AGENDA FOR SYNOD

Responding to God's *gracious call.*

2017

Christian Reformed Church

AGENDA FOR SYNOD

2017

Christian Reformed Church

June 9-15, 2017
DeVos Gymnasium
Trinity Christian College
Palos Heights, Illinois

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1700 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508-1407 U.S.A.
Printed in the United States of America

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PREFACE

Synod 2017 begins its sessions on Friday, June 9, at 8:30 a.m. in the DeVos Gymnasium on the campus of Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois. Crossroads Community CRC, Schererville, Indiana, will serve as the convening church. Reverend Drew Brown, pastor of Crossroads Community CRC, will serve as the president pro-tem until synod is duly constituted and its four officers have been elected. A community-wide Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise will be held Sunday, June 11, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. at Crossroads Community CRC, 1538 Janice Drive, Schererville, Indiana.

Prior to arriving at synod, *all* delegates and advisers to synod are encouraged to take time to view the video orientation accessed on the synod site—designed as a secure site for delegates and advisers only. The orientation will assist first-time delegates and advisers in understanding the nature of synod and will provide helpful reminders for returning delegates and advisers to synod. In addition, orientations will be held for advisers to synod, first-time delegates, and advisory committee chairs and reporters and their alternates on Thursday, June 8, on the Trinity Christian College campus (see the proposed daily schedule on pp. 10-11 for more information).

The congregations of the Christian Reformed Church in North America are requested to remember the synodical assembly in intercessory prayers on the Sundays of June 4 and 11. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will equip the synodical delegates to serve in faith and obedience and will lead the Christian Reformed Church into new and challenging areas of ministry. May Synod 2017 be an experience in which we are further "built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:22) as we strive to be faithful to Christ's call in our congregations and ministries.

Steven R. Timmermans
Executive Director of the CRCNA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

I. Welcome

Thank you for serving as a delegate to Synod 2017. Whether you are a returning delegate or you are coming for the first time, we sincerely hope and pray that you will find synod to be a rewarding and blessed experience. You come together as disciples of Jesus Christ, as members of the CRC, and as representatives of the classes that delegated and appointed you to serve. Synod is more than just a gathering of church leaders or a governing body. It is a reflection of the church and a time for reflection and celebration of what God is doing in and through the Christian Reformed Church in North America. God has richly blessed us, and you have been given a unique privilege to serve him and his kingdom by your engagement at synod.

The synodical services staff, under the leadership of Ms. Dee Recker, is available to assist you in whatever way they are able. Please feel free to contact the Office of Synodical Services, if you need information or have any questions before arriving, by writing synod@crcna.org or calling 800-272-5125 or 616-224-0833.

II. Confidentiality of the executive sessions of synod

The Board of Trustees calls the matter of confidentiality to the attention of Synod 2017 and urges that all necessary precautions be taken to prevent violations of confidentiality.

Synod 1954 stated that "the very principle of executive sessions, or sessions that are not open to the public, involves the practical implication that reporters may not 'report'" (*Acts of Synod 1954*, p. 15). If reporters are not permitted to report on executive sessions of synod, it is certainly a breach of confidentiality also for delegates to the synodical assembly to report—publicly, privately, orally, or in print—on the discussions held in an executive session of synod (cf. *Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 16).

III. Audio and video recordings of synod

Synod 1979 authorized the making of an official audio recording of the entire proceedings of the general sessions of synod as a way to verify the written record of the synodical proceedings. Although the general sessions of synod are recorded, executive sessions are not recorded. Delegates to synod are informed at the opening session of synod that all the general sessions are being recorded. Synod has designated that the office of the executive director be responsible for the use and storage of these materials.

The following regulations were adopted by Synod 1989 concerning audio and video recordings of synodical sessions by media representatives and visitors:

A. Representatives of the media are permitted to make video recordings of synodical proceedings provided they observe the restrictions placed upon them by the synodical news office under the direction of the general secretary of synod.

B. Visitor privileges

1. Visitors are at liberty to make audio recordings of the public proceedings of synod provided they do so unobtrusively (i.e., in no way inhibiting or disturbing either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons).
2. Video recordings are permitted provided the following restrictions are observed:
   a. Video cameras are permitted only at the entrances, not backstage or in the wings.
   b. Auxiliary lighting is not permitted.
   c. Videotaping [video recording] is to be done unobtrusively (i.e., in such a way that it in no way inhibits or disturbs either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons).

(*Acts of Synod 1989*, p. 445)

IV. Proposed daily schedule

Although each new assembly is free to alter the schedule, the following general schedule is tentatively in place for Synod 2017:

Thursday orientations

5:00 - 6:15 p.m.	Orientation for ethnic advisers, women advisers, faculty advisers, and young adult representatives
6:30 - 7:45 p.m.	Orientation for first-time delegates/refresher
8:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Orientation for chairs and reporters, and alternate chairs and alternate reporters of advisory committees
9:00 p.m.	Welcome reception and Ministry Fair

Convening Friday

8:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Opening session of synod Election of officers Finalization of committee assignments
11:15 - 12:15 p.m.	Advisory committees meet for introductions
12:15 - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Advisory committee meetings
3:00 - 3:20 p.m.	Break
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.	Advisory committee meetings
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Advisory committee meetings

Saturday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	Opening worship
8:45 - 9:15 a.m.	Brief plenary session
9:30 - 11:45 a.m.	Advisory committee meetings
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 - 5:00 p.m.	Advisory committee meetings
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Plenary session
8:15 p.m.	Back to God Ministries International Reception

Sunday

Morning worship at area CRC churches

3:00 p.m.	Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise
6:45 p.m.	Synod workshops

Monday – Wednesday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	Opening worship
8:45 - 11:45 a.m.	Plenary session
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 - 5:00 p.m.	Plenary session
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Plenary session

Thursday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	Opening worship
8:45 - 11:45 a.m.	Plenary session

*Synod will adjourn no later than noon Thursday.

DELEGATES TO SYNOD 2017

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Alberta North		
Minister	William D. Nieuwenhuis	Arthur L. Verboon
Elder	Henry A. Bosch	Jason VanDoesburg
Deacon	John Taekema	————
Other	John A. Ooms	Victor Y. Ko
Alberta South/Saskatchewan		
Minister	S. George Koopmans	Matthew D. Vanden Heuvel
Elder	Nelly Eyk	Glenn H. Dykstra
Deacon	Bert Tanis	————
Other	J. Cameron Fraser	Rafik K. Kamel
Arizona		
Minister	José Rayas	Jonathan Gerstner
Elder	Rodney J. Hugen	Samuel EstalaAranda
Deacon	————	————
Other	Eduardo A. Gonzalez	————
Atlantic Northeast		
Minister	Jonathan B. Fischer	Nicholas W. Monsma
Elder	Edward R. Wieringa	Tobias T. Lewis
Deacon	Terry L. Woodnorth	————
Other	Edward C. Visser	Ryan M. Goding
B.C. North-West		
Minister	Curtis D. Korver	Kenneth M. Vander Horst
Elder	Kathy N. Smith	Donald J. Campbell
Deacon	Colin R. Banks	Robin DeHaan
Other	Andrew E. Beunk	Donald J. Campbell
B.C. South-East		
Minister	Michael J. VanderKwaak	S. Nicholas Bierma
Elder	Beatrice Vander Bos	Lee Hollaar
Deacon	Johanna Meyles	————
Other	Chad M. Vandervalk	————
California South		
Minister	Cornelius Pool	William Verhoef
Elder	Jack D. Nydam	Reginald C. Norman
Deacon	Maritza V. Blanco	————
Other	Rudy Gonzalez	Louis W. Wagenveld
Central California		
Minister	John Kim	Paul H. Vander Klay
Elder	Paul Su	Jay A. Sankey
Deacon	David L. Harrington	Mary A. Schrotenboer
Other	Titus E. Davis	Matthew D. Burns

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Central Plains		
Minister	Matthew C. McClure	Edward Jiang
Elder	Richard D. Dykema	————
Deacon	————	————
Other	Brian P. Tarpy	Scott Chiang
Chatham		
Minister	Daryl J. Meijer	Eric H.J. Groot-Nibbelink
Elder	Bill Barneveld	Marg Rekman
Deacon	John H. Klein-Geltink	————
Other	James R. Poelman	Philip A. Apoll
Chicago South		
Minister	Phillip S. Leo	Gregory S. Janke
Elder	Robert A. Cooper	————
Deacon	Evelyn Bussema	————
Other	Henry Doorn	————
Columbia		
Minister	Alvin J. Machiela	Thomas J. Kok
Elder	Leroy A. Werkhoven	————
Deacon	————	————
Other	D. Vance Hays	————
Eastern Canada		
Minister	John H. Noordhof	Craig L. Hoekema
Elder	Richard Smit	Jean J.A. Lauziere
Deacon	Gerrit Teyenhuis	Bill Schuurman
Other	Joseph M. Groeneveld	Daniel G. Brown
Georgetown		
Minister	Joshua S. Van Drunen	Matthew A. Palsrok
Elder	Carol R. Woltjer	Dirk W. VanderSteen
Deacon	————	————
Other	David L. Jolman	————
Grand Rapids East		
Minister	David H. Beelen	Emmett A. Harrison
Elder	Mary J. Bouwma	————
Deacon	Klasien Vaalburg	————
Other	Thea N. Leunk	(same as minister alternate)
Grand Rapids North		
Minister	Peter R. Byma	Elaine G. May
Elder	Karen D. VanderMeulen	Kenneth A. Koll
Deacon	Linda B. Rienstra	————
Other	Daniel R. Wolters	Jason M. Rop
Grand Rapids South		
Minister	Robert L. Boersma	Ruth Boven
Elder	Judith A. Otte	Phil Brouwer
Deacon	Beverly J. Clover	————
Other	James R. DeZeeuw	Ezra Lee
Grandville		
Minister	Roger B. Groenboom	Jay R. Prium
Elder	Jerry A. Sikkema	————
Deacon	Mary Kortman	Andrew Postma
Other	Shaun M. O'Brien	————

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Greater Los Angeles		
Minister	Tae H. Kim	Tom Van Engen
Elder	Thomas H. Byma	————
Deacon	Dick Van Eck, Jr.	————
Other	Julius B. Umawing	Matthew M. Le
Hackensack		
Minister	Petr Kornilov	Sheila E. Holmes
Elder	Ruth Somersall	Glenn P. Palmer
Deacon	Henry Rodriguez	Nelida Irizarry
Other	Amy Vander Vliet	Jeffrey Chang
Hamilton		
Minister	Kenneth F. Benjamins	Greg J. Sinclair
Elder	Judy M. Cook	Robert De Haan
Deacon	Gina M. Taylor	————
Other	Ed W. Visser	Rita S. Klein-Geltink
Hanmi		
Minister	Sung Ho Jung	Tim Kwon
Elder	————	————
Deacon	Hye Sung Park	————
Other	Jeong Ha Chun	————
Heartland		
Minister	Mark Vande Zande	John C. Klompien
Elder	Michael J. Jacobsma	Chuck Mulder
Deacon	Keith E. Boersma	————
Other	John W. Van Der Heide	Kevin J. Muyskens
Holland		
Minister	Lee Khang	John R. De Vries
Elder	Calvin J. Hoogstra	Keith D. Lubbers
Deacon	Debra A. Mead	————
Other	John P. Douma	Kenneth C. Kruithof
Hudson		
Minister	Joel D. Vande Werken	Michael L. Bentley
Elder	George R. Young	John M. McCabe
Deacon	Andrew van der Meer	————
Other	Kevin C. Vande Streek	————
Huron		
Minister	Paul J. Droogers	Ralph S. Wigboldus
Elder	David E. DeHaan	Fred Veenstra
Deacon	Candace Burnett	Betty A.M. Denhartog
Other	Paul D. DeWeerd	Vicki B. Verhulst Cok
Iakota		
Minister	Samuel J. Krikke	Stanley J. Groothof
Elder	Wayne Bok	Mark Tazelaar
Deacon	Val Haverhals	————
Other	Drew D. Hoekema	Jan van Vliet
Illiana		
Minister	Richard T. Vanderwal	Calvin J. Aardsma
Elder	Dan C. Paul	Donald Dykstra
Deacon	Jessica A. Groen	————
Other	Laryn G. Zoerhof	Paul J. Epley

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Kalamazoo		
Minister	James C. Halstead	Brian D. Seifert
Elder	Matthew A.T. Smith	————
Deacon	Richard R. Porter	————
Other	Daniel S. Sarkipato	Michael D. Koetje
Ko-Am		
Minister	Tae J. Son	Jin Ku Kim
Elder	Sang W. Park	————
Deacon	————	————
Other	Theodore S. Lim	————
Lake Erie		
Minister	Nathan D. Gritter	————
Elder	Linda R. Barrett	————
Deacon	Luanne England	————
Other	Benjamin Van Arragon	David L. Spoelma
Lake Superior		
Minister	Steven A. Zwart	H. John Vanderburgh
Elder	Andrea M. Nederlof	David W. Terpstra
Deacon	Randy J. Kroll	————
Other	Donald G. Draayer	Robert A. Hoekstra
Minnkota		
Minister	Joshua M. Christoffels	Timothy J. Ouwinga
Elder	Virgil D. Van Essen	Michael G. Schuller
Deacon	Greg A. Talsma	Loren D. De Kam
Other	Jon R. Bushnell	John A. Bothof
Muskegon		
Minister	Ronald G. Baker	Donald E. Byker
Elder	Robert R. Broekema	————
Deacon	Janet C. Weiden	————
Other	Jane H. De Groot	Greg R. Dyk
Niagara		
Minister	Woodrow P. Dixon	Fred Vander Berg
Elder	Archie A. VerMeer	Dora Stroobosscher
Deacon	Pietronella Verweij	————
Other	Colin Vander Ploeg	————
Northcentral Iowa		
Minister	Joel A. De Boer	Frank E. Pott
Elder	Craig W. Eckels	————
Deacon	Tyler R. Helfers	————
Other	Kelly L. Vander Woude	Wendell Davelaar
Northern Illinois		
Minister	Pedro Aviles	————
Elder	Chuck J. Slinkman	————
Deacon	Al DeLosSantos	————
Other	Daniel Gregory	James E. Wolff
Northern Michigan		
Minister	Chris A. Kostelansky	Kenneth D. Koning
Elder	Carl E. Veenstra	Todd Kuperus
Deacon	————	————
Other	Adam M. Barton	David J. Prince

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Pacific Northwest		
Minister	J. Scott Roberts	Steve J. Van Noort
Elder	Michael S. Boer	Verna L. Alberda
Deacon	Daniel L. Obbink	Karen L. Westra
Other	Karyl G. Groeneveld	Linda W. Grace
Quinte		
Minister	John T. Wildeboer	Shawn R. Brix
Elder	Arnold Depooter	Cora J. Wilms
Deacon	———	———
Other	Gregg C. Lawson	———
Red Mesa		
Minister	Bobby L. Boyd	Stanley W. Jim
Elder	Omar Tsosie	Norman Chee
Deacon	Jon R. Hunt	———
Other	John W. Dykhuis	———
Rocky Mountain		
Minister	Todd H. Hilkemann	David A. Hornor
Elder	Eric P. Snyder	Diego Hiriart
Deacon	Joshua W. Chen	———
Other	DeLinda Baker	Terry M. Gray
Southeast U.S.		
Minister	Karlos Palacios	David J. Weemhoff
Elder	John S. Maatman	———
Deacon	Irma N. Rodriguez	———
Other	Juan P. Sierra	Joshua W. Jung
Thornapple Valley		
Minister	Wayne Coleman	Scott J. Van Voorst
Elder	Robert J. Zoerman	Steven H. VanderLeest
Deacon	Jill Ellens	———
Other	James A. Kralt	Dirk M. VanEyk
Toronto		
Minister	Richard E. Grift	Samuel Cooper
Elder	Jeanette A. Romkema	———
Deacon	Dennis R. Jurjens	———
Other	Michael S. Irshad	Hilbrent Vander Heide
Wisconsin		
Minister	Rodolfo Galindo	Douglas L. Aldrink
Elder	Henry Perez	Glenn E. Meeusen
Deacon	Carol J. Wynstra	———
Other	Kou Vang	Bruce McMurry
Yellowstone		
Minister	Jack A. Huttinga	Randall D. VanOsdol
Elder	Carl Wierda	———
Deacon	Robert A. Kincaid	———
Other	Anne M. Pos	Peter J. DeVries
Zeeland		
Minister	Scott C. Stark	Shaun M. Furniss
Elder	Robert W. Brower	———
Deacon	———	———
Other	Aaron J. Vriesman	Tyler J. Wagenmaker

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (the Board, or BOT) presents this report as a summary of the activities carried out on behalf of synod during the interim between Synod 2016 and Synod 2017.

I. Introduction

A. General

> Our Lord Jesus Christ, upon his ascension into heaven, entrusted the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to his disciples and commanded them to be his witnesses, teaching all nations to obey everything he had commanded.
>
> As followers of Jesus Christ, the church corporately and each of its members individually, led by the Holy Spirit, are called to share this gospel of the kingdom within the fellowship of the church and with people throughout the world by proclaiming God's Word and giving God the worship and honor that are his due, in the confidence that Christ is building up the church and is establishing the kingdom.
>
> To carry out this mission, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (hereinafter *synod*) has created the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and such agencies, committees, and institutions as are listed in its bylaws. These agencies, committees, and institutions function primarily within Canada and the United States, where the Christian Reformed Church is committed to being a binational denomination. Each organizational entity and each national expression of the Christian Reformed Church in North America makes its own unique contribution to God's mission in the world as the whole denomination strives to live the fullness of the gospel.
>
> (Preamble, Constitution of the Board of Trustees)

The Board, a synodically elected and appointed governing body, whose members also serve as the directors of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation, has met two times since Synod 2016 (September 2016 and February 2017) and is scheduled to meet again in May 2017. The Board's agenda normally consists of agency matters (program review, personnel appointments, focus of the agency, and so forth), strategic planning (creation of a ministry plan to guide the CRC ministries), polity matters (study reports, board appointments, interim committee of synod concerns), as well as normal organizational matters that come up in a complex organization such as the CRCNA. In addition, the Board oversees the work of the executive director.

Nearly all the matters addressed by the Board affect the full CRCNA as a binational church, but, in compliance with Canadian regulations governing Canadian registered charities, the Canadian trustees review and approve all actions taken by the full Board and, as necessary, address any matters that

relate directly to uniquely Canadian issues and matters of law. The Board, as synod's agent, is grateful for the opportunity to serve the entire church.

B. Membership

The members of the Board from the United States are Rev. Kenneth A. Baker (Region 10), Dr. Gary D. Bos (Region 5), Mr. David R. De Ridder (Region 7), Rev. Paul R. De Vries (Region 11), Mr. Randy L. Freeland (member-at-large), Rev. Emmett A. Harrison (Region 11), Ms. Susan B. Hoekema (member-at-large), Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn (Region 8), Mr. Kyu Paek (member-at-large), Ms. Elizabeth Rudenga (Region 9), Mr. José Tagle (Region 12), Mr. Kevin TenBrink (Region 10), Mr. Chris Van Spronsen (Region 11), and Dr. Socorro Woodbury (Region 8). The Region 6 position is vacant due to the resignation of the member after accepting a position within the CRCNA.

The members of the Board from Canada are Rev. B. Bernard Bakker (Eastern Canada), Rev. Darrell J. Bierman (Huron), Rev. Shawn R. Brix (Quinte), Rev. Samuel Cooper (Toronto), Mr. Peter DeBoer (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Mr. Andy de Ruyter (B.C. North-West), Rev. Donald G. Draayer (Lake Superior), Mrs. Verney Kho (member-at-large), Mr. Ralph Luimes (member-at-large), Mr. Walter Mulder (Alberta North), Mr. Garry Sytsma (Classis Hamilton), Ms. Gavrielle Tran (B.C. South-East), Ms. Aaltje Van Grootheest (member-at-large), and Rev. Norman J. Visser (Chatham).

Also serving the Board of Trustees when it meets are two young adult representatives, serving as advisers (without vote) to the Board in its deliberations and committee work: Ms. Ashley Bootsma (Canada) and Mrs. Youri Lee (United States).

The executive director (Dr. Steven R. Timmermans) serves *ex officio* as a corporate trustee of the CRCNA-Michigan Corporation and member of the Board of Trustees (without vote). The executive director and the Canadian ministries director for legal purposes serve as guests of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation.

Following are the officers of the Board and of respective corporations for the 2016-2017 term:

1. Board officers: Mr. Chris Van Spronsen, president; Mr. Ralph Luimes, vice president; Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, secretary; Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn, vice-all.

2. Corporation officers

   a. CRCNA-Canada Corporation: Mr. Ralph Luimes, president; Mr. Andy de Ruyter, vice president; Rev. Donald G. Draayer, secretary.

   b. CRCNA-Michigan Corporation: Mr. Chris Van Spronsen, president; Dr. Socorro Woodbury, vice president; Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, secretary; Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn, vice-all.

3. Executive Committee: Mr. Andy de Ruyter; Rev. Donald G. Draayer; Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn; Mr. Ralph Luimes; Mr. Chris Van Spronsen, chair; and Dr. Socorro Woodbury. Dr. Steven R. Timmermans serves *ex officio*.

C. Salary disclosure

At the directive of synod, the Board reports the following salaries for senior denominational services staff directly employed by the Board of Trustees:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
20	1	1	0
19	2	1	1
18	1	1	0
17	4	1	3

Synod 2014 adopted a salary administration system that uses a salary range *target* and a minimum of 85 percent of that target. Salary ranges within which the agencies will be reporting actual compensation for the current fiscal year (unchanged from the 2015-2016 ranges) are as follows:

2016-2017 Salary Grade and Range Structure

	U.S. Range		Canadian Range	
Level	Minimum	Target	Minimum	Target
20	$153,763	$180,898		
19	$138,976	$163,501		
18	$122,431	$144,037	$114,256	$134,418
17	$108,478	$127,621	$99,706	$117,301
16	$93,392	$109,873	$87,097	$102,467
15	$81,357	$95,714	$77,518	$91,198
14	$72,640	$85,459	$70,566	$83,019
13	$64,857	$76,302	$64,361	$75,718

II. Activities of the Board

A. Polity matters

1. Convening church of Synod 2018

   The Board of Trustees, acting on behalf of synod, accepted the invitation from Pillar Church in Holland, Michigan, to serve as the convening church of Synod 2018, which will convene in joint sessions with the RCA General Synod 2018 on the campus of Calvin College. Doing so allows for advanced planning to begin for this special synod. The Board recommends that synod receive the report of the BOT action as information.

2. Direction of CRC-RCA collaboration

   The Board considered a request by the RCA/CRCNA Joint Resolution Committee and approved a provision that the Reformed Church in America (RCA) General Synod 2017 and the CRC Synod 2017 devote up to one hour to discuss the direction of the RCA-CRC collaboration by including in each synod's schedule the showing of a video that describes three options related to our collaboration, followed by a guided discussion format for small groups of delegates to identify strengths and weaknesses of each option and to provide feedback. The feedback received by the two synods will be reviewed and analyzed by the RCA/CRCNA Joint Resolution Committee so that staff can continue exploration of greater collaboration in a more informed way.

Grounds:

a. The following resolution adopted jointly by the RCA General Synod 2014 and the CRC Synod 2014 in Pella, Iowa, calls for continued discernment of our relationship and provides instruction as follows:

   "Therefore, as the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America and the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, we declare that the principle that guides us, and the intention that motivates us, is to 'act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel [us] to act separately'; and, further,

   "We jointly instruct the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church and the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America, in looking to the future relationship between our two denominations, to be guided by this principle."

b. Aided by a consultant and based on the ongoing discussion of the Reformed Collaborative Team (a group of 15-17 staff leaders of both denominations who have been meeting regularly for a number of years), the team believes our discernment would be helped by identifying a direction best understood by means of three possible options for the future: continued collaboration, more joint operating entities, or a new denomination.

   Note: In response to Ground b above, the Board of Trustees members expressed concern that the merging of the two denominations was not the intent of the Pella Accord.

The above action by the BOT is subject to approval of the RCA General Synod Council in March 2017.

3. Interim appointments

   On behalf of synod, the Board has ratified the following appointments made by classes, in addition to appointing one at-large board member and one regional board member:

Appointment	Classis	Member	Alternate	Term
Synodical Deputies	Chicago South	Rev. Michael J. Kooy	Rev. Daniel J. Roeda	2019(1)
	Grand Rapids North	Rev. Henry Admiraal	Rev. Jerry L. Blom	2019(1)
	Ko-Am	Rev. Jonathan J. Kim		2019(1)
	Thornapple Valley		Rev. Ronald D. Goudzwaard	
Calvin College	Region 10	Rev. Michael D. Koetje (for one year)		2018(2)
World Renew	Grand Rapids East	Mr. William Haverkamp		2019(1)
	Muskegon	Mr. Daniel L. Pell		2019(1)
	Pacific Northwest	Mr. Jay A. DeBoer		2019(1)
		U.S. member-at-large	Mr. Nasreen Fynewever	2019(1)

4. Classes that have declared that women officebearers (ministers, elders, deacons) may not be delegated to classis

   In accordance with the instructions of Synod 2007, the executive director keeps a list of those classes that, in keeping with their understanding of the biblical position on the role of women in ecclesiastical office, declare that women officebearers (ministers, elders, deacons) may not be delegated to classis. Although some of these classes have developed their own regulations regarding the permissibility of women officebearers participating in classis meetings, some classes have adopted a decision to declare that women officebearers may not be delegated to classis. A list of these classes may be obtained by contacting the office of the executive director.

5. Annual report on gender and ethnic diversity on denominational boards

   Data for the board diversity (women and ethnic diversity) report for the 2016-2017 year is gathered from the denominational boards (Board of Trustees, Back to God Ministries International, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, the new mission agency, and World Renew). The World Renew Joint Ministry Council (JMC), in addition to the World Renew Board of Delegates, has been included in the diversity report.

   There are presently 181 denominationally appointed board members (without the JMC count); the JMC, elected from the World Renew Board of Delegates, has 15 members; thus a total of 196 board members are reflected in the following. Out of the 196 members, 61 (31%) are women, and 39 (20%) are people of color. The data received from the boards for the 2016-2017 board term reflects a *decrease* of 2 percent for women and an *increase* of 2 percent for people of color over the 2015-2016 reporting year.

6. Annual report on denominational efforts to address ethnic diversity and racial justice

   At the instruction of Synod 2013, each CRC agency, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary are asked to submit to the executive director, as part of their strategic plan, diversity goals and timelines in their leadership, administrative, and regional ministry teams. This annual report was shared with the Board in February. In addition, the director of synodical services regularly encourages stated clerks and denominational boards to seek ethnic diversity in nominating people to serve on denominational boards and as delegates to synod. The BOT noted that over the long term (ten years) little significant progress has been made and thus encourages diligence in the pursuit of healthy diversity at every level.

7. Ethnic advisers to synod

   Synod 2014 approved the appointment of up to seven and no less than two (determined by a three-year average of ethnic representation of delegates to synod) ethnic advisers to synod each year in order to reflect the diversity of CRC membership (*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 537-38, 576). The BOT has appointed the following persons to serve as ethnic advisers to Synod 2017:

Rev. David Cheung
Mr. Mina Meliky
Mr. Jei Wilson

8. Women advisers to synod

Synod 2015 adopted the practice of reinstating the practice of women advisers to synod. The BOT has appointed the following persons to serve as women advisers to Synod 2017 (* indicates service in this capacity in 2016):

Mrs. Gail De Young
* Ms. Karen Knip
Ms. Melissa Van Dyk

9. Young adult representatives to synod

In an effort to engage youth and young adults (18- to 26-year-olds) in the current issues faced by our denomination and to help raise up leadership within the church from among our young adults, young adult representatives will participate in the deliberations of synod. These individuals bring a valuable and unique perspective to the issues we face as a denomination by listening, engaging delegates during advisory committee meetings, and offering input on matters that arise in plenary. The BOT has appointed the following persons to serve as young adult representatives to Synod 2017 (* indicates service in this capacity in 2016):

Mr. Izhar Alvarez
Ms. Kristy Bootsma
Mr. Travis Moelker
Mr. Andrew Rylaarsdam
* Ms. Onelee Sneller
Mr. Jehvon Walker
Ms. Joelle Wilhelm

10. Agency presentations at synod

Synod 1995 adopted a three-year rotation cycle for agency presentations at synod. The following roster for agency presentations is scheduled for Synod 2017:

– Back to God Ministries International
– Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
– new mission agency

11. Transition to Council of Delegates

Synod 2015 approved "the transition from the Board of Trustees to the Council of Delegates by Synod 2018 or sooner" (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 679). At its September 2016 meeting, upon recommendation of the Council of Delegates Transition Committee, the BOT approved moving the transition to the COD from the original 2018 target date to July 1, 2017. The Nominating Committee function of the COD was subsequently launched immediately to help facilitate the transition.

a. Council of Delegates Governance Handbook

Synod 2015 also instructed the BOT "to form a Transition Committee, under the leadership of the executive director, with agency and ministry representation, to facilitate" this transition. The Council of Delegates Transition Committee membership included, in addi-

tion to the executive director, Dr. Gary Bekker, director of Christian Reformed World Missions; Dr. Moses Chung, director of Christian Reformed Home Missions; Dr. Darren Roorda, Canadian ministries director; Dr. Kurt Selles, director of Back to God Ministries International; and Mr. Colin Watson, Sr., director of ministries and administration. Two other groups provided assistance: an Operations Review Team (composed of other leaders from the offices in Burlington, Ont., Grand Rapids, Mich.; and Palos Heights, Ill.) mandated to consider the implementation feasibility of these new structures and processes, and a Governance Review Team (composed of board chairs, cochairs, and vice chairs of the agency boards and the BOT) mandated to review governance implications for the Council of Delegates. Throughout the process the COD Transition Committee consulted with the denomination's legal counsel in Canada and in the United States.

Early on, with legal advice, it was determined that the best way to organize and provide appropriate authority to the Council of Delegates was to develop a governance handbook, as opposed to a constitution (as with the current Board of Trustees). Therefore the Transition Committee and the two review teams worked to develop the proposed Council of Delegates Governance Handbook (with appendices). The boards of Back to God Ministries International and the new mission agency also contributed to the review process. Key components of the Governance Handbook include the following:

- the definition of the form of policy governance to be utilized (*Note:* Policy governance was specified in the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture report to Synod 2015.)
- mandates, functions, and policies of the COD and its committees
- the COD's relationship to corporate entities
- COD membership, officers, and meetings
- financial and advancement responsibilities
- human resource responsibilities

The contours specified by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture stated that the COD is to include a representative from each classis; Synod 2015 asked that the binational character of the CRCNA be carefully considered. The Governance Handbook mandates forty-eight classis delegates and four at-large delegates. It also requires that the COD Executive Committee be composed of an equal number of members from Canada and the United States. In addition, as explained below, there are two corporation boards—one in Canada and one in the United States. The specific missions of Back to God Ministries International and the new mission agency are maintained by way of the COD committee responsibilities and the opportunity for advisory committees.

The BOT recommends that Synod 2017 adopt the COD Governance Handbook, including appendices, as presented in Appendix A.

b. Proposed changes to Rules for Synodical Procedure and the Church Order

In directing the BOT to develop the Council of Delegates, Synod 2015 suggested "review of and possible recommendations for changes to the Church Order" (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 679). Such review has been completed, and the BOT recommends that synod adopt a series of recommended revisions to both the Rules for Synodical Procedure and the Church Order and Its Supplements. The proposed changes and accompanying recommendations are found in Appendix B.

c. Restated bylaws

Synod 2015 also directed the Board of Trustees to facilitate the "review of and possible recommendation for changes to the . . . 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" (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 679). In early 2017 the Back to God Ministries International board asked that they remain a separately incorporated ministry in Canada and the United States; one important reason relates to their accredited standing by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability relative to their non-CRC base of support. However, the board of the new mission agency at their meeting in February 2017 adopted a motion, asking that their bylaws—in Canada and in the United States—be integrated with the CRCNA bylaws for Canada and the United States. The COD Transition Committee and the Governance Review Team, along with legal counsel from each country, have prepared restated bylaws for the incorporation of Back to God Ministries International in Canada and the United States as well as restated bylaws for the incorporation of the CRCNA (including the new mission agency) in Canada and the United States. These four sets of bylaws and appropriate corporate board actions for restatement are subject to a final review by the BOT in May 2017 and will be included in the Board of Trustees Supplement report to Synod 2017.

d. COD membership

The BOT Nominating Committee was tasked in September 2016 to help facilitate nominations for membership on the new Council of Delegates. The committee polled current members on the Back to God Ministries International board, new mission agency board, and Board of Trustees to learn of their willingness to be considered for nomination by their classis to the COD. The results of the query were communicated to each classis along with any recommendation by the Nominating Committee for consideration—a desire for diversity of experience, gender, and ethnicity, as well as representation of ministry, were all taken into account prior to making recommendations to the classes. The nominations will be reviewed and presented to the BOT in May for recommendation to Synod 2017 for appointment of the new Council of Delegates.

e. COD executive committee

Because the Board of Trustees and the boards of Back to God Ministries International and the new mission agency will transition during the summer into the Council of Delegates, pending synodical approvals of the COD Governance Handbook, appropriate bylaws, and election of delegates, there will be a gap of more than three months until the new COD convenes in September. Therefore, following input from the boards of Back to God Ministries International and the new mission agency, the Board of Trustees adopted a transition plan for the executive committee of the Council of Delegates, noting that the plan adequately serves the executive committees of the corporations as well. The Board shares the plan as found in Appendix C as information.

12. Judicial Code Committee

The Judicial Code Committee hears appeals from a decision made by a council, a classis, or an agency of the Christian Reformed Church if it is alleged that an action violates the Church Order or the agency's mandate. The procedures followed by the Judicial Code Committee are set forth in Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c. The committee's members from both Canada and the United States include people with legal expertise, clergy, and nonclergy.

We are still in the implantation phase of the adopted changes to the JCC composition by Synod 2014. Mr. Ron Nightingale (having served four years) and Ms. Laura Bakker (having served six years) are concluding service on the committee in 2017. The BOT, on behalf of the Judicial Code Committee, asks that synod appoint two members with legal expertise—one from Canada and one from the United States—to a first term for membership on the Judicial Code Committee from the following:

a. *Legal expertise (Canada) position* (appoint the following single nominee)

Mr. John Koot is a retired lawyer. He is currently a member of Living Hope CRC in Abbotsford, British Columbia. Mr. Koot's previous experience has included serving as chair of council, Abbotsford Christian Schools, the Abbotsford Foundation, and Abbotsford Scholarship Bursary Fund. He has also served as a director for the Society of Christian Schools of British Columbia and is currently serving as chair of International Needs Incorporated. Mr. Koot served as a deacon for three years and as an elder for fifteen years.

b. *Legal expertise (United States) position* (appoint one member from the following slate of nominees)

Mr. Doug Vande Griend is currently a private practice attorney. He is a member of Sunnyslope CRC in Salem, Oregon. Mr. Vande Griend's previous experience includes service on the boards of Dordt College, Public Justice Advocates, Oregon Right to Life, and Salem Academy Christian Schools. He has also served as CFO for the Christian Legal Society.

Mr. Adam C. Zylstra is currently an attorney with Hoogendoorn & Talbot LLP in Chicago, Illinois. He is a member of Hope CRC in Oak Forest, Illinois. Mr. Zylstra has a passion for giving voice to people who cannot be heard.

The Board also recommends the following nominee for reappointment to a second term on the Judicial Code Committee: Rev. Henry P. Kranenburg.

13. Annual Day of Justice

Synod 2016, in response to the Doctrine of Discovery report, directed "the executive director, working in conjunction with denominational agencies, to consider a denomination-wide annual Day of Justice for the purpose of coming together as a body of Christ to recognize the plight of those who are oppressed, marginalized, and suffer in a culture of discrimination" (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 923). An ad hoc committee presented their report and recommendations to the BOT in February (see Appendix D). In response, the Board requests that Synod 2017 designate an annual Day of Justice for the CRCNA, preferably on the third Sunday of August, for CRC churches, classes, ministries, and educational institutions, beginning in August 2018. If approved, the Annual Day of Justice would be promoted by the Office of Race Relations and Social Justice and by World Renew, coordinating responsibility with each other and with other interested CRC ministries and institutions.

14. National and binational gatherings

a. NEXT—a U.S. regional gathering

A Canadian regional gathering and a U.S. regional gathering were held in May and June of 2016. A second regional gathering, NEXT, for emerging leaders from five college campuses and ethnic groups, was held in February 2017. Evaluations showed that attendees to NEXT found the gathering to be helpful. Because the emerging ethnic group leaders were more involved in congregational ministries (whereas the campus groups were mainly involved in campus ministry), the ethnic ministry leaders also appreciated shared sessions with Church Renewal Lab conferees at the same event.

b. Inspire 2017

A denominational gathering—Inspire 2017—is planned for August 3-5, 2017, in Detroit, Michigan. Inspire 2017 will provide an opportunity for members from all our 1,000+ churches to connect through practical workshops, engaging speakers, worship, and energizing conversations. Attendees will gather with colleagues and friends to refresh, refocus, and reimagine how our shared calling finds expression in our local communities and beyond. Inspire is for persons involved in ministry at any level in the local church. Visit crcna.org/Inspire2017 to learn more and to register for this exciting event!

15. Classis Renewal Group

A Classis Renewal Group has been studying the role of classes in the CRCNA and is mandated to propose any changes to make classes more robust. The group has been granted a one-year extension for submitting its final report to the Board of Trustees—the final report will now be presented to the Board in May 2018. The Board hopes to report to Synod 2018 on the analysis and actions recommended by the Classis Renewal Group.

16. Denominational survey

The CRCNA has historically conducted a denominational survey every five years to track trends in the denomination that help set strategic goals for the church and its ministries. In September 2016 the BOT approved moving from conducting a denominational survey every five years to an every-year survey model. While the every-five-year survey provided an important snapshot of the CRCNA, it was not connected to goals or to the Ministry Plan. The every-year approach will not only provide more frequent CRCNA snapshots but will also help to supply timely answers to whether we are achieving the goals of our unified ministries.

17. Publications and services

a. *Yearbook*

The CRC *Yearbook* is available in print, downloadable, and online versions. The *Yearbook* is published in print and as a downloadable PDF (available at faithaliveresources.org) near the beginning of each calendar year and reflects denominational and local-church information up to approximately August 31 of the calendar year preceding publication. Data received after August are included in continual updates to the online *Yearbook* (found at crcna.org/Yearbook). The online format includes a church finder feature with maps, church service times, membership information, and links to church websites, among other helpful information. Classis and denominational statistics can be downloaded from the online *Yearbook*. Minister service history, special days to be observed in the church calendar, and denominational ministry share information are all linked via the online *Yearbook*.

Among some of the statistics available in the online *Yearbook* are the total number of members (baptized and confessing) in a local congregation, number of families, number of professing members over eighteen years of age, total number of professing members, total number of baptized members, and total number of members received from other CRCs through evangelism and from other denominations. This data continues to present a historical record of our church and ministry together through the years.

b. *Church Order and Its Supplements* and *Rules for Synodical Procedure*

The *Church Order and Its Supplements 2016* reflects the updates adopted by Synod 2016. The latest version, published by the Office of Synodical Services, was distributed to each of the churches in early fall 2016. The *Rules for Synodical Procedure*, also updated following the decisions of Synod 2016, is available in electronic format *only.* Both

the Church Order and the *Rules for Synodical Procedure* are available in digital format on the Synod Resources webpage at www.crcna.org/SynodResources.

c. *Agenda for Synod* and *Acts of Synod*

The publication of the *Agenda for Synod* and *Acts of Synod* is the responsibility of the director of synodical services under the direction of the executive director. From time to time some decisions need to be made by the ED about which material properly belongs in the *Agenda for Synod*. Erring on the side of grace seems more appropriate than erring on the side of rigid regulation. Synod itself will finally decide in all cases whether material is properly on its agenda.

d. *Manual for Synodical Deputies*

The *Manual for Synodical Deputies* is distributed to synodical deputies, their alternates, and the stated clerks of classes. A revision of the manual was completed in Summer 2016 by the Office of Synodical Services, reflecting the decisions of Synod 2016. Anyone desiring to access or download a copy of this tool for the classes may do so by going to the stated clerk and synodical deputy webpage at www.crcna.org/StatedClerks.

B. Program matters

A large part of the Board of Trustees' work relates to the ministry programs, personnel, and finances of the denomination. The program and personnel details are reported to synod by way of the reports of the agencies and this section of the BOT's report in this agenda. Additional information regarding financial matters is contained in Appendix I to this Board of Trustees Report as well as in the *Agenda for Synod 2017—Financial and Business Supplement* that will be distributed at synod. The final budget and the ministry share request will be presented to synod by way of the BOT Supplement report and synod's financial matters advisory committee.

The BOT provides denominational oversight on behalf of synod throughout the year. The office of the executive director serves as the primary link between the BOT and the denomination's ministries. Serving within the office of the ED are the director of ministries and administration (DMA), the Canadian ministries director (CMD), the director of finance and operations (DFO), the director of synodical services (DSS), and the director of communications and marketing (DCM).

The Ministries Leadership Council (MLC), convened by the executive director of the CRCNA, has responsibility for implementation of the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church (*Our Journey 2020*), the collaboration of the ministries, and the review of program matters. The membership of the MLC is made up of executive leadership, directors of the agencies, presidents of the educational institutions (or their designees), and others representing specific offices and functions. The Canadian Ministries Team, convened by the Canadian ministries director, functions as a subcommittee of the MLC to provide leadership to the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in Canada.

The program and financial matters processed by the Board from July through February are presented to synod as information. Any matters that require action by synod are identified within the body of this report.

1. *Our Journey 2020* – The Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church

   The Board of Trustees is mandated by synod to lead in developing and implementing the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church that provides strategic direction for the agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The plan provides a framework for the Board's supervision of the management of the agencies; the planning, coordinating, and integrating of their work; and the integration of the respective missions of the denomination's educational institutions into the denominational ministry program.

   After listening carefully to members and leaders of Christian Reformed churches across North America, the Board identified a set of mutually desired futures. These desired futures, endorsed by Synod 2015, include the following:

   Desired Future 1: Church and Community. We want to participate with each other, and with the people in the communities where we live and work, to discover where God's Spirit is already active and to bear witness to Christ in a way that invites others to accept him and become part of his family.

   Desired Future 2: Discipleship. Our congregations will be vibrant communities, shaped by grace, that proclaim the gospel and are engaged in evangelism and lifelong discipleship with people of all generations.

   Desired Future 3: Leadership. Our congregations and ministries at all levels—local, regional, and denominational—will be places where leaders, both ordained and lay, are identified, equipped, and empowered to serve effectively in today's diverse and challenging world.

   Desired Future 4: Identity. We will understand deeply, embrace fully, and express freely what it means to be the Christian Reformed Church in North America in this time and place.

   Desired Future 5: Collaboration. We will work together—locally, regionally, nationally, and binationally—to live out our fivefold calling in ways that are effective, efficient, responsive, cross-culturally competent, accessible, and sustainable.

   Our Journey 2020 provides a strategic direction for the agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church by focusing on what we believe God is calling congregations to be and to do in ways unique to the ministry contexts and opportunities of each. As such, the aim this past year has been to (a) provide short videos for these desired futures that are meant to inspire and encourage congregations and classes (Synod 2016 previewed several of the videos) and (b) provide congregations and classes with assistance in using the desired futures and strategic goals of *Our Journey 2020* in ways that resonate with the needs and opportunities of each.

Our Journey 2020 was officially launched in July 2016. At this writing, eight months into the Ministry Plan, we have begun to assess (a) denominational agency and ministry efficacy in the provision of assistance and resources and (b) the attainment of these desired futures through surveying CRC churches and their members across North America.

With respect to provision of assistance and resources, a complete report will be made available to the Council of Delegates after the first year is complete; however, it is not premature to report on successes and challenges that are being noted. For example, Desired Future 5 envisions congregations and ministries of the CRC interacting together in ways that are effective, efficient, responsive, cross-culturally competent, accessible, and sustainable. The Connections Project, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., is providing the CRCNA with opportunities to improve our effectiveness and accessibility in mutual resourcing in three geographic areas. Yet, by means of the Connections Project in addition to many other strategic endeavors, there is much progress to be made.

With respect to surveying congregations, we have shifted to annual surveys, and we are beginning to receive feedback regarding factors involved in each of the five desired futures. The Board of Trustees is pleased that congregations and their members are demonstrating encouraging participation rates, and soon we will have an initial data set that will provide an important baseline for measuring progress in the future.

2. Our Calling

Proposed by the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture to Synod 2014, the term *Five Streams*—changed to "Our Calling" in 2016—became a focus of the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in its collaboration, programs, and reporting. Synod 2015 adopted the five themes of Our Calling of the Christian Reformed Church (included below) to function 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" (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 680).

Faith Formation

As a community of believers, we seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to nurture their faith through all ages and stages of life.

Servant Leadership

Understanding that the lifelong equipping of leaders is essential for churches and ministries to flourish, we identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God.

Global Mission

Called to be witnesses of Christ's kingdom to the ends of the earth, we start and strengthen local churches in North America and around the world.

Mercy and Justice

Hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken, and disadvantaged, we seek to act justly and love mercy as we walk humbly with our God.

Gospel Proclamation and Worship

Believing that faith comes through the hearing of God's Word, we proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and seek to worship him in all that we do.

Consistent with prior actions of both adopting the five features and then relabeling them as "Our Calling," we note that these ministry priorities are being utilized to communicate more effectively what the CRC members and ministers, congregations and classes, and ministries and agencies are called to do. The *Annual Ministry Report*, the *Agenda for Synod*, and introductory brochures all utilize this categorization. Further, the BOT uses this structure in its committee work, and the Council of Delegates committee structure and committee mandates will reflect these priorities.

3. CRC agency, institution, and congregational services reports

   Each year the Board of Trustees submits a *unified* report to synod composed of individual parts provided by the agencies, educational institutions, and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church. The individual reports of the CRC ministries appear in the following pages of this *Agenda for Synod.*

   These reports portray the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church at home and around the world. As you read the material, we invite you to praise God for ministry opportunities.

4. Prioritization and reduction of the institutional footprint

   Synod 2016 instructed the BOT "to evaluate and prioritize all existing programs and ministries with the goal of reducing the institutional footprint" (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 858). Included in this instruction was a directive to "produce a detailed chart of all existing ministries that includes the following information: ministry description, date the ministry began, account of synod that established the ministry, and current financial ministry-share allocation. This chart is to be presented to the BOT by February 2017." Further, the BOT was asked to "provide an update on the process to Synod 2017."

   An overview grid and a summary grid of CRC ministry, history, and funding are found in Appendices E and F as an update for synod. In addition, as a step toward the further goal of bringing "a final report to Synod 2018 to affirm the prioritized ministries" and recognizing that "going forward, all ministries will be evaluated on a regular basis" (*Acts of Synod 2016,* p. 858), the goals for all programs and ministries, categorized by Our Calling, along with evaluation approaches for each are found in the Program Evaluation Overview in Appendix G. Synod is asked to take note of the fulfillment of this request of Synod 2016.

   The instruction of Synod 2016 also directed the BOT to "seek input from churches and classes in the prioritization and evaluation" of existing programs and ministries. The BOT, in its role as interim committee

of synod, decided at its February 2017 meeting to ask the delegates to Synod 2017 to give their own personal impression of each ministry's value for God's kingdom by completing a survey prior to synod. Further, the BOT requests that the officers of synod set aside no more than one hour for delegates to review with each other their assessments, thereby providing initial feedback for the BOT to use in preparing its report to Synod 2018.

5. Director of the new mission agency
   The Board was blessed to meet with Dr. Zachary J. King as the nominee for the position of director of the new mission agency, as recommended by the board of the new mission agency. The BOT recommends that synod ratify the appointment of Dr. King as the director of the new mission agency, tentatively effective July 6, 2017, and that he be introduced at synod. The curriculum vitae for Dr. King is included as .

6. Director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
   At its February meeting the Board had the privilege of meeting with Rev. Sarah Hae Kyung Roelofs, nominee for the position of director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, upon recommendation of the search committee and the administration. The Board ratified the appointment of Rev. Roelofs to this position, effective April 3, 2017. Delegates to synod will be introduced to Rev. Roelofs during the week of synod.

7. Integration of the Office of Race Relations and the Office of Social Justice
   Upon the endorsement of the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC), the Board of Trustees approved the direction of senior leadership and the director of ministries and administration in seeking closer integration of the Office of Race Relations, the Office of Social Justice, and related diversity initiatives. In addition, the Board approved combining and integrating the role of the director of Race Relations with the role of coordinator of the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action. The reasons for integrating these ministries include the following:

   a. Race Relations and Social Justice are inextricably bound together as pervasive issues in our world today, and issues of race and justice are also commonly found in our biblical narrative.
   b. Combining these roles strengthens our ability to be effective in both ministry areas, enhancing our ability to describe God's vision of humanity and justice.
   c. This decision honors the history that led to the creation of the Synodical Committee on Race Relations (SCORR) as well as the synodical task force on world hunger.
   d. The decision makes optimal use of our financial and personnel resources—reflecting good stewardship.
   e. This decision removes fragmentation inherent in our current approach to these areas and better aligns responsibility within the staff (to the DMA), and accountability to the BOT (or COD) subcommittee.

   The Board also noted the following concerns around race relations and social justice as a part of the administrative process to be considered

at the level of executive leadership and MLC, and the Board asked that the executive leadership and MLC be included in subsequent reporting to the BOT.

- Consider the concerns re losing prioritization of race relations within a broad social justice sphere.
- Ensure a healthy budget allocation for race relations as a part of the whole.
- Consider the concerns and strategy for different national contexts.
- Assure collaboration with other staff and agency groups who share similar or related social justice concerns (e.g., Antiracism Reconciliation Team) within the proposed new structure.

Following the above decision by the Board to integrate the ministries of race relations and social justice, a search was implemented for a leader of the new Office of Race Relations and Social Justice. At its February meeting, the Board had the privilege of meeting with Dr. Reginald Smith, nominee for director of Race Relations and Social Justice, upon recommendation of the search committee and the administration. The Board ratified the appointment of Dr. Smith to this position, effective February 27, 2017. Delegates to synod will be introduced to Dr. Smith when synod convenes in June.

8. Realignment of Pastor Church Resources

   Effective January 1, 2017, management within Pastor Church Resources (PCR) initiated a realignment. Management responsibilities and leadership will be shared by Ms. Lis Van Harten and Rev. Cecil VanNeijenhuis (both have served as staff within the office for many years). The previous director of PCR, Rev. Norm Thomasma, as he anticipates retirement in 2018, will assume a coaching role and continue to be available to churches for consultation and assistance.

9. Office of Disability Concerns

   a. Disability Awareness Week

      The BOT recommends that synod encourage CRC churches, classes, and educational institutions to annually sponsor events to celebrate Disability Awareness Week, preferably during the week preceding the third Sunday in October.

      Grounds:

      1. People with disabilities make up between 15 and 20 percent of the population in North America. 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).
      2. Since the late 1970s, synods have repeatedly affirmed the Bible's call for 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." Synods 1986 and 1987 created the Committee on Disability Concerns, provided for a full-time administrator, and expanded the committee's mandate "to assist the churches in identifying and eliminating those barriers which hinder the full participation in the life of the church of persons who have disabilities." Synod 1993 recommended "full compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act . . . and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada." Synod 2011 of the CRC and the RCA General Synod 2011 approved similar recommendations from the CRC and the RCA offices of Disability Concerns, promising that future meetings of the synods would provide reasonable accommodations to all participants, including but not limited to people with known hearing impairments, sight impairments, and mobility impairments. Various other decisions by our synods have affirmed the value and giftedness of all people, whether or not they have disabilities. 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. Churches should always engage all members in all aspects of church life, and an annual reminder of the particular importance and giftedness of people with disabilities will help everyone in the church remember that "God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be" (1 Cor. 12:18).

3. This date coincides with the CRC denominational schedule for offerings, which assigns the third Sunday in October to Disability Concerns.
4. The RCA celebrates Disability 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 the CRC. Further, this date aligns our celebration with those of numerous organizations and agencies that highlight disability awareness in October. Both ministries offer many resources for Disability Awareness Week on their websites (rca.org/disability and crcna.org/disability).

b. Disability Concerns Advisory Committee

The BOT approved a proposal in September for a combined advisory committee for the CRC and RCA Disability Concerns ministries. This collaborative effort is an example of the various ways in which the CRC and RCA continue to work toward a common goal of enhancing ministry together in the churches.

10. Timothy Leadership Training Institute

In September 2016 the Board of Trustees affirmed the direction of a plan to manage the Timothy Leadership Training Institute, Global Coffee Break, Educational Care, and other related initiatives in an integrated

way that optimizes the use of resources and allows for further growth in the use of nonformal adult education and training.

11. Other ministries and services of the CRCNA

    a. Ministry Support Services

    The staff of Ministry Support Services (MSS) is responsible for *The Banner,* Faith Alive Christian Resources, Libros Desafio (Spanish language resources), and a number of professional services that support the CRC ministries with communications, marketing, brand management, church and member services, editorial, rights management, design, web services, purchasing, and distribution. At any one time, more than 150 significant projects are in process, numerous orders and special requests are being fulfilled for local churches and individual customers, and thousands of words are being written, edited, and incorporated with photos, graphics, and other design elements into publications on paper or in pixels.

    Working with the Translation Team and its network of non-English language community liaisons, the amount of document and resource translations being requested has increased. To aid in accurate interpretation of sometimes complex concepts, where practical, MSS recommends English and non-English translations to appear side-by-side, as in the recent translations of the Church Order in Spanish and Korean (see crcna.org/SynodResources).

    In the interest of consistent branding and quality presentation, MSS has worked with communications staff to create guides for Brand Standards and Editorial Style.

    We're looking forward to supporting Back to God Ministries' move to the Grand Rapids, Michigan, office. Already we've identified some possible efficiencies from combined distribution and customer support.

    b. *The Banner*

    The Banner, the magazine of the Christian Reformed Church, currently prints and distributes 83,500 copies of its paper version in the United States and Canada. More than 3,000 people have signed up to receive the weekly *Banner Update*, which directs readers to new content on the *Banner* website (thebanner.org). Our efforts on social media also help to ensure that *Banner* content is available to anyone in a wide variety of forms.

    Over 1,200 people participated in the recent (Dec. 2016) *Banner* readers' survey, and the results showed a high level of satisfaction among readers: 78 percent of survey respondents are somewhat satisfied to very satisfied with *The Banner*. This overall satisfaction level has risen from the previous 2013 survey, which was at 69 percent.

    We are also pleased to announce that *The Banner* app is now available for free download on iPhone and Android devices! (See thebanner.org/about-us/general-info.) This app makes it even easier for people to access online content as it's posted.

Finally, *The Banner* is in the process of revamping its content and design to better serve readers' needs. The launch date for this "new" *Banner* is planned for January 2018.

c. The Network

Begun in 2010, The Network (network.crcna.org) has become one of the CRC's most-visited websites. It's a place where people involved in their local church can connect—with each other and with denominational staff—about the "nuts and bolts" of ministry. Since its launch, CRC members and staff have shared more than 2,000 resources on the site, written 3,000 blog posts, added 800 discussion topics, and asked 400 ministry questions (95% of which were answered by other helpful CRC members). The Network is based on the idea that we can all learn from and encourage each other and harness the collective experience across all of our churches—whether down the street or across the continent. Traffic to the site has been increasing steadily—up 55 percent over the past two years—as people become more familiar with this type of online community. As this growth continues, The Network's technology can help make it easier for church members to also browse resources from CRCNA ministries.

d. Digital Library and CRC Discount

At the time of this writing the Digital Library is nearly a year old (see library.crcna.org). A recent survey (of CRC News and *Banner* email subscribers) indicated that 60 percent of respondents had heard about it. Of those, one-third had created an account to view the hundreds of books offered free to anyone who attends a CRC. Reports show that about 700 of our churches have at least one person using the Digital Library—and one church has over 50 persons signed on! Many subscribers have requested that the books be made available offline. But unfortunately that is quite expensive to do.

While the Digital Library is quite well known, there is less awareness of the new "CRC Discount" that was introduced at the same time as the launch of the Digital Library (the same survey indicated 40% awareness of the CRC discount). Through just the first half of the current fiscal year, this discount resulted in our churches' saving over $100,000 (compared to the prices paid by non-CRC customers). The CRC discount will remain in place next year, but the size of the discount will need to be evaluated on the basis of current budget challenges.

12. Ministries in Canada: ServiceLink

At its September 2016 meeting the Board of Trustees adopted the following revised mandate for the ServiceLink ministry within Canada, which previously engaged primarily in volunteer placement and training (visit crcna.org/ServiceLink to learn more about this ministry):

ServiceLink will, first and primarily, be a collaborative resourcing bridge between the agencies and ministries of the CRC and local Canadian churches. This would involve roles in customer service and communication, the specifics of which would be done in consultation with the agencies and ministry leaders of the aforementioned (as well as

classis-based). Second, ServiceLink will maintain their role in volunteer ministry development, especially as it relates to the North American context, to support local churches in their efforts to engage volunteers within their own churches and communities.

C. Financial matters

In order to assure that synod has the most up-to-date and accurate information, detailed financial data will be included in the *Agenda for Synod 2017—Business and Financial Supplement,* which will be made available to the delegates at the time synod convenes. This supplement will include financial disclosure information, agency budgets for fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018), and the recommended ministry-share amount for calendar year 2018. In addition, synod will be asked to approve a schedule for one or more above-ministry-share offerings for the ministries of the denomination, a quarterly offering for World Renew (in lieu of ministry-share support), and a listing of new requests for accredited agency status for recommendation to the churches. Additional financial information and/or recommendations will also be included in the Board of Trustees Supplement report due out in late May.

D. Christian Reformed Church Foundation

The Christian Reformed Church Foundation in the United States and Canada serves the Christian Reformed Church in North America by funding innovative and collaborative projects led by CRC churches, agencies, and ministries. Over the past twenty years, the CRC Foundation in both the United States and Canada has worked to equip and advance more than eighty-five start-up ministry projects through more than $9 million in investments. Many of these ministries have become long-term ministries, such as the Timothy Leadership Training Institute, Partners Worldwide, The Network, and several church plants and leadership initiatives.

The Foundation is able to assist in ministry through estate gifts and *Ignite | Funding Ministry Innovation*. Ignite allows the CRC to explore new ministry ideas and initiatives that advance God's kingdom and equips churches to do ministry effectively, bridging ministry today with ministry tomorrow.

The CRC Foundation works in concert with the Board of Trustees. It is legally established in the United States and Canada.

Following are a few highlights from the past year. The CRC Foundation is

- helping to fund the Youth Ministry Pilot Project organized by Faith Formation Ministries among churches in Canada; the project creates networks of local youth leaders and provides them with opportunities to share, learn, and grow as leaders.
- funding a series of videos for *Our Journey 2020*, the Ministry Plan of the CRC, to help all CRC congregations develop strategies and access resources in the ministry areas where the Spirit is leading: church and community, discipleship, leadership, identity, and collaboration.
- investing in the Reformed Leadership Initiative—a project designed to identify leadership challenges within our churches, communities, and neighborhoods, and to equip leaders with the tools needed to address these challenges.

– assisting churches to identify how they can cut building expenses in order to invest in ministry.

These are just some of the initiatives supported by the CRC Foundation and Ignite. The list of ideas to advance God's kingdom is growing—support is crucial in turning these ideas into reality.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Mr. Chris Van Spronsen, chair of the Board of Trustees; Dr. Steven R. Timmermans, executive director; and members of the executive staff as needed when matters pertaining to the Board of Trustees are discussed.

B. That synod grant all requests for privilege of the floor by the BOT, agencies, educational institutions, standing committees, and study committees of synod contained within the reports to Synod 2017.

C. That synod approve all requests for special offerings for the agencies, ministries, and educational institutions of the CRC that are contained within the reports to Synod 2017.

D. That synod take note of the Board's action to accept the invitation from Pillar Church in Holland, Michigan, to serve as the convening church of Synod 2018, in joint session with the RCA General Synod 2018 (II, A, 1).

E. That synod approve the interim appointments made by the Board for synodical deputies and alternate synodical deputies (II, A, 3), as well as appointments to the agency and institution boards as needed.

F. That synod take note that the implementation for the transition from the Board of Trustees governance model to the new Council of Delegates governance model will take place as of July 1, 2017 (II, A, 11).

G. That synod adopt the COD Governance Handbook, including its appendices, as presented in Appendix A (II, A, 11, a).

H. That synod adopt the proposed changes to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, as presented in Appendix B, to reflect the transition from the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to the new Council of Delegates of the CRCNA (II, A, 11, b).

I. That synod adopt the proposed changes to the Church Order and Its Supplements, as presented in Appendix B, to reflect the transition from the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to the new Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. The revisions adopted will be effective July 1, 2017 (II, A, 11, b).

Ground: These changes will be necessitated by the proposed decision of synod to transition from the BOT to the COD, effective July 1, 2017.

J. That synod take note of the transition plan for the Council of Delegates executive committee, as found in Appendix C (II, A, 11, e).

K. That synod by way of the ballot elect to a first term members for the Judicial Code Committee from the nominees presented (II, A, 12).

L. That synod by way of the ballot reappoint to a second term on the Judicial Code Committee the nominee presented (II, A, 12).

M. That synod designate an Annual Day of Justice for the CRCNA, preferably on the third Sunday of August, for CRC churches, classes, ministries, and educational institutions, beginning in August 2018. If approved, the Annual Day of Justice would be promoted by the Office of Race Relations and Social Justice and by World Renew, coordinating responsibility with each other and with other interested CRC ministries and institutions (II, A, 13 and Appendix D).

N. That synod take note of the overview grid (Appendix E) and the summary grid of CRC ministry, history, and funding (Appendix F) as partial fulfillment of the request of Synod 2016 (II, B, 4).

O. That synod take note the Program Evaluation Overview document (Appendix G) as partial fulfillment of the request of Synod 2016 (II, B, 4).

P. That synod ratify the appointment of Dr. Zachary J. King as the director of the new mission agency, tentatively effective July 6, 2017, and that he be introduced to the delegates of synod (II, B, 5 and).

Q. That synod encourage CRC churches, classes, and educational institutions to annually sponsor events to celebrate Disability Awareness Week, preferably during the week preceding the third Sunday in October (II, B, 9).

Grounds:

1. People with disabilities make up between 15 and 20 percent of the population in North America. 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).
2. Since the late 1970s, synods have repeatedly affirmed the Bible's call for 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." Synods 1986 and 1987 created the Committee on Disability Concerns, provided for a full-time administrator, and expanded the committee's mandate "to assist the churches in identifying and eliminating those barriers which hinder the full participation in the life of the church of persons who have disabilities." Synod 1993 recommended "full compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act . . . and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada." Synod 2011 of the CRC and the RCA General Synod 2011 approved similar recommendations from the CRC and the RCA offices of Disability Concerns, promising that future meetings of the synods would provide reasonable accommodations to all participants,

including but not limited to people with known hearing impairments, sight impairments, and mobility impairments. Various other decisions by our synods have affirmed the value and giftedness of all people, whether or not they have disabilities. 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. Churches should always engage all members in all aspects of church life, and an annual reminder of the particular importance and giftedness of people with disabilities will help everyone in the church remember that "God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be" (1 Cor. 12:18).

3. This date coincides with the CRC denominational schedule for offerings, which assigns the third Sunday in October to Disability Concerns.
4. The RCA celebrates Disability 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 the CRC. Further, this date aligns our celebration with those of numerous organizations and agencies that highlight disability awareness in October. Both ministries offer many resources for Disability Awareness Week on their websites (rca.org/disability and crcna.org/disability).

R. That synod receive as information the condensed financial statements of the agencies and educational institutions (Appendix I).

Board of Trustees of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Steven R. Timmermans, executive director

Appendix A
Council of Delegates Governance Handbook

Glossary

Agencies and Ministries. For the purposes of the COD Governance Handbook, the terms *agencies* and *ministries* refer to those agencies and ministries that synod has directed to be placed under the governance of the COD: Aboriginal Ministries (Canada), Back to God Ministries International, *The Banner*, Committee for Contact with the Government (Centre for Public Dialogue), the new mission agency, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, Disability Concerns, Faith Formation Ministries, Offices of Race Relations and Social Justice, Pastor Church Resources, Safe Church Ministry, ServiceLink, and Worship Ministries. (See section 1.311 for the appropriate synodical reference.)

Other CRCNA Entities. For the purposes of the COD Governance Handbook, the term *other CRCNA entities* refers to those agencies, ministries, and educational institutions that are fully and legally part of the CRCNA but that synod has directed to be governed apart from the COD: Calvin College,

Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS), and World Renew (WR). (See section 1.212 for the appropriate synodical reference.)

Other Nonagency, Noninstitutional Boards. For the purpose of the COD Governance Handbook, the term *other nonagency, noninstitutional boards* refers to those boards that for reasons of incorporation status are separate from the COD but whose governance needs to work in concert with the COD: the CRCNA Foundation board, the board of the Reformed Benefits Association, and the Timothy Leadership Training Institute board.

Unified Ministry of the CRCNA. For the purpose of the COD Governance Handbook, the term *unified ministry of the CRCNA,* often used by synod, refers to the COD's responsibility of focusing on the agencies and ministries assigned to it as well as extending to the other CRCNA entities and other nonagency, noninstitutional boards. Typically such focus is found in the denomination's ministry plan (for example, see section 1.112). In addition, synod often uses this term when seeking unified financial management and operations (for example, see section 2.121). While sometimes synod participates directly in actions that are foundational to unified ministry (e.g., approving changes in mandates of other CRCNA entities), such actions flow through the COD (e.g., the COD's role in being the channel of communication for Calvin College, CTS, and WR to synod—see 1.312) in recognition of the COD's role that extends—on synod's behalf—beyond the agencies and ministries it directly governs.

1.0 Introduction to the Council of Delegates (COD)

The COD Governance Handbook provides the contours for the COD's authority and function, both in terms of its role and responsibilities relative to CRCNA agencies, ministries, and other CRCNA entities as well as its relationship to the church (e.g., synod, classes, and congregations) and state (connection to corporate entities).

Significant policies and governance structures can be revised/amended by action of the COD and, when so determined by precedent and any prior instruction provided by synod, then brought to synod for approval or ratification. All other aspects can be revised/amended by action of the COD, but ratification by synod is not required (other than initial synodical acceptance).

1.1 Governance

Synod 2015 accepted a report from the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture, approving the formation of a COD (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 679), and in so doing relied upon an earlier action of synod: "The COD would be a policy governance board, in line with the task force's 2014 recommendation for adoption of policy governance by all boards (adopted by synod; see *Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 564)" (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 357).

The COD functions with a constituent-representative model of policy governance. Policy governance suggests a board's role is to see that the organization achieves what it should, avoiding the unacceptable (via the concept of limitations), all on behalf of its constituents.

This constituent-representative model of policy governance provides a "link between the organization's board and its constituents. The

constituents are represented on the governing board and participate in policy development and planning."[1] For these purposes, the term *constituents* refers to CRCNA members.

Similar to all forms of policy governance, there is clear differentiation between board activity and staff/administrative activity. Those serving on the COD are not invited into management functions. Staff/administrative members do not chart the direction and set the policies for the denomination, but they serve as implementers, working within the contours of COD-set policies toward the goals and limitations identified by the COD in conjunction with the CRC constituency. Moreover, as the COD sets direction and evaluates the effectiveness of outcomes, staff and administration are always attentive to context, making recommendations and providing analysis to the COD in ways that consider binationality, diversity, and the like.

This model flows from CRC church polity as described in Church Order Article 27-a: "Each assembly exercises, in keeping with its own character a domain, the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to the church by Christ; the authority of councils being original, that of major assemblies being delegated." In other words, ecclesiastical authority begins with congregations and is delegated to classis and then to synod. The role of officebearers in each of these assemblies is significant in Church Order Article 1-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."

As an ecclesiastical governance entity serving in the interim of synod, the COD provides governance by means of the authority delegated to it via members (delegates) who represent the regional (classis) groups of congregations and are elected by synod.

The following definitions provide clarity as this approach to governance requires clarity concerning vocabulary.

1.11 COD Terminology

1.111 Policies. Flowing from statements of mission, vision, and values, **policies** are established by the COD (and, when appropriate, synodically approved) to provide parameters by which its members participate in COD deliberations and actions and to provide personnel the contours within which to enact the programs and utilize the resources of COD-governed agencies and ministries in pursuit of denominational purposes. (*Note:* For the purposes of the

[1] Bradshaw, P., Hayday, R., Armstrong, R.; "Non-profit Governance Models: Problems and Prospects," paper originally presented at ARNOVA Conference, Seattle, Washington, 1998.

Canadian corporation(s), **policies** provide *control*; see section 1.4 for further information.) When such polices extend to other CRCNA entities and to nonagency, noninstitutional boards, such synodically required broadening is noted.

1.112 Goals. Fundamental to Ministry Plans, **goals** are the COD-approved (and, as appropriate, synodically approved) purposes of the CRCNA necessary for guiding the efforts of CRCNA agencies and ministries. **Goals** are at times referred to as criteria, desired futures, or the like. (*Note:* For the purposes of the Canadian corporation(s), **goals** provide *direction*.)

1.12 Non-COD Terms. While *standards, strategies, guidelines*, and *procedures* do not require COD approval, they may be brought to the COD for information and advice to ensure consistency with the policies and the goals to which they are linked as well as to substantiate appropriate policy implementation.

1.121 Interagency/Ministry/Other CRCNA Entities in Relationship to the COD

1.1211 Standards. Guiding principles and parameters set by the appropriate administrative group (at times these are also referred to as *administrative policies*).

1.1212 Strategies. Initiatives and actions developed by the appropriate administrative group to enact policies and goals.

1.1213 The Ministries Leadership Council (and its corresponding bodies) is the major administrative agent for executing the mission of the CRCNA via interrelationships among agencies, ministries, and other CRCNA entities (see 5.2312).

1.122 Agencies, Ministries, and Other CRCNA Entities in Relationship to the COD

1.1221 Guidelines. Directions, practices, and ideas (set by the appropriate administrative person or unit) that help people make appropriate decisions (e.g., ordinary missionaries are encouraged to avoid home service during the summer months).

1.1222 Procedures. Actions developed by the appropriate administrative person or group that must be taken in order to implement a policy or standard.

1.2 Authority and Relationships: Synod

The CRCNA identifies the twofold ecclesiastical authority of this governing body by means of its relationship to synod (see also 1.1, above, for the more complete context of the assemblies of the church).

1.21 Acting on Behalf of Synod. Church Order Article 33-b:
"... synod shall appoint the [Council of Delegates] to act for them in

matters which cannot await action by [synod itself and to] . . . submit all their actions to the next meeting of [synod] . . . for approval."

1.22 Matters Assigned to the COD. The COD "deals with such matters as have been assigned to it by synod as a board of directors. In that capacity the [COD] is synod's servant to oversee the corporate and ministry functions of the denomination"[2]—both in terms of the direct scope assigned to the COD (see 1.311, below) and the complete scope of synod (see 1.312 and 1.313, below).

1.3 Authority and Relationship: Agencies, Ministries, Other CRCNA Entities. The second synodically derived function of the COD relates to CRCNA agencies, ministries, and other CRCNA entities.

1.31 Scope

1.311 Agencies and Ministries. In forming the COD, synod drew together all of the agencies but one and all ministries of the CRCNA under reorganized governance: "reorganization of the governance of the agency boards for Christian Reformed World Missions, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and Back to God Ministries International, as well as the governance of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and core ministries under its governance" (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, p. 355).

1.312 Other CRCNA Entities. This note from the *Agenda for Synod 2015* provides the rationale for boards not incorporated into the COD: "The boards of World Renew, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary would remain the same, due to requirements for recognition and accreditation in their respective fields of endeavor, ability to receive grant funding, and ability to do ministry in contexts where churches are not welcome" (p. 375). Further, "while there would be continuation of separate boards [for these three entities], we anticipate that the Council of Delegates would continue and enhance connections with these ministries" (p. 376). Thus relationships described in Appendix F to this handbook and decades of synodical instructions remain operative, as requirements for the consolidation of services (e.g., IT, Human Resources, Financial Services, etc.) continue to be necessary where appropriate among both the agencies/ministries and these other entities (World Renew, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary). This is realized in the membership of these other entities on the Ministries Leadership Council, where integrative standards (administrative policies) and strategies are formed and decided upon. Further, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew communicate to synod through the COD. Additionally, changes they approve to

[2] Borgdorff, Peter; *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government: 2015 Revision* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian Reformed Church in North America, 2016), p. 145.

their mandates, constitution, and/or by-laws require presentation by the COD as recommendations to synod.[3]

1.313 Other Nonagency, Noninstitutional Boards. The Council of Delegates provides a significant role for other CRCNA boards such as those for the CRCNA Foundation, Reformed Benefits Association, and Timothy Leadership Training Institute. The COD may serve these other boards when specified by the boards' by-laws—for example, by making appointments to their boards and approving substantial changes to their stated purposes and missions.

1.4 Relationship to Corporate Entities

The CRCNA's long-standing understanding of church-state relations flows from biblical and confessional (e.g., Belgic Confession, Article 36) sources, and is summarized in the CRCNA's position on church and state: "The church recognizes and honors the state for its God-given power and service, faithfully proclaims the gospel to all in the state, and prays for all people, including those who are in authority, so that all may lead quiet and peaceable lives (1 Tim. 2:1-2)." Out of these understandings, legal incorporation of congregations, agencies, and assemblies has been the expected practice.

With the initiation of the COD, this statement provides the instruction behind the various corporate identities involved: "Yet the identity of each mission agency would remain, and their legal status as separate charitable organizations (in both Canada and the U.S.) would continue" (*Agenda for Synod 2015,* p. 375). The new mission agency board asked that their Canadian and U.S. by-laws be included in the overall CRCNA by-laws (yet while maintaining their separate identity), so there are four corporate structures, each with their own by-laws and their relationship to the Council of Delegates defined in a joint operating document as well as in each set of by-laws. The four corporate structures are these: [*note:* titles are working titles at this time]

Back to God Ministries International of the Christian Reformed Church in N.A.-Canada
The Christian Reformed Church in N.A.-Canada
Back to God Ministries International of the Christian Reformed Church in N.A.-U.S.
The Christian Reformed Church in N.A.-U.S.

The two Canadian Corporations are the legal agents in Canada for the synod of the CRCNA and the COD. The two U.S. Corporations are the legal agents in the U.S. for the synod of the CRCNA and the COD.

[3] The provision of Section 1.312 is to be understood in light of synod's action (*Acts of Synod 1993,* p. 343), which states, "Nothing contained herein shall interfere with the authority of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary to govern their respective institutions and to manage their personnel, facilities, educational programs, libraries, and finances according to their respective articles of incorporation and bylaws." *Note:* The intent of this act of synod is understood to apply to World Renew as well and is made specific by means of memorandums of understanding.

2.0 Mandates, Functions, and Policies of the COD and Its Committees

2.1 The Council of Delegates

2.11 Mandate. The purpose of the COD is to govern ministry functions and oversee corporate functions of the CRCNA (see also 1.2, above). In fulfilling this responsibility, the COD shall do the following:

2.111 Relative to Synod. Transact all matters assigned to it by synod and serve in the interim of synod on its behalf "in matters which cannot await action" by synod itself and to submit all such actions to the next meeting of synod for approval (Church Order Article 33-b).

2.112 Relative to Agencies and Ministries. Lead the agencies and ministries of the CRC (e.g., BTGMI, new mission agency, and Congregational Services) in light of the missions, visions, and callings established by synod, providing recommendations to synod when the missions, visions, and callings need to be reconsidered.

2.113 Relative to Other Entities/Boards. Cooperate with the educational institutions affiliated with the denomination and World Renew as well as other CRCNA boards toward integrating the respective missions of those institutions and functions into the denominational ministry plan, bringing their reports and any recommended actions to synod via the COD.

2.114 Relative to Congregations and Classes. Perform an intermediary role with three functions: (a) convey inputs for effective ministry from congregations and their members; (b) report back to classes and churches regarding work done by denominational ministries to achieve shared ministry goals; and (c) assist churches to discern changing context and other factors that affect effective ministry—all to achieve expressed shared goals for ministry.

2.115 Relative to Staff Leadership. Provide the denomination its administrative leaders of agencies and ministries by searching for and identifying nominees for vacancies, by selecting candidates and presenting them to synod, and by sustaining administrative leaders with evaluation and support. See Appendix G.

2.116 Relative to Binationality. Ensure that appropriate national contexts are considered in policy construction and administrative implementation, working with the relevant corporate entities in Canada and the U.S. (see section 1.4) and attending to the report Cultivating Binationality (adopted by the BOT and received for information by Synod 2014) found in Appendix L.

2.12 Policies. This mandate requires COD responsibility for the policies needed to *govern ministry functions and oversee corporate functions of the CRCNA* (section 2.1) assigned to it,[4] providing *parameters by which its*

[4] In addition, the COD policies identify where, by synod's request, such policies connect with other CRCNA entities and other nonagency, noninstitutional boards.

members participate in COD deliberations and actions and providing personnel the contours within which to enact the programs and utilize the resources of CRCNA agencies and ministries in pursuit of denominational purposes (section 1.111). Two types of policy result: (a) policies for the agencies and ministries of the COD that provide ends (goals) and limitations within which staff manage, via standards and strategies, guidelines and procedures, and (b) policies that are requested by synod and provide standards and strategies that extend to the unified ministries of the CRC. The COD attends to both types of policies via the various functions of the COD Ministries and Services Committees and decisions of the full COD. These policies are found in the Appendices of this Handbook. The areas of policy foci are the following:

2.121 Finances, Infrastructure, and Advancement. To ensure the provision of appropriate financial management, facilities and systems, and advancement policy within which personnel function and the COD agencies and ministries operate in conjunction with the unified ministry of the CRCNA, thereby ensuring the financial integrity of the denomination's agencies and ministries and the infrastructure needed for staff to pursue their ministries with excellence and efficiency.

2.122 Administrative Leadership and Human Resources. To ensure the provision of appropriate employment policies for all employees that shall not contraindicate federal, provincial, and state employment law, identifying when necessary, evaluating regularly, and supporting constructively administrative leaders of the denomination within the scope of such policies. *Note:* Employment policies are normally management policies, not COD governance policies; however, revisions to or new employee policies that have significant resource (financial or otherwise) implications require review by the Support Services Committee and approval by the COD.

2.123 Criteria and Goals. To ensure the provision of policies that establish the programmatic criteria (goals) and evaluation of progress toward goals for the unified ministry of the CRC while ensuring the establishment of standards and strategies by which personnel pursue such goals.

2.124 Evaluation and Assessment. To attend to the organizational structure and health of the unified ministry of the CRCNA by ensuring the establishment of standards and strategies of assessment (e.g., Ministry Plan measures, personnel surveys, etc.), periodically reviewing outcomes and identifying any needed revision of goals and policies as a result.

2.125 Appointment of Leaders. To maintain policies for the appointment of leaders, including those brought to synod. (See Appendix G.)

2.1251 For the appointment of leaders for BTGMI and the new mission agency, see 2.2214.

2.1252 For the appointment of leaders for Congregational Services and other ministries, see 2.2224 and 2.2234.

2.1253 For the appointment of other administrative leaders, see 2.2313 and 2.2414.

2.1254 For the appointment of *The Banner* editor, codirectors of World Renew, and presidents of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, see Appendix G, Section Two.

2.13 Membership. The members (delegates) of the COD are identified (with the assistance of the COD's nominating committee) by classes and appointed by synod; at-large delegates are identified by the COD's nominating committee and appointed by synod. COD members (delegates) are to be members in good standing of the CRCNA, not employees of the CRCNA, and able to sign the Statement of Agreement with the Beliefs of the CRCNA.

2.131 Classis. Each classis of the CRCNA shall, with the assistance of the COD's nominating committee, provide in a manner selected by the classis a slate of nominees through the COD to synod. The total number of classis delegates shall be the same as the number of classes.

2.132 At-Large. The nominating committee shall provide, with the endorsement of the COD, a slate of nominees to synod. The total number of at-large delegates shall range from 2 to 10.

2.133 Terms. The term of office shall be three (3) years with the possibility of election to a second term. When a member (delegate) is unable to finish his or her term, the COD will appoint (in consultation with the classis when the position is a classical delegate) an interim (with the privilege of vote) until the process in 2.131 or 2.132 is implemented, so that the nominee identified by classis (or, in the case of at-large, by the COD) and elected by synod can fill out the remaining term of the previous delegate.

2.134 Conflict of Interest. In their COD service, members shall adhere to the synodically approved Conflict of Interest Policy (Appendix A).

2.135 Responsibilities of individual COD members.

2.1351 COD Meetings. Attend all COD meetings in order to carry out required duties; attend committee meetings and other special functions and events as appropriate; contribute to and review the agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings.

2.1352 Classis Meetings. Serve as the key link between the COD and classis (if a COD member representing a classis), listening to the concerns and desires of the classis on behalf of the COD and bringing reports to the classis of the work of the CRCNA's agencies and ministries.

2.1353 The CRCNA. Pray for the CRCNA—its leaders, agencies, and ministries—on a regular basis, and challenge others to pray as well; give to the work of the CRCNA according to how God has blessed, and challenge God's people also to give; support and encourage the personnel with words of appreciation.

2.1354 Nomination Process. Participate in the assignments of the nominating committee.

2.136 Staff: *Ex Officio*. The executive director of the CRCNA, by virtue of the position, shall be a nonvoting member of the COD but may not serve as an officer.

2.137 Staff: Guests. The Canadian ministries director, the director of Back to God Ministries International, the director of finance and operations, the director of ministries and administration, the director of the new mission agency, and the director of synodical services shall be nonmember guests of the COD and may serve COD committees in ways appropriate for their positions (see section 2.22).

2.138 Representatives. Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew are invited to have representatives (nonvoting) at every meeting of the COD. In addition, such representatives will normally be invited to the meeting of specific committees appropriate to the relationship of the institution/agency to the COD. See Appendix F for specific protocol.

2.14 Officers. There shall be four officers of the COD selected by the COD from the classis and at-large delegates. In the spring of each year, election of the officers shall be conducted by ballot after the receipt of nominations.

2.141 Chairperson. The chairperson shall conduct the meetings of the COD. The chairperson is a member of and chairs the COD executive committee (but serves on no other COD committee). The chairperson shall be elected by the COD each year; normally a chairperson serves for no more than two successive years. The chairperson serves as the president of either the Canadian corporation board or the U.S. corporation board. The chairperson attends synod as a representative of the COD.

2.142 Vice-chairperson. The vice-chairperson shall serve as chair when the chairperson is absent or when the chairperson temporarily steps out of the chair role to join in discussion/deliberation. The vice-chairperson is a member of the COD executive committee and is chair of the nominating committee (but serves on no other committee). The vice-chairperson shall be elected by the COD each year; normally a vice-chairperson serves for no more than two successive years. The vice-chairperson must be a delegate from the nation the chairperson is not from. The vice-chairperson attends synod as a representative of the COD.

2.143 Secretary. The secretary shall be responsible for recording the actions of the COD in official meetings. The secretary may delegate

all or some portion of the duties of secretary to a staff member. The secretary is a member of the executive committee and may hold an additional committee assignment. The secretary shall be elected by the COD each year; normally a secretary serves for no more than two successive years.

2.144 Treasurer. The treasurer shall be responsible for the portion of the COD's agenda dealing with finances, budgeting, compensation, and the like. The treasurer may delegate all or some of the duties of treasurer to a staff member. The treasurer is a member of the executive committee and chairs the support services committee. The treasurer shall be elected by the COD each year; normally a treasurer serves for no more than two successive years.

2.15 Meetings

2.151 Frequency. The COD shall meet as needed to conduct its business but not fewer than two (2) times per year.

2.152 Rules of Order. Ordinarily the COD shall rely upon *Robert's Rules of Order* in conducting its business. However, adopted self-imposed procedure rules shall supersede *Robert's Rules*. Such procedural rules can be found throughout this handbook (e.g., 2.153).

2.153 Agenda, Committees, Corporations in Session

2.1531. Role of the Agenda. The executive committee prepares COD agendas for meetings (see section 2.2412), and the agenda provides the scope and sequence for the business conducted at each meeting. Normally matters are added to the agenda only by the concurrence of the body at the start of a meeting as the agenda is approved; motions/recommendations normally come through the work of committees, not from the floor.

2.1532 Role of Committees. Normally committees meet during or just prior to the time when the COD is convened, providing their minutes and recommendations to the COD in as timely a manner as possible.

2.1533 Role of Corporations. Corporate boards may meet prior to or during the time when the COD is convened, providing their minutes and recommendations to the COD in as timely a manner as possible. Likewise, corporate boards consider/approve actions of the COD at the conclusion of the COD or at the next meeting of the corporate boards following the COD meeting.

2.154 Open/Executive Sessions. The COD will normally conduct its meetings in open session. When meetings are open, representatives of the press are welcome to observe the proceedings of the COD.

2.1541 Executive Sessions. Upon the request of any member of the COD, or by declaration of the chairperson, the COD may enter into executive session of either form as described below.

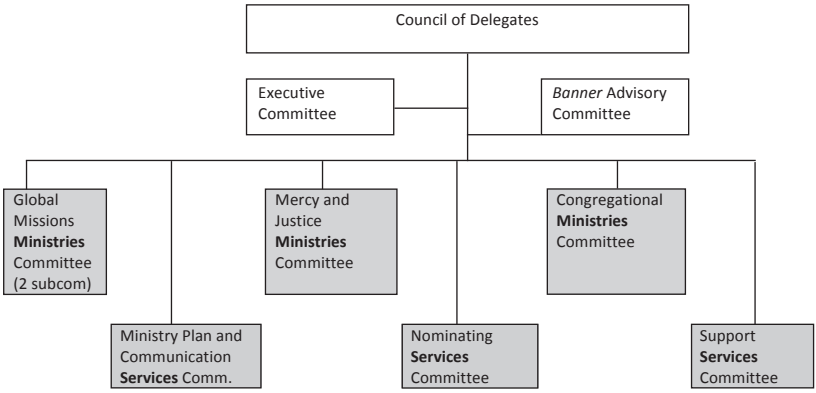
2.15411 *Executive session* means that the COD will meet with the ED present and any staff that the ED deems would be helpful. Normally, an executive session is included as part of each COD.

2.15412 Strict exec*utive session* means that the COD will meet without the ED and without any other staff present.

2.1542 Meetings of committees of the COD are not open meetings.

2.155 Deliberative Body. The COD is a deliberative body, and the assembly requires the deliberation and conversation of those present. Therefore, while a member (delegate) serves as a representative of a classis or the church at large (see section 1.1), he or she is not acting solely on behalf of the constituents in voting or reporting but engages in authentic deliberation. The essence of authentic deliberation involves delegates asking questions, reflecting, and arriving at decisions as an assembly.

2.2 The Committees of the COD. The **Ministries Committees** (third row of boxes) represent committees attending to the *ministries* of the CRCNA. The **Services Committees** (fourth row) represent committees attending to the *services* necessary for the functioning of the denomination (and the COD). Finally, there are two committees that are considered neither a ministry committee nor a service committee: The ***Banner* Advisory Committee** and the **Executive Committee**. In addition, the COD may appoint other committees as are needed to accomplish its tasks.



2.21 Committee Membership. The executive committee provides or monitors committee assignments.

2.211 COD Members. COD members are assigned to committees, seeking to address gifts and passions as well each member's

preference. Default membership relative to the positions of officers is noted in section 2.232.

2.212 Non-COD Members. Committees may include non-COD members who participate in the work of the committee and have the privilege of voting.

2.2121 When a COD committee is desirous of including non-COD member seats, it makes such a recommendation to the COD, specifying the number of seats and the qualities and gifts of those intended for such seats (in the form of rationale for the recommendation).

2.2122 When COD approval is given, the committee chair and the pertinent staff person serving the committee, upon formal nominee recommendations from the committee, invite non-COD members to join the committee for terms of three (3) years, renewable once. The executive committee is informed of non-COD members accepting such committee positions.

2.22 Ministries Committees: Callings and Functions. The **Ministries Committees** of the COD reflect the CRC's five ministry priorities; two committees align directly with two of the ministry priorities (Global Mission; Mercy and Justice) whereas the Congregational Ministries Committee addresses the other three (Servant Leadership, Faith Formation, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship). Likewise, there is correspondence from ministry to committee: The Global Missions Ministries Committee addresses BTGMI and the new mission agency; the Mercy and Justice Ministries Committee addresses the constellation of ministries related to justice, inclusion, mercy, and advocacy; finally, the Congregational Ministries Committee addresses the constellation of ministries related to faith formation, worship, and leadership.

Ministries Committees provide seven functions in service to the Council of Delegates, making recommendations to the COD in the following areas; each of the seven functions are noted in the mandate of each Ministries Committee, as indicated in the following paragraphs.

- The function of stewardship of mission, vision, and values.
- The function of strategic planning and program evaluation.
- The function of finances and advancement.
- The function of identifying and supporting administrative leaders.
- The function of serving and responding to synod.
- The function of serving and responding to **constituents and context**.
- The function of attending to **organizational structure and health**.

2.221 <u>The Global Missions Ministries Committee</u>. The Global Missions Ministries Committee serves as the primary point of contact between constituents and administrative leaders/staff (in service to the COD). In the context of this relationship, the mandate of the Global Missions Ministries Committee includes these seven responsibilities addressed by the committee as a whole (at times worked

out in the agency subcommittees) in order to provide analysis and recommendations to the COD.

2.2211 Mission, Vision, Values. To craft, *revising when necessary,* shared **mission, vision, and values** of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) and the new mission agency with its constituency in light of the denomination's overall mission, vision, and values. Normally each agency works, then, from a mandate and scope of responsibilities arising from mission, vision, and values that are reviewed by this committee and endorsed by the COD.

2.2212 Strategic Planning and Program Evaluation. To connect the strategic priorities and intended actions (i.e., **strategic plans**) of BTGMI and the new mission agency in a way that is responsive to and partnered with congregations and (a) attends to the **evaluation** of such plans and (b) integrates these plans with the denomination's Ministry Plan.

- This requires signaling new rounds of agency strategic planning by BTGMI and the new mission agency, recommending newly formulated plans to the Ministry Plan and Communication Committee of the COD.
- This involves receiving and evaluating progress toward the goals and objectives of such plans from BTGMI and the new mission agency leadership, summarizing the progress in reporting to the Ministry Plan and Communication Committee of the COD.
- This requires connecting with the Timothy Leadership Training Institute leadership as well as other affiliated groups.

2.2213 Finances and Advancement. To propose annually to the COD's Support Services Committee the projected expenditures and revenue (i.e., **finances and advancement**) of BTGMI and the new mission agency in a way that demonstrates alignment with the strategic/Ministry Plans, addresses binational contexts, and fits with the overall financial and advancement plan of the denomination.

2.2214 Administrative Leaders. To ensure BTGMI and the new mission agency benefit from faithful, qualified **administrative leaders** (e.g., agency directors, other directors) who are *supported* and, when necessary, *identified* in the event of vacancies.

- This requires periodic review of the job description of the administrative leadership role as informed by administrative staff within and beyond (e.g., HR) BTGMI and the new mission agency and by proposal of any revisions to the COD.
- This involves, when necessary, a proposal of a search committee mandate, committee composition, and timeline for addressing the vacancy to the COD; normally for vacancies, the search committee is made up of COD and non-COD members as well as appropriate administrative staff.

- This includes interviewing the finalists (normally, one to three) and bringing a solo recommendation to the COD for approval, and subsequently to synod for ratification.
- This entails learning from the COD's executive committee any matters of significance relating to performance evaluations of leaders.

2.2215 Synod. To respond to directives provided by **synod** to the COD and BTGMI and/or the new mission agency. Likewise, if a significant matter comes to the attention of the COD (e.g., from a congregation or classis) in between sessions of **synod** that relates to BTGMI and/or the new mission agency, the goal is to ensure that the matter receives necessary research, analysis, and consideration at the committee level.

2.2216 Constituents and Contexts. To equip COD members and other "ambassadors" with knowledge of BTGMI and new mission agency efforts for the benefit of their **constituents** (i.e., classes and congregations) and to draw attention to the opportunities and trends arising from local, regional, national, and global **contexts** on behalf of the COD.

2.2217 Organizational Structure and Health. To monitor the **organizational structure and health** of BTGMI and the new mission agency in relationship with the agency directors and in light of the overall structure and health of the denomination at its local, regional, national, and global representations.

Note: The two directors (new mission agency and BTGMI) serve this committee and its subcommittees in a nonvoting, *ex officio* capacity. In addition, they serve as committee/subcommittee scribes.

2.222 The Mercy and Justice Ministries Committee. The Mercy and Justice Ministries Committee serves as the primary point of contact between constituents and administrative leaders/staff (in service to the COD) as well as the link to World Renew. In the context of this relationship, the mandate of the Mercy and Justice Ministries Committee includes these seven responsibilities:

2.2221 Mission, Vision, Values. To craft, *revising as necessary*, shared **mission, vision, and values** of CRCNA Mercy and Justice Ministries (e.g., Aboriginal Ministries, Race Relations, Safe Church Ministry, Disability Concerns, Office of Social Justice/Centre for Public Dialogue) with the CRCNA constituency in light of the denomination's overall mission, vision, and values and in concert, when appropriate, with World Renew. Normally, each ministry works, then, from a mandate and scope of responsibilities arising from mission, vision, and values that are reviewed by this committee and endorsed by the COD.

2.2222 Strategic Planning and Program Evaluation. To connect the strategic priorities and intended actions (i.e., **strategic plans**)

of each of these ministries in a way that is responsive to and partnered with congregations and (a) attends to the **evaluation** of such plans and (b) integrates these plans with the denomination's Ministry Plan, and, when appropriate, complements those of World Renew.

- This requires signaling new rounds of strategic planning by each ministry, recommending newly formulated plans to the Ministry Plan and Communication Committee of the COD.
- This involves receiving and evaluating progress toward the goals and objectives of such plans from the leadership of each ministry, summarizing the progress in reporting to the Ministry Plan and Communication Committee of the COD.

2.2223 Finances and Advancement. To propose annually to the COD's Support Services Committee the projected expenditures and revenue (i.e., **finances and advancement**) of this set of ministries in a way that demonstrates alignment with the strategic/Ministry Plans, *addresses binational contexts*, and fits with the overall financial and advancement plan of the denomination.

2.2224 Administrative Leaders. To ensure these ministries benefit from faithful, qualified **administrative leaders** (e.g., coordinators, directors, team leaders) who are supported and, when necessary, identified in the event of vacancies.

- This requires periodic review of the job description of the administrative leadership role as informed by administrative staff within and beyond (e.g., HR) each ministry and by proposal of any revisions *of significance* to the COD.
- This involves, when necessary, a proposal of a search committee mandate, committee composition, and timeline for addressing the vacancy to the COD; normally for vacancies, the search committee is made up of COD and/or non-COD members as well as appropriate administrative staff.
- This includes, depending on the ministry, an introduction of the candidate selected or interviewing the finalists (normally, one to three) and bringing the outcome to the COD for information.
- This includes learning from the COD's executive committee any matters *of significance* relating to performance evaluations of leaders.

2.2225 Synod. To respond to directives provided by **synod** to the COD concerning any of the ministries. Likewise, if a significant matter comes to the attention of the COD (e.g., from a congregation or classis) in between sessions of **synod** that relates to any of the ministries, the goal is to ensure that the matter receives necessary research, analysis, and consideration at the committee level.

2.2226 Constituents and Contexts. To equip COD members and other "ambassadors" with knowledge of these ministry efforts for the benefit of their **constituents** (i.e., classes and congregations)

and to draw attention to the opportunities and trends arising from local, regional, national, and global **contexts** on behalf of the COD.

2.2227 Organizational Structure and Health. To monitor the **organizational structure and health** of these ministries in relationship with their leaders and in light of the overall structure and health of the denomination at its local, regional, national, and global representations (including World Renew).

Note: Either the CMD or the DMA serves this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. In addition, he/she serves as committee scribe.

2.223 The Congregational Ministries Committee. The Congregational Ministries Committee serves as the primary point of contact between constituents and administrative leaders/staff (in service to the COD). In the context of this relationship, the mandate of the Congregational Ministries Committee includes these seven responsibilities:

2.2231 Mission, Vision, Values. To craft, *revising when necessary,* shared **mission, vision, and values** of CRCNA Congregational Ministries (Faith Formation Ministries, Worship Ministries, Pastor Church Resources, aspects of the new mission agency, Sustaining Pastoral/Congregational Excellence, the Network, *The Banner*) with the CRCNA constituency in light of the denomination's overall mission, vision, and values reflecting the ministry priorities of Faith Formation, Servant Leadership, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship. Normally each ministry works, then, from a mandate and scope of responsibilities arising from mission, vision, and values that are reviewed by this committee and endorsed by the COD.

2.2232 Strategic Planning and Program Evaluation. To connect the strategic priorities and intended actions (i.e., **strategic plans**) of each of these ministries in a way that is responsive to and partnered with congregations and (a) attends to the **evaluation** of such plans and (b) integrates these plans with the denomination's Ministry Plan.

- This requires signaling new rounds of strategic planning by each ministry, recommending newly formulated plans to the Ministry Plan and Communication Committee of the COD.
- This involves receiving and evaluating progress toward the goals and objectives of such plans from the leadership of each ministry, summarizing the progress in reporting to the Ministry Plan and Communication Committee of the COD.

2.2233 Finances and Advancement. To propose annually to the COD's Support Services Committee the projected expenditures and revenue (i.e., **finances and advancement**) of this set of ministries in a way that demonstrates alignment with the strategic/

Ministry Plans, *addresses binational contexts* and fits with the overall financial and advancement plan of the denomination.

2.2234 Administrative Leaders. To ensure these ministries benefit from faithful, qualified **administrative leaders** (e.g., CMD, DMA, coordinators, directors, team leaders, editors) who are *supported* and, when necessary, identified in the event of vacancies.

- This requires periodic review of the job description of the administrative leadership role as informed by administrative staff within and beyond (e.g., HR) each ministry and by proposal of any revisions to the COD.
- This involves, when necessary, a proposal of a search committee mandate, committee composition, and timeline for addressing the vacancy to the COD; normally for vacancies, the search committee is made up of COD and/or non-COD members as well as appropriate administrative staff.
- This includes, depending on the ministry, an introduction of the candidate selected or interviewing the finalists (normally, one to three) and bringing the outcome to the COD for information. (*The Banner* editor is an exception and requires *use of a search committee,* a COD interview and approval, and a synodical interview and approval.)
- This includes learning from the COD's executive committee any matters of significance relating to performance evaluations of leaders.

2.2235 Synod. To respond to directives provided by **synod** to the COD concerning any of the ministries. Likewise, if a significant matter comes to the attention of the COD (e.g., from a congregation or classis) in between sessions of **synod** that relates to any of the ministries, the goal is to ensure that the matter receives necessary research, analysis, and consideration at the committee level.

2.2236 Constituents and Contexts. To equip COD members and other "ambassadors" with knowledge of these ministry efforts for the benefit of their constituents (i.e., classes and congregations) and to draw attention to the opportunities and trends arising from local, regional, national, and global contexts on behalf of the COD.

2.2237 Organizational Structure and Health. To monitor the organizational structure and health of these ministries in relationship with their leaders and in light of the overall structure and health of the denomination at its local, regional, national, and global representations; monitoring the organizational structure and health of *The Banner* involves receiving and responding to reports (engaging the COD as appropriate) from the *Banner* Advisory Committee.

Note: Either the CMD or the DMA serves this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. In addition, he/she serves as committee scribe.

2.23 Services Committees. The **Services Committees** serve five functions for the Council of Delegates; all or some of the five functions are noted in the mandate of each Services Committee, as indicated in the following paragraphs.

- The function of reflecting the mission, vision, and values of the constituency and denomination in CRCNA operations.
- The function of serving the Ministry Plan of the denomination and responding to evaluative outcomes.
- The function of identifying and supporting administrative leaders for CRCNA services.
- The function of serving and responding to synod in relationship to services and operations of the denomination.
- The function of attending to the organizational structure and health of the denomination's infrastructure.

2.231 Support Services Committee. The Support Services Committee serves as the COD's focused extension providing oversight of the connection between the vision and strategic plans of the CRCNA (and thus, its constituency) and the resources (people, financial, infrastructure, etc.) needed to accomplish its goals, seeking to ensure that administrative programs, plans, and policies are directed appropriately and evaluated regularly. (See also sections 3.0 and 4.0.) In this context, the mandate of the Support Services Committee includes five responsibilities:

2.2311 Mission, Vision, Values. To ensure that the **mission, vision, and values** of the constituency lead the functions (i.e., its stewardship of finances and facilities, its use of IT and other systems, its advancement efforts, and its organization and deployment of its workforce) of the denomination; in addition, to ensure that the denomination, through the leadership of the COD, experiences financial sustainability by ensuring appropriate policies (governance and management, the former requiring COD approval) within which staff function (e.g., governance level: policies concerning the role and targets of reserves, fundraising ethical guidelines; management: gift acceptance policies, employment policies, etc.).

