool  
 John R. Lee

*C. Judicial Code Committee membership*

The following Judicial Code Committee members are recommended for reappointment to a second term of three years: John Koot and Doug Vande Griend.

*D. Interim Executive Director of the CRCNA*

As noted in the COD report to synod, upon receiving the resignation of Steven R. Timmermans as executive director of the CRCNA in February, the COD appointed Colin P. Watson, Sr., as acting executive director until the meeting of synod in June, when synod would then be asked to appoint an interim executive director of the CRCNA. In view of the cancellation of Synod 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the COD is grateful that Mr. Watson is willing to

serve in the role of interim executive director until Synod 2021 can make further decisions regarding the senior leadership of the CRCNA.

The Council of Delegates recommends that synod appoint Colin P. Watson, Sr., the acting executive director of the CRCNA, as interim executive director of the CRCNA through June (or July) of 2021 (to be decided).

*Grounds:*

1. This will provide continuity in the denomination's senior position until such time as the COD and synod can define a new leadership scenario and approve any necessary personnel.
2. Mr. Watson already has a working relationship and a great deal of experience with CRCNA staff and agencies, as well as with the COD, ecumenical partners, and synod.
3. Having the acting executive director continue as interim executive director for an additional year will keep personnel and ecclesiastical disruption to a minimum.
4. Mr. Watson has expressed a willingness to delay his retirement (previously planned for January 2021) to serve the denomination in this way.

*E. Senior leadership vacancies*

The COD considered and presents the following recommendations with regard to pending vacancies in senior leadership positions within the CRCNA:

1. That synod take note of the existing or pending vacancies in the following three senior leadership positions: executive director, director of ministries and administration, and director of finance and operations, due to retirements.
2. That, due to pending restructuring necessitated by Canadian tax laws, synod declare the intent for Synod 2021 to appoint or ratify new senior leadership positions and persons to fill the positions.

*F. Honoring former executive director of the CRCNA Steven R. Timmermans*

1. Title of *executive director emeritus*

The COD recommends that synod bestow on Steven R. Timmermans the title of *executive director emeritus*, effective upon adoption.

2. Resolution of thanks

The COD recommends that Synod 2021 publically honor Steven R. Timmermans by endorsing the following resolution of thanksgiving and appreciation:

**Resolution of Thanksgiving and Appreciation  
for the Person and Service of  
Dr. Steven R. Timmermans**

Dr. Steven R. Timmermans completed his service as executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America in February 2020. During his tenure he was instrumental in laying out the framework for the transition from a Board of

Trustees governance model to a Council of Delegates model that would better serve local congregations, classes, and the denomination.

Under his leadership the biennial Inspire conferences, *Our Journey 2020*, and multiple other ministry initiatives were born and shepherded. We express deep appreciation for his faithful service in leading senior staff, assisting with numerous committees and boards in staying focused on synodical guidelines and decisions, being a friend and spokesperson to our ecclesiastical partners, and for being our CRCNA representative to the world.

Dr. Timmermans, with his extensive knowledge and experience, along with his love for our Lord Jesus Christ, served the denomination positively in assisting synod, the Council of Delegates, staff, classes, and local congregations in learning best practices to build up and equip the churches for service to our Lord in this ever-changing world in which we live.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Christian Reformed Church in North America declares its thanks and appreciation to Dr. Steven R. Timmermans for his faithful service to Christ's church and for his friendship, leadership, and encouragement on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

*G. Continued address of structure in light of Canadian charitable-law requirements*

In March 2020 the COD executive committee mandated a task force of ten COD members and staff to propose a new denominational structure in light of ecclesiastical, structural, and legal matters with regard to compliance with Canada's requirements for Canadian charitable organizations. The preliminary proposal, reviewed and endorsed by the COD executive committee, was presented to the COD for consideration at its May meeting.

The COD adopted the following three principles to guide the development of new position descriptions for three senior leadership roles (ecclesiastical officer, executive director of CRCNA-Canada, and executive director of CRCNA-U.S.):

1. Going forward, leadership of the CRCNA must be done through an independent executive director in each country, each of whom works collaboratively with the executive director in the other country on matters of shared ministry. This collaborative work includes monitoring and making decisions about joint ministry agreements for shared programs.
2. In addition, there must be an ecclesiastical officer who can help shepherd the denomination forward in a way that fosters unity across the border, emphasizes our shared faith, synodical positions, and ecclesiastical polity, and advances the denomination's global ecclesiastical goals.
3. Finally, this model should be revisited in three years (and perhaps every three years) to ensure that it is working as intended. If it is decided that there is redundancy or a greater need for cross-border coordination, appropriate adjustments should be made.

The COD also approved plans as follows to develop the positions and governmental/administrative structure outlined above and to report back to the COD in October 2020:

- Following the model outlined above, the CRCNA Canada Corporation will further develop a job description for the executive director of CRCNA-Canada and outline the

governance and administrative structure for the ministries of the CRCNA within Canada. This will include a plan for cross-border cooperation and unity.

- Following the model outlined above, the CRCNA U.S. Corporation will further develop a job description for the executive director of CRCNA-U.S. and outline the governance and administrative structure for the ministries of the CRCNA within the United States. This will include a plan for cross-border cooperation and unity.
- Following the model outlined above, the COD will appoint a task force, composed of membership from the CRCNA at large, to develop a job description and responsibilities for the ecclesiastical officer. Nominations for the task force will be solicited from COD members in May for final appointments to be made by the COD executive committee. This task force is also mandated to consider (a) how to ensure ecclesiastical accountability within the two national executive director positions, (b) how to deal with various ecclesiastical duties not covered by the two executive director positions (e.g., synodical committees such as the Candidacy Committee, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, Historical Committee, and Judicial Code Committee), and (c) how best to bring these changes to synod for discussion and approval.

In addition to position descriptions, the following issues should also be kept in mind as these groups carry out their work:

- The perceived conflict of interest that can exist when the directors/members of the BTGMI corporation are also the directors/members of the CRCNA corporation in each country.
- The perceived conflict of interest that can exist when one executive director is accountable to two corporations (e.g., CRCNA Canada Corporation and BTGMI Canada Corporation).
- The question whether members of a corporation should be the same persons as directors of a corporation (as is the current case for the Canada Corporation).
- The question whether the role of a delegate to synod acting on ecclesiastical matters would be in conflict with acting as a member of a CRCNA corporation (as with the U.S. Corporation) tasked with direction of temporal matters (such as management of resources, staff, organizational policy, etc.).
- The instruction of Synod 2016 to have a goal of “reducing the institutional footprint” (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 858).

*Note:* In October the COD will either approve/ratify the recommendations of the three groups or, if needed, send them back for further development. Final proposals should be ratified (in the case of the corporations’ work) or approved no later than the February 2021 COD meeting in order to be forwarded to synod by way of the *Agenda for Synod 2021*.

#### *H. Denominational gatherings*

Planning is under way for Inspire 2021—scheduled for August 5-7, 2021. The planning team is cochaired by Kristen deRoo VanderBerg and Steven Timmermans. The “Be One” theme for this event will take participants through the projected milestones of the new Ministry Plan: *Our Journey 2025*. Promotion of this event was planned to take place at Synod 2020 but is now being deferred until later this summer.

The next Canadian National Gathering, with an emphasis on “Hearts Exchanged 2.0,” may be delayed until 2023.

*I. Review of the New City Catechism*

Synod 2019 instructed the executive director to “refer the New City Catechism to Faith Formation Ministries for curriculum review and potential use by the churches” (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 763). The COD received and reviewed the report by Faith Formation Ministries (FFM), presented in Appendix A. The COD recommends that synod endorse the direction of Faith Formation Ministries as suggested in Appendix A and adopt the recommendations therein:

1. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Chris Schoon, director of Faith Formation Ministries, when matters related to the report in Appendix A are being discussed.
2. That synod encourage CRC churches to share with FFM the ways in which they are engaging in catechetical teaching in their local contexts, particularly with regard to people who come to faith as adults.
3. That synod consider the report in Appendix A in fulfillment of the directive by Synod 2019 for FFM to provide a curriculum review and advice regarding the use of the New City Catechism by our churches.

*J. Worship Practices Report*

Synod 2019 instructed the Council of Delegates “to ensure that Worship Ministries and/or Faith Formation Ministries continue to make excellent resources available to the churches that would encourage existing congregations to continue, and new congregations to embrace, some kind of [worship] assembly that builds up the body of Christ” (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 770). Faith Formation Ministries and Worship Ministries prepared a response report and presented it to the COD in May. The COD endorsed the Worship Practices report, presented in Appendix B, and recommends that synod note fulfillment of the Synod 2019 assignment regarding worship practices.

*K. Convening church of Synod 2022*

Due to the cancellation of Synod 2020, Encounter CRC (Kentwood, Mich.) did not have the opportunity to serve as convening church as appointed by Synod 2019 (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 757). Encounter CRC has expressed interest in serving as the convening church of Synod 2022, scheduled to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The COD recommends that synod accept the invitation of Encounter CRC in Kentwood, Michigan, to serve as the convening church of Synod 2022, scheduled to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the campus of Calvin University.

*Ground:* Encounter CRC was appointed as, and had prepared to serve as, the convening church of Synod 2020; however, Synod 2020 was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### L. *Synodical Historical Committee mandate*

Regarding the COD's assignment by synod "to work with the Historical Committee to review their mandate and clarify the continued relationship between the committee and all of the stakeholders" (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 761), the COD subgroup that worked with the Historical Committee on this matter was not able to complete this task in time for the May COD meeting, due to interrupted schedules and the complexity of the assignment (see also *Agenda for Synod 2020*, pp. 262-63). A final report with a proposed Historical Committee mandate will be provided to Synod 2021.

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

Subsequent to updates provided in the *Agenda for Synod 2020* on progress made in response to the instructions/decisions of Synod 2019 regarding abuse of power (*Agenda for Synod 2020*, pp. 24-25, 40-42, 56, 78-80), the COD provides the following additional updates:

##### 1. Guardian Committee

The Guardian Committee has not yet been appointed but remains on the list of matters to address in the coming year.

##### 2. Nondisclosure agreements

The COD received an update from the acting executive director on the development of a policy on nondisclosure agreements for CRCNA staff. Work will continue on the policy for presentation to the COD at a subsequent meeting.

##### 3. Resources for culturally diverse churches

Safe Church Ministry materials have been translated, but the translations currently do not take cultural issues into account. Translators are being sought who are also expert in the issue of abuse. Exploration is taking place to determine which Safe Church Ministry materials available in English might be most helpful for Korean- and Spanish-language/cultural communities.

##### 4. Ad hoc committee on prevention of abuse in CRCNA offices

The committee observed that with the recent structural changes, both the CRC director of human resources in the U.S. and director of human resources in Canada need to be ex officio members of the ad hoc committee on prevention of abuse in the CRCNA offices. In addition, the membership of this committee needs to reflect the diversity of the denomination.

The COD approved including on the ad hoc committee *at least two* (instead of *no more than two*) CRC members who are not part of the COD and who have experience in addressing abuse of power issues. The COD also approved that the mandate be amended to include the director of human resources in Canada as an ex officio member.

##### 5. Training of pastors

The COD endorsed the proposed training program for pastors in the CRCNA (Appendix C), and recommends that synod adopt the following recommendations:

- a. That synod endorse the training program for pastors as presented in Appendix C.
- b. That synod encourage the coordination of training for all those involved in addressing abuse of power.
- c. That synod endorse the timeline as listed in Appendix C, including requiring all Article 6 candidates for ministry to complete the pilot version of the abuse of power training as part of their candidacy process.
- d. That synod clarify precisely for whom this training be considered a requirement, specifically that the training is embedded in the candidacy process for Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8, 23, and 24.
- e. That synod receive the report in Appendix C as a fulfillment of the COD's mandate for this training and commend the ongoing work of developing and providing this training to Safe Church Ministry, Candidacy, and various resource people from Pastor Church Resources, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin University, as well as to the COD-appointed team charged to "act as a guardian of our commitment to foster a culture characterized by respect for all and mutual service" (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 798).

## 6. Classis training programs

Safe Church Ministry plans to use portions of the pastor training program at the classis and congregational levels. In addition, webinars are being recorded so that classis coordinators can use these trainings for classes and congregations. Recorded webinars are available on the Network, the Safe Church Facebook page, and on the Safe Church YouTube channel.

## II. Program and finance matters

### A. Program matters

#### 1. Denominational Survey 2020

The 2020 annual Denominational Survey report, which gives a snapshot of how we as a denomination are doing from the perspective of congregations, is available for individuals and churches to review and study. The survey results can be accessed at [crcna.org/survey/survey-results](http://crcna.org/survey/survey-results).

#### 2. Ministry Plan: *Our Journey 2025*

As noted in the Council of Delegates report in the *Agenda for Synod 2020* (p. 45), the COD adopted a timeline for developing a new Ministry Plan to succeed *Our Journey 2020*. The COD has adopted the new Ministry Plan: *Our Journey 2025* as found in Appendix D and recommends that synod endorse the new plan for use by the churches and ministries of the CRCNA.

#### 3. Immigration resources

The COD reported in the *Agenda for Synod 2020* (pp. 23, 49) actions taken in response to the instruction of Synod 2019 to develop immigration resources for pastors

and churches. Omitted from that update was a link to the immigration resources compiled and received by the COD at its October 2019 meeting. Members and churches can visit the following webpage to access helpful resources when addressing immigration issues: [crcna.org/resources/church-resources/immigrationresources](http://crcna.org/resources/church-resources/immigrationresources).

#### 4. Back to God Ministries International articles of incorporation

The COD recommends that synod take note of the following actions taken by the respective BTGMI Canada and U.S. corporations in order to comply with legal requirements subject to synod's adoption of a proposed name change for Back to God Ministries International:

##### *By the BTGMI U.S. Corporation*

That, subject to synod's approval of a name change for Back to God Ministries International, as an Illinois nonprofit corporation, to *ReFrame Ministries*, the Articles of Incorporation of Back to God Ministries International be revised as needed to implement this name change; and that the president or other elected officer of the corporation of Back to God Ministries International be authorized to sign any documents as are required to implement the name change, including an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation.

