



## Christian Reformed Church

July 20, 2015

Christian Reformed Church Councils

Dear Council Members:

Synod 2015 will be remembered for the sense of community experienced during meaningful times of worship and prayer, care given by the officers to time for tough deliberations, fellowship enjoyed, and new friendships made over mealtimes and breaks, including friendly competitions in foosball, bowling, and hockey! In all and through all, God was glorified in the work and decisions of all in attendance at synod. The delegates were extremely grateful for the warm reception and exceptional hospitality provided by the staff of Dordt College and the surrounding Sioux Center community.

The delegates diligently addressed a variety of matters brought to the assembly by the CRC's various standing and study committees and by its ministries and boards. Among these matters were the final report of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture, a proposed unification of the Christian Reformed Home Missions and World Missions agencies, and the report of the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon, to name a few. Overtures to synod placed additional matters before the assembly, regarding, for example, the reinstatement of women advisers to synod, the inclusion of a new designation of multiaffiliated churches, and the denomination-wide recognition of the ordination of the Executive Director of the CRCNA as a commissioned pastor. To assist you, our office has summarized (below) decisions of Synod 2015 that are of special importance for CRC churches. Please take time to review these highlights at your upcoming council meeting.

We are always grateful for the opportunity at synod to honor and declare those presented as candidates for ministry of the Word within the CRC—*forty-four* new candidates were approved! What a blessing to witness a standing ovation of the more than 200 delegates and advisers, and a prayer of gratitude offered for these candidates' commitment and preparation to service to the church in ministry. In addition, synod gave special recognition to *twenty-five* ministerial retirees. We are grateful for the effective work of these dedicated servants of the church and wish them God's grace as they enter a new chapter in their lives.

The electronic version of the *Acts of Synod 2015* will be posted soon on the CRC website at [www.crcna.org/SynodResources](http://www.crcna.org/SynodResources)—watch for an announcement by way of the CRC News. The printed version will arrive in mailboxes toward the end of August.

On behalf of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, I want to extend our sincere appreciation to all who served synod as delegates and advisers at Synod 2015. These individuals generously gave of their time and energy for more than a week. The spirit of unity and love for the mission of the church was evident all around.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven R. Timmermans".

Steven R. Timmermans  
Executive Director

Encl.: Summary of Decisions of Synod 2015 for the Churches

**Dr. Steven R. Timmermans**  
Executive Director  
616-224-0832  
[executive-director@crcna.org](mailto:executive-director@crcna.org)

1700 28th Street SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407  
616-241-1691  
616-224-5895 fax

3475 Mainway  
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1  
Burlington ON L7R 3Y8  
905-336-2920  
905-336-8344 fax

## **Summary of Decisions of Synod 2015 for the Churches**

1. Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions will begin the process of unifying into a single agency. The mandate adopted by synod for this **new unified mission agency** is as follows:

### **Joining of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions**

That synod address the following with regard to the proposal for unification of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions (BOT Supplement section II, A, 3):

a. That synod approve the following:

- 1) That Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) become one agency<sup>1</sup> with the following mandate:

#### **Mandate**

The Christian Reformed Church in North America establishes [this Christian Reformed Mission Agency] and assigns it the responsibility of leading the missions programs of the denomination (cf. Church Order Art. 73-77). [This Christian Reformed Mission Agency], hereinafter referred to as *agency*, 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.

These ministries will be done in partnership with congregations, classes, CRC entities, and other organizations to join with God in his kingdom mission in North America and around the world.

The agency shall administer its work according to the Word of God and the Reformed confessions and in harmony with the regulations of the Church Order and the decisions of synod as interpreted by the Board of Trustees.

#### *Grounds:*

- a) A unification has been discussed and encouraged several times by the agencies, the BOT, and others.
- b) The agencies have indicated a unification would be timely, strategic, and stewardly.
- c) This mandate represents the continuity of mandates from CRHM and CRWM while expressing them in a unified way consistent with the rationale for unification.

*(Acts of Synod 2015, pp. 650-51)*

---

<sup>1</sup> An agency name will be proposed during or at the end of the transitional period.

