

2. That synod adopt the following changes to Church Order Article 45 with full implementation (delegation of a deacon) at Synod 2016.

—Adopted

Proposed Article 45

Synod is the assembly representing the churches of all the classes. Each classis shall delegate **one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one other officebearer** to synod.

Grounds:

- a. Numerous requests over the years have asked that the major assemblies seat deacons in order to have full representation and participation in carrying out the mission of the church.
- b. Previous synodical reports have said that the Bible and the confessions do not prohibit the seating of deacons at major assemblies.

—Adopted

II. Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon

A. *Materials:* Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon (including Appendices A-B), pp. 380-410

B. *Privilege of the floor:* Mr. Terry Woodnorth, chair; Dr. Chris Ganski, reporter; and task force members Mr. Andrew Ryskamp (staff adviser) and Dr. Mick Vanden Bosch

C. *Recommendations*

1. That synod adopt the following changes to the Church Order and Its Supplements as indicated:

Note: Italicized text indicates changes from the current Church Order.

Current Article 1-a

a. The Christian Reformed Church, confessing its complete subjection to the Word of God and the Reformed creeds as a true interpretation of this Word, acknowledging Christ as the only head of his church, and desiring to honor the apostolic injunction that in the churches “everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40), regulates its ecclesiastical organization and activities in the following articles.

Proposed Article 1-a

a. The Christian Reformed Church, confessing its complete subjection to the Word of God and the Reformed creeds as a true interpretation of this Word, acknowledging Christ as the only head of his church, and desiring to honor the apostolic injunction that *officebearers are “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:12), and to do so “in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40), regulates its ecclesiastical organization and activities in the following articles.”*

Grounds:

- a. Adding the quotation from Ephesians 4:12 clarifies that the church has a Church Order not merely for the sake of orderliness but for the sake of ministry.
- b. The added change from Overture 9 will help prioritize the ultimate task of officebearers, which is not primarily to do things “in a fitting and orderly way” (regulation) but to build up the saints for works of service (engagement).

—*Adopted*

Current Articles 4-a and -b

- a. In calling and electing to an office, the council shall ordinarily present to the congregation a nomination of at least twice the number to be elected. When the council submits a nomination which totals less than twice the number to be elected, it shall give reasons for doing so.
- b. Prior to making nominations the council may give the congregation an opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons.

Proposed Articles 4-a and -b

- a. In calling and electing to an office, the council shall ordinarily present to the congregation a nomination of at least twice the number to be elected. When the council submits a nomination which totals less than twice the number to be elected, it shall give reasons for doing so.
- b. Prior to making nominations the council may give the congregation an opportunity to direct attention to *suitably gifted* persons.

Ground: Adding the phrase *suitably gifted* clarifies that suitability for office is a matter of spiritual giftedness.

—*Adopted*

Current Article 11

The calling of a minister of the Word is to proclaim, explain, and apply Holy Scripture in order to gather in and build up the members of the church of Jesus Christ.

Proposed Article 11

The calling of a minister of the Word is to proclaim, explain, and apply Holy Scripture in order to gather in and *equip* the members so that the church of Jesus Christ *may be built up*.

Ground: According to Ephesians 4, it is God who builds up the church through the equipping ministry of those called to office. These changes bring the Church Order in line with the biblical text.

—*Adopted*

Current Article 12-a

- a. A minister of the Word serving as pastor of a congregation shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship services, catechize the youth, and train members for Christian service. The minister, with the elders, shall supervise the congregation and fellow officebearers, exercise admonition and discipline,

and see to it that everything is done decently and in order. The minister, with the elders, shall exercise pastoral care over the congregation, and engage in and promote the work of evangelism.

Proposed Article 12-a

a. A minister of the Word serving as pastor of a congregation shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship services, catechize the youth, and train members for Christian service. The minister, *with other officebearers*, shall supervise the congregation and fellow officebearers, exercise admonition and discipline, see to it that everything is done decently and in order, exercise pastoral care over the congregation, and engage in and promote the work of evangelism *and diaconal outreach*.