##### *By the BTGMI Canada Corporation:*

That, subject to synod's approval of a name change for Back to God Ministries International, as a Canada nonprofit corporation, to *ReFrame Ministries*, the Articles of Incorporation of Back to God Ministries International be revised as needed to implement this name change; and that the president or other elected officer of the corporation of Back to God Ministries International be authorized to sign any documents as are required to implement the name change, including an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation.

##### *Grounds:*

- a. *ReFrame* has been the name of BTGMI's English-language ministry for more than 10 years and thus has brand equity both within the CRCNA and among wider audiences beyond.
- b. For the past five years a concerted effort has been made to bring the Back to God Ministries International and *ReFrame* media brands closer together in appearance and language. This prior work will facilitate the elevation of the *ReFrame* name and the phasing out of the *Back to God Ministries International* name.
- c. Since *ReFrame* already has a user audience of more than 500,000, changing the agency's name should be seamless with *ReFrame* audiences. More work will need to be done with CRC donors, but plans have already been developed for communicating with donors that only the name, not the ministry, is changing, in order to reach younger and wider audiences.
- d. The tagline *God's Story, Today's Media* points to God, the gospel, and the distinctive use of media for ministry. Though the new name does not include the international aspect of the ministry, this is the aspect of the ministry most easily conveyed through imagery on the agency's website and via digital and print communication, as is presently being done.

- e. The new name does not affect the identity of BTGMI's international media partnerships, since the name *Back to God Ministries International* is used only in North America.

#### 5. Resonate Global Mission foundational statements

The COD endorsed updated foundational statements for Resonate Global Mission with regard to its mission, vision, strategies, priorities, and postures. The foundational statements are included in Appendix E for synod's information.

#### B. Finance matters

1. The COD approved the unified budget for the denominational entities, inclusive of the individual budgets of the agencies, the educational institutions, the denominational offices, the Loan Fund, and the Special Assistance Funds of the CRC as presented to the COD Support Services Committee in the report of the COD Budget Review Team.
2. The COD recommends that synod approve a ministry share of \$346.48 per adult member (age 18 and over) for calendar year 2021, reflecting no change to the overall rate from the calendar year levels for 2019 and 2020.
3. The denominational salary grid

The COD recommends that Synod 2020 adopt the salary grid included below for use in fiscal year 2020-2021, noting that the current pay ranges remain unchanged from the previous year. The grid reflects the salary structure adopted by the Council of Delegates in 2019.

#### 2020-20210 Salary Grade and Range Structure

Level	U.S. Range		Canadian Range	
	Minimum	Target	Minimum	Target
E1	\$148,000	\$185,000		
E2	\$133,559	\$166,949	\$127,261	\$159,076
E3	\$113,186	\$141,482	\$111,514	\$139,392
H	\$95,920	\$119,900	\$95,580	\$119,475
I	\$81,288	\$101,610	\$81,924	\$102,405
J	\$68,888	\$86,110	\$70,218	\$87,773
K	\$58,380	\$72,975	\$60,185	\$75,232
L	\$49,474	\$61,843	\$51,586	\$64,482

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

Denominational agencies recommended for one or more offerings

Back to God Ministries International

*The Banner*

Calvin Theological Seminary

Calvin University

Congregational Services Ministries

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

Raise Up Global Ministries

Resonate Global Mission

World Renew—one offering per quarter because the agency receives no ministry-share support

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

The COD recommends that synod ratify the following nondenominational organizations recommended for financial support but not necessarily for one or more offerings:

a. United States

1) Benevolent organizations

Bethany Christian Services

Hope Haven

The Luke Society

Mississippi Christian Family Services

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services

QuietWaters Ministries

2) Educational organizations

All Belong Center for Inclusive Education

Ascending Leaders

Christian Schools International

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

3) Miscellaneous organizations

Association for a More Just Society  
 Audio Scripture Ministries  
 Bible League International  
 The Center for Public Justice  
 The Colossian Forum  
 Crossroads Prison Ministries  
 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship – US  
 Mission India  
 Partners Worldwide  
 Talking Bibles International  
 World Communion of Reformed Churches  
 Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.

b. Canada

1) Benevolent organizations

Beginnings Family Services  
 Diaconal Ministries Canada  
 Indwell

2) Educational organizations

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

3) Miscellaneous organizations

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

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

The Council of Delegates recommends that synod ratify inclusion of the following organizations on the accredited organizations list:

a. United States

The Center for Church Renewal

*Ground:* The Center for Church Renewal seeks to equip churches and congregational leaders for renewed gospel impact in a rapidly changing world and to develop intentional missional congregations that make more and better disciples who transform lives and communities for Christ. Their long-term goal is to be a primary resource hub to assist more than two thousand CRC and RCA ministries and ministry leaders through the radical realignment of faith engagement that will be taking place over the next three to five decades so that the churches of our two denominations will have a vibrant missional presence in a post-Christian society.

Pathways to Promise

*Ground:* The mission of Pathways to Promise is to foster community collaborations, which promote acceptance and inclusion within the life and work of persons with mental illness and their families within faith communities.

b. Canada

Christian Labour Association of Canada Foundation (CLAC)

*Ground:* The Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), is a national labor union that has been helping workers in Canada for almost 70 years and around the world for more than 40 years. Founded on the European model of Christian unions, CLAC has sought to apply Christian principles of social justice to labor relations and the workplace. Through the CLAC Foundation, the efforts and

ability of CLAC to aid struggling workers and their families have expanded to help homeless people and new immigrants in their own neighborhoods, and mistreated workers overseas.

#### 7. Ministers' pension assessment

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

- a. The three-year average salary to be used to determine retirement benefits beginning in 2021 for ministers of the Word in the United States is \$55,357 and in Canada is \$56,140.
- b. That the 2021 per-member assessment for the Canadian Plan remain \$42.96 and that the Canadian per-participant assessment remain \$9,840. Similarly, that the 2021 per-member assessment for the U.S. Plan remain \$37.20 and the U.S. per-participant assessment remain \$7,704.

#### 8. Summary of denominational investments and compliance with investment policy

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

### III. Recommendations

A. That synod by way of the ballot elect Thomas Byma to the Council of Delegates as the Classis Greater Los Angeles delegate for a first term of three years and reappoint delegates to a second term as presented (COD Supplement section I, A).

B. That synod reappoint John Koot and Doug Vande Griend to a second term of three years on the Judicial Code Committee (COD Supplement section I, C).

C. That synod appoint Colin P. Watson, Sr., the acting executive director of the CRCNA, as interim executive director of the CRCNA through June (or July) of 2021 (to be decided) (COD Supplement section I, D).

*Grounds:*

1. This will provide continuity in the denomination's senior position until such time as the COD and synod can define a new leadership scenario and approve any necessary personnel.
2. Mr. Watson already has a working relationship and a great deal of experience with CRCNA staff and agencies, as well as with the COD, ecumenical partners, and synod.
3. Having the acting executive director continue as interim executive director for an additional year will keep personnel and ecclesiastical disruption to a minimum.
4. Mr. Watson has expressed a willingness to delay his retirement (previously planned for January 2021) to serve the denomination in this way.

D. That synod take action on the following with regard to senior leadership vacancies (COD Supplement sections I, E, 1-2):

1. That synod take note of the existing or pending vacancies in the following three senior leadership positions: executive director, director of ministries and administration, and director of finance and operations, due to retirements.
2. That, due to pending restructuring necessitated by Canadian tax laws, synod declare the intent for Synod 2021 to appoint or ratify new senior leadership positions and persons to fill the positions.

*E.* That synod bestow on Steven R. Timmermans the title of *executive director emeritus*, effective upon adoption (COD Supplement section I, F, 1).

*F.* That Synod 2021 publically honor Steven R. Timmermans by endorsing the Resolution of Thanksgiving and Appreciation for the Person and Service of Dr. Steven R. Timmermans as found in section I, F, 2 of this report.

*G.* That synod take note of the ongoing work of the COD to propose a new denominational structure in light of Canadian charitable-law requirements, with the intent to present a proposal to Synod 2021 (COD Supplement section I, G).

*H.* That synod adopt the following recommendations as suggested by Faith Formation Ministries regarding review and use of the New City Catechism (COD Supplement section I, I; Appendix A).

1. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Chris Schoon, director of Faith Formation Ministries, when matters related to the report in Appendix A are being discussed.
2. That synod encourage CRC churches to share with FFM the ways in which they are engaging in catechetical teaching in their local contexts, particularly with regard to people who come to faith as adults.
3. That synod consider the report in Appendix A in fulfillment of the directive by Synod 2019 for FFM to provide a curriculum review and advice regarding the use of the New City Catechism by our churches.

*I.* That synod note fulfillment of the Synod 2019 assignment regarding worship practices (COD Supplement section I, J; Appendix B).

*J.* That synod accept the invitation of Encounter CRC in Kentwood, Michigan, to serve as the convening church of Synod 2022, scheduled to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the campus of Calvin University (COD Supplement section I, K).

*Ground:* Encounter CRC was appointed as, and had prepared to serve as, the convening church of Synod 2020; however, Synod 2020 was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*K.* That synod note the continuing work being done in addressing abuse of power matters and adopt the following recommendations for the training of pastors (COD Supplement section I, M; Appendix C).

1. That synod endorse the training program for pastors as presented in Appendix C.

2. That synod encourage the coordination of training for all those involved in addressing abuse of power.
  3. That synod endorse the timeline as listed in Appendix C, including requiring all Article 6 candidates for ministry to complete the pilot version of the abuse of power training as part of their candidacy process.
  4. That synod clarify precisely for whom this training be considered a requirement, specifically that the training is embedded in the candidacy process for Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8, 23, and 24.
  5. That synod receive the report in Appendix C as a fulfillment of the COD's mandate for this training and commend the ongoing work of developing and providing this training to Safe Church Ministry, Candidacy, and various resource people from Pastor Church Resources, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin University, as well as to the COD-appointed team charged to "act as a guardian of our commitment to foster a culture characterized by respect for all and mutual service" (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 798).
- L. That synod endorse the new Ministry Plan: *Our Journey 2025* as found in Appendix D for use by the churches and ministries of the CRCNA (COD Supplement section II, A, 2; Appendix D).

M. That synod take note of the immigration resources available to members and churches when faced with immigration issues (COD Supplement section II, A, 3).

N. That synod take note of the following actions taken by the respective BTGMI Canada and U.S. corporations in order to comply with legal requirements subject to synod's adoption of a proposed name change for Back to God Ministries International (COD Supplement section II, A, 4):

*By the BTGMI U.S. Corporation*

That, subject to synod's approval of a name change for Back to God Ministries International, as an Illinois nonprofit corporation, to *ReFrame Ministries*, the Articles of Incorporation of Back to God Ministries International be revised as needed to implement this name change; and that the president or other elected officer of the corporation of Back to God Ministries International be authorized to sign any documents as are required to implement the name change, including an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation.

*By the BTGMI Canada Corporation:*

That, subject to synod's approval of a name change for Back to God Ministries International, as a Canada nonprofit corporation, to *ReFrame Ministries*, the Articles of Incorporation of Back to God Ministries International be revised as needed to implement this name change; and that the president or other elected officer of the corporation of Back to God Ministries International be authorized to sign any documents as are required to implement the name change, including an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation.

*Grounds:*

- a. *ReFrame* has been the name of BTGMI's English-language ministry for more than 10 years and thus has brand equity both within the CRCNA and among wider audiences beyond.

- b. For the past five years a concerted effort has been made to bring the Back to God Ministries International and ReFrame media brands closer together in appearance and language. This prior work will facilitate the elevation of the ReFrame name and the phasing out of the *Back to God Ministries International* name.
- c. Since ReFrame already has a user audience of more than 500,000, changing the agency's name should be seamless with ReFrame audiences. More work will need to be done with CRC donors, but plans have already been developed for communicating with donors that only the name, not the ministry, is changing, in order to reach younger and wider audiences.
- d. The tagline *God's Story, Today's Media* points to God, the gospel, and the distinctive use of media for ministry. Though the new name does not include the international aspect of the ministry, this is the aspect of the ministry most easily conveyed through imagery on the agency's website and via digital and print communication, as is presently being done.
- e. The new name does not affect the identity of BTGMI's international media partnerships, since the name *Back to God Ministries International* is used only in North America.

O. That synod take note of the Resonate Global Mission foundational statements endorsed by the COD (COD Supplement section II, A, 5; Appendix E).

P. That synod receive the agencies and institutional unified budget as information and approve a ministry share of \$346.48 for calendar year 2021 (COD Supplement sections II, B, 1-2).

Q. That synod adopt the 2020-2021 denominational salary grid for senior positions as proposed (COD Supplement section II, B, 3).

R. That synod adopt the following recommendations with reference to organizations requesting to be placed on the recommended-for-offerings list:

1. That synod ratify the list of above-ministry share and specially designated offerings for the agencies, institutions, and ministries of the CRC and recommend them to the churches for consideration (COD Supplement section II, B, 4).
2. That synod ratify the list of nondenominational organizations, previously accredited, that have been approved for calendar year 2021 (COD Supplement section II, B, 5).
3. That synod ratify inclusion of the following organizations on the accredited organizations list (COD Supplement section II, B, 6):

- a. United States

The Center for Church Renewal

*Ground:* The Center for Church Renewal seeks to equip churches and congregational leaders for renewed gospel impact in a rapidly changing world and to develop intentional missional congregations that make more and better disciples who transform lives and communities for Christ. Their long-term goal is to be a primary resource hub to assist more than two thousand CRC and RCA

ministries and ministry leaders through the radical realignment of faith engagement that will be taking place over the next three to five decades so that the churches of our two denominations will have a vibrant missional presence in a post-Christian society.

#### Pathways to Promise

*Ground:* The mission of Pathways to Promise is to foster community collaborations, which promote acceptance and inclusion within the life and work of persons with mental illness and their families within faith communities.