2. A significant change for the churches and classes in the coming year involves the **delegation of deacons to all future classis meetings and synods** (effective immediately). See also other relevant Church Order changes that reflect the parity of the offices of elder and deacon. The newly adopted Church Order articles and related Supplements below provide reference until the Church Order is published later in the summer.

### **Board of Trustees**

1. That synod adopt the changes to Church Order Article 40 as proposed by Synod 2013 (BOT Report section II, A, 21, a, and Appendix J) and the proposed supplement, including the following amendment to Church Order Supplement, Article 40-a.

*Note: Boldface text indicates changes from the 2014 Church Order.*

#### *Article 40*

- a. The council of each church shall delegate a minister, an elder, **and a deacon** to the classis. If a church is without a minister, or the minister is prevented from attending, **another elder** shall be delegated **in place of the minister**. Officebearers who are not delegated may also attend classis and may be given an advisory voice.

#### *Supplement, Article 40-a*

- a) **When great distances or other weighty reasons make it impractical for a church to send three delegates to the classis, a council may opt to send two delegates.**
- b) **The gender of** delegates to a classis shall be consistent with the decisions of that classis concerning the supplement to Article 3-a of the Church Order. Delegates who believe the seating of women delegates is in violation of the Word of God may record their protest on the appropriate credentials. Their names, along with their protests, shall be included in the official record of each classis meeting. If a classis so desires, it may also invite emerging churches to delegate **three** officebearers to the meetings of classis.

*(Acts of Synod 1997, p. 621)*

*(Amended Acts of Synod 2007, p. 612)*

*(Amended Acts of Synod 2009, p. 613)*

***(Amended Acts of Synod 2015, p. 657)***

#### *Supplement, Article 40-a and -c*

#### *Modification for Churches of Classis Red Mesa*

- a. The council of each church shall delegate a minister, **an elder, and a deacon** to the classis. If a church is without a minister, or **a minister, elder, or deacon delegate** is prevented from attending, **any combination of three officebearers may be delegated**. Officebearers who are not delegated also may attend classis and may be given an advisory voice.
- c. The presiding officers of classis shall be selected from officebearers within the classis. **Ordinarily** the same presiding officers shall not be chosen twice in succession.

*(Acts of Synod 1981, p. 16)*

***(Amended Acts of Synod 2015, p. 657)***

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

*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.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, pp. 656-58)

**Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon**

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

*Note: Italicized text indicates changes from the 2014 Church Order. . . .*

*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.

*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).

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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.*

#### **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.*

**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.*

**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.*

(Acts of Synod 2015, pp. 663-68)

6. That synod thank the task force for the good work in Appendices A and B [Agenda for Synod 2015, pp. 401-10] and commend them to the churches as excellent resources.

(Acts of Synod 2015, p. 670)

3. Classes and congregations are strongly encouraged to schedule and provide opportunity for members to **engage in the Blanket Exercise** in anticipation of consideration of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force Report that will be sent to the churches in October and addressed by Synod 2016. Please contact Ms. Shannon Perez ([spez@crcna.org](mailto:spez@crcna.org)) in Canada and Ms. Viviana Cornejo ([vcornejo@crcna.org](mailto:vcornejo@crcna.org)) in the United States to arrange for a facilitator.

**Board of Trustees**

That synod instruct the BOT to encourage classes and congregations to engage in the Blanket Exercise. This will be done prior to Synod 2016 and the address of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force report (BOT Supplement section I, I). Trained Christian Reformed Church teams are available throughout the United States and Canada. The Blanket Exercise is adapted to each nation's history with Native Peoples. Teams can be contacted through the Office of Social Justice or the Centre for Public Dialogue.

**Grounds:**

- a. The Blanket Exercise is a practical, powerful, experiential way to understand Native Peoples' history in the Canadian and American contexts, allowing participants to experience the dynamics of power without a voice.
- b. In obedience to Hebrews 12:14 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 to be reconciled, The Blanket Exercise is a proven method to enter into Native Peoples' experience of inequality.
- c. The Blanket Exercise helps us to live into other peoples' story no matter where we live. The Lord calls us to walk *together* as we experience the hurtfulness

done to people groups, in a way as God in Christ walked among us and experienced our pain.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, pp. 640)

4. Churches are encouraged to incorporate the **themes of the Belhar Confession** into their discipling and liturgical ministries.