2.2312 Ministry Plan. To review, analyze, and recommend to the COD plans submitted by the administrative leadership for each of the functions (finance and facilities, advancement, human resources), ensuring that they are aligned with and appropriate for the **Ministry Plan** of the CRCNA as well as its mission, vision, and values; that they address binational contexts; and that they respond to evaluative data. In addition, the committee receives information from the CRCNA Foundation to assist the committee in its work.

2.2313 Administrative Leaders. To interview the final candidate or be introduced to the selected candidate, as recommended by an administrative-search or interview committee, for open **ad-**

ministrative leadership positions for these functions; outcomes are reported as information to the COD.

2.2314 Synod. To address directives provided by **synod** to the COD relative to denominational functions. Likewise, plans and proposals developed at the committee level and recommended to the COD are presented to **synod** when appropriate/necessary.

2.2315 Organizational Structure and Health. To monitor the **organizational structure and health** (ensuring the assignment of risk management to staff as appropriate) of these functions in relationship with their leaders and in light of the overall structure and health of the denomination at its local, regional, national, and global representations.

Note: The director of finance and operations serves this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. In addition, he/she serves as committee scribe.

2.232 Nominating Services Committee. The Nominating Services Committee serves the Council of Delegates by working with the classes (and congregations) of the denomination to ensure that the COD has a complete set of delegates meeting the regional distribution requirements and reflecting the diversity of the CRCNA. In serving this role, the committee's mandate includes these responsibilities:

2.2321 Mission, Vision, Values. To ensure that the **mission, vision, and values** of those nominated reflect the mission, vision, and values of the denomination.

2.2322 Ministry Plan and Organizational Structure. To assist classes in understanding the **Ministry Plan** and the **organizational structure** of the CRCNA so that each classis understands the role and function of delegates as they seek and provide nominations.

2.2323 Database. To utilize a nominating database from which nominees can be drawn by classes. (See Appendix N.)

2.2324 Diversity. To ensure a diversity of gender, ethnicity, and age within the COD, reflecting synodically approved guidelines.

In addition to and in conjunction with the spring election of officers, the Nominating Services Committee recommends chairs and vice chairs for each committee in a way that achieves national balance on the executive committee (see section 2.242).

Note: The director of synodical services serves this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. In addition, he/she serves as committee scribe.

2.233 Ministry Plan and Communication Services Committee. The Ministry Plan and Communication Services Committee is responsible for the Ministry Plan of the denomination as well as its many

communication functions. In addition, it provides a link to Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin College. Its mandate includes these responsibilities:

2.2331 Mission, Vision, Values. To discern the shared **mission, vision, and values** of CRCNA classes and congregations so that the mission, vision, and values of the denomination are expressed in unified and authentic ways for the Ministry Plan.

2.2332 Ministry Plan. To listen to classes and congregations in overseeing the development of the denomination's **Ministry Plan** and then communicating with classes and congregations throughout its implementation.

- This requires signaling new rounds of strategic planning when necessary, recommending newly formulated plans to the COD.
- This involves receiving and evaluating progress toward the goals and objectives of the Ministry Plan from administrative leadership, summarizing the progress in reporting to the COD.
- This welcomes the connections of the denomination's Ministry Plan to the strategic plans of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew.
- This requires analysis of the strategic plans from the Ministry Committees connected most directly to the agencies and ministries and attending to linkages of those strategic plans to the Ministry Plan and vice versa.

2.2333 Finances and Advancement. To propose annually to the COD's Ministry Support Services Committee the projected expenditures and required revenue needed for the Ministry Plan and related integrated strategies of the denomination; also, to signal the development of needed communication strategies to ensure the **financial and advancement** partnership of the constituency.

2.2334 Administrative Leaders. To ensure these ministries benefit from faithful, qualified **administrative leaders** (e.g., director of communications and marketing) who are supported and, when necessary, identified in the event of vacancies.

- This requires periodic review of the job description of the administrative leadership role as informed by administrative staff and proposal of any revisions *of significance* to the COD.
- This involves, when necessary, a proposal of a search committee mandate, committee composition, and timeline for addressing the vacancy to the COD; normally for vacancies, the search committee is composed of COD and/or non-COD members as well as appropriate administrative staff.
- This includes an introduction of the selected candidate to the COD for information.
- This includes learning from the COD's executive committee any matters of significance relating to performance evaluations of leaders.

2.2335 Synod. To respond to directives provided by **synod** to the COD regarding the Ministry Plan and to engage synod with the Ministry Plan, seeking synod's approval of newly constructed Ministry Plans.

2.2336 Constituents and Contexts. To equip COD members and other "ambassadors" with knowledge of the Ministry Plan to communicate with their constituents (i.e., classes and congregations) and to draw attention to the Ministry Plan opportunities as contextualized in local, regional, national, and global ways.

2.2337 Organizational structure. To ensure that the **organizational structure** of communication functions (both expressing the denomination's identity and message and listening to those responding) for the denomination are appropriate for local, regional, national, and global purposes—both for internal audiences as well as external purposes.

Note: The executive director and the director of communications and marketing serve this committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. In addition, one serves as committee scribe.

2.24 The Executive Committee. The responsibilities and composition of the **Executive Committee** are described below:

2.241 Responsibilities. The Executive Committee is charged with these responsibilities:

2.2411 Assignments and Interim Role. Fulfill such tasks as are assigned to it by the COD and function as its interim committee when the COD is not in session. When functioning in interim capacity, the Executive Committee may decide issues that fall within the COD's jurisdiction if a decision cannot be deferred until the next meeting of the COD. Excluded from this decision-making authority are such matters that ought to be decided by the COD as a whole.

2.2412 COD Agendas. Review and approve or amend the agenda for the meetings of the COD. After issuing a call for agenda items, the executive director is responsible for placing such matters on the agenda as are appropriate for Executive Committee consideration.

2.2413 Nominations. Receive results from the Nominating Committee and outcomes from classes; ensure that each COD member has a fitting committee assignment and that elections for officers and committee leadership occur (see 2.232). Also receive notice regarding non-COD members accepting terms on COD Committees as approved by the COD.

2.2414 Executive Director Supervision and Evaluation/Emergency Succession. Advise the executive director in the performance of his/her duties, as circumstances require; supervise and annually evaluate (with a 360-degree review at least every third

year; see Appendix G) the performance of the executive director; form a search committee in the event of an executive director vacancy, and, after COD ratification, present the nominee(s) to synod for approval. Ensure use of the Emergency Succession Plan when needed:

2.24141 Emergency Succession Plan. In the event of the executive director's incapacitation or death, the Executive Committee will be convened on an urgent basis to appoint an acting or interim executive director, with consideration of the person serving as Canadian Ministries Director or Director of Ministries and Administration.

2.2415 Compensation. Determine annually and recommend to the COD the salary and benefits for the executive director and ratify the salary and benefits for senior denominational staff (who report to the executive director) upon the recommendation of the executive director.

2.2416 Adjudication. Serve as the adjudication body when decisions of the Canadian corporation(s) and the U.S. corporation(s) require coordination.

2.2417 Senior Leadership and Evaluation. Be appraised by the executive director of the evaluation schedule of senior leaders (CMD, BTGMI director, DMA, new mission agency director, DSS, DFO, DCM), ministry directors, and leaders of other CRCNA entities as specified in Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), receiving completed reports for senior leaders and summaries for the other two categories (ministry directors and leaders of other CRCNA entities—the latter dictated by MOUs).

2.2418 COD Development and Evaluation. Discern the COD's need for development and for setting goals and plans accordingly; also evaluate the performance of individual members and the COD as a whole.

2.2419 Policy Maintenance and Orientation. Maintain, with the assistance of staff, the policies of the COD, ensuring new members receive appropriate orientation.

2.242 Composition of the Executive Committee (and implications for other committees). The Executive Committee is made up of four Canadians and four U.S. members (plus the executive director):

- Chair (same as the chair of the COD; no other committee assignment)
- Vice Chair (Chair of Nominating Services Committee)
- Secretary (from any committee)
- Treasurer (Chair of Support Services Committee)
- Member 1: Chair or Vice Chair of Global Missions Ministries Committee
- Member 2: Chair or Vice Chair of Mercy and Justice Ministries Committee

- Member 3: Chair or Vice Chair of Congregational Ministries Committee
- Member 4: Chair or Vice Chair of Ministry Plan and Communication Services Committee
- Executive director, *ex officio* and non-voting (also the CMD, DMA, and DSS attend as guests and are non-voting)

Election to the COD chair results in being free from other committee assignments.
Election to the COD vice-chair results in being the Chair of Nominating.
Election to the COD secretary position has no committee assignment consequence.
Election to the COD treasurer position results in being the Chair of Support Services.

The other committees (Global Missions Ministries, Mercy and Justice Ministries, Congregational Ministries, and Ministry Plan and Communication Services) select a chair and a vice chair (one CDN; one U.S.). In that way, equal balance for the Executive Committee can be achieved as the Nominating Services Committee recommends to the full COD either the chair or vice chair from each committee for the Executive Committee in a way to achieve national balance (four Canadian; four U.S.).

2.25 The *Banner* Advisory Committee (BAC). The *Banner* Advisory Committee operates according to the functions/mandate, protocol, membership, and conflict resolution procedure described below:

2.251 Mandate/Functions. As a committee of the COD, the primary functions of the *Banner* Advisory Committee (BAC) are as follows (Appendix I includes *The Banner's* mandate):

2.2511 Advise. Advise the editor of *The Banner* on editorial policy, content, *and* matters that the committee believes affect the publishing of a denominational magazine.

2.2512 Report. Report to the COD about editorial activities and decisions, as well as reactions, criticisms, and suggestions received.

2.2513 Monitor. Monitor and report to the COD annually the fiscal welfare and ministry health of *The Banner* as it serves the denomination.

2.2514 Ensure. Ensure the implementation of approved policies and procedures, recommending to the BOT necessary changes to the policies and procedures.

2.252 Protocol. As a standing committee of the COD, the COD is party to the advice given by the BAC. Thus minutes of the BAC, including advice given (which shall be recorded in official minutes of the BAC), shall be distributed to the COD, the executive director, and the editor of *The Banner*. If an extraordinary situation calls for

intervention, the COD may instruct the BAC in the modification, retraction, or initiation of advice given.

2.253 Membership. Drawn from a list of nominees submitted by the executive director of the CRCNA and the editor of *The Banner,* the membership of the council shall be recommended by the COD executive committee for appointment by the COD and composed of three (3) members of the COD and three (3) members at large. In addition, the editor of *The Banner* and the director of ministries and administration (or his/her designee) shall serve as advisers *ex officio* without vote. Members from the COD are appointed for the duration of their term on the COD. At-large members are appointed for a three-year term, renewable for a second term. At-large members will represent areas of expertise including, but not limited to, theological foundations, journalism, and communications. One of these six members shall be selected by the BAC each year as its chair, voting only in the case of a tie. Normally three members will be Canadian, and three will be from the United States. The editor of *The Banner*, the Canadian ministries director, and the director of ministries and administration will serve as advisers *ex officio* without vote.

2.254 Conflict Resolution Policy/Procedure. In the event that a conflict about materials to be published develops between the editor of *The Banner* and the executive director, every effort shall be made to seek a resolution at the administrative and staff level. If a resolution is not achieved and the matter is brought to the attention of the BAC by either the editor of *The Banner* or the executive director, the BAC may decide a resolution for all parties for publishing purposes; such a decision may be appealed to the COD, which will hear the appeal via a panel of five trustees (none of whom serve on the BAC) appointed by the COD executive committee, and the panel will make a recommendation to the COD. If there is still no resolution, *The Banner* editor retains the right to appeal to synod.

2.255 When the editorship becomes vacant, the BAC participates in the search for and identification of a new *Banner* editor in ways described in Appendix G.

3.0 Financial and Advancement Responsibilities

3.1 Overall Responsibility (see also 2.12). The COD shall provide appropriate financial management and advancement policy guidelines and limits within which personnel function, thereby ensuring the financial integrity of the denomination's agencies and ministries and addressing short- and long-term risk.

3.2 Implications

3.21 Committees. The COD relies upon the analysis and recommendations of its Support Services Committee (which has received input from the other committees) for financial and advancement purposes. The Support Services Committee serves as the COD's focused extension that provides oversight of the connection between the vision and

strategic plans of the CRCNA (and thus, its constituency) and the resources (people, financial, etc.) needed to accomplish its goals, seeking to ensure that administrative programs, plans, and policies are directed appropriately and evaluated regularly.

3.22 Staff Responsibilities to COD. Staff shall serve the COD and its Support Services Committee with the following:

3.221 Policies. Reviews of policies (see 3.231, below), offering suggestions as needed.

3.222 Budget Planning Leadership. Recommendations for budgeting assumptions in advance of new fiscal years.

3.223 Direct and Consolidating Functions. Recommendations for expense and revenue targets in advance of a new fiscal year for the ministries governed by the COD, consolidating such information with Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew.

3.224 Financial Monitoring. Reports on expenses and revenues throughout a fiscal year.

3.225 Accreditation of Affiliated Agencies. Recommendations on the accreditation of affiliated agencies in relationship to endorsements to congregations for considering these agencies in the provision of offerings.

3.23 COD Responsibilities to the CRCNA and Its Staff.

3.231 The COD shall maintain and regularly review the CRCNA's Investment Policy, its Financial Reserves Policy, its Policy for the Accreditation of Agencies for Denominational Financial Support, its Financial Operations Policy, and its Conflict of Interest Policy (all found in the Appendices), ensuring that denominational efforts fall within the parameters of these policies and recommending them to synod for ratification upon major revisions.

3.232 The COD shall report to synod each year on the financial activities of the CRCNA (including Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew).

3.233 The COD shall present each year a consolidated budget to synod, providing a recommendation concerning Ministry Share targets.

4.0 Human Resource Responsibilities

4.1 Overall Responsibility (see also 2.231). To attend to CRCNA personnel by the support of appropriate employment policies and to identify when necessary, evaluate regularly, and support constructively administrative leaders of the denomination within the scope of such policies, thereby monitoring the organizational structure and ensuring the health of the denomination's entire workforce.

Note: Employment policies are normally management policies, not COD governance policies; however, revisions to or new employee policies that have significant resource (financial or otherwise) implications require review by the Support Services Committee and approval by the COD, as does the Philosophy of Employment/Compensation policy found in Appendix J.

4.2 Implications

4.21 Committees. The COD relies upon the analysis and recommendations of its Support Services Committee for financial and advancement purposes when considering matters involving resource implications, and upon the analysis and recommendations of its other committees when addressing administrative leadership evaluation or appointment (see pertinent committee sections).

4.22 Staff Responsibilities to COD. Staff shall serve the COD and its committees with the following:

4.221 Employment Policy Formulation and Review. Reviews of employment considerations and policies, offering suggestions for recommendations of new and revised policies to the Support Services Committee when resource implications are evident; binational considerations will also be evident in order to reflect and be in compliance with various provincial/state and federal requirements.

4.23 Evaluation and Appointment of Administrative Leaders. Various sections above, as well as Appendix G, indicate the ways in which administrative leaders are supported, evaluated, sought, identified, and appointed through various committees of the COD. Normally staff (and constituents) participate in providing evaluative feedback and serve on screening and search committees for vacancies as requested by management.

4.3 Safety and Privacy. The COD, in its oversight of employees and its responsibilities to constituents, shall ensure that staff develop, maintain, and use appropriate management policies that address safety (e.g., crisis management policies) and privacy (e.g., protocols that attend to state/provincial and federal requirements).

5.0 Implementation Responsibilities

5.1 Overall Responsibility. Reliant upon policy governance, the COD provides (as indicated in previous sections) administrative leaders, units, and groups policies (see section 1.11), most often with goals (ends) and limitations, that provide direction and expectations for working out the CRCNA's mission, vision, and values in light of the ministries to which the denomination has been called (i.e., Our Calling).

5.2 Implications

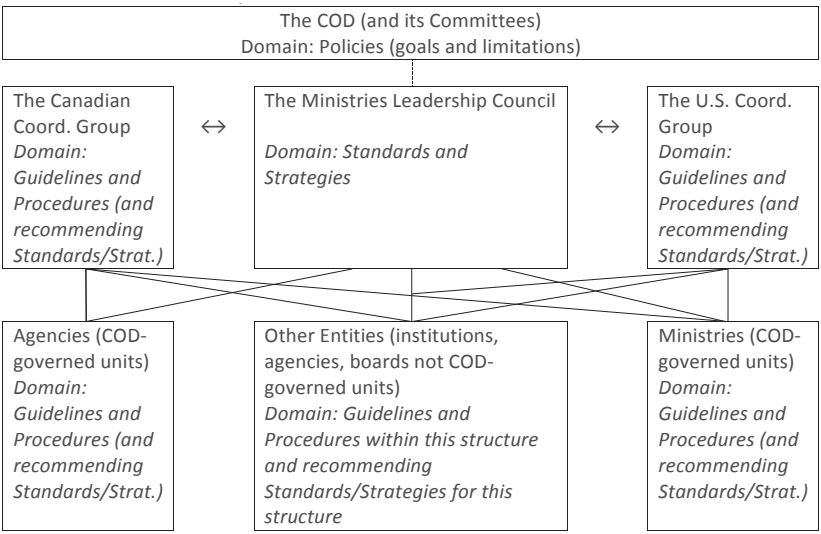
5.21 Committees. The COD relies upon its various committees for providing needed analysis and recommendations in developing and revisiting policies with goals and limitations. The COD's various committees are served by administrative leaders who serve as the conduit

to agencies, ministries, and other CRCNA entities as well as to the various management groups (see 5.23).

5.22 Administrative Leaders. The COD directs its policies to the executive director and through the executive director to other administrative leaders, each with stated responsibilities within the scope of such policies, and with accountability assigned for every role.

5.23 Management Groups. The COD provides its policies (goals and limitations) for management groups as shown and described below.

(*Note:* Lines suggest possible pathways for seeking review/endorsement of newly recommended and/or revisions of *guidelines* and *procedures* as well as *standards* and *strategies;* lines do not signify reporting relationships.)



5.231 Decision-Making Groups. In order to ensure the awareness and, when appropriate, integration of cross-agency/ministry/services *procedures* and *guidelines* in light of COD policies, two levels of decision-making groups provide service; each of these groups includes those agencies and ministries governed by the COD and other CRCNA entities:

5.2311 Country-Specific Coordinating Groups. In each denominational office center with more than one agency/ministry function, a coordinating group meets regularly to address their common and contextualized inter-agency/ministry/services shared agenda related to *guidelines* and *procedures*, <u>and</u> to review and endorse at times *standards* and *strategies* that are then brought to the next level of review (see 5.2312, below).

5.23111 Normally leaders of agencies/ministries/services in a specific country make up the group; however, regular

attendance by an administrative leader from the other country is valuable.

5.23112 Particularly in Canada, the exercise of direction and control, as federally required, is invested for management purposes by the Corporation(s) to the specific agency or, in the case of ministry services, to its director via the CMD, and coordination, as needed, occurs at this Country-Specific Coordinating Group.

5.2312 Ministries Leadership Council (MLC). A binational management group focused on developing and maintaining *standards and strategies* in the context of COD policies, the MLC or some variation has long held an important role in inter-agency/ministry/services work. It is assisted by the Country-Specific Coordinating Groups as described above. The mandate and composition of the MLC is found in Appendix K.

5.232 Working and Collaborative Groups. Agencies, ministries, and other CRCNA entities (both those governed by the COD and those governed by their own boards) utilize groups of individuals—within the agency/ministry/other entity or by means of a collaboration of linked agency/ministry/other entity personnel—helpful in achieving and implementing necessary management *procedures* and *guidelines*. In addition, they may serve as the initial setting for the consideration of revised or new *standards* and *strategies* that are then reviewed/endorsed by one of the subsequent management groups.

COD Governance Handbook Appendices

A. Conflict of Interest Policy
B. Financial Reserve Policy
C. Fundraising Ethical Guidelines
D. Investment Policy of the Christian Reformed Church
E. Policy re Accreditation of Agencies for Denominational Financial Support
F. Policies and Protocol for the Connection of Board Governance between the COD and Other Boards
G. Policy for the Selection and Evaluation of Administrative Leaders
H. Policies for Identifying Goals and Evaluation Methods for the Unified Ministry of the CRCNA
I. *The Banner* mandate
J. Philosophy of Employment and Compensation
K. The Ministries Leadership Council
L. Summary of the Report on Cultivating Binationality in the CRCNA
M. Comprehensive Governance Chart
N. Nominating Services Committee Process

Appendix A: Conflict of Interest Policy

The Council of Delegates (COD) administers a synodically approved Conflict of Interest Policy for all members of denominational governing boards, inclusive of agencies and educational institutions, **including its application to its own functioning**. All COD members are required to sign a conflict of interest declaration form at the beginning of their service on the COD. The policy also requires notification to be given if any COD member finds him/herself in a conflict of interest situation during a term of service. The COD is required to implement this requirement at the first meeting of the COD following the meeting of synod. The full text of the Conflict of Interest Policy and a sample declaration form are as follows:

A. Background

1. The COD manages the business and affairs of the agencies and institutions.
2. COD members are fiduciaries who must hold a position of trust and exercise a duty of care, including a general obligation to avoid conflicts of interest.
3. COD members have the duty of guiding the agencies'/institutions' affairs in such a manner as to achieve the objectives of the agency/institution. COD members have a fiduciary duty to act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the agency/institution, and to be loyal to the agency/institution.
4. Honesty is the first component of this fiduciary duty. A COD member must disclose the entire truth and avoid fraudulent transactions or misleading representation.
5. Good faith is the second component of this fiduciary duty. COD members must pursue the best interests of the agency/institution. This means that a COD member may not pursue any improper purpose while acting on behalf of the agency/institution.
6. The duty of loyalty and the avoidance of conflicts of interest mean that a COD member must give loyalty to the agency/institution and must not subordinate the interests of the agency/institution to his or her personal interests.
7. Even when conflicts do not exist, COD members should understand that COD decisions may affect the business or affairs of a COD member. The impact is generally financial, but even social or political gain may violate the fiduciary duty. COD members must avoid direct or indirect benefits to relatives, friends, and associates.

B. Policy, purpose, and definition

1. A COD member must purposefully avoid conflicts of interest unless authorized under paragraphs C.4 and C.5. This policy statement applies to all COD members. Recognizing that synod carefully selects COD members, relying upon the trust of nominating assemblies in their integrity, judgment, and courage, the COD reasonably expects that no member would ever use his or her position for personal gain. However, to avoid any misunderstanding, this policy statement is promulgated and adopted.

2. A conflict of interest exists when a COD member has a personal interest of any kind which has the potential to be inconsistent in any degree with the best interests of the agency/institution. When a COD member's personal interests, whether real or perceived, could supersede or conflict with his or her dedication to the best interests of the COD, a conflict of interest arises. The test of a conflict of interest is not just in whether a personal interest actually influences a COD member, but also in whether circumstances lend themselves to such a possibility. Examples:

   a. Conflicting financial interests

   b. Use of confidential information for personal gain

   c. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information

   d. Use of agency/institutional time and facilities for personal purpose or other activities.

3. COD members must recognize that the appearance of a conflict of interest, even when in fact it may not exist, can be damaging to the agency/institution and must be avoided.

C. Policy statement

1. A COD member should resign his or her position if he or she reasonably could conclude that any kind of financial or personal obligation might improperly affect his or her judgment on behalf of the board or agency/institution. Each person must examine his or her own activities and those of his or her immediate family to ensure that no condition exists which creates a potential conflict of interest or a potentially embarrassing situation with respect to transactions between the board member and the agency/institution. COD members shall sign and complete the attached Conflict of Interest Statement.

2. Unless the provisions in paragraphs C.3 through C.5 are followed, a COD member shall not solicit or be a party, directly or indirectly, to any financial or other opportunity between the agency/institution and

   a. himself or herself or a family member.

   b. any firm (meaning copartnership or other unincorporated association) of which he or she or any family member is a partner, member, employee, or agent.

   c. any not-for-profit organization of which he or she or member(s) of his or her immediate family is an officer, director, employee, or agent.

d. any for-profit corporation in which he or she is an officer, director, employee, agent, or stockholder owning more than one percent (1%) or the total outstanding stock of any class, if the stock is not listed on a stock exchange, or stock with a present total value in excess of $25,000 if the stock is listed on a stock exchange.

e. any trust of which he or she is a grantor, beneficiary, or trustee.

3. In the event that a potential contract or arrangement which could present a conflict situation described in paragraph C.2 is presented to the COD, the affected COD member shall

   a. not participate in any way on behalf of the agency/institution in discussion or negotiation of the contract or arrangement, or in the approval of the contract or arrangement.

   b. promptly disclose in writing any financial, personal, or pecuniary interest in the contract or arrangement to the board or other official body which has the power to approve the contact or arrangement, which disclosure shall be made a matter of record in the COD's official proceeding.

4. A contract or arrangement referenced in Paragraph C.3 must be approved by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the full COD, or of the approving body, in open session without the vote of the affected COD member.

5. The board or other official body which has the power to approve a contract or arrangement must disclose the following summary information in its official minutes as to contracts or arrangements referenced in paragraph C.2:

   a. the name of each party involved in the contract or arrangements

   b. the terms of the contract or arrangements, including duration, financial consideration between the parties, facilities or services of the entity included in the contract, and the nature and degree of assignment of employees of the agency/institution for fulfillment of the contract

   c. the nature of the board member's financial, personal, or pecuniary interest

6. A COD member shall not engage in a business transaction or arrangement in which the member may profit from his or her official position or authority, or benefit financially from confidential information which the member has obtained or may obtain by reason of such position or authority.

Conflict Of Interest Statement

I have read and understand this Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy. There are no present or future potential conflicts of interest other than those listed below. I have and will continue to observe the Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy carefully.

_____	_____	_____
Signature	Printed Name	Date

Disclosure(s)

(Indicate none if applicable; otherwise please give full explanation of the conflict.)

Note: Completed forms will be retained for seven (7) years from date of signing.

Approved December 1998

Appendix B: Financial Reserve Policy

In February 1999, the CRCNA Board of Trustees approved the Financial Reserve Policy that governs the level of cash and financial investments of CRCNA agencies. In September 2007, the Board of Trustees amended the policy to allocate Agency monies into three funds: Regular, Special/Long-Term, and Endowment. Each fund is the recipient of specific types of revenue and is used to finance specific expenditures. The Council of Delegates assumes the continuance of this policy.

Regular Fund

The Regular Fund is the primary account through which agency financial activity flows. This fund receives revenue from ministry shares, above-ministry-share gifts, estate gifts, sales, tuition, other general donations, and the transfer of assets from the Special/Long-Term Fund if needed to cover the cost of new programs during their initial start-up.

From the Regular Fund, the agency finances program expenditures, management and general expenses, and fundraising costs. The balance held by the Regular Fund at the beginning of the fiscal year is not to exceed 25 percent of the budgeted expenditures for the year. Amounts in excess of this limit are to be transferred to the Special/Long-Term Fund. If the beginning of the fiscal year Regular Fund balance is projected to be less than 20 percent of the budgeted expenditure for the year, the agency may petition the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA during the budget process for authorization to transfer funds from the Special/Long-Term Fund, if available, to bring the Regular Fund balance to the 25-percent level.

Special/Long-Term Fund

The Special/Long-Term Fund holds all designated grants, specifically designated disaster-response gifts, gifts designated by the donor for use over an extended time period, and any surplus from the Regular Fund. The Special/Long-Term Fund provides financing for all one-off program expenditures, all capital expenditures, and any amounts needed to satisfy non-program contractual obligations such as charitable gift annuities. In addition, the Special/Long-Term Fund may be used to finance the cost of new programs during their initial start-up or to increase the beginning of year balance in the Regular Fund as noted above.

The level of funds held by the Special/Long-term Fund is not limited.

Endowment Fund

Specific program expenditures, with the preapproval of the CRCNA executive director or the Council of Delegates (COD), may be financed through the Endowment Fund. The preapproval authority to establish endowments resides with the executive director (ED) of the CRCNA for any endowment with initial funding of up to $500,000. The preapproval of endowments with funding in excess of $500,000 would remain with the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. Such approvals made by the ED will be reported to the Council of Delegates by means of the ED's report to the COD.

These three funds hold all the cash and financial investments of the CRCNA agencies. The agencies are free to rename the funds to better aid in their advancement efforts.

Approved February 1999
Revised September 2007
Amended by BOT Executive Committee, December 2007

Appendix C: Fundraising Ethical Guidelines

The Council of Delegates (COD) administers fundraising and fundraisers' ethical guidelines. This policy is really a mix between guidelines and firm policy. However, even though these are called "guidelines," agencies and educational institutions are expected to follow them diligently. The full text of the ethical guidelines is as follows:

A. Introduction

In gratitude for the remission of sin and the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, the development professionals of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) seek to build God's kingdom through the causes they serve. Through their dedication they seek to inspire others. They are committed to the improvement of their professional knowledge and skills. They recognize their stewardship responsibility to ensure that needed resources are vigorously and ethically sought and that the intent of the donor is honestly fulfilled. They practice their profession with integrity, honesty, truthfulness, and adherence to the obligation to safeguard the trust that is placed in them.

These ethical guidelines apply also to any other individuals and organizations using the denominational mailing list of the CRCNA.

B. Affirmations

The development professionals of the CRCNA individually and collectively affirm that they will do the following:

1. Bring credit to their Lord and the causes they serve by their public demeanor.
2. Affirm through their personal giving a commitment to Christian stewardship.
3. Manifest support for the work of all the denominational agencies, refrain from criticism, and pass along useful information when appropriate.
4. Adhere to the spirit as well as the letter of all applicable laws and regulations.
5. Put charitable mission above personal gain, accepting compensation by salary only.
6. Recognize their individual boundaries of competence and be forthcoming about their professional qualifications and credentials.

7. Value the privacy, freedom of choice, and interest of all who are affected by their actions.
8. Disclose to employer and to donor all relationships which do or might constitute conflicts of interest.
9. Encourage their colleagues in the practice of these ethical principles.

C. Standards of Professional Practice

The development professionals of the CRCNA adhere to the following standards of professional practice in their responsibilities for generating philanthropic support. They covenant to do the following:

1. Act according to the standards and visions of their institution, profession, and Christian commitment.
2. Avoid even the appearance of criminal offense or professional misconduct.
3. Advocate within their organization adherence to applicable laws and regulations.
4. Work for a salary and not for percentage-based compensation or commission.
5. Neither seek nor accept finder's fees and discourage their organizations from paying such fees.
6. Disclose conflicts of interest.
7. Accurately state their professional experience, qualifications, and expertise.
8. Adhere to the principle that donor and prospect information created by, or on behalf of, an organization is the property of that organization.
9. Give donors the opportunity to have their names removed from the organization's mailing list.
10. Keep confidential the list of donors to their organization (with the understanding that appropriate public donor recognition may occur).
11. Not disclose privileged information to unauthorized parties.
12. Ensure that all solicitation materials are accurate and correctly reflect the organization's mission and use of solicited funds.
13. Ensure that contributions are used in accordance with donors' intentions.
14. Ensure proper stewardship of charitable contributions, including timely reporting on the use and management of funds and explicit consent by the donor before altering the conditions of a gift.
15. Ensure that donors receive informed and ethical advice about the value and tax implications of potential gifts.
16. Not exploit for personal benefit any relationship with a donor, prospect, or volunteer.

17. In stating fundraising results, use accurate and consistent accounting methods that conform to standard accounting practice in the United States and Canada.

18. And, all of the above notwithstanding, comply with applicable local, state, provincial, and federal civil and criminal law.

These guidelines, affirmations, and standards are based upon the Code of Ethical Principles and Standards of Professional Practice of the National Society of Fund-Raising Executives adopted in November 1991, expanded in November 1992, and amended in March 1993 and October 1994.

Agreement

The undersigned directors of said organization hereby agree to abide by the affirmations and standards as set forth in the Ethical Guidelines for Development Professionals in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

_____
Name of organization

_____ _____
Executive Director Development Director

Appendix D: Investment Policy of the Christian Reformed Church

I. Introduction

The members and supporters of the Christian Reformed Church in North America provide the funds to carry out the mission of the denomination. Therefore great care and stewardship should be accorded these funds.

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the broad guidelines under which the funds of the denomination shall be managed. The investment objectives are as follows:

A. To preserve the principal value of funds.

B. To earn a reasonable return with appropriate levels of portfolio risk.

C. To invest the funds in a manner consistent with the values and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church.

There appear to be good reasons for Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Board of Pensions to conduct their investment programs separately if they so choose. All other agencies will have their funds invested under the umbrella of the CRCNA Funds LLC and under the supervision of the denomination's financial office. Such a practice will permit greater professionalism, efficiency, and compliance with policy. The investment of funds is not of sufficient magnitude on the part of individual agencies to develop core competency, diversification, or proper monitoring.

The overall responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) shall be clear. The DFO shall carry out the investment policy for the denomination. This shall include a sensitivity to, and overview of, both the U.S. and the Canadian investment management.

If institutions such as Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Board of Pensions elect to conduct their own investment programs, such programs shall be subject to the denomination's investment policy. In addition, there shall be periodic reporting to both the respective governing boards and the Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America regarding the investments.

The long-term success of investments will be enhanced by the input and monitoring of this activity by business professionals. The Christian Reformed Church in North America is fortunate to have a number of such members who can provide the broad guidance and oversight that would be difficult to develop within the limited staff available. Therefore the CRCNA Support Services Committee will function as described below:

- The Support Services Committee will report on investment results and allocation of funds to the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA at least annually.
- Once investment guidelines and objectives are set, the use of outside professional money managers is expected. The selection of managers and specific mutual funds will be the responsibility of the DFO.
- This investment policy makes no provision for the placement of denominational funds in private investments. When such investments are donated, it shall be the practice to liquidate such gifts as soon as feasible. The advice of the donor may be sought in determining the appropriate time for such liquidation.

II. Application

This policy shall apply to all the committees, boards, agencies, and institutions associated with the ministries that are part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA).

Generally all funds and investments of the denomination, with the permissible exception (as defined in this policy statement) of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Board of Pensions, shall be under the supervision of the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. The responsibility for implementing this policy is assigned to the DFO. The custody and management of the funds shall be performed under the umbrella of the CRCNA Funds LLC except as approved in advance by the Council of Delegates. Exceptions authorized in the adoption of this policy are these:

A. The DFO shall maintain cash management and investment programs as necessary to comply with the requirements of U.S. and Canadian regulations and laws.

B. Agencies shall be permitted bank accounts to carry on their mandates, but excess funds are subject to the policy.

C. Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Board of Pensions may elect to conduct their own cash management and investment programs, within the broad parameters of this policy.

In accordance with the proceeding, the following are expected to be the principal types of funds managed by the CRCNA Fund LLC:

- Funds or assets not needed for near-term operations by the agencies or other entities of the CRCNA, including reserves and endowments.
- Funds or assets given to the CRCNA as a denomination, rather than a particular agency, for endowment or other longer-term purposes by the donor.
- Short-term funds intended to be passed through to agencies or ministries of the CRCNA by the donor. Such funds would be received and passed to the appropriate parties in a timely fashion.

III. Implementation and maintenance of this policy

The Council of Delegates of the CRCNA shall be responsible for seeing that this policy is implemented. The DFO is responsible for providing the leadership to implement and maintain this policy.

IV. Designation of investment pools

Because the funds to be invested have many different characteristics, there are likely to be a number of investment pools. These investment pools will likely be accounted for and managed differently. The initial pools shall be as follows:

A. Short-term cash utilized to operate the CRCNA.

B. Excess seasonal funds, which are expected to be required by ministries within one year.

C. Intermediate-term funds, which may be held for ministry needs within the next few years.

D. Long-term funds, which may be invested over longer periods of time (e.g., an endowment).

E. Funds held for specific denominational programs.

The Support Services Committee shall approve guidelines which list the appropriate investment vehicles for each of these pools. Since the members of the CRCNA have given and entrusted these funds for kingdom work, safety of principal shall be given great consideration, especially in the shorter-term investments.

There shall be discussion between the DFO and each agency as to the pools in which agency funds are invested. If there is a difference of opinion, the agency shall meet with the Support Services Committee. If there is still no resolution, the matter shall be referred to the Council of Delegates for decision.

It is possible that different pools will have similar investment objectives for portions of their portfolio, such as ownership of fixed-income securities of intermediate duration. If so, it may be desirable to place such funds from more than one pool with the same investment manager for efficiency and ease of management.

V. Asset allocation

The funds invested shall employ a balanced and diversified investment approach. The asset pools are expected to utilize differing investments and allocations. Funds for various needs and projects should have an asset allocation that is in keeping with the time frame the funds are to be invested. In all cases the investment allocation should take into account that these are church-related funds.

The allocation of funds shall be reported to the Council of Delegates annually after the end of each calendar year.

VI. Investment advisers and performance measurement

Since the investment of funds is a specialized field, it is expected that outside investment advisers and/or funds will be utilized to implement this policy, especially for the larger amounts and intermediate- or longer-term funds.

The DFO will select advisers to manage funds assigned to them. Such funds will be managed by them on a fully discretionary basis within the overall parameters of fiduciary responsibility and the policies set forth in this investment policy.

The investment results of each manager shall be compared at least quarterly with appropriate benchmarks for the type of manager and investments. The benchmarks shall be agreed upon between the DFO and each adviser at the point of hiring. Performance should be measured over a period of years, but any adviser with continual below-benchmark performance will be considered for replacement. From time to time, each manager may be requested to present their current portfolio strategy and results to the Support Services Committee.

VII. Approved investments

The major portion of the overall portfolio shall be readily marketable and traded on major security exchanges. The portfolio investment strategy shall consider appropriate levels of liquidity and risk. Funds may be invested in the following financial assets:

A. Short-term investments

1. U.S. Treasury bills and their Canadian counterpart
2. Commercial paper in the highest grade as rated by Standard & Poors or Moody.
3. CDs and other bank or savings-and-loan deposits, provided they are government-insured institutions. If more than the insured amount is invested with an institution, the institution should be of high quality.
4. Other approved short-term investments of high quality and marketability.

B. Publicly traded common stocks, preferred stocks, and convertible equity securities of companies which have capable and ethical management and are not subject to undue risk.

C. Publicly traded bonds and notes of investment grade. In most cases it is expected that the investments will be at least A-rated securities.

VIII. Gifts received directly from donors

At times gifts of assets other than cash will be received directly from donors. No gifts of real or tangible personal property, or non-publicly traded stocks, bonds, or notes may be accepted until approved by the DFO. In the case of such donations, the following guidelines shall govern:

A. In the case of publicly traded securities, they should generally be transferred to the appropriate investment manager for retention or sale as the manager deems appropriate.

B. In the case of non-publicly traded securities, the DFO may request the advice of the donor regarding how and when the securities can be converted to usable funds.

C. In the case of a proposed donation of property or physical assets, it shall not be accepted until approved by legal counsel. The DFO shall request, in writing, opinion as to liens, litigation, and environmental issues before deciding whether to accept the proposed donation. If there is not positive cash flow, a plan for funding the cash needs of the proposed donation shall be approved prior to acceptance. In some instances, a donor may wish to contribute real estate or financial assets with investment specifications (including, but not limited to, retention of the asset) inconsistent with the Investment Policy of the CRCNA. Compliance with such donor specifications will require approval of the Support Services Committee of the Council of Delegates prior to acceptance of the gift. The goal is to convert all such donations to cash at the earliest practical date to minimize the management and monitoring responsibilities imposed on the staff of the DFO.

IX. Restrictions on investments

A. Investments shall not be made in companies or institutions which are not compatible with the values or mission of the CRCNA. Examples of inappropriate investments would be institutions engaged in or promoting abortion, gambling, tobacco, or pornography.

B. Not more than 5 percent of any investment pool may be invested in a single company or investment, except under the following circumstances:

1. No limits shall be placed on investments in U.S. or Canadian government securities or bonds. This shall include securities backed by them.
2. Investments in mutual funds or similar approved pools of assets shall not be considered to be in violation of this standard if said mutual funds or similar approved pools include a broad base of assets in the funds.
3. The fixed income portfolio shall be invested in securities rated "investment grade."

C. Investments will not be made in warrants, options, or commodity futures, nor will purchases be made on margin, or securities sold short unless such investments and transactions are made in mutual funds or similar approved pools of assets.

D. No investments shall be made which could place in jeopardy the tax-exempt status of the CRCNA, its agencies, or affiliates. In keeping with this

policy, no investments shall be made for the purpose of exercising control over corporate management.

E. The sale of a security whose quality or rating falls below CRCNA policy standards shall be completed within 30 days of such change unless the investment manager receives approval from the DFO to delay such sale. In such event, the DFO and investment manager shall be expected to reevaluate retention of the security on a regular basis.

Approved by Synod 1998
Revised by the BOT, September 2009
Revised by the BOT, February 2011

Appendix E: Policy re Accreditation of Agencies for Denominational Financial Support
(Adopted by the CRCNA Board of Trustees, September 2016)

I. Introduction

The material below governs the process by which nondenominational ministries and agencies can obtain accreditation status that results in a synodical endorsement for such ministries and agencies to be included on the offering schedule of individual congregations. It is emphasized that a synodical endorsement is not an assurance that any ministry or agency will in fact receive an offering from any one church. The endorsement means only that the ministry has merit and that its financial and administrative management falls within the guidelines articulated below. The application process is managed by the executive director and the director of finance and operations. The formal recommendation for accreditation to synod is the responsibility of the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. The decision of synod is final.

II. Program evaluation

A. All new organizations requesting financial support from the churches in the CRCNA must submit to the Council of Delegates a statement of their aims and purposes and be approved with regard to program.

B. The following guidelines shall be used by the Council of Delegates in evaluating the programs of organizations seeking accreditation:

1. The synod and the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA are responsible for appraising the programs and agencies that solicit CRCNA support to confirm that they are closely related to the CRCNA's integral work (works of mercy, of Christian education, or the distribution of the Word of God). While the CRCNA has a vital interest in the work of the Lord's kingdom, it cannot and should not assume responsibility for making a judgment on the worth of every kind of kingdom activity or assume responsibility for the financing of the Lord's work in every sphere of life.

2. The Council of Delegates shall recommend for denominational support only agencies that are closely allied with the CRCNA's ecclesiastical task

and ought for good reason to be recommended to the entire denomination for support.

3. Requests for accreditation of agencies that fall within the scope of the above limitations (works of mercy, of Christian education, or the distribution of the Word of God) but are of a local or regional scope must be submitted instead to the local or regional assemblies, unless their unique character or need make that impossible.

4. Whereas the Council of Delegates and synod hold to the guidelines above, this in no way infringes upon the broad scope of the work of the Lord in every avenue of life. Such work may be supported by individuals rather than by way of ecclesiastical offerings or recommendations.

III. Classification of agencies

A. Synodically accredited agencies are classified under headings of Evangelism, Education, Benevolence, and Social Services/Miscellaneous and, in addition, are classified as to their denominational relationship.

1. **Denominationally related ministries and/or agencies.** These are agencies not denominationally operated that perform services for the denomination in the United States and Canada and/or perform a distinct service for a denominational agency. Agencies and institutions in this category have become so closely affiliated with CRCNA constituents that they are part of the fabric of the denomination's life and have not only made a contribution to the welfare of CRCNA members but have also served as a model for similar efforts.

2. **Unaffiliated ministries and/or agencies.** Organizations in this category too are not denominationally operated, but they perform a work for the Christian church that is not being done by a Christian Reformed denominational agency or institution.

3. **Exceptional cases.** Synod shall retain the privilege of admitting to the list for a designated limited time agencies that have an urgent need, even if such agencies do not precisely meet all the CRCNA eligibility standards. Application and recommendation for such cases shall also be processed through the Council of Delegates.

B. When an agency on the list no longer meets the criteria for synodical endorsement, or if an agency's ministry has become local or regional in focus, such an agency shall be advised to seek local or regional support.

C. Agencies that are currently accredited but are determined by the Council of Delegates to be regional in character and that are unable to make an immediate transition to regional accreditation will be granted a period of three years to make such transition.

IV. Rules and regulations

A. The Council of Delegates will regularly (at least every three years) advise all accredited agencies about the procedures required to maintain synodical endorsement as described above. Each agency must submit program and

financial information in accordance with the existing rules for evaluation and submission to the Council of Delegates and synod for approval.

B. The responsibility for submitting the request for denominational accreditation lies entirely with the requesting agency.

C. Accreditation, once granted, shall be in effect for three years, with updated information regarding any significant program changes to be submitted in the second and third years. Updated information is required by March 15 of the second and third years of accreditation. Prior to the third anniversary of an agency's last accreditation, agencies shall submit an application by March 15 for consideration by the Council of Delegates. Entities added to the list in the second or third year of synod's three-year accreditation cycle will have such status for the one or two years remaining in the accreditation cycle, such that all accredited agencies will be on the same three-year cycle for accreditation.

D. The executive director and the director of finance and operations shall make the preliminary recommendations for consideration and determination by the Council of Delegates.

E. Each requesting agency shall be notified as to the decision made by the Council of Delegates only if the recommendation is negative. Any agency whose application is denied shall have the right to communicate with synod in writing (through the office of the executive director) stating its position with reference to the recommendation. Each requesting agency will be notified of the decision of synod concerning the request for accreditation.

F. The final recommendation of the Council of Delegates, whether positive or negative, shall be reviewed by synod's finance advisory committee in the same manner in which other advisory committees of synod function.

V. Miscellaneous regulations and provisions

A. No agency shall be considered for denominational accreditation until it has been in existence for a minimum of three years.

B. Synod will adhere to its established process and recognize the necessity of the Council of Delegates' evaluation procedure before considering accreditation of nondenominational agencies for financial support.

C. No agency shall be considered for accreditation if its ministry focus duplicates that of a denominational agency.

D. No agency shall be considered for accreditation if it engages in fundraising practices that violate the guidelines established for denominational agencies.

E. Synod reserves the right to place restrictions on any agency's accreditation as it deems appropriate. Such restrictions, if any, shall be indicated in brackets in the listing of accredited agencies.

F. Financial requirements

In order to enable the Council of Delegates to analyze the financial conditions of the various agencies asking for financial support, such agencies are to provide the following information using the attached forms:

1. A financial statement audited or reviewed by a Certified Public Accountant or Chartered Accountant.
2. A statement of the amount of contributions received from Christian Reformed Church congregations.
3. A financial analysis including but not limited to the following:
   a. Days operations coverage = (cash + investments + other liquid current assets – current liabilities) / 250
   b. Dollar and percent change in net assets from the prior year
   c. Percent overhead = (management and general + fund raising) / total expense
   d. Comparison of net asset levels over the prior three years
   e. Source of current assets during the prior three years

Program Evaluation of Agencies
Seeking Annual Renewal of Accreditation

Name of Organization:

Contact Person:

For Program Evaluation, please submit the following:

1. A copy of the purpose and goals of your organization. Please provide as much detail as you feel necessary for evaluation, especially if there have been changes in purpose and goals.

2. A statement describing new programs or changes in the program that you will be introducing.

3. A statement describing programs in which you will no longer be engaged.

4. A statement describing the geographical area you serve. This is important because you are seeking denomination-wide accreditation.

5. For educational/academic institutions, a list of the degree programs you now offer or soon plan to offer.

6. A copy of your corporate by-laws if there have been changes from prior years.

DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSION: MARCH 15

Mr. John Bolt, Director of Finance and Operations
Christian Reformed Church in North America
1700 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508-1407

Financial Evaluation of Agencies
Seeking Annual Renewal of Accreditation

Name of Organization:

Contact Person:

For Financial Evaluation, please submit the following:

1. A copy of your most recent financial statement as audited by your certified public accountant or chartered accountant. If an audited financial statement is not available, a copy of an official financial review may be substituted. If either an audit or review will not be completed by the submission date, please send a preliminary copy followed by a final copy as soon as the final copy is available.

2. A copy of last year's and the current year's operating budgets, because you will be requesting financial support for the next calendar year.

   Your financial reports and budgets should indicate the percentage of expenditures attributed to program and those attributed to support (general administrative, fundraising) services.

3. *For U.S. agencies*, your Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) and a statement that your "501(c)(3)" status as a nonprofit organization is in effect.

4. *For Canadian agencies*, your registration number as a Canadian charity.

5. *For educational agencies/academic institutions*, your calculation showing cost per full-time-equivalent student.

6. The amount of contributions you have received from Christian Reformed churches, and the percentage this represents of your total contributions.

7. A statement indicating that your fidelity bond is in effect, as well as the amount of the coverage.

DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSION: MARCH 15

Mr. John Bolt, Director of Finance and Operations
Christian Reformed Church in North America
1700 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508-1407

Appendix F: Policy and Protocol for the Connection of Governance between the COD and Other Boards

A. COD to Other Boards

Normally, the Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew (WR) boards have guest (non-voting) seats for one or two COD representatives. When two guest seats are made available, normally the COD selects one Canadian and one U.S. delegate for these seats. Nomination is made by the Nominating Services Committee and endorsed by the full COD. The term is one year and is renewable as long as the COD representative is serving on the COD. *Note:* For WR, this policy is applied to the *annual* meeting of the World Renew Board of Delegates.

B. Other Boards to COD

1. Calvin College

   Calvin College's board of trustees is provided one to two non-voting seats on the COD, appointed by the Calvin College board (in any manner deemed appropriate); length of appointment is one year and is renewable. Normally the Calvin College guest(s) participate in the meeting of the Congregational Ministries Committee, because the mandate of this committee relates to Faith Formation and Servant Leadership—ministry priorities in which Calvin College is engaged—although participation in other committees is possible (e.g., Ministry Plan and Communication Services Committee).

2. Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS)

   The CTS board of trustees is provided two non-voting seats (one Canadian, one U.S.) on the COD, each appointed by the CTS board (in any manner deemed appropriate); length of appointment is one year and is renewable. Normally both CTS guest delegates participate in the meeting of the Congregational Ministries Committee, because the mandate of this committee relates to Faith Formation, Gospel Proclamation and Worship, and Servant Leadership—all ministry priorities in which CTS is engaged.

3. World Renew (WR)

   World Renew's Joint Ministry Council is provided two non-voting seats (one Canadian, one U.S.) on the COD, each appointed by the WR Joint Ministry Council (in any manner deemed appropriate); length of appointment is one year and is renewable. Normally the two WR guest delegates participate in the meetings of the Support Services Committee and one of the Ministries Committees of the COD, depending on issues before both WR and the COD at the time.

Note: It is also possible/permitted for a board member from one of these three entities to be a COD member; a guest delegate role is then abandoned until that member's service on either the board or the COD has ended. The member serving both governing boards must be mindful of potential conflicts of interest, identifying such when appropriate.

Appendix G: Policy for the Selection and Evaluation of Administrative Leaders

Section One: Policy Applying to the Executive Staff of the COD

Canadian ministries director
Director of Back to God Ministries International
Director of communications and marketing
Director of finance and operations
Director of ministries and administration
Director of the new mission agency
Director of synodical services
Executive director

I. Executive Staff Descriptions

A. The chief executive staff officer of the Council of Delegates (COD) shall be the executive director (ED), who shall be appointed to the position by synod from a single nomination provided by the COD. The ED shall have overall responsibility for the ministries of the CRCNA; for ecclesiastical matters and relationships, including serving on the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee; and for advising congregations in matters of church polity and procedures. The qualifications, functions, and responsibilities of the executive director are more fully described in the position description in G1 below.

The executive director, the Canadian ministries director, and the director of ministries and administration form the senior executive team.

B. The ED shall be assisted by seven director-level persons, each of whom shall be accountable for their performance to the ED:

1. The Canadian ministries director (CMD) shall function as the CRCNA staff representative in Canada. The CMD (or, alternatively, the DMA) is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of either the Mercy and Justice Ministries Committee or the Congregational Ministries Committee of the COD. The qualifications and functions of the CMD are more fully described in the position description in G2.

2. The director of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) leads the BTGMI agency and is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the COD Global Missions Ministries Committee and the appropriate subcommittee. The qualifications and functions of the BTGMI director are more fully described in the position description in G3.

3. The director of communications and marketing (DCM) shall function as the staff representative for all matters related to CRCNA communications and web content and is an *ex officio,* non-voting member of the Ministry Plan and Communication Services Committee of the COD. The qualifications and functions of the DCM are more fully described in the position description in G4.

4. The director of finance and operations (DFO) shall function as the CRCNA staff representative for financial matters, physical assets, Human

Resources, Employee Benefit Administration, Pensions, Advancement Services, and Information Services. The DFO is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Support Services Committee of the COD. The qualifications and functions of the DFO are more fully described in the position description in G5.

5. The director of ministries and administration (DMA) shall function as the staff representative for denominational ministries (agencies and other program entities). The DMA (or, alternatively, the CMA) is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of either the Mercy and Justice Ministries Committee or the Congregational Ministries Committee of the COD. The qualifications and functions of the DMA are more fully described in the position description in G6.

6. The director of the new mission agency (NMA) leads the NMA and is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the COD Global Missions Ministries Committee and the appropriate subcommittee. The qualifications and functions of the NMA director are more fully described in the position description in G7.

7. The director of synodical services (DSS) shall function as the staff representative for matters related to synod and the COD. The qualifications and functions of the DSS are more fully described in the position description for that position in G8.

C. Performance Accountability of the Executive Staff

Accountability for the performance of the executive director is directly to the COD and is described in G10.

Accountability for the performance of the CMD, BTGMI director, DCM, DMA, DFO, NMA director, and DSS shall flow to and through the ED, with the ED reporting to the COD executive committee as described in section 2.2417.

D. Vacancies

1. Executive Director

a. Responsibility: COD Executive Committee (see 2.2414)

b. Method: Executive committee forms a search committee with a mandate and specified composition along with a timeline.

c. Protocol: A single nominee is brought first to the COD and then, if the recommendation from the search committee is approved, the COD recommends the nominee to synod; synod, after a successful interview of the nominee, makes the appointment.

2. Executive Staff

   a. Responsibility: ED working with the appropriate COD committee

   b. Method: Appropriate COD committee proposes to the COD (or its executive committee) a search committee mandate and composition as well as a timeline (see 2.2214, 2.2234, 2.2334, and 2.2313)

c. Protocol: From the work of the search committee, either (a) two or three finalists are interviewed by the appropriate COD committee and then a single nominee is recommended to the COD for approval, or (b) the candidate selected by the search committee is recommended to the appropriate COD committee or the COD itself (see each section for specifics); the COD, upon approval of the nominee, recommends that synod ratify the appointment.

II. Non-Executive Staff Directors

A. The senior leadership team shall be assisted by director-level persons, each of whom shall be accountable for their performance to the CMD, the DMA, or the DFO.

1. Director(s) of Advancement
2. Director of Candidacy
3. Director of the Centre for Public Dialogue
4. Director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry
5. Director of Disability Concerns
6. Director of Faith Formation Ministries
7. Director of Human Resources
8. Director(s) of Ministry Support Services
9. Director(s) of Pastor Church Resources
10. Director of Race Relations and Social Justice
11. Director of Safe Church Ministry
12. Director of ServiceLink
13. Director of Worship Ministries
14. Editor of *The Banner* (see position description: G9)

B. Vacancies

1. Responsibility: CMD or DMA working with the appropriate COD Committee (or, in the case of *The Banner* editor, the *Banner* Advisory Committee)

2. Method: Appropriate COD committee (or, in the case of *The Banner* editor, the *Banner* Advisory Committee) proposes to the COD (or its executive committee) a search committee mandate and composition as well as a timeline (see 2.2224 and 2.2234).

3. Protocol: From the work of the search committee, the candidate selected by the search committee is introduced to the appropriate COD committee and recommended for ratification by the full COD. (*Exception:* In the case of *The Banner* editor, the candidate selected by the search committee is introduced to the *Banner* Advisory Committee, interviewed by the COD, and then recommended for approval by synod.)

Section Two: Policy Applying to the Executive Leaders of other CRCNA entities

Codirectors of World Renew
President of Calvin College
President of Calvin Theological Seminary

I. Performance Accountability of the Executive Staff

Accountability for the performance of the leaders of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and World Renew is accomplished by their specific boards.

II. Vacancies

A. Calvin College President

1. Responsibility: Calvin College Board of Trustees
2. Method: per Calvin College policy
3. Protocol: After the Calvin College Board of Trustees approves and appoints a single nominee as president, the nominee is interviewed by the COD for endorsement to synod; synod, after conducting a successful interview of the nominee, ratifies the appointment.

B. Calvin Theological Seminary President

1. Responsibility: Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees
2. Method: per Calvin Theological Seminary policy
3. Protocol: After the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees recommends a single nominee, the nominee is interviewed by the COD for endorsement to synod; synod, after conducting a successful interview of the nominee, appoints the nominee as president.

C. World Renew Codirectors

1. Responsibility: World Renew Board
2. Method: per World Renew policy
3. Protocol: After the World Renew Board recommends a single nominee, the nominee is interviewed by the COD and, upon approval of the nominee, the COD recommends that synod ratify the appointment.

G1 Position Description for the Executive Director of the CRCNA

Summary of Position

The executive director is accountable to the Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and is responsible for nurturing a shared and vibrant vision for the mission of the Christian Reformed Church, and for ensuring the effective implementation of this mission through the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church and the work of the various boards, agencies, and institutions of the CRCNA.

Nature and Scope

The executive director is called to keep the CRCNA attentive and responsive to a long-term vision for its mission in the world, both locally and globally. This includes providing a report to each synod, offering a vision for the future ministry of the CRCNA, and making recommendations for its implementation.

The executive director provides direction, supervision, and nurture to the staff of the various agencies, ministries, and institutions that serve the Christian Reformed Church. He or she is responsible to see that the staff works faithfully and cooperatively to carry out the mission of the CRCNA. The executive director also seeks to build a spirit of close collaboration and common vision between the various boards, ministries, and institutions that serve the CRCNA.

Leadership Profile and Qualifications

A. Strategic priorities

Possess a strong desire and demonstrated ability to seek, discern, communicate, and implement God's vision for the future of the CRCNA.

B. Professional qualifications

Possess the ability to provide visionary, servant leadership within a multiagency denomination.

C. Personal qualifications

Exhibit dynamic skills in collaborative relationship building and participatory management with the ability to bridge diverse perspectives and inspire trust.

D. Spiritual qualifications

Exemplify a strong, vibrant, personal Christian faith marked by spiritual humility and moral integrity.

E. Educational and ordination qualifications

Be or become by transfer an ordained minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Adopted 2012

Attachment to the Position Description of the Executive Director of the CRCNA

This attachment provides additional detail on the qualifications and specific responsibilities associated with the position of executive director (ED).

I. Additional Information concerning the responsibilities assigned to this office

The person appointed to this office shall also have the following responsibilities:

A. Serve as an *ex officio,* voting member of the executive committee of the Council of Delegates (COD), the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, the CRCNA Foundation in both the United States and Canada, and

such other committees as synod or the COD may, from time to time, decide. The ED shall make arrangements for, and be an *ex officio* member of, all synodical study committees.

B. Have the privilege of the floor at synodical and COD meetings in all matters relating to the exercise of this office. The ED shall be present during all executive sessions of synod and of the COD, except when matters under discussion affect the person or performance of the ED and he/she is requested to be absent.

C. Be responsible for all official publications the synod or the COD shall authorize, as well as all synodical papers, including correspondence, surveys, reports, questionnaires, materials, and minutes produced for synod or the COD, and keep a file of synodical and COD correspondence as well as an accurate record of the proceedings of synod and the COD.

D. Be responsible for denominational archives and historical documents and administer the right of access to such documents.

E. Be responsible for making all arrangements for the meetings of synod and the COD and function as operations officer during such meetings.

F. In performing the specific duties and responsibilities of this office, discern that, because the CRCNA is a binational denomination functioning in both the United States and Canada, some of the communication functions in Canada may be exercised through the office of the Canadian ministries director.

G. Be responsible to convene and (optionally) chair the meetings of the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC), which functions to advance the vision, mission, values, and strategic objectives of the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

H. Be responsible for providing consultation services to congregations, classes, and synodical deputies on matters dealing with church polity, Church Order interpretation, synodical decisions, and ecclesiastical procedures.

I. Perform such other duties as synod or the COD shall direct.

II. Additional preferred qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall have the following qualifications:

A. Possess personal and professional integrity, forthrightness, and compassion for people who are poor, lost, or disenfranchised.

B. Be well acquainted with the Christian Reformed denomination, its history, its churches, its ministers, its lay leaders, and its ministries in both Canada and the United States.

C. Be able to exercise authority in an unobtrusive manner in order to fulfill the requirements of this position and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ministries and agencies of the denomination.

D. Be able to move with ease and dignity in North American and international ecclesiastical circles. Be congenial and cooperative with representatives of other churches as well as with members of the Christian Reformed Church.

E. Possess knowledge of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church and be competent in interpreting the same.

F. Have the ability to write and be competent in public address.

G. Demonstrate self-reliance and sound judgment in decision making.

H. Possess administrative and organizational ability in such measure as to be able to plan and work collaboratively with others.

I. Have appropriate educational training and prior senior management experience in which leadership and management skills have been demonstrated.

J. Have the capacity to delegate authority.

K. Have demonstrated capacity for listening, integrating ideas, and setting future priorities.

Adopted by Synod 2004

G2 Position Description for the Canadian Ministries Director (CMD)

I. General description

The person appointed to this office is administratively accountable for performance to the executive director, while also accountable to the directors of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation for all matters that are within its mandate as agreed to by the Council of Delegates (COD) and/or are legally required to be performed by a registered charity in Canada, to carry out the following:

A. Cultivate and nurture a shared and vibrant vision for the mission of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) with churches, classes, and agencies in Canada as reflected in the five streams.

B. Prompt and mobilize the churches and classes of the CRCNA to imagine and demonstrate a Reformed missional witness in Canada through community engagement, gospel proclamation, advocating for social justice, and embracing racial diversity.

C. Catalyze networking and teamwork among classes, churches, and denominational agencies and ministries in Canada by nurturing a culture of cooperation and collaboration in mutual learning and ministry planning for optimum impact.

D. Advocate for justice and mobilize congregations and the CRCNA in Canada to be a Christian voice for social justice issues and foster ecumenical partnerships with other churches and denominations, locally and nationally, to enhance our witness.

E. Promote and foster faith formation, discipleship, church health, and development of diverse leadership to grow a vibrant CRCNA in Canada.

F. Provide leadership in developing and overseeing the implementation of the denominational ministries plan as a basis for guiding the planning, coordination, and integration of the work of the agencies in Canada.

II. Qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall have the following qualifications:

A. Be a member of the CRCNA with a general knowledge of, and commitment to, the teaching of Scripture and the Reformed confessions, the life and polity of the CRCNA, a Reformed Christian worldview, and a love for the whole mission of the church.

B. Be grounded in Christ's love and be a Spirit-led person shaped by prayer who leads with an understanding and discernment of God's will in the varied contexts in which we live and minister.

C. Be a seasoned leader and a confident, experienced visionary who is able to cultivate and discern a vision for local, national, and global ministry in an environment of shifting demographics and significant cultural change.

D. Be innovative in cultivating a vision of how God is leading his church and have the capacity to guide strategic responses.

E. Be a servant-leader who nurtures relationships, empowers colleagues, and advances ministry.

F. Work as a team leader and team player with the ability to plan and work collaboratively with people in congregational, regional, national, and denominational ministries.

G. Have a reputation for personal and professional integrity, forthrightness, and compassion for people who are poor, lost, or disenfranchised.

H. Be a good communicator.

I. Have appropriate educational training and possess extensive ministry experience in a church/parachurch-related context where he/she has demonstrated leadership and management capacity.

J. Have a commitment to a binational CRCNA and demonstrate an understanding of the diverse religious and cultural forces and the unique social and political contexts that influence ministry in our respective countries.

K. Have a firm understanding of sound financial practices and fiscal policies and procedures.

III. Duties and responsibilities

The person appointed to this office shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

A. Cultivate and nurture a shared and vibrant vision for the mission of the CRCNA, champion visioning activities at classis gatherings, host regular

national conversations and forums (e.g., every two or three years), and provide leadership in implementing visioning outcomes.

B. Prompt and mobilize missional engagement in local churches by imagining possibilities, promoting learning opportunities, sharing stories and best practices, and facilitating use of resources for mutual learning.

C. Facilitate networking and collaboration with churches, classes, and agencies in Canada for sharing best practices and strategic planning and the implementation of the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church. Gather, lead, and empower a team of classis-based animators/coaches to stimulate collaborative action that generates effective ministry.

D. Serve as the spokesperson for the CRCNA in Canada on matters of communication with the government and of public pronouncement, in consultation with the executive director.

E. Oversee and champion denominational social justice ministries in Canada. Identify social justice priorities and develop strategies for community engagement in consultation with staff and related committees for recommendation to the COD.

F. Foster local and national ecumenical activity and engage in national partnerships through bodies such as the Canadian Council of Churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and others.

G. Foster a culture of leadership development that is organic and innovative.

H. Advocate for intergenerational ministries and faith formation initiatives.

I. Serve as team leader and administrative officer of the Canadian Ministries Team to work for collaborative synergy between agencies, and partner with classes and other Christian ministries to facilitate unified ministry to reflect the denominational ministry plan.

J. Provide leadership in developing and overseeing the implementation of the denominational ministries plan and related budgets of the Christian Reformed Church as a basis for guiding the planning, coordination, and collaboration of the work of the agencies in Canada.

K. Review and monitor ministry plans and budgets from all agencies and ministries operative in Canada; provide observations, analysis, and recommendations with respect to ministry priorities in Canada to respective agencies and ministries, in consultation with the executive director; and provide an annual report to the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and the COD.

L. Promote and advocate for the ministries of the CRCNA in Canada and the ministries of the binational CRCNA with CRCNA congregations and classes in Canada.

M. Serve as adviser to the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and act as its agent as requested or assigned.

N. Serve synod and the binational COD with information and advice regarding matters that relate to the ministry of the denomination and especially to ministry conducted in Canada. Participate in the development and

implementation of synodical and COD policy decisions and denominational plans, especially as they relate to denominational ministries in Canada.

O. Remind the CRCNA-Canada Corporation what is involved to be in compliance with all corporate, legal, and income-tax requirements and equip, advise, and ensure that the directors of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation fulfill fiduciary responsibilities as corporate directors, officers, and trustees.

P. As a member of the executive team, perform such other duties as may be assigned by the executive director.

IV. Working relationships

The Canadian ministries director serves in the following ways:

A. Is administratively accountable to the executive director (ED) and shall consult regularly (e.g., weekly) with the ED and the senior executive staff team in the discharge of duties.

B. Works closely with the ED to cultivate vision and develop a denominational ministries plan for the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

C. Provides leadership on behalf of the COD and synod as a servant of the people, the churches, and the denominational agencies in Canada.

D. Is functionally accountable to the CRCNA-Canada Corporation and serves as its agent.

E. Is adviser to the COD and the CRCNA-Canada Corporation.

F. Serves at the pleasure of the ED, and continued employment is subject to a favorable performance review conducted by the ED and the chair of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation.

G. Serves as spokesperson to the government of Canada on all matters relating to the CRCNA. This is done in consultation with the ED and other "invested" staff or volunteers (i.e., director of finance and operations, Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue).

H. Serves as spokesperson and representative in ecumenical activity of the CRCNA in Canada, working in consultation with the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.

I. Is team leader of the Canadian Ministries Team (CMT).

J. Is a member of the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC).

K. Serves as the leadership link between administrative and ministry leadership in the CRCNA-U.S. office and the CRCNA Canadian office.

G3 Position Description for the Director of Back to God Ministries International

Job Title: Director
Department: Office of the Director of Back to God Ministries
Reports to: Director of Ministries and Administration
Status: Full-time, exempt
Salary Level: XVIII

Purpose
To provide executive leadership in the strategic planning and execution of policies and decisions within the established bylaws and the established organizational framework and to ensure the whole organization supports and facilitates the mission of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI), the denominational strategic ministry plan, and the broader mission of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA).

Essential Duties and Responsibilities
The specific duties of the director shall be as follows:

A. To serve as the chief executive officer of the agency by representing the agency, signing documents, protecting the assets of BTGMI, and filing reports as required by local, federal, and international laws.

B. To create, manage, and change an organizational structure as needed to achieve strategic goals.

C. To be the face and representative of the agency in the CRCNA, other church communities worldwide, and Christian media circles.

Ministry
A. To ensure that all staff of the agency are properly supervised and encouraged and that each has a development plan which is reviewed annually. Each staff member shall have the benefit of a documented performance discussion annually.

B. To supervise the ordained staff directly and advise individual church councils (or their equivalents) of calling churches, as well as the board, regarding the doctrine, life, and work of the ministers of the Word.

C. To ensure that all activities, programs, publications, and correspondence reflect the Reformed theology of the Christian Reformed Church.

D. To ensure that all language programs and projects are subject to a regular evaluation and review for effectiveness, relevance, and adherence to the agency's goals.

E. To explore new and strengthen existing partnerships.

F. To enhance and extend ministry outreach within and beyond the CRCNA.

G. (Recommended) To participate in at least one of the media ministries of Back to God Ministries International.

Administration
A. To ensure that the financial management of BTGMI is handled in an effective and responsible way.

B. To delegate responsibilities for budgeting and accountabilities for spending within budget to department heads and partnerships for full functionality.

C. To ensure that the office is well administered.

D. To encourage teamwork and staff involvement to maximize productivity and staff satisfaction.

E. To participate in advancement work, both in the marketing role and in fundraising.

F. To attend the board and executive committee meetings of the agency as well as any other committee meetings as appropriate.

G. To review biannually all partnership agreements.

H. To ensure representation of the agency at denominational committee and board meetings.

Programming
A. To explore and evaluate new ministry opportunities consistent with the agency's strategic goals and to encourage the staff to develop new programming within the context of those goals.

B. To ensure that the programming in each language group meets the strategic goals of the agency.

Other
A. To perform other duties as assigned by the board.

Relationships
A. The members of the executive committee of the board

B. The executive director and director of ministries and administration of the CRCNA

C. The heads of all the CRCNA agencies and related educational establishments

D. The leadership of existing partnerships

E. The heads of other Christian media outreaches

The director will be visible to the membership of the CRCNA and the supporters of Back to God Ministries International through articles in *The Banner*, other media, and regular contact with congregations.

Supervisory Responsibilities
A. Supervise a diverse group of individuals worldwide.

B. Manage the partnership agreements of BTGMI.

Qualifications
The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required:

A. Ordination as a minister of the Word in the CRCNA or ability to sustain an examination for ordination in the CRC. An experienced Christian leader, theologically trained and in good standing, with the ability to articulate the gospel verbally and in writing.

B. Commitment to the mission of the church and the agency.

C. Demonstrated skills in communicating the vision and implementing the vision of the agency.

D. Competence in or the ability to learn the skills necessary for effective development work.

E. Skill in developing and managing leaders with different areas of competence. These areas of competence include ministry, radio production, TV production, Internet development, finance, administration, mailing of print material, premises management, and international (foreign language) administration.

F. Competence in or ability to develop skills in the use of electronic media.

G. Demonstrated cross-cultural experience (desired).

H. Expertise in teamwork, encouraging others by delegation of responsibility and authority.

I. Skills in coaching and encouraging in a positive fashion and ability to recruit, develop, and promote others in their daily work.

J. Ability to manage a complex organization with a low level of control to achieve maximum productivity and efficiency.

Physical Demands
The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position. The required international travel to all ministry sites can be demanding. The locations of ministry sites can be remote and difficult to access.

Work Environment
The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this position.

It is desirable that the work location be in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

G4 Position Description for the Director of Communications and Marketing

Job Title: Director of Communications and Marketing (DCM)
Department: Denominational Office
Reports to: Executive Director, CRCNA
Status: Full-time, exempt
Salary Level: XVI

Purpose
To provide leadership, strategy, planning, and oversight in the communications and marketing of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). To ensure that communications and marketing function within the established organizational framework in a way that supports and

facilitates the ministry of the CRCNA and its institutions and agencies, in conformity with the denominational ministry plan.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities
A. Develop and implement communication and marketing strategies in order to advance the mission and ministry of the CRCNA and its agencies, institutions, and ministries, including the following:

1. Direct the design and maintenance of an effective denominational web presence.
2. Coordinate and edit the denominational ministries section of *The Banner*.

B. Collaborate with Ministry Support Services and with staff of CRCNA agencies, institutions, and ministries to ensure that denominational and agency communications and marketing efforts achieve and maintain a high standard of excellence and effectiveness.

C. Establish and implement standards that will ensure an appropriate visual identity for the CRCNA and maintain a strong denominational brand.

D. Advise senior CRCNA and agency leaders on communications and marketing issues, and recommend appropriate strategies.

E. Recruit, manage, and direct staff assigned to the CRCNA communications and marketing office.

F. Serve as a resource to denominationally related ministries in their communications and marketing efforts, including assisting in the recruiting, hiring, and training of communications and marketing staff.

G. Perform the duties of Synod News Officer, including directing the work of the Synod News Office.

H. Represent the CRCNA in ecumenical and other appropriate communications and marketing settings.

I. Perform other duties as assigned by the executive director.

Supervisory Responsibilities
Denominational communications and marketing staff

Qualifications
The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required:

A. Commitment to the faith, vision, mission, and calling of the CRCNA and its agencies.

B. Thorough understanding of the CRCNA and its ministries, agencies, and institutions.

C. Demonstrated competence in the skills necessary for effective communications and marketing.

D. Experience in leading and directing a communications and/or marketing team.

E. Fluency in English; knowledge of other languages is an asset.

F. Demonstrated strong skills in oral and written communications, including demonstrated skill in editing.

G. An ability to recruit, train, encourage, and support team members in their daily work.

H. Ability to achieve collaboration and to exercise leadership in a complex organization with a low level of control to achieve productivity and efficiency.

Education and Experience
A. Bachelor's degree, preferably in an area related to communications or marketing; post-graduate degree preferred.

B. At least seven years' experience in communications and/or marketing, including significant experience at a nonprofit organization.

Physical Demands
The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Work Environment
The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this position.

G5 Position Description for the Director of Finance and Operations

I. General description
The person appointed to this office shall carry out the following:

A. Provide leadership, on behalf of synod and the Council of Delegates (COD), as a servant of the people, the churches, and the denominational agencies, by encouraging financial stewardship and fiscal responsibility in the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA).

B. Be the chief financial officer of the CRCNA and its designated agencies and committees, serve as treasurer for the CRCNA Foundation, and provide for fiduciary review by the COD through its formal audit function.

C. Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the employee benefit plans (i.e., denominational insurance programs and the employee retirement plan).

D. Exercise administrative oversight over Human Resources, Advancement Services, Information Services, Facilities and Grounds, and the CRCNA Loan Fund.

E. Be responsible for the administration and investment of Pension Funds maintained by the CRCNA and the benefit plans provided through Reformed Benefits Association.

II. Primary qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall have the following qualifications:

A. Be a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of the CRCNA who is strongly committed to the binational ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.

B. Have appropriate training in financial management.

C. Have senior managerial experience.

D. Possess personal and professional integrity and have a love for the mission of the Christian Reformed Church.

III. General responsibilities

A. Prepare and manage the budget-development process and monitor the unified budget performance of the CRCNA.

B. Prepare and interpret a monthly consolidated statement of income and expenses, as well as other analytical reports, for the executive director of the CRCNA (ED), the director of ministries and administration, and the Council of Delegates.

C. Supervise the work of the director of Human Resources, the controllers in the United States and Canada, the director of Information Services, the director of Advancement Services, the director of the CRCNA Loan Fund, and the facilities supervisor. The Director of Finance and Operations also maintains a communication relationship with the financial officers at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary.

D. Manage the financial resources of the CRCNA (i.e., common cash management accounts, restricted cash investments, inventory levels, accounts payable, loans receivable, long-term and short-term debt, and capital acquisitions).

E. Supervise, through the finance staff, the budgets of Back to God Ministries International, Congregational Services, Ministry Support Services, the CRCNA denominational offices in Canada and the United States, and the new mission agency.

F. Monitor, through the finance staff, the budget of World Renew.

G. Oversee the risk management provisions, maintaining adequate casualty and liability insurance coverage commensurate to the risks involved. The Director of Finance and Operations shall also ensure that adequate auditing and bonding requirements are met.

H. Establish adequate standardized operating procedures with and for classical treasurers to facilitate compliance with synodical mandates.

IV. Accountability and terms of service

The Director of Finance and Operations shall serve at the pleasure of the ED. Continued employment is subject to an annual performance review conducted by the ED and reviewed by the COD.

Approved February 2004

G6 Position Description for the Director of Ministries and Administration

I. General description

The Director of Ministries and Administration (DMA) shall

A. Be invested with executive authority and management responsibility that enhances the unified ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA).

B. As a member of the senior leadership team, cultivate, nurture, and implement a shared and vibrant vision for the mission of the CRCNA throughout the denomination, as reflected in the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church.

C. Serve as the administrative officer for matters pertaining to the ministries and agencies of the CRCNA, their boards, programs, budgets, and personnel.

D. Conduct all responsibilities and roles subject to the direction of the executive director of the CRCNA (ED).

II. Specific responsibilities

The person appointed to this office shall

A. Have responsibility for joint strategic plan implementation and coordination of goals while recognizing the particular responsibilities and functions of each agency and educational institution.

B. Convene meetings, on a functional basis and in various combinations, of directors or official representatives of denominational agencies and educational institutions to advance collaboration and cooperation among the various entities.

C. Participate in the implementation of ministry plans of the Christian Reformed Church; respond as a member of the senior leadership team to Council of Delegates (COD) directives when new ministry plans require development.

D. Serve as the administrative supervisor of the ministries directors.

E. Serve as the administrative supervisor of CRCNA staff serving in other ministries unless such supervision is specifically assigned elsewhere.

F. Manage and guide the implementation of synodical and COD policy decisions as they relate to denominational ministries.

G. Regularly report to the ED and the COD of the CRCNA on work being done with the agencies and educational institutions based on individual goals and the strategic plan for the denomination.

H. Serve as a member and co-vice-chair of the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC).

I. Attend the meetings of the COD and its executive committee.

J. Participate in ecumenical meetings, as well as classical and regional church meetings as agreed upon by the senior leadership team of the CRCNA, and/or as invited by these bodies.

K. Provide staff support as needed.

L. Perform other duties as assigned by the ED.

Qualifications and Working Relationships of the Director of Ministries and Administration

I. Primary qualifications
The person appointed to this office shall

A. Be a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ, giving evidence of being a strongly committed member of the CRCNA or willingness to become such a member.

B. Possess a general knowledge of, and commitment to, the teaching of Scripture and the Reformed confessions and have a Reformed Christian worldview.

C. Have a love for the whole mission of the Christian Reformed Church.

D. Have demonstrated commitment to the binationality of the CRCNA and be familiar with, and show a firm comprehension of, the different factors that affect ministry in the United States and Canada.

E. Have prior senior management experience in which exemplary leadership and management skills have been demonstrated.

F. Be a seasoned, confident, experienced servant leader who is able to lead a team to implement a vision for local, national, and global ministry in an environment of shifting demographics and significant cultural change.

G. Be able to nurture relationships, empower colleagues, and advance ministry.

H. Demonstrate self-reliance and sound judgment in decision making.

I. Have demonstrated the capacity to delegate authority.

J. Have demonstrated capacity for listening, integrating ideas, and recommending future priorities.

K. Have the ability to plan and work collaboratively with everyone involved in denominational ministries.

L. Have the ability to develop rapport and trust with denominational employees in order to promote job satisfaction and a high level of achievement.

M. Be able to exercise authority in an unobtrusive manner in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of denominational ministries and agencies.

N. Have a firm understanding of sound financial practices and fiscal policies and procedures.

O. Have the ability to understand and act on advice with respect to budgetary guidelines, financial reports, and fiscal priorities of denominational ministries and agencies.

P. Have a strong commitment to cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity in positions of servant leadership in the CRCNA.

Q. Possess personal and professional integrity, forthrightness, and a compassion for the poor, the lost, and the disenfranchised.

R. Possess a master's degree in a relevant field.

II. Working relationships

The Director of Ministries and Administration

A. Is administratively accountable to the executive director (ED) and shall consult regularly with the ED and the senior leadership team in the discharge of duties.

B. Works closely with the ED and senior leadership team to cultivate vision for and develop and implement ministry plans in North America.

C. Works cooperatively with ministry directors and other staff in conducting his/her duties.

D. Serves at the pleasure of the COD and the executive director.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, September 2014

G7 Position Description for the Director of the New Mission Agency

Job Title: Director of New Mission Agency
Reports to: Executive Director
Status: Full time, exempt
Salary Grade: XVIII

Purpose

To lead, direct, and manage the new mission agency in all its parts in fulfilling the mission assigned by the CRC synod within the policies set by the Council of Delegates (COD) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). Leadership responsibility includes regional mission teams with global reach, an integrated mission support team, and a capacity building and innovation team which provides global support to the entire new mission agency. Performance metrics will include growth and strength in worshiping communities, leaders, and missional networks around the world.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

A. Serve as the agency's chief executive officer within the bounds of the legal documents and policies of the new mission agency in Canada and the U.S., and the policies set by the CRCNA Council of Delegates.

B. Discern and articulate vision and strategy for the new mission agency together with the board and senior staff leadership. Translate the strategy into plans, program, and budgets.

C. Serve as the voice of the new mission agency in its work of bringing the gospel throughout the world, promoting the agency's work throughout all of the CRCNA and in the broader Christian community.

D. Develop strategic partnerships to advance God's mission through collaboration with the agencies, ministries, and educational institutions of the CRCNA.

E. Lead the new mission agency's communications and fundraising efforts in the public arena, especially with major donors.

F. Maintain financial viability and integrity and recommend annual plans and budgets to the COD as well as alterations to either during the year.

G. Support and serve the COD in its tasks of discerning and articulating vision, mobilizing prayer for mission, approving overall mission strategy, assuring resources for mission, and approving budgets.

H. Establish and maintain effective, efficient procedures, systems, and structures to implement policies set by the COD to supervise all agency employees and volunteers.

I. Assure recruiting, hiring, training, supervising, and evaluating of all new mission agency employees and volunteers within CRCNA guidelines.

J. Maintain appropriate relationships with other entities, particularly governments, regulatory agencies, associations of missions, and churches in countries within which the new mission agency serves other CRCNA agencies, congregations, and their members; other denominations and their members; other mission-related agencies; and the public.

K. Advocate for the biblical vision for a diverse denomination through support for intercultural church and ministry development, for diversity in the new mission agency staff, and for reconciliation and antiracism plans and actions.

L. Provide leadership direction for all CRC ministries through the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC) and ensure the integration of the new mission agency in that direction, and lead new mission agency staff in integrated efforts to support the denominational Ministry Plan and goals.

M. Other tasks assigned.

Supervisory Responsibilities
Senior leadership staff and senior administrative assistant

Qualifications

A. Professing membership in a CRC congregation, conformity to the Statement of Faith documents included in the Covenant for Officebearers of the CRCNA.

B. Commitment to Christ and the mission of his church.

C. Demonstrated skills in casting vision and thinking strategically.

D. Evidence of exemplary Christian character and of personally practicing the spiritual disciplines.

E. Strong communication skills, both oral and written.

F. Proven skill as a decisive, adaptive leader.

G. Demonstrated attributes and skills as a leader and manager.

H. Demonstrated strong ability to work with various cultures and age groups.

I. Demonstrated commitment to racial reconciliation and antiracism ministry, and to the growth of the CRC as a multicultural denomination.

J. Ability to travel extensively throughout North America and the world.

Education and Experience

A. Theologically trained, or with equivalent ministry experience.

B. Significant experience as a Christian missional leader, with evidence of increasing levels of responsibility.

C. At least four years of intercultural experience with knowledge of a least one other culture.

Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Work Environment

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this position.

G8 Position Description for the Director of Synodical Services

Job Title: Director of Synodical Services
Reports to: Executive Director of the CRCNA
FLSA Status: Full-time, exempt
Salary Level: XVII
Vacation Category: III

Purpose
Direct all synodically related services on behalf of the executive director (ED); serve as a senior adviser to the executive director.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities
1. Direct the preparation of all synod- and Council of Delegates (COD)-related meetings, including drafting correspondence and written materials on behalf of the ED.
2. Administer all matters pertaining to synodical services.
3. Provide supervision over synodical services support personnel.

Prepare, plan, and coordinate the following:

A. Annual Synod
1. Oversee the collection and organization of all needed information and reports for the meetings of synod.
2. Manage the distribution of synodical study committee reports and other materials as appropriate to church councils in keeping with established guidelines. Draft letters of response as needed.
3. Coordinate the logistical arrangements for synod and supervise the synodical office during the meetings of synod.
4. Oversee the review and monitoring of the minutes of classes for actions that need some form of synodical action (e.g., elections to denominational positions, synodical deputies' activities, ordinations, retirements, suspensions, and/or depositions). Inform as needed the Ministers' Pension Office, Human Resources Office, and *Yearbook* Office.
5. Manage the production, editing, and publishing of the *Agenda for Synod, Acts of Synod,* and all synod-related materials.
6. Administer the preparation of post-synod correspondence, production of the Church Order, and the *Manual for Synodical Deputies*.
7. Oversee and manage the implementation of synodical decisions.
8. Maintain all synodical files and documents.

B. Classes
1. Serve as primary liaison on behalf of the offices of the executive director and synodical services to each classis, clerks of classis, and classical interim committees (or equivalents).
2. Ensure receipt of all minutes of classis meetings and related communications.

C. COD and Its Executive Committee (three meetings per year)
1. Manage and distribute approved policies and updates to the COD Governance Handbook as needed.
2. Coordinate the preparation, writing, and planning of the agenda and its distribution.
3. Prepare and distribute the approved minutes.
4. Oversee and manage the implementation of COD decisions.
5. Maintain all COD files and documents.
6. Coordinate the logistical arrangements for COD meetings.

D. Administration and Oversight of the Travel Policy
1. Maintain the denominational travel policy.
2. Maintain a relationship with travel agency contractors.
3. Collaborate with travel agents with regard to problems that arise.

E. Edit and Coordinate the Production of the Following Publications:
1. *Church Order* and *Rules for Synodical Procedure*
2. *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*
3. *Agenda for Synod*
4. *Acts of Synod*
5. *Yearbook*
6. *Index of Synodical Decisions*
7. *Manual for Synodical Deputies*
8. Index of Board of Trustees Minutes

Supervisory Responsibilities
Administrative support personnel in the synodical services office.

Qualifications
The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required:

1. Membership in, or a commitment to become, a member of the Christian Reformed Church.
2. Familiarity with the work and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church.
3. Commitment to the mission of the church and the agencies.
4. Demonstrated ability with organizational and management skills.
5. Effective oral and written communication skills.

Education and Experience
Bachelor's degree
At least five years' experience in management
Experience serving in roles within the Christian Reformed Church (preferred)

Revised July 2014

***G9 Position Description for the Editor of* The Banner**

Job Title: Editor in chief of *The Banner*
Department: Ministry Support Services
Reports to: Ministry Support Services Coleader, *Banner* Advisory Council
Status: 0.5 FTE or greater, exempt
Salary Level: XVII

Purpose
Responsible for the content of *The Banner*

Essential Duties and Responsibilities
1. Ensure that *The Banner* achieves its stated purposes to (1) inform readers about what is happening in the CRCNA as well as in the church at large,

(2) provide articles that edify and encourage Christian living, (3) stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part in a way that encourages biblical thinking about these issues and is in line with our confessional heritage, and (4) offer tools to help readers find fresh awareness to seek, learn, worship, and serve as Reformed Christians in contemporary society (cf. mandate for *The Banner* adopted by the CRCNA Board of Trustees, February 2015) by effectively directing or performing the following functions:

a. plan issues of *The Banner*
b. ensure the development and maintenance of *The Banner*'s online presence
c. write editorials and other appropriate columns
d. make final decisions on all submitted manuscripts
e. approve all final copy and layout of each issue
f. ensure that all *Banner* correspondence is answered appropriately
g. maintain an adequate readership level for both the print edition and online edition (including various digital platforms)

2. Work with the executive director and the director of finance and operations to ensure the continuing financial stability of *The Banner*.
3. Consult regularly with the executive director.
4. Effectively interact with people to promote the interests of *The Banner.*
5. Participate in quarterly meetings with staff to plan future issues.
6. Participate in the annual staff retreat for general planning.

Supervisory Responsibilities
The Banner staff

Qualifications
1. A personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. Membership in good standing in the Christian Reformed Church.
3. In full accord with the doctrinal positions of the Christian Reformed Church.
4. Thorough familiarity with the Scriptures and insight into Reformed teachings.
5. Insight regarding issues pertaining to the Christian Reformed Church, the church at large, and the world of our day.
6. Demonstrated ability to write with clarity and liveliness and to sensibly edit what others have written.
7. Sensitivity and ability to communicate in writing to *The Banner*'s diverse reading audience.
8. Ability to develop and direct *The Banner*'s online presence in a manner suited to effective online engagement.
9. Ability to supervise staff in a way that leads to staff growth and development.
10. Ability to work effectively with a senior management team, a board, and committees.
11. Ability to deal constructively with a variety of opinions and with criticism.
12. General knowledge of administrative functions such as finance, planning, etc.

Education and Experience
1. Master of Divinity or Theological Studies (preferred)
2. At least eight years' CRCNA ministry experience (preferred)

Physical Demands
The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Work Environment
The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this position.

G10 Policy for the Annual Review of the Executive Director (ED) of the CRCNA

Every three years a 360-degree review shall be conducted of the ED's performance. The review will be prepared for the spring meeting of the COD executive committee. Every year the executive committee will review the previous year's work of the ED, approve the ED's work plan with objectives for the coming year, and determine compensation adjustment for the ED for the next fiscal year. The annual review of the ED (in the years when a 360-degree review is not scheduled) will be led by no fewer than two members of the COD executive committee who will submit a report of the review to the spring meeting of the executive committee and submit a written report for the personnel files.

Appendix H: Policies for Identifying Goals and Evaluation Methods for the Unified Ministry of the CRCNA

Council of Delegates (COD) responsibilities from the COD Governance Handbook

2.123 Criteria and Goals. To ensure the provision of policies that establish the programmatic criteria (goals) and evaluation of progress toward goals for the unified ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) while ensuring the establishment of standards and strategies by which personnel pursue such goals.

2.124 Evaluation and Assessment. To attend to the organizational structure and health of the unified ministry of the CRCNA by ensuring the establishment of standards and strategies of assessment (e.g., Ministry Plan measures, personnel surveys, etc.), periodically reviewing outcomes, and identifying any needed revision of goals and policies as a result.

Policy:

The Ministries Leadership Council shall periodically develop a Ministry Plan for the unified ministries of the COD, presenting the goals and evaluation methodology to the COD by way of its Ministry Plan and Communication Services Committee (see 2.233) for the committee's review and the COD's adoption and continued oversite.

Leadership of the various agencies and ministries governed by the COD shall periodically develop strategic plans (goals and evaluation methodology) appropriate to their unit's mission, demonstrating—where appropriate—linkage to the Ministry Plan and sharing them with appropriate COD committees (e.g., Global Missions, section 2.2212; Mercy and Justice Ministries, section 2.2222; Congregational Ministries, section 2.2232). Annually the executive director shall present to the COD (via the Ministry Plan and Communication Services Committee) a report on the CRCNA's comprehensive set of goals (weaving together the major goals of the strategic plans of the various units of ministry and the Ministry Plan) and the evaluation of these goals.

Appendix I: The Banner *Mandate*

Mandate of *The Banner*
Including Guidelines for *The Banner*'s Accountability and Freedom
Adopted by Synod 2015 (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 641)

The Banner is a publication of the Christian Reformed Church in North America rather than an independent magazine. Accordingly, the editorial staff, led by the synodically appointed editor in chief, is accountable to the church for the style and content of this magazine. This accountability to the church is realized in a number of diverse, sometimes overlapping, and at times conflicting responsibilities to various groups and structures within the denomination. All these responsibilities are governed by *The Banner's* synodical mandate to (1) inform readers about what is happening in the CRC as well as the church at large, (2) provide articles that edify and encourage Christian living, (3) stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part in a way that encourages biblical thinking about these issues, in line with our confessional heritage; and (4) offer tools to help readers find fresh awareness to seek, learn, worship, and serve as Reformed Christians in contemporary society.

I. Lines of accountability

Lines of accountability have been established by previous decisions of synod and CRC Publications. For the editorial staff, accountability runs through the editor in chief, who is directly accountable

A. To the Council of Delegates, the body mandated by synod to publish this denominational periodical. This accountability includes

1. Reporting periodically on editorial activities and decisions.
2. Reporting reactions, criticisms, and suggestions received from readers and churches.

3. Recommending needed changes in policies and procedures.
4. Carrying out all approved policies and procedures.

B. To the executive director, the administrative head appointed to manage and coordinate the work of denominational staff. This accountability includes

1. Keeping him/her informed of possibly sensitive or controversial issues being addressed and listening seriously to any advice offered regarding such issues. The executive director should, at his/her discretion, consult with other CRC ministry leaders.
2. Being fiscally responsible.
3. Following approved personnel procedures.
4. Working cooperatively with Ministry Support Services.

II. General responsibilities

In addition to this direct accountability, the editorial staff carries general responsibilities inherent in the nature of a denominational magazine:

A. To its subscribers and readers in the Christian Reformed Church for

1. Reporting in an honest and unbiased manner information about activities affecting the church.
2. Presenting to the readers the issues pertinent to the life of the church in a way that shows the diverse positions held within the church and encourages biblical and Reformed thinking about these issues.
3. Edifying readers so as to encourage them to grow in Christian maturity and faith and to live out their faith in daily life.
4. Providing a vehicle through which church members can express their views and opinions on pertinent issues.

B. To the ecclesiastical assemblies (councils, classes, synod) of the CRC for

1. Keeping church members informed about important decisions taken.
2. Reporting significant trends or policy directions.

C. To the official agencies of the CRC for

1. Presenting and explaining their ministry on behalf of the churches, making sure the information disseminated is accurate.
2. Keeping church members informed about important changes in their programs and personnel.
3. Encouraging church members to support and participate in the ministries being carried out.

III. Freedom of editorial staff

In order that it may carry on these diverse responsibilities, the editorial staff must be granted the freedom to

A. Inform its readers and subscribers about what is occurring in the church (including relevant problems, needs, and concerns) even though some persons, congregations, or agencies may prefer that such information not be disseminated.

B. Investigate and determine the facts regarding any occurrence in the church that appears to merit reporting to readers.

C. Lead and encourage a responsible discussion of the issues important to the life of the church through editorial comment and publication of articles that represent the various views held within the church.

D. Permit people of the church to voice their views and reactions even though some of these views may be unacceptable to others in the church.

E. Provide a biblically prophetic and responsible criticism and evaluation of trends within the church and society and of actions, decisions, policies, programs, etc., being considered by or already approved by ecclesiastical assemblies and agencies.

IV. Editorial integrity

The following guidelines for editorial judgment will be used in determining what materials (editorials, articles, news stories, etc.) are published in the pages of *The Banner:*

A. *The Banner* materials should be faithful to Scripture and the confessions.

B. *The Banner* materials should edify and educate readers.

C. Truth must be written but always in love.

D. Criticism must be constructive and fair.

E. Editing of materials should always maintain the intent of the author while making the writing more effective in presenting the author's views.

F. No author should be demeaned by editorial comment or by the way an article, column, letter, etc., is presented.

G. Selection of authors should aim at equity of representation (U.S./Canada, minorities, men/women, younger/older, conservative/progressive, etc.).

H. Nothing deliberately inflammatory, insulting, or divisive should be published.

I. Nothing that serves the interest solely of one individual, organization, or group in contrast to other individuals, organizations, or groups or in neglect of the general interest of the churches should be published.

J. *The Banner* should give preference to CRC authors.

K. Heads/titles should not be misleading or sensational; they should accurately reflect the heart of the story/article.

Appendix J: Philosophy of Employment and Compensation

Philosophy of Employment

The Christian Reformed Church in North America, as well as its agencies and educational institutions, affirm the following statements:

a. God, who gives his people the ability to work, intends that work be performed with joy, satisfaction, and to the best of a person's capability.

b. Every position is important; no position is without purpose.

c. Each employee is an imagebearer of God and deserves to be treated as such by

- being provided with the opportunity to perform meaningful work.
- being affirmed as a person with dignity and honor.
- being provided an antiracist work environment.
- being provided the full privilege and responsibility of his/her position.
- being encouraged to pursue professional and spiritual growth.
- being protected from harassment and discrimination.
- being compensated with a fair wage.
- being provided the opportunity for balancing work with other life activities.

d. All employees are to be contributors to the achievement of excellence in the strategic ministries of the CRCNA by using their God-given gifts. All employees are expected to have and use the expertise and talent that enables them to excel.

e. It is our desire that all employees profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. All employees are required to be supportive of the work of the denomination. All employees are encouraged to be members in a congregation of the CRCNA. Certain designated positions require membership in a CRC congregation as well as explicit commitment to the authority of Scripture for all of life; to the confessional authority of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort; and to the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church.

Philosophy of Compensation

The Christian Reformed Church in North America considers all employees imagebearers of God and critical to the ministry of the organization.

The CRCNA is concerned with treating all employees fairly. In this context, all employees are provided the opportunity to be justly rewarded for their efforts in furthering the ministries and strategic objectives of the CRCNA.

The compensation system is designed to faithfully reflect the principles of good stewardship and to support the CRCNA's Philosophy of Employment. Compensation is a combination of wages, other financial benefit programs, and a wide variety of nonfinancial programs designed to enable employees to fully develop and utilize their God-given gifts and talents. The primary focuses of the CRCNA's compensation program are to provide employees

with a fair wage, with comparable pay for comparable work, and with greater pay opportunity for higher job complexity, responsibility, and impact.

The CRCNA also rewards employees based on performance; differences in performance will be reflected in pay. While the philosophy of compensation is transparent and public, individual salaries are not.

The CRCNA looks to the broad market as well as to the not-for-profit sector for guidance in determining compensation. The CRCNA does not attempt to compete with the private sector for all jobs, especially executives. At the same time, there are positions that the CRCNA cannot fill (generally in technical jobs where demand strongly exceeds supply) unless the CRCNA fully reflects external market pressures.

The CRCNA compensation program provides equity in three major areas:

Internal Equity—so that the compensation differentials between jobs of varying responsibilities and accountabilities within the organization can be perceived as fair, neither too small nor too large. Some jobs are inherently bigger than other jobs due to the innate requirements and skills that the job necessitates. The pay grade of a position relates to the inherent requirements of the job and not the incumbent's performance or God-given gifts and talents.

All jobs at the CRCNA shall be systematically compared and a hierarchy developed based on

- the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the work.
- the degree of creativity and innovation required by the work.
- the opportunity to favorably make an impact on the ministries and strategic objectives of the church.

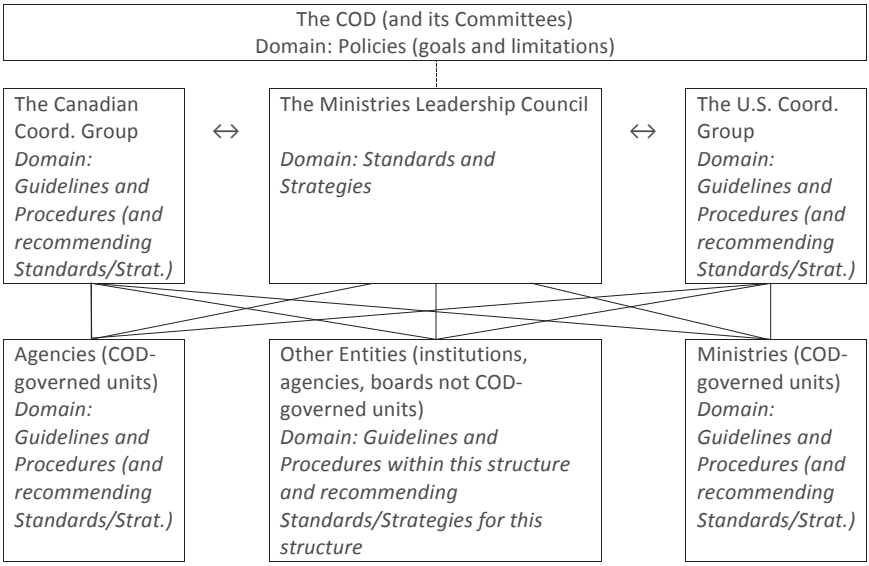
Individual Equity—so that compensation compares fairly among individuals in the same jobs within the organization. As with the Philosophy of Employment, the Philosophy of Compensation of the CRCNA demands that each person have all the rights and privileges of their position. No one person or group of persons will receive significantly more or less for fulfilling the same or similar tasks as others in the organization at a similar level of proficiency.