#### b. Canada

##### Christian Labour Association of Canada Foundation (CLAC)

*Ground:* The Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), is a national labor union that has been helping workers in Canada for almost 70 years and around the world for more than 40 years. Founded on the European model of Christian unions, CLAC has sought to apply Christian principles of social justice to labor relations and the workplace. Through the CLAC Foundation, the efforts and ability of CLAC to aid struggling workers and their families have expanded to help homeless people and new immigrants in their own neighborhoods, and mistreated workers overseas.

S. That synod take note of the COD's endorsement of the following actions of the Pension Trustees (COD Supplement section II, B, 7):

1. The three-year average salary to be used to determine retirement benefits beginning in 2021 for ministers of the Word in the United States is \$55,357 and in Canada is \$56,140.
2. That the 2021 per-member assessment for the Canadian Plan remain \$42.96 and that the Canadian per-participant assessment remain \$9,840. Similarly, that the 2021 per-member assessment for the U.S. Plan remain \$37.20 and the U.S. per-participant assessment remain \$7,704.

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

## **Appendix A**

### **Review of the New City Catechism and Curriculum**

#### **I. Overview**

The Council of Williamsburg (Ont.) CRC overtured Synod 2019 to classify the New City Catechism as a contemporary testimony (*Agenda for Synod 2019*, pp. 516-18). Their formal recommendation and grounds follows:

That synod place the New City Catechism into the category of contemporary testimony.

*Grounds:*

1. The format and content of the New City Catechism concur with a Reformed understanding of Scripture and with the Heidelberg Catechism.
2. This document is clear and concise and will be of particular benefit to children and youth.
3. The New City Catechism is in accord with the definition and purpose of the new contemporary testimony category. As described above, it speaks to essential matters in our society and will be useful for study, faith formation, teaching, and worship.

*(Agenda of Synod 2019, pp. 517-18)*

Synod 2019 decided not to accede to this overture. However, in considering the overture, synod recognized that churches would benefit from further advice related to the New City Catechism. That being so, synod decided to “instruct the executive director to refer the New City Catechism to Faith Formation Ministries for curriculum review and potential use by the churches” (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 763).

This report serves as the response by Faith Formation Ministries (FFM) to this direction from Synod 2019.

#### **II. Methodology**

FFM made several decisions early in this process regarding the scope and framework of our responsibilities related to synod’s directive on the New City Catechism (NCC):

- A. Our review would focus on the quality of the New City Catechism Curriculum ([newcitycatechism.com/books/curriculum/](http://newcitycatechism.com/books/curriculum/)), both in terms of its ability to equip local lay leaders to facilitate learning and with regard to age- and ability-appropriate faith developmental approaches for potential students.

*Grounds:*

- a. These parameters—equipping lay leaders and appropriate faith developmental approaches—allow for a more focused review.
- b. These parameters allow FFM staff to utilize the variety of skills and experiences already present within the team, including curriculum design and editing, classroom educators at multiple educational levels, extensive service in children and youth ministry roles, and an advanced degree in how children make meaning.

- c. While theologically trained ministers have traditionally led catechism teaching, more churches have shifted toward nonordained staff or lay leadership facilitating discipleship, particularly for youth.
  - d. The lens of age- and ability-appropriate faith developmental approaches conforms with an emphasis found in Church Order Article 59-a regarding participation in the Lord's Supper and with FFM's priorities for resource curation and creation.
- B. While including some theological observations, our review would not undertake a formal or extended theological evaluation of the NCC itself.

*Grounds:*

- a. Synod 2019 decided against considering the NCC as a contemporary testimony.
  - b. A substantive theological review would entail a broader synodical structure, such as a synodical study committee or, at minimum, a synodical task force, that contains a broader representation of theological expertise, including Calvin Theological Seminary faculty, than is implied by sending this to FFM for a curriculum review.
- C. Through this report FFM would provide summary observations and considerations for churches regarding the potential use of the NCC Curriculum, rather than a simple statement of "use" or "don't use."

*Grounds:*

- a. Church Order Articles 63 and 64 indicate that the church as a whole, and the consistory (elders) in particular, are responsible for the faith nurture of the local church members.
- b. FFM's posture is to listen, consult, and coach ministry leaders in ways that strengthen the local church's capacity to discern context-appropriate faith formative resources and practices.
- c. To mitigate against the potential for a series of future requests for FFM to review other catechisms and curricula, FFM believes the churches are better served by a report that utilizes this review process as a template for reviewing other potential curriculum resources.

With these guidelines in place, FFM undertook three steps in preparing this review. First, we distributed copies of the NCC Curriculum kit to the six FFM staff who would participate in this review process. Second, FFM staff reviewed the NCC Curriculum materials individually and submitted their observations to a shared document regarding content, pedagogy, and potential pros and cons of utilizing the NCC Curriculum. Third, FFM staff compiled and summarized the shared learning into this report. Thus, the bulk of this report regarding the NCC is structured into the five sections that follow:

- About the New City Catechism
- New City Catechism content observations
- About the New City Catechism Curriculum
- New City Catechism Curriculum content and pedagogy observations
- Additional perspectives for churches to consider

Additionally, FFM staff included a closing section in the report to share comments regarding the learning we experienced through this review process. This section highlights conversations that have emerged through this assignment.

### **III. About the New City Catechism**

The NCC is a set of 52 questions and answers adapted from “Calvin’s Geneva Catechism, the Westminster Shorter and Larger catechisms, and especially the Heidelberg Catechism.” In this sense, the NCC is not a completely new catechism but a paraphrase of excerpts from several Reformation-era catechisms that is intended to make aspects of their content accessible to the church today. A more detailed explanation of the NCC’s roots is available at [newcitycatechism.com/introduction-timothy-keller/](http://newcitycatechism.com/introduction-timothy-keller/) [last accessed Apr. 6, 2020].

Tim Keller and Sam Shammas authored the NCC project, a joint initiative of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (New York) and the Gospel Coalition, a network of broadly Reformed churches. The NCC was first published in 2012 with the intention of being a resource that is accessible to adults and children.

The purpose of this catechism is to reintroduce the historical practice of learning the central content of the Christian faith (from a Reformed perspective) as passed along by teachers to students. Two versions of the NCC are made available: a version for adults and a simplified version aimed at children ages 8-11. The simplified version is the focus of the NCC Curriculum.

In pursuing this purpose, the adult version of the NCC makes use of “archaic language” in the historical commentaries that accompany each question and answer. Moreover, the primary learning methodology expected by the curriculum is memorization of the questions and answers. This learning approach is so central to the curriculum that the introduction includes an orientation section on “Memorization Tips” for students.

As indicated in the NCC’s introduction, the NCC’s 52 questions are structured in three parts:

- Part 1: God, creation and fall, law (twenty questions)
- Part 2: Christ, redemption, grace (fifteen questions)
- Part 3: Spirit, restoration, growing in grace (seventeen questions)

At the time of this review, there are print, web-based, and mobile app editions of the NCC. Though format certainly influences learning, the content and pedagogical expectations do not substantively change across these media.

### **IV. New City Catechism content observations**

#### *A. Affirmations*

There are several important affirmations to make regarding the NCC as churches consider whether or not to utilize the NCC as part of their discipling efforts.

1. As noted above, the NCC unfolds in three parts:
  - Creation and Fall, with attention to the Ten Commandments
  - Christ, Redemption, and Grace, with attention to the Apostles' Creed
  - Spirit, Restoration, and Growing in Grace, with attention to the Lord's Prayer

This arrangement is important to recognize for several reasons:

- The triune nature of God is emphasized.
  - A basic outline of the biblical narrative is apparent in the movement from Creation and Fall to Redemption in Christ to Restoration through the Spirit.
  - The three primary historical discipleship tools (Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer) are included.
2. Drawing from Reformed catechisms of the 16th and 17th centuries, the NCC affirms many important doctrinal truths from the Reformed tradition, particularly those connected to salvation by Christ alone and those that explain the concept of substitutionary atonement. For example, in the adult version the 24th answer responds to the question "Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?" by stating,
 

Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.
  3. The NCC locates the Ten Commandments within the first section on the fall, as a tool to identify sin against God and our neighbors. This position is different from the Heidelberg Catechism, which locates the Ten Commandments in the final section as a teaching on how to live in response to God's salvation in Jesus Christ.
  4. In the web app version, alongside the NCC itself, theological commentary, a Scripture text, and a prayer are included with each question and answer. According to Keller's introduction, the inclusion of a specific accompanying Scripture passage and prayer is intended to frame the theological content in a devotional direction.

#### *B. Questions and concerns*

We also identified several questions and concerns related to the content of the NCC. We offer the following five observations for churches considering whether or not to utilize the NCC in their contexts:

1. **Is God too distant?** While the NCC clearly has a high view of God, including reverence for God's holiness, the personal and approachable nature of God is missing. The second question asks "What is God?" This impersonal language leaves the FFM team wondering why the NCC does not ask "Who is God?"
2. **Does the NCC have a minimalist and anthropocentric approach to creation?** Though the first part of the NCC is described as "Creation and Fall," very little space is given to describing God's creative work beyond humanity. In explaining what God created beyond humanity, the NCC states: "God created all things by his powerful Word, and all his creation was very good; everything flourished under his loving rule" (Q. & A. 5). Likewise,

Christ's redemptive work of reconciling all things in the cosmos to God (Col. 1:15-20) is largely overlooked, as is the flourishing of creation in the new heaven and new earth described in Revelation. In its adult version, the NCC's Q. & A. 52 teaches:

It reminds us that this present fallen world is not all there is; soon we will live with and enjoy God forever in the new city, in the new heaven and the new earth, where we will be fully and forever freed from all sin and will inhabit renewed, resurrection bodies in a renewed, restored creation.

3. **The theological focus appears to be disproportionately weighted on the law and on our inability to satisfy God's anger.** While this perspective is certainly an element of Reformed theology, the NCC overlooks the biblical theme of God's love, affection, and compassion. Whereas the gospel of John states that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life," the NCC asks, "Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?" and responds with "Yes, to satisfy his justice, God himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer" (NCC Q. & A. 19). The silence regarding God's love and the emphasis on the method of our escape from punishment appear to present only a partial picture of the biblical narrative regarding our redemption.
4. **The mention of our calling to do good works occurs in Part 2 on Christ's Redemption, instead of in the work of the Spirit in Part 3.** This arrangement seems odd to our sensibilities. Why isn't this located under the work of the Spirit? Moreover, the lack of any description within the NCC regarding what a life of good works looks like shows the benefit and wisdom of the Heidelberg Catechism's location of the Ten Commandments.
5. **Does the approach to the content lose too much of the richness of the original resources?** The content included in the NCC is abridged, paraphrased, and compiled from several historic Reformation documents written in the 16th and 17th centuries. For example, NCC Q. & A. 1 borrows from the Heidelberg Catechism Q. & A. 1, but changes *comfort* to *hope* and includes only the first sentence of the Heidelberg Catechism's response. The forgiveness of sin, freedom from the devil's tyranny, God's providential care, the assurance of eternal life, and the Spirit's work to "make me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him" are left out. Our team wonders if the hope or comfort of the gospel is diminished too far by leaving out these other aspects of God's reconciling and restorative work in Jesus Christ and through the Spirit.

## V. About the New City Catechism Curriculum

The New City Catechism Curriculum features 52 lessons developed from the questions and answers of The New City Catechism, designed to help children ages 8-11 learn the core doctrines of the Christian faith in a Sunday school, classroom, or homeschool setting.

The NCC Curriculum kit includes four copies of The New City Catechism for Kids, a three-volume leader's guide, and a book of 52 black-and-white reproducible graphics and activity pages needed for activities in the lessons.

Each lesson in the leader's guide includes outlines for 30-, 45-, or 75-minute sessions; a Bible passage and memory verse; a list of suggested materials; detailed instructions for activities; suggested prayers; and activity pages available for digital download. Those who are

interested can download a sample featuring the first five lessons at [static.crossway.org/excerpt/nccc-sample.pdf](http://static.crossway.org/excerpt/nccc-sample.pdf).

## VI. New City Catechism Curriculum content and pedagogy observations

With regard to the NCC Curriculum's content, our main observations are outlined in section IV above because the curriculum content follows the catechism content. In this light, our essential curriculum content question is "How does the arrangement, inclusion, and absence of certain biblical and theological themes influence the ways students will come to understand who God is, their relationship with God, and their calling to participate as members of Christ's body within God's kingdom?"

### A. *Pedagogical strengths*

With regard to pedagogy, our team identified several strengths for churches to note as they evaluate the appropriateness of using the NCC Curriculum in faith formation efforts within their churches.

1. The structure of the NCC's teacher's resources provide an outline and suggestions that help teachers develop a predictable and accessible pattern for the lesson plans. This pattern follows a traditional educational model of recap, intro and intro activity, lesson/teaching time, activity, discussion, take-home memory work, and closing prayer.
2. The curriculum articulates a difference between head and heart knowledge in the teaching notes.
3. The teaching notes draw attention to how the teacher's posture and engagement with the students is a form of teaching. This emphasis demonstrates an awareness of the relational aspects of teaching.
4. The flexibility of the lesson designs allow for contextualization of the NCC within a broad range of teaching settings.
5. The NCC encourages that learning about the NCC would occur in both church and home settings.

### B. *Pedagogical concerns*

However, the review team also noted several significant pedagogical concerns for churches to keep in mind when discerning whether or not to utilize the NCC Curriculum in their contexts.

1. **The NCC Curriculum assumes that catechesis and virtue development are acquired through doctrinal knowledge about the Christian faith.** While faith formation includes learning biblical and theological content about God and the gospel, an age- and ability-appropriate faith also embeds this content within a process of nurturing a person's experiential relationship with God. Experiencing God's love, having our affections and desires transformed, and learning to live in communion with God's people and as participants with the Spirit in God's mission are also essential elements of a holistic faith formation process.