Ground: According to Article 30 of the Belgic Confession, ministers of the Word are called to common tasks with elders *and* deacons in equipping the church. Likewise, the second half of Church Order Article 12-a is intended to give an illustrative list of those tasks that the minister is called to do with other officebearers. Making reference in the article to elders alone is confusing, since some of the tasks belong to other officebearers as well, such as supervising fellow officebearers (see Church Order Art. 82-84 and Supplement, Art. 82-84) and exercising pastoral care (see Art. 65). The proposed language removes this confusion by making a generic reference to other officebearers and including diaconal outreach in the tasks that the minister does in common with other officebearers.

—Adopted

Current Article 25-a

a. The elders and deacons shall serve for a limited time as designated by the council. As a rule a specified number of them shall retire from office each year. The retiring officebearers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the profit of the church make immediate eligibility for reelection advisable. Elders and deacons who are thus reelected shall be reinstalled.

Proposed Article 25-a

a. The elders and deacons shall serve for a limited time as designated by the council. *The length of term should be appropriate for continuity and succession of ministry leadership.* Retiring officebearers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the profit of the church make immediate eligibility for reelection advisable. Elders and deacons who are thus reelected shall be reinstalled.

Ground: While this article was written to give councils flexibility in the length of terms of office, the “as a rule” language has suggested that flexibility is discouraged, and this has hindered the equipping work of some officebearers in some contexts. The proposed revision does not change the meaning of the article—terms should still be limited to a specified period of time—but it does better emphasize flexibility and the purpose for which that flexibility should be employed.

—Adopted

Current Article 25-b

b. The elders, with the minister(s), shall oversee the doctrine and life of the members of the congregation and fellow officebearers, shall exercise admonition and discipline along with pastoral care in the congregation, shall participate in and promote evangelism, and shall defend the faith. The elders also shall nurture in the congregation grateful and obedient participation in the Lord's Supper through encouragement, instruction, and accountability.

Proposed Article 25-b

b. The elders, with the minister(s), shall oversee the doctrine and life of the members of the congregation and fellow officebearers, shall *provide counsel* and discipline along with pastoral care in the congregation, shall participate in and promote evangelism, and shall defend the faith. *As shepherds of the church, they shall encourage and support the members in their Christian life.* The elders also shall nurture in the congregation grateful and obedient participation in the Lord's Supper through encouragement, instruction, and accountability.

Ground: The proposed revision adds a clearer expression of the elders' calling as shepherds to positively build up the church of Christ.

—Adopted

Current Article 25-c

c. The deacons shall represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people, especially to those who belong to the community of believers, and shall stimulate the members of Christ's church to faithful, obedient stewardship of their resources on behalf of the needy—all with words of biblical encouragement and testimony which assure the unity of word and deed.

Proposed Article 25-c

c. The deacons shall represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people, especially to those who belong to the community of believers. *Deacons shall lead the members in ways that inspire faithful stewardship of their time, talents, and resources and so give life in this world the shape of God's kingdom. Thus deacons shall create and encourage participation in structures and ministries of mercy, justice, and reconciliation, both locally and globally. All of this shall be done* with words of biblical encouragement and testimony, which assure the unity of word and deed.

Ground: The proposed revision gives a more comprehensive description of the mandate for deacons as understood and practiced by many diaconates and described in various deacon handbooks and other resources and in the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons.

—Adopted

Current Article 34

The major assemblies are composed of officebearers who are delegated by their constituent minor assemblies. The minor assemblies shall provide their delegates with proper credentials

which authorize them to deliberate and vote on matters brought before the major assemblies. A delegate shall not vote on any matter in which the delegate or the church of which the delegate is a member is particularly involved.

Proposed Article 34

The major assemblies are composed of officebearers who are delegated by their constituent minor assemblies. The minor assemblies shall provide their delegates with proper credentials which authorize them to deliberate and vote on matters brought before the major assemblies. *In any matter that lies almost exclusively within the mandate(s) of one or two of the offices, the delegates shall exercise due deference in deliberation.* A delegate shall not vote on any matter in which the delegate or the church of which the delegate is a member is particularly involved.

Ground: The proposed language addresses the concern that when all offices are seated in major assemblies, some matters brought to the floor will lie largely outside the calling of one or two of the offices. Likewise, the article should instruct all delegates to be mindful of their gifts and mandate and defer in deliberation to those most competent.