External Equity—so that the total compensation for a particular position compares fairly with similar jobs in similar organizations nationally and within organizations in the same geographic location as where the job exists.

The CRCNA will attract, develop, and retain persons who are faithful stewards of the accountabilities, responsibilities, and resources entrusted to them and capable of performing their respective roles at the highest level of excellence. An individual's work performance and contribution to the ministries and strategic objectives of the CRCNA within the framework of his or her current position will be regularly evaluated. Exceptional service and performance will be recognized and rewarded.

The Ministries Leadership Council

I. Background: The relationship of the MLC to other facets of governance (from the COD Governance Handbook)



5.231 Decision Making Groups. In order to ensure the awareness and, when appropriate, integration of cross-agency/ministry/services *procedures* and *guidelines* in light of COD policies, two levels of decision-making groups provide service; each of these groups includes those agencies and ministries governed by the COD and other CRCNA entities:

5.2311 Country-Specific Coordinating Groups. In each denominational office center with more than one agency/ministry function, a coordinating group meets regularly to address their common and contextualized inter-agency/ministry/services shared agenda related to *guidelines* and *procedures*, <u>and</u> to review and endorse at times *standards* and *strategies* that are then brought to the next level of review (see 5.2312, below).

5.23111 Normally leaders of agencies/ministries/services in the specific country make up the group; however, regular attendance by an administrative leader from the other country is valuable.

5.23112 Particularly in Canada, the exercise of direction and control, as federally required, is invested for management purposes by the Corporation(s) to the specific agency or, in the case of ministry services, to its director via the CMD,

and coordination, as needed, occurs at this Country-Specific Coordinating Group.

5.2312 Ministries Leadership Council (MLC). A binational management group focused on developing and maintaining *standards and strategies* in the context of COD policies, the MLC or some variation has long held an important role in inter-agency/ministry/services work. It is assisted by the Country-Specific Coordinating Groups as described above. The mandate and composition of the MLC is found in section II below.

5.232 Working and Collaborative Groups. Agencies, Ministries, and Other CRCNA Entities (both those governed by the COD and those governed by their own boards) utilize groups of individuals—within the agency/ministry/other entity or by means of a collaboration of linked agency/ministry/other entity personnel—helpful in achieving and implementing necessary management *procedures* and *guidelines*. In addition, they may serve as the initial setting for the consideration of revised or new *standards* and *strategies* that are then reviewed/endorsed by one of the subsequent management groups.

II. Mandate and Composition

The Ministries Leadership Council (MLC) is a binational gathering of ministry leaders of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) convened by the executive director of the CRCNA (ED) to advance the vision, mission, values, and objectives of the Christian Reformed Church (including its Ministry Plan) as approved by the Council of Delegates (COD) that governs the agencies, educational institutions, and various ministries of the Christian Reformed Church by establishing and maintaining standards and strategies in the context of COD policies that facilitate such advancement, integration, and collaboration.

Responsibilities

A. The MLC, on behalf of the COD, reviews and coordinates the implementation of the Ministry Plan and may recommend changes to it. It ensures that both its decisions and those of individual CRCNA ministries are in alignment with the plan.
B. The MLC reviews and makes recommendations to the COD concerning issues of strategic importance to denominational ministries.
C. The MLC reviews and approves as necessary the administrative and strategic decisions of the agencies, educational institutions, and specialized ministries as these pertain to the Ministry Plan and/or have an impact on other ministries.
D. The MLC reviews for endorsement to the COD policy recommendations advanced by CRCNA agencies, educational institutions, and specialized ministries for its consideration.
E. The MLC prepares and proposes a unified budget for consideration by the COD, including, but not limited to, a recommendation for the allocation of financial resources.

F. The MLC will have the right of comment on policy, compensation, and benefit matters that are advanced to the COD for approval by the Support Services Committee of the COD.

Composition
The membership of the MLC consists of the following positions:

A. the executive director, who shall be its convener and chair
B. the director of ministries and administration, who shall be one of its two vice chairs
C. the Canadian ministries director, who shall be one of its two vice chairs
D. the director of finance and operations
E. the director of synodical services
F. the director of human resources
G. the director of Back to God Ministries International
H. the president of Calvin College (or their designee)
I. the president of Calvin Theological Seminary (or their designee)
J. the director of the new mission agency
K. the co-directors of World Renew
L. a U.S. and a Canadian leader from the Offices of Race Relations and Social Justice
M. a leader representing ministry in Canada
N. the classis renewal coordinator
O. the director of communications and marketing (non-voting)

Relationship of the MLC to the executive director of the CRCNA and the COD
The MLC is accountable to the COD of the CRCNA through the office of the executive director (ED) of the CRCNA. The ED (or his/her designee) provides administrative oversight for all the ministries of the CRC on behalf of the COD. When the ED disagrees with a decision of the MLC, the ED will inform both the MLC and the COD about the disagreement, communicating to the COD not later than the time that the MLC decision is reported to the COD.

A decision of the MLC may be appealed to the COD when a member of the MLC is persuaded that a principle is compromised by a MLC decision. The response of the COD to an appeal shall be final and binding on all concerned.

Adopted by the BOT September 2009; Revised May 2010;
Revised by the BOT February 2012
Updated (titles only) August 2014

III. The Ministries Leadership Council Protocols

A. Meetings and Agenda. The Ministries Leadership Council (MLC) shall normally meet monthly at a regularly scheduled time. The meeting schedule shall be posted in the MLC minutes for the calendar year but in any event shall be indicated not less than three months in advance.

B. Officers. The chair and convener of the MLC shall be the executive director of the CRCNA (or his/her designee); the director of ministries and administration and the Canadian ministries director serve as vice chairs.

C. Attendance. The MLC members shall be present at each meeting of the MLC unless excused for valid reasons by one of the officers.

D. All agenda materials shall be submitted to the executive director's office no later than one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting date.

E. The meeting agenda shall be distributed to the members of the MLC not less than three (3) working days prior to the scheduled meeting date. Emergency meetings of the MLC may be convened at the discretion of the officers with less than three (3) days notice if the situation so warrants.

F. It is preferable that all agenda materials be accompanied with written motions and financial impact information, if applicable. Agenda materials submitted late or without adequate information will be deferred to a later meeting of the MLC unless the members, by majority vote, permit an exception.

G. Official Records

1. Every decision of the MLC shall be entered into an official record by way of minutes. The minutes of the MLC meeting shall be approved at the next scheduled meeting of the MLC. The official records of the MLC will be kept by the office of the executive director. The office of the executive director will also prepare and distribute the agenda for the MLC meetings.
2. All minutes of the MLC are public unless specifically stated otherwise. Minutes will normally be distributed to members of the MLC, ministry directors, the COD, and members of the administration who do not serve on the MLC.
3. The MLC will receive a copy of all official staff meetings and team meetings where decisions are made that have an impact on the achievement of the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church, on other denominational ministries (e.g., service costs, programs), and/or on the ability of an agency or department to implement their own mandate.

H. Subcommittees. The MLC shall use ad hoc and standing subcommittees (e.g., Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Group) in accomplishing its purposes. Mandates of standing subcommittees shall be found in the MLC Manual.

I. Rules of Order

1. The MLC will generally follow Robert's Rules of Order in the conduct of its meetings. The MLC reserves the right to suspend the normal Rules of Order if a situation demands such suspension.
2. Appeals against decisions of the MLC shall be submitted first to the ED for resolution and only then to the COD. Decisions by the COD are binding upon all parties involved in the appeal.
3. Members of the MLC, with the purpose of advancing the denominational vision and the Ministry Plan, serve with the interests of the whole church at heart. The MLC is intended to be an assembly of leaders acting not only as representatives of their agency but also as members of the denomination.

4. Policy and procedures intended for the COD are normally vetted (approved) at the MLC level. This provides opportunity for input, ownership, and compromise if need be. Standards and Strategies for the Agencies, Ministries, and Support Services of the CRCNA are approved by the MLC and maintained in a manual; standards and strategies that have an impact on COD policies and procedures are brought to the COD when necessary.

Appendix L: Summary of the Report on Cultivating Binationality in the CRCNA

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) values being a binational denomination for the opportunity it provides to combine pursuit of a common mission with intentional and meaningful engagement with different national, regional, and local contexts for ministry. Binationality is an asset to be cultivated as we together engage in God's mission in our various contexts.

The mandate of the Work Group on Binationality was to explore these pathways and prepare recommendations for implementation. The process can be described as moving from a conceptual description to a more specific implementation plan as outlined in recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

II. The mission of God is our primary focus

God is on a mission to make his kingdom a reality in the world. He calls his people to incarnate his message of love, hope, reconciliation, and justice in their context. What especially binds us together is the shared call to be engaged in the mission of God. As we talk about binationality, organization, culture, or leadership, our discussion always needs to be framed in the context of that mission.

III. Why cultivate binationality?

God is at work in his world, and he calls us to his kingdom purposes, values, and work.

God's mission challenges us to be responsive and obedient. It is a matter of faith and faithfulness. The pathways to binationality equip the CRCNA to respond to God's call. Binationality recognizes our cultural and contextual differences, seeking to express our common mission in these varied settings in a way that is faithful to the vision and relevant in the setting.

IV. Strategic ways to cultivate binationality

Five pathways for cultivating binationality were explored. These pathways were identified because of their strategic potential.

A. Pathway 1: Gatherings to discern vision and understand our context

The purpose of gatherings is to stimulate conversations around the mission God has entrusted to us, exploring and discerning how that mission can be implemented most fruitfully and effectively in our respective contexts and in our shared North American context. These conversations should inform

and shape our mission locally and nationally and guide the development of a denominational strategic plan.

B. Pathway 2: Mutual learning and collaboration between CRCNA staff, classes, and churches

The members of senior staff teams in each country develop a dynamic mutual learning relationship with congregations, classes, and ministries together with the agencies of the CRCNA. Linking with congregational- and classis-based initiatives ensures that the staff team interacts with learnings "on the ground" and helps to discern where God's Spirit is at work in that community, region, or country.

The senior staff team would build on the learnings as they develop and review the strategic plan and recommend changes to ensure that plans and programs effectively address the trends, issues, and challenges identified at the national, regional, classis, and congregational levels.

C. Pathway 3: Senior executive leadership team embodies binationality

To make binationality an authentic leadership value, a major component of the executive director position will have to be the intentional advancement of a consultative and flourishing binational organizational culture and communion. This must be the goal not only for the denomination as a whole; it must start with relationships and work within the senior executive leadership team. The very manner in which the team operates is a microcosm of the binationality we not only acknowledge but also treasure.

D. Pathway 4: Developing an organizational culture for effective planning

The CRCNA is an organization that lives in two countries. It is important that our binational character be reflected in the operations of that organization, not just as an afterthought, but as an integral component of what that organization is. We must be intentional in ensuring that our binational character permeates the organization and is embedded in its culture. The CRCNA should be an organization in which the binational context is a natural part of what it plans to do in pursuing its mission in North America. (See the Decision-Making Tree in the addendum that follows.)

E. Pathway 5: Governance for discernment and decision making in context

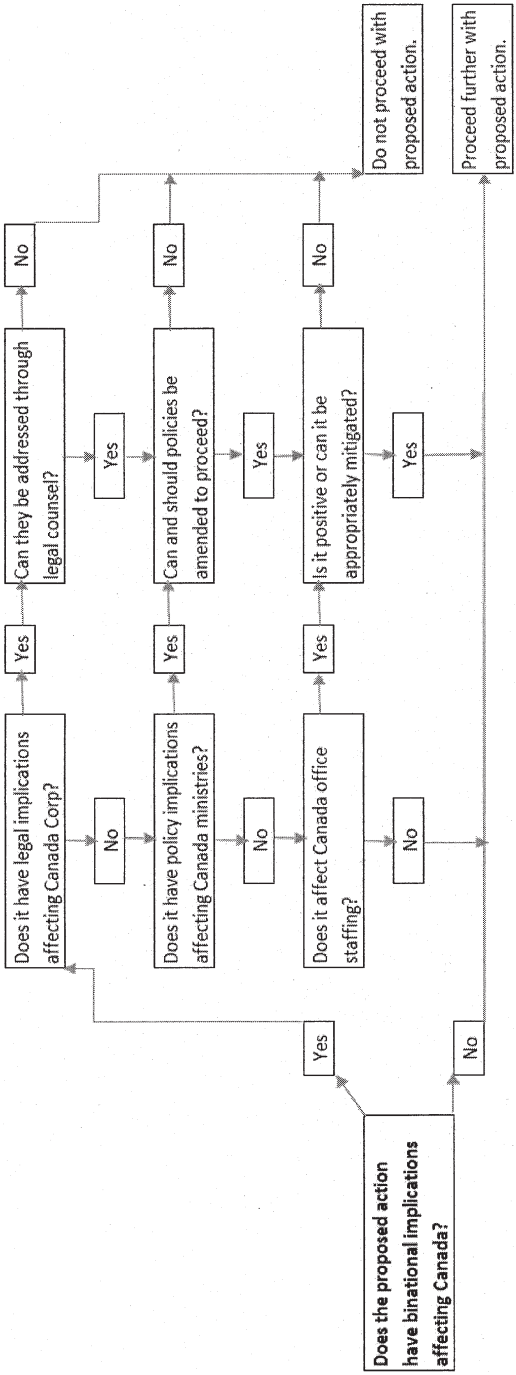
There are two important dimensions of governance that need to be kept in view as we explore this pathway: church ministry discernment and legal corporate governance and decision making. An important role for the Board of Trustees is to develop a culture, practice, and expectation of actively discerning God's mission, primarily in the U.S. and Canadian context, and also in the North American context. The church and its trustees must respect and implement to the highest standard U.S. and Canadian laws regarding corporate governance and decision making, respectively, for the Michigan Corporation and the Canada Corporation.

V. Closing comment

These five pathways are in synergy with each other and other processes under way in the denomination (e.g., structure and culture review, strategic planning and adaptive change).

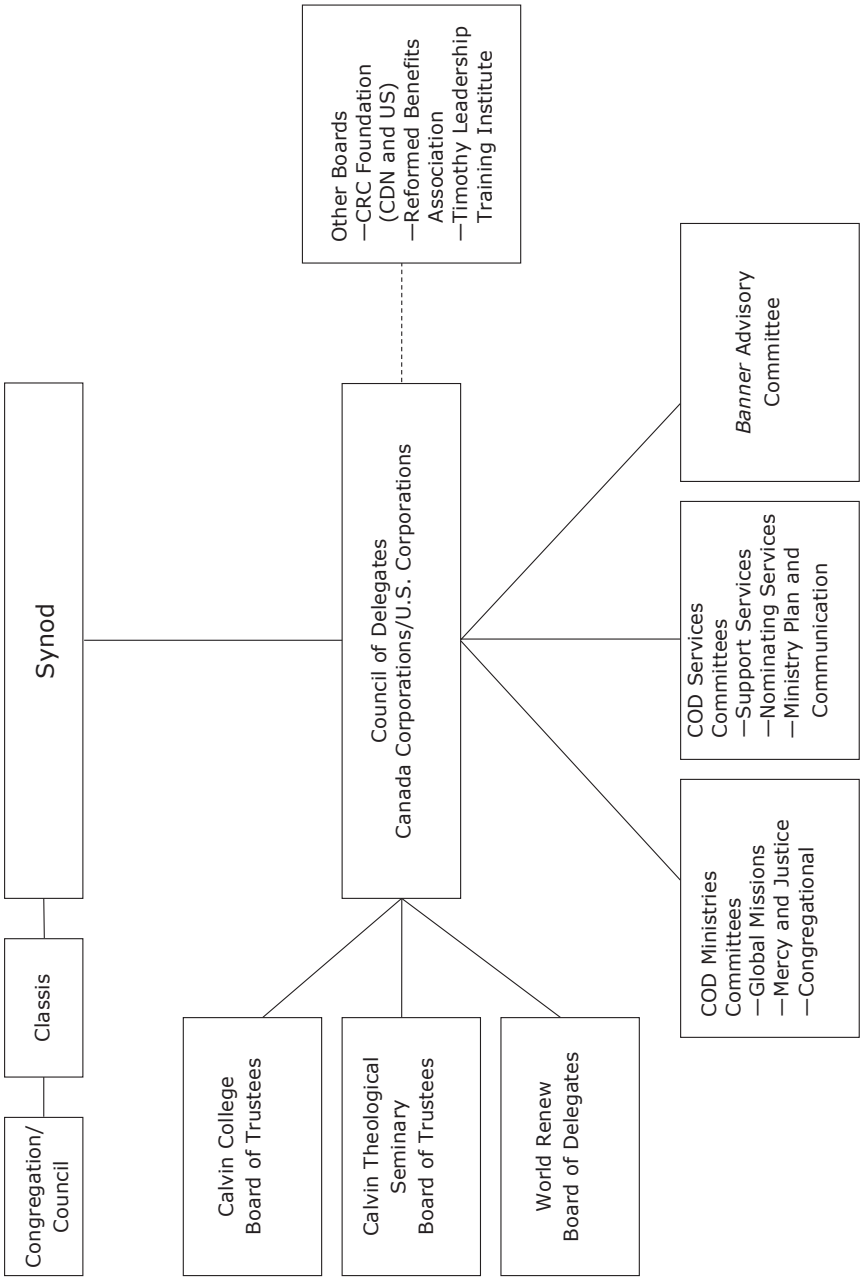
Adopted by the BOT; Received for information, Synod 2014

Addendum: A Decision-Making Tree for Developing an Organizational Culture for Effective Planning



Appendix M: Comprehensive Governance Chart

Governance Structure Chart | 2017



Appendix N: Nominating Services Committee Process

The Nominating Services Committee serves the Council of Delegates by working with the classes (and congregations) of the denomination to ensure that the COD has a complete set of delegates meeting the regional distribution requirements and reflecting the diversity of the CRCNA. (See 2.232.)

Process

A. Gathering Names and Maintaining a Database: Each COD member would be responsible for

1. Bringing a list of potential nominees from his/her classis twice a year (Feb. and May meetings), including brief basic information via a staff developed form. These names should reflect persons with suitable leadership skills to be considered as potential nominees. The COD member will work closely with the stated clerk and/or classis nominating committee to solicit nominees.

   Note: The COD member and the stated clerk will *not* seek the availability or willingness of the potential nominee to include his/her name on the list.

2. Achieving over a five-year period the goal of creating and maintaining a list of not less than ten to twelve names from each classis.

3. Reviewing the list of potential nominees for his/her classis each September, ensuring each name listed is still a member of the classis and suitable for potential leadership.

   Grounds:
   a. This process includes collaboration with the classes, keeping ties with the local level.
   b. In this way a database of potential nominees is managed by administrative staff on behalf of all of the classes.

B. Soliciting Nominees from a Database: When the Council of Delegates is in need of a nominee from a specific classis or region, the nominating committee is encouraged to make use of the potential nominee database; in addition, with the assistance of staff, additional names are gleaned from the diversity leadership database maintained by the Human Resources Office. These names are then shared with the stated clerk of the given classis. The option for the classis is to rely on the list, add to the list, or ignore the list.

Note: It would be premature to seek the interest or permission of any of these individuals to stand for nomination before being presented to classis. After identifying the slate of nominees by the classis, the willingness of the potential nominees is sought by the stated clerk of the classis, who then communicates the recommended slate of nominees back to the board or committee that initiated the request.

When nomination for an at-large position is sought, the nominating committee is encouraged to make use of the potential nominee database as well as the diversity leadership database maintained by the Human Resources office. If potential nominees are chosen from the list (based on diversity, region, expertise, and so forth), the COD nominating committee is responsible for asking the potential nominee if he/she is willing and able to be considered for nomination.

Appendix B
Proposed Changes to Rules for Synodical Procedure and Church Order

The following changes are being proposed for adoption by Synod 2017 to bring the Rules for Synodical Procedure and the Church Order and Its Supplements into line with the proposed decisions of synod regarding the transition from a Board of Trustees to a new governance model in the Council of Delegates.

I. Rules for Synodical Procedure

Recommendation: That synod adopt the following changes to the Rules for Synodical Procedure to reflect the transition from the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to the new Council of Delegates of the CRCNA (strikethrough indicates text to be deleted; underline indicates text to be added):

Section III, A, 3

Edit and have printed such official publications the synod or the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates shall authorize.

Section III, B, 1, j

The ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates shall appoint the ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives each year at its February meeting. Nominations for these adviser positions shall be gathered by the executive director from suggestions offered by the churches. Nominations for ethnic advisers shall also be suggested by the director of Race Relations.

Section III, B, 2, g

~~*Board of Trustees of the CRCNA*~~ *Council of Delegates of the CRCNA (COD) representation* shall consist of the chair of the ~~BOT~~ COD, at least one other member of the ~~BOT~~ COD Executive Committee (ensuring representation from both Canada and the United States), the executive director of the CRCNA, and such other members of the denominational executive staff as are needed to serve synod and its advisory committees. They shall have the privilege of meeting with the advisory committees that address ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates agenda matters as well as the privilege of the floor when ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates matters are addressed in plenary session.

(*Acts of Synod 2014,* pp. 537-39, 576; *2015,* p. 673; *2017,* p. xxx)

Section V, B, 9

Study committee reports shall be filed with the executive director on or before September 15, and the executive director shall distribute them to the churches no later than November 1. The *Agenda* shall be published not later than early April. It shall include reports of standing, study, and special committees; overtures of classes, councils, or individuals; printed appeals; notices of nonprinted appeals; a list of communications; the name of the delegates; and pertinent announcements, with the understanding, however, that the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates, upon recommendation of the executive director, may, for

good cause, determine not to print an item or to print an abbreviated version. If an abbreviated version is printed, the entire item shall be forwarded to the appropriate advisory committee of synod. Items not printed shall be listed in the *Agenda*. All such material shall be in the hands of the executive director not later than the following deadlines: September 15 for study committee reports; February 15 for the reports of standing committees and authorized representatives; ten days after conclusion of board meetings for board reports, but not later than March 1; and March 15 for overtures and appeals.

Section V, B, 10

The ~~Board of Trustees of the CRCNA~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA, ~~the~~ including reports by Back to God Ministries International and the new mission agency; ~~Board,~~ the Board of Trustees of Calvin College~~,~~; the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary~~,~~; ~~the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions, the Board of Christian Reformed World Missions,~~; the Board of World Renew~~,~~; the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee~~,~~; the Historical Committee; and the Candidacy Committee are permitted to file a supplementary report after March 15. These boards and standing committees are expected to incorporate as much of their materials as possible in the printed *Agenda*, and matters for the supplementary reports must be kept to a minimum.

Section V, B, 11

Nonprinted appeals, communications, or other materials legally before synod judged by the ED, in consultation with the Program Committee or ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates, to be confidential in nature, will be distributed only to the advisory committee to which they are assigned. Any disclosure of names in cases where such disclosure is judged to be potentially damaging to their reputation will be removed from the document, and the matter will be dealt with by the advisory committee in executive session.

(*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 549; *2017*, p. xxx)

Section VI, A, 1, b

In case of a vacancy on this committee, the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates shall appoint another member.

Section VI, D, 1, b, par. 2

By way of exception to these rules, synod may mandate a task force to report through the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates to synod, particularly if the matter in question involves the ministries of the CRCNA and if reporting through the ~~BOT~~ COD will help the work of the task force by providing frequent input/feedback. The ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates may offer comment (such as agreement with a report) or may serve synod with advice by way of its report to synod with regard to the recommendations of a synodical study committee or task force if any matters reported by such committee or task force relate to programmatic ministry matters falling under the mandate of the ~~BOT~~ COD.

(*Acts of Synod 1979*, p. 15; *1980*, p. 21; *1997*, p. 634; *2014*, p. 540; *2016*, pp. 827-28; *2017*, p. xxx)

Section VI, D, 6, d

~~Synod requests all classes, when nominating members of denominational boards or committees, to designate the term of the alternate to coincide with the term of the delegate. When an alternate replaces a delegate, or when a new delegate is nominated by a classis, the term of office shall begin the year a delegate assumes the office and shall terminate on July 1 three years later.~~

~~(*Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 19; amended *Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 536)~~

Replace with

In the case of an unexpected vacancy on the Council of Delegates, the COD may appoint an interim delegate—in consultation with the classis for the classical delegates—until appointment of a new classical or at-large delegate can be made by the next synod. When a new denominational board delegate is nominated and subsequently elected by synod to replace a delegate who is unable to complete their term (e.g., due to illness, moving from the region), the new delegate shall ordinarily fill out the remaining term(s) of the previous delegate.

(*Acts of Synod 2017*, p. xxx)

Section VI, F, 2, (only text shown is affected)

Synod shall elect members from nominations presented by the ~~Board of Trustees of the CRC~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. The Judicial Code Committee may recommend nominees to the ~~Board of Trustees of the CRC~~ Council of Delegates. The terms of members shall commence July 1 following their election by synod. In the event of a vacancy on the committee because of resignation or death, the ~~Board of Trustees of the CRC~~ Council of Delegates shall appoint a person to fill the balance of that term.

Section VI, F, 3, d

Claims of appeal filed with synod following an appeal hearing before classis shall also be referred to the Judicial Code Committee by the executive director of the CRC. The Judicial Code Committee shall review the claim of appeal and make a recommendation to the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates whether the application has sufficient merit to warrant further review. No further appeal proceedings shall be conducted unless the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates approves. If approved, the Judicial Code Committee shall conduct an appeal hearing according to the procedures of the Judicial Code.

Sections VIII, A, 1 and 2

1. *Executive Session:* Synod may enter an executive session in unusual or delicate situations. In such sessions, only the delegates, the staff consultants, the seminary advisers, the president and one other member of the executive committee of the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates, and such others as determined by synod upon the recommendation of the executive director, shall be present. If delegates from fully recognized churches in ecclesiastical fellowship are at synod, they also may remain in this session.

2. *Strict Executive Session:* Synod may enter a strict executive session in very unusual situations when such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honor or for the welfare of the church. In such sessions, only the delegates, any staff consultant that may be needed upon the recommendation of the executive director, the seminary advisers, and the president and one other member of the executive committee of the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates shall be present. If any of the above mentioned persons are personally involved in the matter under discussion, they will absent themselves voluntarily or by synodical ruling.

(*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 627; amended *2017*, p. xxx)

II. Church Order and Its Supplements

Recommendation: That synod adopt the following changes to the Church Order and Its Supplements to reflect the transition from the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to the new Council of Delegates of the CRCNA (strikethrough indicates text to be deleted; underline indicates text to be added). The revisions adopted will be effective July 1, 2017.

Ground: These changes will be necessitated by the proposed decision of synod to transition from the BOT to the COD, effective July 1, 2017.

Supplement, Article 30-a, section B, 2 and 3 (p. 48)

2. Normally for an appeal to be considered by a synod in any year the appeal must be in the hands of the executive director by March 15 of that year. If an appeal is filed after March 15, it shall not be heard by the synod of the same year; however, the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church, upon the recommendation of the executive director, may decide to submit the appeal to the synod of the same year.

3. Normally appeals will not be printed in the agenda for synod. However, if the B~~oard of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church, upon recommendation of the executive director, decides that an appeal raises an issue the resolution of which by synod will likely have significant application outside of and beyond the classis from which the appeal came, the appeal and any response to it or, at the discretion of the executive director, an abbreviated version of the appeal and response will be printed in the agenda. If an appeal is filed before March 15 but the deadline for response falls after March 15, the executive director, after conferring with the respondent, may decide to print the appeal and distribute any responses to delegates at the beginning of synod or to hold the appeal over to the next synod.

Supplement, Article 30-c, Section 8, b (p. 61; only text shown is affected)

Synod shall elect members from nominations presented by the ~~Board of Trustees of the CRC~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. The Judicial Code Committee may recommend nominees to the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. The terms of members shall

commence July 1 following their election by synod. In the event of a vacancy on the committee because of resignation or death, the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA shall appoint a person to fill the balance of that term.

Supplement, Article 30-c, Section 9, d (p. 62; only text shown is affected)
The Judicial Code Committee shall review the claim of appeal and make a recommendation to the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates whether the application has sufficient merit to warrant further review. No further appeal proceedings shall be conducted unless the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates approves.

Article 33-b (p. 71)
Each classis shall appoint a classical interim committee, and synod shall appoint the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA, to act for them in matters which cannot await action by the assemblies themselves. Such committees shall be given well-defined mandates and shall submit all their actions to the next meeting of the assembly for approval.

Supplement, Article 45, section a, 1 (p. 85)
The synod shall annually review the unified denominational budget as proposed by the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA and approve a ministry-share assignment to provide the revenue for that budget.

Article 46-b (p. 86)
The convening church, with the approval of the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA, may call a special session of synod, but only in very extraordinary circumstances and with the observance of synodical regulations.

Article 77 (p. 96)
Synod shall regulate the work of denominational ministries by way of the ~~Constitution~~ Governance Handbook and decisions of the ~~Board of Trustees~~ Council of Delegates of the CRCNA.

Appendix C
Transition Plan for Council of Delegates Executive Committee

By way of exception, in anticipation of this inaugural year of the Council of Delegates, the following process was adopted by the Board of Trustees in February 2017 in order to facilitate the appointment of the Council of Delegates Executive Committee for the 2017-2018 year:

a. That the BOT, as one of the first orders of business at its May 2017 meeting, elect four current members who will transition as members to the new COD to serve on the COD Executive Committee—two U.S. members and two Canadian members.

b. That the board of the new mission agency, as one of the first orders of business at its spring meeting, elect two current members who will

transition as members to the new COD to serve on the COD Executive Committee—one U.S. member and one Canadian member.

c. That the board of Back to God Ministries International, as one of the first orders of business at its spring meeting, elect two current members who will transition as members to the new COD to serve on the COD Executive Committee—one U.S. member and one Canadian member.

   Note: These eight executive committee members would serve for the interim period beginning July 1, 2017. At the October 2017 meeting of the COD, the members would elect the officers and other executive committee members to serve until July 1, 2018—the normal end of term of executive committee members. As a reminder, the new mission agency, Back to God Ministries International, and Board of Trustees members who will transition to the new COD for the most part will retain their current terms (e.g., concluding as early as 2018 or 2019).

d. Following election of the eight officers and prior to adjournment of the BOT spring meeting, the three boards elect from the slate of eight executive committee appointees the person to serve as COD president beginning July 1, 2017. This election would be done simultaneously using an electronic voting process (similar to that used by synod). The person elected would be responsible to convene the executive committee meeting of the COD in early July, at which time the eight executive committee members would elect the remaining three officers (vice chair, secretary, and treasurer) from the membership of the executive committee.

e. The Council of Delegates at its first regular meeting in October 2017 would hold an election for officers and other executive committee members to serve for the remainder of the year concluding on July 1, 2018. *Note:* The COD may choose to reelect the executive committee members elected in the spring but are not obligated to do so.

Ground: There is significant benefit in ensuring that an interim executive committee is in place for any matters that might arise between July 1, 2017, and the first meeting of the COD in October 2017. In addition, the interim executive committee would prepare the agenda for the inaugural meeting (October 2017) of the COD. This provision would ensure the leadership and continuity that would be necessary during this inaugural year of the COD.

Appendix D
Annual Day of Justice Proposal

Ad-hoc Committee Members: Carol Bremer-Bennett, Kate Kooyman, Shannon Perez, Andy DeBoer, Susan Van Lopik, Viviana Cornejo, Dena Nicolai, Gail DeYoung, Shannon Jammal-Hollemans, Mark Stephenson, Elna Siebring

Proposal
The Board of Trustees requests that Synod 2017 designate the third Sunday of August as an annual Day of Justice for CRCNA congregations, beginning in August 2018. If approved, the annual Day of Justice would be promoted by the Office of Race Relations and Social Justice and by World Renew, co-ordinating responsibility with each other and with other interested CRCNA ministries and institutions.

Background
One of the outcomes of Synod 2016's address of the Doctrine of Discovery report was to

> direct the executive director, working in conjunction with denominational agencies to consider a denomination-wide annual Day of Justice for the purpose of coming together as a body of Christ to recognize the plight of those who are oppressed, marginalized, and suffer in a culture of discrimination. On this day, people of the Christian Reformed Church would come together to confess, lament, and listen to the stories of those who have experienced pain at the hands of others, read the Belhar Confession, and then open the doors to promoting just solutions to the problems created by the evils of racism. Through this Day of Justice, as the body of Christ, we would resolve to transform our world, seek to change hearts through Christ's redeeming love, and promote the welfare of our brothers and sisters who cry out for justice.
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 923)

The executive director of the CRCNA asked Carol Bremer-Bennett (World Renew), Kate Kooyman (Office of Social Justice), and Shannon Perez (justice and reconciliation mobilizer) to convene a multiagency, binational group to establish a Day of Justice for the CRCNA. The full ad-hoc committee includes the following members: Viviana Cornejo from Race Relations, Gail DeYoung, a teacher/counselor and worship director from Rehoboth, New Mexico; Andy DeBoer from World Renew; Shannon Jammal-Hollemans from Race Relations and Faith Formation; Dena Nicolai, a refugee chaplain and community mobilizer; Elna Siebring, a community organizer and Blanket Exercise facilitator; Mark Stephenson from Disability Concerns; and Susan Van Lopik from World Renew. The group has been blessed by several advisers including Roy Berkenbosch of King's University, C.J. Grier of Western Theological Seminary, and Michelle Loyd-Paige of Calvin College.

The proposal to establish an annual Day of Justice on the third Sunday of August, beginning in 2018, has received the endorsement of the Ministries Leadership Council, which is made up of the leadership representing of all the CRCNA ministries.

Rationale
Step 4.1.1 of the CRCNA's Ministry Plan states: "Congregations identify and set goals to address local/national/global justice issues—discerning unique steps they can take to make an impact from their own communities." Although Christians are called to live a lifetime of righteousness, we recognize that a denomination-wide annual Day of Justice will enable churches to experience a unity of response to God's call for biblical justice. This day will serve as a designated time for congregations to consider the meaning of biblical justice, to lament injustices in the world, and to commit themselves to

the transforming work of standing alongside people whom society oppresses and pushes to the margins. Scripture promises us a future of renewal and restoration, a righting of all broken relationships between people and God. Jesus calls us to stand up, be kingdom workers, and begin that renewal now in our own context and beyond our churches' walls.

The CRCNA has a number of designated Sundays throughout the calendar year. The Day of Justice Ad-Hoc Committee carefully considered the existing Sundays as well as the Church's liturgical calendar. The third Sunday in August does not conflict with other designated Sundays nor with the liturgical calendar. This greatly opens up the time and space for churches to observe an Annual Day of Justice with their congregations. While the Day of Justice Ad-Hoc Committee intends to provide resources through the denomination, connections to the Institute for Worship, and other avenues for churches who desire them, the Day of Justice is meant to be used by each church in the way that best fits its context and leads each congregation to focus on the transforming work of standing alongside people suffering from injustice. There is no designated offering connected with this Sunday, although we would encourage deacons to consider collecting an offering for a local ministry engaged in justice work.

Appendix E: CRC Ministry, History, and Funding Overview Grid

Agency/ Ministry	Date ministry began	Origin of initial mandate	2015-16 ministry share $ received	Ministry share % of total revenue	% of total ministry shares
Aboriginal Ministries	1973	Council of Chr. Reformed Churches in Canada (1973)	$459,000	100.0%	2.3%
Back to God Ministries Int'l	1939	Synod 1938	$3,050,000	32.6%	15.3%
The Banner	1866	Synod 1914	$388,000	33.8%	1.9%
Calvin College	1900	Synod 1900	$2,367,000	1.9%	11.9%
Calvin Theological Seminary	1876	Synod 1876	$2,449,000	32.0%	12.3%
Candidacy Comm.	2004	Synod 2004	$197,000	100.0%	1.0%
Centre for Public Dialogue	1968	Council of Chr. Reformed Churches in Canada (1968)	$192,000	100.0%	1.0%

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry	1942	Synod 1942	$191,000	79.9%	1.0%
Disability Concerns	1986	Synod 1986	$153,000	63.5%	0.8%
Faith Alive Christian Resources	1968	Synod 1968; ended 2013; Imprint, marketing, and sales continue	$64,000	4.0%	0.3%
Faith Formation Ministries	2013	BOT 2013	$421,000	92.3%	2.1%
Home Missions	1879	Synod 1879	$3,251,000	48.9%	16.3%
Pastor Church Resources	1982	Synod 1982	$772,000	92.1%	3.9%
Race Relations	1971	Synod 1971	$486,000	86.6%	2.4%
Safe Church Ministry	1994	Synod 1994	$176,000	83.0%	0.9%
ServiceLink	1995	Started by Canadian CRC agencies/ ministries (1995)	$73,000	42.1%	0.4%
Social Justice and Hunger Action	1993	Synod 1978; Synod 1993	$527,000	84.5%	2.6%
Timothy Leadership Training Institute	1997	Synod 2016	$0	0.0%	0.0%
World Missions	1888	Synod 1888	$4,194,000	28.8%	21.0%
World Renew	1962	Synod 1962	$0	0.0%	0.0%
World Literature	1979	Synod 1979; ended 2016	$250,000	49.3%	1.3%
Worship Ministries	2014	CRC Board of Trustees 2014	$291,000	83.9%	1.5%

Appendix F: CRC Ministry, History, and Funding Summary Grid

Task: "Produce a detailed chart of all existing ministries that includes the following information: ministry description, date the ministry began, account of synod that established the ministry, and current financial ministry-share allocation" (*Acts of Synod 2016,* p. 858). 10.17.2016

	Aboriginal Ministries	Back to God Ministries International	*The Banner*
Ministry Description	Committee: The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) engages CRC congregations and members in conversations, activities, and advocacy surrounding Aboriginal justice. Its aim is to help churches gain and strengthen knowledge and understanding of reconciliation and restored relationships while providing new perspectives on walking our journey on the Earth together with people from all tribes, nations, and languages. The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee also provides practical linkages between local classes and churches to the Aboriginal ministries across Canada. Centres: Each of the ministry centres (Indigenous Family Centre, Indian Metis Christian Fellowship, Edmonton Native Healing Centre) developed within their own contexts, with their own mission statements, vision, and values. However, they share a common purpose in promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, promoting healthy and strong families, and offering many opportunities for people to grow in their relationship with the triune Creator.	By his Spirit, Christ commissions his church to be ambassadors of the Word, sent on a mission that furthers the kingdom reign of the Lord Jesus. Claiming media technology for the kingdom of Christ, the church proclaims the gospel to all nations (Matt. 28:19). The media ministry Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) includes ReFrame Media, which provides audio, print, and digital faith formation resources for North American audiences and English-speaking people anywhere in the world. Nine additional Indigenous ministry teams produce biblical resources that disciple people in Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. BTGMI also focuses on global missions and servant leadership via ten language ministries, uniquely positioning them to provide gospel outreach in nearly every country of the world—even in places where Christian missionaries are not allowed. This involves 190 staff members working around the world, with a ministry presence in more than 130 countries through production and discipleship centers, broadcast locations, and resource distribution. In addition, BTGMI reaches people in more than 180 countries through the Internet and mobile app resources. Finally, BTGMI works with more than 600 volunteers worldwide who offer discipleship, mentoring, and prayer, and they help seekers connect with local churches. Networks of more than 1,000 prayer partners in North America and throughout the world pray regularly for those who respond to BTGMI's media outreach.	*The Banner* is the official magazine of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Its mandate is to inform, inspire, educate, and challenge members of the CRCNA by "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

	Aboriginal Ministries	Back to God Ministries International	*The Banner*
History	On November 5, 1968, Classis Quinte sent an overture to the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) to "look into the possibility of undertaking mission work among the Indians of Canada." Quinte's concern was first broached with the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions, but the board referred Indian Missions in Canada to the CCRCC. The 1968 CCRCC appointed a study committee resulting in the Council's 1973 adoption of recommendations including the establishment of the National Committee for Ministry with Indian and Metis People in Canada and a commitment to establish a ministry in Winnipeg. The ministry in Winnipeg was established in 1974. Rev. Harry Kuperus began working as the first director of Indian Metis Christian Fellowship in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1978. The National Committee recruited John Stellingwerff to work as the first director of the Edmonton Native Healing Centre in 1991. In 2000, upon termination of the CCRCC, the work of the National Committee was transferred to the Canadian Ministries Board of the CRCNA. Reviews were completed in 2002 and 2005. From these reviews the Board of Trustees adopted the Canadian Aboriginal Mandate for the Christian Reformed Church in May 2006.	The history of the Back to God Hour began back in the 1920s, when some farsighted Christian Reformed leaders sensed that radio could become a powerful force spreading the gospel. At Synod 1928, a committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities for radio missions. This committee was convinced that a Christian Reformed radio venture would be successful, and much work was done to prepare a report for Synod 1930. Then came the stock-market crash of October 1929. The report was presented to Synod 1930, but because of financial difficulties, it had to be shelved. Not until 1938 was the idea of a radio ministry of the Christian Reformed Church revived. That year synod received a request from Classis Pella to develop a denominational broadcast modeled after the Lutheran Hour. Synod appointed its first permanent Radio Committee. This committee secured a station, selected speakers, and laid out a program format. On December 17, 1939, the first broadcast aired over WJJD, a 20,000-watt station in Chicago. In the 1940s, in response to a desire to have one permanent radio speaker, Dr. Peter Eldersveld assumed the role of Radio Minister. In 1949 the *Family Altar* was produced as an experiment in follow-up work; in just three years the subscription rate grew to 75,000. In the 1950s experimentation began with a 15-minute television program; by 1953 the first series of 13 films for television had been aired on 68 stations. Authorization to begin foreign English broadcasting was provided in 1954 and focused on areas where CRC missions were active (Ceylon, Japan, Nigeria). Thereafter, ministries in other languages were initiated, beginning first	The life of The Banner began in 1866, when Rev. John Y. De Baun began publishing a 16-page monthly for the True Protestant Reformed Dutch Church in New Jersey. That denomination had broken from the Reformed Church in America in 1822. In 1890 the denomination became Classis Hackensack (a regional group of churches) in the CRCNA. The magazine was originally called *The Banner of Truth*, based on Psalm 60:4, which states: "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (KJV). In 1887, Rev. De Baun became the first pastor of LaGrave Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., and brought the magazine along with him. In 1903 a group of businessmen bought it from Rev. De Baun, planning to use it for conveying Reformed teachings in the English language to people in the Christian Reformed Church. The magazine moved from a monthly to a bi-weekly format in 1904, and in 1904 the name was shortened to *The Banner*. The Christian Reformed Church took over publication of *The Banner* in 1914, purchasing it for $5,000. *The Banner* became the English-language partner of the more prestigious Dutch-language periodical *De Wachter*. In 1945 *The Banner* became a 32-page weekly. In 1997 it became a biweekly, and in 2002 it came full circle and again became a monthly. In 2005 the denomination chose to make the magazine a forum for the whole community rather than for just the 20,000 or so who subscribed. It opted to end subscriptions and instead, using a portion of ministry share, send a copy to every household in the Christian Reformed Church—more than 90,000! Part of

		with Arabic (1958), Spanish (1961-65), and then French and Indonesian (1969). In 1977 the Back to God Hour began producing television programs in earnest, and expansion into radio broadcasting in China and Russia occurred around the same time. In 1981, *Faith 20* began regular broadcasts, and telephone counseling centers were set up in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Toronto. Later, such centers were also set up in Leighton, Iowa, and Campinas, Brazil. At the turn of the century, a children's radio program began, and the use of the Internet began opening new doors. In addition, new opportunities arrived for ministry among French-speaking African women, increased international broadcasting avenues, and even programming on state television through the Sudan Council of Christian Churches. In 2008 a Korean version of the *Today* devotional guide began, and in that same year the agency name was officially changed to Back to God Ministries International. In 2010 the flagship *Back to God Hour* program was replaced by *Groundwork,* a collaborative effort with Words of Hope ministries. By 2012 the development of our Internet and website ministry had expanded into a total of 33 separate websites.	that move entailed incorporating a separate magazine from denominational agencies, *CRC Source,* within the center pages of The Banner. Those pages today are known as "Together Doing More," and they tell stories of the ministry CRC members participate in together around the world.
Synod	The *Acts of Synod* show that synod has routinely commended the work of the three Centres.		Following a rejected proposal to purchase *The Banner* two years earlier, in 1914 Classis Illinois asked and synod approved the purchase. It was placed under the supervision of the *De Wachter* committee, which expanded to seven members to fulfill the additional responsibilities. Subsequent synods have dealt with the appointments of editors, editorial policy, other policies (e.g., advertisement), publication schedule, and the like.

	Aboriginal Ministries	Back to God Ministries International	*The Banner*
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16; ministry shares as percentage of its overall revenue	$459,000 of ministry shares 100% of total revenue 2.3% of total ministry shares	$3,050,000 of ministry shares 32.6% of total revenue 15.3% of total ministry shares	$388,000 of ministry shares 33.8% of total revenue 1.9% of total ministry shares
	Calvin College	Calvin Theological Seminary	Candidacy
	Calvin's mission is to equip students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world. Calvin's *Expanded Statement of Mission* describes the college's goal and approach in this way: "From the start, Calvin has aspired to provide formal education marked by rigor and excellence, infused in whole and in every part by a vital Reformed Christian vision. [Also] from the start, Calvin College has combined liberal arts and pre-professional education. It has not layered these two nor run them along parallel tracks, but so thoroughly intertwined them that education in the broader, fundamental issues of human endeavor culminates in an enriched, responsible, Christian understanding of work and vocation." With approximately 4,000 students and over 100 undergraduate majors, minors, and programs as well a small set of graduate programs, students come from 48 U.S. states, five Canadian provinces, and over 55 other countries. Approximately one-third of the students are Christian Reformed.	Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) exists to serve the Christian Reformed Church in North America and wider constituencies by preparing individuals for biblically faithful and contextually effective ministry of the Word and by offering Reformed theological scholarship. As the theological school of the CRCNA, CTS commits itself to serve the denomination and the broader church by . . . (a) drawing students of the Word through a classical theological curriculum toward culturally effective ministry in the contemporary world; (b) offering theological scholarship and teaching that is both faithful and creative, promoting truth and opposing error; (c) integrating its mission and vision with those of other CRCNA agencies; (d) honoring the polity and synodical decisions of the CRCNA. Ministry takes on various forms, and CTS has developed new programs (e.g., Prison Ministry, Hispanic Ministry Certificate, M.A. and Ph.D. programs) and initiated new delivery systems (distance education) to continue to serve the church, including and especially the CRC. Calvin Seminary currently has nearly 300	The Candidacy Committee exists to encourage the development of pastoral leadership, to propose standards to synod, and to oversee the processes leading to candidacy.

		students who come from over 20 different nations. Approximately 30 percent of Calvin Seminary students come from churches outside the United States and Canada. The seminary's service to these students is part of the CRC's broader service toward proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth. Every year, the ministerial candidates for the Christian Reformed Church stand before synod. All of them have had either all or some of their education and formation at Calvin Theological Seminary.	
History	Founded in 1876 for the education of ministers, the Theological School expanded in 1894 to admit non-theological students in the Literary Department. By 1906 the Literary Department had expanded into an academy, several teacher training programs, and John Calvin Junior College, all distinct entities separate from theological training. The first president was appointed in 1919, and the fourth year of undergraduate training was added in 1920, with the teacher training incorporated into the curriculum. That same year Grand Rapids Christian High School began, and enrollment into the academy was closed. As a result, the school's name was expanded to the Theological School and Calvin College. In 1931 the two programs were separated into Calvin College, the name it is known by today, and Calvin Theological Seminary.	The initial cause for the development of "Our School" was to address the most challenging religious problem facing the newly formed CRC: a shortage of clergy. Up until that time, ministerial training followed an apprenticeship model. The incapacitation of one of the first mentors, Rev. Douwe J. Vander Werp, was one factor that led to the then General Assembly (forerunner to Synod) to meet in February 1876, four months ahead of schedule. At this meeting, Rev. Geert Boer was appointed as the theological school's first professor, a budget was passed to be shared among the then 23 CRC congregations, and the Kampen school model was accepted for CTS. Professor Geert Boer was installed on March 15, 1876, and that date marks the birthday of Calvin Seminary and what would eventually become Calvin College. Since that date, the CRC has overseen and approved the appointment of all full-time seminary professors and has monitored the budget and finances as well as the educational model and instruction of the seminary. Every year members of the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary serve as faculty advisers to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church.	Eight years of synodical study committee reports (1996-2004) resulted in the decision to form a new synodical committee, the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (SMCC), now called the Candidacy Committee.

	Calvin College	Calvin Theological Seminary	Candidacy
		The participation of advisers at synod is almost as old as synod itself. While there is no specific reference to the appointment of advisers prior to 1888, it is likely that the function precedes even that date. (Synod 1888 makes a reference to seminary professors with advisory vote, and this is mentioned as a regular practice of synod in the following years.)	
Synod	Synod 1900 passed this resolution: "The Literary Department be extended to an Academy with a curriculum of four years followed by a transition year for students who wish to study Theology, whereas the Academy be opened for study for other purposes." Since then, synodical engagement can be understood in terms of two categories: one specifically focusing on "ownership," the other focused more broadly and programmatically. In the book *Our School* (Eerdmans, 2001), Harry Boonstra notes that the question about the church's "ownership" of a college was most frequently before synod between 1908 and 1934. He offers this observation: "The synods always returned to two arguments. First, even though the main task of the church is not education, it is not *wrong* for the church to be involved in education. . . . The second response was the more practical one: the time is not right for a change. The favorite word was *voorloopig*—for the time being" (p. 53). Boonstra goes on to say that the issue resurfaced at synod in the early 1950s, as the establishment of regional colleges began. Yet synodical decisions of 1952, 1957, and 1968 reaffirmed the relationship of Calvin and the	In 1876 the General Assembly (now Synod) formed the school by means of appointing the theological school's first professor and a budget to be shared among the then 23 CRC congregations. Subsequently faculty, program, and financial matters routinely have been reviewed and approved by synod. As late as 1980 synodical quotas (ministry shares) met 90 percent of the seminary's operating budget; the balance was paid by modest but rapidly rising tuition. Until 1990, Calvin College and Seminary received a single quota. In 1991, synod approved the separation of governance structures for Calvin College and Seminary by going from one board to two separate boards. In keeping with its entire history and ownership of the seminary by the church, all Calvin Seminary board members are from the Christian Reformed Church. It was only in 1991 that the seminary board asked synod to add responsibility for advancement and fund-raising to then President James DeJong's job description. Synod approved the role of the president's assistant for advancement, thereby recognizing the necessity (beyond ministry share and tuition) for a third stream of revenue.	In 2004 synod approved the formation of the SMCC, and in 2006 synod approved the committee's mandate. Subsequently the committee has reported to synod each year. Synod 2016 instructed the Candidacy Committee to appoint an administrative team from such ministries as Pastor Church Resources, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Candidacy Committee to coordinate initiatives and to seek volunteer help for what would become the new Continuing Education Committee, which would be commissioned to attend to nurturing the practice and culture of continuing education for pastors and ministry staff within the CRC.

	CRC, and Synod 1988 turned down an overture to study the possible "privatization" of Calvin College. Apart from the question of "ownership," the CRC synod has a long and detailed history of engagement with Calvin College. Boonstra notes that "one indicator of synodical involvement is the 'Index of Synodical Decisions, 1857-1980' [in which] Calvin is among the longest category of items in this listing. The decisions range widely, from the number of hours of Dutch required for pre-seminary students, to faculty pensions, to a discussion about a Calvinistic university" (p. 59).		
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16	$2,367,000 of ministry shares 1.9% of total revenue 11.9% of total ministry shares	$2,449,000 of ministry shares 32.0% of total revenue 12.3% of total ministry shares	$197,000 of ministry shares 100% of total revenue 1.0% of total ministry shares
	Centre for Public Dialogue	Chaplaincy	Disability Concerns
Ministry description	The Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG), operating as the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue (CPD), is a justice and reconciliation ministry of the Christian Reformed churches in Canada in close cooperation with the Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America. The CCG is a group of eight CRC and RCA church members from across Canada who serve as a steering committee. CCG members are of diverse backgrounds—business people, pastors, chaplains, academics, front-line service providers, and people deeply invested in their home communities. The Centre for Public Dialogue helps the church to seek justice and speak hope in the name of Christ in Canadian	The Chaplaincy and Care Office of the CRCNA exists to enlist, endorse, encourage, and enfold men and women who choose to serve as chaplains in various institutions and agencies, from the military to the medical field, from corrections to the workplace.	The Office of Disability Concerns (DC) strives to promote and foster relationships, communities, and societies where everybody belongs and everybody serves. It does this by encouraging churches, agencies, institutions, and leadership within the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America to (1) think and act in keeping with the biblical call regarding people with disabilities; (2) break down barriers of communication, architecture, and attitude; and (3) establish ministries with, for, and by people with disabilities and their families. Disability Concerns does its work primarily by recruiting and equipping a network of over 700 CRC and RCA disability advocates across North

	Centre for Public Dialogue	Chaplaincy	Disability Concerns
	public affairs. Its integrated program includes popular communication, citizen education and empowerment, research, and advocacy. Most recently, the Centre for Public Dialogue has encouraged CRC member participation in national discussions on refugee support, Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and physician assisted death.		America, by equipping churches for ministry with people who have disabilities, and by consulting with churches who have questions about fully engaging people with disabilities in church life.
History	Deliberation about CCG staffing began at the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) in 1985 and led to the hiring of a part-time research and communications associate in 1987. Responsibilities included CCG coordination, research, and communication within and outside the church. By the late 1990s the CCG coordinator position became full-time and included additional advocacy and ecumenical (social justice) responsibilities. In 2007, in response to CRCNA-Canada Corporation requests for stronger CCG communication with congregations, a part-time communications associate was hired. This has evolved to a shared full-time justice communications position with OSJ, Race Relations, and Canadian Ministries. Given the promising success of our *relational advocacy* approach, and in careful deliberation with the CRCNA-Canada Corporation, CCG established a presence in Ottawa in summer 2010 and began operating as the Centre for Public Dialogue. First Baptist Church, a short walk from Parliament Hill, continues to provide excellent office space well below market value. Presence in Ottawa provides excellent access to policy	Unofficial chaplaincy began with the Pine Rest and Bethesda hospitals using chaplains as early as 1913. The first CRC military chaplain (Rev. Leonard Trap) volunteered during World War I in 1917. As the demand for chaplains increased during World War II, Synod 1942 appointed the first official chaplain endorsement committee. The first full-time director of chaplains (Rev. Harold Bode) was appointed in 1974. Since then the ministry has grown from a few dozen endorsed chaplains to nearly 150. A large number of other men and women serve as chaplains on college campuses or in part-time service to local hospice, police, or other agencies without endorsement. In early decades it was reported that approximately 10 percent of CRC seminary graduates were involved in chaplaincy at some time during their career. Today it would appear that nearly 15 percent of our seminary graduates and commissioned pastors are exploring chaplaincy as a career.	The ministry of Disability Concerns arose organically out of the churches. It began with a focus on people with severe intellectual disabilities. In 1977, Pine Rest Christian Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan, followed a national trend and decided to phase out institutional care for children. This action created a hardship for a number of Christian Reformed families. Synod appointed a committee to study the need, availability, and adequacy of Christian institutional care for covenant members of the CRC who were referred to at that time as "profoundly retarded." Synod 1979 reappointed the committee to study how churches could be effectively involved in meeting the needs of persons with intellectual disability and their families. In 1981, synod reappointed the committee for two years as a service committee, mandating it to address the broad array of needs of people with intellectual disabilities and authorizing it to hire a part-time administrator who worked with the committee to publish a newsletter, *Christian Companions* (now known as *Breaking Barriers*). Synod 1980, again in response to requests from CRC families, authorized "the Education Department to provide both curriculum materials

makers and shapers, good connections with partner organizations, and a helpful launching point for citizen education efforts.

and training services to help local congregations develop and maintain special church education programs for mentally impaired persons." Thus began Friendship Ministries, a ministry that is now independent from the CRC but remains a close partner with Disability Concerns.

Synod 1985 broadened our denomination's circle of concern from people with intellectual disabilities to people with any and all disabilities by adopting a Resolution on Disabilities. In 1986 synod changed the status of the service committee to a standing committee (the name of which was changed in 1987 to the Committee on Disability Concerns) and provided for the appointment of a fulltime administrator.

In 1996 a major conference, "At the King's Table," took place in Ontario, with over 1,000 people attending the first evening session. The conference was organized by Disability Concerns staff and volunteers as well as people from Diaconal Ministries Canada. This conference launched the building of a network of disability advocates across the denomination that now numbers over 600. Disability Concerns helps to recruit and equip these advocates to serve the people in their churches and classes. As a result, Disability Concerns has been able to remain at a staffing level of 1.5 to 2 fulltime equivalency since 1996. Current staffing includes one fulltime director, a one-third time administrative assistant in the U.S., a one-half time administrative assistant in Canada, and a one-fourth time church and volunteer associate on a limited term contract.

In 2008 the Reformed Church in America General Synod decided to establish a Disability Concerns ministry of its own. That year the CRC Board of Trustees and the RCA General Synod Council approved a working agreement for Disability Concerns ministry in the CRC and the RCA that remains in effect today.

	Centre for Public Dialogue	Chaplaincy	Disability Concerns
Synod	In 1966 a synodical study committee acknowledged that there were duties particular to the Christian Reformed churches in Canada. The first item they listed was "official contact with the Canadian government."[1] Synod 1966 deliberations ultimately led to the formation of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC). At the inaugural meeting of the CCRCC (Winnipeg, 1968), the council considered and adopted a request from Classis Alberta South to "appoint a standing committee for contact with the Canadian Federal Government."[2] This led to the establishment of the Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG). From 1968 to 1997 the CCRCC oversaw the work of the Committee for Contact with the Government through regular reporting and deliberation (as chronicled in the *Acts of Council CCRCC*). The CCRCC, in turn, regularly reported to the synod of the CRCNA on CCG and a wide range of other matters. In 1997, oversight of CCG transitioned to the Canadian Ministries Board, and in 1999-2000 to the CRCNA-Canada Corporation. Synod 2000 reaffirmed the sentiments of 1966 by adopting a governance proposal that recognized the "enduring significance" of a set of core values,[3] including the following: "As a binational church we need to be sensitive to the uniqueness of ministry in both countries. In the Canadian context the CRC needs to address [1] *Acts of Synod 1966*, Christian Reformed Church, p. 143. [2] "Overture no. 1," *Acts of Council 1968*, CCRCC, p. 28. [3] *Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 57-58; see *Acts of Synod 2000*, pp. 622-25.	Synod 1942 established the first chaplain endorsement committee. Synod 1947 asked for investigation of the field of institutional chaplaincy (prisons, hospitals, homes for the aged, industry). Since then, synod has returned a number of the times to qualifications (churches urged to seek endorsement in 1973, churches required to seek endorsement for ordained persons in chaplaincy in 1998), and synod officially separated the chaplaincy ministry from Home Missions in 2003.	After appointing a committee in 1978, Synod 1979 adopted recommendations affirming that "severely and profoundly retarded covenant members" are entitled to quality Christian care, declaring that churches "have the responsibility to support families" needing care for such family members, and urging "diaconal conferences and/or classes to address this need where it exists and provide financial support as needed." In 1981 synod urged "the churches to identify and eliminate those barriers which hinder the full participation of retarded persons in the life of the church," changed the status of the Committee on Christian Care for Retarded Persons to a Service Committee for Ministry to Retarded Persons, and recommended "to Calvin Seminary that its pastoral counseling and leadership curriculum be strengthened in the areas of responsibility toward retarded persons and their families." Synod 1986 changed the status of the service committee to a standing committee and provided for the appointment of a full-time administrative coordinator. Synod 1987 expanded the mandate of the committee "to reflect the church's concern for persons with all types of disabilities." Synod also approved that the committee's name be changed to "Committee on Disability Concerns." In 1993 synod recommended "full compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act . . . and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada." Seven years later, Synod 2000 encouraged each classis to establish a network of disability concerns consultants and congregational contacts. Synod 2013 encouraged all CRC congregations to adopt a church policy on disability and, reaffirming the

	and/or be involved in social-justice issues, ministry with poor and aboriginal peoples, interchurch relations, and interaction with governments." The current operating mandate (as revised after CRCNA-Canada Corporation review) of the Committee for Contact with the Government (operating as the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue) was considered and approved by Synod 2011. Synodical actions relative to the work of the CPD include its report *Responsibility and Community at the End of Life* (Synod 2000), recommendations to the CPD as an outcome of the report of the Committee to Study War and Peace (Synod 2006), recommendations to the CPD as an outcome of the report of the Committee to Study the Migration of Workers (Synod 2010), and affirmation of the CPD's work relative to the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force (Synod 2016).		decision of Synod 2000, synod encouraged churches to appoint at least one person in the congregation to serve as a church disability advocate.
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16	$192,000 of ministry shares 100% of total revenue 1.0% of total ministry shares	$191,000 of ministry shares 79.9% of total revenue 1.0% of total ministry shares	$153,000 of ministry shares 63.5% of total revenue 0.8% of total ministry shares
	Faith Alive	Faith Formation	Home Missions
Ministry description	Faith Alive Christian Resources is the most recent name of what was once known as the Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church. From 1985 to 2007 the agency was named CRC Publications. The board of Faith Alive Christian Resources was dissolved by Synod 2013. However, the CRCNA's Ministry Support Services department continues to market and sell existing Faith Alive products until they are retired. For	Faith Formation Ministries joins and continues God's mission of transforming lives and communities worldwide by encouraging and equipping local Christian Reformed congregations and their leaders in their calling to practice intentional, lifelong, intergenerational, holistic missional discipleship and faith formation. The entry point for Faith Formation Ministries typically involves leaders: children's ministry	Home Missions gives leadership to the CRC in its task of bringing the gospel to the people of Canada and the United States and of drawing them into fellowship with Christ and his church. This mandate has these aspects: 1. Encourage and assist churches and classes in their work of evangelism. 2. Initiate, support, and guide new church

	Faith Alive	Faith Formation	Home Missions
	marketing and distribution reasons, new products developed by CRCNA ministries may continue to be published under the Faith Alive imprint/brand.	leaders, youth group leaders, small group leaders, education and faith formation committees, church councils, elders, and/or pastors. It connects with these leaders in three ways: workshops, coaching, and resourcing. To make these connections, staff members of Faith Formation Ministries are divided into three groups. Five staff members serve as the Support Team by doing administration, communication, coaching support, collaboration, and coordination for ministry. Two staff members serve on the Resourcing Team, focusing not so much on writing new resources as compiling lists of resources and creating toolkits for congregations that connect them with existing tools for discipleship and faith formation. The remaining six staff members—three in the U.S. and three in Canada—work as regional catalyzers, serving as coaches, connectors, and resource people for congregational leadership. They seek to build relationships for the purpose of encouraging, supporting, and challenging congregations as they grow in their discipleship and faith formation practices.	development in cooperation with local churches and classes. 3. Initiate, support, and guide other evangelistic ministries in cooperation with local churches and classes. In fulfilling this mandate, Home Missions calls, catalyzes, and collaborates with God's missionary people to start and strengthen missional churches and campus ministries that transform lives and communities. Core work includes (a) starting and strengthening churches; (b) developing disciples, leaders, and campus ministries; and (c) engaging classes, clusters, and communities.
History	See below	Faith Formation Ministries began as a pilot project in 2013 with just two, very part-time staff, charged by the Denominational Office with carrying on the work of two groups that the denomination lost at that time. The first was the Faith Formation Committee, a team established by Synod 2007 to engage congregations and classes in dialogue about current practices of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and profession of faith with an eye toward	The denomination's first home missionary was installed in 1879 (and served only three years), with synod recognizing the importance of his labor and establishing committees for home and foreign missions. A second home missionary was installed in 1886, and he served four years. An effort begun in 1889 among the Sioux people lasted only a year. The next effort, begun in 1896 in the southwestern United States (under the auspices of what was then called the Board of Heathen

		deepening and revitalizing the practice of these milestones in congregations. The committee's work formally ended at synod in June 2013. At that same synod, a second group, Faith Alive Christian Resources, the CRC's publishing agency, was dissolved. Denominational leadership and congregations alike had a desire to see the important work of both the Faith Formation Committee and Faith Alive carried on, so they created a pilot project called the Faith Formation Initiative. The work of the initiative proved to be so fruitful that the denomination dedicated resources to create a new ministry dedicated to faith formation to continue working with congregations. On January 1, 2015, Faith Formation Ministries officially became a ministry of the CRCNA.	Missions—and later transferred to the Board of Home Missions, in 1964), has lasted to this day. Ministry to Jewish people in urban centers began after the turn of the century, with an official effort beginning in Paterson, N.J., in 1912 and another beginning in Chicago in 1918, but these efforts did not last. The ministry in Paterson concluded in 1957 and ten years later in Chicago. In 1905 ministry began among Dutch immigrants in Lethbridge, Alta. Thirty-four years later, when World War II began, there were 13 CR churches in Canada. After the war, things changed as a result of immigration from the Netherlands. In 1947 synod established the Immigration Committee for Canada under the auspices of Home Missions. And in about 15 years the number of CRC Canadian congregations grew to 170. While urban ministry was beginning in a variety of local ways (including gospel-hall and rescue missions in the 1920s), the Board of Home Missions, in response to a 1949 request from the Eastern Home Mission Board (Classes Hudson and Hackensack), appointed Harold Dekker to minister in New York City. The 1960s saw the launch of Summer Workshops in Missions (1962) and the formal beginning of ministry on university campuses (1967). Having begun in 1970, the Coffee Break ministry was assumed by Home Missions in 1983 by synodical action. Specific ethnic leadership posts/ministries also began in the 1980s. The concluding decades of the century also saw renewed zeal for evangelism (e.g., "400,000 by 2000") with an emphasis on training brought to congregations (e.g., Congregational Evangelism Training, Evangelism Thrust) as well as bringing CRC ministers to learn from others (e.g., Robert Schuller's approach; Bill Hybels's approach).

	Faith Alive	Faith Formation	Home Missions
Synod	Synod 1968 formed the Board of Publications. From 1968-2013 this board oversaw the production of distinctly Reformed publications including hymnals, Sunday school curricula, Bible studies, materials for catechism, *The Banner,* and World Literature Ministries materials. In January 2007, the CRC Publications board changed its name to Faith Alive Christian Resources. The board of Faith Alive Christian Resources was dissolved by Synod 2013, but "critical functions" of Faith Alive—including publication of *The Banner* and faith formation materials—continue to be developed but are now assigned to other areas of the denominational structure.	In 2007 Synod mandated the Faith Formation Committee to provide biblical and pastoral guidance for councils whose members who were requesting infant dedication in place of infant baptism and to provide guidance concerning liturgical practices surrounding infant baptism. In 2011 synod extended the term of the Faith Formation Committee for one more year with the following additional mandate: a. Identify appropriate models for developing a denomination-wide mechanism for promoting continued learning, reflection, and training on the topic of faith formation and discipleship. This is to be done in consultation with other denominational ministries and related agencies. b. Provide quarterly reports on this work throughout 2011 and 2012 to the interim executive director, with a final report to Synod 2013. (*Acts of Synod 2011,* p. 832) In 2013 synod instructed the BOT to continue the foundational work of the Faith Formation Committee by making intergenerational lifelong learning and discipleship integral to the realignment of Faith Alive and denominational structures. *Grounds:* a. Although the study committee has fulfilled its specific mandates, the work of faith formation is not complete. b. Our denominational structures should reflect that the work of faith formation has been a strength of our Reformed tradition and, in its lifelong nature,	Synodical records from the 1800s provide numerous examples of synod's authorization for missions in North America, evidenced primarily in financial records. In 1884 synod called for the organization of committees from each classis, describing their desired function in 1892. Throughout ensuing years, synodical action was often directed toward authorizing specific ministries (e.g., Hospitality House Ministries for those in service, Jewish Missions, etc.). In the 1970s synod attended to changes in the support of Native American missions (e.g., shifting Rehoboth Hospital to the Luke Society) as the churches also approved principles of decentralization in 1973. *Gathering God's Growing Family* (aka "400,000 by 2000") was endorsed by Synod 1989. Around the same time, synod began approving church-planting goals and methods, eventually differentiating new church development from established church development at Synod 1991.

		needs increasingly to become a central component of the church's life. (*Acts of Synod 2013,* p. 553) Synod 2016 instructed the executive director "to task Faith Formation Ministries to investigate the feasibility of the development of new curricula and its potential usage within the Christian Reformed Church" (*Acts of Synod 2016,* p. 931).	
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16	$64,000 of ministry shares 4.0% of total revenue 0.3% of total ministry shares	$421,000 of ministry shares 92.3% if total revenue 2.1% of total ministry shares	$3,251,000 of ministry shares 48.9% of total revenue 16.3% of total ministry shares
	Pastor Church Resources	Race Relations	Safe Church
Ministry description	Beginning with the mandate to provide programs of "healing and prevention" for ministers, staff, councils, and congregations, Pastor Church Resources serves Christian Reformed Churches in a variety of ways. PCR advocates for healthy relationships between congregations, pastors, and staff; manages ministerial and church profiles in the pastor search process; oversees the credentialing program for nonordained staff; and endorses Specialized Transitional Ministers and helps congregations obtain their services. PCR also provides direct consultation in times of transition or crisis, oversees the Continuing Education fund for pastors and church staff, creates and distributes educational and resource materials for congregations and church staff, fosters the health of smaller congregations through grants and resources (e.g., Sustaining Congregational Excellence initiative), and supports and strengthens pastors through learning events, vocational ministry	The ministry of Race Relations is mandated by synod to design, organize, and implement programs that will assist the denomination, churches, and members in eliminating the causes and effects of racism within the body of believers and throughout the world.	Safe Church Ministry equips congregations in abuse awareness, prevention, and response. Safe Church Ministry's strategy includes training safe church team members to become resources within their own congregations and classes. Safe Church Ministry also provides web-based resources for use by team members, or by anyone engaged in the work of safe church ministry.

	Pastor Church Resources	Race Relations	Safe Church
	assessment opportunities, pastor peer learning grants, pastors' spouses events, the spiritual vitality project, resources (e.g., Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative), and pastoral mentors. A final area of PCR's work involves coordinating regional pastors and church visitors to provide support, encouragement, and counsel to congregations and staff (e.g., Classis Renewal Initiative and the Connections Project: Embedding Regional Resourcing) and supporting congregations through the Healthy Church Initiative and Survey.		
History	By the action of Synod 1982, Pastor-Church Relations (PCR) began. Over the years PCR has created and implemented programs and resources in response to the needs of congregations and pastors, and in response to recommendations and requests from the Board of Trustees and various synods. Included in these resources are six training tools that have been widely used: *Closing Well, Continuing Strong; Effective Leadership in the Church; Evaluation Essentials for Congregational Leaders; Marriage and Ministry; More Than a Search Committee;* and *Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring.* Synod 2016 approved our request for a change of name to Pastor Church Resources, which more closely aligns with our ministry focus going forward.	In the 1960s, racial crises characterized North American society. Some of this turmoil was also experienced within the CRC. Out of a growing sense of urgency, the synod of the CRC developed the "racism mandate," and in 1968 the Board of Home Missions was assigned responsibility for gathering the resources of the denomination to eliminate the causes and effects of racism in the church and in society. The efforts of Home Missions' Race Commission to carry out that task met with very limited success, however, and by 1971 Home Missions requested that the racism mandate be taken from their board and given to a separate agency specially designed for such a task and directly answerable to, and funded by, synod. Thus, in 1971, the Synodical Committee on Race Relations (SCORR) was born. In its early years SCORR was characterized by a search for an organizational identity and role. SCORR thought of its task in terms of crisis intervention, advocacy, and confronting the racial attitudes of white constituents. In addition, a scholarship program had been provided to SCORR by synod.	In 1989 synod formed a study committee regarding abuse to report on the prevalence of abuse and ways to respond to it. The study committee reported to Synod 1992 and was reappointed to prepare a protocol for responding to allegations of abuse and to present that to synod in 1994, at which time the Office of Abuse Prevention was formed, with Beth Swagman as its first director. In 2009 the name of the office changed to Safe Church Ministry to reflect a broader focus on abuse awareness and prevention as well as response.

		In fall 1978 other agencies began a conversation with SCORR about a vision they had—namely, an interagency cooperative effort to develop multiracial leadership in the denomination, and to explore whether that effort might be housed within SCORR. Synod 1979 approved an entire package proposal: new codirector position for leadership development, revised guidelines for SCORR membership, creation of the SCORR Advisory Council, and shared funding with the other agencies. In the past few decades, what has become known as the Office of Race Relations has advanced antiracism training across the continent, developing the *Dance of Racial Reconciliation* and *Widening the Circle* workshops. More recent years have also included efforts toward increased inclusivity.	
Synod	Research by the Synodical Interim Committee (1978) led to synod's formation of PCR in 1982. Synod 1987 assigned it the functions formerly performed by the Ministerial Information Service. In 1980 synod provided initial impetus for the role of continuing education for pastors. In the ensuing decades synod has made special requests (e.g., study ministerial departures, statement of professional conduct for ministerial personnel) and has helped institutionalize practices begun via grants.	Synod's involvement directly and indirectly in this work has been extensive, beginning with formation of the effort in 1971 to be a committee directly under the control of synod, replacing Home Missions' Race Commission. Synod further developed the mandate of the Synodical Committee on Race Relations, enlarged its scope in 1979, and gave SCORR the status of a standing committee in 1981. In 1983 synod approved the practice of designating an All Nations Heritage Sunday/Week. Synod 1986 adopted procedures for the affiliation of multiracial groups with the CRC. The 1980s and 1990s saw a variety of constellations and reporting structures for antiracism efforts as well as an expansion and then eventual retraction of regional staff, all undertaken with synod's approval. Synod 2007 publicly confessed and repented for decisions of Synod 1920 motivated in part by racist values and recommitted the denomination	Synod formed a study committee regarding abuse in 1989, and the committee reported to synod in 1992, at which time it was reappointed. Synod 1994 approved a full-time abuse-prevention coordinator. In 2010 synod encouraged classes to develop classical or regional safe church teams. In 2011 and 2012 synod reminded congregations about the adoption and use of safe church policies and safe church teams, and such encouragement is now generally given at every synod. In addition, many individual overtures to synod (sometimes involving the Judicial Code) have dealt with issues related to abuse, and Safe Church Ministries has often served synod in its response to those overtures.

	Pastor Church Resources	Race Relations	Safe Church
		to building "a communion that is becoming increasingly representative of the beautiful diversity of [God's] family" while encouraging the use of the *Dance of Racial Reconciliation* and *Widening the Circle*. Finally, as recently as 2016, synod has approved efforts to develop and ensure diversity in CRC leadership.	
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16	$772,000 of ministry shares 92.1% of total revenue 3.9% of total ministry shares	$486,000 of ministry shares 86.6% of total revenue 2.4% of total ministry shares	$176,000 of ministry shares 83.0% of total revenue 0.9% of total ministry shares
	ServiceLink	Social Justice	Timothy Leadership
Ministry description	ServiceLink will, first and primarily, be a collaborative resourcing bridge between the agencies and ministries of the CRC and local Canadian churches. This would involve roles in customer service and communication, the specifics of which would be done in consultation with the agencies and ministry leaders of the aforementioned (as well as classis-based). Second, ServiceLink will maintain their role in volunteer ministry development, especially as it relates to the North American context, to support local churches in their efforts to engage volunteers within their own congregations and communities.	The Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action (OSJ) exists to lead and equip the CRC in carrying out its transforming mission to "pursue God's justice and peace"—as stated in its denominational mission/vision statement. OSJ focuses primarily on the systemic causes of poverty, hunger, and powerlessness, as well as those social injustices to which synod or the BOT has directed it. Its leadership and equipping consists primarily of (1) raising awareness and educating members and leaders about issues of justice that relate to root causes of poverty, hunger, powerlessness, and those social justice issues that synod or the BOT have identified as priorities; (2) identifying, creating, and encouraging the use of methods of worship and modes of living out our faith that express justice as a core personal and corporate value for Reformed Christians; and (3) and raising the voice of the	Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI) is an organization that took root in Africa in the 1990s and has since developed rapidly throughout the world. The TLTI vision is that healthy churches worldwide are flourishing and transforming their communities under the leadership of people who have been equipped through accessible, high-quality training. Working with international and local ministry partners, TLTI provides essential training to church leaders worldwide, equipping them to advance the kingdom of God in their congregations and communities. World Missions, Back to God Ministries International, and World Renew rely on TLTI in field-based leadership development.

		CRCNA in advocacy for and with those who suffer injustice, through action alerts to our members, participation in advocacy coalitions, and public statements when appropriate.	
History	ServiceLink started its work in fall 1995 with a mandate to provide mission trip and service opportunities for Canadian churches and individuals. ServiceLink was established by agency and ministry directors in response to constituents' desire to serve with CRCNA agencies and ministries and the need to facilitate those requests from a central office. Funding was a collaborative endeavor by all agencies and Canadian programs. The centralized program worked in partnership with ministries and the mission agencies of the denomination and engaged in the various elements and logistics of placing teams and individuals in countries around the world. In July 2009, ServiceLink opened an office in Grand Rapids to serve U.S. churches, but within six months of initiating the program, the main mission agencies indicated that the agreed-upon plan did not work for them. ServiceLink U.S. then realigned their work plans, but within two years that office closed, and ServiceLink continued its work in Canada. An additional focus for the work now included volunteer ministry development, characterized by working with local churches on best practices for recruiting, equipping, and recognizing volunteers within their own context.	In 1976, in response to a massive famine in eastern Africa, the CRC synod created a task force on world hunger. The task forced examined crucial issues such as the increasing disparities between rich and poor, the need for preaching about world hunger, a fresh understanding of stewardship, and the distinction between humanitarian and Christian endeavors. Their report, *And He Had Compassion on Them: The Christian and World Hunger,* recommended concrete actions for responses from within the church, including a world hunger action program. Synod 1978 accepted the report on world hunger and adopted its recommendations. But the task force felt its work was incomplete unless it also spoke to the structural and systemic problems causing world hunger, and it took another year to produce an in-depth analysis of systemic sinfulness, including the biblical and theological underpinnings for such an analysis. *For My Neighbor's Good: World Hunger and Structural Change* was the name of that report to synod. Adopted in 1979, it is still as applicable today as it was then. While World Renew provides relief and development assistance to feed the hungry, these reports propelled OSJ to address the root causes of hunger. To reform systemic injustices that keep people in hunger, OSJ assists members of the CRC in advocating for just and equitable policies on issues that affect food security and global poverty. OSJ, World Renew, and other partners work together to defeat hunger and poverty, because any lasting development work that enables people to thrive ultimately requires	In 1997 a team of Christian educators from Africa, Europe, and North America formed to meet two challenges. The first was to respond to an urgent call for basic pastoral training coming from thousands of Protestant evangelists and lay pastors throughout Africa. The second was to promote economic sustainability within the churches and communities they serve. The resulting training program was named Timothy Leadership Training (TLT) and focused on stewardship and community development. The continuing education TLT seminars were first attended by pastors from the four presbyteries of the Reformed Church of East Africa and from sixteen dioceses of the Anglican Church of Kenya. Several years later these Kenyan seminars became reorganized as Project Africa, a program of lay leadership training. The focus shifted from continuing education to the development of a curriculum for the training of evangelists and lay leaders who were leading congregations of their own. It then became a collaborative ministry of Calvin Theological Seminary, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and Christian Reformed World Missions and was renamed Timothy Leadership Training Institute.

	ServiceLink	Social Justice	Timothy Leadership
		systemic change in order to be successful. Synod revisited world hunger and poverty in 1993 when it passed a major follow-up report to the hunger reports of the late 1970s. *Freedom to Serve: Meeting the Needs of the World* reiterated the central importance of responding to suffering and injustice in the world and identified a long list of practical steps that individuals, congregations, classes, and the denomination could take to reinvigorate its hunger and poverty work. It was this report that identified the need for a staff person responsible directly to the denomination's executive director of ministries to coordinate the reinvigoration of our world hunger and global poverty work—particularly the work on systemic causes. It was this staff position that eventually grew into the Office of Social Justice. Later, a similar office in Canada, The Centre for Public Dialogue, was established with roots in the Committee for Contact with the Government.	As time went on, the team of Christian educators field-tested the curriculum in ten English- and French-speaking African countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia). Weeklong workshops were held with pastors from the Anglican, Assembly of God, Baptist, Reformed, and Independent churches and many other denominations. Between the various workshop trainings these pastors engaged their lay leaders and other evangelists in the same training they had received. Training focused on pastoral care, Christian education, preaching, stewardship, the relationship between work and worship, violence in the family, and sustainable development. After many revisions, a training manual on each of these seven subjects was published and is used effectively today on several continents.
Synod	As mentioned above, ServiceLink was established by Canadian agency and ministry directors and has over the years not experienced any synodical actions. ServiceLink initially received financial support from all agencies and Canadian programs, but over the years fewer funds were allocated to the program. In 2012, ServiceLink received financial support for the first time through ministry shares and has been a recipient of these funds in subsequent years.	In 1979 synod adopted *For My Neighbor's Good* as an acknowledgment of the presence of structural sin and the importance of the church's dismantling of these sinful structures as part of our mission to the poor and oppressed. In 1993 synod adopted *Freedom to Serve: Meeting the Needs of the World,* recognizing structural injustice and identifying practical steps that the CRC could take to reinvigorate its hunger and poverty work; at the same time synod approved a fulltime staff person "to coordinate the implementation of the vision." In response to overtures regarding the Jubilee 2000 campaign seeking debt cancellation for the world's poorest countries, Synod 1999 adopted a "Resolution on International Debt" to encourage social justice and hunger action and	Because of the CRC mission agencies' reliance on this tool and the CRC's participation in its initial development, in 2016 the TLTI 501(c)(3) organization became incorporated into the CRCNA, an action of the BOT noted by Synod 2016 (*Acts of Synod 2016,* p. 841).

the implementation of educational and discussion activities in conjunction with the work of Bread for the World, Citizens for Public Justice (Canada), the Center for Public Justice (U.S.), Jubilee 2000, and other compatible organizations and efforts. In 2005 synod assigned to OSJ recommendations arising from the report on Restorative Justice. Synod 2006 adopted a comprehensive report by the synodical Committee to Study War and Peace, urging the "agencies and members of the CRC to promote and actively engage in international initiatives for building peace with justice."

Synod 2010 received and adopted a study report on the migration of workers, highlighting the great need for mercy, compassion, advocacy, and justice in ministering to and for workers and refugees from other countries. In light of this, synod urged that "the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, and the Canadian Committee for Contact with the Government . . . engage in . . . policy development and advocacy strategies that will lead to immigration reform and the enactment of fair, just, and equitable laws regarding those without status in Canada and the United States" (*Acts of Synod 2010,* p. 878). That same synod received an overture regarding advocacy of the denominational position opposing abortion and adopted a recommendation "to instruct the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action (OSJ) to boldly advocate for the church's position against abortion, and to help equip churches to promote the sanctity of human life" (p. 883). Finally, that year synod received a report and recommendations regarding creation care in the CRC and recognized "the Micah Network Declaration on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change as speaking to its concern for and responsibility toward creation" (p. 871). Synod also called for assembly of a task force "to identify a biblical and Reformed perspective on creation

	ServiceLink	Social Justice	Timothy Leadership
		stewardship," including a discussion of climate change (p. 871). In 2011 synod approved a revised mandate for OSJ. Then, in 2012, the Creation Stewardship Task Force submitted its report, and synod adopted numerous related recommendations, including the statement that climate change is real, is likely largely caused by human activity, and is therefore a moral, ethical, and religious issue. It commended the report "to the churches as a guide for prayer and discussion, and for direct action and advocacy when and where appropriate" (*Acts of Synod 2012,* pp. 803, 805). Synod 2016 received the report of its Committee to Study Religious Persecution and Liberty and passed recommendations which included assignments to OSJ: first, "that synod direct the Board of Trustees to instruct the Office of Social Justice to continue and expand the practice of urging every congregation to participate in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, devoting worship services that day to the pressing issue of religious persecution"; and, second, "that synod direct the BOT to ask the Office of Social Justice (OSJ) to ensure the collection and distribution of up-to-date information about religious persecution and liberty to CRC congregations and to those who join the OSJ network" (*Acts of Synod 2016,* pp. 862-63).	
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16	$73,000 of ministry shares 42.1% of total revenue 0.4% of total ministry shares	$527,000 of ministry shares 84.5% of total revenue 2.6% of total ministry shares	0 0 0

	World Missions	World Renew	World Literature
Ministry description	Christian Reformed World Missions is the international missions sending agency of the Christian Reformed Church established by Synod 1888. From 1986 until 2015, CRWM had primary responsibility within the CRCNA for the parts of *mission* called "evangelism, the organization and development of the church, the development of Christian education, and the training of pastors, evangelists, elders, and teachers. This responsibility includes preaching, teaching, the administration of the sacraments, local communication of the gospel through various media, Bible translation, literature production and distribution, development of Christian worship and music, church education, development of Christian schools, and the training of nationals for all of these" (*Acts of Synod 1986,* p. 646). Christian Reformed World Missions has more than 200 missionaries serving in nearly 40 countries, and through partnerships their work extends to more than 50 countries.	In 1962 the synod of the Christian Reformed Church approved the formation of the denomination's diaconal agency. Its mandate was to "minister in the name of our Lord to [people] distressed by reason of the violence of nature, the carnage of war, or other calamities of life, and to relieve the sufferings of the needy of the world" (*Acts of Synod 1962,* p. 333). In its essence and existence, World Renew makes every effort to offer to those who hunger and thirst access to the river of life, to the stream of justice and mercy that flows from God and his church worldwide to bring healing to the nations. Today, World Renew continues to fulfill this mandate, reaching out in Christ's name to people around the world who are poor, hungry, and affected by disaster and injustice. In doing so, World Renew's mission is "to engage God's people in redeeming resources and developing gifts in collaborative activities of love, mercy, justice, and compassion." World Renew's integrated response to poverty, hunger, disaster, and injustice addresses the needs of the whole person, physical and spiritual, who is the imagebearer of God. World Renew's work provides opportunities for reconciliation and restoration to God and others for people who are considered "the least" in this world. This is work that empowers people to recognize their God-given dignity and shake off the bonds that keep them poor.	Formerly part of Faith Alive Christian Resources (then known as CRC Publications) and more recently part of Ministry Support Services, World Literature has been the global publishing arm of the CRC, publishing Spanish children's literature titles and, to a greater extent, translated theological works of Western Reformed writers appropriate for seminaries and Bible colleges who provide instruction in Spanish and in ways consistent with its mandate: "The World Literature Ministries Committee (WLMC) will be responsible to the CRC Publications Board for the preparation, publication, and distribution of literature disseminating a Reformed vision of faith and life in the major or strategic languages of the world, as resources will allow. This committee is assigned to carry out this task in North America as well as any country not located on the North American continent."
History	Acts of synod from 1857 to 1880 show interest in missions by classes, reports of offerings being taken for missions, and various other missions-related matters. In 1888 synod established *De Commissie der Zending onder de Heidenen* (the	When tornadoes in Michigan and floods in the Netherlands and Ontario in the 1950s caused problems too large for small groups of deacons to respond to, the question was asked, "Should the Christian Reformed Church have a diaconal	The World Literature Ministries Committee was created by Synod 1979 as the Translation and Educational Assistance Committee (TEAC). It brought together the existing Spanish Literature Committee (SLC) and the Committee

	World Missions	World Renew	World Literature
	"Board of Mission to the Heathen"). As reported also in the history of Home Missions, the CRC's first missionary in this capacity was sent to the Lakota (Sioux) nation in (Rosebud) South Dakota in 1887, but his work ended a year later. Four persons were sent to work among the Navajo nation in the southwestern United States in 1896. Then, in 1918, synod appointed Dr. Lee S. Huizenga and Dr. John C. De Korne to investigate possibilities for international missions. They recommended the Sudan area of Africa (Nigeria), but in 1920 synod instead chose to begin work in China. This work was the first international missionary-sending ministry of the CRC. Reorganization spanning 40 years demonstrated changes in thinking about the focus of missions, yet demonstrating a reliance on the semantics of the day. In 1924 the name changed to the Board of Indian and Foreign Missions. Then, in 1964, the responsibility for work among members of the Navajo and Zuni nations transferred to the Board of Home Missions, and the name was shortened to Board of Foreign Missions. In 1976 synod approved a revised Mission Order and approved a new name, the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM). Synod 1985 placed CRWM and CRWRC under a single synodical board, the Christian Reformed Board of World Ministries. The next year synod adopted the *Constitution of the Board of World Ministries,* which included the reorganization and mandate of CRWM operative until Synod 2015. The Board of World Ministries was phased out with the establishment of the Board of Trustees in 1992. CRWM also restructured itself at that time in North America by dividing itself bi-	agency?" By 1960 there was an increased awareness of the material needs in Korea caused by the recent war there, as well as the severe suffering of the world's poor. In response, Synod 1960 appointed a committee to study the matter of a CRC diaconal agency, and on February 21, 1962, a diaconal agency of the CRC called the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) was born. Its constitution included two main tasks: providing material and medical relief to Korean war victims and to Cuban "escapees." In 1965 a change in direction for CRWRC was initiated by Louis Van Ess, its director, who said, "While mass distribution of food and clothing is provided in cases of emergency and disaster, it's far more effective to help in a manner whereby those helped can be trained in self-help endeavors." That year, CRWRC started an agriculture program in Korea, and soon afterward CRWRC's Christian Adoption Program of Korea (CAPOK) placed nearly 2,000 abandoned children in adoptive homes. A referral center started in the U.S. Appalachia region for poverty-depressed people. Also developed at that time were programs to recruit and train volunteers to respond to disasters; further, CRWRC assisted in the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees into the U.S. and Canada. In 1977, the agency's next director, John DeHaan, stressed managing for results and helping poor people use available resources to produce what they needed. This led to development programs, working with partner agencies in agriculture, health, literacy, income, and church outreach. During the 1980s, collaboration was a theme: Christian Extension Services was a special project of CRWRC and CRWM in Sierra Leone. Two teams, each	for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad (CEACA) under one umbrella ministry. Subsequently CEACA was separated from TEAC in 1981, and TEAC changed its name to the World Literature Committee in 1982. In 1986 synod approved the plan for reassignment of the World Literature Committee tasks to CRC Publications. In 1991 a provisional merger was assessed, evaluated, and approved, and the ministry's name changed to CRC World Literature Ministries.

	nationally into a CRWM Canada Committee and administration and a CRWM USA Committee and administration. These bodies jointly supervised international ministries of and as CRWM International.	composed of a field director, community developer, agriculturist, health nutritionist, literacy worker, and two church developers, lived in Sierra Leonean villages. In North America a "joint venture" was needed to satisfy Canadian and U.S. government legal requirements, and Ray Elgersma joined the Canada staff as CRWRC's codirector in 1989. Beginning in the 1990s, CRC deacons were called to equip their congregations to respond to needs. At the local level, that was through diaconates; at the regional level, it was through groups called conferences. By 1997, staff had formed self-managing work teams to replace hierarchical management layers, and CRWRC held its first Assembly of Worldwide Partners. 2002 saw CRWRC focusing on two overall priorities and two overall strategies: (1) community development/transformation and constituency development/transformation; and (2) global collaborations and staff capacity. In 2012, the 50th year of its existence, CRWRC was active in over 40 countries and had 76 partners worldwide, and with synodical approval, the agency changed its name to World Renew.	
Synod	Synod 1888 established *De Commissie der Zending onder de Heidenen* (*Acts of Synod 1888,* p. 14). Article 39 of the minutes includes acceptance of a report on missions and appointment of a committee of three ministers and two elders (plus alternates) to function as the board. Further, it establishes the Mission Order. Synod 1918 appointed Dr. Lee S. Huizenga and Dr. John C. De Korne to investigate possibilities for international missions. In their report to Synod 1920 Huizenga and De Korne recommended the Sudan area of Africa (Nigeria). Synod, however, chose to begin work in China.	Synod 1950 was overtured to "consider the advisability of appointing a synodical diaconal committee" (*Acts of Synod 1950,* p. 63), and at Synod 1959 the Grand Rapids Deacons' Conference requested that a permanent worldwide relief organization be organized. Synod appointed a committee to report in 1960, and in that year established a Worldwide Relief and Service Committee of the CRC's denominational deacons' conferences to administer all works of mercy in such areas where the local congregation was unable to do so. The result was that in 1962	Synod 2016 received the BOT's report that it had discontinued the work of World Literature Ministries because it was not reaching stated needs and was not financially sustainable; the BOT reported its commitment to developing a new model and initiating a redesigned effort to meet ministry needs.

	World Missions	World Renew	World Literature
	Synod 1924 reorganized the board and changed the name to the Board of Indian and Foreign Missions. In 1964 synod transferred the work among members of the Navajo and Zuni nations to the Board of Home Missions and shortened the name to the Board of Foreign Missions. In 1976 synod approved a revised Mission Order and a new name, the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM). Synod 1982 appointed a five-member ad hoc committee to find solutions to what were judged to be persistent problems between CRWM and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). In 1983 synod reconstituted the ad hoc committee as the World Missions and Relief Commission. Then in 1985 synod placed CRWM and CRWRC under a single synodical board, the Christian Reformed Board of World Ministries (phased out in 1992 with synod's establishment of the Board of Trustees). Synod 1986 adopted the *Constitution of the Board of World Ministries,* which included the reorganization and mandate of CRWM operative until Synod 2015.	the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee was established. Synod 1963 expressed appreciation to CRWRC and its various representatives for their labors. Since CRWRC received no funds from ministry share (quotas), synod approved a request to place the work of CRWRC on the list of approved causes for offerings. In fact, beginning in 1963 and continuing until the present, synod has approved one or more offerings per year for the work of CRWRC/World Renew (synod later changed the recommendation to "at least four" offerings per year). Synod 2012 approved a time to praise God in celebration of CRWRC's fifty years of ministry, recognizing the agency's coming alongside communities in need to share God's love and create long-term solutions to poverty, and recognizing the agency's Disaster Response Services and the many volunteers who have put the love of Christ into action in serving communities affected by disasters in the preceding forty years. Synod also approved changing the agency name from Christian Reformed World Relief Committee to World Renew.	
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16	$4,194,000 of ministry shares 28.8% of total revenue 21.0% of total ministry shares	0 0 0	$250,000 of ministry shares 49.3% of total revenue 1.3% of total ministry shares

	Worship		
Ministry description	Enriched by a great diversity of ethnicities, communities, styles, and gifts, Worship Ministries seeks to support and strengthen biblically grounded and theologically Reformed worship. It accomplishes its mission through networking and equipping the church. More specifically, Worship Ministries seeks ways for those who plan and lead worship in the CRC to meet for mutual encouragement and opportunities to share with, learn from, and listen to each other, connecting them with the various CRC ministries and agencies to leverage worship opportunities and learnings and partner with other leaders in the worship context. In these ways, churches are equipped to think deeply about worship using multiple resources including our creeds, confessions, contemporary testimonies, liturgical forms, and the synodically approved document *Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture,* to embrace our unique contexts and calls to ministry as it is reflected in worship and to look outward to the broader community and the global church to further enrich our worship, to join with the church of all ages and around the world lifting prayers and praise as an expression of our unity in Jesus Christ, to preach the Word and respond as we are called, to share in the sacraments and teach their full meaning and significance, and to include people of all ages and abilities in worship as God in Christ has included us. These efforts allow us to share our rich resources through avenues like *Reformed Worship* (quarterly journal, monthly e-newsletter, weekly blog), the Worship Ministries e-newsletter, The Network, and the CRC Worship Ministries Facebook page. Further, these efforts promote use of existing resources such as *The Worship Sourcebook* (Second Ed.), *Prayers of the*		

	Worship		
	People (Second Ed.), *Come and See* (visuals for worship), *Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* (pew and large print hymnal, digital versions and app available), and *Psalms for All Seasons: A Complete Psalter for Worship* (hymnal, digital version, and app available).		
History	The responsibilities for publishing worship materials had been with Faith Alive Christian Resources since its earlier days as the Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, and more significantly since 1985, when the CRC Liturgy Committee merged with CRC Publications. As Synod 2013 dissolved the Faith Alive board, the promise was that Faith Alive's key functions would continue. Thus the formal launch of Worship Ministries began in 2014.		
Synod	The plan for the transition from the Faith Alive model to one that is focused on ministry was presented by the Board of Trustees to Synod 2013 (*Acts of Synod 2013,* Board of Trustees Supplement, pp. 475-78). At Synod 2015, Worship Ministries, along with Faith Formation Ministries, shared its ministry vision, and synod noted the engagement of Worship Ministries' values with the denomination's five ministry priorities and the ministry's connectivity with local churches and other partners (*Acts of Synod 2015,* pp. 594, 628).		
Ministry share dollars in 2015-16	$291,000 of ministry shares 83.9% of total revenue 1.5% of total ministry shares		

Our Calling

Christian Reformed Church

Understanding the breadth and depth of the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church

Faith Formation: As a community of believers, we seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to nurture their faith through all ages and stages of life.

Global Mission: Called to be witnesses of Christ's kingdom to the ends of the earth, we start and strengthen local churches in North America and around the world.

Gospel Proclamation and Worship: Believing that faith comes through the hearing of God's Word, we proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and seek to worship him in all that we do.

Mercy and Justice: Hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken, and disadvantaged, we seek to act justly and love mercy as we walk humbly with our God.

Servant Leadership: Understanding that the lifelong equipping of leaders is essential for churches and ministries to flourish, we identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God.

The various agencies, institutions, and ministries of the CRC are part of our response to God's gracious call as together we seek to be faithful to the mission of the CRC. These agencies, institutions, and ministries have provided key goals in this overview (each also has additional goals not included in this description), and these key goals serve as focal points by which we evaluate their effectiveness in ministry, necessary for periodic review and prioritization.

Faith Formation

As a community of believers, we seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to nurture their faith through all ages and stages of life. We do this via numerous efforts, varying by intended audience (those with disabilities; those in military service, in medical care, and in the workplace; those who are Aboriginal; those who are CRC members; those who are college students) and by medium (printed word; other media; teaching/learning; relationships).

The Goal via Aboriginal Ministries[1]: To further the faith formation of Indigenous individuals and groups by making discipleship and faith formation materials available to them in culturally relevant resources.

Aboriginal Ministries assesses this goal by the establishment of criteria, identification of partners, and the cataloguing of materials.

The Goal via Back to God Ministries International: To ensure that speakers of ten major world languages will have biblical and Reformed discipleship content, accessible by means of a variety of media distribution systems.

Back to God Ministries International evaluates this goal by identifying the media and assessing the impact (e.g., hits, listenership, etc.) in each of the ten language groups.

The Goal via *The Banner*: To help readers find fresh awareness by providing tools as they seek, learn, worship, and serve as Reformed Christians in contemporary society.

The Banner evaluates its goal by tracking indicators of readership and engagement: number of print subscriptions, number of weekly *Banner* update email subscriptions, traffic on *The Banner* website (e.g., pageviews), the Klout index (a measure of overall social media influence and engagement), and satisfaction levels reported in the *Banner* Reader Survey (conducted every 3-4 years).

[1] The term *Aboriginal Ministries* used throughout this document refers to the work of the Urban Aboriginal Ministries centers as well as that of the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee.

The Goal via Calvin College: To help students learn that Christian faith increases in richness, resilience, and passion when grounded in biblical, theological, and historical knowledge as articulated in this Reformed tradition of Christianity; is strengthened by historic spiritual practices, particularly devotional practices and communal worship; and finds purpose in acts of justice, mercy, and love in the world—acts by which we show gratitude and through which God builds the kingdom.

Calvin College evaluates this goal by once every four years implementing an assessment plan that engages a cross-divisional group of students, staff, and faculty, gathering outcome data for its core, major, and co-curriculum programs.

The Goal via Chaplaincy and Care Ministry: To extend the ministry of Christ on behalf of the church in places where chaplains provide ministry beyond the boundaries of the church.

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry evaluates this goal by assembling annual reports provided by its chaplains.

The Goal via Disability Concerns: To ensure ministry leadership and development of new curriculum for the faith formation of persons with disabilities by supporting the work of Friendship Ministries.

Disability Concerns evaluates this goal by measuring the usage (via sales data) of curriculum for the faith formation of persons with disabilities.

The Goal via Faith Formation Ministries: To strengthen and support congregational faith formation leaders with vocabulary, resources, creative steps, and implementation ideas so that their entire spectrum of faith formation culture, practices, and programs is enhanced.

Faith Formation Ministries assesses its effectiveness by tracking engagement (*How many congregational leaders are we interacting with? What common themes emerge from our interactions with them? What is the ratio of one-time interactions to ongoing, sustained interactions? What assessments do congregational leaders give us through (a) their attendance at our workshops, (b) their participation in our cohorts, (c) our ongoing, sustained interactions with them?)* and by evaluating the use of its resource materials among congregations (*How many hits are our online resources—toolkits, 10 step resources, curated resources, Network posts—receiving? How frequently does an online resource lead to a relational interaction?).*

The Goal via our missions agency: To enable congregations and ministries to actively make disciples who live in the way of Jesus by increasing the number of diverse, locally rooted, and globally connected congregations and ministries bearing faithful witness to Christ's reign.

