

VI. Response to Overture 15: Mandate Denominational Agencies and the Board of Trustees to Develop Concrete Strategies to Carry Out the Great Commission

A. *Materials*: Overture 15, p. 422-23

B. *Recommendations*

1. That synod not accede to Overture 15.

Grounds:

- a. The Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church includes both the stated goals and the accountability suggested in the overture.
- b. The reports of the denominational agencies presented to synod make it clear that the denomination is carrying out the work of the Great Commission.
- c. Addressing social and environmental issues are components of carrying out the Great Commission (“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”).
- d. The concern raised in Ground 4 of the overture does not reflect the breadth of work that is occurring throughout the denominational agencies and ministries, including partnering with local churches.

— *Adopted*

2. That synod affirm the work being done by the BOT and denominational agencies and encourage their direction as illustrated in the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture and their discussion of the “Five Streams” (denominational priorities) (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, p. 348-93).

The above recommendation is tabled until after the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

— *Tabled*

ARTICLE 30

The president introduces Dr. Gary J. Bekker, director of Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM), who introduces Rev. Derek Bouma, president of the World Missions-Canada board; and Rev. Joseph Kamphuis, president of the World Missions-U.S. board. Delegates view three short videos and are addressed by the following speakers:

Dr. Gary J. Bekker reflects on God’s faithfulness over the past 125 years. Through the decades, God called CRC men and women to serve him in unfamiliar places and among unfamiliar people. These missionaries could not accomplish their work without the support of the Christian Reformed Church. Prayer uplifted them when the work seemed futile, and encouraged them to rely on God for wisdom and strength. God has answered and continues to answer those prayers.

Rev. Derek Bouma shares how CRWM missionaries are strengthening local Christian leaders for ministry across the globe. God is on the move, knocking on hearts and stirring people to live for him. The CRC and CRWM have faithfully responded to this call for the past 125 years and with God’s help will continue to draw people to a fuller life in Christ.

2. That this be synod's answer to Overtures 21, 22, and 24.

— *Adopted*

3. That synod take special note of the recommendation by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture to give the BOT authorization to approve forthcoming position descriptions and the search for, appointment of, and ratification of final candidates for senior leadership team positions (BOT Supplement, section I, E).

— *Adopted*

4. That synod take note of the start-up of a new search for an executive director of the CRCNA with the hope of presenting a nominee to Synod 2014 (BOT Supplement, section I, G).

— *Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued in Article 47.)

ARTICLE 44

The president welcomes the following fraternal delegates to Synod 2013:

Rev. Pieter G. Sinia, chair of the National and International Ecumenical Faith Relations Committee from the Netherlands Reformed Churches.

Rev. Stephen Kendal, principal clerk from the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Dr. Peter Borgdorff, deputy executive director, welcomes the following fraternal delegates to Synod 2013:

Dr. Stephen Lytch, director of fund development for the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Rev. Dr. Gerrit Dawson from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Joel Boot, executive director, welcomes Rev. Thomas De Vries, general secretary of the Reformed Church in America. Rev. Boot and Rev. De Vries dialogue together regarding catalyzing collaboration to multiply mission, and delegates witness the signing of a partnership agreement between the CRC's World Renew and the RCA's Reformed Church World Service agencies.

ARTICLE 45

The morning session adjourns at 11:50 a.m. Young adult representative Ms. Nicole G. Scholten leads in closing prayer.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, June 11, 2013

Seventh Session

ARTICLE 46

The afternoon session convenes at 1:18 p.m. Ms. Laura de Jong, young adult representative, opens the afternoon session with prayer.

Grounds:

- a. Crossroads Community CRC has extended this invitation, and Trinity Christian College's facilities are available.
- b. A study of the costs of holding synod on the campus of Trinity Christian College indicates that costs are comparable to those of holding synod in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at Calvin College.

— *Adopted*

II. Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture

A. *Materials:* Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Report (including appendices A-D), pp. 348-93

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

C. *Recommendation*

That synod allow forty-five minutes to hear a presentation of "Five Smooth Stones" as background to the proposed "Five Streams" for use as ministry priorities and values for organizational development within the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Grounds:

- a. The Five Streams proposal provides a framework for breaking down "silos" and forming collaboration tables.
- b. The Five Streams proposal informs the CRCNA's strategic planning process that is currently under way.
- c. The Five Streams proposal emphasizes outcomes rather than the work of agencies.
- d. The Five Streams proposal provides a communication model to help the local church and denomination intersect and interact.
- e. The Five Streams proposal provides a framework to analyze and continue to review structure and culture.

— *Adopted*

III. Board of Trustees

A. *Materials*

1. Board of Trustees Report (sections II, A, 10)
2. Appendix A, pp. 28, 40-42, 46-64

B. *Privilege of the floor:* Rev. John Terpstra, chair of the Board of Trustees; Rev. Joel R. Boot, executive director; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. *Recommendation*

That synod recommit to the BOT the recommendations contained in the Role of Advisers to Synod Report (II, A, 10; Appendix A).

Grounds:

1. The guidelines recommended do not adequately differentiate among the various types of advisers to synod.
2. The recommendations of the report fail to represent the unique role of faculty advisers.