—*Defeated*

(The report of Advisory Committee 9 is continued in Article 62.)

ARTICLE 59

The evening session adjourns at 9:25 p.m. Elder delegate Ms. Marguerite E. Ridder (Huron) leads in closing prayer.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, June 17, 2015

Tenth Session

ARTICLE 60

Rev. Josiah Chung leads the call to worship from Psalm 33, and delegates respond by singing “Holy, Holy, Holy” and “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing.”

Rev. Chung invites the delegates to participate in a service of Scripture and song. The worship team leads in singing “Total Praise.”

Ms. Denise Posie and Mr. John Lendein lead the delegates in several responsive litanies from Psalm 62:1-2, 3-8, and Romans 8. Delegates respond by singing “Here on Jesus Christ I Will Stand,” “I Cry Out,” and “My Soul Finds Rest.”

Ms. Denise Posie and Mr. John Lendein lead delegates in the reading of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1, and delegates respond with “I Will Rise.” The liturgists lead delegates in further litany, and delegates sing “Let Justice Flow Down.”

Delegates sing “All People That on Earth Do Dwell” and “Praise God.” Rev. Chung leads in Korean and English the benediction from Romans 15:13. Worship concludes with the passing of the peace.

The roll indicates that Rev. David A. Struyk (Grand Rapids South) and Mr. Gerald Reinsma (Rocky Mountain) are absent with notice.

ARTICLE 61

A delegate presents the following motion:

That whenever synod meets outside of Grand Rapids, the Office of the Executive Director, in conjunction with the Candidacy Committee and Calvin Theological Seminary, work to provide transportation and accommodation at synod for as many of the candidates as possible.

Ground: It is a shame that synod could not celebrate with the majority of the new candidates for ministry.

—Received as information

ARTICLE 62

(The report of Advisory Committee 9 is continued from Article 58.)

Advisory Committee 9, Offices of Elder and Deacon, Rev. Richard Bodini reporting, presents the following:

Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon

A. *Materials:* Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon (including Appendices A-B), pp. 380-410

B. *Privilege of the floor:* Mr. Terry Woodnorth, chair; Dr. Chris Ganski, reporter; and task force members Mr. Andrew Ryskamp and Dr. Mick Vanden Bosch

C. *Recommendations*

1. That synod adopt the following changes to the Church Order and Its Supplements as indicated:

Note: Italicized text indicates changes from the current Church Order.

Current Article 35-a

a. In every church there shall be a council composed of the minister(s), the elders, and the deacons. Those tasks which belong to the common administration of the church, such as the calling of a pastor, the approval of nominations for church office, mutual censure, meeting with church visitors, and other matters of common concern, are the responsibility of the council.

Proposed Article 35-a

a. In every church there shall be a council composed of the minister(s), the elders, and the deacons. Those tasks which belong to the common administration of the church, such as *promoting its mission*, calling a pastor, *approving* nominations for church office, mutual censure, meeting with church visitors, and other matters of common concern, are the responsibility of the council.

Ground: Since the article gives only an illustrative list of matters of common concern, there is no need for the article to be comprehensive. However, the proposed language recognizes that the promotion of the church's mission should be preeminent in the common administration of the church.

—Adopted

Current Article 35-b

b. In every church there shall be a consistory composed of the elders and the minister(s) of the Word. Those tasks which belong distinctively to the office of elder are the responsibility of the consistory.

Proposed Article 35-b

b. In every church there shall be a consistory composed of the elders and the minister(s) of the Word. Those tasks which belong distinctively to the office of elder are the responsibility of the consistory. *The consistory shall give an account of its work to the council.*

Ground: The proposed language codifies a common practice: that of elders reporting on their work to the council, just as deacons do (Art. 35-c). This parallel practice between the diaconate and the consistory follows from the principle of the parity of office and from Belgic Confession, Article 30, in which we confess that the governance of the church belongs to the council. A report from the elders to the council also facilitates council oversight of the activities of the elders, as required by the practices of mutual censure and special discipline, both of which are the tasks of the council (Art. 35-a; Supplement, Art. 82-84).