2. **There appears to be a lack of humility and gentleness.** Some of the “Big Idea” statements, which serve as the focal points for the various lessons, come across as heavy handed. For example, the lesson for Question 3 states that “A correct understanding of the Trinity is essential to right worship of God.” But we are left wondering, who among us has a “correct” understanding of the Trinity? We may have partial understanding about the Trinity, but there is a fundamental mystery and incomprehensibility of the Trinity as well. The danger in asserting that a student must correctly understand the Trinity in order to worship God properly is that it leaves no room for worshiping God while growing in our knowledge about God. Statements like these unnecessarily increase the potential to stunt and damage a person’s faith formation process.
3. **The reading level of the children’s version of the NCC is significantly higher than that of the intended audience.** The language used in the children’s NCC book is far too complex for its 8- to 11-year-old intended audience. When utilizing readability calculators, many of the answers require a Grade 8 (age 12-14) reading level. One calculator, the Gunning Fog index, assesses the NCC’s reading level to be at Grade 11. The language is a real barrier to the younger members of the NCC’s intended audience.
4. **Related to the previous point, the NCC Curriculum lesson plans make several other assumptions about the audience.** The content assumes that participants have a Christian faith background, understand terms like *worship* and *forgiveness*, and are familiar with the basic narrative arc of Scripture. Additional assumptions about family structures are also evident at times. There also are no accommodations suggested for persons with intellectual or physical disabilities.
5. **The primary pedagogical tool is memorization.** The NCC introduction states that memorization is an essential element of this curriculum. From a learning theory perspective, rote memorization is the lowest level of learning. While some memorization is foundational to learning, the pedagogy found in the lesson plans does not move toward higher levels of learning. If the goal is mere accumulation of theological knowledge without integration or development of a Reformed worldview, then perhaps memorization is sufficient. However, faith formation calls for learning approaches that integrate head and heart in order for the head knowledge to become internalized as an assurance of God’s faithfulness. Knowledge accumulation is foundational, to be sure, but if left there or if that is the main focus on what is achieved in this curriculum, we are only giving children content that does not engage in the higher levels of learning. To this end, the expectation of memorizing the catechism answer and an accompanying Scripture passage each week is unrealistic for most home situations.
6. **Will volunteers have the time and theological capacity needed to teach this material?** The lesson plans require preparation time and a fairly high level of theological and intellectual capability from the leaders. This reality limits the availability of potential teachers within a church community who can teach this material.
7. **What resources are available for parents, grandparents, or other caregivers at home to participate in teaching the NCC?** While Keller shares a story of how easy it was for their family to integrate catechism teaching into their home, the lesson plans and resources do not provide specific resources for “at home” learning of the NCC. Parents, particularly those who are new to the faith, would likely be challenged to participate in their child’s learning.

8. **Does this curriculum nurture love?** One of the NCC's stated desires is that this curriculum "nurtures in children a love for and understanding of the essential doctrines for the Christian faith." But the pedagogical approach makes little room for cultivating a love for this knowledge. Many of the questions in the lesson plans are looking for yes or no answers and do little to invite wonder, awe, or affection for the God who took on flesh, suffered, and died in our place.
9. **Where is the transition toward application?** While there is a stated desire that the lessons will lead to a lifelong faith that knows how to respond to life's circumstances, the lessons create little space for students, whether children or adults, to wonder and explore how these theological principles relate to the real contours of the circumstances in which they are living. For example, the curriculum's "Virtue Vision" for Q. & A. 1 on belonging to Jesus is that "we must be quick to forgive." While forgiveness is indeed a Christian virtue, the historic emphasis on this teaching connects with the great comfort that we belong to God, who forgives us. An emphasis that would invite students to wonder about other places they belong and about how they experience belonging to God and to God's people would help to provide a more fitting application.

## VII. Perspectives for churches to consider

In the process of this review, our team noted a few other perspectives for churches to consider when determining whether or not to utilize the NCC Curriculum in their contexts.

- A. **A robust curriculum is multidimensional.** Is this a robust children's curriculum? No. A robust children's curriculum considers how children learn, utilizes developmentally appropriate language and thinking, engages multiple learning styles, cultivates spaces for wonder, stories, and reflection, and offers guidance for potential applications, in which content serves the formation of a person's character in relationship to God, community, and creation. Most of these elements appear to be missing from the NCC Curriculum.
- B. **Curriculum design matters.** In a culture that is progressively more visual and in a context in which we are called to honor the way that we are embodied beings—not souls trapped within bodies—the physicality of our resources matter. We communicate value by the quality of our curriculum resources, particularly through the student materials. Regarding the print version of the children's catechism, there is little about it that would appeal to children. Except for the appealing small size of the children's catechism book, the static design and lack of color and graphics on pages does not convey to children that the material is intended for them.
- C. **The attendance expectation is very high.** A 52-week catechism is ambitious and unrealistic in our current context of declining attendance for worship, Sunday school, and other discipleship programs. How could students make up for missed weeks? We wonder if the material might be better presented in another format rather than a one-year weekly immersion.

## VIII. Faith Formation Ministry learning through this review process

While we bring a certain amount of expertise into a review process like this one, FFM staff recognize that our capacity to lead is rooted in a commitment to our own lifelong learning and growth. This final section of our report shares some of the wondering that has been evoked within the FFM team through this review process.

A. Are we seeing a resurgence in the desire for catechetical resources? We are perceiving a growing desire within the CRC to find culturally relevant ways to communicate the richness of what we believe. This request to provide a curriculum review of the NCC comes alongside numerous other requests from pastors, youth leaders, and other church leaders to assist them in locating new resources for teaching the creeds, confessions, and contemporary testimonies that shape the theological framework of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. This apparent resurging interest in catechetical teaching follows after years of many congregations' discarding all kinds of engagements with the historical documents of the church.

B. Are there gaps in our denomination's current catechetical resources? Yes. We have consistently heard from leaders working with people who are coming to faith later in life that our current catechetical resources assume a familiarity with the Christian faith, the characters and stories in the Bible, and higher levels of education. While the NCC Curriculum introduction states that the NCC is for children and adults, we are not convinced that the NCC is an appropriate resource for those who are early in their faith development, regardless of age. However, the NCC could be a beneficial conversation starter for persons already familiar with the basic Christian faith, biblical narrative, and theological terms.

C. Additionally, we wonder how many lifelong members of our churches have engaged the confessional documents of our tradition since they were in high school. Could all of us benefit from catechetical resources that are designed to introduce these documents as if we were encountering them for the first time?

D. Since the CRC's historical confessional resources were developed in European contexts within the 16th and 17th centuries, how might our catechetical teaching resources benefit from greater attention to the increasing diversity of the CRC today and of the communities in which God has planted us? If we include campus ministries and nontraditional churches, at least twenty different languages are spoken in the CRC, representing many cultural communities. Our congregations also embrace people of varying cognitive and physical abilities. How might our catechetical resources serve all members equally?

E. With today's increasing array of social media options, podcasts, webinars, etc., our team wonders if there is an opportunity to develop new forms of catechetical teaching that utilize these other approaches rather than a traditional curriculum approach. We are wondering how current technologies could encourage more integrated, intergenerational, lifelong, and lifebroad engagement with the creedal and confessional statements of our faith.

F. How can we engage current understandings from educational contexts—how children make meaning, faith formation theory, adult learning theory, practice-based learning, etc.—in shaping catechetical teaching within local church contexts? How might best practices offered by educational, social, and even faith-development research better equip Reformed churches to adapt our faith-formative approaches?

G. What current best practices can we identify within CRC congregations related to teaching our creeds, confessions, and contemporary testimonies? Rather than writing a new curriculum, which would require a high commitment of time and resources, are there ways to gather the best practices from CRC congregations to share and grow in our mutual learning around faith formation?

*H.* While FFM currently has a resource called *A Ten-Question Tool for Choosing a Children's Ministry Curriculum*, our NCC review process has sparked conversations about the potential of developing similar resources for teen and adult materials, as well as for identifying resources for persons who are new to the Christian faith and persons who live with cognitive impairments and learning disabilities.

## **IX. Conclusion**

More than providing a simple yes or no regarding FFM's perspective on the New City Catechism and curriculum, our review team believes that churches are better served by sharing more of our conversation and considerations in reviewing this resource.

Therefore, our goal in sharing this curriculum review of the NCC for synod's consideration is to provide churches with a report that will allow them to see the process and types of observations made when conducting a resource review.

Additionally, we have seen this review as an opportunity to share how the process of reviewing the NCC has sparked within FFM additional conversations related to the CRC's catechetical teaching resources.

## **X. Recommendations**

*A.* That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Chris Schoon, director of Faith Formation Ministries, when matters related to this report are being discussed.

*B.* That synod encourage CRC churches to share with FFM the ways in which they are engaging in catechetical teaching in their local contexts, particularly with regard to people who come to faith as adults.

*C.* That synod consider this report in fulfillment of the directive by Synod 2019 for FFM to provide a curriculum review and advice regarding the use of the New City Catechism by our churches.

## **Appendix B Worship Practices**

Second Service: Response to Synod

### **I. Synod's Request**

In the context of a discussion about Church Order Articles 51 and 54 and churches' worship practices, Synod 2019 adopted the following recommendation (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 770):

That synod affirm the rich tradition of assembling for worship twice on the Lord's Day and instruct the Council of Delegates to ensure that Worship Ministries and/or Faith Formation Ministries continue to make excellent resources available to the churches that would encourage existing congregations to continue, and new congregations to embrace, some kind of assembly that builds up the body of Christ.

*Ground:* This provides congregations with resources for carrying on the tradition of, or beginning, a second Sunday service, in keeping with the decisions of earlier synods (see *Acts of Synod 1995*, pp. 766-67).

### **II. Response from Faith Formation Ministries and Worship Ministries**

It is challenging to write a report on Synod 2019's request "to ensure that Worship Ministries and/or Faith Formation Ministries continue to make excellent resources available to the churches that would encourage existing congregations to continue, and new congregations to embrace, some kind of assembly that builds up the body of Christ," because in essence everything we do is for that purpose. Considering the larger context provided by the report, we ask your indulgence as we have reinterpreted the request as follows: "Whether we choose to meet twice each Sunday or at other times during the week, the CRC continues to value and encourage Sabbath observance, biblical and doctrinal literacy, prayer, opportunities for deep and rich fellowship, and opportunities for worship beyond Sunday morning. In what ways can Worship Ministries and Faith Formation help to support those values?"

Most of Faith Formation Ministries' resource toolkits, Ten Ways resources, Network posts, and other print resources include suggested practices connected to a wide range of worship gatherings and discipling opportunities while also encouraging intergenerational relationships. Several resources introduce faith-formative practices designed for home settings, including family devotional resources.

Likewise, many of the worship-related resources—particularly prayers, responsive readings, and other litanies—curated by Worship Ministries, whether on the Network or through *Reformed Worship*, are readily adaptable to multiple formal and informal worship contexts: in small groups, family settings, or second worship services in a church building. Some representative resources from both ministries, highlighted below, can be accessed at [network.crcna.org](http://network.crcna.org) and search: *Distributing the Weight: Reflections and Resources for When You Have or Don't Have a Second Sunday Service*.

#### **A. Sabbath observance**

- Resources developed regarding *Worship and COVID-19* and including children in online worship
- *Ten Ways for Families to Engage Kids in Worship*

- *5 Ways to Help Kids Worship*

#### B. *Increased biblical and doctrinal literacy*

- *Dwell* children's ministry curriculum, which is undergoing a refresh
- *Dwell at Home* resources, including the *Jesse Tree* and *God's Big Easter Story*
- *Everyday Family Faith*—family faith practices guide, English and Korean editions
- Webinar: *Restoring Holy Communion in Reformed Churches*
- *Lord's Supper and COVID-19*
- *5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids*
- *The Big Question: Growing Spiritually with Heidelberg Q&A 1*
- *10 Ways My Reformed Identity Shapes My Life*
- "Trinitarian Worship" by Cornelius Plantinga, coming June 2020, RW 136
- "Confession of Sins: Why Do It?" by Chris Walker, coming June 2020, RW 136

#### C. *Prayer*

- *Resources for 2020 Prayer Day Services*
- *Reformed Worship* articles:
  - "Our Father in Heaven: A Prayer Service Using the Lord's Prayer and the Heidelberg Catechism"
  - "Hear, O Lord, And Answer: A Service of Prayer"
- *Let Justice Roll: Worship Planning Resources with a Justice Theme*
- *Community-Wide Worship*
- *In Jesus' Name*
- *Name(s) above All Names: Enriching Our Ways of Addressing God*
- *Reclaiming the Power of Prayer in Worship*
- "The Importance of Corporate Prayer" by Martin Boardman, coming June 2020, RW 136
- *Prayer Ideas (In Community and At Home)* from the Family Faith Formation toolkit
- *The Lord's Prayer* (free event outline)
- *5 Ways to Pray with Kids*
- Also see prayer resources listed below under "Worship Opportunities Beyond Sunday Morning"

#### D. *Deeper and richer fellowship*

- "Belonging: 2020" —Worship Symposium workshop led by Joyce and Chris
- Faith Formation Ministries Toolkits:
  - *Building Blocks of Faith*
  - *Faith Storytelling*
  - *Intergenerational*
  - *Third of Life*
- *Reformed Worship* theme issue on "Including Older Adults in Worship" (June 2019, RW 132)
- Worship Ministries webinars:
  - *Training Youth for Leadership*
  - *Worship: Can I Be Included?*
  - *Generations Leading and Worshiping Together*
  - *The Mentoring Project*
  - *Mentoring and the Worship Leader*

E. *Worship opportunities beyond Sunday morning*

- Worship resources that are prepared for Sunday morning can be utilized and adapted to fit many other contexts as well.
- *Lectio Divina*
- From *Lift Up Your Hearts* (LUYH)
  - “A Service of Morning Prayer”—LUYH 373
  - “Midday Prayers”—LUYH 380
  - “A Service of Evening Prayer”—LUYH 381
  - “A Service of Night Prayer”—LUYH 385
- Resources developed for Worship and COVID-19
  - *House Worship Liturgy Template*
  - *Daily Worship for Holy Week and Easter*
- *Everyday Family Faith*
- “Worship ideas” in the Family Faith Formation toolkit
- From *Reformed Worship*:
  - “How to . . . Plan Worship for a Family Reunion”
  - “Everyday Jesus Spirituality”

III. **Additional background material**

A. *Church Order Article 51 and its Supplement*

*Article 51*

- 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. Worship services shall be held in observance of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Pentecost, and ordinarily on Old and New Year’s Day, and annual days of prayer and thanksgiving.
- c. Special worship services may be proclaimed in times of great stress or blessing for church, nation, or world.