3. The recommendations would unduly restrict the voice(s) of advisers and young adult representatives in the deliberations of synod.
4. The recommendations could benefit from more input from the various types of advisers.

— *Adopted*

IV. Response to Overtures 1, 2, 5, 6

A. *Materials*: Overtures 1, 2, 5, and 6, pp. 397, 406-11

B. *Recommendations*

1. That synod approve the transfer of Urim CRC in Lake Forest, California, from Classis California South to Classis Pacific Hanmi.

Grounds:

- a. Classis Pacific Hanmi has approved the transfer of Urim CRC from Classis California South at their February 2013 meeting, contingent upon the completion of future transfer procedures from Classis California South and the synodical office.
- b. The Urim CRC leadership have been participating in the Classis Pacific Hanmi meetings and events as informal members and contributing significantly.
- c. Classis California South has approved the transfer of Urim CRC to Classis Pacific Hanmi.
- d. Belonging to Classis Pacific Hanmi will result in enhanced communication by minimizing the language barrier.

— *Adopted*

2. That this be synod's response to Overtures 1 and 2.

— *Adopted*

3. That synod not accede to Overture 6.

Ground: The requested reflection is already taking place and will continue to take place within the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

— *Adopted*

4. That synod not accede to Overture 5.

Grounds:

- a. The overture requests action that presently happens informally.
- b. For the CRCNA-Canada Corporation to bring recommendations directly to synod, bypassing the BOT, would violate the Constitution and Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA.
- c. The concern of the overture is already being addressed by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.
- d. The overture preempts the process already put in place by the BOT by having the Director of Canadian Ministries participate in exploring the proposed pathways for cultivating binationality, including governance implications, contained in the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture.

— *Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued in Article 55.)

ARTICLE 57

The vice president welcomes Rev. R. Scott Greenway, member of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture, who provides a presentation on the “Five Smooth Stones” as background to the proposed “Five Streams.” “Five Streams” are proposed as ministry priorities and values for organizational development within the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued in Article 60.)

ARTICLE 58

The morning session adjourns at 11:50 a.m. Young adult representative Mr. Nicholas Chuba leads in closing prayer.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, June 12, 2013

Tenth Session

ARTICLE 59

The afternoon session convenes at 1:58 p.m. The vice president continues as chair.

ARTICLE 60

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued from Article 57.)

Delegates resume conversation about the “Five Streams” and transition into the report of Advisory Committee 1, Synodical Services I. Rev. Archie L. VanderHart, reporter for the advisory committee, presents the following:

Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture

A. *Materials*: Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Report (including appendices A-D), pp. 348-93

B. *Privilege of the floor*: Rev. Joel R. Boot, chair, and Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, reporter

C. *Recommendations*

1. That synod endorse the ministry priorities, as identified in the “Five Streams” document in Appendix B to the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Report (*Agenda*, p. 381), for discussion and discernment within the church, its agencies, boards, and planning groups.

— *Adopted*

2. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to explore the proposed pathways for cultivating binationality, including its governance implications, presented in this report, in consultation with the senior leader within Canada and the executive director (secs. V-VI).

— *Adopted*

3. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to encourage the executive director to identify the process for providing participatory training to staff and the BOT in order to develop a “collaborative culture” in which staff, leaders, and congregants are heard and work together to share, develop, and implement a common vision for the denomination (sec. VII, B).
— *Adopted*
4. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to mandate the executive director and leadership to explore, embrace, model, promote, and implement a cultural model in the CRCNA that enhances collaboration and effective communication within (and between) its offices, the Board of Trustees, and congregations as described in the above suggestions (sec. VII, B).
— *Adopted*
5. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to request that the newly appointed executive director, when one is appointed and within eighteen months of being in the position, initiate a survey similar to the *Wilder Research Collaboration Factors* survey with CRCNA departments, ministries, and agencies to determine success in making a cultural change within predetermined “projects” requiring three or more groups working together on a particular ministry (sec. VII, B).
— *Adopted*
6. That synod appoint the new executive director, as soon as one is appointed, to serve on the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (sec. VII, B).
— *Adopted*
7. That synod affirm that the Board of Trustees is authorized to approve revised senior leadership position descriptions when presented to the Board by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture. Upon approval of the revised position descriptions, appropriate search processes may begin in order to fill the senior leadership team (sec. X).
— *Adopted*

The following negative vote is registered: Steven Meyer (Hackensack).

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued in Article 62.)

ARTICLE 61

The vice president introduces Rev. Steve Van Zanen (CRWM-USA) and Mr. Steve Kabetu (CRWM-Canada), who explain the change that now requires missionaries to raise 90 percent of their funding (up from 60%).

ARTICLE 62

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued from Article 60.)

Advisory Committee 1, Synodical Services I, Rev. Archie L. VanderHart reporting, presents the following:

Board of Trustees

A. *Materials*: Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture Report (including Appendices A-D), pp. 348-93

B. *Privilege of the floor*: Rev. Joel R. Boot, chair, and Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, reporter

C. *Recommendation*

That synod affirm the work being done by the BOT and denominational agencies and encourage their direction as illustrated in the report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture and their discussion of the “Five Streams” (denominational priorities) (*Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 348-93).