Our missions agency evaluates this goal by tracking the number of new believers baptized and/or making profession of faith, the number of Bibles distributed, and the number of indices associated with clubs (number of mentors, participants, projects).

The Goal via the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action and the Centre for Public Dialogue[2]: To help CRC members and congregations develop a deeper understanding of and response to God's call to let justice flow like a river in both our personal and communal life and faith, as well as in the structure of our societies, and to help them see doing justice as an integral part of our faith walk and of participating in God's renewal of all things.

The Office of Social Justice and the Centre for Public Dialogue evaluate this goal by measuring usage of *Live Justly*, a Bible study book that introduces people to doing advocacy as part of faith formation; usage of the *Biblical Advocacy 101* toolkits (for Canada and the U.S.); and visits to the overview webpages on OSJ focus issues, where people learn why we care about those issues as Christians.

The Goal via Pastor Church Resources: To support and enhance the faith formation of congregations and their leaders by providing (a) direct consultation during times of transition or crisis, (b) assistance in pastor search processes, and (c) seminars and training for church health (including assistance with the Healthy Church Initiative/Survey).

Pastor Church Resources assesses this goal by tracking the uses/outcomes of direct consultation during times of transition or crisis, uses of assistance in pastor search processes (profiles, conversations, distribution of tools), and attendance at seminars and training for church health (including assistance with the Healthy Church Initiative/Survey).

The Goal via Safe Church Ministry: To equip members who are in ministry with children and youth by providing training in the Circle of Grace program so that children and youth are included in an intentional circle of God's grace and love, providing them a safe place in which to grow in faith.

Safe Church Ministry measures usage of the Circle of Grace program among CRC congregations adopting the program.

Further, we use the Discipleship section of *Our Journey 2020* as a way to integrate ministry among these various agencies, institutions, and ministries in the pursuit of the desired futures, strategic foci, and steps of the denomination's Ministry Plan.

By means of an annual sampling of CRC members, *Our Journey 2020* measures congregants' perceptions of their local experience of these desired outcomes: that their congregations (a) are communities shaped by grace, (b) are places where people of all generations find their spiritual homes and grow in Christlikeness together, (c) are places where evangelism and discipleship practices and resources are implemented in ways that bless their ministries based on their unique identities and contexts, and (d) are places where children, youth, and young adults are engaged in the life of the church.

[2] The work of the Committee for Contact with the Government is assumed to be operative when the Centre for Public Dialogue's work is referenced in this document.

Global Mission
Called to be witnesses of Christ's kingdom to the ends of the earth, we start and strengthen local churches in North America and around the world. We seek to be such witnesses by means of three dimensions of the CRC—two agencies (both focusing on North America and beyond) and one ministry.

The Goal via Aboriginal Ministries: To share the gospel contextually in Canadian Indigenous communities and cultures, fostering awareness of the linkages between culture and Christian faith.

Aboriginal Ministries assesses this goal through the identification of partners and tools.

The Goal via Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI): Speakers of ten major world languages will come to know Jesus Christ and grow in following him, and churches will be strengthened.

BTGMI evaluates this goal by tracking conversions, the number of people being discipled, and the number of churches directly linked to BTGMI ministries in each of the ten language groups.

The Goal via our missions agency: To increase the number of diverse, locally rooted, and globally connected congregations and ministries bearing faithful witness to Christ's reign and actively making disciples who live in the way of Jesus.

Our missions agency assesses this goal by tracking CRC congregations in terms of growing missional witness, partnerships abroad, and baptisms and professions of faith; by tracking the number of persons in training for such global mission activity; and by tracking the start of new congregations and discipling groups.

Further, we use the Church and Community section of *Our Journey 2020* as a way to integrate ministry among these efforts in the pursuit of the desired futures, strategic foci, and steps of the denomination's Ministry Plan.

By means of an annual sampling of CRC members, *Our Journey 2020* measures congregants' perceptions or reports in terms of these factors: (1) whether there's an increasing percentage of congregational resources (time, finances, etc.) used for listening to and connecting with their community and other communities globally, (2) whether relationships with people reflect the demographics of their communities, and (3) whether an increasing number of congregations are showing growth and renewal through conversions and recommitments annually. Also measured is the goal of starting at least 20 new congregations across North America each year.

Gospel Proclamation and Worship
Believing that faith comes through the hearing of God's Word, we proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and seek to worship him in all that we do. Our efforts focusing on proclamation and worship involve five dimensions of the CRC—four ministries (two generally focused and the other two specifically focused) and one institution—in terms of the development of persons seeking to become ministers of the Word, of the continuing development of those serving as ministers, and of the edification and networking of worship leaders.

The Goal via Aboriginal Ministries: To establish safe communities for multicultural learning and worshiping that express and empower holistic (spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical) followers of Christ.

Aboriginal Ministries assess this goal by tracking occurrences and identifying communities as pre-emerging, emerging, or organized.

The Goal via Calvin Theological Seminary and the Center for Excellence in Preaching: To prepare pastors for ordination in the CRCNA (degree program & EPMC) and, through the Center for Excellence in Preaching,

to serve pastors with multifaceted resources to cultivate and support their preaching competencies.

Calvin Theological Seminary and its Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP) assess its offerings through an analysis of dashboard data for the center's website, through hearing feedback from peer learning groups of pastors, and through gathering detailed evaluation forms from participants in all continuing education seminars and conferences sponsored by the seminary and CEP. Calvin Theological Seminary works with the Candidacy Committee of the denomination in developing the process and steps by which prospective candidates are ultimately approved by the church.

The Goal via Chaplaincy and Care Ministry: To assist CRCNA chaplains in providing spiritual and emotional care in contextually appropriate ways to groups they serve (at military bases, hospitals, etc.) as a result of their preparation for ministry and of the orientation and continuing education provided them.

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry evaluates this goal by means of the program evaluation methods used in each specific setting.

The Goal via the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action and the Centre for Public Dialogue: To assist worship leaders and pastors in planning worship and sermons with content that reinforces our Christian identity as peacemakers, justice seekers, and kingdom builders.

The Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action and the Centre for Public Dialogue assess this goal by tracking usage of their justice worship materials, through gathering stories of pastors incorporating justice issues into their sermons, and by tracking use of the OSJ weekly *Prayers* newsletter, which highlights three or four global current events relating to justice issues and includes a prayer for action/resolution and healing.

The Goal via Worship Ministries: To provide networks of mutual learning among worship leaders, other organizations (such as the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship), and ecumenical relationships; and to equip CRC ministry leaders to (a) reflect deeply about their worship, using multiple resources; (b) embrace their specific contexts and calls to ministry; (c) join their worship with the church of all ages and around the world as an expression of our unity in Jesus Christ; (d) include people of all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds without favoritism regarding gender, age, or abilities; and (e) use and lead the Children and Worship program.

Worship Ministries assesses this goal by a variety of counts and tracking tools reported monthly, quarterly, and yearly to supervisors, the larger church community, the Board of Trustees, and synod, as well as to their own advisory committee, which meets twice each year.

Further, we use a particular section (2.5: Our congregations are characterized by vibrant worship that engages people of all ages) of *Our Journey 2020* as a way to integrate ministry among these efforts in the pursuit of the desired futures, strategic foci, and steps of the denomination's Ministry Plan.

By means of an annual sampling of CRC members, *Our Journey 2020* measures congregants' perceptions of their local experience in terms of how much their congregation is characterized by vibrant worship that engages people of all ages.

Mercy and Justice
Hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken, and disadvantaged, we seek to act justly and love mercy as we walk humbly with our God. We do this via a number of efforts, helping congregations and their members to speak to issues of mercy and justice, to become better equipped with inclusive and safe practices that advance justice and mercy for all, and to serve and partner with those involved in the work of mercy and justice in North America and beyond.

The Goal via Aboriginal Ministries: To give voice in urban Aboriginal communities to biblically informed positions expressing support for Indigenous justice.

Aboriginal Ministries evaluates this goal by counting annually the number of contacts with the government and political leaders and by gathering other evidences of impact.

The Goal via the Centre for Public Dialogue: To stimulate learning and dialogue on God's call to justice and reconciliation; encourage and empower CRC members and churches for faithful acts of Christian citizenship; pursue research and advocacy (federal level) on refugee resettlement and on Indigenous justice and reconciliation; and provide congregations and members

with resources on a broad range of justice issues (commercial sexual exploitation, creation stewardship, physician assisted death, etc.) contextualized uniquely within Canada.

The Centre for Public Dialogue evaluates this goal by developing and measuring the effectiveness of tools for congregations and CRC members to use and by tracking instances of advocacy (directly and in ecumenical cooperation).

The Goal via Disability Concerns: To help churches prioritize the full inclusion of people living with disabilities, providing the tools they need to minister with and engage people with disabilities in their congregation and community.

Disability Concerns (DC) evaluates this goal by tracking the numbers in the accessibility section of the annual *Yearbook* survey, the number of pageviews of the DC Network pages, the number of church and regional disability advocates, and the number of attendees at DC connection and training events.

The Goal via the Office of Race Relations: To assist congregations in utilizing opportunities for training and engagement that mobilize them as advocates for racial justice and, working with World Renew, to develop a plan of racial equity and diversity that systematizes training and oversight of volunteers and staff and guides relationships with partners.

The Office of Race Relations evaluates this goal by tracking the increase of congregations with whom they engage/train and by assessing the effectiveness of the plan for the training of volunteers and staff.

The Goal via the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action (OSJ): To help CRC members and congregations love their neighbors in tangible ways by becoming equipped to serve God as agents of God's justice, peace, and renewal; and to enable CRC members and congregations to call on those in power to improve systems that negatively affect the most vulnerable in our world. (The specific systemic issues in which OSJ works are rooted in the justice and advocacy needs of its global mission as well as in synodical public justice positions.)

OSJ assesses its two categories of goals in these areas: *Awareness and Education*: Tracking the number of CRC congregations engaging in, via provided experiences and efforts, issues of immigration, creation and climate care, restorative practices, and Indigenous justice; also tracking (and assessing effectiveness of) the volume of use of Sanctity of Life and abortion awareness materials, religious persecution materials, and Structural Roots of Poverty materials. *Advocacy Efforts*: Tracking the number of CRC members who participate in direct advocacy by measuring how many download the *Biblical Advocacy 101* toolkit and how many contact their representatives concerning immigration and/or creation protection/emissions reduction.

The Goal via Safe Church Ministry: To assist each classis in developing and using a safe church team or a safe church liaison to serve as a resource to congregations in abuse awareness, prevention, and response.

Safe Church Ministry assesses its effectiveness in tracking the establishment of safe church teams and the utilization of safe church resources at both the congregational and classis levels.

The Goal via World Renew: To increase (a) the capacity of communities and missional partners to engage in transformative practices that improve, in sustainable ways, the well-being of people made vulnerable by circumstances of poverty, disaster, or injustice in a manner that is consistent with available resources by seeking an increased number of congregations and partner organizations that empower communities for transformation and proactively address systemic and direct causes of injustice; (b) the number of communities that proactively address systemic and direct causes of injustice; and (c) the number of communities with just systems of resilience.

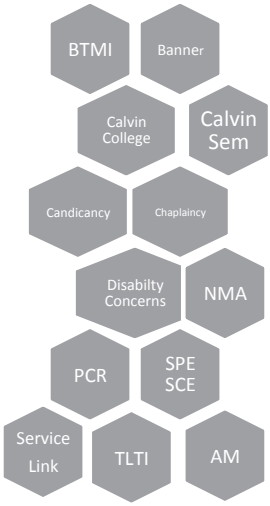
World Renew evaluates this goal by counting the number of direct participants (congregations, partner organizations, and communities) benefiting from its efforts and reporting positive changes from engaging in justice work; the number of North American churches that report positive changes from engaging in justice work in a number of areas (gender, environment, racism, conflict resolution, governance/corruption, human rights, and more); the number of communities that report reduced vulnerabilities or increased capacities and that have a disaster-preparedness plan in place; and the number of participants recovering from disaster events.

Further, *Our Journey 2020* leads us to work in integrative ways toward the strategic focus that "congregations, ministries, and members respond to the call to 'do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly' with God."

By means of an annual sampling of CRC members, *Our Journey 2020* measures congregants' perceptions or reports of engagement in and deepening awareness of the call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly" with God. In addition, counts similar to those mentioned above are tracked in various ways.

Servant Leadership

Understanding that the lifelong equipping of leaders is essential for churches and ministries to flourish, we identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God. This calling is found in a great variety of efforts, representing a strategy of embedding leadership identification and development in numerous ministries.



The Goal via Aboriginal Ministries: To identify and develop leaders from each urban Indigenous ministry community by means of individualized leadership development plans.

Aboriginal Ministries evaluates this goal by tracking the number of leaders so identified and developed.

The Goal via Back to God Ministries International: To develop leaders in specific areas (e.g., Burkina Faso) by assisting their knowledge of the Bible and leadership skills.

Back to God Ministries International evaluates this goal by both tracking the development of appropriate media materials for leadership training and counting the number of leaders trained.

The Goal via *The Banner*: To stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part, in a way that encourages biblical thinking about these issues and is in line with our confessional heritage.

The Banner evaluates this goal by tracking indicators of readership and engagement: number of print subscriptions, number of weekly *Banner* update email subscriptions, traffic on the *Banner* website (e.g., pageviews), the Klout index (a measure of overall social media influence and engagement), and satisfaction levels reported in the *Banner* Reader Survey (conducted every 3-4 years).

The Goal via Calvin College: To help students learn to use their hearts, minds, talents, and resources to be attentive, insightful, and creative participants in the world (with the humility to recognize their own culture, time, and place and the call to value human cultures) and to develop lifelong practices of discerning and developing their talents and passions to respond to God's call with their gifts of knowledge, skills, virtues, and faith.

Calvin College evaluates this goal by once every four years implementing an assessment plan that engages a cross-divisional group of students, staff, and faculty, gathering outcome data for its core, major, and co-curriculum programs.

The Goal via Calvin Theological Seminary: To identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God by means of the candidacy process, including the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy.

Calvin Theological Seminary assesses this goal by means of regular academic appraisal, evaluation components of continuing education programs, and exit interviews with graduating students—as evaluated by faculty.

The Goal via the Candidacy Committee: To foster the development of pastoral leadership in the CRC by helping and encouraging classes and councils to identify potential new leaders whom they can assist on their various journeys to pastoral office (including support and accountability throughout the preparatory process for women whose council or classis does not support women in ordained ministry); by granting licensure to exhort to students training for ordained ministry; by applying with consistency, fairness, and justice the denomination's requirements for each person who desires to become a minister of the Word in the CRC, whether applying under Article 6, 7, or 8 of the Church Order, or who desires to be a commissioned pastor applying under Article 23; and by recommending candidates to synod upon their completion of the Ministry Readiness Profile.

The Candidacy Committee evaluates this goal by tracking each year the number of persons entering the ministry of the Word as well as those departing from it.

The Goal via Chaplaincy and Care Ministry: To enlist, endorse, encourage, and enfold those who feel a calling to ministry in the unique field of chaplaincy while increasing awareness in congregations of this call among ordained clergy.

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry assesses this goal by tracking the number of persons entering chaplaincy as well as those departing from chaplaincy positions.

The Goal via Disability Concerns: To develop leaders among persons with disabilities as well as others by implementing connection events and utilizing learning communities.

Disability Concerns evaluates this goal by tracking attendance at events as well as the number of persons stepping into leadership roles.

The Goal via our missions agency: To increase the number of diverse leaders equipped to participate in God's mission of saving the lost and renewing all things.

Our missions agency assesses this goal by tracking the number of leaders coached/trained and the number of those recruited into leadership roles; in doing so it tracks demographics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age) and use participant respondent surveys to determine the degree to which participants report growth and improvement.

The Goal via Pastor Church Resources: To support and enhance the leadership abilities of congregational and classis leaders.

Pastor Church Resources evaluates this goal by means of surveys completed by participants in their services.

The Goal via ServiceLink: To provide opportunities for church leaders to learn about volunteer ministry best practices, to provide meaningful ministry tools and resources for leadership for congregations, and to provide opportunities for new Canadian pastors, campus chaplains, stated clerks, and other local leaders to learn and experience how the CRCNA serves the local church.

ServiceLink assesses this goal by tracking participation and the number of times resources are accessed.

The Goal via Sustaining Congregational Excellence and Sustaining Pastoral Excellence: To provide opportunities for pastors to gather together in peer learning groups for learning, support, and encouragement; and to enable ministry leaders in nurturing health in their congregations through self-selected ministry projects.

Sustaining Congregational Excellence and Sustaining Pastoral Excellence evaluate pastor and other leader learning by means of written reports, submitted twice during the process of each learning group/project, to indicate impact; and by tracking the number of participants.

The Goal via Timothy Leadership Training Institute: To develop pastors and lay leaders (particularly for those who do not have access to formal education) with instruction in biblical concepts and congregational leadership by training and certifying approximately 500-750 basic trainers per year and by developing approximately 250 master trainers per year through collaboration with other organizations by means of on-site and localized ministry activities.

The Timothy Leadership Training Institute assesses this goal by tracking the outcomes of training.

Significantly, the Ministry Plan *Our Journey 2020* seeks to focus these many efforts in ways that achieve our desired future: *Congregations and ministries of the CRC are places where clergy and lay leaders are developed, trained, and empowered to lead effectively in today's diverse and challenging contexts.*

By means of an annual sampling of CRC members, *Our Journey 2020* measures congregants' perceptions or reports of their satisfaction with leadership and their descriptions of the degree of diversity in leadership they experience; in addition, we measure our partners' expression of satisfaction with leadership development opportunities.

Appendix H
Curriculum Vitae: Zachary J. King

Objective

To be a catalyst for the deepening and broadening of the CRCNA's commitment to and practice of missions within North America and around the world.

Education

Bachelor of Arts in Religion and Theology, December 1998
Bachelor of Science in Geology, August 1998
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Master of Divinity, May 2003
Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Master of Theology in New Testament, May 2005
Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament, February 2017
Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Ministry Experience

Seminary teacher with Christian Reformed World Missions at Veenstra Seminary in Donga, Nigeria (2002-2003). Reason for termination: end of agreed-upon term.

- Taught adult students courses in theology, biblical interpretation, and ministry skills
- Administered essential ministries of the seminary with other staff
- Cared for the spiritual well-being of students and their families
- Led in worship at the school chapel and local church services

Interim pastor of Second Christian Reformed Church, Allendale, Michigan (2004-2005). Reason for termination: end of agreed-upon term.

- Provided preaching and worship leadership
- Helped congregation to discern mission and vision after retirement of the former pastor and before the calling of a new pastor
- Taught catechism, Bible studies, adult education, etc.
- Assisted in the development of an outreach strategy
- Provided pastoral care for congregants

Field Leader and Church and Leadership Developer with Christian Reformed World Missions, Haiti (2005 to present)

- Taught Haitian pastors and other church leaders biblical, theological, and practical ministry subjects in two theological training schools
- Administered the work of CRWM and coordinated the combined ministry of CRWM, WR, and BTGMI in Haiti
- Provided support and mentoring to pastors, lay leaders, and church planters to strengthen their congregations in worship, evangelism, teaching, discipleship, administration, pastoral care, etc.
- Initiated and developed Timothy Leadership Training in Haiti
- Developed the *Perspectives Réformées* French-language ministry of BTGMI in Haiti
- Led and organized the strategic planning process for the ministries of the CRCNA, including the development of mission, vision, strategies, etc.

- Supervised CRWM international and local staff and shared local staff of the CRCNA agencies in Haiti.
- Designed and led a process of evaluation for CRWM ministry partners, CRWM-Haiti itself, and the combined CRCNA ministry team
- Managed and resolved conflict between staff members of denominational agencies
- Developed and promoted tools to evaluate congregational health in Haitian Kreyòl
- Created strategies in partnership with evangelical denominations to develop local churches and plant emerging congregations
- Coordinated and received North American volunteers and teams in Haiti
- Promoted the work of CRWM to a network of donors in order to raise support for projects in the amount of $150,000 or more annually

Additional Experience

Vice-President of the Board of Adoration Christian Centre in Port-au-Prince, Haiti (2010-present)

- Assisted in the development of vision, mission, and policies for the Reformed Christian day-school (K-6)
- Encouraged school administrators to integrate faith into curriculum and teaching

Board Member of the Consortium for the Reinforcement of Christian Education in Haiti (2014-present)

- Developed strategies to engage churches and schools in the improvement of Christian education
- Provided oversight and encouragement for the director and other key employees

Founding Member of Timothy Leadership Training (TLT) Coordination Team in Haiti (2009 to present) and Master Trainer

- Developed TLT small groups in local churches as a means to equip lay leaders in basic ministry and leadership skills
- Mentored pastors and lay leaders in pastoral care, stewardship, preaching, teaching, and community outreach

Elder of Quisqueya Chapel in Port-au-Prince Haiti (2011-2013)

- Assisted church board in staff supervision
- Regular preaching and occasional teaching of Sunday school
- Provided guidance as a pastoral adviser in challenging situations
- Since 2015, served on the Pastoral Search Committee at the congregation's request

Facilitator of New Missionary Orientation Group established with the assistance of an Assembly of God missionary in Port-au-Prince in 2016. The group orients new missionaries from evangelical missions in spiritual growth, self-care, conflict management, and other key concepts from the long-term perspective.

Internships in church planting in Bayamón, Puerto Rico (2000) and in established church ministry in Paw Paw (Kalamazoo, Mich.) Christian Reformed Church (2002) as part of the requirements for my Master of Divinity degree.

Appendix I
Condensed Financial Statements of the Agencies and Institutions

Back to God Ministries International
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 1,515		144		1,659
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	3,152		932	99	4,183
Receivables & Advances	387	-	-	-	387
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-		-	-	-
Equities	-		-	-	-
Partnerships	-		-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-		-	-	-
PP & E	394	-	-	-	394
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	5,448	-	1,076	99	6,623
Accounts Payable	411	-	-	-	411
Notes/Loans Payable	279	-	-	-	279
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	406	-	-	-	406
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	1,096	-	-	-	1,096
Net Assets	$ 4,352	-	1,076	99	5,527

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Note 3: List details of restrictions. Isaac Jen endowment fund and Media Reach Fund.

Note 4: List details of restrictions. Permanently restricted endowment funds.

Back to God Ministries International
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	3,194	$	3,050
% of Total Income		37.8%		32.6%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	3,585	$	3,125
Estate Gifts	$	1,394	$	2,980
Total Gift Income		4,979		6,105
% of Total Income		59.0%		65.3%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	-	$	-
Grants-Animation	$	-	$	-
Miscellaneous	$	273	$	188
Total Other Income		273		188
% of Total Income		3.2%		2.0%
TOTAL INCOME		8,446		9,343
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
English	$	2,419	$	2,214
FTEs		16		16
International	$	4,021	$	3,642
FTEs		10		8
Education	$	165	$	150
FTEs		2		2
Total Program Service $	$	6,605	$	6,006
Total Program Service FTEs		28		26
% of Total $		73.8%		71.1%
% of Total FTEs		75.7%		72.2%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	799	$	929
FTEs		4		4
Plant Operations	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	$	1,551	$	1,513
FTEs		5		6
Total Support Service $		2,350		2,442
Total Support Service FTEs		9		10
% of Total $		26.2%		28.9%
% of Total FTEs		24.3%		27.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	8,955	$	8,448
TOTAL FTEs		37		36
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	(509)	$	895

Calvin College
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 36,781		-		36,781
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	19,115	-	-	-	19,115
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	22,563		14,934	41,338	78,835
Equities	32,152		21,282	58,906	112,340
Partnerships	-		-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	1,692		1,120	3,100	5,912
PP & E	209,792	-	-	-	209,792
	-				
Other	4,063	-	-	-	4,063
Total Assets	326,158	-	37,336	103,344	466,838
Accounts Payable	2,884	-	-	-	2,884
Notes/Loans Payable	89,215	-	-	-	89,215
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	5,976	-	-	-	5,976
Deferred Income	3,240	-	-	-	3,240
Other	76,658	-	-	-	76,658
Total Liabilities	177,973	-	-	-	177,973
Net Assets	$ 148,185	-	37,336	103,344	288,865

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Note 3: List details of restrictions. Over 1,405 accounts for instruction, scholarships, grants, research, public service, student services, etc. funded by outside sources.

Note 4: List details of restrictions. Endowed gifts.

Calvin College
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	2,389	$	2,367
% of Total Income		1.6%		1.6%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	3,443	$	3,603
Estate Gifts	$	53	$	55
Total Gift Income		3,496		3,658
% of Total Income		2.3%		2.4%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	139,083	$	139,630
Grants	$	-	$	-
Miscellaneous	$	3,943	$	4,217
Total Other Income		143,026		143,847
% of Total Income		96.0%		96.0%
TOTAL INCOME		148,911		149,872
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Education	$	129,426	$	131,204
FTEs		576		572
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service $	$	129,426	$	131,204
Total Program Service FTEs		576		572
% of Total $		86.9%		87.5%
% of Total FTEs		77.7%		79.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	8,019	$	7,600
FTEs		60		55
Plant Operations	$	8,319	$	8,055
FTEs		69		66
Fund-raising	$	3,147	$	3,013
FTEs		36		31
Total Support Service $		19,485		18,668
Total Support Service FTEs		165		152
% of Total $		13.1%		12.5%
% of Total FTEs		22.3%		21.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	148,911	$	149,872
TOTAL FTEs		741		724
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	-	$	-

Calvin Theological Seminary
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 2,909	-	1	-	2,910
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	54	-	1,891	-	1,945
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	28	-	-	-	28
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	11,659	-	11,659
Equities	-	-	9,946	13,746	23,692
Partnerships	-	-		5,058	5,058
Property (nonoperating)	-	-		1,050	1,050
PP & E	10,624	-	-	-	10,624
Other	1,656	-		-	1,656
Total Assets	15,271	-	23,497	19,854	58,622
Accounts Payable	1,581	-	-	-	1,581
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	23	-	-	-	23
Annuities Payable	-	-	159	-	159
Deferred Income	-	-	287	-	287
Other	-	-	1,929	-	1,929
Total Liabilities	1,604	-	2,375	-	3,979
Net Assets	$ 13,667	-	21,122	19,854	54,643

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.	Office building in endowment - investment income.
Note 2: List details of designations.	Accounts payable: Early retirement and post-retirement liabilities. Notes/Loans Payable: Net student loan receivables and liabilities.
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Donor designated, program, scholarship, grants, and construction pledges.
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	

Calvin Theological Seminary
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	2,567	$	2,449
% of Total Income		33.5%		32.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	1,165	$	1,215
Estate Gifts	$	180	$	140
Total Gift Income		1,345		1,355
% of Total Income		17.5%		17.7%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	2,408	$	2,440
Grants	$	1,272	$	1,342
Miscellaneous	$	73	$	69
Total Other Income		3,753		3,851
% of Total Income		49.0%		50.3%
TOTAL INCOME		7,665		7,655
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Instructional	$	3,049	$	3,031
FTEs		23		22
Public Service	$	96	$	104
FTEs		1		1
Academic Support	$	1,312	$	1,262
FTEs		5		5
Student Services	$	546	$	577
FTEs		5		5
Student Aid	$	363	$	329
FTEs		1		1
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service $	$	5,366	$	5,303
Total Program Service FTEs		35		34
% of Total $		68.9%		69.2%
% of Total FTEs		67.3%		68.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	914	$	872
FTEs		9		9
Plant Operations	$	866	$	910
FTEs		2		2
Fund-raising	$	639	$	582
FTEs		6		5
Total Support Service $		2,419		2,364
Total Support Service FTEs		17		16
% of Total $		31.1%		30.8%
% of Total FTEs		32.7%		32.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	7,785	$	7,667
TOTAL FTEs		52		50
Post-retirement benefit costs >		**48**		**-**
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	(72)	$	(12)

Congregational Services
Balance Sheet (000s)

INCLUDED IN SYNODICAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Congregational Services
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	5,678	$	5,474
% of Total Income		45.5%		40.7%
Other Gift Income:				
Gifts & Offerings	$	725	$	940
Estate Gifts	$	-	$	-
Total Gift Income		725		940
% of Total Income		5.8%		7.0%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	5,777	$	5,872
Grants	$	-	$	1,000
Services & Misc	$	309	$	149
Total Other Income		6,086		7,021
% of Total Income		48.7%		52.3%
TOTAL INCOME		12,489		13,435
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Lead-Chaplaincy Services	$	261	$	266
FTEs		2		2
Lead-Pastor-Church Relations/SCE/SPE	$	1,246	$	982
FTEs		6		6
Lead-Candidacy	$	179	$	235
FTEs		2		2
Lead-Ecumenical Relations	$	170	$	150
FTEs				
Lead-Network/Healthy Church		26		26
FTEs		1		1
Justice-Race Relations	$	483	$	654
FTEs		4		4
Justice-Safe Church Ministry	$	206	$	244
FTEs		2		2
Justice-Disability Concerns	$	298	$	265
FTEs		2		2
Justice-Social & Restorative Justice	$	717	$	727
FTEs		5		5
Justice-Ministries in Canada	$	1,074	$	1,088
FTEs		5		5
Faith-Volunteer Services	$	168	$	153
FTEs		2		2
Faith-Church Resources (FA)	$	385	$	538
FTEs		4		4
MSS-Agency services	$	5,285	$	4,859
FTEs	$	24	$	24
MSS-Faith Alive (FA)			$	841
FTEs				
MSS-Banner (FA)	$	1,293	$	1,221
FTEs		4		4
MSS-World Literature (FA)	$	482	$	556
FTEs		3		3
MSS-Communications	$	641	$	198
FTEs		3		3
Worship-Worship Resources (FA)	$	380	$	404
FTEs		3		3
Grant Programs - Leadership Init., Connections, Pastor Finance			$	121
FTEs				
Total Program Service $	$	13,294	$	13,528
Total Program Service FTEs		72		72
% of Total $		99.7%		99.9%
% of Total FTEs		98.6%		98.6%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
D.D.M.	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	$	37	$	17
FTEs		1		1
Total Support Service $		37		17
Total Support Service FTEs		1		1
% of Total $		0.3%		0.1%
% of Total FTEs		1.4%		1.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	13,331	$	13,545
TOTAL FTEs		73		73
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	(842)	$	(110)

Employees' Retirement Plan - Canada (in Canadian $)
Balance Sheet (000s)

	December 31, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 187	-	-	-	187
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	469		-	-	469
Equities	4,180		-	-	4,180
GICs / Stable Asset Fund	240		-	-	240
Property (nonoperating)			-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	5,076	-	-	-	5,076
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Forfeitures Due Agencies	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable		-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets	$ 5,076	-	-	-	5,076

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Note 3: List details of restrictions.

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

Employees' Retirement Plan - Canada (in Canadian $)
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

		2015 Actual		2016 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
Estate Gifts	$	-	$	-
Total Gift Income		-		-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Income:				
Employer Contributions	$	443	$	450
Participant Contributions	$	55	$	58
Investment Earnings	$	69	$	313
Total Other Income		567		821
% of Total Income		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS		567		821
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	$	154	$	434
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Program Service $	$	154	$	434
Total Program Service FTEs		-		-
% of Total $		95.1%		97.7%
% of Total FTEs				
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	8	$	10
FTEs		-		-
Plant Operations	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service $		8		10
Total Support Service FTEs		-		-
% of Total $		4.9%		2.3%
% of Total FTEs				
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	$	162	$	444
TOTAL FTEs		-		-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	$	405	$	377

Employees' Savings Plan United States
Balance Sheet (000s)

	December 31, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ -	-	-	-	-
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	5,991		-	-	5,991
Equities	18,613		-	-	18,613
GICs / Stable Asset Fund	2,898		-	-	2,898
Diversified	5,943		-	-	5,943
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	33,445	-	-	-	33,445
Accounts Payable	18	-	-	-	18
Forfeitures Due Agencies	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable		-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	18	-	-	-	18
Net Assets	$ 33,427	-	-	-	33,427

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Note 3: List details of restrictions.

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

Employees' Savings Plan United States
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

		2015 Actual		2016 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
Estate Gifts	$	-	$	-
Total Gift Income		-		-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Income:				
Contributions	$	2,378	$	2,352
Grants	$	-	$	-
Investment Income	$	8	$	1,787
Total Other Income		2,386		4,139
% of Total Income		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS		2,386		4,139
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	$	1,514	$	1,330
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Program Service $	$	1,514	$	1,330
Total Program Service FTEs		-		-
% of Total $		91.8%		90.7%
% of Total FTEs		0.0%		0.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	135	$	136
FTEs		1		1
Plant Operations	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service $		135		136
Total Support Service FTEs		1		1
% of Total $		8.2%		9.3%
% of Total FTEs		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	$	1,649	$	1,466
TOTAL FTEs		1		1
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	$	737	$	2,673

Global Missions
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 3,123	1,712	327	-	5,162
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	648	648
Receivables & Advances	1,388	3	4	-	1,395
Inventory	1	-	-	-	1
Prepaids & Advances	399	-	-	-	399
Investments (note 1):	-	-	-	-	
Bonds	606	1,236	631	303	2,776
Equities	630	724	1,868	454	3,676
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	257	-	-	-	257
PP & E	410	-	-	-	410
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	6,814	3,675	2,830	1,405	14,724
Accounts Payable	1,182	-	-	-	1,182
Notes/Loans Payable	579	-	-	-	579
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	259	-	-	-	259
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1,133	-	-	-	1,133
Total Liabilities	3,153	-	-	-	3,153
Net Assets	3,661	3,675	2,830	1,405	11,571

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.	List supplied upon request (land/buildings overseas are off book) HM-Mission Trg Fund: $385; Hawaii: $1,208; Estate special proj: $227
Note 2: List details of designations.	WM-Board Designated Reserves $239 WM-Endowment/annuities $0 - Other $0
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	NA Trng: $39; Can Legacy: $194; CMI: $69; Above budget: $299; Short-term Loan $511; other $69; Restricted Gifts
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Emerging Leader Trust: $150; Endowments

Global Missions
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	7,780	$	7,444
% of Total Income		37.1%		34.4%
Other Gift Income:				
Gifts & Offerings	$	10,682	$	10,209
Estate Gifts	$	1,223	$	3,189
Total Gift Income		11,905		13,398
% of Total Income		56.7%		61.8%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	120	$	134
Grants	$	76	$	57
Miscellaneous	$	1,111	$	633
Total Other Income		1,307		824
% of Total Income		6.2%		3.8%
TOTAL INCOME		20,992		21,666
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Ministry Teams - N. America	$	3,703	$	3,086
FTEs		20		18
Ministry Devel & Plan. - CBI	$	737	$	559
FTEs		6		5
Africa & Europe	$	3,556	$	3,631
FTEs		24		18
Eurasia	$	2,772	$	2,546
FTEs		17		14
Latin America & Asia	$	4,079	$	4,017
FTEs		21		19
Global/other Int'l program	$	1,587	$	1,461
FTEs		15		40
Mission Educ Engagement/Vol	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		2
Total Program Service $	$	16,434	$	15,300
Total Program Service FTEs		103		116
% of Total $		80.7%		78.5%
% of Total FTEs		83.1%		85.9%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	2,137	$	2,132
FTEs		6		6
Operations and Logistics/PLC	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	$	1,804	$	2,051
FTEs		15		13
Total Support Service $		3,941		4,183
Total Support Service FTEs		21		19
% of Total $		19.3%		21.5%
% of Total FTEs		16.9%		14.1%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	20,375	$	19,483
TOTAL FTEs		124		135
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	617	$	2,183

Loan Fund
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 16,315	-	-	-	16,315
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	18,561	-	-	-	18,561
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-		-	-	-
Equities	-		-	-	-
Partnerships	-		-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	298	-	-	-	298
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	35,174	-	-	-	35,174
Accounts Payable	126	-	-	-	126
Notes/Loans Payable	27,541	-	-	-	27,541
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable		-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	27,667	-	-	-	27,667
Net Assets	$ 7,507	-	-	-	7,507

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Note 3: List details of restrictions.

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

Loan Fund
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
Estate Gifts	$	-	$	-
Total Gift Income		-		-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	-	$	-
Grants	$	-	$	-
Miscellaneous	$	1,068	$	984
Total Other Income		1,068		984
% of Total Income		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL INCOME		1,068		984
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Loan Interest	$	591	$	574
FTEs		1		1
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service $	$	591	$	574
Total Program Service FTEs		1		1
% of Total $		66.6%		61.2%
% of Total FTEs		33.3%		33.3%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	297	$	364
FTEs		1		1
Plant Operations	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	$	-	$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service $		297		364
Total Support Service FTEs		1		1
% of Total $		33.4%		38.8%
% of Total FTEs		66.7%		66.7%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	888	$	938
TOTAL FTEs		2		2
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	180	$	46

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - Canada
Balance Sheet (000s) in Canadian $

	----------December 31, 2016----------				
	Pension	S.A.F			Total
Cash	$ 2,151	311	-	-	2,462
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	68	13	-	-	81
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	10,755	-	-	-	10,755
Equities	39,066	-	-	-	39,066
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Real Estate (nonoperating)	2,462	-	-	-	2,462
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	54,502	324	-	-	54,826
Accounts Payable	142	25	-	-	167
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	142	25	-	-	167
Net Assets	$ 54,360	299	-	-	54,659

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Note 3: List details of restrictions.

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - Canada
Changes in Net Assets (000s) in Canadian $

	MPF 2015 Actual	MPF 2016 Actual	SAF 2015 Actual	SAF 2016 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	$ -	$ -	$ 59	$ 100
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	96.7%	97.1%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Estate Gifts	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:				
Participant Assessments	$ 3,553	$ 3,170	$ -	$ -
Grants	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Investment Earnings/(Losses)	$ 2,614	$ 2,946	$ 2	$ 3
Total Other Income	6,167	6,116	2	3
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	3.3%	2.9%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	6,167	6,116	61	103
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	$ 2,768	$ 2,618	$ 35	$ 15
FTEs	-	-	-	-
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Program Service $	$ 2,768	$ 2,618	$ 35	$ 15
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-
% of Total $	78.2%	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%		
Support Services:				
Management & General	$ 771	$ 874	$ -	$ -
FTEs	1	1	-	-
Plant Operations	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service $	771	874	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1	-	-
% of Total $	21.8%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%		
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	$ 3,539	$ 3,492	$ 35	$ 15
TOTAL FTEs	1	1	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	$ 2,628	$ 2,624	$ 26	$ 88

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States
Balance Sheet (000s)

	December 31, 2016				
	Pension	S.A.F			Total
Cash	$ 4,062	118	-	-	4,180
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	172	-	-	-	172
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	17,792	-	-	-	17,792
Equities	58,130	-	-	-	58,130
Diversified / Alternative	10,781	-	-	-	10,781
Real Estate (nonoperating)	9,481	-	-	-	9,481
PP & E	393	-	-	-	393
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	$ 100,811	118	-	-	100,929
Accounts Payable	73	74	-	-	147
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	73	74	-	-	147
Net Assets	$ 100,738	44	-	-	100,782

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations.

Note 3: List details of restrictions.

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

	MPF 2015 Actual	MPF 2016 Actual	SAF 2015 Actual	SAF 2016 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	$ -	$ -	$ 139	$ 179
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	50.7%	100.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Estate Gifts	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:				
Participant Assessments	$ 5,406	$ 5,384	$ -	$ -
Grants	$ -	$ -	$ 135	$ -
Investment Earnings	$ (231)	$ 4,921	$ -	$ -
Total Other Income	5,175	10,305	135	-
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	49.3%	0.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	5,175	10,305	274	179
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	$ 9,834	$ 9,905	$ 253	$ 152
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Program Service $	$ 9,834	$ 9,905	$ 253	$ 152
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-
% of Total $	89.8%	90.6%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%		
Support Services:				
Management & General	$ 1,118	$ 1,023	$ -	$ -
FTEs	2	2	-	-
Plant Operations	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service $	1,118	1,023	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	2	2	-	-
% of Total $	10.2%	9.4%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%		
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	$ 10,952	$ 10,928	$ 253	$ 152
TOTAL FTEs	2	2	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	$ (5,777)	$ (623)	$ 21	$ 27

Synodical Administrative Services
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 4,398	-	1,650	-	6,048
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	1,493	-	-	-	1,493
Inventory	1,305	-	-	-	1,305
Prepaids & Advances	145	-	-	-	145
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	19,729	-	-	-	19,729
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	6,917	-	-	-	6,917
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	33,987	-	1,650	-	35,637
Accounts Payable	3,922	-	-	-	3,922
Notes/Loans Payable	20,807	-	-	-	20,807
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	42	-	-	-	42
Other	516	-	-	-	516
Total Liabilities	25,287	-	-	-	25,287
Net Assets	$ 8,700	-	1,650	-	10,350

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property currently in use. Canadian Cash Concentration and Netting for Interest Program.

Note 2: List details of restrictions.

Note 3: List details of restrictions. Includes: $37,000 AOYC, $76,000 DORR, $949,000 Lilly Connections, $498,000 Binational Gathering, and $90,000 other.

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

Synodical Administrative Services
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	2,398	$	2,296
% of Total Income		40.0%		49.1%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	19	$	602
Estate Gifts	$	-	$	-
Total Gift Income		19		602
% of Total Income		0.3%		12.9%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	-	$	-
Grants	$	75	$	-
Services & Misc	$	3,503	$	1,779
Total Other Income		3,578		1,779
% of Total Income		59.7%		38.0%
TOTAL INCOME		5,995		4,677
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Synodical Services & Grants	$	2,239	$	2,400
FTEs		5		5
Communications				
FTEs				
Sea to Sea expenses & grants	$	14		
FTEs				
Leadership Programs	$	35	$	17
FTEs		-		-
Total Program Service $	$	2,288	$	2,417
Total Program Service FTEs		5		5
% of Total $		62.2%		64.7%
% of Total FTEs		41.7%		41.7%
Support Services:				
Management & General	$	991	$	1,203
FTEs		4		4
D.M.A.	$	353	$	-
FTEs		2		2
Fund-raising (Foundation)	$	48	$	116
FTEs		1		1
Total Support Service $		1,392		1,319
Total Support Service FTEs		7		7
% of Total $		37.8%		35.3%
% of Total FTEs		58.3%		58.3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	3,680	$	3,736
TOTAL FTEs		12		12
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	2,315	$	941

Synodical Administrative Services (Agency Services)
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
Estate Gifts	$	-	$	-
Total Gift Income		-		-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	-	$	-
Grants	$	-	$	-
Services & Misc	$	6,475	$	6,648
Total Other Income		6,475		6,648
% of Total Income		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL INCOME		6,475		6,648
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Advancement	$	1,008	$	1,122
FTEs		9		9
Finance & Payroll	$	2,250	$	2,302
FTEs		22		22
IT and Phones	$	1,617	$	1,494
FTEs		7		7
Human Resources	$	345	$	375
FTEs		2		2
Coordinated Services	$	176	$	158
FTEs		2		2
Total Program Service $	$	5,396	$	5,451
Total Program Service FTEs		42		42
% of Total $		83.3%		82.0%
% of Total FTEs		95.5%		95.5%
Support Services:				
Management & General				
FTEs				
Plant Operations/Debt Serv.	$	1,079	$	1,197
FTEs		2		2
Fund-raising (Foundation)				
FTEs				
Total Support Service $		1,079		1,197
Total Support Service FTEs		2		2
% of Total $		16.7%		18.0%
% of Total FTEs		4.5%		4.5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$	6,475	$	6,648
TOTAL FTEs		44		44
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	$	-	$	-

World Renew
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2016				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	$ 580	6,021	9,058	-	15,659
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	1,773	1,000	865	-	3,638
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaids & Advances	1,218	-	-	-	1,218
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	27	-	-	-	27
Equities	6,924	1,781	-	-	8,705
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	747	-	104	-	851
Other		-	-	-	-
Total Assets	11,269	8,802	10,027	-	30,098
Accounts Payable	1,134	-	-	-	1,134
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	197	-	-	-	197
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	1,331	-	-	-	1,331
Net Assets	$ 9,938	8,802	10,027	-	28,767

Footnotes:

Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.

Note 2: List details of designations. Term endowments as stipulated by board = $8,028; GAC reserve = $774

Note 3: List details of restrictions. Mission home = $104; Purpose-restricted gifts = $8,859; Term endowments as stipulated by donors = $1,064

Note 4: List details of restrictions.

World Renew
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 14-15 Actual		Fiscal 15-16 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	$	-	$	-
% of Total Income		-		-
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	$	19,786	$	17,416
Estate Gifts	$	2,254	$	5,871
Total Gift Income		22,040		23,287
% of Total Income		61.6%		65.9%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	$	-	$	-
Grants	$	13,119	$	11,758
Miscellaneous	$	646	$	311
Total Other Income		13,765		12,069
% of Total Income		38.4%		34.1%
TOTAL INCOME		35,805		35,356
EXPENSES (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Overseas programs	$	11,372	$	11,078
FTEs		40		38
North America programs	$	393	$	415
FTEs				
Disaster relief programs	$	1,524	$	1,521
FTEs		13		13
Above-budget relief costs	$	16,065	$	12,796
FTEs		4		3
Education	$	1,463	$	1,603
FTEs		12		12
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
	$	-	$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service $		30,817		27,413
Total Program Service FTEs		69		66
% of Total $		88.5%		86.6%
% of Total FTEs		73.4%		70.2%
Support Services:				
Management & General		1,438		1,641
FTEs		6		7
Plant Operations		-		-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising		2,571		2,593
FTEs		19		21
Total Support Service $		4,009		4,234
Total Support Service FTEs		25		28
% of Total $		11.5%		13.4%
% of Total FTEs		26.6%		29.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		34,826		31,647
TOTAL FTEs		94		94
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)		979		3,709

REPORTS OF AGENCIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND MINISTRIES

Introduction

Each year the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA submits a *unified* report to synod composed of ministry updates provided by the agencies, educational institutions, and congregational service ministries of the Christian Reformed Church. The reports of the ministries are organized and presented in alignment with Our Calling—five ministry priorities endorsed by synod (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 610; *Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 563): Faith Formation, Servant Leadership, Global Mission, Mercy and Justice, and Gospel Proclamation and Worship. Supplementary reports will be provided by denominational boards and standing committees of synod, if needed, prior to the time synod convenes.

Writing these reports is an exercise of accountability that is appropriate in our life together as a denomination. Much of what is written is provided as information for synod. Some of the material provides a background for decisions that synod will be asked to make. In either case, these reports are the story of how God is blessing and guiding our ministry through the agencies and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church. As you read the material that follows, we invite you to join us in thanksgiving for the many opportunities provided to proclaim our Lord in the communities in which we live and work, and throughout the world.

Steven R. Timmermans
Executive Director of the CRCNA

Calvin College

I. Introduction

Calvin College's mission is to equip students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world. To fulfill this mission, the current strategic plan, *Calvin 2019: Strengthen, Support, Secure*, keeps the college accountable to its goals.

As the landscape of higher education shifts and changes, we too adapt our teaching and learning approaches to maintain excellence and continue to improve. We pursue this innovation in the context of our commitment to Christ and his truth, and we do so grounded in our rich theological tradition.

In the 2016-2017 year, the college is focused on the following key objectives from its strategic plan:

- Calvin will align academic programs and activities with the educational framework and provide evidence of that alignment for internal and external evaluation.
- Calvin will develop a comprehensive plan to assess teaching.
- Calvin will continue to evaluate new program initiatives for further exploration, feasibility assessment, and mission fit.
- Calvin will continue to develop new enrollment strategies with the goal of enrolling 1,000 new first-year and 100 new transfer students, moving toward a total goal of 4,000 to 4,200 undergraduate students.
- Calvin will implement a program of coordinated care, based on identified risk factors, that is designed to improve student retention and success.
- Calvin will implement "Calvin LifeWork," a new program designed to help students identify and prepare for all aspects of their calling.
- Calvin will continue to improve the quality of its workplace as measured by the Best Christian Workplaces Survey. More specifically, the college will measure progress in the areas of trust, engagement, collaboration, development, and commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Calvin will complete a cost analysis on sustainability to inform a decision on whether Calvin becomes a signatory for the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment.

In addition to these goals, the college affirms its commitment to diversity and inclusion, with specific goals of continuing to enhance cultural competency within the Calvin community, advancing and supporting inclusive excellence and global awareness on campus, and continuing to increase the proportion of underrepresented populations on campus.

II. Reflecting on Our Calling

Calvin College is a Christian academic community dedicated to rigorous intellectual inquiry. What happens at Calvin College, both in and out of the classroom, has strong connections to the CRCNA's five themes of calling. Indeed, the Calvin mission statement ("Calvin College equips students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world") pairs nicely with the denomination's quintet of

emphases. Below are a few examples of the places where Calvin's work and the CRCNA's streams find confluence and harmony.

- *Faith formation*—Calvin campus ministries provide leadership opportunities that allow our 4,000 students from around the globe to serve those around them while they deepen their faith, cultivate their leadership skills, and seek God's calling. In the residence halls, our Barnabas teams consist of 45 students dedicated to walking alongside their peers in the dorms as together they seek God.
- *Servant leadership*—The work of "identifying, training, and recruiting leaders in the kingdom" is central to Calvin's purpose. The brand-new Calvin LifeWork program is one example of this focus. Calvin LifeWork will prepare our students during college for life after college, from their careers to their relationships to their overall leadership and success in this fast-paced, ever-changing world.
- *Global mission*—Our Calvin Institute of Christian Worship brought more than 1,600 people, representing 40-plus countries from A (Angola) to Z (Zambia), to Calvin's campus in January 2017 for its annual worship symposium. The conference theme was "The Faithful Witness: Being Christ's Church in an Apocalyptic World," based on the book of Revelation, particularly the idea that in the midst of the book's majesty and mystery is the golden thread that God is in charge over even the most tumultuous of earthly events.
- *Mercy and justice*—Calvin's John M. Perkins Leadership fellows are a small group of students selected to participate in a series of leadership development opportunities during their first two years of college. These opportunities prepare Perkins fellows to address big issues like poverty, injustice, racism, and materialism. Perkins fellows are committed to renewal and restoration in our communities.
- *Gospel proclamation and worship*—The gospel is proclaimed and the Lord is worshiped in our teaching, scholarship, and service to the community. In addition, the Calvin community gathers multiple times per week for worship: daily chapels, our weekly, Sunday-evening LOFT (Living Out Faith Together) service, dorm worship, foreign-language chapels, and more. And each year we have two campus-wide Bible studies, one in the fall and one in the spring. In 2016-2017 we looked at Revelation in the fall, and we are focusing on apologetics in the spring.

III. Board matters

A. Board officers

Board officers for the 2016-2017 year are Craig Lubben, chair; Mary Bonnema, vice-chair; Christine Metzger, secretary; Sally Vander Ploeg, treasurer (vice president for finance and administration); and Sharolyn Christians, assistant secretary (executive assistant to the president).

B. Board membership

Regional member: Regions 1 and 2

Ms. Margaret Verboon (Pan Zhang) is completing her second term on the board and is not eligible for reappointment. The board presents the

following slate of names to the classes in Regions 1 and 2 for a vote to name the trustee to be presented to Synod 2017 for ratification:

Rev. Thomas (Tom) Bomhof is a pastor at Fleetwood CRC in Surrey, British Columbia. He received his M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1988. Under his leadership at Fleetwood CRC, the church has hosted the Korean emergent Good Shepherd CRC. Rev. Bomhof has had extensive experience serving on other boards and committees for the denomination and for other nongovernmental organizations, including The King's University board, the Christian Reformed Home Missions board, and Classis Alberta South (as stated clerk). His wife, Jodie, has been an active Calvin alumni network leader in British Columbia for a number of years and has served on the Calvin Alumni Board. His oldest daughter and all of his wife's siblings are Calvin College graduates.

Mr. Richard (Rick) Mast is a commissioned youth pastor and has worked in two CRC congregations as a youth minister since 1992. He graduated from Calvin College with a bachelor's degree in special education – cognitive impairment. Mr. Mast is currently serving part-time as a chaplain at the Northern Alberta Institute for Technology. Besides his experience as a college chaplain, his higher education experience includes currently serving on the board of The King's University in Edmonton. He often attends Calvin's Festival of Faith and Writing and has four children who graduated from Calvin College. While attending Calvin, Mr. Mast was on the wrestling and hockey teams.

IV. Finances

The college completed its financial restructuring plan in July 2016, and the outstanding debt now stands at $78 million. The college is thankful for God's provision and care throughout this process.

In 2016-2017, Calvin focused on operational efficiency, improved reporting, budget planning and training, leadership development, and moving forward in our progress toward the financial and campus master-planning goals in our strategic plan.

Foremost in our minds is the cost of education and the quality of said education as we work to fulfill our mission. As we build a budget, we must forecast the number of students we will have, the financial aid we offer, the salaries and benefits we need to offer to retain faculty and staff, and the way we organize the college to support student learning. This requires careful thinking, but we are committed to having a balanced budget and to being nimble enough to respond to future challenges.

One of the challenges faced by all higher education institutions in the Midwest has to do with the declining number of high school graduates in Michigan and in some of our neighboring states. The number of secondary school graduates has declined in the CRCNA as well. Colleges and universities with clear senses of mission, solid academic reputations, and disciplined budgets will weather this demographic shift, and we want to be sure that Calvin is among these colleges. While we don't believe the future of higher education is bleak, we want to emphasize the real need for us to be nimble and disciplined. We must take on these challenges while continuing

to provide a high-quality education that is firmly rooted in a compelling Reformed tradition.

Finally, assumptions about tuition and room and board rates were approved by the board at its fall meeting, and final decisions on those matters will be included in the final 2017-2018 budget to be considered by the board in early May. These financial details will be reported to synod by way of the Calvin College supplemental report to synod.

V. Academic initiatives

Calvin has a rich tradition of Christian intellectual leadership. Such leadership cannot be taken for granted, however. Thus, in 2016-2017, Calvin has made strides in a number of areas that the college believes will continue its legacy of excellent academics for decades to come.

During the summer of 2016, the college supported student researchers by means of various internal and external grants. These included 88 summer Science Division fellows, 16 McGregor fellows (arts, humanities, social sciences), and eight Center for Social Research interns. Overall, this is an increase of about 18 research opportunities for Calvin students from the previous year. The college also has enhanced student scholar travel support via a new travel-support program that pays for Calvin students to present their work to professional audiences.

Under the leadership of religion professor Won Lee, Calvin faculty met, with support from a Council of Independent Colleges NetVUE grant, to deepen their understanding of vocation as understood in a Reformed context, to discuss collectively how best to address student questions and concerns about vocation, and to prepare resources that can be used by Calvin faculty in their own work with students. In addition, associate dean Will Katerberg facilitated reading groups using *American Higher Education in Crisis? What Everyone Needs to Know*, a book that has sections on trends among students, the finances of higher education, leadership and decision making, and future trends. The group included both faculty and staff/administrators.

Cross-divisional, multidisciplinary initiatives on citizenship, community health, and sustainability, sponsored by Provost Cheryl Brandsen, are in their second of five years and are beginning to bear fruit as evidenced by written publications, public conversations, and opportunities for student research.

In December 2016 committees that formed with respect to revitalizing the arts submitted final reports, and momentum from those reports was immediate, including new faculty art studios in our Raybrook building, refurbishment of the lower Gezon lobby as a gathering space for students in the arts, and more. In addition, the new Calvin Center for Faith and Writing now has a year under its belt and is already providing intensive mentoring and research opportunities for students, support of faculty scholarship, and enhancement of the Festival of Faith and Writing.

Calvin's extension program at the Handlon Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan, is in full swing after receiving approval from the Higher Learning Commission to offer a bachelor of arts degree, an associate of arts degree, and a certificate in ministry leadership. A total of 37 students are currently enrolled in the program (17 in the first cohort; 20 in the second). In February 2017, 17 students received their certificate in ministry leadership, the first

academic benchmark in the progression toward earning a bachelor of arts degree.

Finally, in December 2016, the Higher Learning Commission approved Calvin's new master of accounting degree program. The program will be in place for the 2017-2018 academic year.

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to the chair of the board, Mr. Craig Lubben, and to the president of Calvin College, Dr. Michael K. Le Roy, when matters pertaining to education and discussed.

B. That synod ratify the following faculty promotions and reappointments with tenure, effective September 1, 2017:

1. Kristen R. Alford, Ph.D., associate professor of social work
2. Thomas A. Betts, M.B.A., professor of business
3. Brian M. Kreisman, Ph.D., professor of speech pathology and audiology
4. James R. Skillen, Ph.D., associate professor of environmental studies

C. That synod by way of the ballot elect new members, reappoint for subsequent terms, and ratify the results of elections held in classes for membership on the Calvin College Board of Trustees.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Calvin College Board of Trustees
Christine A. Metzger, secretary

Faith Formation Ministries (Dr. Syd Hielema, team leader)
"Encouraging discipleship shaped by grace"

I. Introduction

Faith Formation Ministries (FFM) is just over two years old. Together we have been serving with the mandate to "encourage and equip local CRCNA congregations and their leaders as they practice intentional, lifelong, intergenerational, holistic, missional discipleship and faith formation." To a certain extent, FFM focuses on ministry to CRC members age 0-30, providing resources and strategies to help congregations be hospitable, faith-nurturing spiritual homes for that demographic. FFM is gradually building a ministry that is based on two prongs:

1. Developing a regionally based relational presence with congregational leaders.
2. Creating and curating resources filled with creative, practical ideas for churches to use. Our regional presence currently covers about 75 percent of the CRCNA.

II. Reflecting on our calling

In his passionate appeal to the Galatians to abandon their legalism and return to the gospel of grace, Paul cries out, "[You are] my dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). Faith Formation Ministries focuses on the "faith formation" dimension of our denomination's calling (no surprise there), walking with churches as they carry out the call to participate in the work of Christ being formed within them.

We have developed a resource packet that contains and points to hundreds of practical faith formation ideas for congregations to use, and our current strategy involves using this packet as a means of introducing our ministry to congregational leaders, both clergy and lay (see, for example, crcna.org/
FaithFormation/recommended-resources). Many of these ideas were submitted to us by congregations, and our goal is to foster a denominational culture of exploration and sharing that reinforces the realization that sturdy faith formation practices require creativity, intentionality, collaboration, and wise strategizing.

The resources in our packet especially focus on

- strengthening the intergenerational church.
- strengthening practices around professing our faith.
- developing practices of faith storytelling and sharing testimonies.
- using the Building Blocks of Faith as conceptual handles for assessing and strengthening a congregation's overall ecology of faith formation practices.
- strengthening practices around celebrating communion.

III. Faith Formation Ministries and the Ministry Plan

"Desired Future 2" of the emerging Ministry Plan focuses on discipleship and faith formation. It has been beneficial for FFM that the Ministry Plan is being developed simultaneously with the development of our young

ministry; as a result, these two developments have been correlated with each other from the beginning.

We at FFM are especially grateful that both the Ministry Plan and FFM are being formed in close consultation with congregational leaders. We are seeing this consultative strategy bearing these kinds of fruit:

- Both the Ministry Plan and FFM are rooted in a culture that respects each congregation in terms of its unique identity, calling, history, and context. When we share our resource packet with congregations, we say to them, "We have gathered hundreds of practical faith formation ideas. Your congregation is unique, and it's best to take small steps. Check these ideas out and find two or three that are especially appropriate for your context." We have developed five online resource toolkits at this point, focusing on the five areas bulleted under section II above. We have included user's guide brochures in the packet to direct folks to these online toolkits.
- The Canadian Youth Ministry Project, which is centered on appointing and equipping a youth ministry champion in each classis who supports local congregations, has progressed well, and initial explorations have taken place to adapt this project for CRC classes in the United States.
- We have developed a proposal for continuing the strong CRCNA tradition of providing solid Reformed Sunday school curriculum in a cost-effective manner, and we are currently waiting for this proposal to go through approval processes.
- We are working with our second cohort of twenty CRCNA congregations who engage in 15-month clearly defined faith formation projects within the "supportive incubator" provided by the FFM team and the group of congregations in each particular project.
- We have begun work on a Youth Leadership Development Initiative focused on teens and young adults.
- This spring we are hosting a resource strategizing retreat with the goal of developing a five-year strategy for faith formation resource creation and curation.

IV. Conclusion

We are just over two years into a five-year ministry building process, and it is our sense that congregations are ready and even eager to receive the kind of support we are providing. As a growing ministry, we have also begun to develop and implement strategies for growing donor support. Our team considers it a privilege to serve, and we are very encouraged by the initial reception we are receiving.

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry (Rev. Ronald A. Klimp, director)

I. Introduction

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry. Prior to the beginning of the official endorsement process in 1942, a few pastors served Pine Rest or Bethesda hospitals (beginning in 1913) and troops in World War I (beginning in 1917). Considering these earlier service positions, we are really celebrating over 100 years of chaplaincy in the CRCNA.

Today more than 150 of our ordained clergy (over 10% of our total clergy) serve full- or part-time as endorsed chaplains. Many other current and retired pastors serve without official endorsement by this office on college campuses, in hospital or hospice ministries, police and fire departments, and so on. Through these crisis care activities, the church reaches into the lives of countless individuals and families that it would otherwise not reach.

A growing number of individuals are choosing to prepare for and to seek endorsement as chaplains each year. We anticipate that the number of endorsed chaplains will continue to grow by 5 to 10 percent each year for the foreseeable future.

Since the current director plans to retire in April 2017, the process to post the position, receive applications, and appoint a new director should be completed and approved by the BOT in February 2017. It is our hope that the new director will be introduced to our chaplains when they meet for their annual conference in June and to the delegates of synod immediately thereafter.

II. Ministries of the Office of Chaplaincy and Care

A. Ministry that reflects our calling

1. Faith formation

   Endorsed chaplains are required to have some significant theological education plus two to four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE; 400 hours per unit) that focus on how best to understand and meet the emotional and spiritual needs of persons in crisis, usually within the context of an institution with a diverse population. This means our chaplains are uniquely qualified not only to serve but also to encourage and train others in their local church about how to live out their faith by providing compassionate care to others around them in times of crisis.

2. Servant leadership

   Currently we have four chaplains serving as CPE supervisors. These individuals are instrumental in training future chaplains of all faith groups. A number of other chaplains serve as directors of departments or independently manage counseling or chaplaincy ministries. Many of our chaplains are members of and often serve in leadership roles in a variety of professional organizations, including the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, the Association of Professional Chaplains, the Canadian Association for

Spiritual Care, the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, and the Michigan Chaplains Association. Two of our U.S. Army chaplains are currently serving as trainers at the Chaplains Training School at Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. All of the above facts represent significant influence in God's broader world through the service of our chaplains.

3. Global missions

   While serving locally or overseas, our chaplains enter into and influence populations, cultures, and faith groups from around the globe. Our chaplains have the unique opportunity to influence individual lives in crisis. They also influence the families of these individuals and the institutions in which they serve by calling them to ethical standards of care and concern (for example, our chaplains are often asked to serve on ethics committees in hospitals). The influence of our chaplains stretches literally "from the prison to the Pentagon." Individuals in crisis often search for meaning beneath and around the circumstances they face. Chaplains represent the caring presence of God in such circumstances. They have extensive training in how to minister to these individuals, regardless of their faith background or lack thereof. When appropriate, they share their own faith story. With over 150 chaplains touching numerous individuals and their families in crisis on a daily basis, the potential for introducing and for strengthening faith is significant.

4. Mercy and justice

   Chaplains offer help and show mercy in almost every interaction they experience. As noted above, chaplains in hospitals often serve as key members of ethics committees or give moral advice to the institutions in which they work. Chaplains in other institutions often have access to management and are respected for their observations and insights in terms of policies and procedures affecting justice issues. Military chaplains are instructed in chaplaincy school that they are expected to be the moral conscience for the command structure. Few other voices have access to such important cultural arenas.

5. Gospel proclamation and worship

   All CRC chaplains are called by, and their life and doctrine are overseen by, a local church. Most have filled the pulpit of their calling church and/or those of other area churches on numerous occasions. Some have served on their church council, at classis, or as delegates to synod. Some serve in arenas where they are expected to offer regular or occasional worship leadership. Others pastor local churches while serving part-time as local hospital, hospice, prison, or military chaplains.

   Chaplains conduct adult education classes and workshops, and they help formally and informally with pastoral care in local congregations. We encourage this interaction with the local church as part of the emphasis on *care* in our ministry name. In addition, our chaplains lead in religious education and worship opportunities in places where the church might otherwise not be visible—from hospital chapels to veterans' facilities, long-term care facilities, prisons, college campuses, army field tents, air bases, and aircraft carriers.

B. Collaborative efforts

This ministry often collaborates with the Reformed Church in America (RCA) endorser and chaplains. We also look for ways to collaborate with the many campus chaplains who often serve under Home Missions. Issues that chaplains address often bring them into conversation with the offices of Candidacy, Pastor Church Resources, Safe Church Ministry, and Disability Concerns.

C. Diversity and development of future ministry

Currently 33 of our 150 endorsed chaplains are female (22%). Nine of our current chaplains represent ethnic diversity. Most of these have come into chaplaincy in the past few years. Eleven more ethnically diverse individuals are in our list of recent inquiries/applicants. Based on current applicants and students showing an interest in chaplaincy (18 of which are female and 11 of which represent ethnic diversity), we expect this trend to continue.

III. Connecting with churches

In addition to the ministries mentioned above, the Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry provides occasional stories about chaplaincy to the various print and digital communications outlets available to churches. We also require chaplains to be connected to their calling churches by having them formulate together a Covenant of Joint Supervision (CJS), which we and they sign, and which is reviewed for renewal every five years (along with the chaplain's endorsement renewal). This covenant specifies expectations for the church to support and supervise the life and doctrine of chaplains, and for the chaplains to report regularly on their activities. This usually includes being present (and hopefully speaking) at a worship event at least once a year—often on Chaplaincy Sunday in November. For this event we also provide bulletin inserts, liturgies, video clips, responsive readings, and other resources to the local church. The director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry enjoys the opportunity to personally address congregations from time to time about the wonderful work of chaplains.

IV. Recruitment and training

There seems to be a growing interest in chaplaincy on the six to eight college and seminary campuses that we visit every year. We believe we are expanding this interest by interacting with students and by encouraging chaplains (who often accompany us) to tell their rich and moving stories of service to individuals in crisis situations. We are also attempting to interact with churches and classes to help create opportunities for these stories to be heard.

We currently are working with 32 students (in college, seminary, or CPE) and more than 30 other inquiring individuals, assisting some in their education both financially and through mentoring. We currently grant $15 - 20,000 per year to students toward this end. Funding for this assistance comes from the Chaplains Development Fund, and as we expect the need for such funding to increase, we encourage many of our contributors (including our current chaplains) to specify this fund with their gifts.

Our annual conference will convene June 9-11, 2017, at the Prince Conference Center on the campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We

arrange for transportation, housing, meals, speakers, music, and chaplaincy resources to make this event edifying and enjoyable (at a total cost of approx. $30,000 per year). Since chaplains work at the margins of church and society, they relish the time they can spend with each other at the annual conference to renew friendships, learn together, and dialogue with fellow servants of the Lord who identify with the unique pressures, joys, and challenges that chaplaincy brings.

V. Chaplaincy statistics

The Chaplaincy and Care Ministry Advisory Council and the Office of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry present the following statistics:

1. Total CRCNA endorsed chaplains: 149 (full-time, 104; part-time, 26; endorsed and seeking employment, 19); in the United States, 128; in Canada, 21

2. Military chaplains: 15 in the United States; 2 in Canada; 7 in the National Guard and Reserves

3. Fourteen chaplains were endorsed in 2016:

   Drew Angus
   Robert Bolt
   *Julie DeGraff
   *Kendra Ettema
   *Ryan Hoekstra
   *Christopher Klein
   *Simon Ko
   *Dena Meyerink
   *Ramon Orostizaga
   *Carol Petter
   *Barb Sanders
   *Steven Schulz
   *Adam Vanderzand
   *Rhonda Workman

   (*Provisional endorsement: still awaiting completion of a training component, a job offer, a call from a local church, and/or classis examination/approval.)

4. No chaplains retired from service in 2016.

5. Military chaplains who have served in the past year, or are currently serving, overseas are Chad Haan, Dae Lee, Tom Walcott, Perrin Warner, and Lloyd Wickers.

Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S., was established by Synod 1983 with a directive to assist organized Christian Reformed churches in the financing of capital improvements. The Loan Fund operates exclusively in the United States. The board of directors of the Loan Fund oversees the loan approval process, the determination of loan interest rates, and the setting of Loan Fund policies. The board also establishes interest rates for Investment Certificates sold—primarily to members, classes, churches, and agencies of the CRCNA.

II. Board of directors

Loan Fund board members are eligible to serve for two three-year terms. Members of the board of directors are Ms. Andrea Karsten (2017), Mr. Thomas Sinke (2017), Ms. Chery De Boer (2019), Mr. Kenneth Stienstra (2019), Mr. Scott Ritsema (2018), and Mr. James Brewer (2018). Ms. Karsten and Mr. Sinke are both completing their second terms and are not eligible for reappointment.

The board requests that synod appoint two board members to a first term of three years from the following slates of nominees:

Position 1

Mr. Brad Bruinsma is a member of Brookside CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he has served as treasurer and deacon. A graduate of Trinity Christian College, he is actively involved in Byron Center Christian School and Wedgwood Christian Services. Mr. Bruinsma also serves on the investment advisory committee of Kuyper Christian College. He is employed as general manager of NAI West Michigan, a full-service commercial real estate firm in Grand Rapids, and he has fifteen years of commercial banking experience.

Mr. James Overbeck is a member of Cascade Fellowship CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he has served as a deacon and a Cadet leader and as part of a recent pastoral search committee and the church audit team. He is also treasurer of the Ada Christian School board and a member of the Calvin College Gala committee. Mr. Overbeck is involved in the March of Dimes, Junior Achievement, United Way, and DeVos Children's Hospital. He is employed as a vice president at Fifth Third Bank in Grand Rapids.

Position 2

Rev. Matthew Eenigenburg is a member of Celebration Community CRC in Muskegon, Michigan, where he serves as pastor and as a member of the Classis Muskegon board. He also was a delegate to Synod 2016. He has served as secretary of Shoreline City Ministers Fellowship and as a local election official. Rev. Eenigenburg is a graduate of Bethel Seminary and Trinity Christian College.

Mr. Jack Meyer is a member of East Saugatuck CRC in Holland, Michigan, where he has served as council treasurer and as a deacon, in addition to serving on the fundraising, worship, and praise teams. Mr. Meyer is actively involved in youth outreach ministry and Boy Scouts of America. He is employed as a territory manager for Peterson Associates and has extensive

experience in providing contract accounting services and construction project financial management services.

III. Financial operations

A. The Loan Fund is eligible to sell Investment Certificates to investors in twenty-three states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. Additional states could be added as needed to benefit the Fund.

B. At the close of the 2016 fiscal year (June 30, 2016), a total of $27,666,950 in interest-bearing Investment Certificates held by investors was outstanding. Interest rates vary from 0.75 percent to 2.50 percent, with a weighted average of 2.35 percent. The variances in interest rates reflect market conditions and the terms of the certificates at the times they were issued.

C. Since its inception in 1983, the Loan Fund has originated more than two hundred loans totaling over $70 million to churches across the United States. As of June 30, 2016, the Loan Fund had $20,560,566 in loans and interest outstanding. Loan delinquencies do occur from time to time, but they are closely monitored and are very low. The fund maintains a loan loss reserve to help cover potential losses. The fund is blessed not to have experienced any loan losses in its history.

D. Financial operations are also reflected in the following data:

	2016	2015	2014
Cash and equivalents	$14,315,282	$13,096,796	$11,836,031
Net loans and interest receivable	$20,560,566	$21,470,300	$22,292,604
Other assets	$298,138	$0	$0
Total assets	$35,173,986	$34,567,096	$34,128,635
Certificates and interest payable	$27,666,950	$27,105,990	$26,847,368
Net assets	$7,507,036	$7,461,106	$7,281,267
Total liabilities and net assets	$35,173,986	$34,567,096	$34,128,635

E. A summary of the audited financial report as of June 30, 2016, appears in the *Agenda for Synod 2017—Financial and Business Supplement.*

IV. Sources of funding

Funds for the Loan Fund operations are derived from the following sources:

A. The sale of Investment Certificates in those states where legal approval to offer them has been obtained.

B. Gifts and bequests made to the Loan Fund.

C. An unsecured line of credit with a bank that permits borrowing up to $2 million. The Loan Fund currently does not have any amounts outstanding on this line of credit.

V. Staff

The Loan Fund is served by Mrs. Alice M. Damsteegt, customer service specialist, and Mr. David E. Veen, director.

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant privilege of the floor to the Loan Fund director or any members of the board of directors of the Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S., when matters pertaining to the Loan Fund are discussed.

B. That synod appoint two board members from the slates of nominees provided to a first term of three years effective July 1, 2017.

Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.
David E. Veen, director

Pastor Church Resources (Ms. Lis Van Harten and Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis, codirectors)

I. Introduction: Pastor Church Resources as a ministry hub

Synod 1982 approved the formation of the Office of Pastor-Church Relations (PCR). Synod 2016 approved a name change to Pastor Church Resources, reflecting the broader array of initiatives gathered in the ministry of PCR. In addition to the original mandate to provide programs of "healing and prevention" for pastors, church staff members, councils, and congregations, PCR offers a variety of resources seeking to foster health in our churches.

PCR reflects a growing desire within the CRCNA to develop more coordinated ministries by eliminating silos and providing logical organizational connections for the growth and flourishing of ministries. PCR is a gathering of ministries, marshalling efforts and resources that serve congregations and their leaders, as well as classes and their leaders.

A. New synergies are emerging

As the PCR staff gather, it is apparent that each staff member has an area of focus that requires considerable attention. It is also apparent that many connections and collaborations are emerging:

- vocational ministry assessment, along with discernment of whom to endorse as a specialized transitional minister
- healthy church process and classis renewal as classes develop macro-strategies for member churches
- lenses used in consultations with churches, and in the content of Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) retreats
- the Healthy Church Survey process, and how it is informing church visiting strategy
- continuing education grants, and pastors exploring ministry fit through vocational assessments
- SPE peer learning opportunities, and the Spiritual Vitality Project for pastors seeking spiritual growth

B. A sense of team is developing

Through regular strategy and ad hoc meetings, staff meetings, and an off-site retreat, the PCR group is developing more of a sense of team, a development that promises to generate increased productivity and more coordinated ministry.

C. Some personnel assignments have changed

In January 2017, upon approval of the executive committee of the BOT, Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis and Ms. Lis Van Harten became codirectors of PCR. Rev. Norm Thomasma, director since 2009 and anticipating a spring 2018 retirement, has shifted to a new role focusing on consulting and developing resources that will serve PCR in the future.

Mr. Derek Atkins, coordinator of the Connections Project, is now devoting some of his time to other PCR initiatives such as the Healthy Church Survey and attending processes. This shift comes with the blessing of Lilly Endowment Inc., whose funding is underwriting Derek's salary.

As was the case last year, PCR continues to loan 25 percent of one staff person's time to direct the Connections Project (see section III, B, 2 below),

and 50 percent of another staff person's time to cofacilitate the RCA/CRC Reformed Leadership Initiative funded by the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation.

II. Reflecting on our calling – servant leadership

In the desire of the CRCNA to see congregations flourish, the ministry of Pastor Church Resources plays a role in supporting, training, encouraging, and challenging congregational pastors and congregational leaders. This work occurs in a variety of ways and situations: through direct interactions, and systemically by way of interactions with classis functionaries, and through the encouragement of classis renewal. The typical entry point for engaging congregations is by way of PCR's work with those serving in leadership roles.

III. Connecting with churches (desired outcome 3 in "Our Journey")

A. Ongoing ministry initiatives

1. The staff of PCR respond to various questions and requests from congregational leaders. This includes **consultation/intervention** in times of difficulty or transition: we suggest resources when congregations are adding staff or considering a change in organizational structure, and we help with processes by which challenging congregational conversations can be planned and implemented. Much of this work is accomplished by phone or through email, but PCR staff also work on site when circumstances warrant doing so. **Educational and retreat activities** for councils, congregations, classes, and church staff also continue to be a focus of PCR activity.

2. PCR continues to seek effective ways to build a working relationship with **persons entering ordained ministry**. Each year PCR hosts a dinner for graduates of the M.Div. program at Calvin Theological Seminary as well as those enrolled in the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy. Relationships are initiated, and the work of PCR is explained.

3. On behalf of synod, Pastor Church Resources administers a **continuing education fund** for pastors and professional church staff. Grants of up to $750 per year are awarded to pastors and staff who demonstrate the value of an educational event and/or opportunity they are pursuing. Applicants access this information via the PCR website.

4. **Specialized Transitional Ministers (STMs)** are seasoned pastors trained to help congregations deal with challenges and opportunities during a transition between pastors. PCR endorses pastors for this ministry and supports them through the cultivation of peer learning groups, through annual training events, and through helping to connect them with churches seeking an STM. At this time, there are 20 STMs either endorsed or seeking endorsement by PCR.

5. PCR maintains a list of **supply pastors**, most of whom are retired. Supply pastors serve congregations for a limited time during pastor vacancy. Inclusion on this list is voluntary, and pastors desiring to be on this list may contact PCR.

6. PCR extends its work through **regional pastors** at the classis level who provide support, encouragement, and counsel to pastors and spouses (including commissioned pastors and spouses) challenged by the demands of life and ministry. Regional pastors also assist in setting up **mentoring relationships** for new pastors and encourage the development of support mechanisms when there are multiple staff persons within a congregation. Regional pastors are gathered biennially for a conference of encouragement, support, and training, the next of which is slated for October 31 through November 2, 2017.

7. **Sustaining Congregational Excellence** provides grants to smaller congregations for new ministry initiatives. Since its beginning in 2007, just over 500 churches have participated in the SCE program. This is 74 percent of all eligible smaller congregations (or 92% of smaller Canadian churches and 71% of smaller U.S. churches).

8. **Sustaining Pastoral Excellence** provides grants for pastor peer groups, biennial conferences for pastors' wives, and regional gatherings for pastors and their spouses. Since SPE's inception in 2003, nearly 850 pastors have participated in this program.

9. **Reading Ministry Contexts** is a segment of leadership training provided by PCR staff for students at Calvin Theological Seminary who are preparing for their first fieldwork assignments. The goal is to encourage observation through the use of various lenses and to attend to the work of God's Spirit already under way in a particular setting.

10. In the **Pastor Search Process** PCR assists search teams in the basic procedures of calling a new pastor. The resource *More Than a Search Committee* (which can be downloaded from the PCR webpage or ordered through Faith Alive) is a recommended starting point.

11. Training tools developed by PCR and related ministries that are receiving high usage by congregations include ***More Than a Search Committee, Evaluation Essentials***, and ***Effective Leadership in the Church.*** Congregations are accessing these materials through the PCR website (download) or through Faith Alive (printed copy).

B. Newer ministry initiatives

1. Diagnostic tools and strategies for leaders, congregations, and classes

   a. Vocational Ministry Assessment

      In collaboration with Chaplaincy Care Ministry, the new mission agency, the Candidacy Office, and Calvin Theological Seminary, PCR's ministry assessment consultant, Rev. Samantha DeJong McCarron, resources and arranges for various vocational assessments. These assessments, conducted by various professionals in various locales, help ministry leaders understand themselves, their calling, and the context in which they are likely to flourish. To date, 45 individuals have worked with the ministry assessment consultant to take advantage of an assessment process. These persons include leaders who are just entering ministry, those in a time of mid-life discernment, and those approaching retirement.

b. Healthy Church Survey process

Beginning with a Board of Trustees initiative in 2002, an instrument for describing a healthy congregation was developed. The Healthy Church Survey process, now housed within PCR, is finding traction as congregations gain a more nuanced understanding of themselves, what they aspire to be, and what they seem to be. The process is guided by trained coaches who administer the Healthy Church Survey with the goal of energizing a congregation through reflective conversations about the future of their church and about paths toward more faithful and effective ministry. In addition, a shortened version of the Healthy Church Survey is being adapted for use as a tool that church visitors can use to develop richer conversations with the churches they visit.

c. "Resilience to Risk" congregational self-reflection

Drawing on recurring patterns that emerge in congregation consultation, the PCR staff has developed a one-page tool that can help to forewarn congregational leaders when their church is trending toward risky conditions, such as difficulties in the pastor/congregation relationship. Becoming aware of such trends can prompt earlier and more effective responses.

2. Connections project

Connections is a 3.5-year project that seeks to build a model of regional resourcing. Congregations in three regions (southern Ontario, the U.S. Midwest, and California) and from twelve classes are engaging in projects of their choosing with the goal of enhancing ministry. Regional staff provide opportunities for gatherings and coaching as well as myriad resources. Funding for Connections is provided through a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant.

3. Spiritual Vitality Project

A grant from the Pastoral Excellence Network (Lilly Endowment Inc. funded) has enabled 16 pastors to engage in an 18-month spiritual formation journey. Activities have included assessments with follow-up coaching, retreats, cohort meetings, time with spiritual directors, and reading. The hope is that pastors will learn habits of mind and heart toward spiritual growth in self and community. A concluding retreat in January 2017 provided a forum in which pastors expressed significant appreciation for this experience as well as a deep desire for the project to become a regular part of programming available for pastors.

4. SPE clergy couples retreat

The first retreat for clergy couples, in which both spouses are ordained, is being planned for the coming year. Sustaining Pastoral Excellence will bring together such couples to encourage and support them while they explore their unique roles and partnerships in ministry.

5. Classis renewal

In August 2016, Rev. Al Postma began working in the new role of classis renewal coordinator. This new position builds on the work of the classis coach but is also responsible for ensuring the implementation of recommendations arising from the Better Together Project. These

recommendations are intended to better support the work of classis functionaries: regional pastors, church visitors, mentors, church counselors, and stated clerks.

In partnership with various denominational offices, gatherings have been planned and hosted to work with people in classis leadership positions in the CRC. This includes a gathering of Canadian classis leaders in January and a gathering of U.S. stated clerks in February. A pilot project has recently been launched involving five leaders of four classes, with the purpose of imagining creative approaches to regional ministry.

C. *Changes to note*

1. Through the **Staff Ministry Initiative,** PCR provides support and various resources to nonordained church staff. We are observing fewer requests directly pertaining to church staff and have scaled back our program and staff time to reflect this recent shift. Credentialing of congregational staff continues, and information about this initiative can be found on the PCR website.

2. A **continuing education for pastors task force** has been formed by the Candidacy office. PCR is involved with this, and future plans will likely affect the continuing education grants currently offered (see Candidacy Committee report).

3. Ministerial Information Service

   One of the more challenging dimensions of the work of PCR pertains to the changing dynamics of the denomination with regard to the processes by which congregations and pastors find each other. With the help of the Information Technology (IT) team, PCR has been working toward the development of a more user-friendly ministerial information system with upgraded technology that would provide improved service to congregations and pastors.

   Currently the Ministerial Information Service (MIS) includes a database of pastor profiles as well as a number of congregational profiles. Staff of PCR, with the assistance of a volunteer committee, suggests potential pastors to search committees of congregations. This process has relied on some computer-based profile matching and the human input of committee members. Over the past three years, the minister profiles and the church profiles have been updated and improved. As well, steps have been taken toward a web-based approach so that ministers can access and update their own profile. PCR has also been exploring the possibility of having churches do the same, with a concurrent capacity to conduct their own basic search of the pastor profiles on file.

   Two significant challenges have become clear. The first has to do with ensuring that the information in profiles is accurate. There is no enforceable mechanism within our church polity or church culture to ensure that ministers or churches maintain current profiles. Inaccurate information can lead to discouragement and frustration.

   A second challenge is that expectations for the capabilities of technology have risen with the development of advanced algorithms for online consumer marketing. Churches and pastors are accustomed to

finding information quickly by means of refined searches that lead to better results (i.e., finding the perfect fit). In reality, the infrastructure and budget required to approximate the expectations of users accustomed to searching Amazon.com or Google.com are out of scale for a denomination of about 1,000 churches. And it must be said that sometimes expectations are unrealistic: technology can only be partially helpful in a search process.

As a result, PCR, with the help of IT, is moving toward a process that will utilize current technology and connection points, namely, access to our denominational database, access to the Network, and links to church websites and social networks. There will be some capacity for filtering, and there will continue to be a need for in-depth profiles, personal conversations, and persistent prayer in the search process. Although the approach is different than originally envisioned, the goal remains constant: assisting churches and pastors in accessing the information they need in order to begin conversations as directly as possible. PCR staff will continue to offer some assistance for pastors and search committees in this process. The new process is anticipated to be functional by mid-2017.

Calling system review: The Board of Trustees has requested a review of "the effectiveness of the present 'minister of the Word calling process' in order to address the 21st-century challenges of pairing healthy leaders with fitting congregations" (BOT Minute 5516). The BOT further noted in May 2016 that "the dialogue regarding the minister of the Word calling process has begun" and instructed staff to "continue oversight of the review and enhance the technical systems as soon as possible."

PCR continues to appreciate the unique and vital role of congregations and their leaders and desires to be attuned and responsive to resources needed by them. A desire for flourishing in the body of Christ undergirds the various initiatives and efforts under way in Pastor Church Resources.

Pensions and Insurance

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church in North America maintains employee benefit programs that provide retirement, health, life, and disability benefits for employees of the denomination in its ministries, agencies, local churches, and other CRC organizations.

II. Board matters

The ministers' pension plans, special-assistance funds, and employees' retirement plans are governed by the boards of the U.S. and Canadian Pension Trustees. These boards meet several times per year, usually in joint session. Separate meetings of the boards are held as needed.

Mr. Jack Byeman is concluding service on the U.S. Board of Pensions. The board recommends the following single nominee for election to a three-year term:

Mr. Lloyd Bierma, previously from Sioux Center, Iowa, is now a resident of Holland, Michigan. He has served a number of terms as an elder and as president of council of First CRC, Sioux Center. Mr. Bierma previously served on the U.S. Board of Pensions and Insurance and on its investment advisory committee from 1985 to 1992. He served a second time from 1997 to 2006, including a period as chair of the U.S. Pension Trustees. Mr. Bierma is an attorney and is nearing retirement from his legal career. He has also served on the Dordt College Advisory Board and on the boards of Sioux Center Christian School, Calvin College, Barnabas Foundation, and a variety of nonprofit and for-profit community organizations, including bank board, trust department, and investment advisory committees. He is currently a member of Maranatha CRC in Holland.

III. Benefit-program activities

A. Ministers' pension plans

The ministers' pension plans are defined-benefit plans. Benefits paid by the plans are defined by formula, and the required funding of the plans is determined by actuarial calculations. The primary purpose of the plans is to provide retirement benefits to plan participants. The plans also provide benefits to the surviving spouses of participants as well as to any dependent children who are orphaned. In addition, long-term disability benefits are provided through an insurance product to all full-time, active participants in the plans who have furnished the information concerning compensation and housing as required by the insurance carrier.

The following is a summary of participant counts as of December 31, 2016, for each plan and in total. Participants having an interest in both plans (generally the result of having served churches in both the United States and Canada) appear in the column where their interest is greater.

	United States	Canada	Total
Active ministers	739	260	999
Ministers receiving benefit payments	577	141	718
Spouses and dependents	176	38	214
Withdrawn participants with vested benefits	105	39	144
Total	1,597	478	2,075

Independent actuarial firms are employed to prepare valuations of the plans. These actuarial valuations furnish the information needed to determine church and participant assessment amounts. The U.S. plan is required to have a valuation every three years, whereas the Canadian plan is required to submit an annual valuation to provincial regulators. Information regarding church and participant assessment amounts will be presented later in this report.

1. Portfolio balances and performance

   Plan assets are invested in diversified portfolios under the management of professional investment-management firms. These firms are required to adhere to the denomination's investment guidelines, and their performance is measured against established benchmarks and regularly reviewed by the trustees.

   The plans' actuaries have informed us that as of the date of the plans' last valuation, the actuarial liability totaled approximately $118.4 million for the U.S. plan (as of December 31, 2013) and $43.8 million for the Canadian plan (as of December 31, 2015). These amounts reflect the present value of the plans' obligations to all participants including active, disabled, and retired pastors, widows, and dependents.

   Market value of the portfolios is summarized as follows:

	December 31, 2016	December 31, 2015
United States (U.S. $)	$99,665,000	$100,220,000
Canada (Can. $)	51,277,000	51,076,000

   Dividends, interest, and appreciation in the value of the plans' holdings provide a significant portion of the resources needed to meet the plans' obligations to the active participants and to fund payments to retirees and beneficiaries.

2. Plan review

   The pension plan has undergone several changes since separate plans for the United States and Canada were established in 1983. While the basic defined benefit form of the plan was not altered, changes were made to improve benefits provided by the plan, to clarify how the plan is administered, and to improve the protocols used to obtain funds needed to pay costs.

   The more significant changes to the plans (or changes that affect them) made by recent synods include the following:

   2001 Approved a variety of optional benefit forms in addition to the plan's normal form.

   Applied the plan's 1.46 percent multiple to all service beginning January 1, 1985.

2003 Approved guidelines for part-time service.

Required payment for upgrading the interests of previously frozen participants reinstated as active members of the plans.

Acted to replace self-insured disability benefits with an insurance contract.

Changed funding protocols for all organized churches, effective January 1, 2004, to require payment of the greater of direct costs or per-member assessments.

Linked timely payment of contributions (the greater of participant or per-member costs) to the grant of credited service to first or only pastors of organized churches.

2004 Required that pension costs of endorsed chaplains be paid as a condition for active participation in the plan, effective January 1, 2006.

Approved rule VII for synodical procedure requiring synods to defer any proposed action concerning the plans until advised by the pension trustees.

Amended Church Order Article 15 to include specific elements of "proper support," including payment to the denomination's ministers' pension plan.

2010 Decreased the multiplier used to determine benefit amounts from 1.46 percent to 1.3 percent for credited service beginning January 1, 2011.

Approved a change in the early retirement reduction factor to 0.5 percent from 0.3 percent per month, effective January 1, 2014.

2011 Increased the normal retirement from age 65 to age 66.

Advanced the implementation of the change to the early retirement factor (from 0.3% to 0.5% per month) from January 1, 2014, to July 1, 2011.

Froze the final three-year average salary upon which benefits are calculated in Canada at the 2010 level.

Changed the normal form of retirement benefit from joint and survivor to single life with five years certain. (Participants can still elect to receive a joint and survivor benefit at a slightly reduced level of payment.)

3. Funding

All organized churches are expected to pay church assessments determined by an amount per active professing member age 18 and older or, if greater, the direct costs of their first or only pastor's participation in the plan. The amount of the assessment for 2017 is $42.96 per member in Canada and $37.20 in the United States, and direct costs have been set at $9,840 and $7,704, respectively. These amounts are collected by means of

monthly billings to each organized church, based on reported membership statistics.

All emerging churches and other denominational ministries that employ a minister as a missionary, professor, or teacher, or in any other capacity, including organizations that employ endorsed chaplains (with the exception of chaplains serving in the military who are not yet entitled to receive any military pension benefits) are required to pay the annual cost of participation in the plan. All pension assessments, however determined, are billed monthly, and the grant of credited service for pastors is contingent on timely payment of amounts billed.

While circumstances could change, it is unlikely that there will be a need for an increase in the pension contribution costs for the next year.

B. Employees' retirement plans

The employees' retirement plans are defined-contribution plans covering most employees of participating denominational agencies and ministries who are not ordained as ministers of the Word. In the United States, contributions are paid to the plan by participating employers in an amount up to 6 percent of compensation. An additional employer contribution of up to 4 percent of compensation is made to match employee contributions of a similar amount. In Canada, contributions of up to 9 percent are paid to the plan by participating employers. In Canada, there are no contributions made to the plan relative to matching employee contributions. In both plans, participants may make additional contributions up to the limits determined by federal regulation. Participants receive periodic statements indicating the dollar amount credited to their accounts, the value of their accounts, and the vested percentage.

Individual participants direct the investment of their account balances among several investment alternatives, including fixed-income and equity funds. The investment alternatives are currently managed for U.S. participants by Empower Retirement, and Great-West Trust serves as custodian of the plan's assets. For Canadian participants, Sun Life Financial Group manages investment alternatives and serves as custodian of the plan's assets.

As of December 31, 2016, the balances in these plans totaled approximately $33,448,000 in the United States and $5,076,000 in Canada. As of that date, there were 347 participants in the U.S. plan and 84 in the Canadian plan, categorized as follows:

	United States	Canada
Active	233	77
Inactive	114	7

C. Nonretirement employee benefit programs

Oversight of the denomination's nonretirement employee benefit programs is provided by the Board of Trustees.

Consolidated Group Insurance is a denominational plan that offers health, dental, and life coverage in Canada to ministers and employees of local congregations and denominational agencies and ministries. Currently there are 331 participants in the program. The most significant categories of participants include 219 pastors and employees of local churches, 110 employees of denominational ministries and agencies, and 2 retirees. The plan

in Canada is a fully insured plan with coverage purchased through a major health-insurance provider and is supplemental to health benefits available through government health programs.

In the United States the denomination offers health, dental, and life coverage to ministers and employees of local congregations and denominational agencies and ministries. Currently there are 681 participants in the program. The most significant categories of participants include 302 pastors and employees of local churches, 210 employees of denominational ministries and agencies, and 169 retirees. The plans are provided by the Reformed Benefits Association (RBA) through a trust established to fund benefits and expenses of the plan. RBA was established as of July 2013 by the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and the Board of Benefit Services of the Reformed Church in America to provide nonretirement benefit programs for both denominations.

Premiums charged by the plan in Canada are set by the insurance carrier. The premiums for the U.S. plan are set by RBA based on overall expectations of claims and administrative expenses for the coming year.

D. Financial disclosures

Audited or reviewed financial statements of the retirement plans and of all of the agencies and institutions are made available each year to the treasurer of each classis with the request that they be made available to any interested party. In addition, summary financial statements are included in the *Acts of Synod.* Individualized statements are furnished to active members of the ministers' pension plans and the employees' retirement plans.

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to members of the Canadian Pension Trustees and of the U.S. Board of Pensions and to Mr. John H. Bolt when insurance matters and matters pertaining to pension plans for ministers and employees are discussed.

B. That synod designate up to 100 percent of a minister's early or normal retirement pension or disability pension for 2018 as housing allowance for United States income-tax purposes (IRS Ruling 1.107-1) but only to the extent that the pension is used to rent or provide a home.

C. That synod by way of the ballot elect one nominee to a first term on the U.S. Board of Pensions beginning July 1, 2017.

Pensions and Insurance
John H. Bolt, director of finance and operations

Back to God Ministries International

I. Introduction

For more than 75 years, Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) has served as the worldwide media ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. With ten indigenous ministry teams, BTGMI uses technology and media to take the Word of God to people across the globe so that they can reframe their lives with God's story.

The mission of Back to God Ministries International is to share the gospel, disciple believers, and strengthen the church worldwide by the following means:

- Proclaiming the gospel through media within and across diverse cultures, clearly and efficiently communicating to ensure the gospel is truly heard. Because we are a witness to the unity of Christ's body, and because we value stewardship of resources, we work in partnership with mission organizations.
- Our commitment to working with and through local churches and denominations. We see churches as both sending and receiving, serving and being served. We commit to a prayerful, thoughtful, and wise allocation of resources.
- Working with excellent international ministry team leaders and staff, under the direction of Rev. Kurt Selles, who provide direction in the production of culturally relevant programs and related ministries for gospel proclamation.
- Carrying out ministry in ten major world languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Over the past year, BTGMI has provided evangelism and discipleship resources to people in nearly every country of the world through media outreach.
- A newly redesigned, comprehensive website, backtogod.net, helping the church and individuals engage in our worldwide witness. Web visitors will find information about BTGMI outreach, links to all ten language ministries, and downloadable resources and church materials.

Thanks to faithful support of BTGMI media outreach through ministry shares, church offerings, and individual gifts, people are hearing about Jesus and coming to faith in him. Some are hearing the name of Jesus for the first time in places where they would have no other way to learn God's Word except through media ministry.

II. Reflecting on the five aspects of Our Calling

A. Faith formation

BTGMI has provided faith formation resources in the English language since 1939, beginning with the flagship program *The Back to God Hour*. Today, under the brand ReFrame Media, BTGMI provides audio, print, and digital faith formation resources for North American audiences and English-speaking people anywhere in the world. We have additional indigenous ministry

teams that produce biblical resources to disciple people in Chinese, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

1. **ReFrame Media** offers several diverse media experiences on a range of topics that invite English-speakers to see how God reframes life according to his plan. Resources available to churches, families, and individuals include the following and can be found at reframemedia.com:

   a. ***Today***, a series of daily devotions produced since 1950, is available in print, on the web at ThisIsToday.net, by email subscription, on Facebook or Twitter posts, and through digital apps. We print and distribute 195,000 *Today* booklets six times each year, and more than 132,000 people have signed up to receive the *Today* email. Special devotional guides are also provided by email during Lent and Advent.

   b. ***Kids Corner*** is an audio adventure for children ages 6-12. Web-based Bible stories and devotions complement the audio program to help cultivate a lifelong love for the Bible. Parent resources are also available at kidscorner.net.

   c. ***Groundwork*** is a half-hour audio program and podcast that builds biblical foundations for life. Pastors Scott Hoezee and Dave Bast guide listeners in casual but thoughtful conversations about practical applications of God's Word in today's world. *Groundwork* is produced in partnership with Words of Hope. Listen on the air or online at groundworkonline.com.

      In 2016 *Groundwork* produced a new "Spiritual Disciplines" Bible study for personal and church group studies. This six-part audio podcast helps cultivate growth for a healthy spiritual life and includes a corresponding devotional guide. The study leads listeners as they rediscover the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, study, service, giving, and silence, and why these practices are indispensable to the disciple of Jesus Christ.

   d. ***Family Fire*** is an online community (Facebook and website at familyfire.com) that provides resources to strengthen families through articles, devotions, email and social media interaction, and live retreat events.

      Brittany and her husband are newlyweds. In response to the "10 Rules for Fair Fighting" post on *Family Fire's* Facebook page, she commented: "We seem to bicker about everything. Marriage is a process, and we're still learning each other. I found this guide to be very helpful. I thank the Holy Spirit for leading me to this website. I printed out this guide and other guides for my husband and me to reflect upon and to take notes. We pray before each study session so that we can be truly led by God on how to go about matters of our marriage."

   e. Faith formation goes beyond Bible study and devotional resources. ***Think Christian*** is an online conversation in which Christians bridge the gap between faith and culture. Thoughtful discussions—which include seekers, agnostics, and atheists—are guided by Reformed authors and bloggers as they explore God's sovereignty over all of

culture and consider what it means to live and think as a Christian. Interested individuals can join the conversation at thinkchristian.net.

We've received multiple responses from *Think Christian* followers who have used the blog as curriculum and discussion starters for adult Sunday school classes. Covenant CRC (Sioux Center, Iowa) Pastor Kory Plockmeyer wrote, "Thanks again for the work of *Think Christian* (TC). I especially meant to say a note of gratitude for the various pieces TC has had on the Black Lives Matter movement. Our adult Sunday school program is doing a class based on Jim Wallis's [book] *America's Original Sin,* and I suggested instead that we focus on some of the relevant TC pieces—especially in an effort to have the discussion led by minority voices. I am so impressed by TC's efforts in this area."

Doug Vande Griend of Sunnyslope CRC, Salem, Oregon, also leads a class, and he explains, "We discuss the topics raised by the particular *Think Christian* article, which may be about politics, home life, race, personal finance, business, science, economics, or whatever else might have come along in an article on the site. The purpose of the class is to communally learn, literally, how to 'think Christian' about whatever the subject."

f. ***Church Juice*** works with congregations to offer free resources to help churches communicate better with their congregation and communities. The ReFrame Media team is currently assessing this ministry to strategize how it can best offer resources for churches. For information about how *Church Juice* can assist your congregation, visit churchjuice.com.

2. Culturally relevant discipleship resources are also available in the other major languages in which BTGMI works. Produced and distributed in print, online, and through social media channels and digital apps, devotions and faith formation resources are bringing God's Word to people around the world. Audio and video programs apply God's Word directly through Bible teaching programs, offering Reformed and biblical perspectives on current cultural issues within the context of the nations where we do ministry. Thank God with us for the ways he is using BTGMI discipleship resources to bring people to faith and help them grow in their walk in the Word:

   a. Virendra first learned about Jesus through our Hindi radio program. When Virendra gave his life to Christ, his family opposed his decision and drove him and his wife out of their home. Since he no longer has a permanent address and is always on the move even to this day, Virendra says, "Your radio program is my only source of learning from the Scriptures. I cannot read or write. Listening to your program is food for my spiritual growth."

   b. Takahiro listens to our Japanese *Morning Word* program. He gave his life to Christ ten years ago, but he has struggled because he is the only Christian in his family. For a long time he felt lonely and unwanted. Our Japanese staff invited him to the annual summer Bible camp, where he was welcomed and loved. Takahiro now attends a Bible study and is reading the Bible for the first time in his life.