*Supplement, Article 51-a*

- a. Synod affirms the rich tradition of assembling for worship twice on the Lord’s Day and encourages existing congregations to continue and new congregations to embrace this tradition for the building up of the body of Christ.
- b. Where congregations are exploring alternatives to the second service, synod encourages those congregations to ensure that such alternatives are part of a strategic ministry plan with full accountability to their classis.

*(Acts of Synod 1995, pp. 766-67)*

*Note:* The following changes to Church Order Articles 51-a and 51-b (indicated by strikethrough and *italics*) will be considered by Synod 2020 for adoption. The current Articles 51-b and -c would become 51-c and -d respectively; Supplement, Article 51-a would be deleted.

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.*

**B. Church Order Article 54**

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

*Note:* Synod 2019 proposed the deletion of Article 54-b to be considered by Synod 2020 for adoption.

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.

**C. Acts of Synod 2019 (pp. 768-70)**

The second service has long proven to be a helpful discipline in fostering appropriate observance of the Lord's Day, raising the level of biblical and doctrinal literacy in the church, and creating opportunity for deeper and richer fellowship. Many churches that have continued the practice of a second worship service can testify to these benefits. For congregations that are exploring an alternative to the evening worship service, or for congregations that have already discontinued worshiping on Sunday evening, perhaps *there are ways to reimagine what public gatherings for worship might look like* [emphasis added].

(Acts of Synod 2019, p. 768)

Synod 2019 adopted the following in response:

In order to bring the Church Order into closer alignment with our current practice as a denomination, and to foster conversation among the churches about the expectations that should shape our worship practices, the advisory committee recommends the following:

1. That synod propose that Synod 2020 adopt the following changes to Church Order Articles 51-a and 51-b so that they will read as follows (additions are in *italics*; deletions are in ~~striketrough~~):

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:*

- a. These changes would bring the Church Order into harmony with the current practice of the vast majority of congregations, so that its provisions for public worship are "faithfully observed" (Church Order Art. 86).
- b. 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.

—Adopted

2. That synod propose that Synod 2020 delete Church Order Article 54-b.

*Grounds:*

- a. 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.
- b. This brings Church Order into harmony with denominational practice (Church Order Article 86).

—Adopted

3. That synod affirm the rich tradition of assembling for worship twice on the Lord's Day and instruct the Council of Delegates to ensure that Worship Ministries and/or Faith Formation Ministries continue to make excellent resources available to the churches that would encourage existing congregations to continue, and new congregations to embrace, some kind of assembly that builds up the body of Christ.

*Ground:* This provides congregations with resources for carrying on the tradition of, or beginning, a second Sunday service, in keeping with the decisions of earlier synods (see *Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 766-67).

—Adopted

(*Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 768-70)

Chris Schoon, director, Faith Formation Ministries  
Joyce Borger, director, Worship Ministries

## **Appendix C**

### **Abuse of Power: Training of Pastors Program**

#### **I. Mandate**

Synod 2019 mandated the COD with the following related to the training of pastors:

That synod mandate the Council of Delegates to form a committee to develop a training program on abuse of power. The committee shall include members from the offices of Candidacy, Pastor Church Resources, Safe Church Ministry, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin University (because of available expertise). The training program shall

- be a requirement for all persons entering vocational ministry in the CRC.
- focus on dynamics of power within the variety of pastoral relationships, boundaries, tools for positive use of power and influence, and tools for preventing harmful use of power and influence.
- be widely available and presented as enabling effective ministry (not as an impediment to entering ministry).
- take into account the cultural diversity within CRC churches.

*(Acts of Synod 2019, p. 794)*

#### **II. Training overview: Content**

The training is organized into four modules. Each module is designed to be completed in one hour, for a total commitment of four hours. Our team determined that this would offer the best balance between robust content engagement and a manageable time-commitment level. A more detailed draft of the training is available by request.

The content of the course will be maintained and updated as needed by the Safe Church Ministry office, in consultation with resource people from Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, Pastor Church Resources, and the Candidacy office.

The four modules are summarized as follows:

##### **1. Stories of Allegations against Churches and Church Leaders**

This module anchors the training in actual stories of abuse of power, giving examples from a variety of church sizes, locations, and times in history. This allows us to approach abuse of power not primarily as a topic to explore but as a reality embedded deeply in the church, including stories of persons victimized by abuse, people who perpetrated abuse, and many others also affected.

##### **2. Abuse of Power – Focusing on the Individual Leader**

This module reflects on a Reformed framework of power—and specifically the role that a leader has in understanding and ensuring a healthy exercise of their own power. We will explore pastoral authority, deception, boundaries, healthy rhythms, and other areas of power using multiple tools for sharpening our understanding and models for leading well.

### 3. Abuse of Power – Focusing on Institutional Patterns

This module reflects on how institutions themselves provide space for power to be used and misused. The module will reflect on such things as the power that the church itself has; patterns that enable abuse to be perpetrated; the role of people in power; the role of repentance, justice, and grace; and the vulnerability of those victimized and the likelihood of revictimization.

### 4. Preparing for and Responding to the Abuse of Power

This module will introduce the Code of Conduct regarding abuse of power, a toolkit for responding to abuse, and other resources. It will provide a way forward for living and leading well.

## III. Training overview: Process

We anticipate that the training will be delivered in an online training format. The particular online platform has yet to be developed, but, as noted above, the course will have four modules that can each be completed in approximately one hour. There will be several opportunities within the coursework to dig deeper into issues raised.

Although the course will be made available to all who are involved in church leadership, the mandate given by Synod 2019 was that this course shall be a requirement for all persons entering vocational ministry in the CRCNA. The Candidacy office will coordinate the participation of those who are entering ordained ministry, whether their entrance is through the provisions of Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8, 23, or 24.

## IV. Potential coordination with other training

There is abuse of power training being developed for multiple contexts. It is advisable to have similar material presented across the denomination. Our team is exploring ways in which this training might be adapted for use in other contexts. Some examples include

- an abridged version for councils, allowing a sixty-minute training to be accomplished in a council meeting setting.
- a workshop version that a Safe Church coordinator could lead in a classis meeting context as part of a classis' commitment to providing training opportunities.
- integration into the mentoring program for newly ordained ministers, allowing deeper exploration in the topics presented.

The team will continue to develop these and other opportunities that may present themselves.

## V. Timeline

The team proposes the following timeline for implementation:

- Training program to be finalized and made available in its online learning platform by end of 2020.
- This Abuse of Power training is to be included in the Candidacy Process checklist for all 2021 candidates via Article 6. This group will be required to complete this training as a pilot group.

- This training is to become a general requirement for all those entering vocational ministry in the CRC (as listed in our mandate) starting July 2021.

Our team is left with a question to which we hope synod will be attentive: To whom specifically does “those entering vocational ministry” refer? Our tentative answer is that this would be a requirement for all people entering ministry via Church Order Articles 6, 7, or 8, and entering as lead pastors via Articles 23 and 24. We expect that for Articles 6, 7, or 8 candidates, this be included in their respective list of requirements; and that for Article 23-24 pastors, this be included in any learning plan that is developed and required by the classis.

## **VI. Recommendations**

- A. That synod endorse the training program as presented in this report.
- B. That synod encourage the coordination of training for all those involved in addressing abuse of power.
- C. That synod endorse the timeline as listed in this report, including requiring all Article 6 candidates for ministry to complete the pilot version of the abuse of power training as part of their candidacy process.
- D. That synod clarify precisely for whom this training be considered a requirement, specifically that the training is embedded in the candidacy process for Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8, 23, and 24.
- E. That synod receive this report as a fulfillment of the COD’s mandate for this training and commend the ongoing work of developing and providing this training to Safe Church Ministry, Candidacy, and various resource people from Pastor Church Resources, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin University, as well as to the COD-appointed team charged to “act as a guardian of our commitment to foster a culture characterized by respect for all and mutual service” (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 798).

Submitted by  
Claudia Beversluis, Calvin University  
Michelle De Bie, CRC Human Resources  
Dave Den Haan, Pastor Church Resources  
Eric Kas, Safe Church Ministry  
David Koll, Candidacy Committee  
Jul Medenblik, Calvin Theological Seminary  
Albert Postma, Pastor Church Resources  
Jeffrey Sajdak, Calvin Theological Seminary

## Appendix D

### ***Our Journey 2025: Ministry Plan Overview***

There's something about a journey that's exciting and invigorating. A promise of new horizons, new possibilities, new challenges. The Christian Reformed Church in North America is on such a journey.

It's called *Our Journey 2025*. *Our* because we are on it together as CRC people from congregations across the United States and Canada. *Journey* because we are moving ahead in our shared mission to express the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide, while also striving toward specific goals that our congregations and leaders have identified. And *2025* to remind us that this is just one stage of a journey that will see us living and growing together in new ways and in new places by the year 2025.

You may recall that we are nearing the conclusion of the ministry plan *Our Journey 2020*. During the time of this ministry plan, individuals, congregations, and ministries have specifically aimed to improve in the areas of discipleship, leadership, collaboration, Reformed identity, and community engagement, while also continuing to preach the gospel and seek out people who are lost.

We are pleased with the efforts and success stories that have been shared in the past five-year period. Churches have begun to flow like streams into their communities, meeting their neighbors and becoming channels for the love of Christ. New leaders have been identified, trained, and mentored to help bear fruit in local congregations. And CRC members of all ages have been nurtured in their faith to grow more and more into the likeness of Christ.

As we look toward 2025, it has become clear that there are four key aspects to this journey we are on. We are traveling *with God, with each other, with our neighbors, and for mission*.

Through conversations with Christian Reformed congregations, pastors, and leaders across North America, we have identified specific milestones toward which we believe God is calling us to strive in each of these areas in the next five years.

These are not the only purposes God is calling us to, but we believe that a denomination-wide emphasis on these milestones for the next five years will help us all move forward in appropriate and healthy ways in obedience to the Word of God.

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

- **cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline**, transforming our lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **listen to the voices of every generation**, shaping us for ministry together.
- **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.
- discover how to connect with our local and global ministry contexts, equipping us to **share/live the gospel**.

Undergirding the journey toward these four milestones is a denomination-wide commitment to leadership development and renewal.

To assist leaders and congregations on this journey, the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America have committed to provide resources, training, and support for each of these milestone areas. We will measure the success of this journey by reporting on the use of ministry resources by congregations, telling stories of church engagement and learnings along the way, and seeing congregations report about progress on the journey. An annual denominational survey will also help us assess whether congregations and members sense that they are moving forward in these areas.

## **Appendix E**

### **Resonate Global Mission Organizational Foundations**

#### **OUR MANDATE**

Resonate Global Mission shall give leadership to the denomination in its task of bringing the gospel holistically to the people of North America and the world and drawing them into fellowship with Christ and his church. The mandate of the agency has three aspects. The agency shall

- encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism and discipleship.
- initiate, support, and guide new-church development and other evangelistic and discipling ministries.
- develop Christian leaders.

*(Acts of Synod 2015, p. 464)*

#### **OUR VISION – WHAT WE WANT TO SEE**

Communities of disciples joining in God’s mission as they faithfully proclaim and live out the good news of Jesus in their local neighborhoods and around the world.

#### **OUR MISSION – WHAT WE WANT TO DO**

Compelled by God’s mission to save the lost and renew all things, we exist to engage more and more people in the Spirit’s call to live out God’s mission in their neighborhoods and in the world.

#### **OUR KEY STRATEGIES – HOW WE DO IT**

Resonate joins with a diverse network of CRCNA congregations and other partners locally and globally. We work to mobilize individuals and communities to participate in God’s mission and work for the spiritual and social transformation of the world. We believe that the Holy Spirit is igniting a global gospel movement and that we can join in by investing in these three critical strategies:

##### **Forming Leaders**

Missional leaders are people who live out, influence, invite, and equip others to join God's mission. We want to see an increasing number of Christians **formed** to engage and lead others on God's mission.

##### **Sending Congregations**

Jesus sends all his followers into the world as his witnesses. We want to see an increasing number of diverse, locally rooted, and globally connected congregations and ministries **sent** to faithfully proclaim and live out the good news of Jesus.

##### **Connecting Networks**

As more people join God on mission, we want to see people working together for spiritual and social transformation in their neighborhoods and around the world. We work to foster an increasing number of networks of leaders **connected** in relationships of mutual learning, trust, and influence.

#### **OUR PRIORITIES**

##### **Develop young adults and lay leaders for mission**

We will open space for diverse groups of young adults and lay leaders, equipping, mentoring, and discipling them so that together we may share the good news and live out the gospel in all areas of life.

### **Plant churches that participate in broader church planting movements**

We will catalyze the planting of diverse churches locally and globally that seek spiritual and social transformation in their communities.

### **Equip and encourage congregations in gospel witness**

We will challenge, encourage, and equip communities of disciples locally and globally to discern the Holy Spirit's work in their neighborhoods and boldly follow the Spirit into relationships that concretely demonstrate the love of Christ and grow the church.

### **Minister with diaspora communities**

We will mobilize believers inside and outside communities of immigrants, migrants, refugees, and international students in a way that welcomes and embraces them, communicates God's love, and calls them to faith in Christ.

## **OUR POSTURES**

### **Prayer**

We saturate all we do in prayer because we are completely dependent on God.

### **Listening**

We listen to the Holy Spirit, the Word, and one another in order to discern God's will.

### **Serving**

We serve others above ourselves, walking in the footsteps of Jesus, who gave his life for us.

### **Learning**

We are at our best when we work together and learn from each other.

### **Care and Accountability**

We offer appreciation for each other, we own our mistakes, and we celebrate what God is doing in and through us.

### **Peacemaking**

We model and nurture trust and respect across barriers that divide people.

## **OUR PILLARS**

*Biblical values that undergird our mission*

### **God's mission as central to our being as the church (God's mission)**

Joining the mission of God, the church is sent with the gospel of the kingdom to call everyone to know and follow Christ and to proclaim to all the assurance that in the name of Jesus there is forgiveness of sin and new life for all who repent and believe. The Spirit calls all members to embrace God's mission in their neighborhoods and in the world: to feed the hungry, bring water to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and free the prisoner.

