

membership, not to profession of faith. The overture seems to confuse these two references.

—Adopted

IV. Faith Formation Committee

A. *Materials*: Faith Formation Committee Report, including Appendices A-D, pp. 541-621

B. *Recommendations*

1. That synod accept the revised version of “Children at the Table” (*Agenda for Synod 2011*, pp. 577-612) as fulfillment of the mandate of the Faith Formation Committee to formulate “a clear statement about the participation of baptized children at the Lord’s Supper and the practice of public profession of faith for use in the churches.”

Grounds:

- a. The document is consistent with Scripture and the Reformed confessions.
- b. Synod 2010 endorsed an earlier draft of the document as sufficient basis for approving a principle to guide further work on the topic.
- c. The revised document includes the changes requested by Synod 2010.
- d. This action will allow the document to be received by our congregations and by our ecumenical conversation partners as a document accepted by synod.

—Adopted

2. That synod affirm the following principle regarding infant dedication to guide the continuing work of the committee (see also *Agenda for Synod 2011*, pp. 612-21):

When parents request infant or child dedication in public worship, the pastor and elders of local congregations should (1) engage in pastorally appropriate ways to celebrate the birth or adoption of the child, pray for the child and parents, and call for the commitment of the parents to nurture their children in the Lord; (2) engage in convicted and winsome teaching on the subject of infant baptism; and (3) refrain from leading rituals of infant or child dedication in public worship services.

Grounds:

- a. Congregations should minister to those who will not present their children for infant baptism with a spirit of gratitude to God for the gift of these children, offering encouragement and accountability to parents as part of faithful, pastoral ministry.
- b. A faithful, encouraging, pastoral response to parents promises to reduce unhelpful ambivalence toward members who do not affirm infant baptism.
- c. Many people do not embrace infant baptism because they do not understand how it is consistent with Scripture. Teaching on the subject offers a rich opportunity to promote greater biblical

understanding and may lead the parents to present their children for baptism.

- d. A ritual of an infant or child dedication in public worship is not required by the Bible and is not consistent with the Reformed confessions.
- e. A ritual of infant or child dedication in public worship could easily create confusion about the meaning and purpose of the sacrament of baptism.
- f. This principle is consistent with the Reformed confessions and with the past decisions of Synods 1888, 1964, 1973, and 2007.

—Adopted

3. That synod extend the term of the Faith Formation Committee for one more year with the following additional mandate:

- a. To identify appropriate models for developing a denomination-wide mechanism for promoting continued learning, reflection, and training on the topic of faith formation and discipleship. This is to be done in consultation with other denominational ministries and related agencies.
- b. Provide quarterly reports on this work throughout 2011 and 2012 to the interim executive director, with a final report to Synod 2013.

Grounds:

- 1) Faithful discipleship and faith formation are urgent and ongoing concerns for our churches.
- 2) While the Faith Formation Committee will complete its original mandate at the meeting of Synod 2012, the tasks of training, learning, and mutual accountability are ongoing.
- 3) The work of the Faith Formation Committee in shepherding the denomination in this topic has raised awareness of the hunger for resources and leadership to support faith formation at the classical and local levels. This movement toward stronger faith formation practices needs to be supported and encouraged.
- 4) While there are denominational ministries and other related agencies that support faith formation, there is currently no agency or office mandated to coordinate or oversee matters of faith formation.

—Adopted

(The report of Advisory Committee 9 is continued in Article 57.)

ARTICLE 37

The evening session is adjourned at 9:20 p.m. Elder delegate Frank Zee leads in closing prayer.