B. Servant leadership

Back to God Ministries International is blessed to work with indigenous leaders gifted in both ministry and media. These leaders and their teams provide culturally relevant outreach in each of our ten language ministries.

1. In October 2016, Rev. Masao Yamashita, BTGMI Japanese-ministry leader, was installed as the new director of the RCJ Media Evangelism Office, the new media ministry of the Reformed Church of Japan (RCJ). BTGMI will continue to support and partner with the new organization to use media for proclaiming the gospel in Japan.

2. Rabo Godi was appointed as coordinator of BTGMI French-ministry outreach in Niger. Prior to accepting the role with BTGMI, Godi served ten years as chair of the Consistory of the International Evangelical Church in Niamey, and he had volunteered as interim pastor at his local church for seven years. He has preached on radio and television for more than 20 years and has established his own radio station to proclaim the gospel.

3. In addition, the following serve BTGMI as ministry leaders in their respective languages: Chinese: Pastor Jerry An; English: Rev. Steven Koster; French: Rev. Marc Nabie (in Burkina Faso) and Rev. Jacky Chéry (in Haiti); Hindi: Dr. A.K. Lama; Indonesian (interim): Mrs. Hetty Djohan Suryana; Portuguese: Rev. Hernandes Lopes; Russian: Rev. Sergei Sosedkin; Spanish: Rev. Guillermo Serrano.

4. BTGMI provides leadership training in several regions of the world.

   a. In October 2015 our Spanish-ministry team had an unprecedented opportunity to provide training in two cities in Cuba for pastors, evangelists, leaders, and teachers. More than 100 people attended the events. "We've presented leadership workshops in many other countries over the past eleven years, but this is the first time doors were opened in Cuba. The Christian communities there anticipate that through mass and social media, believers and seekers inside Cuba will have access to gospel resources," says Rev. Guillermo Serrano.

   b. Newly redesigned in 2015, our French ministry began working with Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI) in Burkina Faso to produce a pilot radio program that corresponds with the TLTI Bible study *Choosing Good Leaders*. The programs were timely, as Burkina Faso experienced two coups that interrupted national elections. Radio stations aired the series of programs three times in the months leading up to elections. Our French-ministry leader in Burkina Faso, Rev. Nabie, states, "Pray for our training and broadcasts of *Choosing Good Leaders*. This topic is so timely and will resonate with many leaders." We are now producing a new series, *I Belong to God*, based on the Heidelberg Catechism and consisting of 52 broadcasts with corresponding Bible studies.

   c. The BTGMI Chinese-ministry team annually facilitates leadership conferences on using media in missions. The conferences this past fiscal year were held in Hong Kong and North America. In January 2016, Pastor Jerry An, along with Chinese-ministry staff and Rev. Kurt Selles, led a media conference in Taiwan. Several more conferences are scheduled for 2017.

C. Global mission

Through media, BTGMI is uniquely positioned to provide gospel outreach in nearly every country of the world, even in places where Christian missionaries are not allowed. By proclaiming the gospel through radio, television, Internet, mobile apps, and social media, we are able to reach people who may not otherwise have access to a community of believers or to answers to life's difficult questions. We regularly receive responses from people around the world who testify that they heard about Jesus for the first time through the media resources produced by BTGMI.

For example, Vitorio, who lives in Brazil, was addicted to drugs and alcohol for 25 years. When he started watching the BTGMI Portuguese TV program *Word of Truth*, he testified, "I found the strength to walk with Jesus Christ. And from the time I started to listen, the worship songs and messages had a huge impact in my heart. I was able to return to the Lord's path, and now I am free!"

The majority of people in the Garhwal region of northern India have access to God's Word only through radio. BTGMI radio programming is well received among the listeners. Recently producers did extensive follow-up with listeners who live in remote places in this hilly region. There they met a group of people who have listened to our program over a period of time. Nineteen listeners decided to publicly announce Jesus as their Savior and be baptized. All the new believers come from non-Christian families.

1. BTGMI employs more than 140 full-time and 91 part-time staff members working around the world. BTGMI is active in more than 108 countries through production and discipleship centers, broadcast locations, and resource distribution. In addition, BTGMI reaches people in nearly 180 countries through Internet and mobile app resources.

2. Our international ministry teams have developed 28 ministry websites in nine languages supported by 42 social media sites. BTGMI produces 43 radio/audio programs, 15 TV/video programs, also delivered by CD/DVD, Internet, Netflix, Vimeo, YouTube, and a variety of mobile applications.

3. In 2016 BTGMI distributed more than 2.2 million printed devotional booklets in six languages. In addition, daily devotions are delivered by email, Facebook, or smartphone apps to more than 1.4 million people every day in these languages.

4. When people who respond to BTGMI outreach ask for personal spiritual guidance, our staff and more than 600 volunteers worldwide offer discipleship, mentoring, and prayer, and they help seekers connect with local churches. Networks of more than 1,700 prayer partners in North America and throughout the world pray regularly for people who respond to our media outreach.

5. BTGMI global outreach is strengthened through crucial networks of North American and international partners. Strong collaborations create effective partnerships for mission and allow resources to be invested wisely. BTGMI works cooperatively with the following organizations in various ministry areas:

a. Christian Reformed World Missions—collaborative ministries in Japan, El Salvador, Eastern Europe, and Haiti, where we also entered into partnership with World Renew and Sous Espwa in 2016.

b. Timothy Leadership Training Institute—cooperative leadership training in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Japan.

c. CRC Korean Council—publication of Korean-English *Today* devotions.

d. Calvin Theological Seminary, Sustaining Congregational Excellence, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, the Network, and World Literature Ministries.

e. Words of Hope—partnership in Hindi, Indonesian, and French ministries and in the production of the English-language audio program *Groundwork*.

f. Good Books Educational Trust Ministries—media outreach and discipleship in northern India and the Himalayan region.

g. Reformed denominations worldwide—joint-ministry partnerships in Japan (Reformed Church in Japan), Brazil (Presbyterian Church of Brazil), and Indonesia (Indonesian Christian Church). In addition, we partner with evangelical congregations in Eastern Europe and Africa and with churches and Christian ministries in China.

h. Christian universities in Russia and Brazil.

D. Mercy and justice

While the mission of BTGMI is primarily media missions, our ministry teams and partners have opportunities to provide comfort and assistance to people who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and disadvantaged.

1. Five years after the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami that hit northern Japan, a second major earthquake hit the Kumamoto region in April 2016, causing extensive damage to property and human lives. The BTGMI Japanese team launched a new series of radio programs that offered *Words of Hope* to victims of this latest tragedy. As a result of the spiritual and practical follow-up care by our Japanese-ministry team following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan, God opened doors for continued broadcast, Bible study, and spiritual growth among a population that previously had been closed to the Christian faith. Many people gave their lives to the Lord. We are seeing that same kind of response in Kumamoto.

2. Amid ongoing conflict in Ukraine, we continue to partner with local churches and the Far East Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC) to create short radio spots and a hotline for displaced persons to call. An average of 50 people call the hotline each month, and over the past year approximately 1,000 people were referred to local congregations for assistance and spiritual counsel.

3. Following the destruction in Haiti caused by Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, the BTGMI French-ministry team in Haiti developed a radio broadcast and follow-up to provide grief counseling for residents who faced yet another disaster in this small country.

4. Pain and brokenness are not just international concerns. Our English program *Family Fire* addresses hurting families in North America. BTGMI's English outreach, ReFrame Media, produces *Family Fire*, to help strengthen families. See also section II, A, 1, d above.

   This past year *Family Fire* offered two eBooks, "Ten Rules for Fair Fighting" and "The Power of Forgiveness," which have been downloaded by more than 55,000 email subscribers and used in personal and group Bible studies.

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

As outlined above, for more than 75 years the mission of Back to God Ministries International has been to proclaim the gospel, disciple people who want to follow Jesus, and strengthen the church. By God's grace, we have been blessed to faithfully carry out our mission in ten languages, through a variety of media tools, reaching people with the gospel wherever they are in the world.

To stay current, BTGMI continually seeks out effective ways to proclaim the gospel and call people into relationship with God. Additional examples include the following:

– Over the past several months, the BTGMI Russian-ministry team worked with local church partners throughout Ukraine, including Kiev, Odessa, Kherson, and Melitopol, to plan and carry out youth gospel rallies. Together, BTGMI and local churches promoted the events on radio and TV and through printed and online resources. More than 39,000 youths attended the rallies. A member of the Russian team presented the gospel and challenged the youths to respond to Christ. More than 12,000 young people filled out information cards requesting Bibles, Christian literature, or follow-up with local congregations, who will disciple those who want to know more about a commitment to Christ.
– As avenues for spreading information improve and change with time, media outreach must also change. The Chinese-ministry team has responded, revising their ministry strategy in a variety of ways. They have revised their outreach approach in order to reach more people with more resources, refocusing efforts to create a mobile app platform called *Be Thou My Rhythm*. The multiplatform app produced in Chinese provides a broad collection of solid biblical resources. This outreach has provided opportunities not only to share the gospel but also to be a leading influence among Chinese churches and ministries for expanded ministry in China.
– As more of the general population in Latin America has gained access to mobile devices, we've increased production of an app that offers daily devotions. The digital delivery of our long running *Cada Dia* devotional guide provides easier and more cost-effective access to God's Word. We've also increased email access to these Spanish devotions through subscriptions. These two measures helped reduce the cost of printing and shipping while increasing the number of people who receive the *Cada Dia* daily devotions. Initial steps have begun to provide a similar devotional resource for French-speaking people in Africa and Haiti.

By God's grace and with the faithful prayers and support of individuals and churches, BTGMI will continue to carry out media missions, proclaiming

the gospel throughout the world. And as God gives us opportunities to make an impact on people's lives, we are thankful to see the ways they pass along the blessing to others.

Mr. Apit was banished from his home village shortly after becoming a believer. He fled to the Indonesian village of Cijangkar, Indonesia, where he knew some Christians were living. Mr. Apit now uses his new home to host a listener community for others who, like himself, are seeking truth and encouragement. He specifically requests prayer for the listener community in Cijangkar: "Pray for us, that our faith will be strong."

Again, thank you for ministry shares, offerings, and individual support that make it possible for Back to God Ministries International to proclaim the gospel, disciple people who want to follow Jesus, and strengthen the church.

III. The Back to God Ministries International board

A. Function

Back to God Ministries International is governed by a regionally representative board that meets three times a year to set policy and to evaluate the work of the staff.

B. Officers of the board

The board officers of BTGMI are Rev. Reginald Smith, president; Mr. Wayne Brower, vice president; Mrs. Cindi Veenstra, secretary; and Mr. John Vegt, treasurer. Rev. Greg Fluit serves as president of the BTGMI Canadian board.

C. Salary disclosure

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	1	1	0
16	5	1	4
15	1	0	1

V. Recommendations

A. That Rev. Kurt D. Selles, director of Back to God Ministries International, and Rev. Reginald Smith, board president, be given the privilege of the floor when BTGMI matters are discussed.

B. That synod approve and endorse two offerings by the churches in support of Back to God Ministries International.

C. That synod encourage churches and individual members throughout the CRC in North America to use resources provided by ReFrame Media, the English outreach of Back to God Ministries International, to assist in spiritual growth and encouraging outreach in their local communities.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Back to God Ministries International
Kurt D. Selles, director

New Mission Agency

Note: Synod 2015 approved the joining of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions into a single mission agency. Since that time, the two agencies have continued to operate as separate organizations on the ministry field while also working together to join the two agencies into one. For this reason, we have included reports for Home Missions and World Missions separately while also providing a joint report that highlights some of the initiatives of the new agency.

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Christian Reformed Home Missions

I. Introduction

God is on the move in North America. In congregations, campuses, neighborhoods, workplaces, families—together we seek to join God in mission.

Joining the mission of God, Home Missions follows the Lord's lead in the movement of the gospel in North America. Working through regional teams, Home Missions supports a diverse group of church planters, pastors, campus ministers, and others who are called to renew communities together.

II. Reflecting Our Calling: Global Mission

North America is rapidly becoming one of the largest mission fields in the world. Our call and a sense of urgency lead us to engage the enormous changes now taking place in our culture.

Joining in the mission of God, Home Missions desires to partner with local congregations in sharing the gospel with people across North America. God calls us to listen and discern together, that our eyes might be opened to see more fully God's mission in the world.

A. Starting and strengthening churches

Starting and strengthening churches remains the core work of Home Missions. It builds on the fruitful work of the past while also adapting to address the challenges of our changing North American contexts. We are engaging in this ministry as a journey of discernment in which we seek to bring together all churches, communities, generations, and ethnic groups toward unity in mission.

1. Starting new churches

   Home Missions partners with church plants in a number of ways. We develop partnership teams for each church plant, made up of local leaders and a Home Missions liaison, each of whom brings skills and resources that will create a strong foundation. We support church planters in continuing education, training, coaching, prayer, and pastoral care. Partner church plants also have access to grant funding, which church planters apply for on an as-needed basis. In 2016 Home Missions financially supported a total of 41 church plants, 16 of which were new for 2016.

   Example and story: Oakland Startup Church (Oakland, California)

   While church planting can be a slow process, church planter Kyle Brooks and the Oakland Startup Church family are making strides into
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their community by readily sharing the gospel to the people around them and proving that a simple conversation can go a long way.

One recent conversation came during a pickup game of soccer. Kyle and a young man he had never met began asking about each other's work. Learning that Kyle is a pastor, the young man confided that although his family was never religious or went to church, he always had a sense that there was a "higher power" and "more to life than what he knew."

Kyle encouraged the young man to explore this sense of wonder. "The good news of the Christian faith is not that you can find God. It's that God can find you," he explained. He also offered to meet with him further.

2. Strengthening churches

Our church plants are on the front lines of bringing and being the gospel of Jesus Christ in their communities. As a supportive partner, we equip and encourage leaders, and we come alongside both new and established churches with resources that will bring health and sustainability. A key component of strengthening existing congregations is the training and provision of coaches who work with local congregations.

Example and story: Day of Discernment at Faith CRC in Tinley Park, Illinois

One way that we strengthen churches is through leading a Day of Discernment. Peter Kelder, Home Missions' Central U.S. regional leader, recently led one of these events at Faith CRC. The church's biggest goal for the day was to decide whether to have an intentional interim for leadership development or to begin a more immediate search process for a new pastor.

After a time of worship as well as covering a number of inquiry action points, Peter led the group in an exercise that maps the assets of the congregation. "This led to a breakthrough for this church," says Peter. "They began to see their neighborhood differently and also took ownership of their work in this transition time." With this mapping exercise, along with other coaching from Peter, the group began planning events with the community and decided to begin recruiting their next pastor.

B. Developing disciples

Developing disciples is an important task—one that feeds and supports the vital work of starting and strengthening churches. Our focus is on developing disciples and leaders in local congregations and academic communities across North America who can help transform lives and communities worldwide.

1. Campus ministries

On university campuses across North America, students, staff, and faculty are gathering together to grow in faith, build community, and engage God's world. There's a vast array of research agendas heading off in different, and sometimes competing, directions; there's a multitude of perspectives and worldviews; and there's a colorful array of people on each of our campuses. In 2016, we had 40 campus ministries in Canada and the United States.

Example and story: Campus ministry of Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) in Surrey, British Columbia

Greg never expected his college years to be an exciting time in his life. To avoid ever-increasing college debt, he decided to attend the local (and

affordable) KPU. To Greg, it "seemed like the next, perhaps somewhat boring, step in a life of difficulty."

To help anchor himself in community, Greg decided to join the CRC's campus ministry on the Surrey campus, funded in part by Home Missions. Led by Chaplain Ethan Vanderleek, KPU's program consists of weekly morning prayer, book groups and Bible studies, a philosophy club, and a Muslim-Christian dialogue group.

"Greg specifically commented on the fact that God turned around what seemed to be just another typical, unexciting phase of his life . . . he found community, friendship, and a new path laid before him that is exciting rather than dull," says Vanderleek. "Even those little acts of community are huge acts of divine presence that participate in God's eternal act of creation and salvation."

2. Coffee Break

Coffee Break is small group Bible discovery for evangelism and discipleship. The name "Coffee Break" expresses the relaxed and conversational small group atmosphere. In a Coffee Break group, participants discover for themselves and with others what the Bible says and means. The conversations and study guides are appropriate for all levels of biblical knowledge and faith experience.

In 2016 the North American Coffee Break trainers spent significant time revising the Coffee Break training workshop to apply adult dialogue education principles. The new workshops were very well received by more than 300 leaders who represent thousands of people who participate in their Coffee Break programs.

Example and story: Women's Coffee Break at Yosemite Church in Merced, California

When Jonae Pistoresi began Coffee Break at Yosemite Church in 2001, she started with 50 women in five groups. Now, 15 years later, there are 196 women in 11 groups. These groups meet each week to study the Bible and pray together, providing each other with accountability and encouragement through fellowship.

They regularly find ways to bless their community through service and generosity. Recently the women threw a baby shower for the local pregnancy center, bringing so many baby supplies that the employees at the center needed extra vehicles to transport everything back to their office.

In this same spirit of joy and care, the Coffee Break participants hold an annual community outreach event in the form of a "spring tea," which is a tea party for 250 women.

One woman said that when she started coming to Coffee Break, she was not attending church. Through the Coffee Break group, though, she grew in the Lord, and she and her husband began attending church.

III. Our Journey: Connecting with churches by engaging classes, clusters, and communities

A. Relationships are vital

Relationships with local churches throughout North America are vital to Home Missions' work. Engaging with classes, clusters, and communities is

essential for effective collaboration in the development of experiments and learning communities across the denomination. Our prayer is that these relationships will help the CRCNA effectively reach more people for Christ.

This work takes place in a number of ways that were listed in section II above. However, we also work through regional networks to engage further with Christian Reformed churches and their broader networks.

Example and story: GO Local

Through our GO Local journey, churches are learning to listen, to experience contrarian approaches, and to ask different questions. For example, as they seek to dwell into the text of Luke 10 (in which Jesus sends out the seventy-two), they learn to listen to the voice of the Spirit speaking through the insights of the sister or brother next to them. Instead of seeking to "master the text" (exegete, explain, analyze), they are wondering about what it means to be mastered by the text. This work is both unsettling and challenging for participants. It is opening us up to renew our understanding of, and vision for, the amazing Reformed assertion that God is at work in the world and that we are called and empowered as his people to join the Spirit in that work, God's mission for the redemption of all things.

In West Michigan, five churches have entered phase one of the GO Local process. The Pastors' and Guiding Teams' training took place at the end of September 2016. GO Local also continues to move forward in Classis Chatham. Three congregations are moving ahead and have their guiding teams in place. Two other churches are working on making final decisions about going ahead.

In Western Canada, Alan Roxburgh led a presentation at the fall meeting of Classis B.C. South-East that was very well received. Their classis Home Missions committee is considering possible next steps, and they will host the introductory workshop "Joining God in the Neighborhood." Several other congregations are exploring what it might look like for them to take this first step.

B. Our regional leadership

1. Western Canada region: Rich Braaksma

   Rich is a pastor at New Hope Hillside Church in Calgary, Alberta, where he led the congregation through a process of reforming their vision to focus on mission and merged two church plants into one congregation. Previously Rich served as a "twentysomethings" pastor at New Life Church in Abbotsford, British Columbia. He also planted a church and developed The Talking Stick, a community coffeehouse in the artsy, diverse communities of Venice and Santa Monica, California.

2. Eastern U.S. region: Marco Avila

   Marco lives in Paterson, New Jersey, where he planted New Horizon Church, now a thriving congregation looking forward to buying their own property. Prior to his ministry in the CRC, Marco taught K-12 in Honduras. Currently he serves as a coleader for the CRC/RCA Reformed Leadership Initiative in his region. He also provides regional leadership for Consejo Latino, through which he has linked local Hispanic congregations with a two-year program at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, resulting in the enrollment of 24 new students.

3. Great Lakes region: Amy Schenkel

   Amy worked to plant and pastor Monroe Community Church while serving bivocationally at Home Missions. In 2014 she moved to full-time work with Home Missions, serving as catalyst leader for church planting before transitioning to be the Great Lakes regional mission leader. She also recently served as interim operations director for Home Missions and continues to serve on denominational teams for ministry plan development and the empowerment of women.

4. Central U.S. region: Peter Kelder

   Peter is in his twelfth year of serving as a regional leader with Home Missions. His wisdom and experience in a variety of ministry settings make him a valuable mentor for pastors in his region and for our new regional staff. Peter has also invested in new expressions of missional ministry in his region, partnering with Forge to develop a missional community network in the Chicago area.

5. Western U.S. region: Ben Katt

   Ben planted and pastored Awake Church in Seattle, Washington, a new church that continues to focus on intentionally finding ways to follow Jesus into their neighborhood on Aurora Avenue. Ben's desire to see more churches learn to incarnationally love their neighbors led him to cofound the Parish Collective and the Inhabit Conference. Today Ben shares what he has learned about developing these missional practices with leaders and churches through his Re-Placing Church podcast and coaching relationships.

6. Eastern Canada region

   The most weighty moment of the past sixth months was in saying good-bye to our friend and brother, Eastern Canada regional leader, Adrian Van Giessen. Over the span of a couple of weeks, when it was clear that Adrian's days on earth were coming to an end, our staff prayed together, wept together, remembered together, and encouraged one another like family.

   Adrian was a vital part of creating the foundations for the new mission agency. His words, energy, and passion for mission ring strong through the vision, the values, the postures, and the outcomes. Fittingly, his funeral service presented more of an urgent call to live missionally than a memorial remembrance of his own life and ministry. As a result of his life, Adrian's character will always be in the work we do going forward.

IV. Board matters

Salary disclosure

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	1	0	1
15	7	5	2

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Christian Reformed World Missions

I. Introduction

For over 125 years, Christian Reformed World Missions has been helping Christian Reformed churches fulfill the Great Commission mainly through planting churches and sending individual missionaries around the world. Over the past decade, we have intentionally shifted our focus. We understand that strategic partnerships and intentional networking are crucial to extending Christ's reign among the nations. From our work with unreached peoples to mobilizing local churches, strategic partnerships exponentially increase our ability to initiate and sustain transformational momentum in lives and communities. Together, partnering with each other and with God's Spirit, the good news is being preached around the world.

II. Reflecting Our Calling: Global Mission

God commissioned his people to witness to the good news of his kingdom and make disciples of all nations. World Missions exists to lead members of the CRC in responding to that commission on the international mission field.

World Missions has more than 200 missionaries serving in over 40 countries. Through partnerships, our work extends to more than 50 countries. Within our office staff, field staff, and on our board, we value ethnic, gender, and role diversity to better understand God's call for us. This takes place on the international mission field in four main ways: Christian education, leadership development, evangelism and discipleship, and transforming communities.

A. Christian education

Many Christian educators around the world struggle to apply a holistic biblical worldview in the classroom. One of the strengths of the CRCNA is its commitment to Christian education that incorporates this biblical worldview. World Missions facilitates by sending Christian teachers and equips educators to apply a holistic biblical worldview so that students can hear the story of God, his people, and his world; become active participants in that story; and accept as their own the mission of God's people in his world.

Example and story: Educational Care in Uganda

Nearly 1,800 international Christian day school educators successfully completed World Missions-related education training curriculum in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. One of the many ways this training took place was through Educational Care, a learning program that encourages and assists educators and schools with limited resources by giving them an opportunity to develop skills and strategies of education that honor God, his creation, and the children in their classrooms.

Grace is one of those 1,800 educators who took part in World Missions training.

Unfortunately many students across Africa face corporal punishment and shaming as a means of discipline. It's a deeply rooted tradition, and large classroom sizes make students difficult to manage. But for schools like Grace's in Uganda, teachers and administrators are making an important realization that transforms the way they see students.

"We appreciate that every child is unique and has potential to be a useful member of God's kingdom," says Grace today. "We put a stop to the shame culture, and all corporal punishment stopped." What brought about this change? Grace and other teachers at her school began taking part in Educational Care training, a curriculum developed by Christian Reformed World Missions that helps teachers find practical ways to integrate their faith to the classroom. Educational Care "is restoring dignity to learners and instilling the biblical worldview in teachers," says Mwaya Wa Kitavi, World Missions' regional leader for eastern and southern Africa.

B. Leadership development

Many Christian leaders around the world receive little or no training for their work. They are passionate about their calling but often have no way to prepare to follow the call. World Missions multiplies vibrant disciples and churches through focusing on the development of godly servant leaders. Our ministry in leadership development involves both formal education and nonformal training and engages men, women, youth, and children.

Example and story: Theological College of Northern Nigeria

More than 17,900 people participated in World Missions-related formal pastoral, theological training or nonformal leadership development in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. One of the many ways this training took place was through our partnerships with seminaries around the world, including the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN).

Rev. Maxwell Kanu is one of those 17,900 educators who took part in World Missions training. With support from Christian Reformed World Missions, Maxwell began studying at TCNN in August 2011. He graduated from TCNN and returned to his home country of Sierra Leone in the fall of 2015, planning to use his new skills to strengthen the Christian Reformed Church of Sierra Leone.

At TCNN Maxwell met each week with Tim Palmer, a missionary who serves at the seminary, to develop his understanding of the Reformed faith. "When I was in school, I saw him as a father and as a mentor," Maxwell says.

In November 2015, Maxwell and his family began church planting work in Sierra Leone. Since their first Bible study in November, the church now has about 40 members and continues to grow despite encountering some challenges with securing a permanent location for the church building.

C. Evangelism and discipleship

Many people around the world don't know what it means to follow Jesus. World Missions shares the good news of salvation and leads people to develop and deepen a personal relationship with Christ and with his body. Because the greatest opportunity in evangelism today is among the 1.7 billion people following the Muslim faith, ministry among Muslims is a priority.

Example and story: Evangelism and Discipleship in Asia

Missionaries play the role of evangelists and disciplers in a variety of ways, but in all of these ways they focus on building Christ-centered relationships. They share the gospel with people who have not yet decided to follow Christ, and they help develop the spiritual growth of believers through discipleship ministries. In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, we recorded

8,832 people who made a commitment to follow Christ as a result of direct evangelism efforts by our staff or by programs of our partner organizations. In addition, 17,903 people took part in World Missions-related adult or youth discipleship ministries.

One person who took part in a discipleship program was a young man named Xiao (*name changed*).

"How many of you want to follow Jesus?" Caleb (*name changed*) asked after a week of introducing his group of teenage students to the Bible. Each day they explored a different biblical hero, and on the final day they focused on Jesus. As a culminating exercise, Caleb asked them to answer this question.

To his surprise, every one of the students raised their hands. Some of them had never even been involved in the church where he was teaching. Yet God used this World Missions volunteer to speak to each one of the students.

One of the students particularly surprised Caleb when he raised his hand. Xiao was an 18-year-old who had been relatively quiet during most of the class. Xiao had not been attending a church and hadn't read the Bible.

"I think when I shared that I was the same age as some of my students when I accepted Christ into my heart, they were especially excited," Caleb added.

D. Transforming communities

Throughout the world the Spirit is inspiring Christian movements to ask what the good news of Jesus might look like in the context of their time and place. World Missions identifies, encourages, and learns from these movements as we together endeavor to put faith into action in communities worldwide.

Example and story: Social Business in El Salvador

Transforming Communities is all about recognizing God's existence and important work in communities before we even begin to take part in ministry in this area. World Missions identifies ministries that already exist and helps bring collaboration and transcend boundaries for further impact among these ministries and their leaders. In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, these networks included more than 2,000 people.

Our main partner for community transformation in El Salvador is Seeds of a New Creation, a ministry training center in the heart of El Salvador's capital. One of the many ways that Seeds tries to encourage both faith and lay leaders is through the development of social businesses in and near the country's capital of San Salvador.

"Social businesses are all about affirming local capacities," explains Roland Vanderburg, a missionary who works with Seeds. "Some look like nonprofits, and some look like for-profit businesses, but they are all mission-driven."

Carlos is one of the business leaders who has worked with Seeds to get his social business started. In many ways Carlos was a typical youth in El Salvador. Now 27 years old, he has an education and some valuable knowledge in computer skills but few opportunities to use that knowledge.

Several months later, Carlos started an Internet cafe with help from the social business fund. The cafe serves as a resource center for students, and Carlos teaches computer classes. They recently had their first graduate,

Alison, a 13-year-old. "Carlos's newfound significance in life through dignified work has transformed him," adds Roland.

E. Mobiliziing the CRCNA

World Missions has a fifth category of work also: mobilizing the CRCNA. We come alongside Christian Reformed churches to encourage and enable them to fulfill the mission of God among the nations. The CRC engages in that mission in many ways through various agencies, but we have a responsibility to challenge congregations to live into this calling.

Example and story: Engaging the church through ministry in Haiti

Rob Ringuette was just one of 298 volunteers who served with World Missions in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The teams of North Americans that he connected with the Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic were part of the 30 World Missions teams that served in FY 2015-2016. Connecting members of the CRC with mission opportunities around the world is just one of many ways that World Missions leads members of the CRC in fulfilling the Great Commission. This past fiscal year, 82 percent of churches in Canada and 68 percent of churches in the United States were connected to international ministry through World Missions.

"Those were powerful moments," Rob Ringuette expressed after reflecting on his short-term mission trip to Haiti. He and five teammates from Trinity CRC in Goderich, Ontario, spent a week working alongside six Haitian men to build a second story onto a ministry center.

While Rob and other team members shared their construction skills, his Haitian teammates shared their custom of singing and doing a Bible study during their lunch break. Rob observed, "I was able to hear God in another language, and that's an incredible experience."

As a new Christian, Rob Ringuette said he wasn't sure why God was calling him to volunteer in Haiti, but he sensed God's affirmation of his decision before, during, and after his time there. "I could see how real their faith in God was, and that they start teaching that faith at a very young age," he said.

II. Our Journey: Connecting with churches

World Mission is also connecting with churches in the following ways:

A. Engaging younger generations

Young members of the CRC are getting hands-on understanding of their role in missions. This takes place through short-term service trips, yearlong programs, and key partnerships. As young people explore their calling in missions through these opportunities, they return to North America with a better understanding of God's whole creation and the role they play in building his kingdom.

Momentum is a yearlong discipleship program for young adults (usually ages 18-22) who are looking to grow in their relationship with Christ through mentorship and service in God's local and global kingdom. The program's structure includes (1) teams of young adults who meet with a spiritual mentor or couple; (2) monthly discipleship meetings and monthly service projects in the local community; (3) a culminating, monthlong international missions experience; and (4) exploration of future service opportunities both locally and globally.

B. Cohort of Missioners

The Cohort of Missioners program offers a yearlong experience in which college-age participants, known as missioners, are immersed in a new culture by serving with local mission organizations at the grassroots level. Each participant is linked to fellow missioners with whom they will communally participate in service, intensive learning, reflection, and spiritual formation. In 2016 there were 12 participants in the cohort program.

C. Resources for leadership

We come alongside churches to help train them in caring for their missionaries and in taking an active role in the global church. Churches in North America are extending their impact beyond their church community, beyond their neighborhood, and onto other continents through World Missions. This takes place in several ways:

1. Preparing missionaries and volunteers for service

   Our orientation prepares missionaries and volunteers in spiritual care, conflict management, developing healthy relationships, support-raising, diversity and antiracism, communication, and other topics relevant to cross-cultural living. When the missionary or volunteer leaves for the field, they continue to receive support from our staff.

2. Missions advocates

   Missions advocates serve as church-appointed volunteers who fuel interest for the church in international missions and act as a communication link between members of the local congregation and World Missions.

3. Communicating to churches and individuals

   We are sharing how God is working through members of the CRC to bring positive change on the international missions field. We also publish monthly newsletters that share best practices for supporting global ministry in prayer and with financial gifts.

4. Church engagements

   Our staff is also available to preach at churches or to assist congregations or missions leaders in strengthening their role in missions upon request. World Missions staff also share missions expertise at regional workshops like the annual Day of Encouragement events hosted by Diaconal Ministries Canada.

III. Board matters

Salary disclosure

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	1	0	1
16	1	0	1
15	5	1	4

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New Mission Agency

I. Introduction

Synod 2015 approved the joining of Christian Reformed Home Missions and Christian Reformed World Missions into a single mission agency. Over the past twenty-four months, staff from Home Missions and World Missions have been working together to join the two agencies into one. This change will open the door for increased opportunities for ministry in our ever-changing world.

The mandate of the new mission agency follows:

> The new mission 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
>
> 1. encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism and discipleship.
> 2. initiate, support, and guide new-church development and other evangelistic and discipling ministries.
> 3. develop Christian leaders.

II. Initiatives

Home Missions and World Missions have identified the following as opportunities to expand ministry as a result of joining together: Arab/Muslim/Middle East outreach, partnering with local ministries for change, and diaspora ministries.

A. Arab/Muslim/Middle East outreach

Missionaries in the Middle East and staff in North America who work among Muslim groups have been meeting regularly to share best practices, experiences, and struggles. Together they are finding common themes and applying what they discuss for more effective ministry. Together with local church plants that are working with immigrants from Muslim countries, we have already found opportunities to build a bridge between ministry in North America and other countries that have majority Muslim communities.

Example of Muslim Ministry

Emad Girgis says a meeting between Christian Reformed Church ministry leaders and Arabic- and Farsi-speaking pastors in the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario was an answer to prayer. Coordinated by Home Missions and World Missions representatives, including a missionary who serves in the Middle East, the meeting took place at Willowdale CRC in Toronto.

"Amazingly, a meeting like this is what we have been hoping to see," said Girgis, coordinator of Children of Abraham, an outreach ministry to Muslims based at a Pentecostal church in the nearby city of Mississauga, Ontario. "We have been praying for more churches to open themselves to a love for Muslims. The need to do this is not optional in Canada because we are seeing so many Muslims coming into this country. The harvest is huge."

Participants included CRC pastors who are hoping to do ministry with Muslims in their communities and with ministry leaders from other

denominations who are already at work among Muslims speaking either Arabic or Farsi.

B. Partnering with local ministries for change

We recognize that grassroots ministries led by national leaders have a better understanding of the needs of their community. We see opportunities for partnership with these local organizations by complementing their strengths and working toward a common goal where possible.

Example of partnering with local ministries for change

Mission Montreal is a partnership between Christian Direction, Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, Diaconal Ministries Canada, First CRC Montreal, and Classis Eastern Canada.

Before fleeing her home in Cameroon, Genevieve (*name changed*) worked as a nurse. As a refugee living in the Saint Laurent borough of Montreal, Quebec, however, Genevieve found herself unable to use her nursing skills to make a living for herself and her three children.

Genevieve wanted to join an English conversation group to help her practice her language skills and work toward getting a nursing job. Conversation groups like the one that Genevieve attends are just one of many ways that Mission Montreal has been reaching out to Saint Laurent's refugee and immigrant population. Since joining the English conversation groups, Genevieve has been able to secure a job as a nurse's aide. She is close to completing her training and receiving her credentials to be hired as a nurse.

The method of finding where God is already at work, coming alongside of organizations like Christian Direction that have a long track record, and adding the CRC's gifts and resources to the mix can serve as a template that can be introduced in other settings.

C. Diaspora ministries

We recognize that there are many opportunities to start new churches and ministries with people groups from different countries right in North America. We hope to use the gifts and knowledge that missionaries gain while living in the international mission field to more effectively reach out to immigrants from these countries who want to partner in ministry in North America.

Example of Diaspora ministries

Hailing from Myanmar, Pastor Siang Lian Hup is in the process of seeking to become an ordained CRC minister by way of Church Order Article 8. Currently he is the pastor of an independent Burmese congregation in Knoxville, Tennessee.

"I like the CRC's worship style, and it has the same confessions and creeds that I have," said Hup, whose father was the pastor of a Covenant Reformed Church of Myanmar congregation.

Hup, who speaks several languages, attended a Reformed seminary in India before coming to the United States to serve as an interpreter for the U.S. State Department and to do ministry with refugees, especially of the Chin ethnic group of Burmese.

Indiana has one of the largest Burmese populations in the United States, and Indianapolis has the most Burmese refugees in the state, totaling more

than 13,500. Fort Wayne, Indiana, has the second highest number, with about 7,000.

"These developments offer the CRC a wonderful chance to partner with a group of people who can offer us so much," added Joel Zuidema, pastor of Pathway Church in St. John, Indiana.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the binational board presidents of the new mission agency, Rev. Joy Engelsman (U.S.) and Rev. Carel Geleynse (Can.); the CRCNA director of ministries and administration, Mr. Colin P. Watson, Sr.; the director of CRHM, Dr. Moses Chung; and the director of CRWM, Dr. Gary J. Bekker, the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to the new mission agency, Christian Reformed Home Missions, or Christian Reformed World Missions are addressed.

B. That synod, along with the Board of Trustees, encourage all Christian Reformed congregations to recognize the following Sundays as significant opportunities to pray for and to receive an offering for the new mission agency: Easter, Pentecost, the third Sunday in September, and Reformation Day Sunday.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

New Mission Agency Executive Leadership Team
Gary J. Bekker
Moses Chung
Steve Kabetu
Colin P. Watson, Sr.

Timothy Leadership Training Institute

I. Organization and vision

If you met a pastor serving in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, it is highly likely that he or she will have had no formal training for ministry. The rapid growth of the church in these places has outstripped the supply of trained leaders.

Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI) seeks to address this need. In the spirit of 2 Timothy 2:2, "Entrust what you have heard from me to those who will be qualified to teach others." God has been using TLTI to go where untrained pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders live and work in order to equip them for ministry. They, in turn, are spreading the gospel and their congregations and communities are being transformed.

TLTI's vision is to make its core training programs accessible to all areas of the Christian world by 2020. Today we are active in Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, North America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania, which includes thirty-three countries from which we received direct reports during 2016.

While expanding our reach, TLTI also seeks to provide training programs of excellent quality and with effective assessments so that we can monitor and validate the improvements in a trainee's skills. New software implemented at the end of 2016 provides us with unprecedented insight into our training activities.

II. Training programs

TLTI's core Leadership Training Program consists of seven training manuals that cover the basic areas of ministry. The curriculum includes Caring for God's People, Christian Stewardship, From Harm to Harmony in the Family, Biblical Preaching, Teaching the Christian Faith, Praising God in Work and Worship, and God's Plan for Sustainable Development. Each manual takes about sixteen hours of training time to complete.

The strengths of the TLT program are that it is biblical, interactive, and practical. It respects the local context and utilizes indigenous leadership. Participants prepare action plans during each three- to five-day training session that they take back to their churches for implementation. They report on the results of their action plans during the next training session, usually four to six months later. Participants learn how to identify and develop their own resources for ministry, an essential step in planting and developing churches.

TLT can be reproduced without academic structures and expensive infrastructure. Participants learn through guided study, discussion, and practical application. Attention is given to setting ministry goals, identifying activities to achieve these goals, and then multiplying the training to others.

This year we released the 2016 edition of our Leadership Training Program. By the end of 2017, we project that the full set in this most current edition will be available in sixteen languages. At that point one or more manuals will have been translated into forty languages.

III. Organization and structure

TLTI has identified seventy potential training hubs with actual ministry taking place in forty-five of these hubs. Typically an area training hub is aligned with an established ministry partner who sponsors and supports the

training efforts. A ministry partner may be a congregation, denomination, academic institution, mission-sending agency, or other organization interested in promoting the trainings.

With this structure, area training hubs and our ministry partners become training multipliers. Most of the costs are often paid by the participants themselves. The leverage of local resources provides more training at a lower cost and in the long term creates self-sustaining replication.

IV. Partnerships

Already affiliated with a number of agencies of the CRCNA, TLTI joined forces with the CRC on July 1, 2016, in order to work together more effectively. The TLT program was started almost twenty years ago through the efforts of a number of CRC leaders and educators. This arrangement will help to bring financial stability to TLTI as well as connect CRC ministries and programs more closely with the work of training pastors and ministry leaders worldwide.

TLTI's training programs are used extensively in the field by the CRC's new mission agency, Verre Naasten (the mission-sending agency of various Reformed denominations in the Netherlands), and other agencies or denominations. Our training programs are also used by World Renew and Back to God Ministries International. TLTI's trainees come from several hundred distinct church organizations around the world.

TLTI has affiliation agreements with the CRC's new mission agency, Back to God Ministries International, and Verre Naasten. We also have ministry agreements with many smaller partners, including I.D.E.A. Ministries, a nonprofit based in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Ministry for Christian Development in Haiti (MDK); The Vine Institute, a leadership development program in Salt Lake City, Utah; the Christian Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic (ICRRD); and Semillas de Nueva Creación in El Salvador.

In addition, we have an articulation agreement with Miami International Seminary (MINTS), which provides a path for TLTI master trainers to receive a certificate from MINTS for their work with TLTI's core Leadership Training Program (plus an additional assignment) and grants credit equivalent to the first year of the MINTS bachelor of arts degree in theological studies.

V. Training outcomes

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, TLTI certified 859 basic and master trainers in 33 different countries. TLTI received reports of 262 training sessions attended by more than 2,500 participants. As more trainees graduate, they in turn conduct additional trainings, which multiply the effect of TLTI's work substantially.

VI. Summary

TLTI's global training network and programs are effective tools to use for pastoral and lay leader training around the world, and the demand for our program is growing. We look forward to continued partnerships with organizations and congregations as we seek to train church leaders worldwide.

Timothy Leadership Training Institute
Stephen M. Tuuk, president and chief executive officer

Aboriginal Ministries (Canada)

In the past few years, the work of our Aboriginal Ministry entities within Canada have been walking an even more intentional journey of reconciliation than in the past because of an increased focus across the country prompted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3). As a result, the CRC's Aboriginal ministries—our Urban Aboriginal Ministry Centres in Winnipeg, Manitoba; Regina, Saskatchewan; and Edmonton, Alberta; together with the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) (www.crcna.org/aboriginal/canadian), which supports healing, reconciliation, and restored relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada—have had greater focus and purpose. Through compassionate community building, awareness raising, and advocacy, ministry with Aboriginal persons in Canada continues to grow increasingly faithful and strong.

The Urban Aboriginal Ministry Centres, funded by the Christian Reformed Church, help to meet the spiritual and social needs of Aboriginal Canadians to help them live dignified and harmonious lives. These ministry centers are highly regarded by the communities they serve. Ministry participants value the dignity and respect they experience as they attend and participate in the programs and community activities.

– The Winnipeg Indigenous Family Centre has been involved in the work of reconciliation for over forty years. It is deepening its work in counseling services and contextualization of ministry. In order to minister to a growing population of people engaged with the ministry, the center is expanding its facility. Renovations are beginning in 2017. In addition, the center has begun revising policies and other documents as a first step toward gaining status as a charitable organization.

  Staff members are grateful for the children who come to the kids' camp. In many cases these children have challenges that most of our church children do not face: uncertainty in their home, connections to Child and Family Services that are frightening and confusing, difficulties at school brought on by poverty and trauma. "Still they show us that that they are resilient, beautiful, strong, hopeful. We celebrate them, and we celebrate the people who invest in them."

  The staff are also grateful for the beauty and other benefits enjoyed through our beading and moccasin-making circles. As (mostly) women gather and learn to apply ancient handcrafts in a new way, they visit and talk and share and heal. There is a lot of beauty in what they make as well. All of the proceeds from sales of the moccasins go toward funding this program.
– The Indian Metis Christian Fellowship (IMCF) in Regina, Saskatchewan, provides a drop-in ministry and daily prayer circle. The ministry is known for its ability to contextualize the gospel and for growing a deeper understanding of what is meant by Aboriginal spirituality. From hosting funerals and being present for key family events, the ministry leaders walk a journey together with community members in times of joy and crisis. A yearly clothing drive, a bicycle repair ministry, and

weekly meals served to the community are just some of the ways in which ministry takes place in the name of reconciliation to the people in Regina. IMCF is funded partially through the CRCNA but is also in constant partnership ecumenically with other faith traditions in an effort to raise both funds and volunteers.

– The Edmonton Native Healing Centre continues to use the Blanket Exercise to educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks about three times every two weeks. Funding through a capital campaign is in place for renovations to the center's plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems, and we have applied for a government grant to help with kitchen renovations. The center is also becoming more involved in "End Poverty Edmonton" and is growing ecumenical ties with other churches across the city through a local Mustard Seed ministry. Later this year the center plans to create a classroom to host gatherings for elders and community educators. All this wonderful work is possible because of the faithful support of the CRCNA and its commitment to building relationships with Indigenous peoples across North America.

CAMC's board, which consists of the Urban Aboriginal Ministry Centre directors and key volunteers from the CRCNA and other ecumenical partners (Reformed Church in America and Presbyterian Church Canada), urges churches to continue to grow in understanding and structuring their ministry toward ongoing reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples. Resources, studies, and other tools are increasingly available, with some significant content developed this past year regarding missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. CAMC's key hope is for all churches to access the many tools and resources available as reconciliation becomes a stronger theme in the churches.

Together with the Centre for Public Dialogue and Kairos, CAMC is coordinating use of the Blanket Exercise workshop throughout Canada. The workshop has provided many CRC leaders and other members (including delegates to Synod 2016) with an opportunity to understand the injustices faced by First Nations people in the history of Canada, especially with regard to land claims. Advocacy for Aboriginal rights is another important component of Aboriginal ministry in Canada. In addition, efforts toward Indigenous education reform carried out by the Committee for Contact with the Government/Centre for Public Dialogue (www.crcna.org/publicdialogue) involve working with a broad coalition of churches and Indigenous organizations to encourage public awareness and action in Indigenous education. (See also the report by the Committee for Contact with the Government.)

Committee for Contact with the Government/Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue (Mr. Mike Hogeterp, research and communications manager)

I. Introduction

The Committee for Contact with the Government, operating as the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue, is a justice and reconciliation ministry of the Christian Reformed churches in Canada. The Centre for Public Dialogue cultivates passionate citizenship in Christian communities, studies critical issues facing Canadian society from a Reformed perspective, and interacts with legislators in a constructive manner. Our key focus issues, which are decided through communication with local church representatives and our partners, are currently refugee rights and Indigenous justice, and we also highlight human trafficking and climate change through close partnership with other ministries like Citizens for Public Justice and the RCA's Hope to Freedom.

II. Reflecting on Our Calling

A. Faith formation—We seek, in every part of our work, to help local churches live into doing justice as a key component of a vibrant and faithful faith life:

- Equipping church members to connect with their Members of Parliament through our new online advocacy system, found online at crcna.ca/publicdialogue/action-centre. After beginning to use this new system in June 2016, we have already been encouraged by the way it takes down barriers to advocacy, and we have seen a significant increase in use in comparison with that of our old system. Continuing to promote and use this innovative tool is a key goal in 2017.
- Helping local church members to tell stories and think together about the church's call to justice through our *Do Justice* blog (dojustice.crcna.org). In 2016 our "Live Justly for Lent" and "In 1492, Indigenous peoples discovered Columbus" series were particularly well used by church members.
- Hiring, in 2016, a part-time justice mobilizer for Canada, in partnership with other justice ministries such as World Renew and Diaconal Ministries Canada, to coach and equip churches in their justice journeys.

B. Mercy and justice—We assist local churches in loving mercy and doing justice:

- Working with a grassroots committee of CRC experts in their fields to discern and enact faithful engagement with the federal government around physician-assisted dying.
- Setting up a new, user-friendly website (crcna.ca/publicdialogue) with information, biblical insights, and advocacy opportunities on human trafficking, Indigenous justice, refugee justice, and climate change. The new website also includes new collections of worship resources, both general and issue-specific, and a new action centre which can connect church members to their Members of Parliament for online advocacy efficiently and effectively.

– Developing and facilitating workshops such as Journey with Me: Refugee Stories Change Lives; the Blanket Exercise; and *Living the 8th Fire*, a small group curriculum for churches wishing to learn more about Indigenous justice.

C. Gospel proclamation and worship—Doing justice is gospel proclamation—we proclaim that Christ is renewing all things and that he calls us to be his colaborers. When the church is seen doing justice, our witness is stronger and has more integrity. In addition to the work already mentioned, we have done this work in 2016 as follows:

– Providing both general and issue-specific worship resources on our new website, accessible at crcna.ca/publicdialogue/resources. These worship resources have been curated by local church leaders.
– Working in partnership with other CRC ministries in Canada to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #48 and to formally endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

III. Connecting with churches—Our Journey (the Ministry Plan)

A. Engaging younger members

1. Our communications work maintains a special focus on dialoguing with and reaching young adults. Thirty-two percent of visits to our blog, *Do Justice*, in 2016 were made by people under the age of 35 (up 7% from 2015), and 37 percent of people reached by our Facebook posts were also under 35. Our new action center and website are mobile-friendly and specifically designed to be engaging and useful to younger CRC members, as well as members of other generations.

2. Young adults are not just an audience—they are leaders. On our *Do Justice* blog, which is shared with the Office of Social Justice, more than half of our writers are under 35. We also launched a new initiative called *Do Justice* columnists to encourage the leadership of a group of younger grassroots leaders by paying them honoraria for regular posts on *Do Justice*.

B. Assisting churches within their local contexts
In the past year we have engaged in assisting churches as follows:

1. Equipping local churches and church members to engage with their Members of Parliament through our new *Biblical Advocacy 101* pamphlet, developed with the Office of Social Justice and available free of charge through Faith Alive. It has seen frequent use—one church leader reported that it is so popular that they can't keep it on their shelves!

2. Celebrating and encouraging the work of local churches as they sponsor and welcome refugees through our "Welcoming Refugees: It's Who We Are" Facebook photo series and by federal advocacy for better communication and partnership with refugee sponsorship agencies like World Renew.

3. Facilitating workshops to equip church members at events like the Day of Encouragement and the Canadian National Gathering.

Disability Concerns (Rev. Mark Stephenson, director)

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

The Office of Disability Concerns (DC) strives to promote and foster relationships, communities, and societies where everybody belongs and everybody serves by assisting churches, agencies, institutions, and leadership within the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America

- to think and act in keeping with the biblical call regarding people with disabilities.
- to break barriers of communication, architecture, and attitude.
- to establish ministries with, for, and by people with disabilities and their families.

B. Vision

Since 2009, the CRC DC has been working in close cooperation with the Disability Concerns office of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Together, our vision can be summarized briefly: "In healthy churches, ministries, and communities, everybody belongs, and everybody serves."

C. Mission

DC's mission is to bring about the full participation of all people with disabilities in the life of the church and the full participation of the church in the lives of people with disabilities.

D. Five-Year Plan

DC adopted a five-year plan for 2014 to 2019 that has four main parts:

1. Network – Strengthen the network of advocates both in quantity and quality.
2. Awareness/education – Help churches prioritize the full inclusion of people living with disabilities.
3. Resource/consultation – Provide churches with the tools they need to minister with and engage people with disabilities in congregation and community.
4. Ministry promotion – Enhance and promote the future growth and development of Disability Concerns for the purpose of serving communities and societies more effectively.

II. Reflecting on Our Calling

Although our work is reflected in all five areas of Our Calling, some of the five receive more focus than others.

A. Faith formation

1. Friendship Ministries assists churches in faith formation with persons who have intellectual disabilities. While DC has always maintained a close and productive relationship with Friendship Ministries (an affiliated ministry with the CRC), that relationship has taken on a much deeper

dimension with our director serving on the Friendship Ministries board and executive committee, and assisting Friendship in the development of their new *Together* curriculum (togethersmallgroups.org). CRC and RCA DC have begun work with Friendship and with the CRC Connections Project to form peer learning groups made up of Friendship ministry leaders. (The Connections Project is a three-year, grant-funded project to help CRC congregations in three regions explore and connect with resources for ministry.)

2. Because about 13 percent of children and youth have disabilities of various kinds, Christian Reformed and Reformed Church in America Disability Concerns ministries have produced five training videos for church leaders (volunteer and staff) to assist them in their ministry with children and youth, and we have provided a variety of templates such as an Individual Spiritual Formation Plan. In addition, CRC DC has worked with Faith Formation Ministry to assist them in their work.

B. Servant leadership

1. Disability Concerns staff and volunteers have recruited and trained over 600 church and regional disability advocates who serve their churches and classes. Their primary purpose is to assist churches in their ministry with the 15 to 20 percent of people in their communities who live with disabilities. In October 2016, DC cosponsored a conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario, to train over 220 church leaders, disability advocates and others.

2. With the approval of the Board of Trustees, the CRC DC Advisory Committee and the RCA DC Guiding Coalition now serve as one team that advises both ministries. Their first meeting was in October 2016 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, and they plan to meet via videoconference several times per year in addition to an annual face-to-face meeting.

3. Besides the DC Advisory Committee, we have regional groups that serve in Ontario, western Canada, Michigan, the U.S. Midwest, and Illinois/Indiana, and one team that focuses on ministry with people with mental illnesses: the Mental Health Task Force. All of these teams include volunteers from the CRC and the RCA.

4. The DC Mental Health Task Force, working with representatives from the RCA, Faith Formation Ministries, Pastor Church Resources, and Faith and Hope Ministries, produced a "Guide for a Clergy Leave of Absence for Mental Health Reasons" and a workshop toolkit (see crcna.org/clergyleaveguide) for use at classis meetings and in other settings. A number of classes have already used the toolkit for presentations.

5. We are pleased that we have been working with local people in both southern California and southern Ontario who are part of the CRC Connections Project, and with the RCA in working to organize several "Connection Events" involving both CRC and RCA congregations.

6. The CRC DC staff consists of our full-time director, two part-time administrative assistants, and a part-time church and volunteer associate (for a total of 2 FTEs).

7. The CRC and RCA DC offices provide to all churches that request it a quarterly resource, *Breaking Barriers*, which deepens understanding and suggests new opportunities for ministry by telling the stories of people who have disabilities and their loved ones. All disability advocates and many churches have received our *Inclusion Handbook: Everybody Belongs, Everybody Serves*, which helps church leaders and members welcome and engage people with disabilities in the life of the church.

C. Global mission

1. Although DC focuses primarily on North America, our web (crcna.org/disability) and Network (network.crcna.org/disability) pages reach a worldwide audience. In 2016 our Internet resources received over 51,000 page views (up 36 percent compared to the previous year).

2. In August 2017, our director, Rev. Mark Stephenson, and his wife, Bev, plan to teach in Tanzania at Theological Education Africa, a conference for African pastors and theological educators sponsored by CRC World Missions.

D. Mercy and justice

1. Providing the possibility for people to be involved in congregational life is a critical part of justice toward our neighbors and fellow church members. The annual survey of CRC congregations indicates that 286 churches (27 percent) worship in barrier-free facilities, and another 654 (61 percent) have partially accessible facilities, for a total of 88 percent of CRC church buildings that are fully or partially accessible (up from 86 percent last year). In addition, 524 churches (49 percent) have barrier-free sound, and 436 (41 percent) have barrier-free books/print. Over 550 churches (51 percent) offer transportation for people who cannot drive themselves, and 35 percent of congregations have adopted a church policy on disability. Synod 2013 encouraged all churches to adopt a policy on disability, and all churches in Ontario are required to do so by law. Congregations in Ontario have had to think much more carefully about accessibility of their activities and communications due to the passage of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act; at crcna.org/aoda CRC DC has provided guidance to these congregations for complying with the act.

2. Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC) and CRC DC have partnered together so that communities and churches will be enriched and strengthened by the inclusion, diversity, and gifts of people with disabilities, thus contributing to the spiritual, social, emotional, and physical well-being of persons/families living with disabilities. This past winter our director led part of the training for DMC's diaconal ministry developers.

3. CRC DC is working with Race Relations and Safe Church Ministry to produce a three-hour training for churches on growing in hospitality and diversity.

4. Our director serves on the board of Pathways to Promise, a parachurch organization that helps churches minister to people who have mental illnesses and their loved ones.

5. DC volunteers and staff speak regularly at churches, classis meetings, conferences, webinars, and seminary classes; they also consult with many CRCs about engaging people with disabilities in church life.

6. RCA and CRC Disability Concerns ministries are members of the Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition, which works on public policy priorities in Washington, D.C.

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

DC provides worship leaders with a variety of resources online, including litanies, prayers, and sermons. In appropriate settings we have been promoting the large-print edition of the hymnal *Lift Up Your Hearts*.

III. Connecting with churches re Our Journey (the Ministry Plan)

DC depends on and therefore places the highest priority on a network of church and regional disability advocates, connecting our work as directly to churches as possible. We assist in recruiting and training these ministry leaders to help churches better reflect the body of Christ, especially as described in Luke 14:15-24 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. Congregations that do this well are much better equipped to connect with members of their community, in which 15 to 20 percent of people live with disabilities, and in which more than 30 percent of households have a member with a disability. In addition, we provide a variety of resources for congregations to engage as fully as possible with children and young people who have disabilities.

Race Relations (Rev. Reggie Smith and Rev. Shannon Jammal-Hollemans, interim codirectors)

I. Introduction

The mandate of the CRC Office of Race Relations is to initiate and provide effective and collaborative training, programs, and organizing actions in ways that mobilize Christian Reformed agencies and educational institutions, as well as classes and congregations to recognize, expose, and dismantle racism in all its forms and to experience true biblical reconciliation as a diverse and unified people of God. We do this by seeking catalytic opportunities that move us as a denomination toward a biblical, diverse, Christian community that reconciles sinners to God and unites people to overcome racial inequity and oppression.

We do this in four capacities by

- providing training for congregations, classes, agencies, and schools.
- gathering, networking, and mentoring leaders.
- collaborating with denominational ministries and agencies to raise awareness about both the gifts and the challenges of race and ethnicity.
- developing relationships of accountability with agencies, and leadership for the purpose of aligning with the antiracist values and commitments of the denomination.

In all of our work, we endeavor to reflect the values of the Christian Reformed Church as articulated in the five areas of our calling.

II. Reflecting on Our Calling

A. Faith formation

Race Relations staff facilitated workshops on the biblical call to racial reconciliation for leaders, young people, and congregations. This included leading the Blanket Exercise for the staff of Back to God Ministries International in Palos Heights, Illinois; for volunteers with World Renew's Disaster Response Services; and for delegates to Synod 2016. Newly appointed denominational board members also participated in the Widening the Circle training led by Race Relations staff in 2016. In addition to presentations at classes and congregations about how the call to discipleship demands racial reconciliation, Race Relations staff worked with agency leaders as they issued a Statement on Racism and provided a list of resources for further learning and discipleship (see crcna.org/news-and-views/crc-statement-racism).

B. Servant leadership

Leadership development is a key component of the work of the Office of Race Relations. In the past year we have continued to identify, train, recruit, and support racial reconciliation champions through the Youth Ambassador of Reconciliation Program. We have helped congregational and classis leaders think strategically about affiliating ethnic minority leaders and have stepped in to facilitate when challenges have arisen. We have led conversations on racism at various campus ministries and for campus ministry leaders. We have also served pastors and leaders who requested assistance navigating the denominational system. Whether advocating or brokering relationships, convening leaders of ethnic minority congregations for

networking and resourcing, or creating channels for regular communication with leaders of ethnic minority congregations, the Race Relations staff is passionate about equipping leaders for effective ministry.

C. Global mission

Race Relations staff had several opportunities to make a global impact in the past year. One staff member led a weeklong training on racial reconciliation, as well as a facilitator training, in the Dominican Republic in partnership with Christian Reformed World Missions. Another staff member consulted with the leaders of the CRC's new mission agency about future collaboration, and another met with staff from Disaster Response Services to consult on strategies for being an antiracist ministry. Race Relations staff also serve on several antiracism teams for agencies of the CRC.

D. Mercy and justice

Our work of equipping congregations to do justice and to love mercy is largely done in collaboration with other ministries. In 2016 the Office of Race Relations partnered with World Renew, the Office of Social Justice, and Faith Formation Ministries to bring a group to Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C. Twenty-seven people from five congregations participated in the event, which gave them the opportunity to learn about justice issues from a Christian perspective and to meet with representatives to advocate for systemic change. We also partnered with the Office of Social Justice (OSJ) to facilitate Church between Borders workshops and assisted OSJ staff in connecting with local leaders in congregations and creating broader relationships with ecumenical partners.

Raising awareness about issues of racial injustice is at the heart of our communications. We have shared race-related current events and articles with CRC people through our Facebook page. We have also sought to contribute to the CRC's understanding of and sensitivity to racial issues through three new regional newsletters (Canada, US-West, and US-Midwest).

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

Worship is at the center of the lives of Christian Reformed congregations. As such, Race Relations provides resources, in both Spanish and English, to help congregations honor All Nations Heritage Sunday. Twenty thousand bulletin inserts and covers were ordered by CRC churches in the past two years. And in January we partnered with Worship Ministries, Millbrook CRC (Grand Rapids, Mich.), Dr. Steve Timmermans, and Mr. Colin Watson to plan our second annual service of prayer and praise on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (U.S.), January 16, 2017. In addition, we offered resources for worship to accompany the Statement on Racism made by denominational leaders (see II, A above).

We are grateful for the commitment of the members and the leadership of the CRC to have an office committed to a Reformed understanding of culture, ethnicity, and race that equips all of us to share the love Christ in tangible ways to all people.

Safe Church Ministry (Ms. Bonnie Nicholas, director)

I. Introduction

Safe Church Ministry equips congregations in abuse awareness, prevention, and response. We help build communities in which the value of each person is honored and people are free to worship and grow free from abuse. Where abuse has occurred, the response is compassion and justice that foster healing.

II. Participation in the calling of the CRCNA

Safe Church Ministry fits into the CRCNA calling as a part of **Justice, Inclusion, Mercy and Advocacy** (JIMA). Abuse is a grave injustice, in which power is misused to harm, manipulate, or control. This is opposed to the way of Jesus, which is revealed in humility, valuing others above self, and taking on the nature of a servant (Phil. 2). We are called to follow Jesus' way, honoring all people, who are uniquely created in the image of their Creator. Safe Church partners with the Office of Social Justice to cosponsor training in restorative practices for congregations, a process that values the voice of each participant. Use of restorative practices was approved by Synod 2005 and reaffirmed in the Abuse Victims Task Force Report to Synod 2010.

Safe Church intersects with **Faith Formation and Servant Leadership** by promoting a faith-nurturing context of safe, respectful relationships in our congregations. We offer a wide variety of web-based resources for congregations and church leaders, including webinars, PowerPoint presentations, documents, and **Worship** materials. Safe Church also acts in a consulting role in situations of abuse that arise in congregations. We offer assistance to church leaders responding to issues such as domestic abuse, bullying, registered sex offenders in church, boundary violations in ministry, and child sexual abuse. And we have partnered with World Renew in offering a workshop in trauma healing through the Trauma Healing Institute (http://thi.americanbible.org/) to assist congregations in responding to trauma, including the trauma of abuse. Safe Church also continues to promote and subsidize the Circle of Grace program, which involves children and youth in creating a safe environment for themselves and others. Circle of Grace, used in a growing number of CRC congregations, promotes a shared sense of God's presence in sacred community.

III. Connecting with churches

Safe Church Ministry works through volunteer safe church team members who act as resources and catalysts in their own congregations and classes. Team members work to develop and implement safe church policies and offer educational opportunities to prevent abuse. And they walk alongside, providing a listening ear, offering support, and pointing to resources when abuse has occurred. **New safe church team members are needed for this important work.** Synod has often reminded "all classes in the denomination of the vital importance of a safe church team," noting that "a safe church team is an important part of the pastoral care that the church offers to its members" (*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 559).

A bimonthly electronic newsletter is sent to over 500 people involved in safe church ministry throughout the United States and Canada. Our biennial

Safe Church Conference was held November 4-5, 2016, and was attended by more than 50 persons, representing 22 different classes. In 2016 Safe Church piloted a minigrant program, which assisted team members in New Mexico and Ontario to offer safe church educational programs. We hope to expand the minigrant program in 2017.

During 2016 staff conducted presentations and team training events in Michigan, Illinois, and Colorado, and we recorded over 1,200 interactions with congregations and individuals (about 300 of these were with Canadians). We track interactions with keywords: about 400 interactions were related to abuse awareness; 375 were team-focused; 200 had to do with a situation of abuse; 125 were about a policy concern or question; and 57 were related to the Circle of Grace program.

IV. Safe Church Advisory Committee

The director of Safe Church Ministry is assisted by a 6- to 8-person volunteer advisory committee. We seek to maintain diversity with regard to gender, nationality (Canada/U.S.), and ethnicity in our committee, as well as in our volunteer base. Safe church objectives work when we all work together.

Social Justice and Hunger Action (Mr. Peter Vander Meulen, coordinator)

I. Introduction

The Office of Social Justice (OSJ) exists to help the CRCNA address the root causes of hunger, poverty, and oppression both around the world and in our own locales. It was created in 1995 to add the critical element of justice and advocacy to our overseas ministries.

Today OSJ works to develop a deeper understanding of and response to God's call to "let justice flow like a river" in our personal and communal lives and in the structures of our societies. It assists the CRC in responding to social justice issues identified by synod—such as refugee policy and encouraging congregations to be welcoming, helping congregants to understand the U.S. immigration system and how to advocate for a more just system, and learning together about indigenous justice, human trafficking, and peacebuilding worldwide. OSJ works to educate CRC members and to encourage and support their engagement in social justice issues. OSJ is also occasionally involved in direct advocacy with legislators.

The Office of Social Justice acts in three ways: (1) through individuals or groups in congregations, (2) through organizing collaborative efforts with existing denominational agencies and institutions, and (3) through ecumenical efforts and partnerships. In short, this office aims to be a catalyst that energizes and organizes our denomination for more appropriate, effective, and efficient action on behalf of and with people who are poor and/or oppressed.

II. What is social justice?

Doing justice is about making things right. It involves seeking restoration of our world and society through vocal, active, fearless love for others. It means being a part of Jesus' incredible ministry of reconciliation, restoring broken relationships, and making all things new.

Justice is the work we are already doing—renewed, revamped, refocused on the needs of the marginalized. It involves an understanding of the gospel that adds an important dimension to our community outreach, faith formation, missions, and worship. Seeking justice makes us always look for ways to follow Christ and his upside-down kingdom in which the last are first, the least are important, the poor can meet their needs, and the oppressed can find justice.

III. Reflecting the Five Callings

A. Faith formation

1. This spring OSJ and Faith Formation Ministries brought 40 people from five churches in West Michigan to Ecumenical Advocacy Days, a three-day conference on faith and justice with a final day of visiting congressional representatives in Washington, D.C. Each group participated in the *Live Justly* devotional series before attending the conference with members of their congregations and learned the importance of faith-based advocacy.

2. Faithful to Synod 2010's call to welcome the stranger amid the challenges of a broken immigration system, we continue to equip believers to care for the stranger as an integral part of discipleship. Many churches have incorporated our educational curriculum *Church between Borders* into their education calendar.

3. This fall OSJ worked with the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue to remind CRC congregations of our tradition of welcoming refugees from around the world into our congregations and communities. We launched our #RefugeesWelcome: It's Who We Are album on Facebook to highlight the many congregations throughout the United States and Canada working to welcome refugees.

B. Servant leadership

1. Our restorative justice work has transitioned to Ms. Kate Kooyman with strong collaboration with the Justice, Inclusion, Mercy, and Advocacy collaborative working group. We have begun several workshops and trainings in the United States to complement the highly effective workshops already happening in Canada. These workshops equip congregational leaders to respond to conflict in a holistic, restorative way.

2. *Do Justice*, a blog in partnership with the Centre for Public Dialogue, is a space for thoughtful voices in the denomination to express themselves on topics ranging from abortion to stories of hope and liberation. We have seen a dramatic rise in readership and in contributing authors from all points in the denomination. This year we set and met a goal to increase the diversity of *Do Justice* writers so that 25 percent are people of color.

C. Global missions

As an active participant of the Justice and Excellence in Short-Term Missions Think Tank, OSJ has coordinated a multiagency curriculum called *Changed for Life* to help congregations do a better job of short-term missions and mission trips.

D. Mercy and justice

1. The world has more displaced persons and refugees than at any time since World War II. Since 1997 OSJ has been tasked by the CRC with engaging our U.S. churches to welcome, resettle, and defend the rights of refugees. We do this through our participation in Church World Service's Refugee Program and by contracting with PARA/Bethany Christian Services to contact churches around the United States. PARA/Bethany staff help refugees decide whether or not to actively resettle. When a church decides to welcome refugees, the refugees arrive through Church World Service and other national-level resettlement agencies. The CRC in the United States usually resettles from 50 to 120 refugees in 10 to 15 churches in an average year through Church World Service. Many more churches welcome refugees through other evangelical, Catholic, or Lutheran agencies in their areas.

   OSJ has actively promoted awareness of and advocacy for refugee issues since the synodical study of 2007 raised the topic to a significant level of urgency. Given the recent actions of the new U.S. government administration, justice and care for refugees has become a major focus of our ministry as well as in the ministry of the broader CRC.

2. This year we continued our work on abortion by producing Sanctity of Human Life Sunday materials and sharing articles about abortion in our social media accounts. Thirty congregations from both sides of the border ordered bulletin inserts. Interest in the connected story and worship materials was very high.

3. With Race Relations and the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry, a U.S. version of the Blanket Exercise is being disseminated. This workshop literally walks participants through the history of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada and the United States. It helps participants understand why reconciliation is needed and how to take steps toward reconciliation and new relationships.

4. Through the *Immigrants Are a Blessing, Not a Burden* campaign, OSJ screened the film *Documented: A Film by an Undocumented American* with over 250 people in attendance in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Through the Climate Witness Project, OSJ also screened the film *Before the Flood* with 250 attendees to learn about the impact of climate change worldwide today.

5. In response to the creation stewardship report of Synod 2012, OSJ has provided significant resources on the church's responsibility to creation and to people who are most affected by environmental degradation. The *Climate Conversation: Kenya* video series provides an opportunity to get up close and personal with the issues of climate change and environmental stewardship. Our Climate Witness Project leveraged public attention on Pope Francis's encyclical and the historic agreements of COP 21 in Paris into a grassroots organizing effort that resulted in 200 Climate Witness partners in 35 churches in the United States and Canada. This project continues through 2017 and should result in increasing stewardship and advocacy activities on the creation/climate care fronts.

6. The Office of Social Justice uses a new advocacy platform that is equipping more CRC members to connect with their elected officials around justice issues that synod has assigned us to work on.

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

1. Our Advent devotional series, a joint effort from OSJ and World Renew, continues to be one of our most widely read and shared publications, with over 2,000 subscribers.

2. We offer fresh content for worship every week through *OSJ Prayers*, a weekly email list of the most pressing justice issues around the world with written prayers appropriate for individuals, small groups, and congregations. *OSJ News* is our monthly newsletter for CRC justice seekers. This popular newsletter is delivered electronically to almost 3,500 recipients, and it supplies a unique Christian Reformed perspective on social justice news and events. Our immigration list remains the largest issue-based list, with over 1,800 subscribers. To subscribe to any of our publications, visit crcna.org/justice and click on "Newsletters."

3. In response to synod's decision in 2016, OSJ added religious persecution pages on its website and resources for the International Day of Prayer. In addition, this past January more than 35 churches ordered Sanctity of Human Life Sunday bulletin inserts, and we estimate that in addition to these churches, many more churches used our other Sanctity of Human Life worship resources in their Sunday services. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday resources are available at crcna.org/life.

IV. Connecting with churches

A. We provide focused training and leadership development through the Blanket Exercise, Church between Borders, and restorative justice trainings.

B. OSJ naturally engages younger generations, but this year we anticipate strong connections with all generations through our *Changed for Life* short-term missions curriculum, immigration workshops in bilingual and immersion schools, the large number of Sunday school classes and GEMS/Cadets groups that send cards for women and children in detention centers, growing vibrancy and readership of *Do Justice*, ecumenical advocacy days, our Climate Witness project, and our social media coverage of timely issues. This year, more than half of our *Do Justice* writers were under 35 years old, and 32 percent of the visits to the *Do Justice* blog were made by people under the age of 35.

C. OSJ continues to partner with World Renew to equip churches to understand and seek justice. The Congregation Justice Mobilization (CJM) project is well into its tenth year, with a shared full-time coordinator. We have also added a staff member to support the CJM project. Some of the many initiatives coming out of CJM include presentations on various timely issues, an expanded resource collection for small groups, and growing relationships with over 400 congregations. Our work with churches includes increasing congregations' capacities to recognize the dynamic challenges faced by migrants and challenging CRC members to personally and publicly commit to take action to make their communities and nations better places to live for immigrants. We also host resources to help churches and families respond to current hot topics such as the Syrian refugee crisis and other issues.

D. OSJ developed a new website that helps congregants engage justice issues. We offer a wide variety of resources for leadership, ranging from consultations to online discussion guides to weekly prayer newsletters. The OSJ website (www.crcna.org/justice) serves more than 2,000 visitors each month. In addition to providing news and advocacy opportunities, the site supplies practical resources and helpful information to pastors, deacons, social justice committees, students, and every CRC member who wants to live the call to do justice. OSJ also engages with over 3,000 subscribers on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest who are eager to learn, speak, and act as agents of social justice.

E. OSJ is currently asking CRC members to join the Matthew 25 movement. The movement asks people to sign a pledge and take steps to become more welcoming congregations where they are. Learn more about the movement at crcna.org/justice in the immigration section.

F. Nearly 250 Climate Witness partners in 40 churches in the United States and Canada have come together to learn, act, and advocate around the issue of climate change through the CRC's Climate Witness Project. More information about the Climate Witness Project is available at crcna.org/cwp.

The Office of Social Justice, in collaboration with the agencies and institutions of the CRC, looks back with gratitude on a rewarding and productive year. We look forward to continuing to assist members of the CRC to become salt and light in the service of God's justice and mercy.

World Renew

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

When the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) approved the formation of a diaconal agency in 1962, the new agency's stated mandate was to "minister in the name of our Lord to those distressed by reason of the violence of nature, the carnage of war, or other calamities of life, and to relieve the suffering of the needy in the world."

For nearly 55 years World Renew has joined God in his work among people who live with extreme poverty and who experience hunger and injustice. Aligning its work with God's presence, World Renew "looks to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2) as the great Story Changer of our lives and the world. Every day World Renew is a witness to God's powerful work among people who live in adversity, rewriting their stories with the hope and courage that only God can give.

B. Mission and ministry

Today, as the diaconal agency of the Christian Reformed denomination, World Renew continues to fulfill this mandate, reaching out in Christ's name to people who are poor, hungry, and affected by disaster and injustice around the world. Through God's grace and with the support of churches and individuals, World Renew was able to provide new opportunities to many who were most affected by hardship in 2016. They were able to improve their lives for the long term through World Renew's integrated community development programs.

By collaborating with 67 Christian churches and outreach organizations, World Renew assisted nearly 298,400 people in 21 developing countries with better health, agriculture, literacy, income, and leadership capacity. World Renew also assisted nearly 498,000 people who experienced disaster in 27 countries. In total, the agency served over 796,200 people in 39 countries in 2016, responding to disasters and providing long-term, community-based interventions. These program efforts included addressing systemic justice issues such as human trafficking, gender justice, land rights, conflict resolution, trauma healing, and the protection of vulnerable children.

World Renew does not receive ministry shares from the CRC but depends in faith on the generosity and sacrifice of God's people to carry out compassionate ministry in communities of poverty. Through its membership in international alliances, World Renew in 2016 leveraged $23 million in gifts from individuals and churches into $35 million in ministry. In addition, this work was supported by 2,885 volunteers who donated 250,392 hours of their time and gifts to people in need—the equivalent of 120 full-time employees for one year.

World Renew's holistic approach to its mandate, mission, and ministry contributes to each of the five denominational callings of the CRC: faith formation, servant leadership, global mission, mercy and justice, and gospel proclamation and worship. Because of the integrated nature of World Renew's work with the whole person, much of the work intersects with more than one of these Five Callings even as it focuses primarily on justice and mercy. World Renew's work is not only integrated; it is collaborative:

it involves working with Christian partners to train leaders and develop biblically based community values that strengthen the message of the local church in North America and around the world.

In so doing, World Renew continued to fulfill its mission in 2016 to "engage God's people in redeeming resources and developing gifts in collaborative activities of love, mercy, justice, and compassion" through its ministry. While the stories of men, women, and children around the world were shaped by poverty, disaster, and injustice, the practical ministry of World Renew presented people with opportunities for miraculous transformation. The life stories of people with little hope for change have been rewritten because of your involvement in this mission of justice and mercy in 2016. Thank you for doing your part to bring in God's coming kingdom through World Renew. We praise God, the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and the end of all of our stories.

II. Reflecting on our calling

A. Faith formation

1. North America

a. Church and family education and classical support

In 2016, World Renew continued to build on existing relationships with churches and schools and also created new connections with educators and church members. As in previous years, World Renew board delegates or staff attended a classis meeting at least once per year to present World Renew's local and global work. Delegates made presentations to other classical delegates and/or submitted a report in their agenda so that all classes and churches were informed about the agency's work.

World Renew also continued to develop relationships with deacons through copresenting workshops at various classis and congregational meetings and by providing information about interacting in both local and global communities. Several of these When Helping Hurts workshops on this topic were offered last year. It is worth noting that making presentations during classis meetings is becoming increasingly difficult as some classes are changing the focus of their agenda.

Throughout 2016, World Renew's Church Relations Team made opportunities to meet personally with churches. Staff, board delegates, and ambassadors met with deacons, council members, and pastors. There were also opportunities for Church Relations team members to speak during a church service and to share about World Renew's work in connection with an offering.

The Church Relations Team continued to create an extensive list of workshops that are available to churches and subchurch groups across North America. Topics for these workshops include evaluating mission trips, understanding poverty, living out justice, learning about disaster response, and walking with refugees. There are currently 17 workshops available for churches and subchurch groups to use. The team has been developing a list of regionally available speakers for churches, subchurch groups, schools, and individuals.

b. Christian schools, colleges, and universities

World Renew completed research on Christian Schools International (CSI) institutions and is implementing the results. Dynamic, vibrant, and growing connections are forming and bearing fruit. In 2016 more than 15 schools used World Renew's *Gift Catalog* for learning and raising support. World Renew staff made ten academic presentations on poverty and disasters in elementary, middle, and high schools. Staff presented workshops at four educators conventions in 2016. The King's University in Edmonton, Alberta, has a staff that is jointly supported by the university and World Renew for leading its Micah Center. World Renew's Canada director also teaches a course on community development at Redeemer University in Hamilton, Ontario.

In response to a request from schools, World Renew is facilitating an Educators Learning event in July 2017. Students, particularly those in the senior grades, are involved in applying justice and advocacy initiatives as they work through *Live Justly*, a new workbook available in U.S. and Canadian versions. World Renew will continue to deepen these partnerships and facilitate learning opportunities in the year ahead.

c. Refugee office, Canada

World Renew's refugee office in Canada has the great privilege of welcoming refugees—neighbors, friends, and fellow imagebearers of God—as they begin their life anew. This past year was a historic one in refugee resettlement in Canada. In late 2015 the Canadian government responded to the Syrian refugee crisis by agreeing to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada in 2016. The Canadian public made this commitment their own and responded to the Syrian crisis with compassion, concern, and a desire to take action.

Likewise, World Renew's refugee office witnessed a tremendous outpouring of support from churches and community partners. We were blessed to play a part in welcoming 152 Syrian refugees to Canada last year and to share in the joy of resettling 133 refugees from other countries. We recognize and mourn that the plight of refugees from countries such as Myanmar, Eritrea, and Ethiopia does not come to the world's attention.

In 2016 the refugee office experienced its busiest year in recent memory. The office submitted 156 applications, representing 371 refugees. Of this total, 80 applications represent 223 Syrian refugees. In all, CRCs in Canada welcomed nearly three times the refugees in 2016 than in 2015 (81:226). The number of CRCs that applied for sponsorship also nearly doubled in the same time period (24:44). World Renew is grateful to CRCs for the many ways they extended a generous welcome to refugees who sought safety in Canada in 2016.

2. International volunteer opportunities

World Renew provided international volunteers with robust opportunities to participate in justice and compassion ministries in 2016. Their presence in communities of poverty and disaster was a catalyst for change in their own hearts and in the lives of the people they lived and worked

with. Their testimonies are a powerful witness to the formation of faith in the context of global ministry.

As men, women, and young people used their time and skills to serve alongside God's children in a country or region not their own, they enlarged their own understanding of community in the body of Christ and discovered new ways to listen for God's affirmation and direction.

One young adult who participated in World Renew's Global Volunteer Program (GVP) in 2016 spent time in some of Guatemala's rural indigenous communities. Bethany Cok, a recent Calvin College graduate, reflected on working out her calling to the ministry of transformation.

"Sometimes change starts small, and it's hardly ever easy. But we have to believe that it's worthwhile, that together as servants in God's kingdom we can make things different, that together we can further his kingdom. This is true for communities all over the world, for the places we all live and work, because together as the body of Christ we have a huge opportunity to speak and act and change things in love."

B. Servant leadership

As the corporate expression of the office of deacon in the body of Christ, World Renew's task is to address the pain of a hurting world. This involves raising up and equipping servant leaders to develop and exercise their gifts in ways that enhance their own faith walk as they minister in their community, nation, and world. Servant leadership is the primary means for World Renew's activities, and it is integral in the CRC's callings of faith formation, global mission, mercy and justice, and the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Global Volunteer Program

World Renew's Global Volunteer Program (GVP) offers opportunities for collaborative learning to volunteers who have a heart to serve others through international internships and long-term volunteer placements. This includes engaging groups in church partnerships, discovery tours, intergenerational church-based work teams, college teams, and semester programs as well as youth and young adult opportunities in North America and around the globe.

World Renew's GVP placed 559 volunteers in ministry positions in 2016. This included 466 people who were new to volunteering with GVP. More than 200 of those who volunteered last year were from the United States, and nearly 350 were Canadian.

To help volunteers with their personal and spiritual development as they serve, GVP introduced the *Seven Dimensions Study Guide* last year, a resource that assists volunteers with growth in faith by living more fully. The guide introduces World Renew's framework for identifying, planning, reporting, and evaluating transformation in developing communities. To increase awareness and commitment for addressing systemic justice issues, especially with regard to indigenous communities around the world, GVP orientations also include the use of the Blanket Exercise focusing on the history of Aboriginal or Native communities in Canada and the United States.

In Ephesians 3:18, Paul encourages Christ followers to discover the dimensions of the height, depth, width, and length of God's love. GVP pro-

vides North Americans with opportunities to learn and grow together—to learn what it means to be part of God's work in the world and to grow in response to his Spirit's invitation to be truly changed. GVP volunteers report that they are deeply transformed by their engagement with World Renew.

"I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:18, *The Message*). It is the prayer of GVP that volunteers further their understanding of God's call on their lives as they serve people who also need to experience the extravagant love of Christ.

2. Disaster response volunteer programs

   a. International Relief Managers

      When disasters strike, people who live in poverty are the most vulnerable. In 2016, World Renew placed 16 International Relief Managers (IRMs) in seven countries affected by disasters. IRMs managed complex logistics in a wide variety of projects that helped disaster survivors get back on their feet and build greater resilience over time to better respond to loss in the future.

      Last year IRMs coordinated food and emergency distributions to families affected by Hurricane Matthew in Haiti. They provided oversight to the distribution of food, seeds, and emergency funds to those affected by El Nino-induced drought in Zambia, Malawi, and Indonesia. International volunteers also managed latrine construction for South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda and supervised a team of local staff in Nepal who built earthquake-resistant shelters. IRMs also worked with local partners to seek funding for a district-wide drought response project in Kenya's southeast region. In total, IRMs gave 12,000 hours of their time to this work, the equivalent of six full-time staff for a year.

   b. Disaster Response Services volunteers in North America

      World Renew's Disaster Response Services (DRS) volunteers gave their time and talents to help clear debris, assess needs, and rebuild homes after disasters in North America last year. More than 2,300 DRS volunteers, including 420 young people, provided and connected 60,000 low-income, elderly, or disabled disaster survivors with labor, support, and resources to help them recover from a flood, wildfire, tornado, or hurricane in 2016.

      World Renew DRS volunteers are general and skilled laborers; building estimators; construction supervisors; site managers; and regional, project, and area managers who donate their specific experience and skills to the ministry.

      Last year World Renew DRS volunteers gave 185,300 hours of their time in 40 disaster-affected communities in North America, repairing and rebuilding 363 homes, helping 52 families with cleanup and debris removal, assessing the needs of 2,000 households, training facilitators, and building the capacity of local long-term recovery groups.

World Renew DRS volunteers represented 25 different denominations in 2016, in addition to individuals from the CRC and the Reformed Church in America, a partner with World Renew DRS in domestic disaster response.

3. International development programs

A strength of World Renew's international development programs is their implementation by servant leaders from Christian partner groups and churches in local communities. World Renew empowers and equips its partners so that they can lead transformational development in their community and region by building organizational and board capacity, teaching nonprofit management and good governance, facilitating monitoring and evaluation, and promoting accountability and transparency.

Leaders who follow Jesus Christ, reflecting the heart of a servant in their communities, are better able to mobilize local congregations to become catalysts for change and justice. World Renew works to empower its partners, pastors, and laity so that they can lead their own development.

C. Global mission

While World Renew's work around the world focuses primarily on mercy and justice, this work is infused with global mission. In ministry and mandate, the organization works in concert with other CRC agencies, as well as church and denominational partners, to accompany each other into the daily living of local communities. Through World Renew's unique ministry with churches and denominations that engage with people who live in poverty, hunger, disaster, and injustice situations around the world, the well-being of such people improves and God's kingdom expands.

For example, in any Christian worship service in Nicaragua you may hear the song *El es mi Libertador*. The words "God is my liberator" are a reminder of World Renew's daily work in communities around the world. By the grace of God as liberator, World Renew's work frees people who are locked in by misused power and injustice. By God's strength and wisdom, together with the assets he provides in churches and communities, World Renew helps to change the story of people's lives through hope and reconciliation.

The Christian Center for Human Rights (CCDH) is one of World Renew's partners in Nicaragua. World Renew provides support for justice initiatives undertaken by this group of Christian lawyers and legal advisors. They dedicate their time pro bono to deal with wrongful imprisonment, land grabbing, domestic violence, child abuse, and the systemic oppression of vulnerable people, including those who live in the rural Chinandega region.

One of the most influential cases that CCDH took on last year involved some police officers and leaders of the courts who were taking bribes from a rich business owner. The man intended to grab the property of low-income families without paying for it, and three people were killed when family members objected.

With the tools of the law and the courageous Spirit of God's love in their hearts, the Christian lawyers from CCDH were able to secure justice for the families who were being victimized and ensure sentencing for those who were guilty of murder. Praise God for brave lawyers who work to open doors for people locked in the bonds of oppression! As they educate people about their rights and advocate for people who are unjustly imprisoned, they

prove that God's love unlocks the doors to spiritual freedom and his saving grace. They are the agents of God as the liberator.

World Renew's work in Nicaragua is effective not only in releasing people from the physical aspects of poverty and injustice but also in providing opportunities for local churches to grow their ministry. "I now see that our church has been so focused on saving souls that we have neglected to show God's love in our actions. Our eyes have been opened to see that we must be more active in social justice," one pastor said.

Congregation members also testified that they had been changed by World Renew's work in the Chinandega area doing community surveys that identify their resources and priorities. They said, "We cannot believe how many assets we have in our community as our six churches work with people to build a better life."

World Renew, through partnerships with CCDH and 66 other local organizations in 2016, have been used by God as the liberator who opens people's eyes to new worldviews, values, and community assets. One local facilitator in Nicaragua said that the gospel "is not just proclamation but also demonstration!" Thank God for this ministry that opens doors through the demonstration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

D. Mercy and justice

The CRCNA formally acknowledges mercy and justice as an integral part of its mission, vision, and calling. In World Renew's global ministry of poverty alleviation and disaster response, justice and mercy are inseparable for experiencing the shalom that God intends for all relationships between people and God, their neighbors, and creation.

World Renew's mandate and mission recognize that it is the power of God's mercy and justice that sustains motivation and movement for changing the story of a troubled world to something better. He graciously chooses to use us and his church worldwide to accomplish this.

1. International community development

   In 2016, World Renew touched the lives of nearly 800,000 people in more than 1,350 impoverished communities worldwide. World Renew's community-based programs in agriculture, health, literacy, income earning, and leadership training helped families and individuals improve their way of life where basic services like health, education, employment, and food security are scarce and out of reach.

   World Renew's development programs are carried out collaboratively in communities with Christian agencies and organizations that benefit from structural, board, and financial training from World Renew as well as leadership development and Bible-based values training that strengthen the preaching of the gospel at the local church level. These Christian partners reach out into their communities with the whole gospel—proclaiming the Word, caring for people who are poor and in distress, and promoting active citizenship that contributes to more just societies.

   Four years ago World Renew began an effort to raise $1 million to fund income-earning projects that help people who earn less than $2 a day build sustainable, diversified incomes. The hope was to provide overall $2.5 million in revenue to a Village Savings and Loan (VSL) Fund to expand outreach to more communities and countries.

The goal was achieved last year: now 80,000 people in 3,200 communities are participating in VSL associations. Festo Madira, a 45-year-old husband and father of four children in Bukokwa, Tanzania, is one of these participants.

Madira left school at 12 years of age to earn income for his family. Over the years, he tried numerous ways to earn enough money to support his wife and family, such as agriculture, fishing, and small businesses. Madira grew frustrated that he was mostly unsuccessful because he lacked the financial and management skills he needed and the access to capital required to grow his endeavors.

When a World Renew partner in Tanzania, the AICT Diocese of Geita, offered savings and loan training in Madira's home village of Bukokwa, he was interested. The community-based groups helped their members save small amounts of money every week, and then in time they received a loan with reasonable interest rates. Madira was one of the 30 members of the Daraja group, and he eventually agreed with his wife to take out a loan to buy a 1.5-acre plot of land and some tomato seedlings. When Madira sold his first tomato harvest, he paid off his loan.

By 2015, Madira had earned enough profit from his farm to finish building a new house for his family. Last year he started a farm supply shop in the village. The income from his shop helps pay his children's tuition fees. "I feel confident that I can grow my businesses and repay my loans," Madira said. "I have consistent income from my farm and shop. I hope to take out another loan to purchase cows that will provide milk and calves for sale."

Over the next 15 years, World Renew's VSL Fund will help more people like Festo Madira support their families. Half of the revenue in the fund will be used to support the development of more VSL groups and to build the capacity of existing groups. The other half will be distributed as small grants to World Renew partners to enable them to pilot innovation projects.

Many people will change their story for good in the years ahead, the same way that Festo Madira's life was transformed by an opportunity to build resilience, use his skills, and support his family using the resources already present in his community. Through income earning projects like the VSL Fund and integrated programs in health, agriculture, literacy, and leadership, World Renew is helping to end extreme poverty worldwide.

In 2016, World Renew also completed a four-year program that focused on Protecting Adolescent Health and Rights. It was implemented in Nigeria and Senegal, where many undereducated teens and young adults from poor communities are vulnerable to health threats such as early sexual activity, HIV, STDs, and early pregnancy. In Nigeria, where HIV is spreading, young people from 40 communities in five states, along with their parents and civic and religious leaders, were involved in a project offered through World Renew's partner Beacon of Hope.

The Protecting Adolescent Health and Rights initiative in Nigeria established peer-led groups in the 40 communities involved in the project. Group members learned about healthy behaviors aimed at reducing threats from HIV and AIDS, STDs, and early or unwanted pregnancies. As a result, members of 310 health groups were trained by peer educators

in basic reproductive health, physical development, safety and security, HIV and AIDS prevention, STDs, and family planning. The project also tackled prevention of early and forced marriage and early and premarital pregnancy.

The young people also learned the communication skills they needed to discuss sensitive topics with their family members and to respond appropriately to harassment, physical abuse, and unwanted sexual advances. The youth, their parents and guardians, and local religious and community leaders participated enthusiastically in the project, which realized similar results in Senegal, where World Renew partners with CECS, an association of three Protestant denominations.

One participant said, "My parents say that this is a good program. I share with them everything I learn. We have talked about AIDS, healthy behavior, reproductive health, the menstrual cycle, and transmission of diseases, as well as my dreams for the future. They were very interested and have asked me to continue to participate in the meetings."

Because of the success of the curriculum used by the adolescent health and rights groups in Senegal and Nigeria, this curriculum is being adapted and shared with World Renew's partners in Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. Although the program in Nigeria and Senegal concluded last year, more young people around the world will have the opportunity to change their story to one of good health in 2017 and beyond.

In addition to the work of farmers, business owners, and young adults and their families, 2016 provided many people with a window for courageous action in the face of violence and persecution. People were driven from of their homes, villages were burned, and killings that were motivated by ethnic violence and revenge erupted in countries where World Renew works. In the affected villages, World Renew responded with temporary shelter, rebuilding, and counseling in trauma healing.

Stress on the land, the availability of weapons, and a lack of safety and security have intensified ethnic tensions in some areas. The increase in violence calls for an increased response to displaced and traumatized people. World Renew is providing training in trauma healing to church leaders who have survived ethnic violence themselves. Trainers also discovered that is some cases an ethnic group of Christians is turned against another, resulting in hostility, grief, and bitterness.

"We met one pastor who prayed against his neighbors from another ethnic group," said one staff person. "We let him know that many of those people are Christians and that they are also displaced from their village because of a massacre. The pastor was amazed. It will take time and healing to change the attitudes caused by this type of trauma."

2. Disaster response

   a. International disaster response

      In 2016 millions of people's lives were shattered by loss and destruction caused by natural disasters or conflict. Families were torn apart when fighting broke out and ended a fragile peace in the young nation of South Sudan. Homes were destroyed and livelihoods were disrupted when a massive hurricane battered Haiti. In other places, lives were

lost and years of hard work were destroyed by earthquakes, droughts, floods, and other disasters.

Thanks to prayers and the generosity of supporters, World Renew was able to respond to disasters in 27 countries, providing a measure of comfort and hope to over 366,000 people. Working in collaboration with local and international partners, World Renew leveraged that generosity into $18.6 million in disaster response and rehabilitation programs. These programs not only met immediate needs but also provided longer-term support as communities recovered and continued their journey of transformation. This focus on building resilience is a strategic priority for World Renew.

Families in countries around the world experienced a devastating drought caused by a severe El Nino weather pattern. In Mwandi, Zambia, two successive years of crop failure left community members with few options. Food reserves were depleted, and thousands were left hungry and at risk of malnutrition or starvation. World Renew, working with the United Church of Zambia, provided monthly food distributions to more than 31,500 people. Drought also affected families in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Indonesia. Across these four countries, World Renew provided further assistance to 67,000 people like Tadelech.

Tadelech is a widow with six children living in Ethiopia. While she owns 8.5 acres of land, the drought meant that she harvested almost nothing and struggled to feed her children. World Renew, in collaboration with Food for the Hungry, was able to provide her and thousands of others with much-needed food. With enough to eat, Tadelech had enough energy to tend her field and plant seeds provided through the project. The seeds grew successfully, and Tadelech harvested a good crop, enabling her to return to self-sufficiency.

The work in Zambia and Ethiopia was made possible by World Renew's active membership in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. With funds being matched by the Canadian government, World Renew implemented food assistance and food security projects in 13 countries, totaling $9.1 million (CDN).

When Hurricane Matthew struck the southwestern tip of Haiti in 2016, it left behind enormous devastation. In hundreds of communities almost all of the buildings were damaged, and many homes were completely destroyed. The farms in this breadbasket region of Haiti were also severely damaged. In the first week after the hurricane, World Renew provided emergency relief to affected families. Since then, 12,000 Haitians have received food assistance, seeds, hygiene kits, water filters, clean drinking water, tarps, kitchen kits, and blankets. While these initial efforts have provided relief and hope, plans are being finalized to build permanent shelters. The short-term relief provides immediate aid, and World Renew intentionally promotes economic justice in these early phases of response by maximizing the purchase of supplies produced locally.

World Renew is able to respond quickly in the aftermath of a disaster, but not everything can be restored in the following months. Three years after Typhoon Haiyan, World Renew continued to work in the

Philippines in 2016, where 1,900 people were part of a project focused on sustainably improving household income in agriculture, livestock, fishing, and livelihoods. As income improved, community members began to save for the future. Since then, nearly 500 people have joined savings groups and saved nearly $7,500 (US), an incredible amount for those who make only one to two dollars per day!

World Renew also continued rehabilitation efforts in Nepal after a catastrophic earthquake in 2015 left 9,000 people dead and displaced many more. Nearly two years after the earthquake destroyed her home, 95-year-old Sanu still lives with her daughter. Her most significant need is permanent shelter. World Renew has trained local masons in earthquake-resistant construction techniques. These masons are helping to build permanent earthquake-resistant shelters for Sanu and others. World Renew also provided families with kits to build temporary shelters until these new houses are built.

Five years after a civil war began in Syria, more than half of the population has been forced from their homes. World Renew reached out to nearly 10,000 families living in Syria and Lebanon in 2016, providing food assistance, hygiene kits, and nutritional support.

The war left Suha and her three children homeless during the Syrian winter, exposing them to freezing temperatures. Her youngest child went to the hospital with respiratory difficulties. World Renew provided Suha and 700 other families with cash allowances during the hardest winter months for buying blankets, warm clothes, household goods, and heating fuel.

Many families in South Sudan have been forced to flee to neighboring countries like Uganda to avoid conflict. Bidibidi, a refugee resettlement area in northern Uganda, has become one of the largest refugee-hosting areas in the world. The area did not have sanitation and hygiene facilities in place to support so many people. In response, World Renew built 530 latrines in Bidibidi to provide sanitation facilities and dignity for 26,500 people.

b. Disaster Response Services in North America

In 2016 World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) touched the lives of nearly 60,000 people in 40 communities throughout the United States and Canada. The work was accomplished by trained, dedicated volunteers from the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Reformed Church in America, and 25 other denominations who gave their time, energy, and talents to people in need. This servant-hearted effort is a witness to the faith and commitment of God's people to reach out in his name.

World Renew DRS volunteers helped 11 communities with organizational capacity building that provides training in carrying out disaster recovery work. DRS volunteers worked closely with local long-term recovery groups, explaining best practices in recovery, networking with national and federal response organizations, and offering World Renew DRS services.

Through unmet-needs assessments in disaster-affected communities, volunteers were able to identify the disaster-related emotional,

physical, household, and financial needs of vulnerable residents. The needs were prioritized, and those that were most urgent were immediately delegated to case workers who expedited a response. These assessments prepared communities for reconstruction and ensured that vulnerable residents were taken care of.

Grounded in a commitment to justice and peace, World Renew is devoted to helping homeowners who face significant barriers in recovering from disasters in North America. In line with the calling of mercy and justice, World Renew worked to restore health and well-being in disaster zones last year by committing hands and hearts to the larger restoration of humanity and creation.

One of those responses was in Fort McMurray, Alberta. Barb Bracko and other World Renew DRS volunteers met with Fort McMurray residents after wildfires destroyed roughly 2,400 structures, including homes, as well as 1.5 million acres of land in Alberta.

"The people in Fort McMurray are struggling to rebuild their lives, find a new home, and deal with the emotional trauma they experienced. But they are also turning to God for strength and direction in their lives," Bracko said. "Sometimes tragedy can become a stepping stone to greater faith."

"I met one couple who described the fire that destroyed their home and all of their belongings as 'a blessing' because it drew them closer to the Lord and strengthened their trust in him. They said that God provided everything they needed, and they had faith that he would provide for them in the future.

"The couple's friends offered them their basement suite while they recovered, and their church donated bedroom furniture, a sofa, and a table and chairs for when they find their own place. They lost all their earthly possessions, but they have gained 'the peace that passes understanding' (Phil. 4:7). Their young son is also learning to trust God: of all the things they lost, he missed his bike.

"One evening he prayed, 'God, we lost everything, and we had too much stuff, but I miss my bike.' The next morning, someone stopped by their house with a bike. We know that God does not always respond to our prayers immediately or answer in exactly the way we'd like, but he cares about every concern we have.

"One of the striking features about the population of Fort McMurray is its diversity. There are people from every continent who came to find work in what has been called 'Canada's boom town.' With such great diversity, discord between ethnic and religious groups could grow quickly.

"But after the fire forced the entire city to evacuate, people are more unified than ever before. They say, 'We don't shake hands in Fort McMurray. We hug.' These residents are an example for all of Canada and other countries that are welcoming some of the 65 million refugees, or one in every 113 people in the world today. In times of need, we are all called to 'love our neighbors as ourselves' (see Matt. 22:39).

"Another couple who came to the World Renew walk-in center was struggling to start their life over after the fire destroyed their home. When our team followed up with them a few days later, the husband

realized, . . . 'This is what I'm missing. . . . I have forgotten about God.' We may forget about God, but he never forgets about us. 'I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name' (see Isa. 49:15-16)."