We repent of leaving this work to a few, for this mission is central to our being.

On our part in God's mission, see Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:45-49, and John 17:18; on seeing our mission beyond our local community, Matthew 24:14 and Acts 13:1-3; on meeting the needs of people, Matthew 25:31-46 and Luke 4:18-19; and on the centrality of mission to our being, John 20:21.

(Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony, para. 41)

### **God's loving care for creation and people (whole world)**

We celebrate the abundance and diversity of the gifts and resources God has given to all peoples and cultures. We continually point others toward and remind ourselves of God's faithful provision to meet our own needs and to help us share with others. We embrace our calling as disciples of Jesus to live and learn together as faithful and generous stewards of God's best intentions for the world.

Our world, fallen into sin, has lost its first goodness, but God has not abandoned the work of his hands: our Maker preserves this world, sending seasons, sun, and rain, upholding all creatures, renewing the earth, promising a Savior, guiding all things to their purpose.

See Genesis 3; 9:8-16; Psalm 104, especially verse 30; Matthew 5:45; and Acts 14:17. For the promises of a Savior, see Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; 11:1-5; 42:1-7; 53; and Micah 5:2.

(Our World Belongs to God, para. 4)

### **The comprehensive scope of God's redemptive work in Christ (whole gospel)**

We announce the gospel of Jesus as good news of redemption for the whole world. We proclaim and embrace the reconciling work of Christ for personal salvation, and we participate in God's reconciling and transforming of our world by working for God's reign of peace and justice. We recognize all aspects of life and community, as well as the darkness in our own personal lives, as needing redemption and transformation.

In a world estranged from God . . . we witness—with respect for followers of other ways—to the only one in whose name salvation is found: Jesus Christ. In Jesus, God reconciles the world to himself. God loves all creation; his compassion knows no bounds.

On the exclusive claims of Christ, see John 14:6 and Acts 4:12; on God's love and compassion for the world, see Matthew 9:36-38 and John 3:16.

(Our World Belongs to God, para. 42)

### **The church as the worldwide body of Christ formed by the Spirit and the Word (whole church)**

We celebrate the unity in diversity of the worldwide body of Christ. We humbly acknowledge that the church is empowered by the Spirit to not only announce but also live out the good news of Jesus. We commit ourselves and call others to a radical discipleship that follows Jesus in the way of the cross, putting others above ourselves and overcoming evil with good. We seek to model this by being a caring and diverse community ourselves. In our worldwide ministry, we honor the work the Spirit has done and is doing through other expressions of the church while contributing our distinctive Reformed flavor. We seek to partner with others whenever and wherever possible.

The Spirit gathers people from every tongue, tribe, and nation into the unity of the body of Christ. . . . Men and women, impelled by the Spirit, go next door and far away into science and art, media and marketplace—every area of life—pointing to the reign of God with what they do and say.

On the gathering of all nations, see Revelation 7:9-17 . . . and on the breadth of the church's mission in the Spirit, Philippians 1:27-2:15.

(Our World Belongs to God, para. 30)

## **Appendix F**

### **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, 2019, all of the agencies and institutions are in compliance with the denomination's investment policy, including the guidance it provides for assets received as a result of gifts or gift-related transactions.

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

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

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA**  
Agencies and Institutions  
Investment Summary in US\$  
As of December 31, 2019

	Back to God Ministries International	Calvin University	Calvin Seminary	Denom./Congreg. Services	Loan Fund	Resonate Global Missions	World Relief
<b>Categories Specified by Investment Policy:</b>							
<b>SHORT TERM</b>							
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS							
Cash, Money-market mutual funds & CDs	\$ 1,621,969	\$ 5,394,845	\$ 9,762,719	\$ 4,878,077	\$ 5,887,653	\$ 10,623,932	\$ 18,789,983
<b>FIXED-INCOME ISSUES</b>							
CRCNA Funds LLC Liquidity Fund	1,842,022	1	-	3,466	1	1,245,566	1 28,110
Other short term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CRCNA FUNDS LLC BALANCED FUND	4,248,189	2	-	87,010	2	9,631,402	2 9,521,161
<b>COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS</b>							
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	1,536,603	3	-	-	-	-
Equity mutual funds	579,373	98,943,013	10	26,990,550	2,10	290,380	3 3,090
<b>FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)</b>							
US treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds	-	39,842,746	-	4,157,529	-	-	-
Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bond mutual funds	206,919	66,878,745	12	10,506,722	1	53,372	-
CIBC / TAL overdraft accounts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Interagency Investments (Obligations):</b>							
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other Investments:</b>							
Private equity fund	-	32,380,289	-	4,313,300	4	-	-
Partnerships	7,284	-	4	-	-	-	-
Land contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hedge funds	-	6,489,037	-	-	-	-	-
Other Alternatives	248,303	2,572,525	11	-	-	24,638	-
Life insurance cash value	533,012	-	-	25,053	5	-	26,446
Common stock -- non-listed	-	2,768,480	7	-	-	-	-
Real estate (non-operating)	6,000	-	8	1,887,088	8	23,146	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,293,070</b>	<b>\$ 256,806,283</b>	<b>\$ 57,617,908</b>	<b>\$ 4,993,606</b>	<b>\$ 5,887,653</b>	<b>\$ 21,892,437</b>	<b>\$ 28,368,790</b>

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA**  
Agencies and Institutions  
Investment Summary in US\$  
As of December 31, 2019

	Back to God Ministries International	Calvin University	Calvin Theol. Seminary	Denom./Congreg. Services	Loan Fund	Resonate Global Mission	World Renew
<b>Categories Specified by Investment Policy:</b>							
<b>SHORT TERM</b>							
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>							
Cash, Money-market mutual funds & CDs	\$ 2,186,962	\$ 5,394,845	\$ 9,762,719	\$ 6,763,253 (9)	\$ 5,887,653	\$ 12,871,777	\$ 24,757,911
<b>FIXED-INCOME ISSUES</b>							
CRCNA Funds LLC Liquidity Fund (1)	1,842,022	-	-	3,466	-	1,245,566	28,110
Other short term	32,498	-	-	1,076,607	-	252,351	1,500,000
CRCNA FUNDS LLC BALANCED FUND (2)	4,248,189	-	-	87,010	-	9,631,402	9,521,161
<b>COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS</b>							
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	40,955	1,536,603 (3)	-	-	-	-	-
Equity mutual funds	579,373 (3)	98,943,013 (10)	26,990,550 (10)	6,738,416	-	290,380 (3)	3,090
<b>FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)</b>							
U.S. treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds	-	39,842,746	4,157,529	5,050,247 (9)	-	-	-
Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	-	-	7,862,693 (9)	-	-	-
Bond mutual funds	206,919 (3)	66,878,745 (12)	10,506,722 (1)	-	-	53,372 (3)	-
CIBC / TAL overdraft accounts	-	-	-	(20,588,133) (9)	-	-	-
<b>Interagency Investments (Obligations):</b>							
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other Investments:</b>							
Private equity fund	-	32,380,289	4,313,300 (4)	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	7,284	- (4)	-	-	-	-	-
Land contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hedge funds	-	6,489,037	-	-	-	-	-
Other alternatives	248,303	2,572,525 (11)	-	-	-	24,638	-
Life insurance cash value	533,012 (5)	-	-	25,053	-	-	26,446 (5)
Common stock -- non-listed	-	2,768,480 (7)	-	-	-	-	-
Real estate (non-operating)	6,000 (8)	- (8)	1,887,088 (8)	-	-	23,146	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,931,516</b>	<b>\$ 256,806,283</b>	<b>\$ 57,617,908</b>	<b>\$ 7,018,612</b>	<b>\$ 5,887,653</b>	<b>\$ 24,392,633</b>	<b>\$ 35,836,718</b>

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

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

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA**  
Agencies and Institutions  
Investment Summary (CANADA IN CDN\$)  
As of December 31, 2019

	Back to God Ministries International	Calvin University	Calvin Seminary	Denom./Congreg. Services	Loan Fund	Resonate Global Missions	World Relief	
<b>Categories Specified by Investment Policy:</b>								
SHORT TERM								
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS								
Cash, Money-market mutual funds & CDs	\$ 753,324	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,513,567	\$ -	\$ 2,997,126	\$ 7,957,237	
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES								
CRCNA Funds LLC Liquidity Fund (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other short term	43,330	-	-	1,435,476	-	336,468	2,000,000	
CRCNA FUNDS LLC BALANCED FUND (2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS								
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Equity mutual funds	-	-	-	8,984,555	-	-	-	
FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)								
US treasuries or Canadian gov't bonds	-	-	-	6,733,663	-	-	-	
Publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	-	-	10,483,591	-	-	-	
Bond mutual funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
CIBC / TAL overdraft accounts	-	-	-	(27,450,844)	-	-	-	
<b>Interagency Investments (Obligations):</b>								
Loans to CRCNA (Denom. Services)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ -
<b>Other Investments:</b>								
Private equity fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Land contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Hedge funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other Alternatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Life insurance cash value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Common stock -- non-listed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Real estate (non-operating)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 796,654</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 2,700,008</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 3,333,594</b>	<b>\$ 9,957,237</b>	<b>\$ 16,787,493</b>

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

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA  
Benefit Plans  
Investment Summary  
As of December 31, 2019**

	Employees' Savings Plan - U.S. in U.S. \$	Ministers' Pension Plan U.S. in U.S. \$	Special Assistance Fund U.S. in U.S. \$	Employees' Retirement Plan - Canada in Canadian \$	Ministers' Pension Plan Canada in Canadian \$	Special Assistance Fund Canada in Canadian \$	Consolidated Group Insurance Canada in Canadian \$
<b>Categories Specified by Investment Policy:</b>							
<b>SHORT TERM</b>							
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>							
Cash, CDs and money-market mutual funds	\$ -	\$ 5,210,130	\$ 217,476	\$ 172,523	\$ 2,185,320	\$ 290,320	\$ 132,823
<b>FIXED-INCOME ISSUES</b>							
Guaranteed investment contracts	-	-	-	126,152	-	-	-
Stable Asset Income Fund	3,259,289	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>COMMON AND PREFERRED STOCKS</b>							
Publicly traded common, preferred, and convertible preferred stock	-	75,776,590	-	-	50,818,806	-	-
Diversified/Alternative mutual fund	8,039,806	5,135,789	-	4,421,999	-	-	-
Equity mutual funds	20,621,935	-	-	923,416	-	-	-
<b>FIXED-INCOME ISSUES (LONG TERM)</b>							
U.S. treasuries, Canadian gov't bonds, or publicly traded bonds and notes (investment grade, at least A-rated)	-	19,580,727	-	-	12,150,069	-	-
Bond mutual funds	6,605,344	-	-	304,727	-	-	-
<b>REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS</b>							
	-	11,464,892	-	-	2,657,039	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 38,526,374</b>	<b>\$ 117,168,128</b>	<b>\$ 217,476</b>	<b>\$ 5,948,817</b>	<b>\$ 67,811,234</b>	<b>\$ 290,320</b>	<b>\$ 132,823</b>

### **Footnotes to the December 31, 2019, Investment Summary**

1. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized fixed income account for agencies.
2. CRCNA Funds LLC pooled/unitized balanced account (fixed income 48%, equities 49%, cash 3%) for agencies.
3. Includes directly owned and donated publicly traded stock or mutual funds.
4. Ownership interest in private equity funds, including unrealized gains and reinvestments. Private equity groups include Venture Capital, Domestic and International Partnerships, Natural Resources, and Distressed Debt.
5. Cash value of life insurance contracts received as gifts.
6. Includes promissory notes received in the sale of real estate.
7. Includes investment in Creative Dining Services, owned jointly with Hope College.
8. Real estate received as a gift or held for investment purposes.
9. These investments, which provide security for the overdraft accounts, are part of a Canadian agency concentration/netting for interest cash management and investment program.
10. Includes equity, commodity, and hedged mutual funds.
11. Includes Tactical Tilt Allocation Fund and other alternative private equity funds.
12. Includes hedged mutual funds.

## Calvin University Supplement

### I. Introduction

The Calvin University Board of Trustees met May 7-8, 2020, and presents to synod this supplemental report. The board had a successful meeting and completed its scheduled work for committee and plenary sessions. During its May meeting, the board thanked two members who are leaving—David Cok and Craig Lubben—for their diligent work on the board and their service to Calvin University.

### II. Finance

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved the 2020-2021 budget proposal and received for information the completed Form 990 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

### III. Academic

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

The Board of Trustees also approved changes to faculty expectations for reappointment and tenure designed to deepen and strengthen Calvin University's Reformed Christian witness. For an overview of these changes please see [calvin.edu/about/who-we-are/faculty-expectations.html](http://calvin.edu/about/who-we-are/faculty-expectations.html).

### 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

Jeffrey De Nooyer is completing his second three-year term on the board as an alumni trustee. The board presents for appointment the following single nominee to serve a three-year term.

*Perrin Rynders* is a litigation partner at Varnum Law LLC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is a member of LaGrave Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids. He is a 1982 history graduate of Calvin University and graduated cum laude from the University of Michigan Law School in 1985. He is a faithful donor and proud supporter of Calvin and has previously served on the Calvin College Alumni Association Board as its president.

b. At-large trustees

Allan Hoekstra ended his second term on the board as an at-large trustee following his resignation in February 2020. The board presents for appointment the following single nominee to serve a two-year term.

*Jeffrey De Nooyer* is a 1980 graduate of Calvin University. He is the president and general manager of Metro Toyota, Inc., and has been active in the automotive industry serving in both state and local associations, as well as on advertising boards. Mr. De Nooyer has served on several boards in his community, including the United Way, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, and the Kalamazoo Christian School Association. He and his wife, Dede, are active members at Third CRC in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he is currently serving as an elder.

Craig Lubben is completing his third three-year term on the board as an at-large trustee, having served as chair for the past five years. The board presents for appointment the following single nominee to serve a three-year term.