#### **Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee**

That synod note the decision of Synod 2012 regarding the Belhar Confession and encourage the churches to study and incorporate its themes into their discipling and liturgical ministries.

##### *Grounds:*

- a. The lack of attention by churches to the Belhar Confession and the need for further study of the Belhar's themes and incorporation into the discipleship and liturgical life of the CRC call for synod's reaffirmation.
- b. The importance of Synod 2012's decision deserves to be emphasized by a subsequent synod.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 636)

5. Synod reinstated the practice of appointing **women advisers to synod**. Requests for nominations for advisers to synod, including ethnic advisers and young adult representatives, will be sent to the churches and classes in the fall by the Synodical Services Office.

#### **Response to Overture 1: Reinstate the Practice of Appointing Women Advisers to Synod and Review the Formula Adopted by Synod 2014 for Ethnic Advisers**

That synod reinstate the practice of including women advisers to synod in a way that parallels the guidelines established for ethnic advisers to synod (see *Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 537-38, 576), including that twenty-five women delegates be set as the minimum representation for synod to achieve the goal of gender diversity.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 673)

6. By way of exception, synod declared that the **ordination of the executive director, Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, as commissioned pastor** will apply to the whole denomination.

#### **Response to Overture 6: Encourage All CRC Classes and Congregations to Recognize the Ordination of the Executive Director as a Commissioned Pastor**

That synod declare by way of exception that the ordination of the executive director, Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, as a commissioned pastor will apply to the whole denomination.

##### *Grounds:*

- a. Ordination as a commissioned pastor is an appropriate response to the expectation expressed by Synod 2013 that the executive director "is or becomes an officebearer in the CRC" (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 576).
- b. While this action admittedly goes beyond the generally agreed parameter of a commissioned pastor serving only within one classis, it is important for the executive director to be seen as serving the whole denomination and not only in those classes that choose to recognize him as a commissioned pastor.
- c. This action is by way of exception only to the prevailing practice of commissioned pastors serving within the boundaries of the classis that ordains

them and is not to be considered a new normal for the commissioned pastor position.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 627)

7. Churches are encouraged to **incorporate the themes of the “Resolution on the Relationship between the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America”** as found in the *Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 503-504, into their joint ministries.

#### **Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee**

That synod note the “Resolution on the Relationship between the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America” (adopted by Synod 2014) and encourage the churches to incorporate its themes into their joint ministries.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 647)

8. Synod approved the transition from the current Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and agency board model to a **Council of Delegates** within the next three years. In addition, the **Five Streams functions** (see *Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 472) were endorsed as ministry priorities. Synod also instructed the appointments of a **Classis Renewal Group** as well as a **task force to review the practices and functions of synod**.

#### **Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture**

1. That synod approve the formation of a Council of Delegates (with an Executive Committee, Ministry Collaboration Committees, Agency Committees, and Policy Committees) to take the place of the current Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and the boards of Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Back to God Ministries International.
2. That synod direct the current Board of Trustees to form a Transition Committee, under the leadership of the executive director, with agency and ministry representation, to facilitate the transition from the Board of Trustees to the Council of Delegates by Synod 2018 or sooner, including
  - presentation of annual reports to synod on the steps and timeline for implementation.
  - review of and possible recommendations for changes to the Church Order, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA, and the various organizational bylaws (for the United States and Canada) relating to Christian Reformed World Missions, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Back to God Ministries International.
  - address of other key issues that may arise in the implementation of transition, including the proposed size of the Council of Delegates, the binational character of the CRCNA, and the impact on agencies.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. This allows for the Transition Committee to exercise some latitude in discerning the composition of and in refining the structure of the Council of Delegates.
- b. This addresses concerns raised by various mission agencies, classes, and congregations (regarding size of the council and binational character).
- c. This is consistent with the feedback from Synod 2014 regarding the three “ways in which we might move forward together in a new era of ministry” (*Agenda for Synod 2014*, pp. 356, 361-63; see *Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 563; *Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 356-57).