By meeting with World Renew DRS, the needs of these individuals and families were brought to the attention of an organization called NGOs Supporting Uninsured, Underinsured Recovery (NSUUR). World Renew is a member of the NSUUR working group, which focuses on repairing and rebuilding homes for uninsured and underinsured families in the Fort McMurray area.

World Renew DRS volunteers meet with disaster survivors to help communities like Fort McMurray make sure that those who need help recovering are not forgotten. Determining who needs help with rebuilding provides a foundation for World Renew and other organizations to make plans for home reconstruction. It is also a way that the hope of Christ shines through the ashes of people's lives after a disaster, changing their story to one of recovery and hope.

3. Mobilizing churches for justice

As a CRC agency, World Renew shares in the calling to mobilize congregations to faithfully and effectively pursue "God's justice and peace in every area of life." In 2016 more than 200 North American churches were involved in addressing justice issues in relation to climate adaptation, peace building, and refugee and immigration policies.

a. United States

U.S. Congregational Justice Mobilization (CJM) has a four-part strategy: partnering, raising awareness, taking groups deeper with adult dialogue education, and organizing and mobilizing advocates for policy change. World Renew's CJM efforts in the U.S. are implemented in partnership with the CRC Office of Social Justice.

The Matthew 25 movement is a national movement of individuals and churches who pledge and take action to protect the vulnerable in the name of Jesus. The movement focuses on advocating for immigrant and refugee rights. World Renew is currently participating in this movement and mobilizing congregations to learn, advocate, and stand with immigrants and refugees in their communities.

Through the 2016 World Hunger Campaign, World Renew mobilized constituents to advocate for the Global Food Security Act. The passage of this law in the U.S. Congress and signing by the president made permanent a program called Feed the Future, which benefits communities where World Renew works.

The Alliance to End Hunger and Bread for the World partnered with World Renew to produce a resource called *Biblical Advocacy 101*. This resource describes the biblical basis for advocacy and is used as an introductory study for groups who are starting to take on advocacy work as part of their Christian mission, or for groups who want a refresher.

A group of 40 individuals representing four congregational groups traveled to Washington, D.C., in 2016 to advocate for the rights of marginalized voters. They learned about the impacts of racism in America and how Christians can work together for racial justice. The

participants met with their members of Congress to discuss improvements to the Voting Rights Act. The groups also prepared themselves and then continued in follow up by doing the six-week study, *Live Justly,* a World Renew resource on integrating the spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Bible study, and compassion into a socially just lifestyle.

b. Canada

From April 2015 to December 2016, World Renew Canada was a partner-member of the Good Soil advocacy campaign, which served as a powerful vehicle for reflecting God's love and passion for justice by calling on leaders to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our world. Funded by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), the Good Soil campaign was a social justice project that included activities that addressed advocacy through policy influence as well as constituent engagement.

In 2016, Good Soil campaign activities led to several opportunities for World Renew staff, volunteers, supporters, and partners to meet with Members of Parliament (MPs) and to increase the visibility of World Renew's work. Campaign activities included conducting highly successful tours to Ottawa for young adults and World Renew's board members. The groups were oriented to the process of meeting with political figures.

Between March and December 2016, nearly two dozen letters were written to MPs and the prime minister of Canada. These included letters to the minister of international development and the parliamentary secretary to the minister of international development. Nineteen meetings were held with MPs, and three of these meetings were held with staff of MPs at their offices. A total of 28,000 postcards encouraging just action were mailed to MPs, and 10 related stories have been published online. World Renew also posted regularly on social media to raise awareness about the need to increase Canadian government funding and support for small-scale farmers through the Good Soil campaign.

In 2016 the Good Soil campaign used resources created in 2015 to promote letter writing, postcard signing, and the capacity-building of constituents to advocate for increased support to small-scale farmers through various events. Engaging youth was a main focus of the events.

Good Soil campaign presentations at churches and schools proved to be a successful way to engage students and educators. The principals of 30 Christian high schools across Canada were contacted by postal mail in August. The Good Soil advocacy manager and others met with CRC constituents in the Vancouver area to talk about Good Soil and related efforts.

Good Soil campaign activities in 2016 were also successful in engaging members from denominations beyond the CRC. One example is a presentation at the United Church Women's Conference in Mississauga, Ontario. The event highlighted the Good Soil campaign and CFGB. The United Church Women's Conference also took about 300 postcards back to their respective communities. Another example is a presentation on *Global Food Systems and Urban Agriculture* for the Canadian

Council for International Cooperation's food security working group at the Food Secure Assembly Canada.

World Renew in Canada is working with the CRC Office of Social Justice, the Center for Public Dialogue, Diaconal Ministries Canada, and the Canadian ministries director's office to jointly support a part-time justice mobilizer position. In the first year, this position will focus on analyzing the current engagement of congregations in social justice and their future interests.

c. International justice

Each year World Renew makes grant funding available to address justice issues that are discovered as our programs, partners, and communities develop. The peace-building and justice fund creates opportunities for training and education, implemented through existing church networks, that advance basic human and civil rights. This includes training in advocacy, servant leadership, and good governance like that offered by World Renew and its partners in Cambodia.

Mao Chuob has been the village chief of Prey Anse, Cambodia, for fifteen years. However, the community members haven't always trusted him to have their best interests at heart. When he attended a workshop on governance and multistakeholder partnerships offered by World Renew's partner CFT, Mao learned about clear communication, trust building, power dynamics, decision making, and accountability. His leadership skills were transformed as he applied what he learned.

In response, the people of Prey Anse began to invest in improving their community. Mao became confident about the community's ability to make collaborative improvements. He is now committed to excellent leadership and has become a role model for other chiefs. His community is proud to have him as an effective, trustworthy leader who works for a better life for everyone.

E. Gospel proclamation and worship

World Renew's integrated programs in development and disaster response represent the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, ministering to those in need with practical interventions in community development, justice education, and disaster response that point to the saving grace of his death and resurrection.

In contexts where the gospel can be freely preached, World Renew openly integrates the Christian faith into its work in communities that are poor, oppressed, or affected by disaster. In contexts where Christianity is not recognized or welcomed, World Renew establishes common ground through values training that is based in our Christian faith, often bringing the first glimpse of salvation into hearts, homes, and communities where fatalism and spiritual poverty reign.

By working with churches and partners globally, World Renew strengthens both local churches and their denominational structures through essential training that increases ministry capacity and the proclamation of the gospel. World Renew works collaboratively with Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) throughout the CRC's ministry in global missions,

opening the door to a greater ministry presence through development and disaster response programming.

World Renew partners with Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI) on every continent where it works to integrate training for deacons, elders, pastors, and lay leaders in stewardship, biblical teaching, pastoral care, and teaching the Christian faith.

In 2016, with technical support from TLTI, World Renew in Haiti partnered with CRWM to launch a worldview training manual called *Se Conformer ou Etre Transformé* (Conform or Be Transformed). In addition to the Christian leaders who attended the launch conference in Port-au-Prince, several mission agencies and organizations also participated in the event.

The manual, created by World Renew, is a guide for different trainings currently being developed by World Renew and World Missions. Two ministry partner organizations in Haiti, PWOFOD and MDK, started to train leaders from local churches, schools, and communities a few years earlier, discussing relevant topics and practical outreach programs and addressing key local development issues.

TLTI has experience in developing Christian training materials in more than 50 countries around the world. The TLTI curriculum in Haiti contains materials in Haitian Kreyòl. The topics include taking care of God's people, managing God's resources, preaching, teaching the Christian faith, restraining violence in the family, worship and life, and sustainable development. There is also a section on choosing good leaders that helps Haitians choose wisely in political elections. World Renew coordinates TLTI training for leaders semiannually in Port-au-Prince and also annual facilitator training.

III. Connecting with churches: Our Journey

A. World Renew church relations program

1. Offerings

   World Renew does not receive ministry shares from Christian Reformed churches but depends on the generosity of donors, including congregations that receive four synodically designated offerings during the year. In 2016 these denominationally approved offerings focused on World Hunger Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Disaster Response Sunday. World Renew also recommends that offerings be received on Refugee Sunday in Canada, on Maternal and Child Health Sunday, and on Foods Resource Bank Sunday in the U.S. and CFGB Sunday in Canada.

2. Reaching and growing into the non-CRC constituency

   In nearly 55 years of ministry, World Renew has engaged with and blessed many people around the world, from participants to constituents to other members involved in the work. It therefore continues to be necessary that the work of this CRC agency be structurally and intentionally shared with more people than only members of the CRC. In 2016, World Renew began spearheading a strategic planning and research initiative to "increase denominational diversity" among the constituents and partners of World Renew. World Renew is a member of several international collaborative networks, including CFGB, Foods Resource Bank, ACT Alliance, and Integral Alliance. These networks provide access to funding

and grants from non-CRC donors who also support other member organizations in these networks.

3. Events

In West Michigan, World Renew worked with Urban Roots and Access of West Michigan to explore food and faith issues and to help churches use their gardens for community engagement. World Renew also sponsored a number of local, public events in Grand Rapids, Michigan, around immigration and climate change.

Throughout 2016, World Renew's Church Relations Team was involved in more than 15 conferences and workshops including the Global Leadership Summit, Engage 2016, the Hunger Walk, the Calvin College Faith and International Development Conference, Jubilee, MissionFest in Seattle and Vancouver, Wholistic Ministries, Wild Goose Festival, CSI conventions, and a Global Agriculture Convention.

4. Church engagement highlights

In 2016, World Renew's Church Relations Team reshaped the Ministry Partner Program (MPP) and its staff support program and created a new framework to engage churches globally through World Renew. Through the development of Global Engagement Opportunities (GEO) materials, World Renew provided more ways to come alongside churches to help them flesh out their global engagement strategy and develop opportunities that fit the congregation.

The process of restructuring MPP involved renaming staff deputations, which are now called Connections Tours. In 2016 five Connections Tours were facilitated for World Renew's frontline workers in Latin America, Asia, and Africa who interacted, engaged, inspired, and connected with churches, schools, groups, and individuals across Canada and the United States. In 2017 thirteen planned Connections Tours will continue to provide a variety of opportunities for international field staff to share their work and build relationships with partner churches and supporters around North America. Additional opportunities such as workshops, simulation activities, resources, and speaking engagements are also planned to continue to engage churches and individuals in World Renew's international ministry.

B. Communities First Association

World Renew supports the work of Communities First Association (CFA) in U.S. development programs. For almost a decade CFA has focused on the integration of asset-based community development (ABCD) principles in neighborhoods, communities, and organizations across the country. Equipping and networking community development leaders to build community strength and seek just, sustainable transformation is the missional cornerstone of CFA's identity. Helping all communities thrive in sustainable ways is what drives every touch and encounter that CFA engages in as a professional teaching and learning organization.

IV. Board matters

An important support to World Renew's ministry is our board. The primary function of the board is to set World Renew's vision and mission and to encourage and track the accomplishment of that vision.

World Renew's governance structure is made up of delegates from each CRC classis and up to 27 members-at-large, who together constitute the Board of Delegates of World Renew. The delegates serve as a vital communication link with classes and churches. They select national boards that include up to seven members on the U.S. board and up to nine members on the Canada board. The two boards together form the Joint Ministry Council, which provides governance for World Renew as a whole.

Board of Directors of World Renew-Canada
Mr. John DeGroot, president
Mr. Raymond Prins, vice president
Ms. Marguerite Ridder, secretary
Mr. Jason DeBoer, treasurer
Ms. Rebecca Warren
Mr. Jerry Aydalla
Mr. James Joosse
Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink, pastoral advisor

Board of Directors of World Renew-U.S.
Mr. Lyman Howell, president
Ms. Hyacinth Douglas Bailey, vice president
Ms. Joy Anema, secretary
Mr. Barry Haven, treasurer
Ms. Erika Izquiredo
Mr. Roy Heerema
Rev. Ramon Orostizaga, pastoral advisor

A. Board nominations, reappointments, terms completed

1. Canada members-at-large

   a. Ms. Jacoba (Ko) Spyksma has served as the classical delegate from B.C. North-West; however, she has recently moved out of the classis. The board of World Renew recommends that synod appoint Ms. Jacoba (Ko) Spyksma to serve out her term on the board as a member-at-large.

   b. Rev. Joseph Hamilton was ratified by Synod 2016 as the classical delegate from Classis Lake Superior (Canada); however, classis recently submitted the nomination of Ms. Marlene VanderBurgh to fill the classical delegate role—in response to the request for board diversity. In light of this change in delegation from the classis, the board of World Renew recommends that synod permit Rev. Joseph Hamilton to serve out his term on the board as a member-at-large.

2. Reappointment of Canada member-at-large
   The following Canadian delegate is completing her first term on the board and is being recommended for a second three-year term: Ms. Rebecca Warren.

3. Reappointment of Canada classis members
   The following Canadian delegates are completing their first term on the board and are being recommended for reappointment to a second three-year term: Mr. Raymond Prins (Alberta North), Mr. Rob Aukema

(B.C. South-East), Ms. Eve Mazereeuw (Huron), and Mr. Lawrence DeGraaf (Niagara).

4. Canada at-large member completing term
   World Renew would like to recognize and thank the following board member for completing his second term of service: Mr. James Joosse.

5. Reappointment of U.S. classis members
   The following U.S. delegates are completing their first term on the board and are being recommended for a second three-year term: Ms. Rachel Brink (Holland) and Mr. Howard Walhof (Yellowstone).

6. U.S. members completing terms
   The board of World Renew-U.S. would like to recognize and thank the following board members completing their service on the board: Rev. Roger Nelson (Chicago South), Ms. Jodi Cole Meyer (Georgetown), Dr. Harlan VanderGriend (Heartland), Rev. Carl Bruxvoort (Iakota), Mr. Jim Groen (Illiana), Mr. Dennis Anderson (Northern Michigan), Mr. Caleb Dickson (Red Mesa). The board of World Renew would like to recognize and thank the following board members who are unable to continue their service on the board: Mr. Andrew Woja Henry, Mr. John Apostol, and Ms. Mary Van Buren.

B. Financial matters

1. Salary disclosure
   In accordance with synod's mandate to report executive salary levels, World Renew reports the following:

Job level	Number of positions	Number below target	Number at target
18	2	1	1
16	4	0	4
15	8	3	5

2. Detailed financial information
   Detailed financial information and budgets will be submitted to synod by way of the *Agenda for Synod 2017—Financial and Business Supplement*.

C. Human Resources management

World Renew values program excellence. As such it relies on its Human Resources (HR) management function to provide HR support to functional and ministry teams. Further, it relies on diverse, professional, and skilled staff to meet the goals around its vision and mission.

World Renew has a rigorous recruiting process, and as a result we have successfully hired more than 15 highly skilled staff this year. We continually expand our recruitment activities to ensure we meet both our diversity and our professional learning goals, given especially that our agency is a learning organization. To that end we continue to promote professional development and learning and continue on the journey of competency development for various positions.

World Renew is also committed to the process of gender mainstreaming with the goal of gender equality. As part of its gender plan, World Renew regularly tracks goals for the number of both men and women in leadership

positions, staff perception about their team's commitment to gender equality, and the participation of men and women in decision making. In terms of World Renew's leadership positions (those with a job level of 14 or higher), 50 percent are held by women.

Annual performance reviews are routine for all World Renew staff. This gives staff an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and critically review growth areas. World Renew is thankful for each of its human resources, who are essential to providing program excellence in communities in need around the globe.

D. Resource development report

Last year World Renew was blessed to receive a total of $35,356,109 from all sources in the United States and Canada. Of this funding, $23 million came from churches and individual donors. These funds were then leveraged into greater ministry dollars through grants, partnerships, and other collaborations.

Just over $1.2 million was received through government grants last year, and nearly $6.5 million came from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank for emergency disaster response and food security programs. World Renew also received just over $4 million in grants from organizations in North America, Europe, and elsewhere, and received about $311,000 from its investments.

World Renew directed $11 million of its 2016 financial resources toward core international development programs, and $14.3 million went to disaster response. Just over $400,000 was used for community development in North America, and $1.6 million was directed to constituent education.

World Renew uses about 13 percent of its resources for general management and fundraising purposes—meaning that 87 percent of the money you entrust to World Renew directly helps those who experience poverty, injustice, and disaster with life-saving, life-changing programs that witness to the justice and mercy of Jesus Christ and build up the church worldwide.

V. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Mr. Lyman Howell, president of World Renew-U.S.; Mr. John DeGroot, president of World Renew-Canada; Ms. Carol Bremer-Bennett, director of World Renew-U.S.; and Ms. Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director of World Renew-Canada, when World Renew matters are discussed and need to be addressed.

B. 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.

C. That synod, by way of the ballot, appoint and reappoint members to the World Renew Board of Delegates.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

World Renew
Carol Bremer-Bennett, director, World Renew-U.S.
Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director, World Renew-Canada

Calvin Theological Seminary

I. Introduction

The Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees presents this report to Synod 2017 with gratitude to God for his provision this past year. The seminary has experienced God's faithfulness and looks toward the future with hope and anticipation.

II. Board of Trustees

The board met in plenary session in October 2016 and via conference call in February 2017. It anticipates a plenary session in May 2017.

The board officers are Mr. Sidney Jansma, Jr., chair; Rev. Curt Walters, vice-chair; and Ms. Teresa Renkema, secretary.

Trustee Rev. Curt Walters (Region 11) has completed one term of service and is eligible for reappointment. The board recommends that synod reappoint Rev. Walters to a second three-year term.

Completing terms on the board are Rev. Victor Ko (Region 2), Rev. Jeff Klingenberg (Region 4), Rev. William Sytsma (Region 9), and Mr. Myles Kuperus (Region 10 at-large). We are grateful for their service and wise counsel to the seminary and to the church.

The following nominees have been submitted to the classes in their respective regions for a vote. The results of those elections will be presented to Synod 2017 for ratification. *Note:* The Region 9 position will remain vacant until July 2018.

Region 2

Mr. Hessel Kielstra is a member of Emmanuel CRC in Calgary, Alberta. He is president and CEO of a number of family businesses involving agriculture and food processing. He has served four terms as elder at Emmanuel CRC and two terms as a school trustee at Calgary Christian School. He has also served two terms as a trustee on the board of Calvin Theological Seminary, two terms on the CRCNA Board of Trustees, and three terms on the Back to God Hour Advancement Board. In 2016 he completed two terms as a trustee for Dordt College, including two years as chair. Mr. Kielstra has also served two terms as an alderman for the city of Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Mr. Frank Zee is a member of Covenant CRC in Edmonton, Alberta. He has served as a deacon or elder for more than thirty years, first in La Glace (Alta.) CRC, and presently at Covenant CRC. Mr. Zee taught English at the Grande Prairie (Alta.) Regional College for many years and is a graduate of Dordt College and of the University of Alberta. He also worked for the Christian Labour Association of Canada for twelve years, finishing as director of training, until his retirement in 2014. While living in LaGlace, Mr. Zee mentored many Calvin Theological Seminary summer students and helped several new pastors in their first calls at LaGlace CRC. He has been a synod delegate on two occasions and recently served on the Banner editor-in-chief selection committee.

Region 4

Rev. Allen Kleine Deters is pastor of The Bridge Church, a church plant he begin in 2014 in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Rev. Kleine Deters received his bachelor's degree in religious education from Reformed Bible College and his M.Div. degree from Calvin Theological Seminary. He has also received training from FORGE Ethos Missional Training and has served in multiple roles in full-time ministry, including youth and worship ministry while serving at these locations over the past thirty years: Redeemer College (Ancaster, Ont.), Cephas CRC (Peterborough, Ont.), First CRC (Calgary, Alta.), New Life CRC (Grand Junction, Colo.), Abundant Life CRC (Grand Junction, Colo.), and Alamosa (Colo.) CRC. He would bring a very broad and diverse perspective to the needs in ministry, including that of a church planter, to his service on any board.

Rev. Kevin VanderVeen is a pastor at Covenant CRC in St. Catharines, Ontario. He received his bachelor's degree from Kuyper College and his M.Div. degree from Calvin Theological Seminary. He became pastor of community at Covenant CRC in the fall of 2015. He is a recent seminary graduate (2015) and a new pastor who would bring fresh ministry perspectives to his service on any board.

Region 10 at-large

Mr. Myles Kuperus, Region 10 at-large is completing his second term on the board and is not eligible for reappointment. The Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees hopes to present nominees for this position for election by way of the Supplemental report to synod.

III. Administration

The seminary administration includes Rev. Jul Medenblik, president; Ms. Jinny Bult De Jong, chief financial and operating officer; Dr. Ronald J. Feenstra, academic dean; Dr. Mary Vanden Berg, associate academic dean; Rev. Geoff Vandermolen, director of vocational formation; Mr. Robert Knoor, director of development; Rev. Jeff Sajdak, dean of students; and Ms. Sarah Chun, associate dean of students.

IV. Faculty

The seminary faculty continues to serve the church in numerous ways. Although teaching and preparing students for various forms of ministry continues to be central to their work, members of the faculty also provide education and counsel to many local congregations and broader assemblies, preach regularly, publish scholarly books and articles, participate in significant conferences, and, in various ways, seek to stay attuned to developments in ministries in the Christian Reformed Church and the church of Christ worldwide.

In response to Synod 2012's challenge to develop ways to "get involved earlier" in the rising number of pastor/church breakdowns, several denominational ministries (Home Missions, World Missions, Calvin Theological Seminary, Candidacy Office, Pastor Church Resources, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, etc.) worked together on a pilot project to enhance ministry "fit" for pastors and other religious leaders and to create a proactive strategy for improving pastor/congregation/ministry relationships. As a result, the

CRCNA hired Rev. Samantha DeJong McCarron as its first ministry assessment coordinator, and she works half-time to bring current and potential ministry leaders together with several vetted counseling services to provide a robust assessment and vocational guidance process. Rev. McCarron is present at Calvin Theological Seminary one day a week as one way to help future leaders discern their calling and ministry fit.

At its February meeting, the following actions were taken by the board:

- The board noted the upcoming retirement of Dr. John Bolt; acknowledged his years of faithful service to Calvin Theological Seminary (1989-2017); conferred on him the title of Jean and Kenneth Baker Professor of Systematic Theology, *emeritus,* effective upon his retirement on January 1, 2018; and requests that synod acknowledge this action with gratitude to God.
- The board noted the upcoming retirement of Dr. John W. Cooper; acknowledged his years of faithful service to Calvin Theological Seminary (1985-2016); conferred on him the title of Professor of Philosophical Theology, *emeritus*, effective upon his retirement on July 1, 2017; and requests that synod acknowledge this action with gratitude to God.
- The board noted the upcoming retirement of Dr. Dean B. Deppe; acknowledged his years of faithful service to Calvin Theological Seminary (1998-2017); conferred on him the title of Professor of New Testament, *emeritus,* effective upon his retirement on July 1, 2017; and requests that synod acknowledge this action with gratitude to God.

V. Reflecting on Our Calling

A. Convergence with the CRCNA Ministry Priorities

Over the past few years, Calvin Theological Seminary faculty, with input and final approval from the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, has produced a "Vision Frame" document, outlined as follows:

Mission Statement—*What* are we doing?
As a learning community in the Reformed Christian tradition that forms church leaders who cultivate communities of disciples of Jesus Christ, Calvin Theological Seminary exists to serve the Christian Reformed Church in North America and wider constituencies by preparing individuals for biblically faithful and contextually effective ministry of the Word and by offering Reformed theological scholarship and counsel.

Values—*Why* are we doing it?
Reformed theology—All our teaching and formation grow from a shared understanding of God's Word as articulated in the Reformed confessions.

The church—We are formed by and serve the church, God's agent of hope for the world.

Cultural context—We give our students tools to sow the gospel in a multicultural world. We challenge one another to have hearts that engage the broader world God so loves.

The whole person—We cultivate meaningful relationships with our students to foster personal and spiritual growth throughout our learning community.

Strategy—*How* are we doing it?
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
- we are known for academic excellence and scholarship.
- we provide innovative learning environments.
- we pursue synergy with our graduates and other ministry leaders.
- we nurture a community of hospitality.
- we enrich the student experience through vital partnership.

Measures—*When* are we successful?
When graduates of Calvin Theological Seminary
- preach and teach the Bible (message).
- grow in their pastoral identity (person).
- discern and engage ministry contexts (context).
- cultivate and lead communities of disciples (goal).
- equip the church to renew communities for the glory of God (*purpose*).

A scan of this material shows significant convergence with the ministry priorities of the Christian Reformed Church in North America:

Faith Formation—Calvin Theological Seminary seeks to train disciples who become the trainers of more disciples of Jesus Christ.

Servant Leadership—Calvin Theological Seminary is seeking to identify, recruit, and train leaders to be servants in the kingdom of God. From *Dig* (formerly *Facing Your Future*) for high school students to its resident and online education programs followed by continuing education programs and resources, Calvin Theological Seminary is training leaders.

Global Missions—The world is at our doorstep. Every year over 20 different nations (30% outside the U.S. and Canada) are represented in the student body of Calvin Theological Seminary. The training for global missions takes place not just in classrooms but also over lunch in the Student Center.

Mercy and Justice—Calvin Theological Seminary trains students through cross-cultural internships and exposure to environments that help form the hearts of Christian disciples. For example, experience with prison ministry through Calvin Theological Seminary has led students to witness the need for ministry to prisoners and to understand the structures of society that need to be addressed.

Gospel Proclamation and Worship—Along with Servant Leadership this is probably our leading edge within the CRC ministry priorities. Our core degree is the Master of Divinity, which helps to form preachers and teachers of the gospel. In addition, we recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Center for Excellence in Preaching (cep.calvinseminary.edu). This ministry tool has served church leaders in one-on-one settings with thousands of website resource users every month.

B. Connecting with churches—Our Journey (the Ministry Plan)

Making and maintaining connections with churches is a foundational component of education for Calvin Theological Seminary. Whether this involves church-based internships or assignments related to the local church environment, the local church is the key partner for nurturing, developing, and training students.

The Calvin Theological Seminary faculty recently adopted a new way for students to fulfill their contextual learning requirements through internship hours that are embedded in churches during the ministry year. The office of Vocational Formation, led by Director of Vocational Formation Geoff Vandermolen, continues to develop partnerships to help bridge the classroom and the church.

Calvin Theological Seminary's Institute for Global Church Planning and Renewal has deepened our connection with churches by developing the Church Renewal Learning Laboratory, which helps cohorts of approximately ten churches learn together how to provide effective ministry in their contexts. We hope that our learning from this pilot program will enable us to serve the broader Christian Reformed Church and beyond.

Finally, Calvin Theological Seminary presented last summer a continuing education opportunity for pastors and lay leaders, and the event was well attended and well received. Former Fuller Theological Seminary President Richard Mouw keynoted a conference titled *"What Does It Mean to Love My Neighbor Today?"* Besides Dr. Mouw, faculty members of Calvin Theological Seminary gave presentations on this important, timely topic.

VI. Program highlights

Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) has been involved in the training and teaching of students for ministry for 141 years since 1876.

We continue to be blessed by strong support for our Distance Education Master of Divinity Degree program. In fall 2016 a new group of 12 students joined the program, which allows students to remain where they are while receiving a Calvin Theological Seminary education through mentoring, cohorts (small groups), and distance classroom experiences. In the 2017 spring semester, six new students are expected to begin the program, bringing total enrollment in the program to 58. The launch of the distance M.Div. has created a great deal of interest in CTS, and we are now offering a distance delivery format for M.A. and M.T.S. degree programs.

The seminary is grateful for the overall enrollment of nearly 300 students for the 2016-2017 academic year, with 79 new students, including 36 M.Div. students (23 residential and 13 in the distance education program). At the same time, we urge the churches to encourage and support men and women who seek additional training for ministry to consider Calvin Theological Seminary.

The following data for the Center for Excellence in Preaching compares the first full year of visits, pages viewed, and unique visitors in 2006 with those of this past year, demonstrating the growth of this ministry and illustrating that it is one of the premier Reformed preaching websites:

Year	Total visits	Total pages viewed	Avg. unique visitors per month
2006	86,411	242,871	5,649
2016	346,000	1,573,000	14,005

Calvin Theological Seminary recently received a sustainability match grant (2017-2019) from the Lilly Endowment for $125,000 to build on several of the goals from our 2013 grant of $250,000 under the Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers initiative.

The sustainability proposal builds on three of the four components in the original grant:

- research that more fully documents our reality of student debt and its contributing factors
- the importance of financial literacy to better equip future ministers
- greater financial assistance for our students

The two themes of the sustainability grant narrative are (1) stewarding the ecosystem health of Calvin Theological Seminary and (2) a "wellness plan" for Calvin Theological Seminary: more students, more funding, less debt.

We are also pleased to encourage the work of the CRCNA as they have been invited to submit a grant proposal under the National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. We had several meetings with their grant developers, offering input from our work, and were pleased to write a letter of support for their grant submission to Lilly Endowment, titled "The CRCNA Financial Shalom Project." We are even more pleased that they have been awarded this grant, and we look forward to possibilities of collaboration in the next three years to indeed pursue financial shalom with the CRCNA in our respective places of ministry.

The seminary was blessed with a number of key appointments during the past year. We give thanks for new faculty member Dr. Matthew J. Tuininga, assistant professor of moral theology, who began his teaching ministry in July 2016. We also give thanks for Dr. Danjuma Gibson, associate professor of pastoral care, and Rev. Geoffrey Vandermolen, director of vocational formation, who began their work and ministry with us this past July.

The seminary anticipates welcoming Dr. Young Ahn Kang (from South Korea) as visiting professor of philosophical theology for a two-year term that begins this summer.

The seminary has also been blessed to see the continued development of a new institute. Just as the Center for Excellence in Preaching continues to serve the church in providing preaching resources, the Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal (IGCPR) seeks to be a resource and catalyst to churches in the area of church renewal and church planting. This institute is directed by Dr. Cory Willson.

We are currently in the fourth year of the Church Renewal Lab with Rev. Keith Doornbos as project program director. The program uses focused learning intensives, peer groups, the assistance of seminary interns, and the involvement of local church leadership. Over twenty churches are currently involved in cohort learning, and the initial results of this laboratory experiment are promising.

On September 8, 2015, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary were blessed to open prison doors through the beginning of classes at Handlon Correctional Facility as part of the Calvin Prison Initiative. Twenty students from within the prison system came together to begin a five-year bachelor's degree program accredited through Calvin College. Twenty new students were added to this program in the summer of 2016. This program

was begun at the request of the State of Michigan and is a coordinated effort of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. It is our hope that this "seminary behind bars program" will be used by God to affect not only the students in the classroom but also the prison system as these students are deployed within that system. In addition, we testify that professors and Calvin College and Seminary students are changed and affected by their involvement in the lives of students at Handlon.

We are grateful for partnerships with congregations and pastors in the training of our students. Fifteen of our twenty Formation Group Leaders are pastors (the other five are seminary faculty members): Rev. Mike Abma, Rev. Lynn Barger Elliott, Rev. David Beelen, Rev. Don Byker, Rev. Peter Byma, Rev. Doug Fauble, Rev. Doug MacLeod, Rev. Kenneth Nydam, Rev. David Poolman, Rev. Denise Posie, Rev. Henry Schenkel, Rev. David Struyk, Rev. Elizabeth VanderHaagen, Rev. Paula Vander Hoven, and Mr. Karl Westerhof.

We are also grateful to pastors and others for recommending great students for the *Facing Your Future* program, which has been relaunched as *Dig*. We celebrate the continuation of this opportunity to train young people and expose them to ministry. During the summer of 2017, we anticipate high school students experiencing theological education at the seminary, followed by ministry in the Roseland area of Chicago, Illinois, or in Toronto, Ontario.

Two special opportunities for giving that continue to grow are The Presidents' Legacy Society and Mission Builders. Both have proven fruitful in raising the level of financial support for Calvin Theological Seminary.

Finally, Calvin Theological Seminary is preparing for a comprehensive evaluation visit by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). The ATS evaluation committee is scheduled to be on campus in March 2018. If you have any comments concerning Calvin Theological Seminary's qualifications for continued accreditation, please send them in writing to the president or board chair of Calvin Theological Seminary (3233 Burton St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546) and/or to the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1110).

VII. Students 2016-2017

The composition of the seminary's student body indicates a growing national and ethnic diversity. The following statistics from fall 2016 indicate the impact the seminary is having beyond the Christian Reformed Church:

Denominational affiliation

Christian Reformed: 125 (46%)
Non-Christian Reformed students: 146 (54%)
Presbyterian: 59
Other Reformed: 23
Baptist: 14
Other/None Listed: 50
(30+ total denominations)

Geographical information

U.S. students: 158 (58%)
Canadian students: 28 (10%)
International students, other than Canadian: 85 (31%)
Korean: 51 (19%)

Chinese: 8 (3%)
Other: 26 (9%)
Total countries represented: 20

Student body
Male students: 220 (81%)
Female students: 51 (19%)

Programs and students enrolled
M.Div.: 124
M.A.: 19
M.T.S.: 18
* EPMC: 21
Th.M.: 47
Ph.D.: 29
Hybrid/Distance Learning: 52 (this number does not reflect residential students who also take a hybrid/distance class)
Certificate/diploma: 4
Unclassified: 9
Dual degree: 2

*Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy

Noncredit students
It should be noted that we currently have 20 students in the Handlon Correctional Facility who are also considered noncredit students of Calvin Theological Seminary. In addition, we have 38 students who are part of the joint Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary program known as the Calvin Prison Initiative. We also have a total of 70 students registered in our two Spanish-language certificate programs.

VIII. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Mr. Sidney Jansma, Jr., chair; and Rev. Julius T. Medenblik, president, when seminary matters are presented.

B. That synod, by way of the ballot, ratify the election and reappointment of trustees from the slates of nominees presented.

C. That synod, with gratitude to God, acknowledge the years of faithful service of Dr. John Bolt and note the new title conferred on him by the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees: Jean and Kenneth Baker Professor of Systematic Theology, *emeritus,* effective January 1, 2018.

D. That synod, with gratitude to God, acknowledge the years of faithful service of Dr. John W. Cooper and note the new title conferred on him by the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees: Professor of Philosophical Theology, *emeritus,* effective July 1, 2017.

E. That synod, with gratitude to God, acknowledge the years of faithful service of Dr. Dean B. Deppe and note the new title conferred on him by the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees: Professor of New Testament, *emeritus,* effective July 1, 2017.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the denominational Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance Advisory Committee.

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees
Teresa Renkema, secretary

Worship Ministries (Rev. Joyce Borger, director)

I. Introduction

Enriched by a great diversity of ethnicities, communities, styles, and gifts, Worship Ministries supports and strengthens biblically grounded and theologically Reformed worship in the Christian Reformed Church in North America by the development of networks and the equipping of worshiping communities.

A. Networking

Worship Ministries is continually engaged in networking

- to seek ways for those who plan and lead worship in the CRCNA to meet for mutual encouragement and opportunities to share with, learn from, and listen to each other.
- to leverage worship opportunities and learning by connecting with and supporting worship-related efforts of other CRCNA ministries and agencies, including other worship organizations—the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Center for Excellence in Preaching.
- to foster ecumenical relationships that strengthen the CRCNA's understanding and practice of worship.

B. Equipping worshiping communities

We strive to equip local worshiping communities

- to reflect deeply about their worship, using multiple resources including our creeds, confessions, contemporary testimonies, liturgical forms, and relevant synodical documents.
- to embrace their specific contexts and calls to ministry by reflecting their uniqueness in their worship and to enrich their worship by engaging with and learning from other churches in the CRCNA, other local churches, and the global church.
- to join their worship with the church of all ages and around the world as an expression of our unity in Jesus Christ.
- to preach the Word of God faithfully, effectively, and contextually, and to respond as we are called.
- to share in the sacraments, teaching their full meaning and significance.
- to include people of all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and without favoritism regarding gender, age, or abilities.
- to use and lead the Young Children and Worship program.
- to share their rich resources with each other, to utilize existing resources, and to aid in the creation of new resources that meet specific needs.

As Christians, we all have a sense of the importance of worship, knowing, first, that God has commanded us to gather for worship and, second, that we need the gathered worshiping community. When we gather for worship, our faith is formed, our identity and unity in Christ is affirmed, and we are sent to live as Christ's disciples, sharing the gospel message wherever we go. As Reformed Christians, we have a sense too that worship needs to be grounded in our theology. We desire that worship be a unifying force within

the CRCNA, but when we look around, we see churches within our denomination that worship very differently, and there are often divergent ideas of what worship ought to look like.

At Worship Ministries we are blessed to have a diverse advisory committee among our conversation partners this year as we began to gain a better understanding of the diversity of worship within the CRC and as we explore what unifies our worship. What statements can be made about worship in the CRC that are equally true for a church of predominantly white middle-class people with Dutch roots, a Native American worshiping community, a church plant reaching out to a richly diverse community facing complex social issues, a young immigrant community who worships in its native language, a congregation of diverse cultures and ethnicities, and a church in a university town with students coming and going? What unifies our worship when our style and expression of worship are so varied among congregations like these? And how does a ministry go about supporting such diverse communities, each having their own set of needs?

While we have rich, thoughtful, formational synodical documents on worship (see *Acts of Synod 1968* and *1997*), a variety of resources, and church polity statements, we are a very different church than we were in 1997. With changes in culture come changes in acoustical environment, and documents from twenty or more years ago may not communicate the same thing or communicate as well in today's varied contexts. We are not eager to create more documents, but we do want to encourage the church to join us as we ask these questions over the coming year(s) and together discern what it means for every worshiping community in the Christian Reformed Church in North America to experience vibrant gospel proclamation and worship that is directed to God, is biblically based and theologically Reformed, and is characterized by creativity, discernment, spiritual vitality, the faith formation of all worshipers, and the call to serve others.

II. Reflecting the Five Callings

Worship is intertwined in each of the five areas of calling, revealing a symbiotic relationship in which the strengthening of one serves to strengthen the other.

A. Faith formation

Worship Ministries continues to work closely with the staff of Faith Formation Ministries, attending parts of their staff retreats, assisting in the formation of toolkits, and serving as a coach for their cohort program. Worship Ministries staff also serve as the CRC's liaison for the Young Children and Worship program.

B. Servant leadership

We are well aware that in addition to the pastor there are worship planners, leaders, musicians, artists, and others involved with worship who have a significant leadership role in the congregation, regardless of their status as staff or volunteer, layperson or ordained. Each week these individuals are choosing the words that form our faith. We continue to look for ways to support these leaders through strengthening relationships and networks, spiritual nourishment, and training opportunities from within and outside of our denomination.

C. Global missions

Worship Ministries is working with staff from the new mission agency and Ministry Support Services to provide worship resources in the Korean language. *Reformed Worship* is also negotiating with a Korean publisher with regard to translating portions of *RW* into Korean to be distributed worldwide. Plans continue for the translation of material into Spanish as well.

We are also collaborating with the new mission agency and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship toward providing a series of short training videos for worship planners, leaders, and committees.

D. Mercy and justice

Worship Ministries staff participated in a consultation on "Intergenerational Worship in the Urban Context," which centered on issues of race and justice. In addition, we have supported the Office of Social Justice, Race Relations, and Safe Church Ministries in their work by providing worship planning leadership at the following events: Engage 2016, Safe Church Conference, and a Martin Luther King Day service. We continue to be committed to issues of justice and race relations in our collaborations and support of worship at such events, as well as in resources published in *Reformed Worship*, conversations of which we are a part, and our own advisory committee.

In addition, a peer learning study this year focused on how to include persons with disabilities in worship (see below), and we do our best to implement many of these best practices.

E. Global proclamation and worship

1. *Reformed Worship (RW)*

   a. *RW* is celebrating its 30th anniversary. We marked this milestone by changing over to a new subscription system that allows subscribers online access to the journal, account information, and email renewal notices; these changes will significantly decrease our printing and mailing costs. In addition, subscribers also now have access to a flip-through e-version of the journal with all copyrighted material in addition to the words-only public archive on the *RW* website. We currently have 2,100 subscribers to the journal.

   b. We continue to provide a monthly e-newsletter filled with resources and notices of events related to worship from a variety of sources. This is sent to a growing list of over 4,000 individuals.

   c. We continue to make use of Facebook, with over 4,000 individuals following ReformedWorship.org. Blogs written by practitioners and academics are posted weekly to the website. Our search function has improved, and we now have 30 years of archived resources. In the past year we logged over 800,000 users and more than a million page views.

   d. Staffing: We have hired a new copy editor (30 hours per issue) and will soon be looking for a managing or associate editor as well (50 hours per issue).

2. Peer learning groups

   a. Fourteen groups (5, Canada; 8, U.S.; 1, Ukraine) have formed, including over 60 participants.

   b. Groups set up their own schedule—meeting in person or online—and this year they chose one of the following books to study (free of charge): *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* by Barbara J. Newman; and *The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World* by Sandra Maria Van Opstal.

   c. The conveners of these groups gather in Grand Rapids each January to learn from each other and are given a free registration to the Symposium on Worship, thanks to the generosity of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

3. Worship resources

   We continue to assist other agencies in the gathering and/or formation of worship resources. In the past year this collaborative work included resources for the following events:

   - Mission Emphasis Sunday
   - World Communion
   - Pastor's Farewell Service
   - Commemoration of 9/11

4. Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

   As requested by Synod 2016, Worship Ministries chaired an ad hoc committee representing Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and various denominational ministries to collect resources and make them available to churches and classes for use in their planning of commemorative services. These resources can be found at ReformationDay500.org.

III. Connecting with churches

A. The local church

Besides supporting the local churches with the work mentioned above, responding to individual requests, and coaching, we have sponsored or been part of the following events and conversations over the past year:

- networking events in New Jersey
- Niagara Classis Worship Leaders
- The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World (New York, N.Y.; Grand Rapids, Mich.) led by CRC pastor Sandra Van Opstal, who challenged those present to think through worship as it relates to issues of diversity, and to explore approaches, forms, and styles of multicultural worship.
- Accessible Gospel/Connections grant, Brampton, Ontario
- Brown Bag Lunches—A monthly discussion group for worship leaders, hosted by a different church each month, with the host church choosing the topic as well as introducing us to their worshiping community. Piloted in Grand Rapids, we hope that this may be a model for other communities. We also plan to test the creation of online conversations following the same sort of model.

- Hymn/Psalm festivals—We coordinate lending libraries of *Lift Up Your Hearts* and *Psalms for All Seasons* for events across the United States and Canada.

B. Other partners

Worship Ministries is grateful for many partnerships. The Center for Excellence in Preaching provides a column "For Preachers" in each issue of *Reformed Worship*. The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship continues to be a source for many rich experiences and deep discussions on topics related to worship. Their staff also contribute to each issue of *RW*.

Staff maintain ecumenical relationships through membership in the Hymn Society of North America, the Consultation on Common Texts (Revised Common Lectionary), and the Association of Reformed and Liturgical Worship by attending worship conferences sponsored by various organizations, and through personal relationships with worship leaders in other denominations, particularly the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

STANDING COMMITTEES

I. Introduction

Synod 2004 established the concept of the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (SMCC), which is now known as the Candidacy Committee. The committee began meeting in late 2004 and was provided with a full-time staff person in late 2007. The committee mandate is available in a document entitled, "Journey Toward Ordination," accessible on the Candidacy Committee website (www.crcna.org/candidacy). The members of the committee meet three times per year. As with other denominational committees, Candidacy Committee members serve a potential of two three-year terms.

II. Committee membership

The following people currently serve on the Candidacy Committee: Rev. Changguk "Joseph" Byun (2017/1), Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen (2017/2), Pastor James Jones (2018/1), Rev. Susan LaClear (2018/1), Rev. Joel Kok (2018/2), Rev. Mark Hilbelink (2019/1), Rev. Andrew Vander Leek (2019/1), Dr. LaVerne Jordan (2019/2), Rev. Fernando Valencia (2019/2), Rev. Jul Medenblik (*ex officio*, as the Calvin Theological Seminary representative), Mr. Colin Watson, Sr. (*ex officio*, representing the executive director), and Rev. David Koll (nonvoting staff).

Rev. Changguk Byun is completing his first term on the committee and is willing to serve a second term. Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen is completing her second term and is not eligible for reappointment. Therefore the Candidacy Committee presents to synod the following slate of names for appointment to fill this vacancy:

Rev. Ashley Bonnes is a 2013 graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary and was ordained in September 2013 to serve as a pastor at Lafayette (Ind.) CRC. She is a copastor with her husband, and the two share preaching and pastoral-care duties and take on various other tasks based on their individual gifts. Prior to attending seminary, Rev. Bonnes practiced social work in Toronto, Ontario, having earned a master of social work degree from the University of Toronto. She worked with caregivers of children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. She is grateful for the many people who helped her through the discernment process for ordained ministry and is eager to contribute to this task for the benefit of others and the CRCNA.

Rev. Meg Jenista Kuykendall is a 2008 graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary and was ordained in 2008 as pastor of community life and witness at Third CRC in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In 2012 she accepted a call to be the lead pastor at the Washington, D.C., CRC, where she currently serves. Rev. Kuykendall is also currently working on a Th.M. in preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary, and she has served as an adjunct professor of preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary over the past five years. Serving on the Candidacy Committee appeals to Rev. Kuykendall as an opportunity for service that matches directly with her dual interest in parish ministry and the academy.

III. Review of the committee's work

A. Development of the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy

The Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) continues to be a well-used route to candidacy. Approximately 40 percent of our candidates are now attending seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary. Such students are the target audience for the EPMC program. The Candidacy Committee continues to encourage students to consider Calvin as they select a seminary, but a large variety of factors comes to play in the decisions students make in this regard. We are grateful for the growth in flexibility being shown by Calvin Theological Seminary as it has developed a nonresident M.Div. degree, and we are also grateful for the work done by the seminary in the administration of the EPMC program. Our committee continues to monitor trends in seminary selection, and we welcome any wisdom and any questions that the church may offer in this area of our life together.

B. Implementing a two-year candidacy process

A prominent feature of our reports to synod for the past two years has been the implementation of a requirement that all potential candidates have a monthly vocational mentor relationship for two years, and that they have an active engagement with a classis for that period. The Candidacy Committee proposed this process to Synod 2015 and received approval for implementation, with the understanding that it would apply to all candidates presented to synod, beginning with Synod 2018 (see *Acts of Synod 2015*, pp. 590-91).

In this past year we have engaged with the appropriate committees of each of the forty-eight classes in order to identify and contact all persons who are on the journey toward candidacy. We have identified all whom we hope are aiming at candidacy for Synod 2018, and we have enlisted many in the twenty-four-month program. We note that some of the identified students have not responded to us in our offer of helping them identify a mentor. Such cases will require the deliberative wisdom of our staff and committee as we approach the matter of deciding which persons are eligible for candidacy in June 2018.

Further developments of this program are under way. We are building and maintaining a roster of all those moving toward candidacy for the years 2019 and beyond. We have developed and are refining report forms and tools for use by mentors and classes. We are working with Calvin Theological Seminary to plan what we hope will become a yearly training opportunity for those engaged in the mentoring task.

We are tremendously grateful for the support we are receiving from the many and various pastors needed to make this program work. We invite suggestions for this initiative, and we welcome the names of persons who need to be enrolled in this program.

C. Church Order Article 23 initiatives

Synod 2015 received an overture raising various questions about implementation of Church Order Article 23, with requests for clarification. The overture was referred to the Candidacy Committee. The Candidacy Committee prepared an extensive response, offered to Synod 2016 as an appendix titled "Clarification Regarding Church Order Article 23." Synod responded by taking the following actions:

1. Receive the report on Clarification Regarding Church Order Article 23 (Appendix A) as presented by the Candidacy Committee, and recommend it to congregations and classes for review as helpful advice in the administration of Church Order Article 23.

2. Instruct the Candidacy Committee to bring recommendations and, if necessary, modifications to Church Order Article 23 and its Supplement that address the five areas of concern raised in Appendix A, section III, and report to Synod 2017. Churches and classes are encouraged to freely communicate related ideas and concerns to the Candidacy Committee by November 1, 2016.

(*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 848-49)

The Candidacy Committee has received communications from a number of individuals and from a few classes regarding these matters. Our committee staff and various others have worked diligently to prepare a response to Synod 2017, as requested. The response, including a variety of proposals, is contained in the appendix to this report.

D. Committee on Continuing Education for Pastors

Synod 2016 received an extensive report from a two-year Committee on Continuing Education for Pastors. The committee was appointed by Synod 2014 with the following mandate:

> That . . . the denominational Candidacy Committee . . . work with Calvin Theological Seminary and the Office of Pastor-Church Relations in developing a plan for continuing education of pastors that includes opportunity for growth in familiarity with our denominational ministries, our confessional commitments, and our polity, and that this plan be presented to Synod 2016
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 544)

The report, presented to Synod 2016, included an ambitious list of motions and initiatives (see *Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 849-51). Central to the report was the proposal to form a standing committee to attend to the various initiatives and to the general priority of continuing education for pastors. Synod 2016 adopted the following in response:

> That synod instruct the Candidacy Committee to appoint an administrative team from such ministries as Pastor Church Resources, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Candidacy Committee to coordinate initiatives and to seek volunteer help for what would become the new Continuing Education Committee, which would be commissioned to attend to nurturing the practice and culture of continuing education of pastors and ministry staff within the CRC, as described in section VII, I of the report.
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 850)

The Candidacy Committee is pleased to report that an administrative team and committee have been appointed and have begun to function. The following seven persons have agreed to serve (some as staff, some as volunteers, as noted):

- Jeanne Kallemeyn (Pastor Church Resources staff)
- LaVerne Jordan (Candidacy Committee member and member of the 2014-2016 study committee)
- Scott Hoezee (Calvin Theological Seminary representative)
- Albert Postma (Classis Renewal Group, also PCR staff, and member of the 2014-2016 study committee)
- Bruce Dykstra (commissioned pastor from Classis Atlantic Northeast, and volunteer as a Synod 2016 delegate on the advisory committee that considered this matter)

– Joel Ringma (current regional pastor, living in British Columbia)
– Mary Bouma (retired commissioned pastor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the current PCR continuing education grant administration team)

This group is tasked with reporting on their progress to Synod 2018. We are grateful for their efforts, and we anticipate that good progress will be made in the coming years as we seek to build a culture of continuing education for our pastors and staff.

E. Administration of Church Order Article 8

One of the tasks entrusted to the Candidacy Committee is the administration of Church Order Article 8. This is the article which deals with the affiliation of pastors ordained in other denominations who wish to become acknowledged and allowed to serve within the CRCNA.

The supplement to Article 8 describes some fences or barriers, referred to as the *need* factor, which help monitor the use of this practice. Article 8 also offers the requirement that "a church may consider calling a minister of another denomination only if it has put forth a sustained and realistic effort to obtain a minister from within the Christian Reformed Church or the Reformed Church in America" (Church Order Supplement, Article 8, E, 1 and 4).

The administration of Article 8 proves to be one of the more challenging aspects of our work. We have reported on these challenges to previous synods (see *Agenda for Synod 2012*, pp. 214-15, and *Agenda for Synod 2013*, pp. 213-15). As we continue to serve and respond to the various interests surrounding this complex matter, we are at the point of considering a slight change to our approach. We have set aside time in our April 2017 meeting to continue reflection on this matter, and we hope to be able to report our thoughts to Synod 2017 via the supplemental report. Whatever our approach, we are committed to being accountable to synod and to our Church Order.

F. Other initiatives

The Candidacy Committee is pleased to deal with, and participate in, a number of new and continuing initiatives that support the church in preparing persons for pastoral ordination in the Christian Reformed Church. We present the following list to enable synod to note the scope of the work and to prompt the church to rejoice in the many projects being done to serve the church:

1. An assessment project to help aspiring and current pastors discern ministry fit has been launched in the past year. The project is a joint effort of Pastor Church Resources, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, Calvin Theological Seminary, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, Home Missions, and World Missions.

2. The Korean Institute in Ministry (KIM) is now in its eleventh year. This program offers Korean-language orientation to pastors affiliating with the CRCNA, and it has served over one hundred pastors.

3. A newer program, Ethnic Pastor Orientation, offers a learning opportunity and instruction in the values, history, and ministry of the Christian Reformed Church to persons entering pastoral service in the CRC as either ministers of the Word or commissioned pastors.

4. Each spring the Candidacy Committee coordinates and implements a process in which persons are ultimately presented to synod for approval as candidates for minister of the Word.
5. Pastors entering service in the Christian Reformed Church participate in a Candidacy Committee-approved learning plan appropriate to their ministry setting. This includes pastors who affiliate via Church Order Article 8 and pastors who will serve as solo or senior leaders in the position of commissioned pastor.
6. A major task of the Candidacy Committee and its director is to consult with and facilitate the work of regional leaders who play significant roles in the various ordination processes. These include members of Classical Ministry Leadership Teams (CMLTs), other classis functionaries, and individual pastors who serve as mentors and advocates for those entering ordained ministry.
7. One unique project this past year has been that of helping to prepare a fresh presentation of the affiliation process for congregations. A brochure has been prepared as a companion to other denominational identity brochures for distribution to pastors and congregations who may wish to affiliate with the CRCNA.
8. We have also been very grateful to participate in a joint RCA-CRC project, led by Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, that offers Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) to pastors and candidates via a congregation-based, distance-learning format.
9. The Candidacy Office attempts to follow the progress of candidates as they await a call and ordination, and to facilitate support and encouragement for such candidates. Our calling process takes longer than in previous years, and the number of candidates approved in recent years is more than that of a generation ago. We pray that these trends will prompt us all to pray for and to support candidates ready to enter ministry as they find their way.
10. Our director of Candidacy is engaging in a new conversation with Pastor Church Resources staff and others in order to review and consider revisions to the support structures around the call system in our denomination.
11. Our director also served as an *ex officio member* of the synodical Task Force on Funding for Calvin Theological Seminary Students, which is reporting to Synod 2017. This work fits in with the stated mandate of the Candidacy Committee.

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. David R. Koll (director of Candidacy) and to an additional member of the Candidacy Committee, if one is present, when the Candidacy Committee report is discussed.

B. That synod by way of the ballot appoint one new member to the Candidacy Committee from the slate of nominees presented and reappoint Rev. Changguk Byun to a second three-year term.

C. That synod adopt the following re the administration of Church Order Article 23 (see Appendix):

1. That synod adopt the following addition to Church Order Article 23 (signified by a new lettered section):

   A commissioned pastor who has reached retirement age may, upon the judgment of the classis in which the ordination was approved, be given the title of *commissioned pastor, emeritus*, and may retain the authority to perform official acts of ministry. Supervision of a commissioned pastor, emeritus, shall remain with the church last served unless transferred to another congregation under the authority of the classes involved.

2. That synod adopt the following statement to be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23:

   A commissioned pastor who is released from a calling church may, upon the request of the commissioned pastor or the calling church, and with the approval of the classis, be assisted by the classis with a system of evaluation and assistance analogous to that described in Church Order Article 17 for ministers of the Word.

3. That synod instruct the Candidacy Committee to include the following guideline in the handbook of synodical decisions related to the office of commissioned pastor:

   Protocol for Transferring Credentials of a Commissioned Pastor from One Calling Church to Another

   a. A commissioned pastor who serves in an approved ministry not lodged in a local church may request transfer of their church membership and transfer of their call from one congregation to another.

   b. Both the "sending church" and the "receiving church" must agree to the transfer with the understanding that the receiving church agrees to extend such a call and take over the supervision of the doctrine and life of the commissioned pastor.

   c. The call must be approved by the classis and duly noted as part of the history of the approval of the related job description.

   d. The job description must remain unchanged, since alteration of the job description would require the approval of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies.

   e. If the "receiving church" is in a classis other than that of the "sending church," the "receiving church" classis must approve the transfer and job description, with the concurrence of the synodical deputies, and the receiving classis will have the option of conducting an interview or examination of the commissioned pastor.

4. That synod approve for insertion in the commissioned pastor handbook the following statements of guidance for churches and classes as they deal with persons who are ordained as commissioned pastors and are experiencing a transition of ministry assignment and vocation:

a. The Church Order articles on transitions for ministers of the Word offer some helpful principles for grace-filled treatment of commissioned pastors who are in transition (Church Order Articles 14 and 17).

b. The report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2016 reflects on various options that a classis and church council can consider as they deal with individual cases of transition (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 268-71).

c. It is extremely important for the proper maintenance of records by the classis clerks, and by the synodical office, that classes note in their minutes, with clarity, any action taken regarding a transition of a commissioned pastor. The official transition cannot be recognized until classis declares it to have happened, and delinquency in reporting transitions can create numerous problems.

d. Because the offices of minister of the Word and commissioned pastor differ from one another with regard to "automatic portability" (since a minister of the Word is ordained for ministry denomination-wide, and a commissioned pastor is ordained only for a specific ministry task), it is wise for the classis to be deliberative and discerning in the process of acknowledging the transition of a commissioned pastor. Approval of the new ministry position, as well as a thoughtful practice for a contextualized examination for the new position, needs to be taken into account (see Appendix A, section 8 of the Candidacy Committee report, *Agenda for Synod 2016,* pp. 270-71).

5. That synod adopt the following addition to Church Order Article 23 (signified by a new lettered section):

   Commissioned pastors may be called to a position in which the call is for a specified term contingent upon accountable progress toward completion of the requirements for ordination as a minister of the Word. Approval of the classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, is required as to the terms of such a call and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan.

6. That synod adopt the following statement to be added to the Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a:

   At some point prior to any examination for ordination of a commissioned pastor being considered for a solo pastor position in an emerging or organized church, the classis must ascertain that a learning plan has been approved by the classis and agreed to by the Candidacy Committee, and synodical deputies must affirm through a written report that such approvals have taken place.

7. That synod instruct the Candidacy Committee to propose a reformatting of Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and their Supplements, also making appropriate use of a document called the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, in order to enhance the clarity and brevity of the Church Order.

D. That synod take note of the various initiatives and challenges identified by the Candidacy Committee in this report.

Candidacy Committee
David R. Koll, director

Appendix
Development of Church Order Article 23

I. Introduction

The office of commissioned pastor has been evolving over the past two decades. With new and broader uses of the office have come various challenges. Synod 2016 received a report from the Candidacy Committee with reflections on many of these challenges (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 262-75). The report was received and recommended to congregations and classes for review as helpful advice in the administration of the office of commissioned pastor (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 848). A section of the report was also referred back to the Candidacy Committee with the instruction to "bring recommendations and, if necessary, modifications to Church Order Article 23 and its Supplement that address the five areas of concern raised in Appendix A, Section III, and report to Synod 2017" (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 849).

Various churches and classes have communicated with the Candidacy Committee on this matter as encouraged by Synod 2016. The Candidacy Committee has also identified two additional matters that are relevant to the administration of the office of commissioned pastor and can be addressed at this time. The following report and recommendations are presented to Synod 2017 in the context of this continuing discussion.

II. Creation of a status of "commissioned pastor, emeritus"

The Christian Reformed Church has been, and continues to be, blessed by a number of persons serving as commissioned pastors in pastoral roles. Unlike those ordained as ministers of the Word, whose ministerial status may continue after they retire (Church Order Art. 18), a retired commissioned pastor currently has no ecclesiastical authority to continue doing official acts of ministry or to retain a continuing title.

A number of classes have felt that such an honor should be given to retiring commissioned pastors. The status of "commissioned pastor, emeritus" has been created in at least three classes that we are aware of. Such a status offers what the Candidacy Committee judges to be appropriate honor and appreciation to the retiring commissioned pastor, and such a status also allows the church to be blessed with the gifts and service of a retired commissioned pastor.

One concern considered by the Candidacy Committee relative to this matter is that it is important to recognize that the ordination of a commissioned pastor is in the context of a single ministry, overseen by a single classis. As emeritus status is given, a question may well arise for the cases of retired commissioned pastors who move to a new region and become members of a new local church. The proposal we offer allows for such retired commissioned pastors who relocate to remain available for service in ordained ministry during retirement, given the approval of the new local church and classis they select when they relocate.

The Candidacy Committee therefore offers the following addition to Church Order Article 23 (signified by a new lettered section) for consideration by synod:

> A commissioned pastor who has reached retirement age may, upon the judgment of the classis in which the ordination was approved, be given the title of *commissioned pastor, emeritus*, and may retain the authority to perform official acts of ministry. Supervision of a commissioned pastor, emeritus, shall remain with the church last served unless transferred to another congregation under the authority of the classes involved.

Not all persons concluding service as a commissioned pastor should be offered the status of "commissioned pastor, emeritus." Those who serve for only a brief time and in roles not connected to preaching and the administration of sacraments would not likely be considered for such a designation. As in many other areas of the office of commissioned pastor, the Candidacy Committee believes synod would be wise to leave judgment on specific decisions and criteria up to the classis.

III. Guidance regarding termination of commissioned pastors or their positions

One area of tension discussed in the report to Synod 2016 has to do with vulnerability experienced by commissioned pastors regarding their relationship with and employment by the churches. Ministers of the Word are protected by Church Order Article 17. The action of releasing a minister of the Word by a church from a ministry position requires the approval of the classis by means of a protocol that involves a review by synodical deputies. Such a protocol is a blessing to the churches as well as to the ministers of the Word, for a variety of reasons.

The vulnerability of ordained commissioned pastors has been recognized by previous synods. Synod 2009 approved an addition to Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a, declaring, "A calling church that terminates the service of a person in an approved [commissioned pastor] position must seek the concurrence of the classis in which approval was given" (*Acts of Synod 2009*, p. 583). This addition to the Church Order Supplement has been helpful; however, the Candidacy Committee believes that it is time to speak with greater strength and clarity regarding this matter. Those in ordained ministry positions, whether ordained as a minister of the Word or as a commissioned pastor, deserve respect and just action regarding matters pertaining to their continuing service. At stake are the morale of our ordained pastors and also the reputation of the church as an agency of justice and mercy.

Church Order Article 17 represents the attempt of the church to provide for justice and mercy regarding ministers of the Word. The Candidacy Committee presents the following proposed addition to Church Order Supplement, Article 23 in order to offer such provision to commissioned pastors:

> A commissioned pastor who is released from a calling church may, upon the request of the commissioned pastor or the calling church, and with the approval of the classis, be assisted by the classis with a system of evaluation and assistance analogous to that described in Church Order Article 17 for ministers of the Word.

The intention of the Candidacy Committee here is that decisions regarding this area of managing the office of commissioned pastor stay, as much as possible, within the authority of the classis. The proposed statement is carefully worded to apply only to those who express a desire for such support and to those cases that the classis may judge would benefit from such review and support. The protocol of Church Order Article 17, with its supplemental material, is rather extensive and provides wise guidance that can serve as a template for the classis, should it wish to apply that material to a case involving the release of a commissioned pastor.

IV. A protocol for transferring a commissioned pastor's credentials

Classis Hamilton contributed to the discussion and development of the office of commissioned pastor in a helpful way when it presented an overture to Synod 2015. One specific matter raised in that overture was a request for clarity regarding guidance for transferring the credentials of a specific type of commissioned pastor.

A commissioned pastor who serves in a ministry assignment outside of a local congregation may wish to transfer membership and ordination supervision from one congregation to another while continuing in the same ministry assignment. Such a practice occurs occasionally for ministers of the Word who serve in a mission enterprise, a chaplaincy assignment, or even a denominational role. Such cases for those ordained as commissioned pastors may be rather rare, but with the increasing use of the office, the Candidacy Committee agrees that it would be helpful to provide guidance for such a scenario.

For ministers of the Word who make such changes, a normal protocol is required. The original calling church, the classis of that church, the classis of the receiving church, and the new calling church must all note and approve of such a transfer. The transfer is noted in the minutes of each assembly. The new calling church, by definition, offers a call to the pastor for the continuing position. A similar scenario is conceivable for those who make such a change as an ordained commissioned pastor.

We do not believe that providing a guideline or protocol for such a scenario would require a Church Order change, but we do believe that an official guideline placed in the commissioned pastor handbook would provide helpful assistance in facing this question. We therefore propose that synod direct the Candidacy Committee to place the following guideline in the handbook of synodical decisions related to the office of commissioned pastor:

> Protocol for Transferring Credentials of a Commissioned Pastor from One Calling Church to Another
>
> 1. A commissioned pastor who serves in an approved ministry not lodged in a local church may request transfer of their church membership and transfer of their call from one congregation to another.
> 2. Both the "sending church" and the "receiving church" must agree to the transfer with the understanding that the receiving church agrees to extend such a call and take over the supervision of the doctrine and life of the commissioned pastor.
> 3. The call must be approved by the classis and duly noted as part of the history of the approval of the related job description.

4. The job description must remain unchanged, since alteration of the job description would require the approval of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies.

5. If the "receiving church" is in a classis other than that of the "sending church," the "receiving church" classis must approve the transfer and job description, with the concurrence of the synodical deputies, and the receiving classis will have the option of conducting an interview or examination of the commissioned pastor.

V. Supporting transitions for commissioned pastors

Related to the previous item is the challenge of offering appropriate support to commissioned pastors as they face life transitions. In some cases, transitions occur as a person moves from one ordained position to another. In other cases, the transition involves a movement out of ordained ministry or a potential return to ordained ministry after a period of time away from ordained ministry.

Our Church Order gives clear, and sometimes complex, processes for ministers of the Word in transition. The general principle regarding ordained service is that ordination is tied to ministry rather than to a person. In this regard, an active ordained minister of the Word who is not eligible for retirement and who exits an assigned ministry is given a period of two years to enter another approved ministry assignment (Church Order Article 17-c). This period may be extended on a yearly basis for reasons that are weighty in the judgment of classis with the concurrence of synodical deputies. Ministers of the Word who leave ordained ministry and enter a vocation that is judged to be nonministerial are expected to be released from office within one year of that judgment (Church Order Article 14-d). Any former minister of the Word is eligible to reenter ordained service with the approval of the classis that approved the release from office (Church Order Article 14-e).

With respect to the sense of calling and the meaning of ordination, the assumptions about ordination for commissioned pastors are similar to those for ministers of the Word; however, when a ministry assignment concludes for a commissioned pastor, there is no specified "period of grace" built into the process. Rather than waiting one year or two years, or more, to declare a person as no longer ordained, the expectation is that when a commissioned pastor leaves a ministry assignment, they are no longer considered to be ordained. In this respect the two offices are different.

As observed in the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2016, there is, however, an inherent period of grace in the process even for commissioned pastors. The ordination status of a commissioned pastor is not officially concluded until it is reported to classis and recognized as such. In consideration of this reality, a classis has the option of offering a reasonable period of time, depending on the circumstances, in which a transitioning commissioned pastor can facilitate a transition to either a new ministry or a nonministerial vocational assignment. These matters are discussed in detail in the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2016 (Appendix A, sections 6, 7, and 8; *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 268-71).

The Candidacy Committee does not believe it is wise, at this time, to add a new layer of Church Order direction in this matter; however, we believe it

would be wise for Synod 2017 to address these issues by approving for insertion in the commissioned pastor handbook the following statements of guidance for churches and classes as they deal with persons who are ordained as a commissioned pastor and are experiencing a transition of ministry assignment and vocation:

1. The Church Order articles on transitions for ministers of the Word offer some helpful principles for grace-filled treatment of commissioned pastors who are in transition (Church Order Articles 14 and 17).
2. The report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2016 reflects on various options that a classis and church council can consider as they deal with individual cases of transition (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 268-71).
3. It is extremely important for the proper maintenance of records by the classis clerks, and by the synodical office, that classes note in their minutes, with clarity, any action taken regarding a transition of a commissioned pastor. The official transition cannot be recognized until classis declares it to have happened, and delinquency in reporting transitions can create numerous problems.
4. Because the offices of minister of the Word and commissioned pastor differ from one another with regard to "automatic portability" (since a minister of the Word is ordained for ministry denomination-wide, and a commissioned pastor is ordained only for a specific ministry task), it is wise for the classis to be deliberative and discerning in the process of acknowledging the transition of a commissioned pastor. Approval of the new ministry position, as well as a thoughtful practice for a contextualized examination for the new position, needs to be taken into account (see Appendix A, section 8 of the Candidacy Committee report, *Agenda for Synod 2016,* pp. 270-71).

VI. Use of Church Order Article 23 as a bridge ordination

Synod 2007 decided to return to what was referred to as the "historical use" of Church Order Article 7. This Church Order article provides, "by way of exception," a way for "singularly gifted" persons to enter ordained ministry even though they have not earned an M.Div. degree at an accredited theological seminary. Synod 2007 also decided to provide more support, more use, and more respect for the office of commissioned pastor as persons without the required theological education were directed to Article 23. The two decisions together were intended to allow for the ordained ministry of those not formally trained while also retaining the historic denominational commitment for ordained pastors to meet a standard of accredited theological education.

The Candidacy Committee believes these two decisions and the strategy they present are serving the church well. We observe that as the use of the office of commissioned pastor has increased, the denominational culture of support and respect for those serving in the office has also increased. There also continues to be a vibrant support for theological education, as is evidenced, in part, by the generous and continuing financial support of those who attend seminary.

The Candidacy Committee has reflected in recent years on a new phenomenon in the church relative to the two offices. Churches are seeking to make use of persons in ministry and ordaining them through Church Order Article 23 while also requesting or even requiring that they work toward an accredited degree in theological education. Under the appropriate authority of the elders supervising ministry where the person is serving, and with the assistance of the classis, which is aware of this arrangement, the commissioned pastor actually moves over a period of time toward eligibility for ordination as minister of the Word. The net effect is that the office of commissioned pastor serves as a "bridge ordination" and mirrors a pathway toward ordained ministry that has been used for a number of decades in other denominations and faith communities.

This practice was described most recently to Synod 2016 via the Candidacy Committee report (Appendix A, section 12; *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 273-74). The Candidacy Committee recognizes the wisdom and benefit of this practice. Although discernment must be applied relative to the specific circumstances and locations in which the practice is approved, the judgment of the Candidacy Committee is that the practice has great benefit in the process of forming competent pastors.

The use of the office of commissioned pastor as a "bridge ordination" flows logically in Church Order Article 23 as a statement following the current Article 23-d. This practice may, in some cases, be useful for instances in which Church Order Articles 23-b, -c, and -d are applied. The Candidacy Committee therefore wishes to propose to Synod 2017 adoption of the following statement, potentially as Article 23-g:

> Commissioned pastors may be called to a position in which the call is for a specified term contingent upon accountable progress toward completion of the requirements for ordination as a minister of the Word. Approval of the classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, is required as to the terms of such a call and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan.

Congregations, classes, church counselors, and synodical deputies seeking to make use of this provision can be served by reviewing Appendix A, section 12 in the report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2016 (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 273-74).

VII. Ensuring commissioned pastors in solo positions complete a learning plan

Synod 2013 approved the addition of a statement to Church Order Supplement, Article 23 that requires a learning plan be developed and completed in cooperation with the Candidacy Committee if the person will serve as the solo pastor of an emerging or organized church (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 557). This provision was added in order for the denomination to ensure that sufficient exposure to denominationally valued material is given to those who are entrusted with primary leadership in an emerging or organized congregation.

The experience of the Candidacy Committee since 2013 has been that in a number of cases classes have proceeded with an examination for a commissioned pastor serving in a solo pastor position without consulting the

Candidacy Committee. Although the Candidacy Committee is committed to allowing the office of commissioned pastor to be administered at the classis level as much as possible, this specific issue is one in which the denomination, its ministry, and its reputation are well served by consistent practice. It is in the interest of both the denomination and the local church to ensure that commissioned pastors charged with primary leadership at the local level are able to represent and support the denomination's values.

As the Candidacy Committee has pondered this matter, it has considered a few possible solutions. Each solution has advantages and disadvantages. We provide them as follows so that synod can give wise direction in these matters:

1. Solution 1: Leave the Church Order as it is and hope that classes will increasingly adopt the new protocol requiring that commissioned pastors ordained as solo pastors in emerging and established churches to have a learning plan developed and completed in coordination with the Candidacy Committee.
   - The advantage of this approach is that it adds no further elements to a process that is already complex, and it expresses trust that those classes that have not conformed will begin to conform to this practice.
   - The disadvantage of this approach is that it may allow a valuable practice to continue to be ignored.
2. Solution 2: Add to the Church Order Supplement the expectation that classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, ascertain that a learning plan is in place when they approve the job description.
   - The advantage of this approach is that it affirms the importance of the learning plan and fits in with a current practice, since synodical deputies already engage classis at this point of the process.
   - The disadvantage of this approach is that often a job description is created or approved without a specific person in mind and the learning plan, as approved, might then not fit the person who is eventually appointed to the position.
3. Solution 3: Have classis and the synodical deputies ascertain that approval of a learning plan, as developed by the classis and the Candidacy Committee, has occurred at some point before the examination. This would be a new step, completed when the job description is approved, or immediately before the examination, or at some time between those two actions of classis. If a learning plan approval is not verified in a classis minute, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, the examination would not be valid.
   - The advantage of this approach is that it affirms the importance of the learning plan and requires more overtly that classis, with synodical deputy concurrence, support this requirement in each appropriate case.
   - The disadvantage of this approach is that it adds a new step to the process and potentially complicates the journey.
4. Solution 4: Require that synodical deputies attend the examination for ordination of a commissioned pastor being considered for a solo pastor

position in an emerging or established church. Synodical deputy concurrence with the decision to approve the examination would be required.

- The advantage of this approach is that it affirms the important nature of the role of solo pastor relative to the interests of the denomination and the local church.
- The disadvantage of this approach is that it brings the denominational engagement relative to specific commissioned pastor approval into new territory, threatening the local nature of the process.

Having pondered these options, the Candidacy Committee is drawn to solution 3, although we sincerely look to synod for direction on this matter in view of the other potential approaches. We therefore propose that the following statement be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a, recognizing that synod through its deliberation process has the prerogative of addressing this matter in a different way:

> At some point prior to any examination for ordination of a commissioned pastor being considered for a solo pastor position in an emerging or organized church, the classis must ascertain that a learning plan has been approved by the classis and agreed to by the Candidacy Committee, and synodical deputies must affirm through a written report that such approvals have taken place.

We call synod's attention to the limited nature of the proposed role of the synodical deputies and the new step being required for the classis. Classis acts only to affirm that they have evidence that a learning plan has been formed and carried out in consultation with the Candidacy Committee. The synodical deputies concur only that such an action has taken place. It is conceivable, and likely, that such concurrence could be done via email and that the physical presence of the deputies at the classis meeting is not required. The task of synodical deputy concurrence with the classis' judgment of fitness for ministry is not required because commissioned pastors, as locally ordained servants, serve under the authority of the local classis, not the denomination. The Candidacy Committee believes this approach mitigates the concern regarding denominational overreach while still ensuring that the interests of the denomination are served.

VIII. Reformatting the Church Order relative to the office of commissioned pastor

As had been noted in the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2016, the Church Order Articles pertaining to the office of commissioned pastor have grown significantly in the past three decades. Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and their Supplements have become quite extensive. The Candidacy Committee believes synod will be well served by an effort to bring greater focus and a clearer structure to this section of the Church Order.

One option is to make greater use of a document similar to the current commissioned pastor handbook. This strategy would be similar to the one adopted for prescribing and describing the processes for candidacy (see Church Order Article 6 and its Supplement). In this section of the Church Order the text is rather brief. Mention is made of a program,

the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy, without specifically describing the elements of the program. Recommendations for candidacy are required by Calvin Theological Seminary faculty, and yet the details of the faculty recommendation process are not specified. A document called "Journey Toward Ordination," created under synod's authority, is administered by the Candidacy Committee. Slight modifications to this document may be implemented as the committee sees fit. Thus, much of the detail of the candidacy process is administered at the seminary and denominational committee levels. Changes to the process and the documents used are reported to synod if significant. Any substantive change is offered for synod's approval, but these changes do not necessarily appear in the Church Order or its Supplements. One positive result of this strategy is that we can keep the Church Order from becoming unnecessarily complicated.

The Candidacy Committee recognizes that similar dynamics are at play in the administration of Church Order Article 8, which deals with the transfer of ordination from other denominations into the CRCNA.

Although Synod 2016 asked the Candidacy Committee to offer proposals for modifying Church Order Supplement, Article 23 (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 275, and *Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 848-49), the Candidacy Committee, at this time, is not offering any proposals beyond those made earlier in this report. We are concerned that the process of change occur at a rate that can be sensibly absorbed by the church. Considering that significant changes to the Church Order are already being offered in this report, we would like to see the reaction of the church and synod to these proposals before making further recommendations. The decisions and actions of synod on these matters will provide important context and guidance for us before we embark on the major task of constructing a proposed conversion of the current articles and their supplements into a new format. We also recognize that synod may want to commission an update of Church Order Article 8. Both Church Order Articles 23 and 8 show evidence of evolving practice over the years. It may well be the judgment of synod that these articles will be enhanced by means of reformatting their content, removing redundancies, refocusing on what is of primary concern, and making use of supplemental and "handbook level" material where appropriate.

We therefore present this final proposal for synod's evaluation, offered in the context of a willingness to serve the church in a way that will facilitate healthy administration of our pastoral offices:

> That synod instruct the Candidacy Committee to propose a reformatting of Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and their Supplements, also making appropriate use of a document called the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, in order to enhance the clarity and brevity of the Church Order.

If Synod 2017 sees fit, a request to reformat Church Order Article 8 can be integrated into this instruction.

IX. Recommendations

A. That synod adopt the following addition to Church Order Article 23 (signified by a new lettered section):

A commissioned pastor who has reached retirement age may, upon the judgment of the classis in which the ordination was approved, be given the title of *commissioned pastor, emeritus*, and may retain the authority to perform official acts of ministry. Supervision of a commissioned pastor, emeritus, shall remain with the church last served unless transferred to another congregation under the authority of the classes involved.

B. That synod adopt the following statement to be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23:

A commissioned pastor who is released from a calling church may, upon the request of the commissioned pastor or the calling church, and with the approval of the classis, be assisted by the classis with a system of evaluation and assistance analogous to that described in Church Order Article 17 for ministers of the Word.

C. That synod instruct the Candidacy Committee to include the following guideline in the handbook of synodical decisions related to the office of commissioned pastor:

Protocol for Transferring Credentials of a Commissioned Pastor from One Calling Church to Another

1. A commissioned pastor who serves in an approved ministry not lodged in a local church may request transfer of their church membership and transfer of their call from one congregation to another.
2. Both the "sending church" and the "receiving church" must agree to the transfer with the understanding that the receiving church agrees to extend such a call and take over the supervision of the doctrine and life of the commissioned pastor.
3. The call must be approved by the classis and duly noted as part of the history of the approval of the related job description.
4. The job description must remain unchanged, since alteration of the job description would require the approval of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies.
5. If the "receiving church" is in a classis other than that of the "sending church," the "receiving church" classis must approve the transfer and job description, with the concurrence of the synodical deputies, and the receiving classis will have the option of conducting an interview or examination of the commissioned pastor.

D. That synod approve for insertion in the commissioned pastor handbook the following statements of guidance for churches and classes as they deal with persons who are ordained as commissioned pastors and are experiencing a transition of ministry assignment and vocation:

1. The Church Order articles on transitions for ministers of the Word offer some helpful principles for grace-filled treatment

of commissioned pastors who are in transition (Church Order Articles 14 and 17).

2. The report of the Candidacy Committee to Synod 2016 reflects on various options that a classis and church council can consider as they deal with individual cases of transition (*Agenda for Synod 2016,* pp. 268-71).

3. It is extremely important for the proper maintenance of records by the classis clerks, and by the synodical office, that classes note in their minutes, with clarity, any action taken regarding a transition of a commissioned pastor. The official transition cannot be recognized until classis declares it to have happened, and delinquency in reporting transitions can create numerous problems.

4. Because the offices of minister of the Word and commissioned pastor differ from one another with regard to "automatic portability" (since a minister of the Word is ordained for ministry denomination-wide, and a commissioned pastor is ordained only for a specific ministry task), it is wise for the classis to be deliberative and discerning in the process of acknowledging the transition of a commissioned pastor. Approval of the new ministry position, as well as a thoughtful practice for a contextualized examination for the new position, needs to be taken into account (see *Appendix A,* section 8 of the Candidacy Committee report, *Agenda for Synod 2016,* pp. 270-71).

E. That synod adopt the following addition to Church Order Article 23 (signified by a new lettered section):

> Commissioned pastors may be called to a position in which the call is for a specified term contingent upon accountable progress toward completion of the requirements for ordination as a minister of the Word. Approval of the classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, is required as to the terms of such a call and the accountability of progress in the proposed learning plan.

F. That synod adopt the following statement to be added to the Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a:

> At some point prior to any examination for ordination of a commissioned pastor being considered for a solo pastor position in an emerging or organized church, the classis must ascertain that a learning plan has been approved by the classis and agreed to by the Candidacy Committee, and synodical deputies must affirm through a written report that such approvals have taken place.

G. That synod instruct the Candidacy Committee to propose a reformatting of Church Order Articles 23 and 24 and their Supplements, also making appropriate use of a document called the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, in order to enhance the clarity and brevity of the Church Order.

Candidacy Committee
David R. Koll, director

I. Introduction

The Ecumenical Charter of the Christian Reformed Church provides the foundational statement that guides the work of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee (EIRC). The Charter states: "When the CRC believes that a particular denomination is part of the universal church of Christ, then the CRC can be in an ecumenical relationship with that church and consider such a church an ecumenical partner, especially in areas where we share values and a common mission." Noting that "the CRC does not need to endorse every position taken by an ecumenical partner," it goes on to explain that ecumenical relationships provide important opportunities for churches to learn from each other and to discuss differing perspectives. The charter concludes that "ecumenical relationships can be built on common interests and commitments to the ministry of the gospel and the mission to which that gospel calls the whole church."

Four categories of relationship provide ways to express our ecumenical partnership with others, as explained in the Ecumenical Charter. First, there are churches with which the CRC has a particular affinity, which are called *churches in ecclesiastical fellowship*. Second, there are churches with which the CRC is in a stage of exploration for a closer relationship, or with which there is a memorandum of understanding, which are called *churches in dialogue*. Third, some relationships are more distant and episodic and, therefore, are important to the extent that the CRC considers such churches to be part of the global Christian family. This third classification is called *churches in other ecumenical relationships.* These first three classifications are at times referred to as *bilateral ecclesiastical relationships*. And, fourth, there is a classification for participation in *ecumenical organizations*. This last classification is at times referred to as *multilateral relationships*.

Finally, the two-part name of the committee (ecumenical and interfaith) demonstrates two distinct and important foci to our work. The former relates to relationships between the CRC and those of other Christian traditions. The latter refers to exchange between the CRC and those of non-Christian faith traditions. This distinction is important for the committee as well as for individuals and congregations.

II. Membership and meetings

The members of the EIRC for the current year ending June 30, 2017, are Rev. Andrew E. Beunk (2017/1); Rev. Anthony Elenbaas (2019/2); Rev. Emmett A. Harrison (2019/2); Ms. Sharon Jim (2017/1); Ms. Lenore Maine (2019/1); Rev. Karen L. Norris (2018/2); Dr. Jim Payton (2018/2), chair; Dr. Jay J. Shim (2017/2); Rev. Kathy S. Smith (2018/1); and Rev. John Tenyenhuis (2018/1). Dr. Steven R. Timmermans and Dr. Darren C. Roorda serve as *ex officio* members of the EIRC. Dr. Darren Roorda serves as the ecumenical representative in Canada in his capacity as the Canadian ministries director; Dr. Timmermans and Mr. Colin P. Watson, Sr., share additional ecumenical duties.

The EIRC met in October 2016 and January 2017. A conference call meeting is scheduled to be held in April 2017.

III. Nominations for membership

Ms. Sharon Jim and Dr. Jay J. Shim are concluding their service to the committee. Because of their faithful work, the EIRC recommends that synod express its gratitude to them for their service.

Rev. Andrew E. Beunk is completing his first term on the EIRC, and, given his contributions and willingness to continue, the EIRC recommends that synod reappoint Rev. Beunk to a second term of three years.

In keeping with the synodical guidelines and requirements for diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, geographical location, and ordination, the EIRC presents the following nominees to fill two vacancies. Both positions are from the U.S. region west of the Mississippi.

Position 1

The EIRC recommends that synod appoint one member to a first term from the following slate of nominees:

Ms. Ruth Palma is the office manager of Sun Valley CARE Development, Inc., a community development organization north of Los Angeles that works with her home church, Bethel CRC of Sun Valley, where she serves as a deacon, a Sunday school leader, and a member of the education committee. In the past she has served as the educational program coordinator for Sun Valley CARE Development, Inc.; as principal of the Sol del Valle Christian School; and as the international student coordinator for Community Christian College, Redlands, California. A graduate of Calvin College (B.A.) and Azusa Pacific University (M.A.), Ms. Palma has served on the boards of Calvin College and Faith Alive Christian Resources. Ms. Palma, a native of Costa Rica, grew up in Heredia, Costa Rica, and was a member of the Pueblo de Cristo Church (Mennonite) there. In Costa Rica she served as an ICTHUS International board member and as a trainer for churches of all denominations in Costa Rica and beyond. Ms. Palma also served with a multidenominational youth board in Costa Rica, planning different activities of evangelism and spiritual growth.

Ms. Kristen Rietkerk is the church mission catalyst at Crossroads CRC, San Marcos, California. She also serves as the Southern California catalyst for the Connections Project. A graduate of Calvin College (B.A.) and Azusa Pacific University (M.A.), Ms. Rietkerk has served as a leadership development and small groups ministry consultant to local churches and has studied in Brazil and Mexico. In addition, she served fifteen years in ministry to U.S. military dependents through Protestant Women of the Chapel International, including a term as President–Europe Region. Ms. Rietkerk is a church liaison and volunteer for Interfaith Community Services, an organization that empowers people in need through partnerships with diverse faith communities in North San Diego County, and is a member of Flourish San Diego, an initiative of the Made to Flourish Network, which seeks "the shalom of the city." Through various moves across the United States and Europe due to her husband's role in the military, she and her family have been regular attenders or members of several denominations and several nondenominational congregations as well as participants in the U.S. military chapel system, which brings together a wide range of Christian traditions.

Position 2

The EIRC recommends that synod appoint the following single nominee to a first term:

Rev. InSoon Hoagland is a chaplain and major in the U.S. Army, in which she has been serving for eighteen years at posts in the United States and in South Korea. A native of South Korea, she graduated from Trinity Christian College (B.A.), Calvin Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (M.A.). She also holds a license in clinical marriage and family therapy and is a doctoral student in marriage and family therapy at Kansas State University. Her ministerial credentials are held by Eastern Avenue CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan. In her role as a chaplain, Rev. Hoagland is the staff officer responsible for conducting the commander's program for moral leadership training and is expected to report regularly to the commander on the spiritual, ethical, and moral health of the command. In addition, she provides religious support coverage to the command staff and to soldiers and their families. Currently she serves as the copastor for the liturgical service for Lutheran and Presbyterian faith groups at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Her ministry experience in the United States Army has involved working with other chaplains from various faith backgrounds and different denominations.

IV. Bilateral relationships

The CRC maintains a relationship of *ecclesiastical fellowship* with 25 denominations and partners with 10 *churches in dialogue.* In addition, we have four partners in the category of *churches in other ecumenical relationships.* Of these three categories combined, we have 21 partners on the African continent, four partners in Central and South America (including the Caribbean), three partners in Europe and India, six partners in Asia, Australia, and Indonesia, and five partners in North America. A complete list is available on the "Relationships" page of the EIRC website (crcna.org/EIRC).

A. New developments

1. Recent actions

   Synod 2016 approved designating the Presbyterian Church in Ethiopia (PCE) as a *church in dialogue* with the CRC. In its report to Synod 2016 the EIRC also noted the addition of two partners as *churches in other ecumenical relationships:* the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), Uganda, and the Kale Heywet Church, Ethiopia. We are pleased that our work as ecumenical partners has already given rise to vibrant Timothy Leadership Training Institute connections as facilitated by World Missions East and South Africa regional leader, Dr. Mwaya wa Kitavi, and his wife, Munyiva Kitavi.

2. Recommendation

   The EIRC recommends that synod designate the Christian Reformed Church in Sierra Leone as a *church in dialogue* with the CRCNA. The background and grounds for the recommendation are found in Appendix A.

B. Reports

Activities of two bilateral partners *in ecclesiastical fellowship* deserve extended mention; in addition, CRCNA representatives had conversations with several other partner churches and represented our denomination at the annual meetings of various partners.

1. Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC: Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika)

   Last year in our report to synod we reviewed the DRC's actions relative to same-sex relationships—namely, that while they adopted the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman, they also gave recognition "to the status of civil unions between persons of the same sex that are characterized by love and fidelity . . . [making] provision for pastors who see their way open to solemnize such unions." Their decision also provided church councils with "the discretion . . . to deal with different opinions concerning same-sex relationships in a congregation and [requested that they do so] . . . in a spirit of Christian love."

   Since that report, the Dutch Reformed Church convened a special synod in response to various reactions that these decisions elicited from their congregations and members. Their earlier decisions about same-sex relationships were annulled on procedural grounds at that special synod meeting, and the matter is now under additional study.

2. Reformed Church in America (RCA)

   The synod of the CRC and the general synod of the RCA met simultaneously in 2014 at Central College in Pella, Iowa, and adopted a resolution that commits the two denominations to further shared ventures. The resolution also declared that "the principle that guides us . . . is to 'act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel [us] to act separately.'" We have come to refer to this resolution as the Pella Accord.

   A group of more than a dozen leaders from both denominations have been meeting to further understand the opportunities before us, given the basis of the Pella Accord. The Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and the General Synod Council of the RCA have both made recommendations that time be spent at the CRC Synod 2017 and the RCA General Synod 2017 so that each group can discuss possible directions to further guide this work. We look forward to these discussions.

   Last year we reported that the RCA was planning a modern-day Jerusalem Council for April 2016. A specially selected group of seventy-four RCA members gathered in Chicago with a mandate to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discern "a constitutional pathway forward for the Reformed Church in America to address the questions of human sexuality as it relates to ordination and marriage." Recommendations were presented to the RCA's General Synod 2016. At present, the RCA's regional synods are reviewing, per their constitutional church polity, a range of actions taken by the 2016 General Synod. Those regional synod reports and possible ratifications will be on the agenda for their General Synod 2017 meeting.

3. Other conversations

Oftentimes we find informal opportunities to engage with leaders of ecumenical partners in the course of their travels or ours. This past year, Dr. Gary Bekker was able to meet with leaders of the Christian Reformed Church in Cuba, and Dr. Steven Timmermans was able to meet with various South African church leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika), the Reformed Churches in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika), the Reformed Churches in South Africa (Synod Soutpansberg), and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider Afrika). In addition, Dr. Timmermans met with Rev. Gerardo Oberman of the Reformed Churches in Argentina. Each of these conversations brings important knowledge and the sharing of joys and challenges we face together even while living on different continents.

4. The following delegated ecumenical representations occurred during this past year:

   a. To the general assembly of the Reformed Church in Japan, Rev. Kurt Selles.
   b. To the general synod of the Reformed Church in America, Rev. Emmett A. Harrison.
   c. To the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa, Dr. Mwaya wa Kitavi.
   d. To the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Rev. Andrew E. Beunk.

V. Multilateral relationships – ecumenical organizations

We belong to a number of ecumenical organizations, including the Canadian Council of Churches, Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A., the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Global Christian Forum, the National Association of Evangelicals, Sojourners, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the World Reformed Fellowship. Invitations for one or two of these groups to send representatives to synod are extended each year, and we look forward this year to the possible participation of the Global Christian Forum.

A. The EIRC appoints representatives and observers to many of these multilateral ecumenical organizations and to other ecumenical efforts:

1. Mr. Colin Watson, Sr., serves as the CRCNA's representative on the board of directors of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and Dr. Steven Timmermans participates in the NAE's Heads of Communion meetings.
2. World Renew codirector Ms. Carol Bremer-Bennett attended a special national meeting convened by Sojourners, and Mr. Colin Watson, Sr., continues to serve on the Sojourners board.
3. Dr. Darren Roorda and Rev. Anthony Elenbaas serve as the representatives of the CRC to the Canadian Council of Churches.
4. Dr. Steven Timmermans and Mr. Colin Watson, Sr., serve as the CRCNA's representatives to Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT-USA); the annual meeting of CCT was not held this past year.

5. Dr. Darren Roorda represents the CRCNA to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC).
6. Dr. Steven Timmermans serves as the CRCNA's representative to the Global Christian Forum (GCF).
7. Dr. Jim Payton serves as the ecumenical representative on the RCA's Commission for Christian Unity.
8. Rev. Tim Wood serves on the board of KAIROS, an effort linked to the Canadian Council of Churches.
9. Dr. Matthew Lundberg serves as the representative on a commission of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A.
10. Dr. Peter Choi, Dr. Ronald Feenstra, and Dr. Sue Rozeboom serve as representatives of the CRC in its participation in the United States Roman Catholic-Reformed Dialogue.

In addition to these appointments, Dr. William T. Koopmans serves on the executive committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and CRC executive director *emeritus* Dr. Peter Borgdorff serves on the executive committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and of Sojourners.

B. Multilateral relations also often give rise to important ecumenical dialogues:

1. The United States Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue

   The Christian Reformed Church is a participant in the United States Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue. The current round of dialogue focuses on issues that are ecclesiological in scope. Any substantive matters from the group's spring 2017 meeting will be included in the EIRC's supplemental report to synod if appropriate.

2. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

   The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, after many years of dialogue, agreed in 1999 to adopt The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ). From 2011 to 2016 the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) has been in dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and now plans to present to its General Council in July 2017, for possible adoption, a formal statement that provides a Reformed perspective in response to the JDDJ. The proposed statement is provided in Appendix B. The WCRC has kept us and other member denominations informed, and has elicited our feedback, in the formulation of this statement. If the statement is adopted by delegates to the WCRC General Council this summer, it should be noted that it would have no binding impact on the CRCNA; Church Order Article 50-c specifies that only those decisions of ecumenical bodies that have been ratified by the CRC's synod are to be considered binding.

VI. Interfaith activities

The EIRC informed Synod 2015 that in order to pursue the four interfaith responsibilities provided by Synod 2010, it would establish a subcommittee to focus on the tasks, in light of the guidance described in the Interfaith Dialogue Report adopted by Synod 2010:

> While the Christian church should never lose its confession that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and should joyfully proclaim that there is

> no other name given under heaven by which people may be saved, interfaith dialogue must not be a pretext for evangelism. . . . However, it is hoped that when people of other faiths have an accurate understanding of Christian teachings and values and get to know Christian people, they will be intrigued by the Christian worldview and testimony and begin a journey that leads to true reconciliation with God.
>
> (*Agenda for Synod 2010*, p. 449; see *Acts of Synod 2010*, pp. 827-28)

Membership includes Bernard Ayoola, Priscilla Brink, Shannon Jammal-Hollemans, Jessica Joustra, Jim Payton, Greg Sinclair, Steve Timmermans, Femke Visser-Elenbaas, and Cory Willson. Each member brings extensive interfaith experiences related to their country of birth and/or their professional and personal experience, certainly needed in a world rife with interreligious tension. With the subcommittee meeting scheduled in early spring, any substantive reporting will be provided, as appropriate, in an EIRC supplementary report to synod.

VII. Synod 2016 assignments

A. The Belhar Confession

Synod 2016 gave the EIRC a specific assignment and proposed that Synod 2017 consider the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony.

1. EIRC assignment

   After discussing the EIRC report to Synod 2016 and Overture 13 (to adopt the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession), synod directed the EIRC

   > to provide a report on the confusion with the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category as identified by our ecumenical partners in their February 2014 consultation and in subsequent conversations with the EIRC, advising Synod 2017 on the viability of the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category.
   >
   > (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 913)

   The committee's response to this assignment is provided in Appendix C.

2. A suggestion

   In light of Synod 2016's recommendation that Synod 2017 recategorize the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony, the EIRC recommends that synod receive and act on the EIRC's proposal to establish a category of Contemporary Testimony. The full report and recommendations on this matter are provided in Appendix D.

3. The Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony

   The EIRC notes that Synod 2016's action places this recommendation on the agenda for Synod 2017. The Synod 2016 decisions proposing that the Belhar Confession be classified as a contemporary testimony are provided in Appendix E. The EIRC presents here the seventh recommendation adopted by Synod 2016 for consideration by Synod 2017 (*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 913-14):

   > That Synod 2017 recategorize the Belhar Confession to the same status as that of a contemporary testimony in the CRC—same as *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*.

Grounds:

a. Synod 2013 declined to respond to an overture requesting a change in the status of the Belhar Confession on the grounds that the EIRC's work of seeking feedback from ecumenical partners regarding the category of Ecumenical Faith Declarations was not yet complete (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 574). Per EIRC reports to Synod 2015 and Synod 2016, the current status of the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration is confusing to our ecumenical partners.
b. Synod 2014 urged the EIRC "to continue its assessment of the place of the Belhar Confession in the life and ministry of the CRC and report back to synod at appropriate times" (*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 565).
c. The current status of the Belhar Confession does not provide the necessary weight to respond appropriately to the historic and recurring presence of racialized violence, systemic racism, and ethnic strife throughout the world.

We add four additional observations:

a. The Belhar Confession would also fill a gap in our current confessions and testimony. Our present documents fail to fully reflect our identity as a denomination that actively seeks to answer God's call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. Adopting the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony would affirm our commitment to these important biblical commands.
b. The Belhar Confession's message of unity, reconciliation, and justice is more necessary now than it was when it was written. It speaks quite profoundly to the North American context. The Belhar has already challenged us in a number of ways.
c. As a denomination, we do not work alone. We work in partnership with our ecumenical brothers and sisters, each with their own accent of faith. Apartheid may no longer be the rule of law in South Africa, but it is by no means a dead ideology, as Christian brothers and sisters from various places around the world report. The Belhar Confession is a gift to us from sisters and brothers that we ought to receive with gratitude.
d. We have discussed the potential inclusion of the Belhar Confession in the category of Contemporary Testimony with our brothers and sisters of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (the denomination that authored the Belhar Confession), and while they maintain their gift to the church is a *confession*, they have been gracious in embracing the good that this potential action would have for the Spirit's use of the Belhar Confession in the teaching, faith formation, and worship ministries of the CRCNA.

B. Other assignments

Synod instructed the executive director to form two ad hoc committees: one to study a new category of affiliation by congregations outside Canada and the United States, and the other to consider collaborative partnership with Koreans in Korea (*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 838-39). Reports on the work of these two committees and subsequent recommendations follow:

1. New category of affiliation

a. Mandate

To consider creation of a new category of affiliation by which a (non-Canadian and United States) congregation or groups of congregations

could associate with the CRCNA. Composition should include members of the EIRC and staff of the new mission agency.

b. Recommendation

The EIRC recommends that synod revise the mandate of the ad hoc group (addition provided in **bold**): To consider creation of a new category of affiliation **and/or a revision to current ecumenical categories** by which a (non-Canadian and United States) congregation or groups of congregations could associate with the CRCNA.

Ground: Initial work by an ad hoc group has indicated the need to reconsider current categories before consideration of an additional category because our current categories

- fail to capture the full range of interactions of CRCNA churches and ministries with ecumenical partners.
- are not always responsive to missional initiatives and needs that arise in the ministry of CRCNA congregations and agencies.
- are not always immediately meaningful to other denominations.

2. Collaborative Korean partnership

a. Mandate

To investigate potential areas of collaborative partnership in ministry with Koreans in Korea. Composition should include members of the Korean Relations Team, EIRC, our educational institutions, and staff of the unified mission agency.

b. Report

The ad hoc committee will conclude its work later this spring; the EIRC expects to provide its conclusions and recommendations in an EIRC supplementary report to synod.

VIII. Closing comments

The preceding paragraphs document the work of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee. However, also important to the ecumenical and interfaith work of the Christian Reformed Church are the activities pursued by our many congregations. The CRCNA's Ecumenical Charter (section I, C, 3) suggests an important role for congregations:

> The ecumenical task is the responsibility of the church at all its organizational levels. This task is especially important at the level of the local congregation, for it is there that the witnessing power of visible unity—and the counter-witness of division—is most vivid. Local congregations should seek to worship, witness, and work with neighboring churches that are part of the Christian community and unequivocally witness to Jesus Christ (see Belgic Confession, Art. 29).

For stories of congregations pursuing important ecumenical and interfaith relationships visit the "Initiatives" page at crcna.org/EIRC.

IX. Recommendations

A. That Dr. Jim Payton, chair, and Dr. Steven R. Timmermans be given the privilege of the floor when matters relating to the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee are being discussed.

B. That synod express its gratitude to Ms. Sharon Jim and Dr. Jay Shim for serving the cause of ecumenicity for the CRC.

C. That synod by way of the ballot elect two new members from the nominees presented to serve on the EIRC for a first term of three years, effective July 1, 2017.

D. That synod approve the reappointment of Rev. Andrew Beunk to a second three-year term.

E. That synod designate the Christian Reformed Church in Sierra Leone as a church in dialogue with the CRC (Appendix A).

Grounds:

1. The CRC in Sierra Leone made this request to the CRCNA.
2. The CRC in Sierra Leone is a child of the World Renew and Christian Reformed World Missions evangelism efforts that began in 1980 and gave birth to a growing church in 2005.
3. This action would be a fitting response to a story of great plans, tremendous obstacles, and, through it all, God's faithfulness.

