



COD Highlights

A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES MEETING

To: **CRC Members**

From: Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, Director of Communications & Marketing

Date: May 10, 2022

Highlights from meeting of May 5-6, 2022

The Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met in the denominational offices in Grand Rapids, Mich., on May 5-6, 2022. This was the first time the council met in person since February 2020.

During this meeting, the Council:

- Gave thanks for the years of service of Colin Watson (executive director) and John Bolt (deputy executive director and chief financial officer) as well as several outgoing COD members.
- Heard a report from Colin Watson expressing his gratitude at being able to serve the denomination for the past several years, and that he will soon pass the baton of leadership on to a new General Secretary. He also highlights several ongoing areas of work such as preparations for synod, restructuring updates, and work with ecumenical partners.
- Bestowed on Colin Watson the title of *executive director emeritus*, recommended that Classis Grand Rapids East bestow on Colin the title of *commissioned pastor emeritus*, and thanked him for his service.
- Recommended that synod adopt new bylaws to establish a corporation known as the Christian Reformed Church Worldwide, which would house the Office of General Secretary outside of either the Canadian or U.S. corporations of the denomination.
- Heard a report from *The Banner* Advisory Committee, noting that the Evangelical Press Association awarded *The Banner* first place (award of excellence) in the Denominational Magazine (Digital) category.
- Heard that the CRCNA Canada Corporation unanimously approved Rev. Albert Postma for the position of Transitional Executive Director - Canada, which will be a two-year term.
- Heard a report from the acting Canadian ministries director, Terry Veldboom, highlighting several steps that have been taken to better establish the Canadian Office of the CRCNA. He also mentioned the Canadian National Gathering that will take place in May 2023 and focus on Hearts Exchanged. The COD thanked Terry for serving in this interim role.
- Heard an update from Kurt Selles, director of ReFrame Ministries. He specifically asks for prayers for staff and programs in Burkina Faso, and for those serving in the Ukraine, Russia, and the surrounding area.
- Endorsed a proposal to appoint Joel Huyser to the role of interim Resonate Global Mission director pending Zach King's appointment by Synod 2022 to the role of General Secretary. Heard

a report from Joel about Resonate highlighting a new church planting leader and six new international missionaries that have been hired.

- Heard that the search for a new Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is starting over, appointed a new chair for the search team, and reappointed several search team members. Two additional members are still needed.
- Recommended that synod grant the COD authority to act on the appointment and ratification of a CAO in the interim of synod, in addition to other senior level staff within the Office of General Secretary (excluding the General Secretary).
- Recommended that synod adopt a revised Ecclesiastical Mandate Letter.
- Approved a sample termination template that removes nondisclosure agreement language, and recommended it for use in churches when requested.
- Appointed five people to serve as a Dignity Team for the CRCNA.
- Heard that reduced ministry-share income has resulted in the need to freeze new hires and potentially lay off some congregational ministries staff. An overall reorganization plan has been put together that will allow for closer collaboration, better service to congregations, and smaller administration.
- Mark Stephenson was thanked for his years of service to the CRCNA, most recently as interim director of the offices of Race Relations and Social Justice.
- Endorsed a plan to fill the position of Resonate director pending Zach King's approval by Synod 2022 as General Secretary.
- Endorsed a long-range international plan by Resonate Global Mission
- Approved allocations of ministry shares for 2022-2023.
- Adjusted salary ranges and approved an aggregate compensation program for CRCNA staff in the United States and Canada.
- Adopted the Child Safeguarding Policy as amended.
- Approved a list of organizations evaluated for support, including denominational agencies, institutions and ministries, as well as nondenominational organizations. Deferred a decision about whether or not to include 222 Disciple on that list.
- Heard a presentation by Dr. Neil Carlson of Datawise Consulting regarding the decline of membership in Christian Reformed congregations. He notes demographic changes in birth rates as a key factor and encourages churches to welcome refugees, immigrants, widows, and orphans into their midst.
- Received a report on the denominational survey of 2022. Results will be shared at the October meeting.
- Endorsed revisions to the Church Order Supplements and Guidelines for Handling Abuse Allegations Against a Church Leader. These will be forwarded to synod for adoption.
- Heard that Calvin University has appointed a new president, Dr. Wiebe Boer.
- Took note of changes in Calvin's faculty handbook that allows faculty to be appointed without synodical approval.
- Endorsed minor changes to Calvin University's articles of incorporation regarding the registered agent. The revisions will be forwarded to synod for adoption.
- Recommended that synod receive as information all the items designated as consent agenda within the *Agenda for Synod* by the Program Committee of synod.
- Received a report from the Bible Translations Committee with proposed criteria for evaluating translation and guidelines for recommending it for specific use.
- Tasked the General Secretary with gathering a discussion group to study the integration of international churches into the composition of the CRCNA, as well as to facilitate a "One Family" conversation related to the topic of diversity and its place in the CRCNA both now and in the future.

- Recommended several people to synod for appointment to the Judicial Code Committee and Council of Delegates.
- Elected officers for the executive committee and to lead each of the COD committees.
- Appointed COD members to be guest delegates to the Calvin University board, Calvin Theological Seminary board, and World Renew board.

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. Here are highlights.

CRCNA Canada Corporation:

- Interviewed and appointed Albert Postma to the role of transitional executive director.
- Reviewed a report from an April 9 workshop and are working to rebuild trust with Canadian churches.
- Approved an ecclesiastical mandate.
- Approved a plan for establishing the Canadian office.
- Approved the budget and child safeguarding policy.
- Approved joint ministry agreement documents.
- Heard reports from senior leadership.

ReFrame Ministries Canada Corporation:

- Reviewed budgets.

CRCNA U.S. Corporation:

- Approved a new role of U.S. director of ministry operations and appointed Joel Huyser to fill this role.
- Agreed to revisit the role of U.S. director of ministry operation in two years.
- Addressed banking matters.
- Approved joint ministry agreement documents.
- Approved the budget and child safeguarding policy.

ReFrame Ministries U.S. Corporation:

- Approved grants for worldwide ministries as well as budgets.

For more information, please contact:

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Upcoming meeting dates:

- October 12-14, 2022, in Grand Rapids, MI
- February 15-17, 2023, virtually
- May 3-5, 2023, (TBD)
- October 11-13, 2023, (TBD)