4. That synod endorse the Five Streams functions as ministry priorities to strategically focus and adaptively organize the work of the Christian Reformed Church in North America while respecting and building on our previous mission efforts, history, and legacy of relationships and member support.
6. That synod instruct the executive director to appoint and resource a working group (Classis Renewal Group) to build on the work of the existing Classis Renewal Ministry Team, including an examination of the nature, scope, and purpose of classes, with the objective of boldly exploring and innovatively addressing revisions to structures and to the Church Order that will enable classes to flourish.
8. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to bring to Synod 2016 a proposed mandate, parameters of composition, and a timeline for a task force to review the practices and functions of synod.

(Acts of Synod 2015, p. 679-80)

9. The churches are asked to take special note of the following requests for **special offerings for CRC agencies, ministries, and educational institutions:**

#### **Officers of Synod**

That synod approve the following requests for special offerings for the agencies, ministries, and educational institutions of the CRC that are contained within the reports to Synod 2015:

1. That synod encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Easter Sunday and Reformation Day Sunday as significant opportunities to receive an offering for Christian Reformed Home Missions (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 208).
2. That synod along with the Board of Trustees encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Pentecost Sunday and the third Sunday of September 2015 as significant opportunities to pray for and to receive an offering for Christian Reformed World Missions (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 215).
3. That synod commend the work of mercy carried on by World Renew and urge the churches to take at least four offerings per year in lieu of ministry-share support (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 247).
4. That synod approve two offerings for Calvin Theological Seminary (for the Facing Your Future program and the Distance Education program) (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 265).  
(Acts of Synod 2015, p. 586)

10. Synod's advisory committee on financial matters spent significant time addressing the CRC ministry share system and presented both the **ministry-share amount** as well as observations included below. **Churches are challenged by synod to be thoughtful and prayerful about their ministry share gifts.**

#### **Ministry shares**

##### *Background*

Advisory Committee 7 spent significant time discussing how ministry shares are understood by our local congregations. We rejoice in the blessings and faithfulness of our churches. Over the past fifteen years, we have consistently received close to \$24-25 million annually through ministry-share giving. Praise God for this highly successful communal endeavor! Even as we are rejoicing, we also recognize the challenges our local congregations

face regarding ministry-share giving and understanding. Each year at synod the advisory committee dealing with financial matters receives valuable information about ministry shares. However, often these clarifications, concerns, and challenges are not brought to the floor of synod; nor do the local churches hear them. We think the churches would be helped by being made aware of the following.

## 1. Statistical information

The chart below shows the percentages of giving during 2014 from each congregation, based on church membership (number of active professing members over age 18).

Membership size	Percent Contribution of Requested Ministry Shares						
	0	1-24	25-49	50-74	75-99	100	100+
0-99	36.3%	20.4%	11.4%	10.5%	6.3%	4.2%	10.8%
100-199	8.9%	22.6%	13.6%	17.0%	14.0%	1.7%	22.1%
200-299	4.5%	16.2%	18.8%	20.8%	22.1%	13.0%	4.5%
300-399	4.1%	12.3%	11.0%	23.3%	16.4%	19.2%	13.7%
400-499	9.1%	13.6%	18.2%	31.8%	13.6%	13.6%	0.0%
500+	4.0%	8.0%	36.0%	20.0%	12.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Total	18.4%	19.0%	14.3%	16.2%	12.6%	7.1%	12.5%

Note: Although many churches of all sizes pay less than 100 percent of ministry shares, many churches of all sizes, including very small churches, pay more than 100 percent.

## 2. Synodical decisions

- a. With regard to the payment of ministry shares, synod determined that when a church believes it is unable to pay its share (100%), as determined by specific guidelines adopted by synod, that church is to present its position to classis with the percentage that it feels is attainable, seeking the confirmation of classis (*Acts of Synod 1986*, p. 709). Further, synod stated that “when a classis is convinced that a member church is unable to pay [ministry shares], the churches within a classis, if possible, through a combined effort [should] be requested to assist a church to meet its denominational obligations” (*Acts of Synod 1970*, p. 81).