F. That synod receive the report on the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category provided by the EIRC (Appendix C) and approve discontinuance of the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category.

Ground: The category is confusing to our ecumenical partners; "ecumenical" does not fit if no denomination other than the CRCNA embraces it.

G. That synod receive the report on the Contemporary Testimony category provided by the EIRC (Appendix D) and adopt the following recommendations:

1. That synod adopt the following definition for the category of contemporary testimony*:*

   A *contemporary testimony* is a dynamic statement of faith that serves the CRCNA—its congregations and members—as a statement that is essential for a given time period. It is useful for study, faith formation, teaching, and worship. As such, it must periodically be reviewed if it is to speak contemporaneously and perhaps (1) be revised if authorship belongs to the CRCNA or (2) be provided newly revised accompanying explanatory material if authorship belongs elsewhere. It may ultimately gain confessional status, pending synodical approval, although such a possibility should not be considered a criterion for adopting a statement as a contemporary testimony.

   Grounds:

   a. This definition comports with previous synodically approved descriptions of a *contemporary testimony.*

b. This definition clearly differentiates a *contemporary testimony* from a *confession.*

2. That synod recognize *Our World Belongs to God* as in the newly defined category of contemporary testimony.

   Grounds:
   a. This action is consistent with the role *Our World Belongs to God* has served in the Christian Reformed Church since its adoption.
   b. This action would provide needed clarity when considering the Belhar Confession's recategorization as a contemporary testimony.

H. That synod adopt Synod 2016's recommendation to recategorize the Belhar Confession to the same status as that of a contemporary testimony in the CRC. *Note:* The recommendations and grounds adopted by Synod 2016 are provided in Appendix E of this report.

*I. T*hat synod adopt the following revised mandate of the *ad hoc* group considering the new category of affiliation, assigned by Synod 2016 (addition provided in bold):

> To consider creation of a new category of affiliation **and/or a revision to current ecumenical categories** by which a (non-Canadian and United States) congregation or groups of congregations could associate with the CRCNA**.**

Ground: Initial work by an *ad hoc* group has indicated the need to reconsider current categories before consideration of an additional category because our current categories

1. fail to capture the full range of interactions of CRCNA churches and ministries with ecumenical partners.
2. are not always responsive to missional initiatives and needs that arise in the ministry of CRCNA congregations and agencies.
3. are not always immediately meaningful to other denominations.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee
Jim Payton, chair
Steven R. Timmermans, executive director *(ex officio)*

Appendix A
Christian Reformed Church in Sierra Leone

I. Sierra Leone background

Narrative History of the CRC in Sierra Leone
(submitted by CRWM missionary Paul Kortenhoven)

Background
Synod 1978 of the CRCNA mandated CRWM and CRWRC (now World Renew) to select and implement an integrated world hunger ministry in a particular country. Several feasibility studies were done, and Sierra Leone

was selected. The CRCNA rallied behind this decision with generous support and a strong commitment to "wrap our arms around Sierra Leone with the compassionate gospel of Christ."[1]

An agreement between CRWM and CRWRC was written, discussed, and adopted. CRWRC was to be the lead agency in the newly integrated word-deed ministry.

The first staff people to be sent were Lou and Jan Haveman, who arrived in early 1979. Lou Haveman gave the name Christian Extension Services (CES) to the work of the CRCNA in Sierra Leone. Bob and Linda Bosch soon joined them. These two families did the difficult work of conducting surveys, site selection, building renovation, drawing up and completing necessary government documents, supplying inter-mission documents, and preparing the way for the first team to arrive in the Kuranko area. They did this job very well, and the rest of the first team (Meyers, Prinses, Kortenhovens, Krakers, Heimstras, Angie Hoolsema) arrived in 1980-81. The ministry among the Kuranko people was under way.

A note about development theory at the time

The dominant development thinking at this time was characterized by a belief in the use of "experts" in various areas of development—such as income generation, agriculture, medical consulting, leadership training, and evangelism—most of whom were Western-trained Europeans or North Americans who had cross-cultural experience. It was generally accepted that technology transfer was the way to go about improving the less-developed societies, and development thinkers believed that the West possessed the depository of needed and appropriate technology to transfer.

The CRCNA and CES were no exceptions to this way of thinking. In Nigeria, the Kambari field was started in the late 1970s with missionary experts from other parts of the CRC work in the country; work in Guinea was started with experts in evangelism and development from North America; CRWRC's arid lands program was North American-expert based. In addition, the United Nations Development Project, the U.S. Peace Corps, and World Vision all based their strategies on the use of foreign experts in starting their educational, relief, and development programs.

Another classic example of this approach is to be seen in the so-called "Green Revolution," by which a very productive and highly controlled agricultural plan based on hybrid seeds and external inputs was thought to be the answer to world hunger.

Additional ministry projects

A team assigned to work among the nearby Krim people began to arrive in 1981 (Spalings, Booys, De Kuipers, Vander Scheur, De Vries, and Drenths).

[1] The *Acts of Synod 1978* and the *Acts of Synod 1979* of the CRCNA contain the reports of the Task Force on World Hunger, their recommendations to the church, and the decision to select Sierra Leone as the target country for a joint word-deed ministry. In addition, the CRC book and study guide *And He Had Compassion on Them* gives an excellent background to the denominational vision for addressing the crisis of world hunger.

The Krim history is a very interesting one and deserves a separate treatment. It is not, however, within the scope of this brief history of the Northern Kuranko Project.

A Freetown ministry was also begun in 1986, staffed by Steve and Carol Nikkel. Its goals were (1) to set up a model income generation project through one of the local churches in the poorer, most densely populated area of the capital, and (2) to establish a partnership with the Christian Council of Sierra Leone (CCSL) in community development. Several viable projects were set up with the United Brethren in Christ (UBC) church in the Kissy neighborhood. CES attempts to partner with CCSL failed because of internal CCSL political considerations. Steve and Carol were forced to leave in the wake of a violent coup d'état in Freetown in 1993.

Early years

The strategy called for the team to be composed of key, experienced leaders in the areas of community development (Meyers), agriculture (Prinses), literacy (Heimstras), community-based health care (Hoolsema), and evangelism (Kortenhovens and Krakers).

All of the team members spent significant time learning language and culture during 1980-1982. Indeed, this was a process that never stopped for any of the team members. It was instrumental to the success of the ministry.

The initial strategy also required that each of us on the team hire and mentor a Sierra Leonean counterpart from our area of residence. This was a most forward-looking and groundbreaking move by CES and is certainly a key factor in the longevity, integration, and success of the entire ministry of the CRCNA in Sierra Leone.

The core of the strategy hinged on its tight integration between the agencies involved and between the field personnel. The field personnel recognized this as soon as the team was complete, and, in contrast with projects done elsewhere (with separate directors, meetings, and reporting from each agency), the personnel in Sierra Leone designed a unified system with one director, one reporting system, one set of meetings, and one field structure. All of us on the Kuranko team were committed to the complete integration of a word-deed ministry, and our growing national staff were not even aware that for many years there were two agencies administering the field from North America. This was very important to our ministry among the Muslim Kuranko, who had little idea of the Christian message and only a countrywide example of many different missions and churches. Unity was a key ingredient in their religious thinking, and the people saw CES as unified because of this approach.

The CES Sierra Leonean and expatriate staff also demonstrated in their own lives the compassionate ministry that Christ has told us to imitate, and their neighbors were drawn to CES because of their examples. Some examples:

- They helped Muslims as well as Christians and non-Muslims. Earlier missions in Sierra Leone had refused to assist Muslims with travel or shunned them socially. CES staff worked with, lived among, showed hospitality to, traveled with, and lived with Muslims.

- They were peacemakers within the villages where they lived. They took part in settling minor disputes, avoided court cases, and tried to help those who were being marginalized by power brokers in the region.
- They did not accept bribes to begin development projects or churches.
- All CES staff took turns leading worship, praying with people, and comforting them in times of death and crisis.
- Evangelists worked on water systems and roads, and agriculturists preached sermons and led Bible studies.
- When conflict came into the region, CES staff hosted and fed hundreds of refugees.
- Many CES staff risked their lives to help their Muslim neighbors during the civil war. (Note: Three of our staff were killed in this effort.)
- They refused to accept the fatalism so dominant in Kuranko society. All staff spoke regularly about hope for a better future in this world and the next.

This led to success in our evangelism efforts. Three core churches were started in the communities of Foria, Badala, and Alikalia. Several adults were baptized, and local Kuranko men were trained as itinerant village evangelists.

We soon learned that the key parts of our ministry, word-deed or development-evangelism, did not always follow the same schedule. There were times when evangelism went well, churches started, and people became Christians. There were other times when the church seemed to stand still while income generation, agriculture projects, and leadership training took off. Though confusing at first, it did not take long for the team members to recognize and accept this pattern, which continues to this day. We also saw that "seizing the opportunity" in whatever area was going well was a good ministrategy, and we put our resources into the areas that showed the greatest probability of success at that particular time. When evangelism slowed down, agriculture took off with a major palm-oil project. At other times leadership training was in high demand. During both a measles epidemic and a cholera epidemic, primary health care and training became critical.

Knowing that Christian development in African rural society does not follow a clear-cut, chronological order was far different from living it, however. We had to learn that the society in which we lived did not operate like the society we had left in North America. Much of what the people did and do was and is dictated by events and needs—and not necessarily by logical plans thought through by the community and its leaders. This was an important lesson for each of us to learn, but quite hard to accept and adjust to. We are planners, goal-focused, achievers who have not faced the acute needs of simple survival. I am thankful to the Kuranko people for opening my eyes to their world. Wonderful relationships developed between the missionaries and Sierra Leonean staff and village neighbors. This was often begun and enhanced by our children as we learned again and again the meaning of Jesus'

words "You must be born again" (John 3:7), and as we learned experientially that we must become like little children to understand the workings of the kingdom of God.

Transition

In 1985, key CES expatriate staff left Sierra Leone. Though nationalization was built into the CES strategy from the beginning, most of us did not know how to do it. We had few precedents to follow in our CRC mission history, so we did our best to learn the initial part of the nationalization process as it was actually happening. This meant that we adopted sort of a "damage strategy." When key staff left, those of us who remained had to fill the void somehow. Though CES had national counterparts for all the necessary positions, no one was really prepared for the actual transition. The expatriate staff who remained and the Sierra Leonean staff who now had to shift into fifth gear without really going through third and fourth gear were more than a bit overwhelmed.

CES was blessed with two key individuals, Joseph Sesay and Robert Jawara, who reluctantly took on more responsibility than they had been prepared for. Another major blessing was the appearance of Rowland Van Es in Sierra Leone as a Peace Corps volunteer. When he finished his term with the Peace Corps, he was hired by CRWRC to mentor Robert Jawara. Robert and Rowland made an excellent miniteam, and the two years they spent together were crucial to Robert's development as a future national director and as a community development leader.

Rowland and the Kortenhovens also mentored Joseph Sesay (CES agriculture supervisor) during this time, and he too became a strong Christian leader in the community. His marriage to Kumba Sano continued to turn his life around and prepare him for the task of supervising the work of CES in the Kuranko area.

In 1986, Paul Kortenhoven was appointed as team leader, and Jan Disselkoen (who had replaced the Heimstras as literacy trainer) was appointed assistant team leader. Together they helped to move the staff into the *"Training for Transformation"* phase in which every one was asked to take a two-year/four module course.[2] This *"T for T"* curriculum was taught to CES staff members by the Catholic development workers based in Kenema. The course is now the basis for development training used by CES and many other Christian development groups in West Africa. It is designed to implement the action-reflection-action learning model as local leadership is trained. People who never thought they could change their leadership style did in fact change to a more participatory method. Broad-based community input was sought and used in decision making, and practical action plans were designed and implemented in villages throughout the area.

[2] T*raining for Transformation* by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel has become the basis for much development thinking, particularly in Africa. It is an excellent tool that empowers local people in the decision-making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects that affect them. First used in East Africa, it has now been adapted for use in other parts of the continent and has been translated into several local languages. The CRCNA uses it (or principles of the program) in Niger, Nigeria, Mali, and Senegal.

These developments, along with the arrival of Norm and Joyce Baker in 1986 and the return of the Kraker family in 1990, were major boosts to CES morale and crucial factors in the continuing development of the national staff.

By 1993, CES mentored programs of income generation, community development, literacy, primary health care, and agriculture, and local churches were all poised to develop regional structures, links, markets, and projects. Morale was high, and the staff was looking for a way to expand into a second Kuranko area ("Kuranko II").[3]

War

Then came the war! In 1991 the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attacked the southeast area of Sierra Leone from their base in western Liberia. Within two months the entire region was under siege, and this rebel presence made it impossible to enter the "Kuranko II" area. For almost seven years the RUF held that part of the country, and a reign of terror erupted, costing thousands of lives.

Regular United Nations, Sierra Leone government, and international non-government organization (NGO) reports suggested that the war would be contained there, but that was not to be the case. The first attacks in the north came in November 1994. They wiped out CES homes, offices, and most of the physical infrastructure in the original Kuranko project. After this rampage, the rebels left the area and returned to their bases in the south. After we assessed the situation, we concluded it was possible to regroup, recapitalize, and rebuild. This was the firm belief of the CES staff, CRWM, CRWRC, and the CRCNA at that time. It led to the development of the CRCNA Free to Serve tour of late 1996.

A Sierra Leone Working Group formed in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and was led by Paul Kortenhoven and Peter Vander Meulen (1995-1999). Its purposes were (1) to inform the agencies about the situation in Sierra Leone and (2) to encourage continued CRCNA support of CES during this civil war. This led to a stakeholders meeting held in Dakar, Senegal, in early 1999.[4] At this meeting, the nationalization process was discussed in light of the conflict. The stakeholders agreed that CES should continue the process, with the hope that nationalization would be possible by 2000, but also noted that the timetable for the process was dependent on the war and the ongoing peace process. Tentative plans were made to return to Koinadugu District and to rehabilitate the work of CES among the Kuranko people.

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[3] "Kuranko II," an expansion of the existing CES program, was planned during 1991-1992. This expansion was to begin in a very remote part of Koinadugu district that was (literally) the most ignored area of the country. The plan was to select a team of local Kuranko people led by current CES Kuranko staff and send them to key locations in this part of the country. They were to use the experience gained and the lessons learned from the original Kuranko project in beginning a new phase of CES work.

[4] Peter Vander Meulen, director of the CRC Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, led a team that planned the *Free to Serve* rally in which six members of the CES Kuranko group toured in the United States and Canada. It started as a musical tribute to the work of the CRC in Sierra Leone. The idea originated in a Sierra Leone Working Group meeting in the U.S. and expanded to include other work of the CRCNA as well.

CES staff returned to Sierra Leone with high morale and readiness to begin rehabilitation of the Kuranko project. Together with the local people, they began the work—but within a few weeks conflict, which had returned to the Kuranko region with a second invasion in mid-1998, escalated and engulfed the entire province. Some of the worst atrocities of the war were committed at that time. Amputations were common; villages were attacked; women were multiply raped; children were tortured to make their parents disclose where things of value were hidden.[5] From that time until mid-2001, the CES working area was under a brutal occupation by the rebel Revolutionary United Front and its ally, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

The majority of CES staff members remained in the north (Kabala) for most of this time. Kabala was surrounded by rebels and attacked 15 times but never taken. The staff worked with Médicins Sans Frontières (MSF—"Doctors Without Borders") and the local government hospital to treat the wounded and to help manage two refugee camps for over a year. Asumana Sesay, the CES driver, Joseph Sesay, and other staff members risked their lives in order to carry critically wounded civilians to Freetown or Makeni to receive emergency care. Along with the Catholic mission, CES helped to transport and deliver emergency food aid and clothing to thousands of war victims. Paul Kortenhoven, Joseph Sesay, Bishop George Biguzzi, and Dr. Fasil Tezera of MSF became the spokespersons for peace, relief, and emergency care in northern Sierra Leone. They met several times with the rebels in order to secure safe passage for relief supplies and for the transportation of severely wounded people to good medical facilities.

During this time Paul, as a representative of international nongovernment organizations (INGOs) became involved in international efforts to bring peace to Sierra Leone. He was asked to join lobbying efforts in the U.S. Congress, the Canadian Parliament, and the United Nations. He was the INGO representative at peace talks in Lomé, the capital of Togo; and in Sierra Leone;[6] and at continuing peace efforts in Washington, D.C.; Paris; Ottawa; and New York City.

With the indispensable help of the United Nations and the British Special Forces, the government of Sierra Leone was finally able to convince the rebels that they had no chance to win this war. Force and the threat of force played a critical part in this argument. A peace agreement was finally signed

[5] In several visits to Kabala and to rebel-held Foria in 2000, Mary and Aaron Kortenhoven, Joseph and Kumba Sesay, Louise Taylor of the UN office of Justice, and Corrine Dufka of Human Rights Watch (HRW) interviewed several victims of abuse. The information gathered was included in a HRW report on atrocities committed in northern Sierra Leone.

[6] Bishop Biguzzi and Paul Kortenhoven formed this group to coordinate much-needed lobbying efforts for peace in Sierra Leone. Together they formed a strong voice for the people who were being brutalized by the rebel RUF and AFRC combatants. Paul represented the international nongovernment community in the 1999 peace talks held in Lomé, Togo. Bishop Biguzzi, Paul Kortenhoven, Jim Mc Laughlin (director of Catholic Relief Services [CRS]), and Baika Sesay of CRS addressed the heads of agencies at UN headquarters in New York. They provided an up-to-date report on the war situation as well as specific suggestions regarding how the UN could take a more active part in peace-making and peace-keeping.

and implemented, and disarmament began in mid-2000.[7] Though there were many setbacks in this process, the majority of rebel arms were collected and destroyed by early 2001. Many rebels who refused to turn in their arms fled to Liberia and became part of a growing rebellion there. War was officially declared over in late 2001.

Women's programs

In 1998, CES realized that there were hundreds of women from the Kuranko project area who were displaced and living in Freetown. Mary Kortenhoven, Theresa Kargbo, James and Nyima Marah, and Robert Jawara planned and developed a program for these women, and this developed into the House of Hope ministry. This was a shelter (10 women and their children, 35 people) in Freetown that helped women who had no surviving family or community support to cope with life as displaced people in Freetown. The rebel combatants had repeatedly abused all of these women and their children, and many had lost several family members. CES was not able to house them all, of course, but it managed to get income generation (gara dyeing, soap making, gardening, hair dressing, small-business training), literacy, and counseling programs set up to help many of them. All of the women's programs were paid for by grants from non-CRCNA agencies such as the United Nations, Catholic Relief Services, Médicins Sans Frontières, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and interested individuals.

When the Kuranko women were able to return to Kabala and northern Sierra Leone, CES arranged their transportation. The programs were continued in Kabala. A building was renovated with the help of another grant from the UN, and this became the center for all the training. It was set up and supervised by Mary Kortenhoven and Theresa Kargbo. Over 400 women graduated from the courses offered in this center from 2001-2002. The need is still great for such programs, and the long-range plan was/is to duplicate the training in several local villages on a smaller scale.

Post-war Sierra Leone

A post-war needs assessment by CES staff, Catholic Relief Services, and MSF indicated the following:

- Food security was the major problem, and malnutrition was endemic to the population.
- Most agricultural production stopped, and fields had lain fallow for at least three growing seasons. There was no seed stock for the next seasonal planting.
- All the government and village medical clinics had been destroyed.

[7] There were five separate peace accords signed by all combatants during this civil war. All of them were broken by the RUF within weeks of their signing. In 2000, when it finally became apparent that the RUF-led rebel group could not win either the war or an election, they agreed to surrender and disarm.

- Immunization programs had stopped, and childhood diseases had increased the mortality rate dramatically. Measles was back; typhoid and tetanus were taking their toll; and polio had also returned to the area.
- The roads and bridges had not been maintained in four years.
- Gravity water systems that had not been looted of pipes and equipment were in critical need of repair.
- Poverty among the local population was totally pervasive. There was simply no money and no agricultural produce to sell. People had no clothing but the worn-out rags on their bodies. Most of the tradespeople had either fled or been killed.
- Almost all of the women had been brutalized, raped, and victimized by the rebel groups.
- All schools had been destroyed, and there was no primary or secondary education anywhere in the area.
- All the international and local development organizations agreed that the needs of the people after the war were much greater than they had been in the early 1970s. This devastating civil war had robbed Sierra Leone of 30 years of progress toward sustainability in agriculture, health care, education, and any basic social services.

Moving from post-war relief and to development activity will remain a major concern for CES for many years to come. Poverty and physical need continue at a level that rivals the social situation of 1975. (Experienced peacemakers who have dealt with post-war situations in Mozambique, Nigeria, Algeria, Zimbabwe, and Cambodia tell us that it takes *at least* a generation to recover from the devastation of civil war. Psychological trauma and anger may take more than a hundred years to fade away. One need only look at the U.S. Civil War and its ongoing effects to see the truth of this assessment.) Though all of us would like to make a transition from relief and rebuilding to long-term development and capacity building, we must realize that it will not happen overnight. In such a post-war situation, there is simply no clean break between relief and development. The challenge to CES and to the CRCNA is to find the appropriate balance and seize the opportunities that will certainly come to partner with local people in the entire process of rebuilding, healing, training, planning, and working for their own development.

Post-war churches among the Kuranko people

During the occupation by the rebels, churches continued to meet, and local leadership began to emerge that had been influenced/trained earlier by CES missionaries and staff. One young man in particular was instrumental in encouraging new believers. He is Sewa Marah from the village of Foria. His trust in God and his desire to share the message of Christ in every way with his fellow Kuranko people enabled him to gain the respect and trust of the rebels. He was allowed by the occupying rebel force to be an

itinerant pastor and to visit villages in the entire region. There Marah found a great interest in Christianity and the teachings of Christ among the people.

Because of the incredible word/deed witness of Marah, of CES-related staff, and of church members during the war, people simply wanted to know about Jesus. During the occupation and following the peace, 20 new churches were planted. There are now 38 churches in the Kuranko area planted by CES and the local Christians. They are poised to grow, to become a regional church, and they desire to move toward registration as a national Reformed denomination.

In a workshop held in Kabala in May 2003, over 80 church leaders expressed their concerns about their growing church to CES staff and to CRWM representatives Ron Geerlings and Paul Kortenhoven. Their primary concerns were identity and the need for biblical training for their leaders.[8] One response to these expressed concerns was the first phase of Project Africa training held in November 2003.

Post-war nationalization

Concurrent with the post-war activities, CES staff and the agencies continued to implement the nationalization plan and timetable. Both CRWM and CRWRC decided to turn over the work of CES to a national administration in 2001. Paul and Mary Kortenhoven worked with Robert Jawara, Joseph Sesay, and the staff to plan the turnover process, which included selection of a national director, payment of termination benefits to all CES staff, selection of board members for a new national CES, and a schedule for turnover.

This also demanded the following:

- several planning/clarification discussions among staff
- recruitment of board members
- board training
- rewriting the CES/CRC conditions of service to fit a national NGO
- registration with the government of Sierra Leone
- an action plan for the training of church leaders and encouragement of the churches that were starting in many villages
- a longer-range plan for the women's programs

Most of these tasks were completed, but three important objectives were not met:

- board training for the Sierra Leoneans who were to become the CES supervising body
- a program for the training of leaders in the new churches
- a longer-range plan for the continuation of the women's programs going on in Kabala

[8] In May 2003, Ron Geerlings and Paul Kortenhoven visited Sierra Leone and met with representatives of the 38 Kuranko churches. During this meeting, these representatives expressed their concerns candidly: they felt abandoned by CES and by the CRCNA that had started the CES churches; they wanted an identity as a new Christian group; they desperately needed training for their leaders; and they wanted to become a national, Reformed denomination in Sierra Leone.

These continue to be priorities that must be addressed.

As a primary step in the nationalization process, Robert Jawara was appointed as the country director for CES in 2001. The Kortenhovens worked alongside Robert until they left the field in July 2002. Joseph Sesay was appointed as the deputy national director and as the team leader of the Northern Kuranko Project. CES maintains a national office in Freetown and a regional office in the town of Kabala. There is a board consisting of five Sierra Leoneans (business people, a lawyer, and educators) and an advisor from CRWRC, Senegal.

Issues arising

Three major issues are highlighted by the Sierra Leonean experience. Each is the subject of a separate paper, but I will mention them briefly here.

1. **The righteous (appropriate) use of power/authority in the mission-development context**

   Power is embedded in the world and is part of the missionary equation. Western missionary efforts in Africa were/are case studies in the use of power by mission societies, the church, and Western culture. The issue here is the need to be aware of this power and thus sensitive to how it can be used to further the gospel message that motivates us in all our work. It does no good to deny that it exists, or to attempt to use power to control the development of local churches from a mission headquarters. It does even less good to use it to pave the way for a new form of colonization, such as globalization of the world economy, and it is most naïve and unhelpful not to use it at all in the process of nationalization and support.

   The book of Acts gives us a clear picture of how the apostle Paul uses his considerable power as a Roman citizen. Acts 16 shows that he used it to protect his personal health; and in Acts 25-26, when facing trial in Jerusalem, he used it to further the cause of the gospel by bringing his case to Rome.[9]

2. **The importance of continued support during and after nationalization**

   There is a natural tendency for mission agencies and churches to support programs that are most visible through the presence of their own missionaries. Historically, when mission agencies pulled out their Western missionary personal during the nationalization process, support for that mission endeavor decreased. In a well-meant effort of noninterference, mission organizations have allowed the newly nationalized effort to fend for itself, often with negative results. No less a mission authority than Stephen Neill points this out in *A History of Christian Missions*. Citing the work of the Anglican Church in Sierra Leone in starting Fourah Bay University, he says:

   > In 1827 the C.M.S. (Church Mission Society) rendered an incomparable service to the whole of West Africa. It founded Fourah Bay College for the higher education of Africans; the first student on the roll was Samuel

[9] Acts 25:11-12: Paul appeals to Caesar before Festus. His trial under King Agrippa (recorded in Acts 25-26) gives Paul's personal testimony that eventually became part of his gospel message to Rome.

> Adjayi Crowther, whom we shall have occasion to meet again. The failure adequately to support and maintain this great institution reflects grave discredit on British Christianity.[10]

At no time in the history of CRWM had a mission field been nationalized as quickly as in Sierra Leone. Nigeria has been partially nationalized after 70 years, but missionaries still live and work there. Large parts of CRWM/CRWRC work in Japan, the Philippines, Mexico, and much of Latin America have also been "nationalized" over longer time periods, but missionaries remain there as teachers, administrators, counselors, planners, managers. Though the strategy of CRWM/CRWRC does not consider Nigeria, the Philippines, Mexico, and Latin America as appropriate models for its work in Sierra Leone, it is vital that the CRCNA does not repeat the same mistake here as "British Christianity" did in the case of Fourah Bay University.

3. **Our view of the church of Jesus Christ**
   The three classic New Testament views of the church are (1) the church as the people of God, (2) the church as the body of Christ, and (3) the church as the fellowship of believers. Exclusive emphasis on one of these over the others has led to the following:

   - Doctrinally pure churches in which the maintenance of the original theology of the first missionaries was/is paramount. Nigeria abounds with examples of this type of "African" church.
   - Sacramental churches in which connections to the early church of Acts and Rome are vital to their existence and at times a hindrance to their biblical foundations.
   - Pentecostal churches in which leaders and members follow the latest revelation of the "spirit." Africa is full of independent church movements led by charismatic figures claiming a special revelation from the Lord.

   It is important that we in the CRCNA maintain a trinitarian approach to the nature of the church both in North America and in our mission/local/national church situations.

Concluding comment

The CRCNA ministry in Sierra Leone is a success story. God has blessed our church, the staff of CES, and the Kuranko people in 24 years of partnership, learning, surviving, teaching, and worshiping in his name. God has also led us in ways that none of us could have anticipated in 1978. He has protected CES staff, missionaries and local colleagues as they walked through "the valley of the shadow of death" for over ten years. Churches have been and are being planted, Christian leaders are present and working in the Kuranko area, and thousands of people have seen their lives improve and suffer and improve again. They have seen joy, grief, and freedom from fear in war, peace, and reconciliation. And in all of this the Christian Reformed Church in

[10] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions,* p. 306 (Penguin, 1991).

North America was a major partner. The CRCNA can be proud of the vision that led them to Sierra Leone and of all the people who ministered, planned, acted, and donated to make CES a successful national Christian organization. In the African sense of time, this ministry has just begun. We hope and pray that the CRCNA will recognize this and that it will continue to pray for and give to CES as they support the fine national Christians who are leading at this time. To God be the glory.

II. Request from the CRC in Sierra Leone

Last year the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee received the following request from the CRC in Sierra Leone, approved by their synod: "That the CRCNA accept the CRC-SL in fraternal fellowship." Their rationale was straightforward: "The CRC-SL is a child of the evangelism efforts of the WR/CRWM, which started in 1980 and finally gave birth to a growing church in 2005."

III. Recommendation

That synod designate the Christian Reformed Church in Sierra Leone as a church in dialogue with the CRCNA.

Grounds:

1. The CRC in Sierra Leone made this request to the CRCNA.
2. The CRC in Sierra Leone is a child of the World Renew and Christian Reformed World Missions evangelism efforts that began in 1980 and gave birth to a growing church in 2005.
3. This action would be a fitting response to a story of great plans, tremendous obstacles, and, through it all, God's faithfulness.

Appendix B
Statement by the World Communion of Reformed Churches Regarding the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

Association of the World Communion of Reformed Churches with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification
[August 2016]

Preamble

1. In recent years a welcome degree of convergence on the doctrine of justification has been achieved. In 1999, after many years of committed dialogue, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification was signed by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. This agreement, on what had been a central church dividing issue at the time of the Reformation, is a landmark achievement which we celebrate. In 2006, the World Methodist Council and its member churches affirmed their fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. The World Communion of Reformed Churches, after extended consideration and special attention to connections between justification and justice, now joyfully accepts the invitation to associate with the Joint Declaration on the

Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ). For the Reformed, justification by grace through faith is an essential teaching of the gospel.

2. We affirm our fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the JDDJ, and we express profound gratitude for the great advance that has been made in this ecumenical consensus. We rejoice together that the historical doctrinal differences on the doctrine of justification no longer divide us, and we experience this as a moment of self-examination, conversion and new commitment to one another manifesting new unity and advancing our common witness for peace and justice. In keeping with the Reformed principle "*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum dei*," we embrace the new reality this shared agreement promises. We hope to not only affirm but also enrich and extend the existing degree of consensus. We embrace the model of differentiated consensus and the openness, diversity and richness of theological language it makes possible. We will here add our distinctive emphases to those already shared by others. We anticipate areas that invite further dialogue and clarification. We acknowledge the importance, in ecumenical dialogue, of listening to one another and listening to Scripture together.

3. There is a long and interesting history of dialogue on the matter of justification among Reformed, Lutheran and Catholic communions. In fact, a remarkable consensus on basic elements of the doctrine of justification was declared in the Regensburg Agreement of 1541 (Article V *de iustificatione*).[1] Calvin warmly welcomed this agreement (*Letter to Farel* 11.5.1541). However, because of the confessional struggle, the efforts failed and the agreement was nearly forgotten for more than 450 years.

   We hear the consensus and agree.

4. We agree with the common affirmation that justification is the work of the triune God. The good news of the gospel is that God has reconciled the world to himself through the Son and in the Spirit. Justification presupposes and is grounded in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. Justification means that Christ himself is our "righteousness (δικαιοσύνη – justice) and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). According to Reformed understanding, justification and sanctification, which cannot be separated, both flow from union with Christ.

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[1] In the Article V *de iustificatione* Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed theologians (Contarini, Eck, Gropper, Melanchthon, Bucer, Calvin) stated:

> "But this happens to no one unless also at the same time <u>love is infused</u> [*infundatur*] which heals the will so that the healed may <u>begin to fulfil the law</u>, just as Saint Augustine [De spir. et lit., c.9,15] said. So <u>living faith</u> is that which both appropriates mercy in Christ, believing that the <u>righteousness which is in Christ is freely imputed</u> to it, and at the same time <u>receives the promise of the Holy Spirit and love</u>. *Therefore the faith that truly* justifies is that <u>faith which is effectual through love</u> [Gal. 5:6]. Nevertheless it remains true that it is <u>by this faith that we are justified</u> (i.e. accepted and reconciled to God) inasmuch as it appropriates the <u>mercy and righteousness which is imputed to us on account of Christ</u> and his merit, <u>not on account of the worthiness or perfection of the righteousness</u> imparted [*communicatae*] to us in Christ." (Translated by Anthony N. S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue. An Evangelical Assessment*, London/New York 2002, 234-235).

Entering into union with him through the Holy Spirit, by means of word and sacrament, we receive a share in his saving righteousness. By grace alone, through faith in Christ's saving work—and not because of any merit on our part—we are accepted by God. In Christ the Spirit renews our hearts while equipping us to do the good works that God has prepared for us to walk in. (§15)

5. We also agree that God calls all people to salvation in Christ. When we receive this salvation by grace through faith, we are justified by Christ alone. Faith is God's gift through the Holy Spirit. By word and sacrament in the community of faith, the Spirit leads believers into that renewal of life which God will bring to completion in eternal life. (§16)

6. We further agree that the message of justification directs us in a special way to the heart of the biblical witness. Based on God's saving action in Christ, justification tells us "that as sinners our new life is due solely to God's forgiving and renewing mercy. This mercy is imparted to us as a gift, which we receive through faith, and never can merit in any way." (§17)

7. We agree with both Catholics and Lutherans that the doctrine of justification has a central place among the essential doctrines of Christian faith. It is an indispensable criterion for teaching and practice in the life of the church. We also affirm that historic differences in emphasis and interpretation on this doctrine are not a sufficient cause for division between them or between either party and the Reformed. (§18)

   We particularly appreciate some of the distinctive insights in the JDDJ.

8. We appreciate the recognition in the JDDJ that we are powerless to save ourselves, incapable of turning to God on our own, and that the freedom we know is not freedom for salvation. Our response to God's grace is itself the effect of God's grace working in us. What Christ has accomplished by his saving obedience (extra nos) is made known and applied in us (in nobis) by the Spirit especially through God's word and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. No one can respond to God's call apart from God's prior work of grace. (§19-21)

9. We appreciate the recognition that sin is both a guilt and a power; thus, God's grace brings both forgiveness and liberation. God's forgiveness absolves us of our guilt (justification), and God's liberation frees us from bondage to sin so that our faith might be active in love (sanctification). Union with Christ, according to Reformed teaching, is the source of these two saving benefits. Sanctification does not entail attaining perfection in this life. We recognize the ongoing struggle—our situation of being at the same time justified and a sinner. Nevertheless, we believe that in our union with Christ, "day by day, more and more," we are being conformed to his image and grow in grace. According to Reformed understanding, it is through our participation in Christ by faith that we receive a saving share in his righteousness before God (justification) and receive the gift of new life (sanctification) to be instruments of God's love. (§22-24)

10. We appreciate the clear presentation that sinners are justified by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8) and that faith is active in love. Grace is the source and ground of justification while faith is the instrument of its reception. The whole of the Christian life is a life of trust in the promises of God. Such faith cannot truly exist without love and hope in God. Union with Christ by faith entails both justification by grace and sanctification or growing in grace. "Faith is active in love and thus the Christian cannot and should not remain without works." Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17). Love for God and the neighbour is therefore indispensable to faith. "But whatever in the justified precedes or follows the free gift of faith is neither the basis of justification nor merits it." The grace we receive brings renewal of life. (§25-27)

11. We appreciate the honest recognition that even though we are justified we nevertheless continue a lifelong struggle against the contradiction to God which we must continually repent and for which we daily ask forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer. This struggle, however, does not separate us from God in Christ. We remain ever dependent on God's grace, through word and sacrament, throughout our lives. Grace never becomes something we merely possess. (§28-30).

    The Reformed have particular emphases and additional insights to bring.

12. The Reformed agree with the strong conviction expressed that the law is fulfilled in Christ and is not a "way of salvation" for us. The law discloses our sin to us and leads us to seek God's mercy in Christ. At the same time, we understand that it is the teaching and example of Christ (who fulfilled the law) that remains the norm for life in Christ. For this reason, the Reformed maintain that the commandments of God remain valid for us in our lives as believers. This is the guiding role of the law, sometimes referred to as "the third use of the law." This is the primary use in Reformed understanding—even more central than the first two: the "civil" use (to curb wrongdoing in the public arena) or the "pedagogical" use in convicting of sin. "Law and gospel" are not sharply contrasted but viewed as connected by their grounding in God's grace. This sense of connection between law and gospel echoes a Reformed emphasis on the continuity (rather than contrast) between the Old Testament and the New Testament as one covenant of grace. For the Reformed *sola scriptura* entails *tota scriptura*. Both law and gospel are God's good gifts to us. The law is God's gracious provision of a guide for living. Reformed sensibilities concerning the law resonate with those expressed in Psalm 19, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes…." The renewal of life (sanctification) that accompanies justification strengthens us to live (more fully) in gratitude and joyful obedience to God. This is a gift of God's grace at work in our lives. We may have confidence that the good work God has begun in us will be brought to completion. "Through Jesus Christ God has mercifully promised to his children the grace of eternal life." (§31-33)

13. We affirm the testimony given here to the utter reliability of the promises of God. We witness to the irrevocability of the gifts and calling of God (Rom. 11:29). God's covenant of grace given to Israel is unbroken and is extended to us by faith in Christ. The gift of faith provides us assurance of salvation. Faith without assurance would be deficient or confused. Assurance is not based upon anything in ourselves—whether faith, works or evidences of the Holy Spirit—but upon the promises of God. Our God is a faithful God who keeps covenant with the people of God through the ages. God's electing grace at work in the people of Israel is now at work in us also through Christ. For assurance we look to Christ and the promises of God in him. In times of doubt, temptation and anxiety we do not look to ourselves but to Christ. For the Reformed, assurance of salvation is particularly linked to the doctrine of election. Divine election is grounded solely in God's electing grace. In the doctrine of election we recognize God who chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). We have nothing that we have not received. Even our capacity to respond to God is God's gift to us. So also is our perseverance in faith. These insights evoke humility and gratitude in believers and provide assurance of salvation. God's calling and God's promises are sure. In Christ God has promised our salvation, and "the objective reality of God's promise," which cannot be considered untrustworthy, grounds our assurance of salvation. (§34-36)

14. We value the careful nuancing of the place of good works among the justified. They are the fruit (and not the root) of justification. Good works reflect the effect of God's grace in us; faith that is active in love. Good works can only be done in dependence upon God's grace. The Reformed would add here a comment on how we have interpreted the place of good works among the justified. In the Second Helvetic Confession (Chapter XVI, paragraph 6) there is an explication which clarifies that good works are not done in order to earn eternal life, or for ostentation, or for gain. Rather they are "for the glory of God, to adorn our calling, to show gratitude to God, and for the profit of the neighbour." In this way, we have further elaborated the place of good works among the justified. (§37-39)

    We wish to underscore the integral relation between justification and justice.

15. We wish to add a word on the relation we see between justification and justice. In 2001, representatives of the Catholic Church, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches met in Columbus, Ohio, to discuss the prospect of widening participation in the JDDJ. The thoughtful and constructive conversation held at the consultation led the Reformed to a deepened reflection on the JDDJ and to a commitment to inquire into one of our key questions: What is the relation between justification and justice? The similarity in terms invites reflection upon the nature of their connection. In the New Testament, the same Greek term (δικαιοσυνη, *dikaiosyne*) is used to convey both. It can be translated either as "righteousness" or as "justice." We began a series of consultations in our regional contexts about the nature of this connection. Our further discussions have been

most profitable, and we offer, in the paragraphs which follow, a few insights that have emerged.

16. For the Reformed, justice is not simply the ethical outworking of justification as a kind of second step; rather it is already entailed theologically in justification as such. This insight has now been elaborated in the final report of the fourth phase of the International Reformed–Catholic Dialogue, *Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent of Justice*, "That both of these meanings are conveyed with the same word reflects the fact that they are profoundly related. The one who is justified by faith is called to act in a righteous way. As a consequence, the doctrine of justification cannot be seen in the abstract, divorced from the reality of injustice, oppression and violence in today's world" (paragraph 56). Justification is both a "declaring righteous" and a "setting right." This insight may be at the root of John Calvin's insistence that justification and sanctification are inseparable (*Institutes,* III.2.1); they are to be thought of as a two-fold grace (*duplex gratia*). We acknowledge that the discussion of justification (in JDDJ 4.2) as entailing both "forgiveness of sins" and "renewal of life" points in this direction. We also welcome the invitation offered in paragraph 43 to further clarification of "the relation between justification and social ethics." In what follows, the Reformed intend an initial offering on this relation.

17. In the Reformed emphasis on the sovereignty of God, we have affirmed that God is sovereign over all of life (not just the narrowly religious or spiritual aspects of individual lives). We affirm with the Psalmist that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those that dwell therein" (24:1, KJV). God has entered into covenant with all of creation (Gen. 9:8-12), and God's covenant of grace intends a "setting right" that is world-embracing—including even political, economic and ecological realities. All of God's covenantal acts are acts of justification and justice. This emphasis has been lately underscored in the Accra Confession (Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth): "God has brought into being an earth community based on the vision of justice and peace. . . . Jesus shows that this is an inclusive covenant in which the poor and marginalized are preferential partners, and calls us to put justice for the 'least of these' (Mt 25.40) at the centre of the community of life. All creation is blessed and included in this covenant (Hos 2.18ff)" (paragraph 20).

18. This way of thinking has also been welcomed by the present partners. In the most recent dialogue with the Lutheran World Federation (*Communion: On Being the Church*, paragraph 56) we have affirmed, "There is no area in life, indeed in all creation which does not belong to Jesus Christ who sends us into all the world to be a sign of God's kingdom to preach and live the gospel of reconciliation in a common concern for justice, freedom, peace and care for the creation." Similarly, in the final report of the fourth phase of the International Reformed-Catholic Dialogue (*Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent of Justice*), we together affirmed: "the theological doctrine and reality of justification by faith and sanctification impels the Christian community to act on

behalf of justice. The imperative for justice flows necessarily from justification and from the call of the whole Church to holiness" (paragraph 79).

19. There is a sense in which justification and sanctification may be thought of as ordered toward justice. In God's saving work things are being "set right" in lives. We are drawn into right relationship with God and into the true worship of God (soli deo gloria). The true worship of God finds concrete manifestation in striving for justice and righteousness in society. Thus we are drawn into the work of setting things right in the larger social world. Calvin affirmed that "believers truly worship God by the righteousness they maintain within their society" (*Commentary on Matthew,* 12:7).

20. We maintain that "the doctrine of justification cannot be seen in the abstract, divorced from the reality of injustice, oppression and violence in today's world" (*Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent of Justice,* paragraph 56). In the message and ministry of Jesus justice was central. This becomes even more obvious when we remember the frequency of the Greek term *dikaiosyne* in the gospels and realize that (as noted above) in the many places where it is translated "righteousness" it could equally well have been translated as "justice." The Belhar Confession expresses the imperative of resisting injustice even more strongly. In Christ, God is revealed "as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people. . . . We reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel" (paragraph 4).

21. The doctrine of justification is vitally important for the Reformed. Calvin spoke of it as "the main hinge on which religion turns" (*Institutes*, III.2.1). We view it as being in essential connection with other doctrines. Our unity around this central doctrine is to be celebrated. We are grateful that Lutheran and Reformed Churches in some countries have recognized one another as belonging to the one Church of Jesus Christ and have declared full communion of pulpit and table. It is our deep hope that in the near future we shall also be able to enter into closer relationship with Lutherans in other places and with the Catholic Church, as well as with Methodists, in accordance with this declaration of our common understanding of the doctrine of justification.

Official Common Affirmation

In this Statement the World Communion of Reformed Churches affirms fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed at Augsburg on 31 October 1999 on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church. The World Methodist Council affirmed their fundamental doctrinal agreement on 23 July 2006.

The signing partners of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification join together in welcoming the above Statement of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, which declares and demonstrates Reformed

agreement with the consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification as expressed in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Building on their shared affirmation of basic truths of the doctrine of justification, the four parties commit themselves to strive together for the deepening of their common understanding of justification in theological study, teaching and preaching.

The present achievement and commitment are viewed by Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists and Reformed as part of their pursuit of the full communion and common witness to the world which is the will of Christ for all Christians.

Appendix C
Response to the Ecumenical Faith Declaration Assignment by Synod 2016
(Approved by EIRC, October 20, 2016)

I. Our task

After discussing the EIRC report to Synod 2016 and Overture 13 (to adopt the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession), synod directed the EIRC

> to provide a report on the confusion with the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category as identified by our ecumenical partners in their February 2014 consultation and in subsequent conversations with the EIRC, advising Synod 2017 on the viability of the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category."
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 913)

II. Background

Synod 2012 adopted the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration (EFD) but did not provide a definition for this new category. Afterwards, the EIRC took up contact with ecumenical partners about the category as a way to present the concept to them, to discuss its viability as a new category, and to invite assistance in defining it. As the EIRC reported to Synod 2013, many of those ecumenical partners expressed interest, and Synod 2013 encouraged the EIRC to continue the conversation with them.

To facilitate this conversation, the EIRC made plans for and conducted an Ecumenical Faith Declaration Consultation, held February 2-4, 2014, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Stated objectives included the following (from the "EFD Consultation: Objectives, Schedule, and Process" document distributed to participants):

1. To explore the nature of and potential roles for an EFD in Reformed churches.
2. To provide a format for dialogue regarding an EFD categorization that benefits from and contributes to broader ecumenical partnerships.
3. To proceed with the development and implementation of the EFD categorization in a way that builds transparency, understanding, and unity in relationships among Reformed denominations and ecumenical institutions.
4. To formulate a working document that will assist Reformed denominations to proceed with a meaningful utilization of the EFD category.

5. To hold a consultation that will serve to advance the use of EFD documents in Christian discipleship and related service in the everyday life of the church.

The EIRC's planning subcommittee distributed these objectives and also prepared and sent to the registered participants readings to help prepare for the five brief presentations and extended discussions that would follow them.

A. Participation

The three North American churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC were invited to the consultation, as were representatives of numerous denominations of the WCRC (which endorsed and cosponsored the event). In all, fifty-six attendees participated, representing ecumenical partners from twenty countries. The EFD consultation proved to be a genuinely ecumenical meeting of representatives of Reformed churches from around the world. It offered the respective churches the opportunity to reflect on the use of creeds and confessions and, more specifically, to consider, in an open and transparent environment, whether and how this new EFD category could serve a broader purpose among Reformed churches.

B. Results of the discussions

The consultation program was structured to focus initially on the broader role of creeds and confessions in church history. Then the consultation moved to a more targeted focus on the needs of this century and possibilities that might be envisioned regarding *ecumenical faith declarations*. The following notes describe what came out of the discussions:

1. It became apparent that creeds and confessions function in a variety of ways in the life of the churches represented at the consultation, with considerable diversity in the degree to which the creeds and confessions have been employed as foundations for identity in particular church circles. It also became evident that there are differences in the function of confessions in the churches of the WCRC and in the perception of their authoritative nature related to levels of expected subscription to them.

2. There was not a generally recognized need to expand the confessional basis of the WCRC churches to address contemporary issues (such as would be envisioned by the EFD category).

3. As an outgrowth of the two points noted above, the idea of having a general category for faith documents that numerous churches could share did not resonate with the participants. (Some participants urged that decisions of churches about issues in their particular contexts are sufficient.)

4. With all this, the EFD category did not convey a clearly understood purpose and meaning to those gathered. Even with the explanations offered by the EIRC planning subcommittee and other CRC members (all subdivided among the four discussion groups), the participants did not see value in accepting an EFD category.

C. Outcome of the consultation

Through preliminary discussions with various ecumenical partners about the EFD in the year following Synod 2012's decision to adopt the Belhar

Confession as an EFD, the EIRC expected a positive response to the category at the EFD Consultation in February 2014. Through the extensive discussions held there, though, it became sharply apparent that—however much participants appreciated a careful discussion and consideration of confessional matters—only a small number of participants (who were not themselves CRC) saw potential value in the EFD category. In the concluding plenary discussions at the consultation, however, no one (who was not a CRC member) spoke in favor of the category.

The "confusion" alluded to in the EIRC report to Synod 2016 (and cited in Synod's 2016 direction to EIRC) concerned the reason for and purpose of the EFD category. The concluding discussions demonstrated that the consultation did not see need for or value in the EFD category.

III. Recommendation regarding the EFD category

Synod 2016 asked the EIRC for a report (provided in this appendix) "advising Synod 2017 on the viability of the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category." The EIRC recommends that synod approve discontinuance of the EFD category.

> *Ground:* The category is confusing to our ecumenical partners; "ecumenical" does not fit if no denomination other than the CRCNA embraces it.

Appendix D
Contemporary Testimony as a Category

I. Introduction and background

Synod 2012 considered the adoption of the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). The Belhar Confession was presented to the CRC as a gift from the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and has been adopted as a confession by the Reformed Church in America (RCA) among other denominations. But instead of adopting the Belhar Confession as a fourth standard of unity, Synod 2012 created a new category and adopted the Belhar as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration.

Subsequent synods asked the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee (EIRC) to assess the effectiveness of the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category. The EIRC reported to synod in 2015 (*Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 291-92) that their inquiry conducted in 2014 demonstrated that the category was not helpful. This information was summarized for Synod 2016:

> Synod 2012 adopted the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration (EFD) without providing definition to this new category. As reported to Synod 2014, the category of Ecumenical Faith Declaration did not find favor with the attendees at a conference gathered to focus on the possible value of such a category (see the EIRC report to Synod 2015, *Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 291-92), nor with our ecumenical partners. Some of our ecumenical partners are confused by the category; still others remain discouraged that the CRC did not adopt it as a confession.
>
> (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 324)

Synod 2016 received the EIRC report and also addressed an overture asking that the Belhar Confession be reconsidered as a fourth standard of unity. After reviewing the overture, the advisory committee brought forward a series of recommendations, which the assembly adopted after some deliberation. Two of these recommendations follow:

> That synod recognize that Overture 13, together with the EIRC reports to Synod 2015 and Synod 2016, exposes dissatisfactions with locating the Belhar Confession in the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category.
>
> > *Ground:* The EIRC reports to Synod 2015 and Synod 2016 both expressed concern that our category for the Belhar Confession has been received with confusion by some of our ecumenical partners in the broader Reformed community, and that Overture 13 and personal testimonies heard by the committee express the inadequacy of its current applications.
> >
> > (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 913)
>
> That synod propose that Synod 2017 recategorize the Belhar Confession to the same status as that of a contemporary testimony in the CRC—same as *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*.
>
> > *Grounds:*
> > a. Synod 2013 declined to respond to an overture requesting a change in the status of the Belhar Confession on the grounds that the EIRC's work of seeking feedback from ecumenical partners regarding the category of Ecumenical Faith Declarations was not yet complete (*Acts of Synod 2013*, p. 574). Per EIRC reports to Synod 2015 and Synod 2016, the current status of the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration is confusing to our ecumenical partners.
> > b. Synod 2014 urged the EIRC "to continue its assessment of the place of the Belhar Confession in the life and ministry of the CRC and report back to synod at appropriate times" (*Acts of Synod 2014,* p. 565).
> > c. The current status of the Belhar Confession does not provide the necessary weight to respond appropriately to the historic and recurring presence of racialized violence, systemic racism, and ethnic strife throughout the world.
> >
> > (*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 913-14)

II. Suggested preliminary step

Upon receiving the request of Synod 2016, the EIRC realized that the category of Contemporary Testimony has never been adopted and defined by synod. Rather, the phrase *A Contemporary Testimony* has been part of the title of *Our World Belongs to God* since its adoption in 1986. The complete reference title of this document has been *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony.*

Before considering the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony, it is appropriate for synod to first consider adopting a definition and function for the category Contemporary Testimony.

III. Emergence of Contemporary Testimony as a category

Our World Belongs to God was called a testimony rather than a confession in order to distinguish it from the historic confessions of earlier centuries. As the original preface states, "A testimony contains what a church finds essential to confess at this time. It is more temporary in aim than a confession. . . ." There was also the stated hope that, over time, this testimony might gain confessional status.

After twenty years *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony* had won wide usage throughout the CRC for personal study, teaching, and in worship. In 2005 synod asked the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to appoint a committee to write an updated version of *Our World Belongs to God*. It reasoned that "given the changes in our world that have taken place since [1986], along with the fact that *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony* does not function at the level of a confession but has served instead as a dynamic statement of faith, it must periodically be reviewed and perhaps revised if it is to speak contemporaneously" (*Acts of Synod 2005*, p. 734).

IV. Recommendations

A. That synod adopt the following definition for the category of contemporary testimony:

> A *contemporary testimony* is a dynamic statement of faith that serves the CRCNA—its congregations and members—as a statement that is essential for a given time period. It is useful for study, faith formation, teaching, and worship. As such, it must periodically be reviewed if it is to speak contemporaneously and perhaps (1) be revised if authorship belongs to the CRCNA or (2) be provided newly revised accompanying explanatory material if authorship belongs elsewhere. It may ultimately gain confessional status, pending synodical approval, although such a possibility should not be considered a criterion for adopting a statement as a contemporary testimony.

Grounds:

1. This definition comports with previous synodically approved descriptions of a *contemporary testimony.*
2. This definition clearly differentiates a *contemporary testimony* from a *confession.*

B. That synod recognize *Our World Belongs to God* as in the newly defined category of contemporary testimony.

Grounds:

1. This action is consistent with the role *Our World Belongs to God* has served in the Christian Reformed Church since its adoption.
2. This action would provide needed clarity when considering the Belhar Confession's recategorization as a contemporary testimony.

Appendix E
***Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 909-14**

Please note: The following material is reprinted from the *Acts of Synod 2016* for information; Recommendation 7 below is being presented to Synod 2017 as directed by Synod 2016.

C. Recommendations

1. That synod reaffirm that all people are created in God's image and are worthy of our love, care, and protection.

Grounds:

a. There is continued public rhetoric that diminishes the value and dignity of people based upon their racial, ethnic, cultural, or national identity.
b. *God's Diverse and Unified Family* states: "As God's imagebearers, all human beings without exception are endowed with royal dignity and share in dominion over all creation" (Creation, pt. 1).

—*Adopted*

2. That synod grieve alongside those who have been and continue to be marginalized through racialized violence, systemic racism, and ethnic strife in North American society.

—*Adopted*

3. That synod offer prayers of lament as a response of solidarity with those who have been brutalized by these sinful actions and the attitudes of indifference that have frequently accompanied them.

Grounds:

a. Overture 13 and the testimony of representatives from Classis Hackensack (among others) give evidence to the personal and communal pain being carried by many in the church and in our broader culture on account of the continued perpetuation of racism within North America.
b. Scripture calls us to carry each other's burdens and to weep with those who weep: Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15.
c. Belhar Confession Article 4 states that "the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

—*Adopted*

4. That synod denounce the racialized violence, systemic racism, and ethnic strife evident in North American society.

Grounds:

a. Events of the past several years in the United States and Canada have heightened public attention to the ongoing and systemic nature of racism within the North American context.
b. Belhar Confession Article 4 states that "the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."
c. Previous synods have issued declarations against racism in response to situations of heightened racial tension, such as in Charleston, South Carolina (*Acts of Synod 2015,* p. 682; see also *Acts of Synod 1968*, p. 18).

—*Adopted*

5. That synod recognize that Overture 13, together with the EIRC reports to Synod 2015 and Synod 2016, exposes dissatisfactions with locating the Belhar Confession in the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category.

Ground: The EIRC reports to Synod 2015 and Synod 2016 both expressed concern that our category for the Belhar Confession has been received with confusion by some of our ecumenical partners in the broader Reformed community, and that Overture 13 and personal testimonies heard by the committee express the inadequacy of its current applications.

—*Adopted*

6. That synod direct the EIRC to provide a report on the confusion with the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category as identified by our ecumenical partners in their February 2014 consultation and in subsequent conversations with the EIRC, advising Synod 2017 on the viability of the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category.

—Adopted

7. That synod propose that Synod 2017 recategorize the Belhar Confession to the same status as that of a contemporary testimony in the CRC—same as *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*.

   Grounds:

   a. Synod 2013 declined to respond to an overture requesting a change in the status of the Belhar Confession on the grounds that the EIRC's work of seeking feedback from ecumenical partners regarding the category of Ecumenical Faith Declarations was not yet complete (*Acts of Synod 2013,* p. 574). Per EIRC reports to Synod 2015 and Synod 2016, the current status of the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration is confusing to our ecumenical partners.
   b. Synod 2014 urged the EIRC "to continue its assessment of the place of the Belhar Confession in the life and ministry of the CRC and report back to synod at appropriate times" (*Acts of Synod 2014,* p. 565).
   c. The current status of the Belhar Confession does not provide the necessary weight to respond appropriately to the historic and recurring presence of racialized violence, systemic racism, and ethnic strife throughout the world.

—Adopted

I. Introduction

The Historical Committee is a standing committee of the Christian Reformed Church established by Synod 1934 to oversee the work of the denominational archives and promote publication of denominationally related historical studies. The committee's members are Dr. Lyle Bierma, chair (2017, second term); Dr. Paul Bremer (2019, second term); Dr. Kristin Kobes DuMez (2019, second term); Dr. Robert Schoone-Jongen (2018, second term); Dr. Richard Harms *(ex officio)*, secretary.

II. Archives staff

Dr. Richard Harms is the curator of the archives, housed in Heritage Hall on the campus of Calvin College; he also serves as archivist for the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin College. Other staff members are Ms. Hendrina Van Spronsen, office manager; Ms. Laurie Haan, department assistant; Ms. Holly Waldenmeyer, department assistant; Dr. Robert Bolt, field agent and assistant archivist; and Ms. Jessica Vos, student assistant. They are assisted by volunteers Mr. Phil Erffmeyer, Mr. Ed Gerritsen, Mr. Ralph Haan, Ms. Helen Meulink, Ms. Clarice Newhof, Ms. Janet Sheeres, and Ms. Jeannette Smith.

At the end of April 2017, Dr. Harms will retire after nineteen years as curator of the archives. During this time the denomination's archives have expanded from 70 cubic feet to 1,200 cubic feet of records, all of it readily accessible. The committee commends him on his many accomplishments during these years and wishes the best for him and his wife, Joan, as they move into this new phase of their lives.

III. Significant archival work during 2016

A. Christian Reformed Church Archives (other than the microfilming of congregations' minutes)

- Christian Reformed Home Missions records (35 cubic feet), much of it dealing with outreach efforts during the past four decades.
- Narrative reports to the Fund for Smaller Churches (6.5 cubic feet), providing insight into both the successes and shortcomings of efforts to support these ministry efforts.
- Instructional, convention, and promotional materials for Coffee Break (2 cubic feet), dating back to 1994.
- Administrative records for Faith Alive Christian Resources (2 cubic feet), including meeting minutes and supporting documentation and a small amount of correspondence.
- Records from the discontinued West Park Christian Reformed Church of Cleveland, Ohio (4 cubic feet).
- Records from Cutlerville East Christian Reformed Church of Cutlerville, Michigan (2 cubic feet), primarily their newsletter.

B. Calvin College Archives

- Records from the college provost's office (8 cubic feet), detailing instructional developments and teaching personnel (access to the latter are restricted by legal statutes) from the preceding ten years.
- Records from the Educational Policies Committee (7 cubic feet), documenting changes to, additions to, and subtractions from courses offered by the college, primarily from the first decade of the twenty-first century.
- Records from the office of the president (4 cubic feet), Gaylen Byker presidency, 1995-2012.
- Minutes and supporting documents of the college board of trustees (2 cubic feet), 2011-2016.
- Records of the Kinesiology Department (2 cubic feet).

C. Dutch in North America Collections

Much of our processing time for manuscript collections was devoted to the papers of Vernon J. Ehlers, former Calvin College faculty member and member of the U.S. House of Representatives. The resulting collection of 59.5 cubic feet, one of our largest manuscript collections, traces his career from his time as a graduate student in the late 1950s through his eighteen years in the United States Congress, ending in 2011.

We added four cubic feet of material to the papers of Dr. H.J. Brinks, the former curator of Heritage Hall, who was one of several scholars, since the 1960s, who refocused research attention on the Dutch in North America.

We opened the papers of Rev. Gerrit Boerfyn (1911-2000), who had a long career as a home missionary in the midwestern and western United States.

Tina Ipema donated three cubic feet of papers from her late husband, Rev. Peter Ipema, documenting his career as a missionary in Africa and his work as a leading scholar on the relationships between Christianity and Islam in Africa.

The collection of Antonia Teernstra details her youth in the Netherlands during the Great Depression and World War II, and then her marriage and subsequent immigration to the United States with her husband, Gerard Beisecker, a manufacturer of organ pipes.

Dr. Clifton Orlebeek's collection of material on Eastern philosophies is contained in his papers.

IV. Publications by *Origins*

We continue publishing the semiannual paper copies of *Origins*, which is self-funding. We have electronically published another year of *Origins* (2015) via our webpage (www. calvin.edu/hh/origins/Origins_Main_Page/htm); an index to the 1955-1964 birth, marriage, anniversary, and death notices in *The Banner* (www.calvin.edu/hh/Banner/Banner.htm); and the birth, marriage, anniversary, and death notices in *Christian Courier*, 1945-2015 (www.calvin.edu/hh/family_history_resources/ChristianCourier.htm).

V. Recognition

A. The committee recognizes individuals who will celebrate significant anniversaries during 2018. These 138 ministers will have served a combined 7,816 years in the ordained ministry:

77 years, 1941-2018	Gysbert J. Rozenboom
73 years, 1945-2018	James W. Van Weelden
70 years, 1948-2018	Carl G. Kromminga, Sr. Howard B. Spaan
69 years, 1949-2018	Albert J. Vanden Pol
68 years, 1950-2018	Lugene A. Bazuin Martin D. Geleynse Dick C. Los Lammert Slofstra
67 years, 1951-2018	Leonard J. Hofman Jacob Kuntz MyungJae Lee John T. Malestein
66 years, 1952-2018	Ralph D. Baker Herman Leestma Richard D. Sytsma Rits Tadema Samuel Vander Jagt Benjamin Ypma
65 years, 1953-2018	Harry G. Arnold William A. Huyser Bassam M. Madany Bernard J. Niemeyer Kenneth R. Slager John W. Van Stempvoort Theodore Verseput
64 years, 1954-2018	Alan A. Arkema Louis F. Baker Marvin Beelen Ralph W. Bronkema Floyd R. De Boer Earl D. Dykema Sidney H. Rooy Anthonie Vanden Ende
63 years, 1955-2018	Andrew J. Bandstra Rodger J. Buining John Bylsma Michiel M. De Berdt Bert Den Herder John Hofman

	Earl C. Marlink Jack J. Matheis Carl J. Reitsma John C. Rickers Gerard Ringnalda William Kenneth Stob Jacob W. Uitvlugt Wilbert M. Van Dyk
62 years, 1956-2018	Harold Bode Theodore L. Brouwer John Cooper Sidney Cooper Milton R. Doornbos Norman E. Jones James R. Kok Calvin W. Niewenhuis Jacob A. Quartel Clarence Van Essen John G. Van Ryn
61 years, 1957-2018	Wilbur L. De Jong Earl S. Holkeboer Louis E. Kok Pieter Kranenburg Eugene W. Los Harvey A. Ouwinga Eugene F. Rubingh Arnold (Arend) Rumph Jack (Jacob) Stulp Paul C.H. Szto Louis M. Tamminga Hans Uittenbosch Roger E. Van Harn James E. Versluys Donald P. Wisse Lloyd J. Wolters
60 years, 1958-2018	Raymond G. Brinks Ralph A. Bruxvoort Sidney Draayer Donald J. Griffioen Kenneth L. Havert Allan H. Jongsma Henry T. Karsten John Koopmans Theodore Medema Edward P. Meyer Alvin A. Mulder Bernard W. Mulder Garrett H. Stoutmeyer

	Leverne K. Tanis Jack L. Vander Laan Arie G. Van Eek
55 years, 1963-2018	Clarence Bishop Warren J. Boer Peter Breedveld Peter W. De Bruyne Sidney C. J. De Waal Evert Gritter Jack S. Hielema Robert J. Holwerda Carroll E. Keegstra Jim R. Kok William H. Kooienga Dick Kwantes Donald H. Postema Paul H. Redhouse Robert D. Ruis Gerrit W. Sheeres Norman Shepherd Dick M. Stravers Edward J. Tamminga Alvin J. Vander Griend Frederick J. Walhof John J. Wiegers Woon Se Yeo
50 years, 1968-2018	H. Hendrik Boer William Brander Paul Brink Edward A.M. Den Haan Robert C. De Vries Albert Dreise Gerald W. Frens Allan C. Groen Jacob P. Heerema A. William Heersink Herman Keizer John Kerssies Kenneth D. Koeman Roger D. Kramer Derk Oostendorp Donald L. Recker John J. Steigenga Richard E. Sytsma Robert H. Uken Kenneth J. Vander Wall Vernon G. Vander Zee Arthur L. Van Wyhe

B. We report the following anniversaries of ministries that will occur during 2018:

25 years, 1993-2018	Artesia, CA – Cerritos Woori Church Camarillo, CA – Iglesia Cristiana Ref. de Camarillo Chicago, IL – Back to God All Nations Church Holland, MI – VictoryPoint Ministries Kent, WA – Kent First Korean North Liberty, IA – Chinese Church Peterborough, ON – Living Hope San Diego, CA – Trinity Fellowship Winnipeg, MB – Covenant Zeeland, MI – Gateway Community
50 years, 1968-2018	Cutlerville, MI – Hillside Community De Motte, IN – Bethel Edmonton, AB – Trinity of Edmonton Grand Rapids, MI – Woodlawn London, ON – Bethel Lowell, MI – Calvary Marysville, WA – Cascade Pella, IA – Faith Sauk Village, IL – Emmanuel Tacoma, WA – Tacoma Chr. Ref. Community Church Wappingers Falls, NY – Immanuel Webster, NY – Webster
75 years, 1943-2018	Bellflower, CA – Bethany San Diego, CA – Living Faith Community Washington, D.C. – Washington, D.C., CRC
100 years, 1918-2018	Ripon, CA – First
150 years, 1868-2018	Oostburg, WI – First

VI. Reminders

We ask congregations that have observed anniversaries during 2016 or will observe anniversaries during 2017 to send copies of commemorative materials (booklets, historical sketches, video recordings, photographs, etc.) to the archives.

During 2016, official minutes from 86 Christian Reformed congregations and three Christian school organizations were received and microfilmed. The film copies were stored in our vault and, as always, originals were returned to the respective churches. Of the 851 active, organized congregations, 658 have participated in the records microfilming effort. Once a congregation is ten years old, we begin contacting them about the program. There are 776 congregations that meet this threshold, which means we have 85 percent participation. Although this is a high percentage for such projects, the staff strives for 100 percent participation.

Official minutes were received from all forty-eight classes (minutes from meetings late in the year had not yet been received when this report was being prepared). Anniversary materials were received from fourteen Christian

Reformed churches. The following classes are to be commended for having had minutes duplicated from all of their churches that are at least ten years old: Arizona, Eastern Canada, Grand Rapids East, Hamilton, Niagara, Thornapple Valley, and Zeeland. These seven classes are particularly noteworthy for continuing to achieve this distinction year after year.

VII. Regional representatives

The Historical Committee has a representative in each classis who acts as a liaison between the committee and churches within that classis. During this past year communications have been sent to each of our representatives thanking them for their services throughout 2016 and requesting that they continue to serve next year. In a number of classes, the stated clerk has taken this additional role, for which the committee is particularly thankful.

VIII. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to a member of the Historical Committee when matters pertaining to the mandate of the committee come before synod.

B. That synod recognize Dr. Lyle Bierma, who is completing his second term, and express gratitude for his contributions and service, including several years as chair of the committee.

C. That synod appoint a new member to a first term of three years from the following slate of names:

> *Dr. John Bolt* teaches systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) and has been an ordained minister of the Word in the CRCNA since 1973. He has served the church in Penticton and Kelowna, British Columbia, and he taught at Calvin College and Redeemer University College before joining the faculty at CTS in 1988. He has written or edited fourteen books, with focused attention on Herman Bavinck, Johan Herman Bavinck, Abraham Kuyper, and Christian education. He notes that one way to gain a better understanding of Christian faith is by listening to the "voices of important theologians throughout church history."
>
> *Rev. Scott E. Hoezee* has been the director of the Center for Excellence in Preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary since 2005, before which he served as pastor at Second CRC, Fremont, Michigan, and at Calvin CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He previously served on the editorial committee for *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought*, and he has authored or coauthored six books, including two detailing the history of the CRCNA: *Flourishing in the Land*, a history of the denomination's mission outreach, and *Grace through Every Generation,* a history of the denomination for the general reader.

D. That synod acknowledge and thank Dr. Richard Harms for his nineteen years of service as archivist for the Christian Reformed Church.

E. That synod instruct 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 via surface mail, fax, or

email to Archives, Calvin College, 1855 Knollcrest Circle SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4402; fax: 616-526-7689; or crcarchives@calvin.edu.

F. That synod encourage the following classes, all of which have at least one member congregation more than ten years old that has not had its minutes duplicated, to contact the archives to have this done: Alberta North, Alberta South/Saskatchewan, Atlantic Northeast, B.C. North-West, B.C. South-West, California South, Central California, Central Plains, Chatham, Chicago South, Columbia, Georgetown, Grand Rapids North, Grand Rapids South, Grandville, Greater Los Angeles, Hackensack, Hanmi, Heartland, Holland, Hudson, Huron, Iakota, Illiana, Kalamazoo, Ko-Am, Lake Erie, Lake Superior, Minnkota, Muskegon, Northcentral Iowa, Northern Illinois, Northern Michigan, Pacific Northwest, Quinte, Red Mesa, Rocky Mountain, Southeast U.S., Toronto, Wisconsin, and Yellowstone.

Historical Committee
Lyle Bierma, chair
Paul Bremer
Kristin Kobes Du Mez
Richard Harms *(ex officio)*, secretary
Robert Schoone-Jongen

DENOMINATIONALLY RELATED AGENCIES

Dordt College

Year after year we send our greetings and our brief report to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church, and year after year we are newly grateful for the partnership we enjoy and the support we receive from the CRCNA.

Enrollment at Dordt College for the 2016-17 school year reached an all-time high of 1,523 students; the incoming class was the largest since 2008. Dordt's retention of students from first to second year was nearly 30 percent higher than the national average of 60 percent; our four-year graduation rate is nearly 70 percent in comparison with the national average of less than 50 percent; and our placement rate is more than 99 percent. We have much for which to be thankful.

Many of our students are drawn by and value the strong sense of community at Dordt College. We were reminded of this again this year when the *Wall Street Journal* ranked Dordt College first in the nation for student engagement;
Dordt students scored in the 96th percentile in educational growth testing administered by the Educational Testing Service. Interestingly, the top five performers on the *Wall Street Journal*'s engagement ranking are all religious institutions. We continue to believe that learning for serving is a powerful motivator and mission.

Dordt College continues to find new ways to engage and meet the needs of students with a variety of interests and gifts. Our new Pro-Tech program will help fill a gap in Christian education at the associate level. The two-year professional and technical program, set to begin next fall, will give its majors a full Christian college experience as they gain hands-on vocational training. At the heart of the new program is the conviction that students should be equipped to serve in all areas of life and that today's professional-technical vocations are critical to our collective work for Christ in today's industry and workforce.

Initial Pro-Tech programs and their internships will focus on farm operation and management and manufacturing technology. As the program expands, so will the offerings. The newly hired head of the manufacturing program has a wealth of experience in technical education and a passion for helping Christian students gain a broad understanding of how to live their calling in careers in manufacturing and technical fields.

The Dordt College Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service's website, In All Things, continues to provide a forum in which Christians can share ideas and learn from each other about how to live in healthy relationship with God, their neighbors, and creation.

Over the past year readership of www.inallthings.org has doubled, with an average of 15,000 people visiting the site each month. Christian writers from Dordt College, wider North America, and around the globe address topics such as faith and science, politics, parenting, sports, race, and much more. A year-long devotional guide centered on the Common Lectionary is currently being featured, and book and film review essays are also presented to strengthen God's people for kingdom service.

In our core program and in our discipline-specific courses, in vocation-specific internships and research and scholarly endeavors, we believe God calls us to discern his call for our living. Please pray for us as we pray for your deliberations that his Spirit will be working in all of us to do our work in a way that honors him.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Dordt College
Erik Hoekstra, president

Institute for Christian Studies

As the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) approaches the 50th anniversary of its official opening, our attention is firmly focused on the decades ahead. Our mission is as vital as ever, and we look to God to show us the way to pursue our calling with vigor in the years to come. Despite the difficulties of this past year associated with necessary structural and financial changes, we have been encouraged by the continued and generous commitment of our CRC churches and support community. Following are some highlights of the ongoing work of ICS in 2016-2017.

Our M.A. and Ph.D. degrees continue to be a focus of our generations-long commitment to Christian scholarship at the highest level of the academy. Currently our enrollment stands at twenty-three junior members: ten in the M.A. program, ten in the Ph.D. program, and three in the Master of Worldview Studies program. In May 2016 we celebrated the graduation of seven accomplished junior members: two Ph.D., two M.A., and three M.W.S. degrees.

Across our total offering of 20 courses, we have 70 course registrations—a figure that includes students enrolling in single courses from the Toronto School of Theology or via distance education.

Last fall we redesigned our Wayfinding program, intended originally as a new stream in our Master of Worldview Studies. As we canvassed pastors and leaders in Christian organizations, it became apparent that this exciting opportunity, designed to help women and men in the workforce navigate the intersections of faith and work, needed to be more accessible in its delivery and registration expectations. We are currently offering the first course, Vocational Wayfinding, as an online learning opportunity in two six-week modules, available for both degree and continuing-education credit.

The second "ART in Orvieto," a four-week residency in Italy, has been designed by Rebekah Smick (associate professor of philosophy of arts and culture) to serve artists and authors as they explore the relationship between art, religion, and theology. This will take place June 18 - July 15, 2017. These flexible learning opportunities help us fulfill our commitment to serve the community more extensively.

To broaden the reach of our educational offerings, we are forging partnerships with Christian undergraduate institutions and community service organizations. These partnership conversations include the initial planning stages of an M.A. in leadership (with a focus on educational leadership) with two university colleges in Ontario.

Our Institutional Repository, ICS's online database of faculty, student, and other publications, launched three years ago, continues to expand its reach into the global academic community. Online search engines based in the United States, Canada, China, and Germany harvest documents from our repository on a regular basis. Even the smallest detail, such as a citation located in a document in the repository, can be found through search engines like Google Scholar. We garner approximately 1,700 hits each month. Our top visitors are from France, the United Kingdom, Vietnam, Ukraine, and Japan. The repository is now mobile friendly and is accessible at ir.icscanada.edu/icsir/.

Teaching excellence goes hand in hand with disciplined research. Our senior members make a significant contribution through their books and articles. Most recent is Robert Sweetman's *Tracing the Lines: Spiritual Exercise and the Gesture of Christian Scholarship*, the first book in a new series titled *Currents in Reformational Thought*.

The Centre for Philosophy, Religion, and Social Ethics continues its work by collaborating with other organizations to bring quality research and scholarship to the community at large. There are currently two partnership events on the Centre's agenda:

- Building our whole society: religion and citizenship at Canada's 150th, a three-day multisectoral conference on the theme of religious citizenship (May 7-9, 2017).
- Faith and settlement partnerships, a two-year SSHRC partnership development grant led by the Centre for Community-Based Research, and in collaboration with the CRCNA's World Renew.

There were two Art Talks! events this year:

- In conjunction with the Art Gallery of Ontario's groundbreaking exhibit, Mystical Landscapes: Masterpieces from Monet, van Gogh, and More, Rebekah Smick was responsible for inviting renowned Christian philosopher Charles Taylor (author of *A Secular Age*) to give what was a sell-out lecture on November 1, 2016. Those participating in the event also enjoyed an introductory panel presentation led by Dr. Smick.

- Post-secular cinema: "Navigating the Open Space between the Sacred and the Secular," a two-day cultural festival organized by CPRSE in partnership with the Toronto International Film Festival's Higher Learning program (Apr. 1, 2017). The keynote speaker was the acclaimed American screenwriter, film director, and film critic (and Calvin College alumnus) Paul Schrader. Other planning and financial partners in this event were Imago, Knox Presbyterian Church, and Ryerson University.

Thank you for standing with us in our mission these past 50 years. We look forward to our continued partnership in the years ahead. We want to thank you especially for the continued generosity you have shown us in this year of expanding initiatives. This commitment to our students and our vision for Christian higher education encourages and strengthens us as we work to fulfill God's calling.

May God grant you wisdom and discernment in your work during Synod 2017.

Institute for Christian Studies
Doug Blomberg, president

The King's University

Greetings from The King's University! We're pleased to have this opportunity to share the blessings we've enjoyed since our last report, and to look ahead to the exciting opportunities of 2017.

In September 2016, King's enrolled a record high 785 students to study and be a part of our community for the 2016-17 academic year. It has been encouraging to see four consecutive years of positive enrollment growth. Much of our strategic planning is centered on ways to further increase student enrollment. This includes focused efforts on program expansion in key areas (natural and social sciences), enhancing student services by supporting the intentional development of student skills required for university success, fostering faith formation and spiritual development, and improving scholarship options to assist in recruitment and retention. Thank you for continuing to partner with us on this exciting journey.

Fall 2016 marked the completion of our campus master planning process and a monumental decision by the board to remain committed to our current campus location and to focus on further developing the space we have occupied since 1993. The campus master plan demonstrated the incredible opportunities that we have with our current space, and it confirmed that further development of our existing property would allow us to serve at least 4,000 students. Before making the decision to commit to our current location, we had a group of volunteers explore opportunities in the Edmonton area for relocating the campus. In their report to the board, they outlined the pros and cons of each option they investigated. The board spent considerable time evaluating the report and came to a consensus that our mission and vision supersedes our location, and that we will be able to serve our community very well from our current location for years to come.

Conversations between King's and the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) regarding a potential partnering or merger were recently resurrected. ICS is a graduate school in Toronto with which we share a mission, a history, and overlapping supporting constituencies. There have been many discussions regarding a possible partnership over the years, but none were successful. While the current conversation is still in early stages, the ICS Board of Trustees did commit, at a meeting in November 2016, to partnering with The King's University. There are a number of major challenges to be worked through, such as the matter of ICS's Ontario Charter, the development of a long-term, sustainable financial model, and the governance structure of any merged entity.

Over the past several months we have navigated some potential issues involving our membership to Universities Canada. King's has been a Universities Canada member since 1992, and membership in Universities Canada is important to us. While not an accrediting body, Universities Canada has reputational importance, and membership is a mark of quality higher education well recognized in Canada and abroad. Over the years, the place of faith-based universities in Universities Canada has been a matter of debate for the association's membership. Required faith statements are perceived, by some, to have serious implications for academic freedom. Over the past year, there have been extensive conversations with the membership on revisions to the bylaws of Universities Canada and how they might affect King's faith-based

hiring policies. Through a process of much dialogue and discussion, the proposed criteria and policy that were developed seem to allow a member institution such as The King's University to hire on the basis of faith. The proposed by-law amendment would not allow a member institution to discriminate on other grounds. We expect that there will be much to work through regarding the implementation and implications of this policy in the months to come. We ask for your continued prayers on matters such as this, where our place as a Christian university in the public sphere is challenged.

The gifts we receive from our supporting community are profoundly important for our institution. We are incredibly thankful to the Christian Reformed Church in North America for confirming the value of the work being done at King's by giving generously through ministry shares and other offerings. We continue to use the resources with which we have been blessed in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Your commitment to our students and to King's mission to provide "university education that inspires and equips learners to bring renewal and reconciliation to every walk of life as followers of Jesus Christ, the Servant-King" is deeply appreciated. On behalf of the entire King's community, we would like to express our sincere gratitude.

May God bless your work on behalf of his church during Synod 2017.

The King's University
Melanie Humphreys, president

Kuyper College

The Reformed Bible Institute (later to be known as Reformed Bible College and then Kuyper College) would not have come into existence without the Christian Reformed Church. It was the mission movement within the Christian Reformed Church during the first part of the twentieth century that gave birth to the Reformed Bible Institute in 1939. And members of the Christian Reformed Church have continued to form a critical mass within the growing and developing support community for this institution ever since.

As a result, today's Kuyper College can pause to say, "Thank you" to the Christian Reformed Church for its dedication to the gospel and its continuing spread across the world and throughout all of culture.

Today it's not only missionary training that marks the Kuyper College curriculum. Our largest major is social work. Our rapidly growing business leadership program is close behind. Our preseminary collaboration with Calvin Theological Seminary is particularly meaningful to the CRCNA, as are the numerous youth ministry as well as music and worship alumni currently serving in a wide range of churches, including CRCNA congregations, across the United States and Canada.

In short, wherever in the world and in whatever way there is a need for the integrative Reformed biblical perspective to be applied with missionary passion and solid doctrinal and biblical foundations, Kuyper College is grateful to be able to serve. And while we give God all the glory for what has been accomplished, we also offer a heartfelt thank-you to the CRCNA for the nurture and continuing support that makes this possible.

As the interim president of Kuyper College, I wish to offer a salute to Dr. Nick Kroeze, who served as president for twenty-two years until his retirement at the beginning of this year. Anytime one person serves for close to a third of the history of a long-standing institution like Kuyper College, deep appreciation and gratitude are due, first of all to our faithful God and as well to his obedient and willing servant.

I trust that the synod of the CRCNA will join me in offering humble thanks and praise to the God who has provided such leadership in the past, beginning with our first professor, Johanna Timmer, and, we pray, under the leadership of a permanent president in the months ahead. We respectfully ask—and pray—that the CRCNA will continue to support Kuyper College in the years ahead as faithfully and generously as it has in the decades gone by.

Kuyper College
Carl E. Zylstra, interim president

Redeemer University College

Greetings from Redeemer University College! We're thankful for this opportunity to share with you the ways God has been at work at Redeemer, and to look ahead to the exciting opportunities in store for us over the next few years.

This past September, Redeemer welcomed 206 incoming students, a 2.5 percent increase over last year and the first year-over-year increase in incoming students in four years. Redeemer has prepared graduating classes—the next generation of Christian leaders—for 35 years, and our graduates bear witness to the fact that faith lived in the church pew overflows into all of life.

Why? Because Redeemer students are shaped by the Reformed Christian commitment to see faith woven through all aspects of learning and life. In their university college experience, they want to honor God in the classroom, in every discipline and program, on the field or court, in their dorms, in their off-campus learning and service opportunities.

We remain committed to this overarching mission during this time of leadership transition. I am grateful to report that our board is actively moving forward with the process of finding Redeemer's next president, with the hope of an announcement later this year.

In the meantime, the Redeemer 2020 strategic plan will continue to build on the vision of our founders. The 2020 plan's program renewal, institutional profile raising, and resource stewardship efforts will not stall. We also acknowledge that financial challenges require hard decisions that can negatively affect valuable colleagues, their families, and our Redeemer community. We regret that pain is caused even as we remain committed to honor and steward student tuition dollars and the generous gifts of our supporters.

In our efforts to provide a firm financial foundation for the future, we are also pursuing strategic opportunities. So in the coming year we look forward to the following launches and celebrations of key initiatives:

- A new Centre for Experiential Learning and Careers will help students connect their sense of calling with a career through co-ops, internships, workshops, and individualized career guidance. The center launches formally on March 2.
- This past September we celebrated with students, faculty, staff, external stakeholders, and others the launch of a new Christ-centered core curriculum with courses emphasizing interdisciplinarity and digital awareness.
- In the next academic year we plan to launch a revamped ministry program with a new urban and intercultural ministry major. Our goal is to prepare the next generation of urban and overseas ministry leaders for our communities, ministry organizations, and churches.
- The Centre for Christian Scholarship is increasing its impact of research from a Christian perspective through grants and lecture series that address current cultural issues.
- In the next few years, we believe more young Christians will hear about Redeemer. Through a new content marketing strategy, including the recently launched *Resound* magazine (print and digital), our goal is to double Redeemer's market brand awareness by 2020.

– Further, we are working hard to keep tuition affordable by maintaining balanced budgets and reducing Redeemer's long-term debt. Our goal by 2020 is to reduce our debt to $15 million, down from $33 million in 2009; and, by doing so, secure Redeemer's financial position for the next generation. We are getting close. By the end of this fiscal year, we anticipate our debt will be down to approximately $20 million.

In all these exciting new initiatives, we remain rooted in the Reformed Christian tradition through Christ-centered liberal arts and science education. Redeemer continues to be a place where the next generation of leaders, whose foundation is a bedrock of faith in Jesus Christ, are prepared to foster God's kingdom in families, communities, and public and private institutions.

The Christian Reformed Church community has played a significant role in the life of Redeemer. We are grateful for the ongoing support of Christian Reformed congregations and individuals. Our university college exists and thrives today because of the visionaries who believed that the institutions they built and worked in—churches, schools, businesses, banks, hospitals—need a foundation in the bedrock of faith.

Redeemer University College
Fred Verwoerd, interim president

Trinity Christian College

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on behalf of Trinity Christian College. Throughout our history we have valued and appreciated our relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. We are grateful for the support we receive from CRC congregations that direct a portion of their ministry shares for Christian higher education to Trinity. We cherish the students from CRC families who select Trinity as their college. We relish the opportunities to be in partnership with the CRC in a variety of ways—from hosting classis meetings (and, in 2017, the meeting of synod), to serving as a resource for local congregations, to preparing students to be leaders in our local congregations. Our partnership with the CRC is a valuable and mutually beneficial one!

Now in their second academic year together, Trinity and its new president have gotten to know each other well. In last year's report, we stated that Trinity is looking anew at programs to ensure that curricular offerings meet both the demands of our mission and the needs of the educational marketplace. We are grateful for the diligent and expeditious work of our faculty who are led by a new provost (more about that below) in this undertaking. In less than a year we have made significant progress in the review of our core curriculum and have introduced three new majors (health communications, art therapy, and human resource management) and a new bioinformatics minor. With additional programs currently in the vetting stage, we expect that this work will continue in similar fashion during the 2017-18 academic year.

It is no secret that higher education is a tumultuous "industry" today, and Christian higher education is even more turbulent. Concerns range from cost to value, from changing demographics to cultural pluralism. At Trinity we have witnessed this in our overall enrollment numbers as well as in the makeup of our students. We continue to offer three broad types of educational offerings: a traditional undergraduate program, an adult degree completion program, and a graduate program. In response, we are employing new, more sophisticated enrollment strategies and systems with the fall 2017 traditional undergraduate class and have good indications at the time of this writing that these efforts and investments are bearing fruit. While the exact tactics, strategies, and methodologies alter to keep pace with changes in student (and parent) culture and with rapid advancements in technology, we remain firmly committed to the work that has animated our efforts from our earliest days: to provide an outstanding, biblically informed liberal arts education that prepares our students to faithfully lead in a multiethnic and dynamic world.

Part of our calling, especially given our unique location in the global metropolis of Chicago and as a consequence of our Christian commitment, is to more accurately reflect the broad ethnic diversity of our world. We continue to broaden the makeup of our student body with just under 30 percent of our new students being persons of color. In addition, Trinity is enriched by the presence of wonderful students from Indonesia, Brazil, the Netherlands, South Korea, and China. We also continue to diversify the backgrounds of our faculty and staff as we have opportunities to hire employees.

Our faculty, staff, and students continue to faithfully live their callings and are increasingly doing so in collaboration. A few examples:

- Our students are finding new ways to collaborate on original research with members of our faculty that lead to publication and conference presentation.
- Our nursing program had its second consecutive year of a 100 percent pass rate on the NCLEX examination.
- Our accounting program produced the best Illinois CPA pass rate percentage *and* the highest average exam scores of any Illinois college or university.
- Our pre-med students continued their streak of 100 percent placement into medical school.
- A team of entrepreneurial students shared the awards platform at a Future Founders "pitch" competition with four other teams from large universities (the University of Iowa, Penn State, Ohio State, and the University of Chicago).

Every day good work is happening between our faculty and students. It is an honor and privilege to help these students learn well and discover their vocations.

We are thrilled to have rounded out our senior leadership team in this past year. Rick Riddering has assumed the role of vice president for enrollment, in which he oversees the admissions, financial aid, and communications divisions of the college. Dr. Aaron Kuecker has returned to Trinity (years ago he was a theology professor at Trinity) to assume the role of provost. Most recently, Rick Van Dyken has returned to Trinity as our vice president for advancement. These additions join with the vice president for student life, Rebekah Starkenburg, and the vice president for finance and administration, Jim Belstra, to make up Trinity's senior administration, and all of us together are diligently and creatively working to move the college forward.

I invite you to learn more about the things that are happening at Trinity via our website (trnty.edu) or on our various social media channels (links available on our website).

Thank you again for your partnership with and support of Trinity Christian College. We are a better and more faithful place because of our cherished relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. We look forward to many future years of deep and rich partnerships with the church.

Trinity Christian College
Kurt D. Dykstra, J.D., president

Communities First Association

For almost a decade, Communities First Association (CFA) has had a laser-like focus on the integration of asset-based community development (ABCD) principles into neighborhoods, communities, and organizations across sectors throughout the country.

Equipping and networking community development leaders to build community strength and seek just, sustainable transformation is the missional cornerstone of CFA's identity, and seeing *all* communities thriving and sustainable is what drives every connection and encounter we experience as a professional teaching and learning organization.

Over the past eight years, CFA has informed the teaching, coaching, and facilitation practices of over fifty coaches and community connectors across twenty major cities in North America, while also creating space for self-reflection, self-care, and celebration of community wins, both great and small, to encourage continued commitment to people and places that are not always celebrated and named for their greatness.

Once an association that focused solely on the integration of ABCD principles into neighborhoods, Communities First Association has continued these important grassroots efforts while also leveraging the organization's national brand to build relationships and partnerships that foster opportunities to infuse ABCD principles into institutions and organizations at the "grass-tips" level as well. With this strategy we aim to ensure that all entities, both great and small, are operating out of their strengths, recognizing "the power of *with*" as opposed to doing things "to" or "for" people, resulting in relevant, lasting, sustainable, and transformational change, implemented with dignity by people empowered to inform their own lives and their own collective future.

Like many organizations that survive the first three to five years of operations, CFA has seen some challenges and also many successes. Through it all, we have remained faithfully committed to our mission of community transformation while learning tremendous and significant lessons from the bumps and struggles along the way. It is, after all, the difficulties we have encountered that have prompted us to re-examine our operations and development structures, creating more viable and sustainable systems of our own, creating core competencies for the work we do, and committing all the more to "walking the walk" that we have set out to teach, coach, and train in communities.

We also see and give thanks that God has been with us, guiding us as we were intentionally discerning and steadfast in our commitment to prayerful minds and the emergence of shalom during trying and difficult times.

We continue to appreciate the legacy of CFA and the compilation of vision, innovation, and grit rendered by so many individuals and organizations who have been found faithful to the emergence of a world of sustainable, holistically viable communities for *all*. Moreover, we are honored by the presence of our current affiliates and partners and for the ways they usher us into new ways of thinking and being fully present to the work of Christian community development, together.

We deeply desire that this annual report will inspire you to celebrate the successes that Communities First Association has accomplished thus far, as well as challenge you to discover how you might come alongside and support our efforts, as we equip and network community development leaders to build community strength and seek just, sustainable transformation for *all*.

Communities First Association
Reesheda N. Graham-Washington, executive director

Diaconal Ministries Canada

For Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC) the year 2016 has been a time of change. After fifteen years of service, Hans Kater retired as DMC's national director, and after sixteen years with DMC (and thirty-two years in the Christian Reformed Church offices in Canada), Madeline Wierenga retired as DMC's executive assistant. Together they led the organization as it became a national ministry and laid an amazing foundation for future generations of deacons. DMC is extremely grateful for the years of servant leadership they provided!

A new era has now begun. After five years of working with World Renew as an assistant project manager, Samantha Bondy has taken on the role of administrative coordinator for DMC, and after twenty-two years as a CRC pastor (with the past ten as a church planter), Ron Vanden Brink has begun work as DMC's national director.

As a result of these changes—and the changes made to the Church Order in response to the 2015 report to synod by the Task Force to Study the Offices of Elder and Deacon—DMC has decided that the time is right for some evaluation and strategic planning. Our prayer is that this work will be completed by the summer of 2017, and we are confident that just as God has blessed DMC in the past, he will continue to bless us into a new and exciting future.

One thing has not changed. Our vision continues to be "*to inspire, equip, and encourage deacons, churches, and their partners as we join in God's transforming work in communities*."

It is a privilege for DMC to see the Spirit at work, enabling churches to live out their diaconal calling. We are partners in this work, serving the churches in three primary areas: equipping deacons, engaging communities, and doing justice.

1. Equipping deacons—For each Canadian CRC, DMC offers Diaconal Ministry Developers (DMDs). DMDs are classis-based and are equipped to help deacons, through workshops and conversations, to understand their role, discover their gifts, and develop their leadership skills. DMC is also committed to providing resources that will equip and enable deacons to live out their calling. Whether through work plans, guidelines for preparing an offering schedule, or devotions, deacons will be blessed by the many resources available online at www.diaconalministries.com.

2. Engaging communities—DMC's goal is to encourage each deacon and each church to join in God's transforming work in their community. For churches seeking to do this, DMC has developed the Community Opportunity Scan (COS) and will walk alongside churches as they use this assessment tool to get to know their neighbors. DMC also offers the Operation Manna Program, which provides coaching and grants for churches to establish and grow their ministries in their local community. Last year, the members of CRC congregations in Canada gave nearly $200,000 so that churches and ministries might access this program.

3. Doing justice—DMC equips and encourages deacons and mobilizes churches to act on justice issues affecting vulnerable people in their communities. Partnerships with other ministries, such as the Christian

Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue, the Office of Social Justice, World Renew, and the Office of Disability Concerns, increase DMC's capacity to serve the churches in their calling to do justice. DMC has also developed online resources that will help churches walk alongside marginalized people in their communities.

Through equipping deacons and by encouraging churches to engage their communities and be involved in justice issues, DMC continues to serve the CRC in Canada. Please pray with us that as we move into the future, we will continue to be open to hearing God's voice and be blessed with the wisdom and energy to boldly follow his call.

Diaconal Ministries Canada
Ron Vanden Brink, national director

Dynamic Youth Ministries

Calvinist Cadet Corps

I. General information

The Calvinist Cadet Corps celebrates its 65th birthday during 2017, with the official birthday being October 16. We are not letting our age slow us down as we continue to provide men with materials that allow them to better help boys grow spiritually in all areas of life—devotional, mental, physical, and social. After several years of decline in the number of clubs in our organization, we are happy to report that we have the same number of clubs this year that we had at this time last year. Our regional councils have been challenged to be more intentional about growth and to help start new clubs in churches that currently do not support a Cadet club.

In July 2017 we will be hosting Camp Elk Run in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Over 1,000 men and boys will be spending a week together while focusing on the devotional theme "God Seeking Us," based on Ezekiel 34:11. This will also be our theme for the upcoming Cadet season.

II. Program opportunities

The Cadet program continues to develop new materials. New badges, Bible lessons, and activities are published and available. Our annual meetings in January approved the opportunity for independent clubs (those not part of a regional council) to use the name Christian Cadet Club (in comparison to including the word *Calvinist*). The desire is that this will allow these clubs a more favorable acceptance in their communities, thereby being able to reach boys who would not otherwise have the chance to hear about Jesus and how they can live for him. There is no change to the Calvinist Cadet Corps' doctrinal beliefs or its organizational structure.

III. International activities

Last summer three Cadet leaders from Michigan traveled to Kenya to continue training new counselors for the Cadet ministry in East Africa. Administrative meetings were also held, laying the framework for the ministry there to take on additional financial responsibility, toward the eventual formation of a board of directors and becoming self-sufficient. There are currently about 85 clubs in Kenya. Working with the leaders there, we set a target of starting 15 new clubs a year for the next three years.

The Evangelical Reformed Church of Beregujfalu, in Transcarpathia, Ukraine, hosts our newest international club. They have partnered with a Reformed church in the Netherlands to help meet their budget and to provide uniforms for their cadets.

Calvinist Cadet Corps
Steve Bootsma, executive director

GEMS Girls Clubs

I. Introduction

Mentoring matters, and at GEMS Girls' Clubs we believe that when women are thoughtfully engaged in their own faith, they can help teach the next generation *what is good* (Titus 2:3). In 2016 women and girls in clubs around the world built relationships, studied God's Word, and served their communities as part of the Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior (GEMS) ministry.

II. Highlights from 2016

- Throughout the season, nearly 17,000 girls gathered for club meetings and events in 39 states, 9 provinces, and 13 additional countries around the world. Over 4,500 women committed to showing up each week to mentor them. Eighteen percent of those girls do not regularly attend church, and without GEMS they would have little to no exposure to God and his Word. The ministry is thankful to the Christian Reformed Church for continuously supporting these efforts.
- GEMS' focus on outreach is strong, and the impact local clubs are having on families and communities continues to be deep, particularly this year as women and girls collectively learned what it means that God's love overflows. A ministry-wide study of the themes presented in 1 Thessalonians 3:12 has sparked a ripple effect of service projects and action steps as girls grow to understand that God's love pours out through them when they act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with him (Mic. 6:8).
- None of this would be possible without the dedicated volunteers who give of their time in local GEMS clubs. GEMS continues to expand its leadership training opportunities to ensure that these women have the tools they need to effectively mentor their girls.
- GEMS is also humbled by the fact that over half of the 20,000 girls who receive the ministry's two award-winning magazines each month do not attend a local club. This means that the Bible lessons and biblical content are making an impact on a growing number of girls from a variety of backgrounds.

III. Goals and news for 2017

- Since 2008 GEMS has been following God's lead in the planning for and development of The Esther School in Zambia. Since that time the school has been a part of GEMS, but in 2017 it will become an independent ministry with its own oversight and board. We are excited to continue to partner with The Esther School and are grateful for the ways it has inspired women and girls in North America to think globally and give generously.
- This year GEMS is excited to welcome a new executive director to the team. Ms. Cindy Bultema will be joining the GEMS staff and helping to carry out the mission and vision of the ministry through her leadership.

For nearly sixty years, GEMS has been honored to faithfully serve Christian Reformed congregations throughout the United States and Canada. Thank you for entrusting so many of your women and girls to our care.

GEMS Girls' Clubs
Amy White, publications director

Youth Unlimited

Imagine a generation of students with a clear understanding of God's purpose for their life, knowing they are made by God, for God, and to "SERVE" God. Youth Unlimited strongly believes the local church is the tool God created to reveal himself to this world. We know the responsibility of ministering to students today is not easy or for the faint of heart. Therefore, we exist to encourage, support, equip, and partner with Christian Reformed congregations in the discipleship of students. There are many ways to accomplish this, but Youth Unlimited is laser focused on the opportunity of discipleship through the creation of short-term SERVE mission trips for church youth groups. Each of these SERVE experiences is hosted by a local church that desires to live missionally, empowering students to assist them in building bridges between their church and neighboring community.

A student's experience on SERVE will challenge them to step out of the daily temptations of everyday life and give them the space to focus on God. For students at SERVE, each day includes time for personal devotions, worshiping, praying, serving, and small-group discussion on how to apply faith into daily life. As the students serve on behalf of Jesus Christ through the local church, they are given a picture of what and how God intends a local church to be. Many students return home with ideas to enhance their own church's missional outreach.

In 2017 Youth Unlimited is excited to have 27 Christian Reformed congregations hosting a SERVE experience—four of them for the first time! It will take approximately 160 church youth groups to carry out the missional opportunities of the SERVE host churches. While the students are serving Jesus on behalf of the local church, they will spend the week studying Scripture from the book of Mark.

Youth Unlimited is also excited to enhance its partnership with CRC Faith Formation Ministries (FFM) in 2017. Youth Unlimited and FFM will share a full-time position to enhance each ministry's youth ministry programming. This partnership will enable Youth Unlimited to have a Canadian staff member, living in Canada, leading our SERVE efforts in Canada!

Youth Unlimited appreciates partnering with Christian Reformed congregations to disciple students. May God find us faithful to living into such a great calling!

Youth Unlimited
Jeff Kruithof, executive director

Friendship Ministries

Friendship Ministries is an international/interdenominational ministry that empowers the church to share God's love with people who have intellectual disability and enable them to become active members of God's family.

We have recently begun publishing an exciting new line of curriculum. In addition to providing existing Friendship groups with the quality Bible studies they are accustomed to, the new material also includes a track of studies that will be appropriate for any traditional adult small group that would like to include one or more persons with intellectual disability. This new curriculum utilizes a unique, online, multimedia format that has been highly praised by those who have used it.