—Adopted

Current Article 42-b

The church visitors shall consist of one or more teams of officebearers chosen for their experience and counsel, with teams composed of two ministers or one minister and one elder. Their task shall be to ascertain whether the officebearers of the church faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and promote the building up of the body of Christ and the extension of God's kingdom. Churches are free to call on the church visitors whenever serious challenges arise that would benefit from their advice. The church visitors shall provide classis a written report of their work.

Proposed Article 42-b

The church visitors shall consist of one or more teams of officebearers chosen for their experience and counsel. *Team composition shall include a minister of the Word and at least one other officebearer.* Their task shall be to ascertain whether the officebearers of the church faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and promote the building up of the body of Christ and the extension of God's kingdom. Churches are free to call on the church visitors whenever

serious challenges arise that would benefit from their advice. The church visitors shall provide classis a written report of their work.

Grounds:

- a. Oversight of officebearers belongs in the hands of ministers, elders, and deacons at the congregational level (see Art. 35-b and Supplement, Art. 82-84), and the same should be true at the classical level, especially when all three offices are delegated to the classis.
- b. Some matters for which church visitors may be required are matters that lie primarily within the mandate of the office of deacon, and the churches would benefit from having an experienced deacon as one of the church visitors, which the proposed article allows, but does not require.

—Adopted

Current Article 62

Offerings for benevolence shall be received regularly in the worship services. Offerings also shall be received for other ministries of the congregation and the joint ministries of the churches.

Proposed Article 62

Opportunity shall be given regularly, as part of worship, to offer gifts, both financial and otherwise, to develop and sustain ministries of the congregation, locally within its own community, the shared ministries of the denomination globally, and other causes that the church supports.

Ground: The proposed language offers a more comprehensive description of the nature of offerings and promotes meeting the needs of the poor in a variety of ways—through more than just offerings of benevolence.

—Adopted

Current Article 64-a

- a. Each church shall minister to its adult members so as to increase their knowledge of the Lord Jesus, to nurture a mature faith in Christ, and to encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers.

Proposed Article 64-a

- a. Each church shall minister to its adult members so as to increase their knowledge of the Lord Jesus, to nurture a mature faith in Christ, to encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers, and to equip them to fulfill their calling in the church and in the world.

Ground: The proposed language gives a more comprehensive and missional description of the purpose of nurturing faith in adults, in line with the meaning of Ephesians 4:12.

—Adopted

Current Articles 73-a and -b

- a. In obedience to Christ's Great Commission, the churches must bring the gospel to all people at home and abroad, in order to lead them into fellowship with Christ and his church.
- b. In fulfilling this mandate, each council shall stimulate the members of the congregation to be witnesses for Christ in word and deed and to support the work of home and world missions by their interest, prayers, and gifts.

Current Articles 74-a and -b

- a. Each church shall bring the gospel to unbelievers in its own community. This task shall be sponsored and governed by the council. This task may be executed, when conditions warrant, in cooperation with one or more neighboring churches.
- b. Each church shall carry on a ministry of mercy. The deacons shall enable the needy under their care to make use of Christian institutions of mercy. They shall confer and cooperate with diaconates of neighboring churches when this is desirable for the proper performance of their task. They may also seek mutual understandings with agencies in their community which are caring for the needy, so that the gifts may be distributed properly.

Current Articles 75-a and -b

- a. The classes shall, whenever necessary, assist the churches in their local evangelistic programs. The classes themselves may perform this work of evangelism when it is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches. To administer these tasks, each classis shall have a classical home missions committee.
- b. The classes shall, whenever necessary, assist the churches in their ministry of mercy. The classes themselves may perform this ministry when it is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches. To administer this task, each classis shall have a classical diaconal committee.

Current Articles 76-a and -b

- a. Synod shall encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism, and shall also carry on such home missions activities as are beyond their scope and resources. To administer these activities synod shall appoint a denominational home missions committee, whose work shall be governed by synodical regulations.
- b. Synod shall encourage and assist congregations and classes in their ministry of mercy, and shall carry on such work as is beyond their scope and resources. Synod shall appoint a diaconal committee to administer the denominational ministry of mercy. The work of this committee shall be governed by synodical regulations.