While this may not be the common practice, it underlines the historical understanding that our denominational ministries are a communal ministry in which all the churches participate.

- b. In the same regard, in seeking to understand the direction synod has given to these matters in the past, we note that synod has requested churches to “pay denominational causes before making gifts to nondenominational organizations on the synod-approved accredited list. . . . Our denominational causes should have priority in our giving” (*Acts of Synod 1970*, p. 81).

Again, while this may not be the common practice, it is a reminder of the communal ministry of which we are part through our ministry-share giving.

3. Additional notes

- a. Ministry shares comprise only a part of the budget of any agency. The ministry-share amount is only designated to be that part of the budget that is met by ministry shares. Agencies need to find other ways to raise the balance of their budget, including the amounts budgeted for but not met by ministry shares. Our committee was informed that in a typical year it only costs about \$50,000 to obtain the full ministry-share amount. By comparison, when about \$17 million of ministry shares is not received (as was the case in 2014) about \$4 million is spent to raise that amount. This is not a wise investment. Moreover, it also means that churches are actually costing the CRC ministries money when they give less than 100 percent.
- b. While ministry shares have gone up in actual dollar amount, it was noted that, adjusting for inflation, the ministry-share per-member rate is roughly the same as it was in 1993.
- c. Some churches, when they have chosen not to support an agency, have indicated they would not pay ministry shares to that agency or that they would withhold ministry shares altogether. The CRC Finance Office honors the requests of churches that send in ministry shares and identify how they desire to have them allocated.

*Recommendations*

1. That synod receive the agencies and institutional unified budget as information and approve a ministry share of \$339.48 for calendar year 2016.
3. That synod request the BOT to instruct the executive director to send a letter to our congregations communicating the information in [the] section on ministry shares (IV, C) and challenge them to be thoughtful and prayerful about their ministry share gifts.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 634-35)

**11. Synod reminds churches of the **importance of developing and implementing a safe church policy.****

**Specialized Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church**

*Safe Church Ministry*

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.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 670)

**12. Churches are encouraged to **celebrate Disability Awareness Week** in October 2015.**

**Board of Trustees**

That synod encourage CRC churches, classes, and educational institutions to sponsor events to celebrate Disability Awareness Week, October 12-18, 2015 (II, B, 7).

*Grounds:*

- a. Specific and intentional events that recognize the importance of breaking down barriers and including people with disabilities will remind God's people of the welcome our Lord gives to all of his people (Luke 14:15-24) and will encourage them to press on toward becoming a community in which every member knows that he or she is indispensable (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- b. The Bible calls God's people to be a caring community as the covenant people of God. In 1985, the CRC committed itself as a denomination to eliminate barriers of architecture, communication, and attitude "in order to use the gifts of all people in our life together as God's family." Although our Lord Jesus calls all of his people to ministry in his church, the church has not always made it possible for people with disabilities to participate fully and sometimes has isolated them and their families.
- c. The dates of Disability Week coincide with the CRC denominational schedule for offerings, which assigns the third Sunday in October to Disability Concerns.
- d. The RCA celebrates Disability Awareness Sunday on the second Sunday in October. Having similar dates for this celebration facilitates and enhances deeper collaboration between the Disability Concerns offices of the RCA and CRC. Further, this date aligns our celebration with numerous organizations and agencies that highlight disability awareness in October.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, pp. 639-40)

13. Churches are asked to **send copies of their constitutions and articles of incorporation to the CRC Archives** for safe keeping and record. In addition, synod stressed that churches contact the Archives regarding **duplication of all minutes**.

**Historical Committee**

2. That synod instruct the executive director to encourage all churches and classes to send duplicates (photocopies, faxes, or email attachments) of their constitutions and articles of incorporation to the archives. Copies can be sent to Archives, Calvin College, 1855 Knollcrest Circle SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4402; or by fax: 616-526-7689; or by email: [crcarchives@calvin.edu](mailto:crcarchives@calvin.edu).
3. That synod instruct the executive director to encourage the 40 classes whose 175 member churches more than ten years old have not had their minutes duplicated to contact the archives to have this done.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 596-97)