

B. Communication from synodical deputies R. Koops (Hamilton), C.N. Overduin (Toronto), and J.J. Hoytema (Niagara) includes the following comment: As synodical deputies, we are distressed about the increased use of Article 17-a by churches and pastors.

Recommendation: That synod instruct the councils and classes of the CRCNA, as well as the president and board of Calvin Theological Seminary and the CRCNA's Candidacy Committee, to take note of this comment.

—Adopted

C. Communication from synodical deputies C.N. Overduin (Toronto), R. Koops (Hamilton), and J. Kerkhof (Chatham) includes the following comments: As synodical deputies, we were once again faced with the difficulty of coming to a conclusion on a ministry associate position. Synod 2001 has left the door open so widely that often there is not enough clarity for when ordination is appropriate or inappropriate. The Yearbook lists many pages of ministry associates. Synod needs to address this issue once again because classes and synodical deputies repeatedly need to deal with particularized requests in the context of a generalized confusion. We feel torn as deputies and classes between being open to the leading of the Spirit and, at the same time, wondering where the boundaries are for these ministry associate positions.

Recommendation: That synod instruct its deputies, as well as the classes and congregations of the CRC, to take note of the actions of Synod 2012, changing the title of ministry associate to commissioned pastor, and clarifying the nature of a job description that would be consistent with this title.

—Adopted

III. Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Report and Related Matters

A. Materials

1. Overture 63
2. Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Report
3. BOT Supplement (section I, G; Recommendation D)
4. BOT Supplement II
5. Christian Reformed World Missions Supplement

B. *Privilege of the floor:* Rev. John Terpstra, chair of the Board of Trustees; Rev. Joel R. Boot, chair; and Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, reporter

C. Recommendations

1. That synod affirm the ongoing work of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and the Ministries Leadership Council in reviewing the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church.

—Adopted

2. That synod accept the initial report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture as completing the task of verifying the analysis of the Stratagem Report in keeping with its mandate.

—Adopted

3. That synod approve the proposed position description of the Executive Director of the CRCNA as presented in the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture report.

—Adopted
4. That synod direct the Board of Trustees to form an Executive Director Search Committee with the goal that a candidate be presented for interview and approval by Synod 2013. It is suggested that the search committee be composed of three members from the Board of Trustees, two members from the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture, and four individuals from the CRCNA membership, for a total of nine members, with a chair to be appointed from among them by the Board of Trustees. It is understood that the formation of such a search committee includes authorization to obtain a consultant to assist in the search process.

Grounds:

 - a. This is the recommendation of the BOT (Supplement II), and is consistent with the recommendation of the task force.
 - b. A consultant can greatly expedite the work of the committee via their connections and expertise.
 - c. Other organizations have recently been served very well by the expertise of a consultant (e.g., Redeemer University College, Dordt College, the Institute for Christian Studies, Calvin College).

—Adopted
5. That synod adopt the following timeline for the Executive Director search process:
 - a. No later than August 2012: Appointment of the Executive Director Search Committee and retention of a consultant.
 - b. Fall 2012: Begin the search process.
 - c. February 2013: Update on the search process provided to the Board of Trustees.
 - d. May 2013: Presentation of a nominee to the Board of Trustees.
 - e. Synod 2013: Interview and appointment of the nominee.

—Adopted
6. That synod direct the Board of Trustees to design and implement a process for succession and transition and, as part of that process, consider retaining Rev. Joel R. Boot for an additional year beyond Synod 2013 to serve as a counselor to the new executive director with duties to be assigned by the executive director. Rev. Boot was originally appointed by Synod 2011 to serve a two-year interim period.

—Adopted
7. That synod extend the initial one-year term of service of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture three additional years beyond Synod 2012, with the expectation that the task force will report through the Board of Trustees to subsequent synods through 2015.

Grounds:

- a. This respects the mandate Synod 2011 gave the task force, and it leaves the task force in the position to evaluate the function of the BOT within the structure.
- b. This respects the constitutional mandate of the BOT and keeps the BOT fully informed of the task force's activities.
- c. This arrangement should foster the already close and cooperative working relationship between the BOT and the task force.
- d. Some issues that the task force has to deal with (especially those related to the CRC's binational character) can be better addressed through the BOT, which has equal representation in both the United States and Canada.

—*Adopted*

8. That synod declare Recommendation 7 to be its response to the Board of Trustees' request for clarity with regard to Recommendation G of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture report (BOT Supplement section I, G; Recommendation D)

—*Adopted*

9. That synod declare these actions (Recommendations 1-7) to be its response to the appreciative communication from the board of Christian Reformed World Missions (Christian Reformed World Missions Supplement).

—*Adopted*

10. That synod declare this to be its response to Overture 63.

—*Adopted*

Executive director Joel R. Boot gives thanks to the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture. The president responds.

IV. Overture 7: Do Not Require Delegates to Submit a Motion in Writing before Synod Considers It

A. *Materials:* Overture 7, pp. 481-84

B. *Recommendation*

That synod not accede to Overture 7.

Grounds:

1. Technology has overcome some of the concerns and challenges addressed by the overture.
2. The overture's grounds are not compelling and do not express the widespread sentiments of synodical delegates.
3. The president of synod always has discretionary authority to entertain motions from the floor.

—*Adopted*

V. Overture 3: Commission a Study of Church as *Institution* and *Organism*

A. *Materials*: Overture 3, pp. 466-69

B. *Background*

The material in Overture 3 reflects the reality that we live in a society and belong to a church that is to some extent characterized by polarization and lack of trust. In this context, church members on occasion feel that denominational leaders, denominational agencies, and ecclesiastical assemblies speak on behalf of the church in areas beyond their mandate or competence. Overture 3 addresses this polarization and lack of trust.

The overture touches on deep pastoral concerns and raises large theological issues, such as the nature and calling of the church and how it engages the world. These issues should be addressed, but the normative way to begin addressing such weighty and consequential matters would be by studying Scripture and the confessions that the church has adopted. A study of the distinction between church as institution and church as organism offers too narrow an approach to these matters—one that does not draw on biblical images or other available theological models.

C. *Recommendation*

That synod not accede to Overture 3.

Ground: This overture engages a broad range of issues, pastoral as well as theological, but offers a framework that is too narrow for addressing those issues comprehensively.

—*Defeated*

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued in Article 78.)

ARTICLE 69

The afternoon session adjourns at 5:15 p.m. Elder delegate Mr. Michael Schuller leads in closing prayer.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, June 13, 2012 Twelfth Session

ARTICLE 70

Elder delegate Ms. Carolyn P. Dieleman leads in opening prayer.

ARTICLE 71

Advisory Committee 9, Creation Stewardship, Mr. Lawrence Hoogerhyde, Sr., reporting, presents the following:

Creation Stewardship Task Force

A. *Materials*

1. Creation Stewardship Task Force, including Appendices A-G, pp. 287-411
2. Overtures 55-60