— *Adopted*

(The report of Advisory Committee 1 is continued in Article 82.)

The president resumes the chair.

ARTICLE 63

The president introduces Ms. Shannon Jammal-Hollems, who addresses delegates on the work of Specialized Ministries. Delegates watch a video presentation on the CRC Specialized Ministries and thank the staff who are present.

ARTICLE 64

(The report of Advisory Committee 2 is continued from Article 28.)

Advisory Committee 2, Synodical Services II, Rev. Peter R. Byma reporting, presents the following:

I. Board of Trustees

A *Materials*

1. Board of Trustees Report (sections II, A, 6-7, 21, 24; B, 1, 4, including Appendix E), pp. 26-27; 32, 34, 36, 38, 67-75
2. Board of Trustees Supplement (section I, C)

B. *Privilege of the floor*: Rev. John Terpstra, chair of the Board of Trustees; Rev. Joel R. Boot, executive director; and members of the executive staff as needed

C. *Recommendations*

1. That synod encourage all Christian Reformed churches to adopt a church policy on disability and to appoint at least one person in the congregation to serve as a church disability advocate.

e. The current Office of Deacon Task Force, as per their mandate, addressed only one of the offices. There is value in doing the same for all the offices, as may be appropriate, so that it is done in a complete and integrated manner rather than piecemeal.

— *Adopted*

4. That synod, in appointing a new task force, include two members of the current Office of Deacon Task Force, as well as others representing the offices and missional interests of the CRCNA, to address the matters identified in Recommendation 3 above. They will report their findings and recommendations to Synod 2015 and give a progress report of their work to Synod 2014.

Grounds:

- a. Having two members of the current task force will give continuity to the work they have done.
- b. Adding those with expertise in the other offices, as well as those with expertise in the area of mission, will allow for a fuller and more integrated inclusion of the diaconal office at major assemblies and will help move the “mission” of assemblies in more missional directions.

— *Adopted*

5. That synod instruct the BOT to appoint up to seven deacons in the CRC during the interim years of Synod 2014 and Synod 2015 to represent the interests of deacons at synod, using the same guidelines for ethnic advisers and young adult representatives.

Ground: Diaconal advisers are representative voices of the diaconal membership of the CRC.

— *Adopted*

6. That synod mandate the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture to consider how the inclusion of deacons at major assemblies will affect the culture and structure of the CRCNA.

— *Adopted*

7. That synod instruct the BOT to ask World Renew to take the lead role in facilitating the collaboration and networking necessary to support deacons. This will be done primarily by bringing leaders of resourcing organizations together for effective collaboration.

— *Adopted*

8. That synod refer the balance of the Office of Deacon Task Force Report, Recommendation G, to the new task force.

— *Adopted*

9. That synod thank the Office of Deacon Task Force for its significant work toward a revitalized diaconate and toward a revitalized council, classis, and synod, and that synod dismiss the task force with thanks.

— *Adopted*

10. That synod declare this to be its answer to Overtures 19, 20, and 23; Communications 3-6; and the Christian Reformed World Missions Supplement.

— *Adopted*

V. Synodical study committees and task forces

A. *Doctrine of Discovery Task Force* (scheduled to report in 2015)

Ms. Carissa Bakker-Johnson, Mr. Mark Charles, Mr. Mike Hogeterp (chair), Mr. Steve Kabetu, Ms. Liz Kuipers, Mr. Harold Roscher, Ms. Susie Silversmith, Mr. Peter Vander Meulen.

B. *Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture* (scheduled to report in 2015)

Rev. Joel A. De Boer, Dr. R. Scott Greenway, Mrs. Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, Mr. Peter Meerveld, Mr. Terry Van Der Aa, Mrs. Jane Vander Haagen, Ms. Katherine Vandergrift, Mr. Colin Watson, Rev. Joel R. Boot (chair).

C. *Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon* (scheduled to report in 2015)

Membership to be determined following acceptance of synod's appointment.

D. *Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty* (scheduled to report in 2016)

Membership to be determined following acceptance of synod's appointment.

E. *Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-sex Marriage* (scheduled to report in 2016)

Membership to be determined following acceptance of synod's appointment.

VI. Recommendation

That synod approve the list of boards and committees.

— *Adopted*

ARTICLE 89

(The report of Advisory Committee 3 is continued from Article 72.)

Advisory Committee 3, Candidacy and Education, Rev. William C. Veenstra reporting, presents the following:

Response to Overtures 12 and 13

Overture 12: Appoint a Study Committee to Expand on the 1973 Report and Conclusions on Homosexuality

Overture 13: Provide Pastoral Advice on the Issue of Gay Marriage

A. *Materials*: Overtures 12 and 13, pp. 418-20

B. *Recommendations*

1. That synod adopt the following mandate for the Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-sex Marriage:

This study committee shall

- a. Give guidance and clarification on how members, clergy, and churches can apply the biblical teachings reflected in the *Acts of Synod 1973*, Report