

**Please note this excerpt was modified to remove items unrelated to the topic of Abuse of Power within these Minutes*

M. *Addressing the abuse of power*

Subsequent to updates provided in the *Agenda for Synod 2020* on progress made in response to the instructions/ decisions of Synod 2019 regarding abuse of power (*Agenda for Synod 2020*, pp. 24-25, 40-42, 56, 78-80), the COD provides the following additional updates:

1. Guardian Committee

The Guardian Committee has not yet been appointed but remains on the list of matters to address in the coming year.

2. Nondisclosure agreements

The COD received an update from the acting executive director on the development of a policy on nondisclosure agreements for CRCNA staff. Work will continue on the policy for presentation to the COD at a subsequent meeting.

3. Resources for culturally diverse churches

Safe Church Ministry materials have been translated, but the translations currently do not take cultural issues into account. Translators are being sought who are also expert in the issue of abuse. Exploration is taking place to determine which Safe Church Ministry materials available in English might be most helpful for Korean- and Spanish-language/ cultural communities.

4. Ad hoc committee on prevention of abuse in CRCNA offices

The committee observed that with the recent structural changes, both the CRC director of human resources in the U.S. and director of human resources in Canada need to be ex officio members of the ad hoc committee on prevention of abuse in the CRCNA offices. In addition, the membership of this committee needs to reflect the diversity of the denomination.

The COD approved including on the ad hoc committee *at least two* (instead of *no more than two*) CRC members who are not part of the COD and who have experience in addressing abuse of power issues. The COD also approved that the mandate be amended to include the director of human resources in Canada as an ex officio member.

5. Training of pastors

The COD endorsed the proposed training program for pastors in the CRCNA (Appendix C), and recommends that synod adopt the following recommendations:

- a. That synod endorse the training program for pastors as presented in Appendix C.

- b. That synod encourage the coordination of training for all those involved in addressing abuse of power.
- c. That synod endorse the timeline as listed in Appendix C, including requiring all Article 6 candidates for ministry to complete the pilot version of the abuse of power training as part of their candidacy process.
- d. That synod clarify precisely for whom this training be considered a requirement, specifically that the training is embedded in the candidacy process for Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8, 23, and 24.
- e. That synod receive the report in Appendix C as a fulfillment of the COD's mandate for this training and commend the ongoing work of developing and providing this training to Safe Church Ministry, Candidacy, and various resource people from Pastor Church Resources, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin University, as well as to the COD-appointed team charged to "act as a guardian of our commitment to foster a culture characterized by respect for all and mutual service" (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 798).

6. Classis training programs

Safe Church Ministry plans to use portions of the pastor training program at the classis and congregational levels. In addition, webinars are being recorded so that classis coordinators can use these trainings for classes and congregations. Recorded webinars are available on the Network, the Safe Church Facebook page, and on the Safe Church YouTube channel.

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