*Ray Vander Kooi* is a 1989 graduate of Calvin University. He is the senior vice president of finance and administration and the chief financial officer at Irwin Seating Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is a current board member of both the Employers Association and Van Laan Concrete Construction, Inc. He previously served on the board of trustees of Grand Rapids Christian Schools as treasurer while chairing the operations and finance committee. Mr. Vander Kooi has also served on the Wedgwood Christian Services board of directors as president, treasurer, and chair of the finance and operations committee. He is a member of Seymour CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he has served two terms on the administrative board of council and chaired the Christian education committee.

2. Trustee reappointments

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

Regions 1 and 2: Richard Mast for a second three-year term

Region 9: Tim Goudzwaard for a second three-year term

Alumni: Rhonda Roorda for a second three-year term

At-large: Scott Spoelhof for a second two-year term

At-large: Bill Boer for a third three-year term

At-large: Carl Triemstra for a second three-year term

At-large: Bert Kamp for a second three-year term

B. Board officers

The Calvin University Board of Trustees appointed the following officers of the board for 2020-2021: Bruce Los, chair; Mary Tuuk, vice chair; Janice Buikema, secretary; Jim English, treasurer (vice president for finance); and Sharolyn Christians, assistant secretary (executive assistant to the president).

**V. Other**

The Calvin University Board of Trustees approved the new endowment goal of \$210 million by 2025.

**VI. Recommendation**

That synod elect new members and reappoint members for subsequent terms on the Calvin University Board of Trustees.

Calvin University  
Michael K. Le Roy, president

## World Renew Supplement

### I. Board matters

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

The board requests that synod appoint the following as a Canadian classical delegates to a first term of three years: Lisa Kuipers (Alberta North) and John Batterink (Quinte). *Note:* John Batterink's appointment is subject to affirmation of his nomination at the meeting of Classis Quinte on May 26.

#### B. *Canada member completing service*

World Renew would like to recognize and thank the following board members on completing a second term of service: Ko Spyksma (B.C. South-East) and Hans Vink (Quinte).

#### C. *U.S. member-at-large nominees for appointment*

The board of delegates requests that synod appoint each of the following single nominees as U.S. members-at-large to a first term of three years:

*Jeff Banaszak* is a member of Pillar Church in Holland, Michigan. He has served at Engedi Church as a director of administration, and he started the Moran Park church plant in Holland, Michigan. Mr. Banaszak is gifted in administration and accounting/finance, with experience in auditing, budgeting, investments, purchasing, and information technology. He has a desire to serve as a board treasurer with a nonprofit organization that is focused on international ministry.

*Bonny Mulder-Behnia* is a member of Rosewood (Calif.) CRC, where she currently serves as executive pastor. She loves getting to know people and their God stories. She also enjoys having the privilege of praying with people through intimate crises, coordinating ministry events, working with leaders, preaching, and teaching. She looks forward to listening, learning, and figuring out how she can best serve World Renew.

*Charles Udeh* is a member of Zuni (N.Mex.) CRC. He has worked as a public relations officer within his church as well as on the worship, sound, marital counseling, and youth mentorship committees. He proclaims God's faithfulness throughout his life to build him to be an ambassador for God's kingdom.

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

The board requests that synod appoint the following as U.S. classical delegates to a first term of three years: Sunjin Kim (Ko-Am) and James Zwier (Northern Michigan).

#### E. *U.S. members completing terms*

World Renew would like to recognize and thank the following board members completing their service on the board: Ramon Orostizaga (pastoral adviser), Angela Buikema (Northern Illinois), and Barry Haven (member-at-large).

## II. Recommendation

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

World Renew

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

Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director, World Renew-Canada

## **Calvin Theological Seminary Supplement**

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

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

At its meeting on May 21-22, 2020, the board elected the following officers for 2020-2021: Keith Oosthoek, chair; Dave Morren, vice chair; Heather Garretson, secretary.

### **II. Academics**

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

COVID-19 has obviously affected our global village as well as our ongoing formation and education programs at Calvin Theological Seminary. We are grateful for the investment made many years ago in an online delivery system of education, by means of which we moved all of our classes online from mid-March through the end of this academic year.

Calvin Theological Seminary graduated 61 students, collectively celebrated by means of a 2020 Commencement Congratulations Video released on our originally scheduled commencement date of May 23, 2020 (see [vimeo.com/421778354](https://vimeo.com/421778354)).

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

Calvin Seminary is beginning a new, completely online certificate program in cooperation with Christian Schools International (CSI). We are now offering a Certificate in Bible Instruction, a 15 credit-hour program with required courses in “Integrating Faith and Teaching” and “Teaching Bible,” along with 11 hours of other seminary courses. All of these credits will count toward a master’s degree in ministry leadership or a master of divinity degree at CTS. In addition, we have an agreement with the Calvin University Education Program that all of these credits will count toward a master of education degree at Calvin University. We see this certificate as a service to Christian schools binationally and as a gateway to encourage students to consider further CTS Education (see [calvinseminary.edu/academics/certificate-in-bible-instruction](https://calvinseminary.edu/academics/certificate-in-bible-instruction)).

Calvin Seminary has been approved by the Association of Theological Schools to begin offering a doctor of ministry (D.Min.) degree with an anticipated start date in the late summer of 2020. A previous synod asked CTS to investigate this degree program as part of a continuing education report—and we are glad for the ongoing support of the church. We aim to begin with a cohort of twelve students from diverse backgrounds (see [calvinseminary.edu/academics/doctor-of-ministry](https://calvinseminary.edu/academics/doctor-of-ministry)).

#### *B. Distinguished Alumni Awards*

Rev. John DeVries (founder of Bibles for India, now known as Mission India) and Rev. Stanley Jim (regional director for CRC Home Missions from 2000-2016 and longtime pastor in Classis Red Mesa) received the seminary’s Distinguished Alumni Award for 2020.

### 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 Cory Willson for two years (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2022) as Jake and Betsy Tuls associate professor of missiology and missional ministry.
2. Received notice from Mariano Avila of his intention to retire on January 31, 2023, which (D.V.) would complete 20 years as a professor of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary.
3. Affirmed the placement of Jeffrey A. D. Weima as holder of the Deppe family doctoral chair in New Testament as part of the expansion of the Calvin Theological Seminary Ph.D. program into New Testament studies.
4. Noted the intention to hold, at a future date, the first bachelor of arts commencement ceremony for students completing this degree through the Calvin Prison Initiative. This program is part of an ongoing partnership with Calvin University.
5. Noted that the Meeter Center of Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary is planning a two-day conference for September 18-19, 2020, to commemorate the Puritans.
6. Noted that the upcoming Loving Your Neighbor Conference: "Forming Citizens of God's Kingdom in Prison and Upon Re-entry" will be fully online and held July 6-7, 2020. More information can be found at [calvinseminary.edu/academics/loving-your-neighbor-2020](http://calvinseminary.edu/academics/loving-your-neighbor-2020).
7. Heard an update on COVID-19 summer course offerings under the umbrella of "Ministry in a COVID-Shaped World." These are fully online courses, with some classes presented entirely in Spanish. More information on this joint venture of Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary can be found at [calvinseminary.edu/academics/covid-19-courses](http://calvinseminary.edu/academics/covid-19-courses).
8. Heard an update from Rev. Shawn Brix, who on January 2, 2020, began work as the Calvin Theological Seminary Canadian church relations liaison.
9. In keeping with the actions of Synod 2019 of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (or the Council of Delegates in the interim), identified two additional at-large trustees for the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

### D. *Board appointments*

The board recommends that synod appoint the following nominees to the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees as additional at-large members:

*Susan Keesen* is a retired senior business executive and an attorney who previously served as an at-large Calvin Theological Seminary board member for her expertise in law and finance. In that capacity, she eventually served as board secretary and as chair of the development and finance committee. She has recently concluded service in her community as a board member for Christian Living Communities and has served on the classical interim committee of Classis Rocky Mountain since 2013. She is a member of Hope Fellowship CRC in Denver, Colorado.

*Rev. Christian Oh* received a bachelor's degree in theology/philosophy in Seoul, Korea, at Chongshin University in 1980. Upon immigrating to the United States to further his studies in 1980, he pursued and received a master of divinity degree from Calvin Theological Seminary and subsequently completed the coursework in 1991 for a master of theology degree. After 30 years in ministry, he completed a doctor of intercultural study degree on syncretism in the Korean church from Grace Theological Seminary of Winona Lake, Indiana, in 2016. Rev. Oh plans soon to be completing more than 30 years of ministry at Han-Bit Christian Reformed Church in Rochester Hills, Michigan. Rev. Oh has been an ethnic adviser at synod, serves as a teaching instructor and mentor for the Korean Institute for Ministry, and has previously served on the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees and on the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

### **III. Recommendation**

That synod by way of the ballot appoint the stated nominees as additional at-large members to the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees for a first term of three years.

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees  
Heather Garretson, secretary

## Candidacy Committee Supplement

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

#### A. *Candidates for ministry*

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

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

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

Subject to approval, the candidates are normally presented to synod. Because synod will not meet this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these names will be presented for approval to the Council of Delegates in June 2020 on behalf of synod. Note that one of the thirty-six names presented is listed by initials only, at the request of this candidate and with permission of the Candidacy Committee, following the protocol presented in section III of the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2020.

Namju Bae  
Maria D. Beversluis  
David Bouma  
Richard A. Britton III  
Andrea C. Bult  
Ahnna E. Cho Park  
Jaebok Choi  
Erik M. Delange  
Derek B. Ellens  
Derek W. Elmi-Buursma  
Eric D. Freeman  
Cary R. Gephart  
Noelle M. Jacobs  
Travis Jamieson  
Kelsi J. Jones  
Kennedy M. Kailiti  
Hyung-Jun Kim  
Jinsol Kim

Jiyong "Jonathan" Kim  
Seongjun Kim  
Jeff M. Liou  
Bryzon W. Masiboh  
Loice M. Minito  
K.O.  
Jeremy Oosterhouse  
Jennifer L. Rozema  
Hannah G. Van Rees Saxton  
Nathaniel A. Schmidt  
Jeremy Scripps  
Mike J. Slofstra  
Lynn Song  
Joshua P. Stammis  
Chris A. Tibben  
Steven M. Vandyk  
Nathan J. Voss  
Cory B. Willson

### 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 twenty-three persons for approval of candidacy extension:

Ram Aryal	Matthew Mulder
Yoon Chul (Daniel) Choi	Katrina J. Olson
Elisabeth A. De Vries	Jennifer L. Palkowski
Brad Diekema	Kyle J. Sandison
Steven Dykstra	Ivan K. Santoso
Ben Gresik	Sharon R. Smith
Robert J. Gruessing	Rebecca L. Tjapkes
Elizabeth L. Huizenga	Thomas J. Van Wyk
S.K.	Jantje Fenna (Femke) Visser-Ellenbaas
Kiseok (Daniel) Kang	Klaas J. Walhout
Hannah Ryou Lee	Chad E. Werkhoven
Courtney Mooney-Saldivar	

### C. *Reinstatement of candidacy*

Daniel Meyer was first a candidate in 2013. After a period of time he requested that his candidacy be suspended as he worked through some personal matters and also his sense of call. In the past year he has established a relationship with a CRC congregation in northern Alberta. As this congregation has expressed a desire to call him, and as he has expressed a desire to serve the congregation, the Candidacy Committee interviewed him in April. We are pleased to affirm Daniel Meyer's request for reinstatement of candidacy, and we recommend that synod approve this request.

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

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

Date	Name of applicant	Classis	Former denomination
6-4-19	Campbell, Karen	Grand Rapids East	Presbyterian Church in Ireland
8-7-19	Lee, John	Hudson	Presbyterian Church in America
8-19-19	Cho, Kang Wang (Joseph)	Hanmi	Evangelical Church Alliance
8-20-19	Kwon, "Joel" Byun	Hanmi	Korean Presbyterian Church
8-24-19	Chung, Yong Je	Hanmi	Korean Presbyterian Church
8-26-19	Lee, Phillip	California South	Global Mission Church SBC
8-28-19	Han, Samuel Samhyun	Hudson	Presbyterian Church in Korea
8-29-19	Jung, Yunho (Joseph)	Ko-Am	Presbyterian Church in Korea
8-29-19	Yi, Daniel Duyoung	Ko-Am	Presbyterian Church in Korea
10-6-19	Ho, Sea	Lake Erie	Presbyterian Church in Korea
10-18-19	Bailey, Justin A.	lakota	Christ Our Savior Church in Chicago

12-5-19	Kim, Minsoon	Red Mesa	Presbyterian Church in Korea
12-15-19	Nieuwstraten, Doug	Toronto	Reformed Church in America
1-22-20	Hwang, Eunsang	B.C. South-East	Presbyterian Church in Korea
3-4-20	Schatzle, Joshua	Eastern Canada	Evangelical Presbyterian Church

### III. Other matters

In view of the cancellation of Synod 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Candidacy Committee discussed in our meeting of April 2020 what would constitute a wise course of action regarding our proposals to synod relative to the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC). See Recommendations E and F and the accompanying Appendix in the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2020 (*Agenda for Synod 2020*, pp. 240-47). The Candidacy Committee judged that it would be wise to proceed with the matters described in the proposals because the concerns they address are significant and ought not wait for another year for action. In addition, the approaches contained in these proposals are consistent with the history, purposes, goals, and development of the EPMC program and were presented in a survey open to all synod delegates at Synod 2019. We will provide an update to Synod 2021, and we will remain open to all input offered by churches and classes in the intervening year.

### IV. Recommendations

- A. That synod declare the persons listed in section I, A as candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
- B. That synod approve the extensions of candidacy as recommended in section I, B.
- C. That synod approve the reinstatement of the candidacy of Daniel Meyer as described in section I, C.
- D. That synod approve the action of the Candidacy Committee in declaration of need for the persons listed in section II for affiliation under Church Order Article 8.
- E. That synod take note of the action of the Candidacy Committee as noted in section III of this supplemental report.

Candidacy Committee  
David R. Koll, director

## **Communication 5: Councils of Community CRC, Kitchener, Ontario; and First CRC, Owen Sound, Ontario**

To the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA:

Following the events of the CRCNA over the past three months, including communications to churches from various denominational staff, articles in *The Banner*, highlights of the COD meeting, and the sudden resignation of executive director Dr. Steven Timmermans, we feel it necessary to present you with our concerns. Given the current situation of global pandemic and the loss of Synod 2020, we believe that the proper process to make you aware of our concerns is through this communication.