Current Supplement, Article 76-a

The synodical regulations referred to in Article 76 may be found in the Mission Order of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions (*Acts of Synod 1992*, pp. 741-46 and subsequent revisions thereof).

Current Articles 77-a and -b

a. Synod shall encourage and assist the joint world mission work of the churches by regulating the manner in which this task is to be performed, providing for its support, and encouraging the congregations to call and support missionaries. To administer these activities, synod shall appoint a denominational world missions committee, whose work shall be governed by synodical regulations.

b. The denominational diaconal committee shall extend the ministry of mercy of the congregations and classes worldwide.

Current Supplement, Article 77-a

Synod regulates the work of the world missions committee by way of the Constitution and decisions of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

Proposed Article 73: The Church's Mandate to Ministry

In joyful obedience to the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, the church is called to bear witness to Jesus Christ and his kingdom through word and deed.

Proposed Articles 74-a through -d: The Ministry of the Congregation

a. Each church shall proclaim the gospel to its community. The local church is to announce and demonstrate, through word and deed, that God's reign has come; to live as an exhibit of God's healing and reconciling grace; and to extend to all the invitation to experience new life in Christ through repentance and faith.

b. The council shall be responsible to develop a vision and provide training and leadership to equip the church to fulfill its unique evangelistic and diaconal calling. Churches are encouraged to work with neighboring churches, appropriate community resources, classical and denominational resources, and other gifts the Lord has provided to help accomplish their tasks.

c. Each council shall encourage the members of the congregation to support denominational and classical ministries by their interest, prayers, and gifts.

d. Each church shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.

Proposed Articles 75-a and -b: The Ministry of the Classis

a. The classes shall implement a ministry plan that advances evangelistic and diaconal witness to Christ and his kingdom in its specific region and, when necessary, assist those churches needing support to fulfill their mission.

b. Each classis shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.

Proposed Article 76: The Ministry of the Denomination

- a. Synod shall encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of word and deed witness to Christ and his kingdom. Synod shall also appoint denominational ministries that engage churches and classes in ministries that are local, national, binational, and global.
- b. Synod shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.

It is recommended that the following Supplement, Article 76-a be removed:

~~The synodical regulations referred to in Article 76 may be found in the Mission Order of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions (Acts of Synod 1992, pp. 741-46 and subsequent revisions thereof):~~

Proposed Article 77: Synodical Governance of Ministries

Synod shall regulate the work of denominational ministries by way of the Constitution and decisions of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.

It is recommended that the following Supplement, Article 77-a be removed:

~~Synod regulates the work of the world missions committee by way of the Constitution and decisions of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.~~

Grounds for proposed changes to Articles 73-77:

- a. These changes grow out of the belief that the whole church is called to diakonia.
- b. The new language is inclusive of all the denominational ministries, not just select ministries.
- c. The changes reflect a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the church's ministry.
- d. Article 77 incorporates the existing Supplement, Articles 76-a and 77-a, applies it to all denominational ministries, and brings the Church Order into alignment with the governance realities of the denomination.
- e. These changes integrate the roles and mandates of the offices into the mission of the church.
- f. The changes recognize the continuities between local and global ministries and the growing collaborations between ministries.

—Adopted

Current section heading: D. Missions

Proposed section heading: D. Ministries of the Church

—Adopted

Note: The following recommendation was presented by the advisory committee and *withdrawn* following discussion:

2. That synod, upon adoption of the proposed Church Order changes above (with respect to the offices of elder and deacon), adopt the following changes to the Rules for Synodical Procedure:

Note: The change to Church Order Article 34 that calls for delegates to “exercise due deference in deliberation” calls for an accompanying change in the Rules for Synodical Procedure. The following change specifies how the president and delegates to synod will ensure that “due deference” is actually extended. The following are additions to the duties of the president of synod and the delegates to synod when issues are discussed (changes indicated by *italics*).

Proposed new section II, A, 4

4. The president shall ensure that the minister, elder, or deacon delegates exercise due deference when matters arise that lie almost exclusively within the mandate(s) of one or two of the offices.

Note: The present section II, A, 4 and subsequent sections would then be renumbered 5, 6, 7, and so forth.

Proposed new section VIII, J, 2

2. All delegates participate in the deliberations. If matters arise that lie almost exclusively within the mandate(s) of one or two of the offices, the delegates representing the other office(s) shall exercise due deference.

