



COD Highlights

To: **CRCNA Staff**

From: Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, Director of Communications & Marketing

Date: October 22, 2020

Highlights from meeting of Oct. 14-16, 2020

The Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met via zoom conference call on October 14-16, 2020.

During this meeting, the Council:

- Spent time in prayer for the leaders of our nations, the world as we continue to struggle with a global pandemic, racial tensions, and for the church and our witness.
- Endorsed the work of the Ecclesiastical Officer Task Force, and approved the appointment of a new taskforce to take draft position descriptions for three new senior level positions (a U.S. executive director, Canadian executive director, and ecclesiastical officer – these are working titles only, pending final review by the COD and the corporations), incorporate feedback from the Council of Delegates, and ensure that the positions are complete, compatible, and meet the demands of our Reformed polity as well as other relevant ecclesiastical considerations. A final report will be brought back to the COD in February 2021 for recommendation to synod.
- Spent time discussing a recent action by Neland Ave. CRC to ordain a woman, who is part of a same-sex marriage, to the office of deacon, and the communication received from congregations and classes that were troubled by this action. Asked the executive committee of the COD to send a pastoral letter of response to those who had written. Also tasked the executive committee to draft a letter to Neland Ave. CRC, grieving their decision to break covenant with the CRC in this way before Synod 2021 has had the opportunity to address the report of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality.
- Participated in a conversation around unity and diversity, reflecting on what is happening in our local congregations in response to racism and how we can all play a role to dismantle it. Recommendations will be brought to the COD in February for further action.
- Granted an exception to the regular protocols to allow the executive director to begin the process of recruiting and for the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Council of Delegates, to appoint replacements for the director of Human Resources, the director of Safe Church Ministry, and any other positions that cannot wait for appointment by the COD in February.
- Heard an appeal that had originally been intended for Synod 2020. The appeal was not sustained, and communication will be shared with the respective parties. This action will also be reported to Synod 2021.
- Adopted several recommendations contained in the Abuse of Power ad hoc team report, including recommendations related to training in restorative justice practices, as well as the prevention of discrimination and harassment; and several updates to the employee handbook around complaint resource persons, investigations into allegations, and how to create a safe environment during the investigation. Three

exceptions for when nondisclosure agreements might be permitted were granted. Additional items, including details about a proposed Office of Dignity and Respect, were sent back to the ad hoc team for additional work to be presented to the Council in February in time to report to synod.

- Approved a definition of church planting presented by Resonate Global Mission, which reads, “Planting churches is a missionary endeavor to form new Christian communities of faith-churches—from persons currently outside of existing established Christian communities for the purpose of discipling the new community in the ways of Jesus to be witnesses to the world in both word and deed to the gospel of Jesus Christ.”
- In addition, endorsed a strategy grid for church planting, which includes details about the categorization, funding, and credentialing of church plants and church planters.
- Discussed the most recent counts and measures of the *Our Journey 2020* ministry plan, and heard an update about *Our Journey 2025*, which will get promoted to churches more robustly in early 2021.
- Endorsed preliminary budget assumptions for the 2022 fiscal year. These assumptions will be used to prepare draft budgets for the ministries, institutions, and agencies, which will then be adjusted once ministry share pledges have been received.
- Approved updates to U.S. employee benefits and identified which ordained staff members would qualify for housing exemptions.
- Heard reports from the executive director, Canadian ministries director, director of Resonate Global Mission, and director of Back to God Ministries International.
- Heard updates on Inspire 2021 (to be held August 5-7, 2021 in the Chicago area, or as a virtual event if COVID-19 prevents gathering in person).
- Appointed two interim members to the COD to fill vacancies. These appointments will be sent to Synod 2021 for regular appointment.
- Adopted a COD meeting schedule through October 2022.

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

CRCNA Canada Corporation:

- Heard updates on a job description for the Canadian executive director. This position description will now be referred to a new task force to be integrated with other senior level positions.
- Heard an update on the Canadian Restructuring Plan as well as several reports from Canadian staff.
- Reviewed audit reports from several ministries.
- Adopted a proposal for a new Race Relations position and a related advisory team.
- Adopted several recommendations from the Abuse of Power ad hoc team.

BTGMI Canada Corporation

- Reviewed audit reports and addressed legal matters.

CRCNA U.S. Corporation

- Heard updates on the job description for a U.S. executive director. This position description will now be referred to a new task force to be integrated with other senior level positions.
- Adopted several recommendations from the Abuse of Power ad hoc team.

BTGMI U.S. Corporation

- Approved auditors.
- Approved changes to the BTGMI reserve policy.

For more information, please contact:

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Upcoming meeting dates:

- February 17-19, 2021, in Grand Rapids
- May 5-7, 2021, in Grand Rapids
- October 13-15, 2021, Minneapolis, MN
- February 16-18, 2022, in Lombard, IL
- May 4-6, 2022, in Minneapolis, MN
- October 12-14, 2022, in Lombard, IL