In February of 2020, a letter from the COD was sent to the churches, in essence telling us that the COD was putting in place necessary legal changes that should not affect the local church. A presentation at classis followed this, saying both sides of the border were in favor of the changes and working together, and we should trust the system. However, merely a week later at the COD meeting, our executive director, Steven Timmermans, suddenly and unexpectedly resigned. Less than a month later, the Canada at-large delegate from Classis Huron likewise suddenly and unexpectedly resigned. It is highly unusual for executive directors and board members to suddenly and unexpectedly resign over simple and necessary administrative tweaks. Being concerned by the changes made, and alarmed by these resignations, we requested access to documents from both the Canada Corporation and the COD so that we might better understand the concerns and legal opinions that justified these changes, and the official records of the motions and resolutions made. We also requested full disclosure that any conversations with COD members and denominational leadership would not be held in confidence, but would be allowed to be made public. We were, however, denied access to many of these records. Therefore it is with the very few public documents available to us that we lay out our concerns:

1. The resolutions that the Canada Corporation made represent a massive realignment of the CRCNA and effectively split the denomination into two national churches, each solely responsible for those church operations which lie on its respective side of the border.
2. There has been an egregious lack of transparency in the process and decisions made. Official communications to the churches have been so vague they do not even detail the weighty decisions made, and many of our questions and requests for justification of these decisions have been met with evasion, denial, and at times, hostility.
3. The resolutions that the Canada Corporation made were drafted, debated, and adopted by the Canada Corporation largely in camera, consulting neither the local churches nor other important stakeholders, and as such lack necessary legitimacy for the full CRCNA.
4. The resolutions that the Canada Corporation passed were made without any U.S. staff present and without knowledge of the executive director,<sup>1</sup> both of which are a violation of the Canada Corporation's bylaws. Furthermore, the actions taken by the Canada Corporation went against the decision of the full Council of Delegates, which laid out the process and

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<sup>1</sup> See CRCNA Canada Corporation Directors Minutes of 2019-12-16 in which the attendance does not include any U.S. staff, nor does it include Steven Timmermans as absent with, or without, notice.

mandate for addressing the charitable status concerns raised by a local church at both the May 2019 and October 2019 meetings.<sup>2</sup>

5. There has been a failure to provide adequate explanation for why the Canada Corporation made the decision to contravene the express decision of the full COD to appoint a bi-national committee to resolve the matter. Both the minutes approving this course of action and the legal brief upon which the resolutions were founded are being kept out of the public record.
  - Neither the Canada Corporation nor the Council of Delegates has made public the precise legal basis for institutionally splitting the CRCNA. They have, in fact, refused to share the legal opinion commissioned by the Canada Corporation which ostensibly grounds the division of the CRCNA.
6. As a result of the process and communication thus far, many local church members and pastors have felt a severe loss of trust in the denomination and its leadership.
7. The unity of the church of Christ is itself a Reformed doctrine. Further divisions of the body of Christ should only be suffered by that body if such are absolutely necessary after a proper deliberative process of mutual discernment has concluded. The process taken to enact these changes—involving sparse public minutes, obscure public communications, no published legal opinion, and which was accomplished over a matter of mere months in between meetings of synod—has not been deliberative, and is a betrayal of the heart of Reformed polity.
8. The CRCNA has only very recently (2016) already undergone a massive organizational renovation as the result of a years-long denominational deliberative process, and the resolutions that the Canada Corporation made represent a fundamental undoing of that project.
9. There is no evidence that the Canada Corporation or the COD looked into examples, both within and outside the church, that are seen by independent organizations as being legitimate multinational agencies. For a few examples: World Renew has separate boards and projects but meet together and cooperate across the border. Compassion Canada has a separate national board, but almost all the money raised goes outside of Canada. There was also no consultation with Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, or the Ministers' Pension Fund, all of which operate across the border.
10. Canada Corporation members have suggested to us that the organizational structure of the COD and CRCNA governance is comparable to situations like CEAF and Redeemer tuition tax fraud, in which the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) required CRC members to pay back taxes. However, in both those cases, tax receipts were being inflated and the law was blatantly ignored, quite unlike this situation.

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<sup>2</sup> See “COD Minutes and Appendices 5-19” item COD 5876, A, which states:

“A motion carries to conduct a thorough review of the Canada agency corporate status and charity legal requirements, upon resolution of the pending application of Resonate Global Mission to Canada Revenue Agency as an internal division.”

11. Church Order expressly mandates that all actions taken by the Canada Corporation and the COD must be approved by the following synod.<sup>3</sup> The process taken thus far has profoundly altered positions that were appointed by synod, flouting proper process, and with no stated plan for input from local churches or proper process.

- It has been communicated to us by the secretary of the Canada Corporation that synod has no corporate authority to overturn decisions made by the Canada Corporation.<sup>4</sup> While this opinion may be technically legally correct, it represents a profound violation of the covenant trust that synod has placed in its COD and has no place in the covenant community of the church, much less in its leadership.

We understand that there is a one-year interim period in which the denomination will be reviewing and making recommendations for a new administrative structure that addresses these concerns. Churches have not received any information on what this process will look like, and now that synod is canceled, there is no body that will be able to give the COD direction on this matter. We do not believe that what has been done cannot be undone, and we trust that the CRA does not treat charitable status as a light switch that can be flicked on and off at a moment's notice. We believe it is important for the COD to take a step back, ask important questions, consult important stakeholders, and take next steps carefully, deliberately, and collaboratively.

Specifically, we believe that there are two important steps that the COD ought to take:

1. The COD ought to seek a **second legal opinion** from a lawyer who is an expert in Canadian tax law to provide a response to the legal opinion upon which these decisions were based, exploring alternate ways forward. Making sweeping structural changes based on a single legal opinion is not best practice, and could even be seen as irresponsible. It is like submitting to a highly invasive and dangerous surgery without seeking a second opinion from another doctor.
2. The COD ought to mandate the restructuring team to **pursue legal options that best preserve both institutional and ecclesiastical unity**, in keeping with the express direction and priorities of the denomination reaffirmed at several past meetings of synod. There are many examples of other charitable institutions and religious organizations that collaborate effectively across many borders. The CRCNA has a long and venerable legacy of binationality, and we desire for that to be preserved. The process taken, current "emergency" structure, and communications we have received from Canada Corporation executives have caused us great concern and shaken our faith in the commitment of these officers to the stated goals of synod for binational unity and cooperation.

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<sup>3</sup> From the *Church Order* of the CRCNA:

Article 77: "Synod shall regulate the work of denominational ministries by way of the Governance Handbook and decisions of the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA."

Article 33-b: "Each classis shall appoint a classical interim committee, and synod shall appoint the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA, to act for them in matters which cannot await action by the assemblies themselves. Such committees shall be given well-defined mandates and shall submit all their actions to the next meeting of the assembly for approval."

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix.

We hope that your response to these concerns and recommendations will restore some of our faith in the denominational leadership.

Council of Community CRC, Kitchener, Ontario  
Alesha Hoekstra, clerk

Council of First CRC, Owen Sound, Ontario  
Ken Boers, clerk

*Note:* The councils of Community CRC and First CRC were unable to process the communication through Classis Huron because the spring meeting was canceled. The document was originally being developed as an overture to Synod 2020, and was modified to be a communication to the COD in light of the fact that synod has been canceled. The councils understand it as being a response to the “very brief and vague report” on “Addressing structure in light of Canadian charitable-law requirements” on page 28 of the COD Report in the *Agenda for Synod 2020*. Because churches have not received a comprehensive report on the Canada Corporation’s decisions or their ramifications for our denominational agencies, the councils were left to compile the details of what those decisions entailed.

### **Appendix**

Email received by John Tamming, delegate to Synod 2020, from the secretary of the Canada Corporation on March 11, 2020, in response to a planned appeal to churches to prepare their questions regarding the process and decisions made for Synod 2020.

John, I have just received this and am appalled that you would write and consider publishing this article. The members of Canada Corp. have been appointed by each Classis in Canada and have acted, to the best of their ability, in the best interests of our Church by obtaining expert legal advice and abiding by the advice received. We have absolutely no interest in splitting our Church, effectively or otherwise. Have you checked the impeccable reputation of the Carters firm?

And decisions have certainly not been made at breathtaking speed. Canada Corp. initiated a review of our corporate and charitable status in May 2019 after receiving queries from some Canadian Churches. The initial discussions occurred with a bi-national committee appointed by the Executive of the CRCNA. The US leaders were involved right from the beginning. Only when specific decisions needed to be made only by Canada Corp., did the full board of Directors act unilaterally. None of the discussions or decisions were made lightly, and many of us lost sleep trying to ensure that we would not hear comments like the ones expressed in your article. Separation was never mentioned as a possibility and the Board has done everything within its power to ensure that it will not be a result of the required changes. The denomination will remain whole. Only matters dealing with money and who controls how it is spent are being changed.

As you well know, Synod has no corporate authority to overturn decisions made by Canada Corp. and, as a result, “preserve the unity of the denomination.”

If you would like a more detailed response from me, please so advise. Otherwise I will assume my email of earlier today will be sufficient to allay your fears and save you the cost of publishing this article which will only have the effect of inviting CRA to come for a visit.

## Communication 6: Council of Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ontario

In these strange days of COVID-19, many of our administrative structures of polity have not been so attentive to spinning the wheels of the broader church, having plenty enough to do at home, as we're sure you understand. So unfortunately, this note did not get written in time for our Classis Hamilton agenda, and our classis meeting was canceled anyway.

Given the brokenness of our world and of our processes in this time, we hope that you, together with the appropriate members of the Council of Delegates, especially those of the Canada Corporation, will still take note of this brief communication as a note we deemed worth writing, even in times like these.

We write to raise concerns about the Ministry Shares Reimagined initiative that was to come before synod this year, for the following reasons (the action we would propose is below in bold):

1. The current ministry-share system remains the cheapest, most stewardly way to raise money: 0.2 percent cost compared to the 20 percent cost of traditional advancement (*Agenda for Synod 2019*, p. 111).
2. We are concerned that this initiative will lead to significant loss of ministry capital, and therefore capacity on the national and international level where our denominational agencies and ministries operate, carrying out effective work too broad for any of our local churches to do on their own.
3. These ministries are still valued in roughly the proportion in which they exist, as studies around prioritization over the past few years have revealed (*Agenda*, p. 113).
4. The plan suggests that trust in the denomination to centrally allocate resources to ministry needs has eroded to the point where the process of allocating resources must be decentralized to the network of churches and classes where trust remains stronger. However, we do not believe that scenario holds to be as true in the Canadian context as in the American. Numbers shared by the Canadian ministries director at the October meeting of Classis Hamilton gave a five-year average of 71% ministry share support in Canada—a strong number relative to the numbers given in the *Agenda for Synod 2019* (p. 112) for the CRCNA overall. Our sense is that giving, investment, and participation in denominational ministries in Canada is stronger across the board than for our American counterparts. We may eventually need to decentralize our giving structures, but that time may not yet have come for Canada.
5. We believe that, quite practically, the ministry and agency staff have been hired not as fundraisers but as practitioners of ministry. It is a shame to waste them on advancement work, yet the Ministry Shares Reimagined plan will necessarily require much more advancement work of our ministry staff to keep the profile of and investment in these ministries strong across all the various churches and classes who would be making independent decisions on funding.
6. Recent legal advice received by the Canada Corporation has confirmed that Canadian ministry must have independent direction and control, including in the area of finance. Yet, we have not really seen nor been able to study the numbers for what ministry-share giving looks like in the Canadian context (relative to this plan, particularly) to know whether this

plan makes sense for Canada or not. Again, we suspect investment remains stronger here, but we really have no way to know for sure without broader research on the Canadian impact of this change being made available to the churches.

7. Synod's cancellation means there will not be a venue in which to properly deliberate this change before ratification. And while we have great faith in our COD and Canada Corporation members, we do not believe a shift of this scale should be taken on by the interim body of synod alone (the COD/respective corporations) without the input of the gathered church in the strength of its polity provisions.
8. With that said, given the legal advice that Canada Corporation needs to exercise independent direction and control, we wonder whether synod would even be the proper venue for the Canadian church to have this discussion about ratification of the new plan. The new reality brought about by this legal opinion has not yet had time to work itself out in newly clarified structures of governance, finance, and accountability, suggesting that it may be unwise for either side of the church to take on such a large scale fiscal shift as the Ministry Shares Reimagined plan at this point in time.

Here, then, is our proposal (or overture, if such a word fits the strange way that this comes to the COD):

**That the Canada Corporation delay for one year any decision to go forward with the Ministry Shares Reimagined plan for the Canadian context.**

*Grounds:*

1. The current ministry-share system remains the cheapest and is therefore the most stewardly system to administer.
2. The plan may harm the national and international ministries of the Canadian church financially.
3. Each of these ministries remains valuable to local churches, as studies have shown.
4. We believe trust in ministries remains high and giving strong in Canada.
5. The plan will likely require more advancement work of staff, taking them away from ministry.
6. Independent numbers for ministry-share giving in Canada has never been revealed. The churches therefore have never had opportunity to study and make an informed decision on it.
7. This decision is too weighty for the Canada Corporation or COD to make independently of synod.
8. The independent governance, finance, and accountability structures required by the legal opinion received by the Canada Corporation have not yet coalesced to clarity for the Canadian church, making it unwise to proceed with such a large fiscal shift at this time.
9. Given the reality of COVID-19, few have the head space to process such new changes right now.

We do not believe that enough *specifically Canadian* research has been done to determine the implications of this change on Canadian ministry and churches to justify moving ahead at this time—especially at *this COVID-19* time. We at the local level have enough fish to fry without worrying about how to re-jig our ministry-share giving and fielding more advancement communications from denominational agencies and ministries. Let them do ministry, let us do

ministry, and let us trust one another to do it well for now. Let's keep the status quo for a year until we can give all these new realities a good think.

Council of Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ontario  
Clarence Nagtegaal, clerk