Friendship Ministries provides opportunities for people with intellectual disability to be baptized and to make profession of faith using our resource *Expressing Faith in Jesus*. We also provide resources to help friends grow in faith, including our core Bible study curriculum and studies on the Ten Commandments and Psalms. Many Friendship members have found ways to serve and share with their congregations by ushering, helping to lead worship, and participating in service projects.

There are more than 300 Friendship programs in Christian Reformed churches in Canada and the United States, and many of these programs involve multiple CRC congregations. Some programs also collaborate with churches of other denominations, extending their outreach into the wider community.

We are a worldwide organization:

- There are more than 1,200 Friendship programs in 28 countries.
- Friendship groups are in more than 75 denominations.
- Friendship serves approximately 18,000 people who have an intellectual disability.
- Through *Ministerio Amistad*, the Spanish arm of Friendship Ministries, there are almost 300 programs in Latin America.

We collaborate with the CRC:

- We are working closely with CRC Ministry Support Services to develop our new materials.
- Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) students in the pastoral care class are required to attend a Friendship group and write a one-page reflection paper. CTS students may participate in Friendship groups as a service-learning option.

Additional services we provide:

- A website that contains clear and easy-to-use resources for starting a group.
- A newsletter and regular blog that provide inspiration and practical tips for new and existing Friendship groups.

Friendship Ministries
Tom VanWingerden, executive director

Partners Worldwide

For the past twenty years, Partners Worldwide has faithfully pursued a world without poverty so that all may have abundant life. We have invested in long-term relationships with local community partners and volunteer mentors, forming a global Christian network that uses business to end poverty. Together, we provide entrepreneurs and business leaders with mentoring, training, access to capital, and advocacy tools. These four strategic elements catalyze job creation in communities of high unemployment and poverty while encouraging businesspeople to pursue their calling to do God's work.

As we reflect on our twenty-year history, we recall with gratitude our beginnings in East Africa with World Renew. What started as a small group of Kenyan and American businesspeople has grown remarkably to become a network of thousands in twenty-seven countries around the world!

Total job growth has tripled since 2012 alone, when we first implemented our Vision 2020 strategic plan. Last year we celebrated 120,134 jobs created and sustained, 80,000 businesses and farms served, and 10,000 graduates of business training! We also saw an 81 percent increase in local mentors—an indication that our vision of locals leading the change in their communities is coming to fruition.

These metrics are more than numbers; they represent the many people who have found flourishing life through meaningful work. In addition to creating jobs, the entrepreneurs in our network are seeking the restoration of their whole community. They are starting children's ministries, hosting fellowship groups, and serving in their churches.

We are deeply grateful for our founding partnership with World Renew that has helped make this life-changing work possible, and we are honored to be working together to host Sea to Sea in summer 2017. Sea to Sea is a cross-continent bicycling mission that raises awareness about issues of poverty as well as money to support the work of Partners Worldwide and World Renew. We are also thankful for our partnership with the CRCNA. It is a great blessing to work together to end both physical and spiritual poverty.

As we enter our twentieth year of ministry, we are more resolved than ever to end poverty for good. This is not just a dream we are working toward; it's a reality we believe is in our sights. With a proven model and a network of dedicated supporters like the CRCNA, we know that ending poverty is possible, and we eagerly anticipate how God will use us to make it a reality. Thank you again for your faithful partnership.

Please pray for guidance and wisdom as we continue to pursue the calling God has placed before us. The movement to end poverty through business is gaining momentum, and increasing demand for partnership continues to exceed our ability to respond.

Therefore we look forward to partnering with more CRCNA businesspeople, congregations, and ministries to meet this demand and further our impact. Together we can grow businesses, create jobs, and make an impact on communities around the world to end poverty for good.

Partners Worldwide
Douglas Seebeck, president

STUDY COMMITTEES

Synod Review Task Force

The establishment of the Synod Review Task Force (SRTF) was approved by Synod 2016 (*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 826-27). Following the parameters of composition and membership delineated by synod, the committee was formed with the following members: Rev. Ronald Chu, Ms. Nelly Eyk, Rev. Sheila Holmes, Ms. Karen Knip, Dr. William Koopmans (reporter), Rev. Thea Leunk (chair), Ms. Dee Recker, Ms. Jeanette Romkema, Rev. Kathy Smith (recording secretary), Mr. Jose Tagle, Dr. Steve Timmermans (staff), and Mr. Kraig Van Houten.

The mandate of the SRTF is "to research, examine, and review the principles, practices, and functions of synod; recommend changes and improvements that do not require amendments to the Church Order for implementation; and propose any Church Order changes for study and adoption by a subsequent synod" (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 49). The background for this mandate evolved out of the work of the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC) that was established by Synod 2011. Included in the final report of the TFRSC in 2015 was a recommendation to form a subsequent task force to conduct a meaningful review of synod. The timing of this work correlates with the current transition from the Board of Trustees to the Council of Delegates.

The SRTF has embraced the calling to work in ways that are participatory and broadly consultative, collaborative, and informed by the experiences and practices of other churches in the Reformed tradition and beyond through ecumenical and interchurch dialogue. The work of this task force is expected to be completed by September 15, 2018, in time for its report to be distributed to the churches and classes in advance of Synod 2019.

Synod Review Task Force
Ronald Chu
Nelly Eyk
Sheila Holmes
Karen Knip
William Koopmans, reporter
Thea Leunk, chair
Dee Recker
Jeanette Romkema
Kathy Smith, recording secretary
Jose Tagle
Steve Timmermans, staff
Kraig Van Houten

I. Introduction

The Task Force on Funding for Calvin Theological Seminary Students was mandated by Synod 2016 in response to two overtures from Classis Hamilton. The task force members include: James Jones, Daniel Kinnas, David Koll *(ex officio)*, Brady Mulder, Christopher Schoon (chair), Jennifer Settergren, Michael Ten Haken, Corey Van Huizen, and Geoffrey Vandermolen.

As the task force met and discussed the issues surrounding this topic, many different aspects surfaced. This is a rather complex issue, with many moving parts. Our mandate from synod is to address the following:

> – Issues of equity in classis-based funding of seminary students.
> – Financial challenges faced by students from Canada who desire to attend Calvin Theological Seminary.
> – The impact of these financial circumstances on CRC members accessing a Reformed preparation for ministry within the CRCNA.
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 854)

In this report we will address these issues and acknowledge some of their implications for the church's approach toward funding seminary students. We have sought the input of various classes, organizational leaders, students, and others in both Canada and the United States to try to gain an accurate picture of the current reality facing students who are seeking funding for seminary education.

We would like to thank Classis Hamilton for their initiative in raising some of these issues, which might otherwise not have been dealt with at this level. Classis Hamilton's overtures have led to the uncovering of some adaptive challenges that lie ahead of us as we seek to affirm and appropriately offer financial support to students and prospective pastors in their callings.

We would also like to affirm the support CRC classes are providing across the denomination. While there are a variety of amounts of financial support given to students, classes in the Christian Reformed Church supported students with over $650,000 in the 2015-16 school year.

We give thanks to God for the generosity of his church and the financial commitment of members to raising the next generation of leaders in the church.

II. Background and history of the issues

A. Introducing the issues

Imagine that at a recent conference held at Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS), many current CRC pastors and CTS students attended. At lunchtime during the conference, several attendees gathered around a table in the student center for food and fellowship. The conversation turned from the materials of the conference to the students, and how their experience at seminary was going. After a time, some of the financial challenges the students were facing came up. One of the pastors asked about receiving financial support from their respective classes, and each person at the table shared their experience in this matter.

The first individual mentioned they were in a classis that supports many students, so the amount of funding they could receive was limited. The next

person mentioned how they had tried to get in touch with their classis but never received any communication in return, and thus were receiving no support. Another individual said the whole of their tuition was being covered by their classis. Another mentioned that her classis didn't support women candidates, so she had to look elsewhere for help. Another at the table said they had received their seminary education elsewhere and were now at CTS for the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC). They were receiving classis support for their EPMC training but had not received any support for their previous seminary education. Another at the table said they were receiving support from their classis but, being from Canada, were feeling the pinch of the current exchange rate, along with the challenges of finding ways to earn income because of visa restrictions. It became clear that no one's experience in this matter was exactly like another's, and the variance of support each one received could be quite substantial, depending on a number of factors.

This hypothetical, but, as our researched showed, quite realistic, scenario highlights some of the reasons why this issue of seminary student funding came before Synod 2016, and it helps us picture the challenging reality of trying to address the challenges of this issue going forward. There is a need for greater consistency and equity in student funding, but, at the same time, each student's case is unique, and classes need to be able to deal as well as possible with each one. This report and its recommendations will attempt to address some of these challenges.

B. Overtures regarding student funding from Classis Hamilton

Classis Hamilton submitted two overtures to Synod 2016 expressing a need for the CRCNA to consider more closely how funding for seminary students is determined and distributed across the CRCNA (see *Agenda for Synod 2016*, pp. 555-60). Calvin Theological Seminary and the CRC Candidacy Committee both expressed a desire for further attention to this issue as well. In response to this consensus, synod agreed to form a task force that would attend to (1) issues of inequity between classis funding of seminary students and (2) challenges faced by Canadian students who desired to attend Calvin Theological Seminary in preparation for ministry in the CRCNA. Some of the specific issues/situations that prompted Classis Hamilton's overtures are captured below in section IV of this report.

C. Church Order and the history of supporting seminary students

Two articles in the current CRC Church Order are particularly relevant to the work of this task force. The most significant is Article 21, which states: "The churches shall encourage individuals to seek to become ministers of the Word and, in coordination with classis, shall grant financial aid to those who are in need of it."

Article 43-a reinforces the responsibility of classis in supporting persons preparing for ministry in the CRCNA: "Every classis shall maintain a student fund and a Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT) to provide support and encouragement for individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church."

Article 21 places responsibility on the churches (local councils and congregations) for encouraging individuals to pursue becoming ministers of the Word. However, the privilege and burden of financially supporting those

preparing to serve as ministers of the Word is shared by the classis of anyone pursuing this calling. Moreover, Article 43-a expands the classis responsibility beyond financial support to also include "support and encouragement."

In their respective commentaries on the Church Order, Henry DeMoor (2010) and Idzerd Van Dellen and Martin Monsma (1967) note the long history of financially supporting seminarians. DeMoor remarks that "the requirement that seminary students receive financial support is as old as the first synodical assemblies of the Netherlands in the latter part of the sixteenth century" (pp. 114-15). While also pointing out this early history of financial support, Van Dellen and Monsma contend that churches at that time experienced a shortage of ministers because many who were qualified for ministry simply could not afford the necessary theological education, and the young Reformed churches in the Netherlands did not have the capacity to support seminary students (pp. 86-87).

Van Dellen and Monsma further contend that "the purpose of Article 21 is not to help needy students but to help the churches" by guarding against a situation in which there is a lack of ministers. Additionally they argue that if God has called more people into ministry, the churches have a responsibility to "by all means open fields of labor as far as conditions permit." Anticipating potential justifications for supporting only enough students to meet the present needs of the churches, they add: "Inasmuch as there is ever a crying need for able and consecrated preachers of the Gospel in every nook and corner of our great land; and inasmuch as the world at large in these days of doubt and darkness is desperately in need of Christ's gospel," the churches should provide financial assistance to those preparing for ministry (p. 88).

D. Recent synodical conversations regarding student funding

Synod has considered overtures and reports related to student funding a couple of times in recent years.

In response to the synodical Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry report, Synod 2004 established the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee. This committee's mandate included resourcing classical candidacy committees in supporting students, approving individual plans for financing seminary education, and ensuring equity throughout the candidacy and ordination processes across the denomination (*Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 362-63; *Acts of Synod 2004*, p. 616-17).

Synod 2006 received an overture from Classis Georgetown (*Agenda for Synod 2006*, pp. 473-77) urging synod to centralize funding for seminary students under the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (now, the Candidacy Committee). The overture noted several of the same concerns observed by Classis Hamilton in 2016, contending that these inequities could be resolved by alleviating classes of the burden of administering financial aid to students.

Synod 2006 denied the overture's recommendation to form a centralized student fund. However, they did affirm the need for further attention to the inequities in funding seminary students. They contended that the SMCC (Candidacy Committee) was ideally situated to consider and respond to the concerns raised by the overture.

In its supplemental report to Synod 2008, the Candidacy Committee noted that they were developing financial support guidelines for use by

the Classical Ministerial Leadership Teams. The Candidacy Committee also stated that they formed these guidelines as a direct response to the urging of Synod 2006. Distributed to Classis Ministry Leadership Teams in September 2008, the guidelines consisted of the following:

While each classis is free to establish its student aid policy, the Candidacy Committee judges that generally speaking:

1. It is preferable to fund seminary students over undergraduates. (Often undergraduates aren't that sure they're going to seminary and change their mind. Undergraduates also often have access to federal and state money not available to students enrolled in a seminary program.)
2. It is preferable to fund those students who are preparing for the ordained ministry as compared to ministry service in general (limited resources call for prioritization).
3. It is preferable to fund full-time students over part-time students.
4. It is preferable that students at Calvin Seminary receive priority over other seminaries (synod has officially declared CTS the preferred seminary).
5. Classis committees may find it helpful to consult with CTS or any other seminary to which they send students regarding broader forms of student aid that are available.
6. Classis committees may find it helpful to take into consideration the total cost of living for students being considered (tuition, room and board, books, travel to and from home, etc.).

This task force affirms all of these suggestions from the Candidacy Committee.

III. Definitions and financial aid categories

In discussing this topic, the task force felt it was important to make sure that synod have a clear understanding of the terms and various types of costs and financial aid resources that make up seminary education, expenses, and funding.

A. Expenses

Costs for seminary education fall into three main categories:

1. Tuition and fees

   Tuition and fees are fixed costs that an institution charges every student for the courses they are taking. These are usually charged on a dollars-per-credit basis and are paid per semester. These vary, depending on whether a student is attending full-time or part-time.

2. Room and board

   Room and board costs are variable and can be significantly different from student to student depending on several factors such as rent and family size. For example, a single student sharing an on-campus residence with another student will spend much less for room and board during

their education than a student who is married, has three children, and is renting a three-bedroom home.

3. Other costs

Other costs can include books, travel expenses, health care costs, visa application fees for foreign students, Christian school tuition for the seminary student's children, and more. These will also vary greatly from student to student, depending on their marital status, country of residence, and stage in life.

All of these costs, with the exception of Christian school tuition, are factored into what is called the Estimated Cost of Attendance (ECOA). The ECOA is the amount the seminary reports it costs a student to complete a degree program at their institution. Financial aid can be used to fund any of the costs included in the ECOA. Funding for seminary education thus typically involves much more than simply paying for tuition. For some students, tuition is only a fraction of the actual cost of obtaining a seminary degree.

B. Financial aid

Financial aid also comes in different forms. How much aid an individual student can and does receive requires a consideration of all the above factors, plus other variables that affect eligibility and access to various funding options. Financial aid comes in two basic forms:

1. Gift aid

Gift aid does not require repayment and comes in two categories:

a. Scholarships

Scholarships are merit-based awards that never require repayment. Students must qualify for these by obtaining and maintaining a certain GPA, enrolling in a particular program, and/or meeting other criteria. The total amount of scholarship aid any one student can receive will vary greatly based on a number of factors. Scholarships can come from the seminary or from outside entities.

b. Grants

As opposed to aid that is merit-based, grants are needs-based—that is, a student must demonstrate financial need through the completion of a financial aid form. Grants never require repayment.

2. Loan aid

Loan aid requires repayment after a student has left or completed a degree program, regardless of whether or not a degree has been granted. The terms of student loans are set ahead of time and are usually amortized over not more than ten years. Like gift aid, loan aid comes in two main forms.

a. Forgivable loans

These are loans that are "paid back" through years of service following degree completion. For example, a student with a master of divinity degree who enters full-time ordained ministry in the CRC can have up to half the loan forgiven—5 percent per year in return for a year of service to the denomination for a period of up to ten years. If

the criteria for loan forgiveness are not met, repayment of the remaining balance will be required through regular monthly installments.

b. Loans

Standard loans are repayable on a monthly basis over time according to agreed-upon terms. They can come from the seminary or from the federal government.[1]

C. Other definitions

In addition, it may be helpful to define some other terms related to this discussion.

1. Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC)

   The EPMC is the pathway that students intending to enter ordained ministry in the CRCNA use if they are attending a seminary other than Calvin Theological Seminary to obtain their master of divinity degree. The program can be taken in either the resident or distance learning format. The EPMC, through the Office of Candidacy, monitors student progress at other institutions, stipulates additional requirements for ordination, and facilitates communication between the student and the denomination for licensure, examination, and ordination.

2. In-residence degree program

   Students are considered in-residence when they are taking the majority, if not all, of their classes and coursework (whether full-time or part-time) on campus in the traditional classroom setting. Assuming a student attends full-time, a typical student will take three to four years to complete a master of divinity degree using this method.

3. Distance Learning (DL) degree program

   Students in the Distance Learning degree program do the majority of their coursework in an online environment and not in a traditional classroom setting. These students travel to the seminary granting their degree about two times a year for intensive classes in the traditional classroom setting but complete the majority of their coursework away from the campus. Assuming that a student is enrolled full-time, it usually takes about five years to complete a master of divinity degree at Calvin Theological Seminary using this method.

4. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS)

   ATS is the recognized accreditation body for seminaries across the United States and Canada. In order to enter into ordained ministry in the CRCNA via the traditional route (i.e., not via Article 7) students *must* receive a master of divinity degree from an ATS-accredited institution. It is in the best interest of the student and the classis to ensure that a seminary's master of divinity program is fully accredited by ATS. Calvin Theological Seminary is fully accredited by ATS.

[1] Only U.S. residents are eligible to receive federally funded financial aid to study at Calvin Theological Seminary. Canadian students can receive federal assistance from the Canadian government for studies at Calvin Theological Seminary, but they receive a lower percentage than they would if they studied at a Canadian institution.

IV. Equity issues and challenges to students

There are many different issues, depending on a given student's situation, that might heighten their financial needs as they look to attend seminary, might provide challenges to their receiving financial aid from a classis, and might determine their choice of seminary to attend. The data and feedback we received from our survey affirmed the validity of this list of challenges and realities (see the appendices to this report for survey information and data). Some of these issues and challenges are listed below.

A. Lack of uniformity between classes

There is no common practice of application or determination of financial assistance from classis to classis. One student in one classis may be supported at a level that covers the full cost of tuition, while another student in another classis may discover that support levels are significantly less.

B. Disproportionate number of students seeking assistance from a particular classis

Some classes, because of proximity to larger population centers or to several undergraduate universities, experience a higher number of students in their congregations who are seeking assistance in preparing for ministry. Whereas some classes have no students being supported, others will have five or more students apply for and receive support each year.

C. Limited capacity to meet the increasing financial needs of students

Several classes have the experience of not having enough resources to meet the financial needs faced by the students in their classis. This situation is due partly to the rising costs of education, but it can also be related to certain classes' having more students applying for aid.

D. Diversity of expectations and requirements

Students applying for financial aid from one classis might experience very different application and repayment requirements than will students in another classis. Some students are required to have face-to-face interviews in the application process, and some may have lengthier application paperwork to fill out, while others may never even meet their classis Student Fund Team. Some classes will forgive larger portions of loans than others will. In addition, some classes require more years of service for loan forgiveness, while others have no loan forgiveness policy in place.

E. Lack of collaboration between classes

There are a couple of cases where classes have worked together to support students, but in general this hasn't been practiced, and some efforts at this collaboration have proved difficult because of the varying policies, number of students, and financial capacities of the classes involved.

F. Gender issues

Some of our classes support only male students. This situation creates additional obstacles/financial burdens for prospective female students from these classes.

G. Excellent local choices

In an age of competitive educational choices, more and more students are saying there are local seminaries in both the United States and Canada that will allow them to pursue their studies, receive a solid theological education,

and perhaps lessen some of the burden they would otherwise face by attending Calvin Theological Seminary.

H. Other seminaries and EPMC

We have discovered that one result of having to face these challenges is that some students from CRC churches not only decide to attend schools other than CTS for their theological education, but then also choose to bypass the EPMC process and leave to serve in other denominations.

I. Equity issues and challenges particular to Canadian students

In addition to the issues mentioned above, there are some specific challenges/issues that Canadian students face, particularly as they consider education at CTS. A few of these challenges/issues are listed below.

1. Immigration matters

   Immigration matters include several factors. One factor is that classis budgets and financial assistance have traditionally been awarded annually. However, some Canadian students are now required to provide a statement with their student visa application indicating that they have secured funding to cover all expenses for their entire program. In this regard, Classis Hamilton has been asked several times to sign documents guaranteeing support for four years to students in order for them to receive their visa, even though classis approves the funding for only one year at a time. Another factor is that U.S. immigration requirements, and the implications of this for Canadian students, are beyond the expertise of a local classis to provide appropriate advice and support to students. As one example, students face complex choices regarding which visa to pursue. Further, the visa itself can be quite costly. And some visas come with restrictions on the ability of the student's family/spouse to engage in gainful employment while living in the United States.

2. Volatility and disparity in the Canadian-U.S. dollar exchange rate

   The persistent fluctuation in the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the Canadian dollar has led to several situations in which the declining value of the Canadian dollar left students without enough funds to meet their expenses during the year. In addition, the disparity in the exchange rate, along with some of the costs and restrictions of visas, as mentioned above, has made a seminary education at Calvin Theological Seminary increasingly less affordable for many Canadian students.

3. Lack of cultural resonance

   Many students find that there is a lack of cultural resonance between the Canadian and the U.S. contexts, making theological education in the United States a less-appealing option. This perception may in some cases make seminary education within the Canadian context more appealing to Canadian students, even if that would involve a change in theological perspective.

V. Priorities of the task force

In considering recommendations to synod and the CMLTs, the task force has identified and worked with the following guiding principles and

commends them to the church, the classes, and their appointed committees for consideration:

A. Partnership among classes

The task force encourages classes to work together to support and encourage students pursuing theological education. Some classes, for a variety of reasons, have more students pursuing a seminary education than others. Neighboring classes can and should consider sharing the burden by pooling their resources. In addition, some students have strong connections to more than one classis. Perhaps they grew up in one classis and now live in another. It is possible for a student to be supported by more than one classis, and classes should consider working together with that student when feasible.

B. Equity and fairness

As noted above, the actual cost of attendance and the amount and types of financial aid that a student receives can vary widely. For example, the cost of attendance for an unmarried student beginning seminary right after college and living at home is far different from that of an older student who has a spouse and children and is leaving a previous career. Therefore we recommend that classes, in an effort to be fair, try to avoid a "one size fits all" approach to funding. An academically gifted student who receives a large merit-based scholarship may not need as much funding as a student who is not as academically gifted and is also attempting to support a family. In that case, it may be more equitable and fair to give more aid to the second student even though their tuition costs may be the same. In addition, a student coming from Canada will incur significant visa fees and will have limited opportunity for gainful employment (usually part-time) while attending school. Further, fluctuations in exchange rates can make it difficult to plan ahead for expenses over the long haul. Therefore it may be more equitable or fair to give a Canadian student more money than a U.S. student. even though their cost of tuition and room and board might be almost identical. When it comes to supporting seminary students financially, there are responsibilities for the student, the classis, the seminary, and the denomination to consider.

C. Preference to CTS

The task force recognizes that many students, for many good reasons, choose to attend seminaries other than CTS; however, we also recognize the importance of future Christian Reformed Church leaders receiving the bulk of their training at the denominationally established seminary. Therefore, in establishing funding guidelines, we recommend that CMLTs provide financial incentives to students choosing to attend CTS for their degree program.

D. Ongoing relationship

CMLTs are in the best position to provide meaningful and stewardly support to students when they know these students and their situations well. What's more, situations change over time. What is true one year may not be true the next. Perhaps a student gets married or has a child. Perhaps a spouse or the student loses a job or takes a new job, changing their financial need. Maybe a younger child is now ready to begin school, adding to tuition costs, or a child has graduated from high school, reducing those costs. Perhaps a student is planning to do distance learning instead of the in-residence

program, which can affect the amount of aid a student is eligible for. Any number of other scenarios could also apply. Therefore the task force recommends that CMLTs keep in regular communication with the student during their education. At the very least, an annual review and application process is recommended.

VI. Current Initiatives being taken

A. Lilly grant to CRC

In January 2017 the CRCNA launched a three-year project aimed at improving financial security and shalom for its pastors. The project was made possible through a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.. The Financial Shalom project seeks to lessen the key financial challenges that prevent shalom by increasing financial literacy through programs, tools, and resources, and by providing support through the Financial Shalom fund. More information can be found on the webpage crcna.org/FinancialShalom.

B. CTS financial commitments

CTS has granted funds to Canadian students for the past two semesters to assist in offsetting the financial burdens incurred by studying in the United States. The seminary recognizes the financial burden placed on Canadian CRC students who use personal savings, family assistance, or classical aid to pay for their education and cannot possibly predict or plan against wide fluctuations in the exchange rate. There are several discussions happening at the seminary on how we can further assist this population in light of the CRC's requirements for ministry preparation through CTS. It will continue to be a priority of the seminary to make sure that a Calvin Theological Seminary education is accessible to all members of the denomination.

C. Adjustments to CTS website

CTS will have a new resource for both students and classes on their website. This page will have information for classes regarding estimated cost of attendance, possible fund application templates, guidance for committees, and promissory note templates. Student resources will include classical aid contact information, process expectations and more. Once ready, an email will be sent to all classis clerks with the web address and additional information.

D. Candidacy website

The Candidacy Committee currently serves as a resource for seminary students and potential seminary students seeking the name of the contact person for student funding support in their classis. The Candidacy Committee also has a section on their website with reports on the student fund levels across the denomination. They will seek to broaden this section with additional documents offering best practices in student fund support as such documents are forwarded to them. In the work of our task force, a number of excellent documents have been supplied, and these will be used to begin this new section.

VII. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Dr. Christopher Schoon, chair; Rev. Daniel Kinnas, reporter; and other members of the task force when the report is addressed.

B. That synod encourage Classis Student Fund Teams to conduct annual interviews with students they are supporting or considering supporting.

> *Ground:* The main benefit of having our seminary students supported by their classes is the opportunity for an ongoing relationship between those students and the churches and leaders of their classes. Conducting annual interviews will foster a healthier environment for our students, the funding process, and our classes.

C. That synod encourage Classis Student Fund Teams to give support preference to students attending Calvin Theological Seminary and to those who are pursuing a master of divinity degree.

> *Ground:* The original intent of Church Order Article 43-a is for the support of students pursuing ordained ministry in the CRCNA. This is the primary support function of Classis Student Fund Teams, so it is fitting for these teams to give support preference to students in a master of divinity program, and to those pursuing this degree from CTS, since it is the theological seminary of the CRCNA.

D. That synod encourage Classis Student Fund Teams to develop and put into practice a clear and workable set of guidelines for the process of student funding. This would include reviewing the forms being used for application in the student funding process, having an understanding of the timeline students are working with when it comes to scholarships received and payments being due, having an understanding of what is required by our Candidacy Committee of students pursuing candidacy in the CRCNA, and being aware of some of the legal issues/requirements surrounding the type of agreement a classis enters into with a student (forgivable loan, grant, etc.).

> *Ground:* There is a lot of changeover on Classis Student Fund Teams, so it is imperative that there be some clear and accessible guidelines, forms, and so on for the team to follow in each classis. This will be helpful for the students as they go through the funding process, but it will also be helpful in keeping our classes consistent and organized in this process, even as team members change.

E. That synod encourage, whenever possible, our classes and Student Fund Teams to work together in the support of our students. These might be neighboring classes in a close geographical area (like many of those in West Michigan) or classes that share a relationship with a student—for example, a student from New Jersey attends Calvin College and becomes involved in a Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. When this student attends seminary after college, both of these classes that have a relationship with the student could support him or her.

> *Ground:* Our classes and churches have a shared goal in this process of coming alongside students as they prepare for ministry in the CRCNA.

Since we are working together as one denomination and we have this shared goal for the training and support of students preparing for ministry, it makes sense for our classes to combine resources and work together in this endeavor whenever possible, particularly since classes have various amounts of resources available for the support of students, and the number of students who request classis support varies in a given year.

F. That synod accept this report as fulfilling the mandate of the Task Force on Funding for Calvin Theological Seminary Students and dismiss the task force.

Task Force on Funding for
Calvin Theological Seminary Students
James Jones
Daniel Kinnas, reporter
David Koll, ex officio
Brady Mulder
Christopher Schoon, chair
Jennifer Settergren
Michael Ten Haken
Corey Van Huizen
Geoffrey Vandermolen

Appendix A
2008-2014 Student Funding Data from the Candidacy Committee

Student Fund Data: A Summary Report Prepared in Summer 2015

Year of Data	2008	2010	2012	2014
# of Classes				
Providing complete data	26	36	37	34
Providing partial data	10	4	4	9
Providing no data:	11	7	6	5
Total # of classes	47	47	47	48
Average $ per member (range of lowest-highest within reporting classes)	$5.73 ($.31 lowest) ($15.32 highest)	$4.44 ($.78 lowest) ($9.73 highest)	$5.94 ($.12 lowest) ($15.98 highest)	$5.60 ($.91 lowest) ($14.58 highest)
$ of Student Fund Aid				
$ reported as given (a)	$488,596	$609,804	$719,709	$629,541
$ reported in budget (b)	$119,139	$ 93,475	$100,000	$119,000
$ Projected total (c)	$607,735	$703,279	$819,709	$748,541
Total # of students shown in data	113	133	145	146
Average $ per student (range of lowest to highest in reporting classes)	$4525 ($500 lowest) ($15,000 highest)	$4566 ($500 lowest) ($15,500 highest)	$5009 ($500 lowest) ($15,299 highest)	$4663 ($300 lowest) ($16,884 highest)

Notes regarding methodology in collecting data

1. The 2014 data represents a survey of data gathered from classis minutes, plus data gathered from personal contact with classis representatives in classes where data did not appear in their minutes.

2. The data for 2008, 2010, and 2012 was gathered from past studies, reviewed for this study, and in some cases represents different figures than previously announced, in order to keep the methodology consistent from year to year.

3. In the boxes reporting "$ of Student Fund Aid," the dollars reported as given (row a, in bold) represent the total of all grants reported from the classes providing such data. To this number is added an amount reported in the classis budget (row b) from the classes from which we have no data for amounts actually given but do have data regarding amounts budgeted for student aid. The "Projected total" (row c) indicates the likely total of funds provided in the given year for student aid. In fact, the number may be higher still, because there are a number of classes which provide no data at all.

Appendix B
Data Regarding Seminaries Attended by Students on Candidacy Track

There are currently **148 students** in the candidacy program for whom we had relevant data regarding the seminaries they attended. These **148 students** have received or are receiving their theological education at **29 different seminaries.** Less than half of the students currently in the candidacy track are completing their degree program at CTS, whether that be in-residence or via distance learning.

Appendix C
Data from Classical Ministerial Leadership Team Feedback Regarding Policies and Procedures

The task force requested that the CMLT (or equivalent) from each classis provide information regarding policies and procedures related to student funding. We received responses from 32 CMLTs. (One of the CMLTs is a combined student fund committee shared by two classes.) Some CMLTs indicated they had no formal policies or documents, but conveyed established practices. Other CMLTs provided as many as five documents related to their student funding process. These documents included classis policies, student application packets, loan agreement documents, cover letters for prospective students, and financial assistance worksheets.

The task force reviewed the information provided by the CMLTs. The following graph summarizes details gleaned from the documents and communications submitted to the task force.

Does the CMLT have or allow for…	Yes	No	Not indicated
Written policy and procedures	28	3	1
An application form	18	3	11
A signed assistance agreement	13	0	19
A preference for Calvin Theological Seminary	21	8	3
Eligibility of schools other than CTS	28	1	3
Eligibility of programs/degrees other than M.Div.	15	8	9
Funding available for both men and women	5	2	25

In addition, the task force notes a wide range of practices regarding funding levels as indicated in the documents and communications from the CMLTs.

Dependent on classis budget	$3,000	$5,000	$6,000	$7,000	Not indicated
9	1	1	1	1	8

50% of tuition	50% tuition + books	60% tuition + $5,000 need based + books	70% tuition	100% tuition	100% tuition + books
1	1	1	1	4	3

Finally, information provided by the CMLTs included several different practices regarding forgiveness of loans issued to those preparing for ministry. In all cases, when a student did not complete seminary or left CRC ministry before the agreed upon time period, some level of repayment was expected.

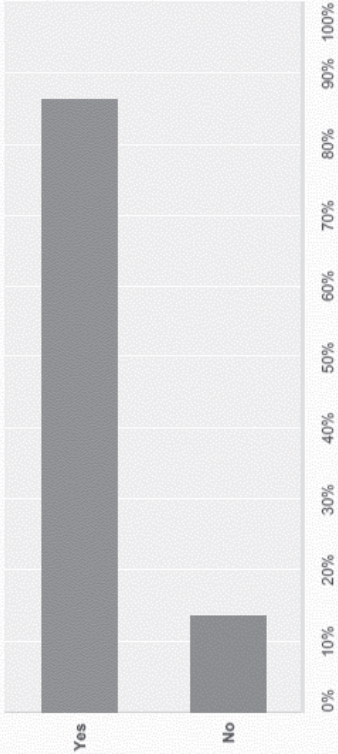
Scholarship or grant - no repayment	After 5 years in CRC Ministry	After 10 years in CRC ministry	Not indicated
2	6	9	15

Appendix D
Data from Student Survey Related to Classis Funding

Synodical Task Force Survey Studying Classical Funding

Q12 Did you receive funding from Christian Reformed Classis while studying?

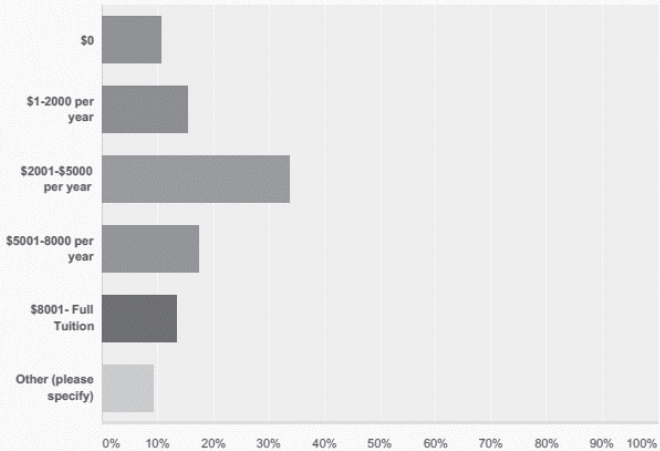
Answered: 147 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	86.39%	127
No	13.61%	20
Total		**147**

Q14 What was your level of funding?

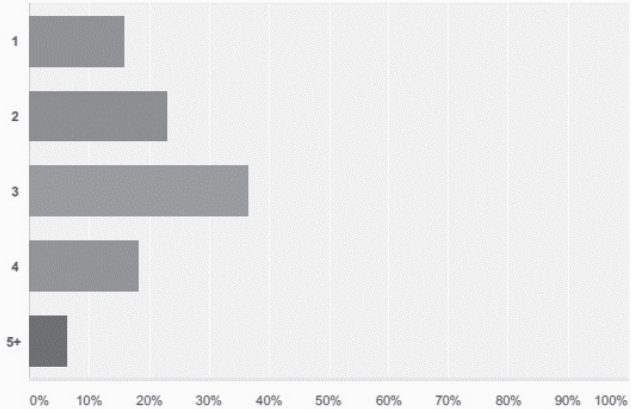
Answered: 142 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses	
$0	10.56%	15
$1-2000 per year	15.49%	22
$2001-$5000 per year	33.80%	48
$5001-8000 per year	17.61%	25
$8001- Full Tuition	13.38%	19
Other (please specify)	9.15%	13
Total		142

Q15 How many years did you receive Christian Reformed classical funding?

Answered: 126 Skipped: 21



Answer Choices	Responses	
1	15.87%	20
2	23.02%	29
3	36.51%	46
4	18.25%	23
5+	6.35%	8
Total		126

OVERTURES, COMMUNICATIONS, AND APPEAL

Overture 1: Approve Transfer of Alto CRC, Waupun, Wisconsin, from Classis Wisconsin to Classis Minnkota

I. Background

At its meeting on September 22, 2015, Classis Wisconsin approved an overture to open all offices of the church and classis to women delegates. Prior to this meeting, one woman held a position as minister of the Word in a church of classis, however she was not recognized on the floor as a voting member. The vote in support of the 2015 overture was nearly unanimous. Negative votes were recorded by all the delegates from Alto CRC in Waupun, Wisconsin.

For many years Classis Wisconsin experienced lingering tension regarding the issue of seating women as officebearers. The pressure was relieved a little more each year as ministers retired and new pastors came into the Wisconsin churches. At this point it appears Alto CRC is the lone church whose officebearers still believe that God has given to men alone the burden of responsibility as church officers and believe it to be inappropriate for women to hold office.

The council of Alto CRC also believes that to attend Classis Wisconsin meetings puts them in a position of violating their conscience and convictions. It was suggested by church visitors that Alto CRC delegates to classis might attend "under protest," thereby recording their opposition to the seating of women. Alto CRC's council took the recommendation under advisement, but has determined that they do not want to be the overbearing uncle at the Thanksgiving Dinner, so to speak. They love their family members, and feel it is counter-productive to be viewed as the contentious members.

Rather, the council decided, with the support of the congregation, to pursue realignment with another classis of like mind, since that option was sanctioned by synod and has many instances of precedent.

II. Overture

Classis Wisconsin overtures Synod 2017 to permit the transfer of Alto CRC, Waupun, Wisconsin, from Classis Wisconsin to Classis Minnkota.

Grounds:

1. Alto CRC cannot in good conscience remain in a classis that promotes the ordination of women to the offices of minister and elder, and seats them at the shared assembly.
2. Alto CRC wishes to join a classis in which it can serve in harmony as opposed to serving in protest. Synod provides such allowance (see Church Order Art. 39 and its Supplement).

3. Synod 2007 permitted the churches to seek out like-minded classes with which to participate and has set precedent to do so (e.g., Mt. Pleasant CRC, Mich., 1997; Pine Creek CRC, Holland, Mich., 1997; South Bend CRC, Ind., 1999; First CRC, Prinsburg, Minn., 2007).
4. Synod has declared that churches and delegates to classis should not be forced to participate against their convictions (see Church Order Art. 3, and Supplement, Art. 3-a, 1, b and c, 3, and 5).
5. Alto CRC has been in contact with Classis Minnkota regarding the desire to join them. Alto CRC hopes to receive a positive response from Classis Minnkota following its meeting on March 2, 2017.
6. In its reading of Holy Scripture, Alto CRC believes it is imperative to make this request. Biblical passages foundational to this request include Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:15-25; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9; 1 Timothy 2-3; and Titus 1:5-9.

Classis Wisconsin
Mary L. Bosch, alternate stated clerk

Overture 2: Permit Transfer of Alto CRC, Waupun, Wisconsin, from Classis Wisconsin to Classis Minnkota

Classis Minnkota overtures synod to permit the transfer of Alto CRC in Waupun, Wisconsin, from Classis Wisconsin to Classis Minnkota.

Grounds:
1. Alto CRC has requested this transfer.
2. Classis Minnkota has considered the reasons for which Alto CRC desires a transfer and finds these reasons to be acceptable.
3. Classis Minnkota would welcome Alto CRC into its classical fellowship.
4. Classis Wisconsin concurs with the request of Alto CRC.
5. In recent years Classis Minnkota has welcomed other churches that for reasons of conscience have been unable to remain in the classes of which they historically have been a part.

Classis Minnkota
LeRoy G. Christoffels, stated clerk

Overture 3: Remind Denominational Board Delegates to Report to the Classes

I. Background

The various ministries of the Christian Reformed Church have been governed by boards with representation from the classes of the denomination. Initially there was a very clear sense that the congregations, through the classes, had a voice in what was taking place in those ministries, because each classis delegated a representative. Increasingly decision making was turned over to executive directors and other nondelegated personnel. When the boards would meet, the number of delegates seemed cumbersome, and

it was costly to gather them in Grand Rapids. Eventually the classes were grouped into regions with a representative from the region being delegated to the boards.

This structure may function better on the denominational level and be less costly. However, it does not necessarily function better in terms of representation of local congregations and classes. It has been our experience that very frequently the regional delegates are not present at classes other than those to which they belong, and rarely do they submit any sort of personal report on the activities of the board to which they are delegated. The result is that the sense of disconnect with the denomination and its ministries is not confronted but may be increasing. Classes may be frustrated in believing they have no input and don't know what is happening at the denominational level. In addition, when a classis is asked to provide nominees for a board position or when asked to affirm a proposed nominee, little is known about the tasks of the board members and the gifts needed and possessed by a nominee.

Continuation of the regional delegate structure requires that the delegates must take more seriously their responsibilities to represent the agency or ministry to all the classes in the region from which they are delegated and to represent all of those classes to the boards.

II. Overture

Classis Yellowstone overtures synod to remind/instruct regional members of denominational boards (the new mission agency, Back to God Ministries International, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA) that they have the responsibility to regularly report in person and/or in writing to the member classes of their region and, further, that synod instruct the executive director to continue to encourage and oversee this responsibility of board delegates.

Grounds:

1. It was the intent when the structure of regional boards was initiated that regular reporting to each classis in a region would take place by the delegate.
2. Currently several classes (especially those with greater distance between classes in a region) never receive personal communication from delegates, indicating a failure in the responsibilities of those delegates.

Classis Yellowstone
Del VanDenBerg, stated clerk

Overture 4: Adopt a Rule That Synodical Reports Longer Than Ten Pages Must Include an Executive Summary

Classis Eastern Canada overtures synod to adopt a rule that synodical reports longer than ten pages include a mandatory executive summary.

Grounds:

1. Synodical reports are submitted to classes and churches for review and comment in advance of synod. However, the length of the reports is often intimidating and an obstacle to this review.

Whereas study committees truly desire classes and churches to review and comment on their reports:

2. An executive summary would help draw the attention of pastors, elders, and deacons to the essential elements of the report, increasing interest and encouraging further reading with greater comprehension.
3. More church members may at least read the executive summary and inform themselves about the study committees' recommendations, increasing potential input from the church community as a whole.
4. Executive summaries would also be helpful for the purpose of future reference and research. An executive summary would quickly identify the most important and applicable content of the report, as well as where to do further reading.

Classis Eastern Canada
Richard Smit, stated clerk

Overture 5: Translate the Three Forms of Unity and Core Denominational Documents; Provide an Official Process of Denominational Recognition of the Translated Creeds and Confessions

Classis Pacific Northwest overtures Synod 2017 to do the following:

1. Translate the three forms of unity and core denominational documents into the seven most commonly used languages by non-English speaking Christian Reformed churches (Korean, Spanish, Chinese or Mandarin, Navajo, Laotian, Hmong, Vietnamese). We recognize that this will take time and effort, and that the translations will need to be prioritized according to the size and urgency of need throughout the various non-English language groups.

2. Provide an official process of denominational recognition of the translated creeds and confessions in support of 230 ethnic community churches among the CRC. We recognize that such a project involves deeper work than just translating and will require the coordinated work of various persons for each translated document.

Grounds:

a. The CRC currently has about 230 ethnic community churches that minister using 19 different languages across North America. Seven major languages are currently in use in ethnic CRC congregations; there are 115 Korean-speaking congregations, 30 Spanish, 9 Chinese (Mandarin), 8 Navajo, 6 Laotian, 4 Hmong, and 3 Vietnamese.
b. There has been some translation work done in some languages as posted on the CRCNA website (www.crcna.org/resources/other-resources/resources-other-languages). However, this work does not cover all the creeds and confessions in all of these languages.
c. The Christian Reformed Church is a confessional church. Providing proper translation of key documents in their native language will help non-English speaking groups in understanding our

confessions and thus ensure the unity of a confessional denomination. With translations of key documents, these groups will better be able to put into practice the Reformed confessions and theology in their ministry and in their daily lives.

d. The CRC put a lot of effort into changing the Form of Subscription to the Covenant for Officebearers. We expect these various ethnic groups, however, to affirm creeds and confessions that have not been provided in their language.
e. The three forms of unity have not been fully translated into some languages. Those documents should be provided in other languages as soon as possible. The Contemporary Testimony is available only in Spanish and Korean.
f. The Church Order and Its Supplements (currently translated to Chinese, Korean, and Spanish), *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government,* Rules for Synodical Procedure, and other core ministerial documents need to be translated as soon as possible. By doing so, we are inviting diverse groups within the CRC to a deeper participation in our denomination.
g. Those documents already translated and posted on the CRCNA website have not been officially recognized by synod. Just like the CRC's official version of the English translations of the creeds and confessions, we need to validate certain translations of our creeds and confessions in these other languages, thus insuring uniformity and accuracy in translation.

Classis Pacific Northwest
Rob Jansons, stated clerk

Overture 6: Amend Church Order Article 13

I. Background

While such circumstances are infrequent, it has nevertheless happened that a minister called to a specialized ministry (such as chaplaincy) may make changes—or have changes made for him or her—such that it is expedient to have a CRC other than the original calling church take over the responsibility of supervising the minister's doctrine, life, and duties in accordance with Church Order Article 13-a. This may be a case, for instance, in which a military chaplain is reassigned to an area with a CRC for several years, or in which changes in a minister's family might make transfer of membership to a different CRC congregation advisable. In the best of circumstances, supervision from a distance is problematic and, if at all possible, supervision should be carried out by a congregation that has opportunity to interact with and get to know the minister on a regular basis. Joint supervision by two congregations too often leaves everyone assuming the others are taking care of it, particularly as officebearers rotate on and off their respective councils. It is our belief, therefore, that provision should be made in the Church Order to allow the transfer of credentials, with the attendant responsibilities for supervision, from one church to another in these and similar cases.

Because the relationship between a minister and the congregation that supervises his or her doctrine, life, and duties varies according to the minister and congregation, we do not think such a transfer should be required in all such circumstances, merely allowed.

II. Overture

Therefore, Classis Iakota overtures synod to amend Article 13 of the Church Order by adding an Article 13-d:

d. The credentials of a minister of the Word serving in specialized ministry (e.g., chaplaincy) may be transferred from one calling church to another when a minister's call has not changed but a transfer makes supervision of the minister's doctrine, life, and duties easier and/or more effective. Such a transfer requires the approval of both councils and classes.

Grounds:

1. Ministers in specialized ministry may, from time to time, transfer from one location to another or change their church membership without changing employers. There are instances in which such a move renders it easier for a church other than the original calling church to supervise the minister's doctrine, life, and duties.
2. Supervision requires knowledge of the minister's life, doctrine, and duties. This knowledge is much more likely to occur where a local congregation actually sees and interacts with the minister on a regular basis.
3. Joint supervision of a minister by two congregations is rarely ideal. This change in Article 13 would allow greater flexibility in maintaining and enhancing the connection between specialized ministers and local congregations.
4. Specifying that a transfer of credentials is permitted only in cases where it makes supervision easier or more effective is in keeping with the spirit and intent of Article 13-a.

Classis Iakota
Eric B. Verhulst, stated clerk

Overture 7: Amend Church Order Article 45

Classis Iakota overtures synod to amend Article 45 of the Church Order by adding the word "ordinarily" between "shall" and "delegate" so that it reads, "Each classis shall ordinarily delegate . . ." and by adding the following sentence at the end of Article 45: "Classes shall not delegate more than two ministers to synod."

Grounds:

1. Given Article 2 of the Church Order, the substitution of one office-bearer for another when a classis has difficulty filling the nonministerial delegate positions is in keeping with the spirit of the Church Order.

2. Classes routinely have difficulty filling the nonministerial delegate positions.
3. Classes should be permitted as much latitude as possible in determining their own delegation to synod.
4. While Synod 2015 clearly indicated a desire for maximal diversity of office in delegations to synod, the present wording of Article 45 inflexibly limits the ability of willing nonministerial officebearers to serve even when the only alternative is a reduced classis delegation. In such exceptional cases, rather than expanding the voices at synod, the present wording unnecessarily contracts them.

Classis Iakota
Eric B. Verhulst, stated clerk

Overture 8: Add New Church Order Article 23-f re Retirement of a Commissioned Pastor

I. Background

The office of commissioned pastor has undergone a number of changes over the years, including name changes. The church seems still to be in the process of describing and understanding this office. One area lacking clarity concerns the retirement of commissioned pastors and the status they then have in the church. At least two classes have made independent decisions when faced with the retirement of commissioned pastors within their classes and have decided to allow retired commissioned pastors to perform the "official acts of ministry" (see Church Order Supplement, Article 18). The Candidacy Committee has mentioned the question of the retirement of commissioned pastors and their status on more than one occasion, most recently to Synod 2016 (*Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 272), but has not yet proposed Church Order changes to address the issue.

The way the office of commissioned pastor is currently described in the Church Order is that the scope of ministry for the commissioned pastor is limited to a single particular congregation and sometimes to a particular task within a congregation. However, the door on this question is opened by Church Order Article 23-e: "Commissioned pastors who desire to serve beyond their specific field of labor must secure the approval of their consistories and classes." We believe that when a commissioned pastor retires and no longer is serving a particular congregation, it is beneficial to the commissioned pastor, the classis, and the broader church that the particular gifts of the commissioned pastor continue to be used in the performance of official acts of ministry. Since the proposed Church Order Article notes that retirement is to take place with the approval of the council and classis, the approval for wider service as required in Article 23-e is met.

What is presented in this overture is framed in a way similar to what is stated in Church Order Article 18 and its Supplement regarding the retirement of minsters of the Word. However, not everything has been duplicated, because that would complicate the basic proposal, considering, for example, that commissioned pastors are not included in the denominational ministers'

pension plan and the office of commissioned pastor is distinct from that of minister of the Word.

Believing that it is time to clarify this matter and to give commissioned pastors the value they deserve in retirement, the following overture is offered.

II. Overture

Classis Yellowstone overtures synod to adopt the following as Church Order Article 23-f:

> *Proposed Article 23-f*
>
> A commissioned pastor who has either reached retirement age and has served as solo pastor in a congregation, or who has served in a position that includes performing the official acts of ministry is eligible for retirement. Retirement shall take place with the approval of council and classis. The commissioned pastor shall retain the title of commissioned pastor and the authority, conferred by the church, to perform official acts of ministry. Supervision shall remain with the congregation last served unless transferred to another congregation.

Grounds:

1. This will allow a commissioned pastor to retire while still enabling him/her to serve the church by performing the official acts of ministry.
2. This change will "place more value on the office of commissioned pastor and offer more support to those who serve in this office" (see the Candidacy Committee report in the *Agenda for Synod 2016*, p. 272; and encouragement by Synod 2007 in the *Acts of Synod 2007*, p. 652).
3. The church will benefit greatly from an ability to use emeritus commissioned pastors through the performance of official acts of ministry.

Classis Yellowstone
Del VanDenBerg, stated clerk

Overture 9: Establish Oversight of the Blog *Do Justice*

I. Background

The Do Justice blog (dojustice.crcna.org) describes itself as "a conversation space for justice for the Christian Reformed Church" and is hosted by the Centre for Public Dialogue and the Office of Social Justice. This blog features articles from a variety of perspectives, examining various ways to improve justice work. Though intended for good, the focus on different points of view has gone much too far, including authors who promote praying to false gods, equate native religions to Christianity, participate in idolatry, and promote pluralism. A representative of one of our church councils emailed the Office of Social Justice with our concerns, but received no response.

The following are excerpts from specific articles:

"What I Learned from a Full Moon Ceremony" by Erica VanEssendelft
Posted December 2, 2016

In 2014 I had the amazing opportunity to participate in an Indigenous Peoples Solidarity delegation of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) to Kenora, Ontario, where we visited Grassy Narrows First Nation. It was a time to "walk in solidarity, live out reconciliation, support Indigenous land defenders, and learn what it means to be an ally."

We received a last minute invitation to the full moon ceremony once some women connected to CPT met us and said we (females only) were welcome to participate. Not wanting to pass up this opportunity, the other female on the delegation and I accepted the invitation. It was like nothing I had never experienced before. I felt honored to be invited into the sacred space. I felt honored to be a woman—in this world of sexism, it is not every day that I feel valued as a woman.

. . . As the full moon rose higher in the night, women started gathering at the Women´s Place Kenora. We formed a circle around the sacred fire and in a fluid clockwise motion the circle turned, giving each woman present an opportunity to be at the head of the circle to offer up a prayer of tobacco to grandmother moon. There was young. There was old. There was me, in the middle of a full moon ceremony, a sacred ritual. I prayed for the strong and fierce women in my life. I thanked God for the phases of the moon and the beautiful connection it has to a woman´s cycle, to the creation of life and the sanctity of it.

In the above article, the author attends and participates in a full moon ceremony hosted by Grassy Narrows First Nation of Ontario. Part of the ceremony includes offering a sacrifice of tobacco to grandmother moon. It is not clear from the article whether the author offered the sacrifice, nor is it clear if the author believes grandmother moon to be the same as the God of the Bible. What is clear, however, is that this was a pagan worship ceremony to a false god, and the author speaks very positively about her participation in it, thereby promoting it. Even if the author is not breaking the first commandment, she is certainly breaking the second commandment by attempting to worship the true God in a false way.

"COP21: Learning Stewardship from Indigenous Peoples" by Michelle Nieviadomy
Posted December 11, 2015

Canada's Indigenous communities are at the front lines having to face the consequences of climate change. "Look at my community" pleaded a First Nations community member who further said "we are not a third world country but yet we live like one." Inuit communities and their traditional way of life have already been deeply impacted, as illustrated by changes of animal skins, weather, water, and ice patterns, all of which they rely on for their livelihood. One Inuit leader said "we are human barometers of climate change." A First Nations chief from a northern community expressed his community's profound relationship with the earth: "We live on the land and we are tied to the land. Our spiritual identity is with the land." Land is sacred. Land is ceremony. Relationship to land is about more than provision…..

As we continue to pursue justice and equality, may our prayers follow that of Sioux Chief Yellow Hawk:

Great Spirit Prayer
Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the wind, whose breath gives life to all the world. Hear me; I need your strength and wisdom. Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people.

> Help me to remain calm and strong in the face of all that comes towards me. Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock. Help me seek pure thoughts and act with the intention of helping others. Help me find compassion without empathy overwhelming me. I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy: myself. Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes. So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.

In this article, the author presents some of the negative impacts climate change is having on Indigenous people groups in Canada, as well as some of the ways those same people groups have been marginalized once again during the climate talks held in Paris. The author ends by inviting us to have our prayers follow a great spirit prayer, in which the Indigenous god is credited with creating the world and giving everything life. The great spirit is also asked for strength, wisdom, and compassion. What does it mean to have our prayers "follow" this prayer? Does this mean we should pray to the great spirit with Chief Yellow Hawk? Is the author suggesting the great spirit is the same as the God revealed in the Bible?

> "My Trip to Standing Rock" by Susie Silversmith
> Posted December 7, 2016
>
> At Standing Rock they were holding a peaceful sacred gathering with prayers. The camp reminded me of my own Navajo people who have ceremonies like that. The ceremony is treated seriously and respectfully. When we visited, the Lord had plans for us to meet some of the frontline protectors—we went to their camp and prayed with them. We formed a circle with our hands and while we were praying, the helicopters and drones started flying above us like they were trying to interrupt our prayers. It was a form of intimidation—they were trying to interfere with our prayer circle. I got a taste of what it feels like when the water protectors are praying and the militarized police make their commotion to disrupt their prayers.
>
> Another thing that made me mad and sad was the stories I heard about the times the militarized police came and raided their camps, urinated on the sacred items, and threw them away. This story was shared with us by some of our people who carry these sacred items for prayer. We use our feathers, cedar, sweet grass, tobacco, pipes, and other sacred items when we pray. Many of these items are passed down from generation to generation so that the ceremonies can be carried on. To me it's just like stepping into a church and dishonoring the altar or the piano, items that people use to worship God. My heart was broken when I heard that there was so little respect for our people and how they worship Creator God. There is only one Creator that we all worship. I believe that before any Europeans came, we Navajo people already had our relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We already had our own ways of worshipping our Maker and Creator.

The above blog was written by an author who went to the Standing Rock Sioux camp to protest the Dakota Access pipeline. She prays with the Sioux there. She then goes on to describe her views that the Navajo religion is and always has been worshiping God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and the Navajo creator god is the same as the Christian God. Clearly the author is promoting syncretism, having fused together the Navajo religion with Christianity.

> "Decolonizing Christianity after Discovery" by Daniel José Camacho
> Posted October 10, 2016
>
> . . . Second, Christians must abandon the Eurocentrism of modern Christian missions. George Tinker challenges the ways in which Las Casas is celebrated as a hero. Although he did defend Indigenous peoples against other Christians

of his time who argued for absolute extermination or servitude, Las Casas still justified the conquest as an opportunity to evangelize and civilize (not to mention that Las Casas helped precipitate the trans-Atlantic slavery of blacks). For the most part, many well-meaning Christians have followed Las Casas in seeking to evangelize and civilize Indigenous peoples while making them conform to their idea of theological "orthodoxy." Re-thinking missions means respecting the variety of shapes that Indigenous spirituality can take without forcing conversion or a particular Euro-American expression of Christian faith.

Third, repenting of the doctrine of discovery should include wrestling with destructive seeds embedded within modern Christianity which contributed to colonialism. For example, the seeds for racial classification and the denigration of Indigenous and black people can already be seen within Christianity itself, specifically in its original construction of its Other, namely the "Jew." Within theology, this is known as the problem of Supersessionism. Additionally, exclusively privileging Judeo-Christian scriptures (as written texts) can contribute to denigrating oral histories and other religious ways of knowing.

This article discusses ways Christians need to change in how they view and treat Indigenous peoples to act against the Doctrine of Discovery. Within it, the author calls Christians to rethink missions, including not requiring "orthodox" belief, nor privileging the Bible above oral histories. This confusing proposal, while not at all clear on what evangelism should look like, may lead readers to conclude that Native Americans do not need to be evangelized at all, since their oral histories and "other religious ways of knowing" are equal to the Bible in value and spiritual importance.

II. Overture

Classis Minnkota overtures Synod 2017 to establish oversight of the blog *Do Justice* to ensure that posted articles are in line with Scripture and our confessions and that articles that are not in line with Scripture and our confessions are removed.

Grounds:

1. The Bible and our confessions are very clear that God is a jealous God, and will not share his people with false gods.
   a. The Old Testament shows many times that the pagan practices of neighboring nations were besetting sins to the Israelites. God gave them many warnings about such practices, including the following:
      1) Deuteronomy 6:13-15: "Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land."
      2) Deuteronomy 8:19: "If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed."
      3) Exodus 22:20: "Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed."
   b. The New Testament also has many warnings for the church against idolatry:
      1) 1 Corinthians 10:20: "The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons."

2) Matthew 4:10: "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."'"
3) 1 John 5:21: "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols."

c. Our confessions, too, have something to say:
1) Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 94: "What does the Lord require in the first commandment?
A: That I, not wanting to endanger my own salvation, avoid and shun all idolatry, sorcery, superstitious rites, and prayer to saints or to other creatures. That I rightly know the only true God, trust him alone, and look to God for every good thing humbly and patiently, and love, fear, and honor God with all my heart. In short, that I give up anything rather than go against God's will in any way."
2) Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 95: "What is idolatry?
A. Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the one true God, who has revealed himself in the Word."
3) Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 96: "What is God's will for us in the second commandment?
A. That we in no way make any image of God nor worship him in any other way than has been commanded in God's Word."

2. Articles on *Do Justice* speak of Native American gods, prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices, and faith in such a way that readers could be led to believe that participating in these forbidden activities is permissible or even beneficial.
3. Articles on *Do Justice* are vague about whether Native American gods are actually the same as the Christian God, and openly promote syncretism and perhaps pluralism.
4. CRC members need clarification and encouragement in their daily walk with Christ from this denominationally sponsored blog, not confusion. Therefore *Do Justice* needs careful oversight to ensure that articles are in line with Scripture and our confessions and that articles that are not in line with Scripture and our confessions are removed.

Classis Minnkota
LeRoy G. Christoffels, stated clerk

Overture 10: Limit Use of Disposable Serve Ware and Cease to Use Water Bottles at Meetings of Synod

In fulfillment of our calling to be stewards of God's creation (Gen. 1:28) and doers of justice (Mic. 6:8), Classis Eastern Canada overtures synod to use fewer or no disposable dishes at its meetings, and to cease providing plastic water bottles at its meetings.

Grounds:

1. Using disposable dishes is not a stewardly use of God's creation when reusable dishes are available.

2. Using bottled water is usually unnecessary. It is no more sanitary, safer, or purer than water from the tap. In fact, in many cases, tap water is cleaner and adheres to higher safety standards.
3. Using bottled water is costly. It costs far, far more to pay for bottled water than it does to use water from the tap.
4. Using bottled water is wasteful. While it is advertised that the bottles can be recycled, they often are not—either because users do not put the bottles in recycling bins or because recycling plants cannot handle the volume or the type of plastic. Furthermore, why first put water (or anything) in a container that needs dealing with if it doesn't need to be? Better than recycling is reducing.
5. Using bottled water is unjust. It commodifies a resource that is necessary to sustain human life. Water should not be something that could be put out of the reach of people who could not afford it. If, as sometimes happens, water from our city taps is not sufficiently safe, bottled water ought to be a temporary solution, and a permanent solution ought to be found in asking our civic leaders to ensure that safe water is accessible to everyone.

Two simple ways to stop or reduce using water bottles would be (1) to provide pitchers of water on tables with drinking glasses, and (2) to ask delegates to bring travel mugs (please do not provide delegates with travel mugs: almost everyone has their own already; providing travel mugs just creates more production, cost, and waste).

For more information, see the "Story of Bottled Water" on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se12y9hSOM0). Kairos, an organization of which the Christian Reformed Church is a member, also advocates that plastic water bottles stop being used.

More compelling than YouTube is the prophet Isaiah: "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come" (55:1). Isaiah's invitation to real, true, God-given life is one we cannot afford to ignore, even and especially in the most practical of ways! Jesus said, "Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Our forgiveness and Spirit-given new life extend to our concrete, daily choices. What a witness it would be if the broader church were a leader in this aspect of caring for our Lord's creation and promoting his justice!

Classis Eastern Canada
Richard Smit, stated clerk

Overture 11: Discover Cause for CRC Membership Decline; Develop Strategy to Reverse the Trend of Decline through Church Renewal and Planting; Require Annual Reporting of Progress

I. Background

A study of denomination membership statistics reveals that the Christian Reformed Church has been in an alarming trend of decline. This decline is geographically widespread, has been steady since the early 1990s, and appears to be increasing in its rate. Consider the following:

A. At the time of the publication of the 2016 *Yearbook,* CRC membership stood at 235,921. Only ten years prior, in 2006, membership stood at 272,127. Twenty years ago, in 1996, total membership of the CRC was 291,796.

B. Thus, there was a 6.7 percent decline in membership for the years from 1996 to 2006, but this decline rate doubled (13.3%) for the years from 2006 to 2016.

C. During this twenty-year period of time, 45 of the then 47 classes in the Christian Reformed Church declined (Classis Pacific Hanmi was divided into two classes in 2014). The only exceptions were Classis Minnkota—which showed an increase merely because of the transfer of churches from other classes—and Classis Hanmi. Almost half of the 45 declining classes (22) declined at a rate of 10 percent or more. Twelve classes declined at a rate of more than 15 percent over this time frame.

D. Most alarmingly, if each classis continues to decline at the same rate as it has for the past ten years, then the following projections can be made about CRC total membership:

- In ten years (2026) the total membership of the CRC will be reduced to 206,995.
- In twenty years (2036) the total membership of the CRC will be reduced to 184,107.

Note: These projections may even be entirely overly optimistic, given that the rate of decline seems to be increasing. (See Appendices 1, 2, and 3.)

If these projections prove to be anywhere near accurate, it is certain that this decline will have a profound impact on the entire denomination and all its ministries. It is difficult to see how, if nothing changes, the CRC's kingdom impact will not be severely reduced.

At the present time, various denominational agencies and offices have taken some initial steps to address this decline. It seems, however, that these initial steps (while important) have been inadequate to solve this major issue. It is clear that as of yet there has been no comprehensive attempt to discover the reasons for this decline. Nor has there been developed satisfactory solutions to arrest, much less reverse, this alarming trend.

In other words, if immediate, bold and decisive action is not taken to discover the causes of this decline, and if the same immediate, bold and decisive action is not taken to find solutions that actually work to solve the problem, then we together are failing to take hold of the strategic opportunity that this moment in our history provides.

II. Overture

Classis Southeast U.S. overtures synod to instruct the executive director, the Board of Trustees, and each agency to act with urgency to make the following a top priority:

A. Gain a full understanding of the causes of our membership decline.

B. Develop a comprehensive unified strategy and plan to arrest and reverse the trend of decline and bring a positive trend line of membership growth to our denomination through both church renewal and church planting.

C. Further, Classis Southeast U.S. overtures synod to instruct the executive director, the Board of Trustees, and each agency to report its progress to synod annually until such time as synod decides that this issue has been satisfactorily addressed.

Grounds:

1. Given the profound impact that our decline both is causing and will cause, it is more than obvious that swift and bold action is needed now. The old adage seems quite appropriate, "If nothing changes, nothing changes."
2. A satisfactory comprehensive strategy for church planting and church renewal that adequately addresses our membership trend line has yet to be developed.
3. "The love of Christ compels us" (2 Cor. 5:14). These actions should not be undertaken for our own sake. The love of Jesus and the Great Commission must compel us in a North American context where ignorance, apathy, and hostility toward the gospel is on the rise.

Appendix 1
Total Membership by Classis

Classis	1996	2006	2016
Alberta North	9,472	9,781	9,069
Alberta South/Saskatchewan	4,833	4,763	4,357
Arizona	1,612	849	481
Atlantic Northeast	4,114	3,314	3,132
B.C. North-West	5,318	5,052	4,039
B.C. South-East	7,371	7,369	6,584
California South	6,825	5,450	4,894
Central California	7,809	7,874	6,945
Central Plains (formerly Pella)	7,322	5,883	5,097
Chatham	11,156	9,806	7,852
Chicago South	6,236	5,913	4,789
Columbia	2,858	2,213	2,131
Eastern Canada	5,402	5,038	4,125
Georgetown	10,357	9,342	9,012
Grand Rapids East	9,330	8,668	8,270
Grand Rapids North	9,483	7,718	4,848
Grand Rapids South	9,347	8,817	7,678
Grandville	8,965	8,588	7,468
Greater Los Angeles	5,425	6,718	3,985
Hackensack	3,059	2,853	2,556
Hamilton	6,618	6,952	6,374
Hanmi (formerly Pacific Hanmi), est. 1996		1,479	1,669
Heartland	5,907	5,045	5,092
Holland	11,424	11,992	11,096
Hudson	3,955	2,905	2,347
Huron	8,213	8,763	7,742
Iakota	8,345	8,217	8,022
Illiana	8,947	7,556	6,469
Kalamazoo	6,672	5,308	3,635
Ko-Am, est. 2014			638
Lake Erie	4,296	4,243	3,241
Lake Superior (formerly Minnesota North)	7,682	7,459	5,727
Minnkota (formerly Minnesota South)	4,426	3,411	4,322

Muskegon	6,329	6,089	5,096
Niagara	5,855	5,728	4,958
Northcentral Iowa	2,537	1,861	1,678
Northern Illinois	5,560	5,574	5,322
Northern Michigan	3,848	3,520	3,000
Pacific Northwest	8,595	7,196	6,117
Quinte	7,561	7,639	6,295
Red Mesa	1,745	1,824	1,712
Rocky Mountain	5,120	4,755	4,550
Southern U.S. (formerly Florida)	2,616	2,476	2,289
Thornapple Valley	4,803	4,901	4,220
Toronto	8,406	7,730	5,880
Wisconsin	5,935	5,303	4,949
Yellowstone	2,622	1,732	1,363
Zeeland	7,485	6,460	4,806
Total Membership	**291,796**	**272,127**	**235,921**

Appendix 2
Decadal Rates of Increase or Decrease by Classis

Classis	1996 - 2006	2006 - 2016
Alberta North	3.26%	-7.28%
Alberta South/Saskatchewan	-1.45%	-8.52%
Arizona	-47.33%	-43.35%
Atlantic Northeast	-19.45%	-5.49%
B.C. North-West	-5.00%	-20.05%
B.C. South-East	-0.03%	-10.65%
California South	-20.15%	-10.20%
Central California	0.83%	-11.80%
Central Plains (formerly Pella)	-19.65%	-13.36%
Chatham	-12.10%	-19.93%
Chicago South	-5.18%	-19.01%
Columbia	-22.57%	-3.71%
Eastern Canada	-6.74%	-18.12%
Georgetown	-9.80%	-3.53%
Grand Rapids East	-7.10%	-4.59%
Grand Rapids North	-18.61%	-37.19%
Grand Rapids South	-5.67%	-12.92%
Grandville	-4.21%	-13.04%
Greater Los Angeles	23.83%	-40.68%
Hackensack	-6.73%	-10.41%
Hamilton	5.05%	-8.31%
Hanmi (formerly Pacific Hanmi), est. 1996		12.85%
Heartland	-14.59%	0.93%
Holland	4.97%	-7.47%
Hudson	-26.55%	-19.21%
Huron	6.70%	-11.65%
Iakota	-1.53%	-2.37%
Illiana	-15.55%	-14.39%
Kalamazoo	-20.44%	-31.52%
Ko-Am, est. 2014		
Lake Erie	-1.23%	-23.62%
Lake Superior (formerly Minnesota North)	-2.90%	-23.22%
Minnkota (formerly Minnesota South)	-22.93%	26.71%
Muskegon	-3.79%	-16.31%
Niagara	-2.17%	-13.44%
Northcentral Iowa	-26.65%	-9.83%
Northern Illinois	0.25%	-4.52%

Northern Michigan	-8.52%	-14.77%
Pacific Northwest	-16.28%	-14.99%
Quinte	1.03%	-17.59%
Red Mesa	4.53%	-6.14%
Rocky Mountain	-7.13%	-4.31%
Southern U.S. (formerly Florida)	-5.35%	-7.55%
Thornapple Valley	2.04%	-13.90%
Toronto	-8.04%	-23.93%
Wisconsin	-10.65%	-6.68%
Yellowstone	-33.94%	-21.30%
Zeeland	-13.69%	-25.60%

Appendix 3
Ten- and Twenty-Year Projections Based on 2006-2016 Membership Rates

Classis	2026	2036
Alberta North	8,409	7,797
Alberta South/Saskatchewan	3,986	3,646
Arizona	273	154
Atlantic Northeast	2,960	2,797
B.C. North-West	3,229	2,582
B.C. South-East	5,883	5,256
California South	4,395	3,946
Central California	6,126	5,403
Central Plains (formerly Pella)	4,416	3,826
Chatham	6,287	5,035
Chicago South	3,879	3,141
Columbia	2,052	1,976
Eastern Canada	3,377	2,765
Georgetown	8,694	8,387
Grand Rapids East	7,890	7,528
Grand Rapids North	3,045	1,913
Grand Rapids South	6,686	5,822
Grandville	6,494	5,647
Greater Los Angeles	2,364	1,402
Hackensack	2,290	2,052
Hamilton	5,844	5,358
Hanmi (formerly Pacific Hanmi), est. 1996	1,883	2,125
Heartland	5,139	5,187
Holland	10,267	9,500
Hudson	1,896	1,532
Huron	6,840	6,043
Iakota	7,832	7,646
Illiana	5,538	4,742
Kalamazoo	2,489	1,705
Ko-Am, est. 2014	638	638
Lake Erie	2,476	1,891
Lake Superior (formerly Minnesota North)	4,397	3,376
Minnkota (formerly Minnesota South)	5,476	6,939
Muskegon	4,265	3,569
Niagara	4,292	3,715
Northcentral Iowa	1,513	1,364
Northern Illinois	5,081	4,852
Northern Michigan	2,557	2,179
Pacific Northwest	5,200	4,420
Quinte	5,187	4,275
Red Mesa	1,607	1,508
Rocky Mountain	4,354	4,166

Southern U.S. (formerly Florida)	2,116	1,956
Thornapple Valley	3,634	3,129
Toronto	4,473	3,402
Wisconsin	4,619	4,310
Yellowstone	1,073	844
Zeeland	3,575	2,660
Total Membership	**206,995**	**184,107**

Classis Southeast U.S.
Vernon G. Vander Zee, stated clerk

Overture 12: Provide the Churches with Guidance for Providing Pastoral Care for Same-sex Attracted Members and Their Families

I. Overture

In light of the Synod 2016 decision not to adopt the majority report of the Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same Sex Marriage (with or without the minority report recommendations), the council of Ivanrest Christian Reformed Church overtures Synod 2017 to direct the Board of Trustees (or Council of Delegates) to facilitate providing churches with specific guidance on how to care well for those who are same-sex attracted in our hurches and their families before Synod 2018.

Grounds:

1. Ivanrest CRC understands that there is a study committee charged with researching and reporting on human sexuality within the next five years. This, however, does not provide us with guidance needed in the meantime.
2. The pastoral need is urgent and immediate. There are same-sex attracted people currently in our churches, our schools, and our families. Many of them are being ignored or marginalized by churches, schools, and families who don't know how to reach out to them in truth and love.
   a. The decision not to adopt the majority report and the adoption of the minority report's amendments as recommendations (or is this "pastoral advice?") has only provided us with prohibitions. It has not provided us with any positive guidance on how to intentionally reach out and care for same-sex attracted members or their families.
   b. This unbalanced message is being heard by the same-sex attracted community as an unwillingness on our part to enter into an honest dialogue and has been hurtful to them and their families.
   c. Without practical pastoral guidance, churches, schools, and families too often respond to same-sex attracted individuals in reactionary and often painful ways that damage relationships and the witness of the church.
3. Not providing positive guidance leaves churches ill equipped to effectively communicate either biblical truth or God's love to those within the same-sex attracted community.
   a. Society has dramatically changed their viewpoints and practices regarding same-sex attracted individuals since the pastoral guidance

provided by Synod 1999. Our current conversation is reactionary rather than proactive, leaving many people within the church, including leadership, feeling overwhelmed and perhaps even fearful.
   b. It is not enough to remain silent since the church's silence can often lead to feelings of rejection by the church and even rejection by God.
4. Without thoughtful and positive guidance from our denomination, churches will act from widely varied perspectives without any common grounding.
   a. While we appropriately search out the theological truths of human sexuality together, it would be a great failure not to come together to provide intentional pastoral care to those in need in the meantime.
   b. A pastoral conversation would, hopefully, reshape many of the emotionally charged, divisive conversations occurring regarding a theological understanding.
   c. Pastors and council members are in desperate need of a common pastoral foundation upon which we can minister together.

II. Conclusion

We continue to pray for wisdom and understanding for the CRCNA as we seek to discern truth from Scripture over the next five years. In the meantime, we hope that this action will help us to grow together in our calling from God to love our brothers and sisters in Jesus' name.

Council of Ivanrest CRC, Grandville, Michigan
Michael Brown, clerk of council

Note: This overture was presented to the January 2017 meeting of Classis Grandville but was not adopted.

Overture 13: Recategorize the Belhar Confession to the Status of a Contemporary Testimony

Classis Red Mesa overtures Synod 2017 to recategorize the Belhar Confession to the same status as that of a contemporary testimony in the CRCNA—the same as Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony.

Grounds:

1. Living in an increasingly divided society, the church is scrutinized as to how we live out our unity as the body of Christ. It is our responsibility as the church to keep the gospel at the forefront of our living.
2. The gospel is the message of reconciliation accomplished in Christ to form a new humanity together, reconciled to God through faith (Eph. 2:14-16).
3. The Belhar Confession highlights the unity—the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ ("We believe in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family" [Belhar Confession, Art. 2])—and therefore calls us to pursue reconciliation and live justly in a way that none of our current confessions do.
4. In the Covenant for Officebearers we commit to be "formed and guided" by the *Contemporary Testimony*. The Belhar Confession speaks

to our attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors and therefore ought to "form and guide" us as a denomination as well. For this reason, we believe the Belhar Confession fits the same criteria as the Contemporary Testimony.

5. The current status of the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration is ambiguous to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCNA, as well as to those who might seek a closer relationship with us.
6. Similarly, the current status as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration is ambiguous to the congregations of the CRCNA. It is unclear how we are supposed to use the Belhar Confession in our worship, teaching, and preaching.
7. While designating the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony may or may not help relations with denominations in ecclesiastical fellowship, it will help clarify its use for CRCNA congregations since it will be included in the Covenant for Officebearers.
8. Adopting the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony and including it in our Covenant for Officebearers will hold us more accountable to be "formed and guided" by it together.

Classis Red Mesa
John J. Greydanus, stated clerk

Overture 14: Recategorize the Belhar Confession to the Status of a Contemporary Testimony

Classis B.C. North-West overtures Synod 2017 to recategorize the Belhar Confession to the status of a contemporary testimony in the CRC.

We believe such an act shows due respect to, and cooperation with, our ecumenical faith partners, who have expressed confusion at its current status as an "ecumenical faith declaration." We also wish to respect and listen to the voices of our own diverse family who have asked for a reconsideration because of the way they have been transformed in identity, purpose, and belonging by the Belhar Confession, along with their hopes and prayers for the transformation of our world by Christ through the church.

Along with providing more clarity to others about what we believe, the Belhar Confession is helping our congregations reflect, repent, and be "renewed in knowledge according to the image of [our] Creator" (Col. 3:10) in ways that the other creeds, confessions, and testimony have not.

Understanding what true unity is within the church, how to work for reconciliation with one another in faithful witness to the world, and seeking justice for our brothers and sisters in Christ are realities that are confronting us every day. Like the unity that it espouses, the Belhar Confession represents both a gift and an obligation to the church—a characteristic it shares with our confessions and Our World Belongs to God. Though these challenges have existed for as long as sin has been part of this world, we recognize them as pressing and timely, while also admitting that we can be too overwhelmed to discern how the Holy Spirit is leading us to Christ's call to action. The Belhar

Confession proclaims both the call and the action by helping us to envision not only what to believe but also what to do.

The Belhar Confession has the power to be used by the Holy Spirit to deeply shape us as a church for faithful witness in the twenty-first century, and we agree with others who have called for the reexamination of its position in the CRC. Such a reexamination is a true sign of humility and a desire to seek the will of God. From our own recent discernment and study of the Belhar Confession, we believe it will be most beneficial to the church if it is made one of our contemporary testimonies rather than keeping it as an ecumenical faith declaration. The church knows how to relate to and use our current contemporary testimony; the same cannot be said for an ecumenical faith declaration.

Though we did not write the Belhar, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we *can* proclaim this call of Christ and express the unity of faith, of which Christ is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:11-22).

Classis B.C. North-West
Andy de Ruyter, stated clerk

Overture 15: Do Not Adopt the Belhar Confession as a "Testimony" or as a Fourth Confessional Standard of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

I. Background

Synod 2009 proposed that Synod 2012 decide on the adoption of the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession of the CRCNA. Synod 2012 created the new category, Ecumenical Faith Declaration (EFD), and adopted the Belhar as an EFD for the CRCNA.

Since that time, the CRCNA's Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee (EIRC) has reported to Synod 2015 and 2016 that some of the CRCNA's ecumenical partners are dissatisfied with the position of the Belhar Confession in the less-binding category of EFD.

Classis Hackensack overtured Synod 2016 to adopt the Belhar Confession as the fourth confession of the CRCNA. Despite the study committee not finding the grounds of the overture sufficient for the "reconsideration of the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession" (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 909), Synod 2016 eventually passed a motion "that Synod 2017 recategorize the Belhar Confession to the same status as that of a contemporary testimony in the CRC—same as Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony" (*Acts of Synod 2016,* p. 913).

II. Analysis

A variety of reasons have been used to promote the Belhar Confession as a confession of the CRCNA. Synod 2012 failed to find them sufficiently compelling.

A sample of the reasons against giving confessional status to the Belhar Confession can be found in the 22 overtures written by 22 different classes to Synod 2012 against the Belhar Confession becoming a full confession of

the CRCNA on par with the existing three confessions. (See *Agenda for Synod 2012*, pp. 499-575.)

Some remain committed to elevating the Belhar Confession to confessional status in the CRCNA, or in the alternative, to having the Belhar listed on the Covenant for Officebearers (CFO) similar to the position of Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony.

Adding another confession to the CFO would make it more likely that officebearers would object to signing it. Beyond what prospective new officebearers might think, many current officebearers in the CRCNA have concerns regarding the nature and content of the Belhar. Will ministers and other officebearers who refuse to sign the CFO that includes the Belhar Confession be expected to resign? Why would we bind consciences in such a way?

The churches who feel they will benefit from using the Belhar Confession are already free to do so. To the extent individual churches have found ways to use the Belhar Confession beneficially, we celebrate with them. Any church will be able to follow their example without the CRCNA adopting the confession more officially. There is no reason the Belhar Confession needs to have its status changed in order for the CRCNA to continue its efforts toward unity, reconciliation, and justice as described in various official documents of the CRCNA, most notably, the study committee report to Synod 1996, *God's Diverse and Unified Family*.

The objection that the Belhar is too vague to be useful has never been answered. The fact that Synod 2009 felt the need to attach its own commentary to the Belhar stands as evidence of the Belhar's lack of clarity. By adopting the Belhar, the CRCNA could be assumed to agree with the Belhar's authors' interpretations of justice by those unfamiliar (especially new or prospective church members) with the "small print" which Synod 2009 attached as an introduction.

This overture should not be received or construed in any way as minimizing the troubling issues of racism in North America and within the CRCNA. All church members should hold themselves and the denomination accountable to the conclusions of its former proclamations on racism rather than adding more and more words to read. Consider the following example from *God's Diverse and Unified Family:*

> **Obedience in matters of racial reconciliation calls us individually and corporately to continually repent, to strive for justice, and to battle the powers of evil.**
>
> We must be forthright in acknowledging that racism is sin. Racism is more than just bad manners; indeed, any attitudes, words, or deeds of omission or commission that inflict harm upon others and break down community constitute sin against God and sin against God's children. Racism is a disgrace to a civil society; it is a much greater disgrace in the church because racism sends the opposite message from the one Christ sends in his reconciling work on the Cross.
>
> (*God's Diverse and Unified Family*, p. 25)

III. Overture

Classis Columbia overtures Synod 2017 not to adopt the Belhar Confession as a "testimony" of the Christian Reformed Church in North America or to elevate it to full confessional status.

Grounds:

1. Recategorizing the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony will be confusing because the CRCNA already has a "Contemporary Testimony." Further, because the Belhar Confession was not written by the CRCNA it cannot function in the role as typically implied by the term *testimony*.
2. Recategorizing the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony will not solve the problem identified by the EIRC and others because the contemporary testimony category is hardly better defined as a category than is Ecumenical Faith Declaration. There is little reason to think anything other than full confessional status will please the few ecumenical partners of the CRCNA who have chosen to elevate the Belhar Confession to such status.
3. Recategorizing the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony is a mistake because the CRCNA already has a substantial "contemporary testimony" on the evils of racism and the Christian responsibility to repent of racism and strive for justice—the 1996 study report to synod titled *God's Diverse and Unified Family*.
4. Recategorizing the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony is a mistake because adding it to the Covenant for Officebearers will unnecessarily bind the consciences of all officebearers who find theological fault with the Belhar Confession.
5. Recategorizing the Belhar Confession as a contemporary testimony because the gesture *may* be received well by some of our ecumenical partners is a mistake. Our confessions need to serve the needs of our churches, classes, and denomination. The following classes overtured Synod 2012 to not promote the Belhar as a fourth confession of the CRCNA for various theological and practical reasons: Alberta South/Saskatchewan, Columbia, Eastern Canada, Grandville, Hamilton, Heartland, Hudson, Huron, Minnkota, Northern Michigan, Pacific Northwest, and Zeeland. Surely, the expressed desire of a substantial number of CRCNA classes should be recognized above the desires of our current ecumenical partners.

Classis Columbia
Roger Kramer, stated clerk

Overture 16: Reject Elevating the Belhar Confession to the Same Status as Our World Belongs to God

I. Background

In 2009 the Belhar Confession was circulated to the churches for three years of study and discussion. Upon completion of these three years the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee recommended that Synod 2012 adopt the Belhar as the fourth confession of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. This recommendation elicited a large number of overtures and communications from various classes, congregations, and individuals. Some of these overtures were in support of adopting the Belhar as a fourth

confession, but the majority were opposed. Opposition to such an adoption generally centered on four areas of concern:

1. Lack of a comprehensive nature inherent in a confession.
   The Belhar is essentially a one-issue statement and not a confession.

2. The Belhar lacks clear wording, leaving it open to unbiblical interpretations and applications.
   The Belhar states, "We believe . . . that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged." It can be argued from this statement that social and economic status is the basis upon which a special relationship with God is enjoyed rather than being based upon faith in Jesus Christ.
   Furthermore, the Belhar states, "**We reject any doctrine** . . . which explicitly or implicitly maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church."
   The meaning of "human or social factor" is not clear. One of the primary promoters of the Belhar in its original context argued that support for homosexual unions and homosexual ordination is demanded by the Belhar because homosexuality is a human and social factor (*The Banner*, January 18, 2011).

3. Confessions are adopted as forms of unity, whereas the affect of adopting the Belhar would be that of bringing disunity.
   The many overtures received by Synod 2012 gave evidence to the fact that many in the CRC could not, in good conscience, accept the Belhar as a fourth confession. Forcing every officebearer in the denomination to accept this statement would divide rather than unite.
   The Belhar states, "Anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted."
   One of two conclusions must be reached in light of this statement.
   - Either the Belhar disqualifies itself for consideration in our denomination by this statement, for surely we have seen in 2012 the disunity that was brought on account of this confession, and therefore we must resist it.
   - Or, the content of the Belhar is important enough because it reflects the truth of God's Holy Word, and therefore it is worthy of possible disunity because it upholds God's truth, which is of much greater importance than a unity found in common falsehood or pretenses. If this were the case, however, the above-quoted statement would prove itself false and therefore the Belhar would be unworthy of consideration in any manner for having a false statement contained within it.

Furthermore, if one were to suggest that the above conclusions take the Belhar's idea of unity out of context, then it would only prove point 2 above, regarding the ambiguous nature of the Belhar's context.

For surely the unity discussed in the Belhar would include unity between all and any Christian brothers or sisters, and not simply to those that may find themselves in separate economic situations (the rich and the poor) or racial divisions (Christians of different color/culture).

4. Adding the Belhar to our confessional standards is redundant.

Unity, reconciliation, and social justice are already addressed in our current confessions, rendering the Belhar confession redundant.

Synod 2012 did not adopt the Belhar as a fourth confession. It was accepted as an ecumenical faith declaration. As such, members of the CRC are encouraged to know and teach and appreciate the content of the confession but are free to state their lack of agreement with certain aspects of the Belhar.

In 2016 Classis Hackensack overtured synod to adopt the Belhar as a fourth confession. The advisory committee that dealt with the overture advised that the overture be considered out of order because no new grounds were submitted to those submitted in 2012. However, the committee suggested that it be adopted as a contemporary testimony. This recommendation carried and now, if ratified by Synod 2017, the Belhar will be elevated to the level of Our World Belongs to God.

However, the status of Our World Belongs to God has changed since Synod 2012 received the aforementioned overtures. Prior to 2012 all officebearers in the CRC stated that they fully accepted the three confessions as fully consistent with God's Word and promised to teach and defend them. In 2012 the form of subscription was replaced with the Covenant for Officebearers, which still requires unqualified acceptance with the three confessions, but also now includes Our World Belongs to God. By raising the Belhar to the same status as Our World Belongs to God, a document with serious weaknesses will be elevated to a foundational status in the Christian Reformed Church and will bring about divisions in the church.

II. Overture

For the above reasons, Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan overtures Synod 2017 not to elevate the status of the Belhar to that of Our World Belongs to God.

Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan
J. Cameron Fraser, stated clerk

Overture 17: Do Not Elevate the Belhar Confession to Level of Contemporary Testimony

Classis Holland overtures synod not to elevate the Belhar Confession to the same level as Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony.

Grounds:

1. The creation of the Ecumenical Faith Declaration category, while somewhat novel and in various ways problematic to some of our ecumenical relationships, was designed with a valid and specific purpose: to bring together two sharply differing positions within the CRCNA on the adoption of the Belhar Confession.
   a. The advisory committee noted in its report to Synod 2012:

> As a committee, we considered a range of options that would honor the biblical centrality of the themes of the Belhar Confession while giving

> weight to the objections raised by the overtures and a lack of clarity over the definition and nature of a confession.
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2012*, p. 765)

b. Also,

> The three-year discussion of the Belhar Confession revealed a lack of consensus in support of adopting the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession on par with the historic confessions adopted by the CRCNA.
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2012*, p. 767)

c. There were an astonishing 35 overtures submitted to Synod 2012 on the question of the adoption of the Belhar Confession expressing strong opinions from across the spectrum, all the way from outright rejection of the confession on the one hand to its adoption as a fourth form of unity on the other.

2. While the suggestion to elevate the Belhar Confession to the same level as the Contemporary Testimony may seem like a new and fitting solution to many, this option was already considered by Synod 2012 and rejected.
   a. This option was suggested, in varying forms, by 11 of the 35 overtures presented to Synod 2012 on this question.
   b. The advisory committee concluded that such an option would not successfully bring together those on opposing sides of this debate.
3. Central to accomplishing a compromise on this issue was the assurance to those opposed to adoption of the Belhar that it would "not be listed in the Covenant for Officebearers," thus eliminating the binding nature of its content upon them, and avoiding the crisis of conscience they would have faced if required to sign the Covenant for Officebearers with the Belhar Confession included in it.

> Documents of this category, while important and contributing to the CRCNA's worldwide witness and ministry, are not considered part of the confessional basis of the CRCNA and, therefore, will not be listed in the Covenant for Officebearers.
>
> (*Acts of Synod 2012*, p. 766)

4. Conditions within the CRCNA regarding the stark differences of opinion held by its members on the Belhar Confession have not changed since this 2012 decision. The discussion that took place on the floor of Synod 2016 alone revealed the continuance of these deeply held positions on both sides of the issue.
5. Elevating the Belhar Confession to the status of the Contemporary Testimony would add the Belhar Confession to the Covenant for Officebearers, essentially eliminating the shelter given to those opposed to adoption of the Belhar by the compromise achieved in 2012.

   While the Belhar Confession would not be listed in the same place as the three forms of unity in the Covenant for Officebearers, listing the Belhar along with the Contemporary Testimony would require all those signing to affirm that the Belhar too is "a current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context." Affirming such a thing would be largely impossible for many in the CRCNA.

6. The fallout from this single action would be widespread, creating much unnecessary conflict within the CRCNA and the need for many to either sign the Covenant for Officebearers against their consciences, step down from official ecclesiastical office, or leave the CRCNA altogether.

Classis Holland
Calvin Hoogstra, stated clerk pro-tem

Overture 18: Retain Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration

Since 2009, when the Ecumenical Relations Committee (now Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee) first proposed that the CRCNA adopt it as a fourth summary of our beliefs, the Belhar Confession has been the subject of much discussion within the denomination. For proponents, further incorporation of the Belhar into the CRC's confessional framework represents an important denunciation of the sin of racism, and an affirmation that voices representing the diversity of the church are welcome at the confessional table. On the other hand, many have expressed concerns that specific statements in the Belhar Confession are, at minimum, confusing or unhelpfully narrow (for both perspectives, see *Agenda for Synod 2012*, pp. 235-56, 490-575). In the end Synod 2012 chose not to adopt the Belhar as a confession, but instead placed it in a new category of "ecumenical faith declarations."

Now the question of the Belhar's place in our confessional matrix has come up again. While the option of recategorizing the Belhar as a "contemporary testimony" may seem like an attractive compromise, we note that by endorsing this option, synod leaves many of the concerns about the Belhar unresolved. By affirming the Belhar as a testimony, synod would be placing into the Covenant for Officebearers a document which has several statements of questionable interpretation, including the following:

– "true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church" (Art. 2.6).
– "we reject any doctrine which . . . maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church (Art. 2, Rejection 4).
– "that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged" (Art. 4.2).

(Because these concerns were already adequately presented to Synod 2012, we would simply direct attention to Overtures 22, 27, and 37 in the *Agenda for Synod 2012* rather than repeating them all here.) Synod would also be requiring officebearers to affirm a document that synod itself felt needed clarification with regard to the denominational position on homosexuality (see *Acts of Synod 2009*, p. 606; see also *Agenda for Synod 2012*, pp. 237, 251-52).

While proponents of the Belhar would argue that the denomination is simply affirming the principles of unity, justice, and reconciliation that are clearly biblical (Overture 13 to Synod 2016), this overlooks the CRC's

long-held understanding that we affirm the confessions because they fully agree with God's Word, not just because they generally do so (see Covenant for Officebearers, and also the distinction in the report from the *Agenda for Synod 1976*, pp. 560-61 between agreeing "in so far as" or "because of" a confession's alignment with God's Word). Even if the Belhar Confession functioned on a level of *Our World Belongs to God*, the question would need to be asked what it means to have a document that "forms and guides us in our present context" when that document has so many uncertain meanings.

Synod 2016 rightly noted that no new grounds were advanced to support changing Synod 2012's decision not to adopt the Belhar as a fourth confession (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 909). Synod 2012 had also made a specific decision not to include the Belhar in the Covenant for Officebearers (*Acts of Synod 2012*, p. 766), and no new grounds have been advanced why this decision of synod should be changed. In addition, it should be noted that though a number of overtures in 2012 suggested that the Belhar be adopted on par with *Our World Belongs to God*, the contemporary testimony was not included in the Covenant for Officebearers at that time. Though we can appreciate how the category of "ecumenical faith declarations" may require additional elucidation to be useful, it may be that such a category is exactly what our denomination needs in order to help identify documents, like the Belhar Confession, which have provided vital dialogue with our ecumenical partners. If additional weight were required for such documents, perhaps a sentence could be added to the Covenant for Officebearers noting the value of our ecumenical faith declarations for dialogue with the wider Body of Christ without committing officebearers to be formed and guided by everything in these documents.

The manner in which this discussion has once again come before synod should also raise some concerns about the way we discuss confessional matters in the CRC. We require that study committee reports be submitted in the fall, to provide sufficient time for discussion among councils and classes. Confessional changes, which are much weightier matters, can in contrast be proposed (though not adopted) without any prior opportunity for such discussion. In fact, this is exactly what happened at Synod 2016, where on the basis of a single overture, the concerns of a single classis were used as grounds to initiate confessional changes while most other classes, including the twenty-four classes which expressed concerns to Synod 2012, lacked prior opportunity to speak into this conversation. Is this the best way to foster meaningful dialogue within the CRC about our most significant statements of faith?

With all this in mind, Classis Hudson overtures Synod 2017 to do the following:

1. Retain the Belhar Confession in the category of "ecumenical faith declaration."

   Grounds:

   a. Even in proposing recategorization, Synod 2016 observed that the overture on which it was acting did not raise any new or compelling grounds to reconsider the confessional status of the Belhar Confession (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 909).

b. Synod 2012, in adopting the Belhar Confession as an "ecumenical faith declaration," specifically stated that it was not to be included in the Covenant for Officebearers (*Acts of Synod 2012*, p. 766). No new grounds have been established for a revision of that decision, nor has synod provided a response to the theological concerns presented to Synod 2012 by Overtures 18-49 and 61 which formed the basis of its decision for the status of the Belhar Confession.
c. Synod 2016 proposed recategorization of the Belhar Confession because of the supposed weakness of the "ecumenical faith declaration" category, without a clear understanding of what those weaknesses actually were (*Acts of Synod 2016*, p. 913).
d. Our current confessions and testimonies already address the issues of unity, justice, and reconciliation (see Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 54-55, 105-107, 110; Belgic Confession Art. 27-29; Canons of Dort, First Main Point, Art. 9 and Rejection IX; Second Main Point, Art. 5, 9; *Our World Belongs to God*, para. 16, 40, and 47).

2. Explore ways to either strengthen or add to the current language of the contemporary testimony, *Our World Belongs to God*, to clearly express the witness of Scripture that racism is evil, and to affirm the reconciling power of the atonement of Jesus Christ to break down hostility between individuals and people groups.

   Ground: This would clearly call officebearers in the CRCNA to stand against the sin of racism while specifically identifying the source of our reconciliation in the completed work of Christ.

3. Encourage the EIRC to develop a more robust vision for the category of ecumenical faith declarations and its place in our own denominational context, including other potential statements for this category (such as the Theological Declaration of Barmen).

   Grounds:
   a. Such a move could enhance the visibility of a document like the Belhar Confession for our ecumenical partners, highlighting in this case the sin of racism and its damaging effect to the credibility of our Christian witness, thus giving it the added weight desired by the authors of Overture 13 to Synod 2016.
   b. A category for documents to which CRC officebearers could subscribe "insofar as" rather than "because" the statements agree with the Word of God could be helpful in fostering additional dialogue with other churches in ecumenical fellowship.
   c. The EIRC's response to the ecumenical faith declaration category has thus far mostly been critique from our ecumenical partners rather than exploration of its usefulness within our own context.

4. Amend the Rules for Synodical Procedure to require that any proposals for confessional revision (whether from overtures, from standing committees, or from the Board of Trustees) be submitted for initial consideration on the same timetable as study committee reports.

Ground: This recognizes the weight of discussions around confessional matters, and provides councils and classes with greater opportunity for input in the first consideration of any confessional changes in the broader spirit of Church Order Article 47.

Classis Hudson
Mary B. Stegink, stated clerk

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication 1: Classis Toronto

Classis Toronto wishes to communicate to Synod 2017 a protest to the unprecedented stipulation that Synod 2016 placed on potential members to serve on the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-Laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality—namely, that members must say in advance that they are in agreement with the church's official position on homosexuality as stated in 1973 and reiterated in 2002.

Grounds:

1. The restriction in effect places an earlier synodical decision ahead of Scripture study.
2. Never before has synod placed such a restriction on potential members to serve on a synodical study committee.
3. We believe it is important to distinguish between the authority of the confessions, which can be disputed only by formulating a gravamen, and the lesser authority of synodical decisions.

Classis Toronto
John Meiboom, stated clerk

Communication 2: Classis Minnkota

The churches of Classis Minnkota believe that men and women are created equal as imagebearers of God and as heirs of salvation. We also believe that men and women complement each other in mutually enriching ways and that God has given them specific callings in the church and home. We seek to honor and glorify God by celebrating and using the gifts and abilities he has given to us within the roles he has established for us.

As a classis we affirm the following:

1. That men and women equally bear the image of God and are called to serve him throughout their lives (Gen. 1:27-28).
2. That we are to follow Christ's example when he honored and respected women during his earthly ministry (Luke 8:1-3; 10:38-42) and as he continues to equip them for service in his church today (1 Cor. 12:4-7).
3. That the roles for men and women in the church must be defined solely by the Word of God and not by human ideologies such as feminism or male chauvinism (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

4. That from the beginning of creation God assigned headship to males in the family and in the church (1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:12-13; 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

5. That the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12), and that the church, therefore, should not ordain women to authoritative offices in the church.

6. That the purpose of spiritual gifts is not self-fulfillment but service to God and others, to the end that God receives all the glory (1 Cor. 12:7; 14:26).

As a classis, our desire is to honor the authority of Scripture. We therefore commit ourselves as follows:

1. To identify, nurture, and use the gifts and abilities of all of God's people—men, women, and our youth—in ways that are according to the Word of God and for the good of God's kingdom and his people.

2. To preserve the holiness and authority of the offices of the church in accordance with the Word of God.

3. To send delegates to synod who fit the biblical qualifications found in 1 Timothy 2 and 3 and in Titus 1. Our conviction is expressed in the older translation of the Belgic Confession, Article 30, where it states, ". . . when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy." (The original French wording refers to persons in the masculine gender.) The Scripture reference provided with this article of our confession is 1 Timothy 3, a passage in which it is clear that Paul envisioned faithful men to serve as elders and deacons.

Synod has declared that the position outlined above is biblical and may be held within the Christian Reformed Church. In keeping with the provision made by synod, many delegates from Classis Minnkota who attend synod protest the seating of women officebearers as delegates. When they protest, they do so not out of prejudice against sisters in Christ, but because of their convictions based on Scripture and our confessions.

We send this communication to clarify where we stand and to indicate that our desire is not to offend brothers and sisters in Christ but to honor the Word of God and our confessions.

Classis Minnkota
LeRoy G. Christoffels, stated clerk

APPEAL

1. Appeal of the consistories of First CRC, Lynden, Washington; Second CRC, Lynden, Washington; Bethel CRC, Lynden, Washington; Sumas CRC, Sumas, Washington; Mountain View CRC, Lynden, Washington; Anchor of Hope CRC, Silverdale, Washington; Cascade CRC, Marysville, Washington; and Pastor Mitchell R. Senti (from The Jesus Gathering/ Envision Mission CRC, Bellingham, Wash.) from a decision of Classis Pacific Northwest on October 6, 2016.