



COD Highlights

A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES MEETING

To: **CRC Council of Delegates Members and Staff**

From: Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, Director of Communications & Marketing

Date: May 12, 2021

Highlights from meeting of May 5-7, 2021

The Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met via zoom conference call on May 5-7, 2021.

During this meeting, the Council:

- Made several recommendations to Synod 2022 related to organizational structure and leadership as proposed by the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT). A [summary of these recommendations](#) as well as [answers to Frequently Asked Questions](#) can be found on [crcna.org](#). Initial steps on some of these recommendations, such as the planning for the formation of search teams for senior positions, will begin immediately.
- Heard that John Bolt, currently serving as director of finance and operations, has been appointed by Colin Watson to serve in a new role as deputy executive director for the coming year. This appointment was authorized by the COD in February and will help ease Colin Watson's workload as executive director until Synod 2022 can appoint new people to senior leadership positions.
- Heard an update on the decision of the Program Committee for Synod 2021 regarding which matters will be addressed by a special meeting of the COD in lieu of synod in June.
- Spent time in confession, lament, exhortation, and affirmation regarding the justice ministries of the CRCNA. Also spent a morning learning about the *Colossian Way* of having difficult conversations with those with whom you disagree: identifying the fears behind people's strong opinions can help us uncover shared deep loves and make it easier for us to listen to each other.
- Appointed several people to a committee to bring an action plan back to the COD regarding building respect and love throughout the leadership, administration, and church at large as we jointly act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.
- Asked that the U.S. Committee to Provide Guidance and Support of the OSJ evaluate their assets and challenges and provide a candid assessment to the October 2021 COD meeting, together with an assessment of how they perceive OSJ's synodically mandated justice initiatives are being received and appreciated by churches and classes.
- Adopted several changes to the Calvin University bylaws related to board members, board meetings, and the presidential appointment process. These changes will also be forwarded to synod for adoption.
- Approved the list of organizations evaluated for support. Added the International Network for Christian Higher Education to the list of accredited non-denominational organizations, and

removed Bethany Christian Services from the list on the basis of their willingness to assist same-sex couples with adoptions.

- Heard reports from the executive director, Canadian ministries director, director of ReFrame Ministries, and director of Resonate Global Mission.
- Heard that staff will be working to call the church to prayer, including listening prayer, to be held in various ways and at various times between June 2021 and June 2022.
- Adopted the mandate, membership, timeline, and position description for search teams to recruit a director of Disability Concerns, and a director of the Office of Social Justice and Office of Race Relations.
- Approved a unified budget and ministry-share allocation for the fiscal 2022 year.
- Approved salary ranges and a merit program for CRCNA staff.
- Endorsed the decision of the Pension Trustees that the per-member and per-participant assessments for the ministers' pension plan remain the same as last year in both the United States and Canada.
- Endorsed the use of ReFrame Ministries reserve funds for several purposes including donor acquisition campaigns; Church Juice grants for local churches to use for web development, social media or other communications campaigns; and upgrades to studio equipment.
- Heard that *The Banner* recently received awards for being the best denominational magazine from two different organizations.
- Adopted a revision to the mandate for the Bible Translations Committee making it clear that requests to review translations should be sent to the Council of Delegates, which will pass them along to the committee as appropriate.
- Affirmed that it is not part of Worship Ministries' role to notify CRC congregations on issues related to a particular song or body of songs, or to dictate their use. Decisions related to congregational song reside with the elders of each local congregation and with those they assign as worship leaders.
- Heard updates about the prevention of abuse of power training for pastors, creating a culture to prevent the abuse of power, a new safe church assessment tool, and restorative practices.
- Saw a video about the Glocal Mission Summit and heard that more than 500 people have registered to attend this free event.
- Heard updates on the CRCNA denominational survey, the *Our Journey 2025* ministry plan, and Inspire 2022.
- Adopted a new policy regarding making recordings of meetings and alerting participants to the fact that a recording may be made.
- Appointed several people to interim roles with the Council of Delegates as well as to other ministry boards pending synod's approval. This included extending the term of Paul DeVries (current COD chair) for one more year to help provide continuity of leadership during a period that will include several difficult matters.
- Adopted a policy that all COD members sign the Code of Conduct prior to service on the COD.
- Heard that a process has started that will seek to identify convening churches for Synod 2023 and Synod 2024.

In addition to the meeting of the COD, this meeting also included the meeting of four corporate entities: CRCNA Canada, CRCNA U.S., ReFrame Ministries Canada, and ReFrame Ministries U.S. Highlights from these meetings include:

CRCNA Canada Corporation:

- Approved, in principle, the establishment of a governance committee.
- Heard reports from staff.

- Instructed staff to develop a revised mandate for Indigenous Ministries.
- Approved the Canadian budget, salary ranges, and merit program for Canadian staff.

ReFrame Ministries Canada Corporation:

- Endorsed foundational documents including mission, vision, core values, and strategy.
- Approved the ReFrame Ministries Canada budget.
- Approved moving funds from one account to another.

CRCNA U.S. Corporation:

- Received an update from the U.S. Committee to Provide Guidance and Support for OSJ.
- Approved the U.S. budget as well as salary ranges and merit program for U.S. staff.

ReFrame Ministries U.S. Corporation:

- Approved moving funds from one account to another.

For more information, please contact:

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Upcoming meeting dates:

- October 13-15, 2021, virtual or in Minneapolis, MN
- February 16-18, 2022, in Lombard, IL
- May 4-6, 2022, in Minneapolis, MN
- October 12-14, 2022, in Lombard, IL