Note: The present section VIII, J, 2 and subsequent sections would then be renumbered 3, 4, 5, and so forth.

—*Withdrawn*

3. That synod instruct the ED to commend the task force’s proposed revision of the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 397-400) and Overture 10 (*Agenda*, pp. 442-43) to the Liturgy Forms Consultation of the CRCNA for consideration as an additional version for inclusion in their report to Synod 2016.

—*Adopted*

4. That synod instruct the ED to make the necessary updates to the “Guide for Conducting Church Visiting” resulting from the adoption of the above Church Order revisions.

—*Adopted*

5. That synod, in order to provide for the ongoing revitalization of the offices of elder and deacon, mandate the executive director of the CRCNA to task appropriate agencies and ministries with the development of strategies for the revitalization of the offices of elder and deacon, including
 - a. A cataloging of all resources offered by our denominational agencies that support the vision of reinvigorated offices of elder and deacon, as well as other appropriate resources offered by other sources (see Appendix A, *Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 401-404).

- b. The development of an approach, whether by way of conferences, staff, materials, or other means, that gives energy to initiatives of deacons and elders in churches, classes, and the denomination.

The executive director of the CRCNA shall report to synod on the annual progress of the above efforts of denominational agencies and ministries as all seek to work together for the revitalization of the offices of elder and deacon.

Ground: This is important for the revitalization of the offices of deacon and elder.

—Adopted

6. That synod thank the task force for the good work in Appendices A and B and commend them to the churches as excellent resources.

—Adopted

7. That synod accept this report as fulfilling the mandate of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon and dismiss the task force with thanks.

—Adopted

8. That this be synod's response to Overtures 9-12 and Communication 2.

—Adopted

Upon completion of this report of the Offices of Elder and Deacon Advisory Committee, delegates sing "We Are Called."

ARTICLE 63

(The report of Advisory Committee 4 is continued from Article 42.)

Advisory Committee 4, Congregational Support Ministry, Rev. Joel W. Zuidema reporting, presents the following:

I. Specialized Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church

A. Safe Church Ministry

1. Materials: Safe Church Ministry Report, pp. 192-93
2. Recommendations
 - a. That synod commend the work of Safe Church Ministry.
 - b. That synod remind the churches again of the importance of developing and implementing a safe church policy and remind the classes in the denomination of the importance of a safe church team. One-third of the churches do *not* have safe church plans.

—Received as information

B. Committee for Contact with the Government

1. Materials: Committee for Contact with the Government Report, pp. 217-18

2. Recommendation

That synod commend the work of the Centre for Public Dialogue, the public arm of the Committee for Contact with the Government, and the Office of Social Justice in their work along with aboriginal partners in Canada for reconciliation action plans to be implemented in the years ahead as a result of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

—Received as information

C. Disability Concerns

1. Materials: Disability Concerns Report, pp. 219-22

2. Recommendations

- a. That synod commend the work of the Office of Disability Concerns.
- b. That synod note the tremendous resources available on the Disability Concerns website. The website includes advice on Bibles that is truly helpful for persons with sight disabilities. Simply purchasing large print Bibles is not enough. The website also has advice on projecting words and images on screen for persons with sight disabilities. Also included is advice on sound systems to help the hearing impaired. These are just some of the important topics covered.

—Received as information

D. Race Relations

1. Materials: Race Relations Report, pp. 223-24

2. Observation: Dominant culture churches want to minister *to* rather than minister *with*. When we all begin to minister *with* each other, we will have bridged a great divide.

3. Recommendations

- a. That synod recognize a new resource, *African Americans: We've Come This Far by Faith*. Additional resources are planned in the coming year to help the church understand the distinctiveness of First Nations Peoples and Asians.
- b. That synod commend the work of the Office of Race Relations.

—Received as information

E. Social Justice and Hunger Action

1. Materials: Social Justice and Hunger Action Report, pp. 225-28

2. Recommendation

That synod commend the work of the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action in connecting with many organizations to raise awareness, identify, encourage, and raise a voice of advocacy about the issues of immigration reform, creation care, peacemaking, indigenous justice, and restorative justice.

—Received as information