No Time to Talk

Citing concerns that synods are already getting too rushed, delegates declined to mandate a discussion time at future synods.

The recommendation, from the denomination’s Board of Trustees, was that future synods allow time at each synod to deliberate on topics of church-wide interest, some of which would be suggested by the board.

“Synod is giving short shrift to its core responsibilities,” said Rev. Thomas Niehof, Classis Northcentral Iowa. “I am not in favor of adding something to synod unless we go back to meeting for two weeks.”

“I would like to see those [discussion topics] come from the churches,” said Rev. Mary-Lee Bouma, Classis British Columbia North-West. “I fear that we are becoming too centralized.”

Rev. Mark Vermaire, Classis California South, defended the recommendation. “Sometimes synod doesn’t have the opportunity to talk about important issues because those issues don’t come from the churches,” said Vermaire, who is president of the Board of Trustees.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

First-Time Officers

One of the delegates to this year’s synod came with any experience as synod officers, so it was no surprise to have an executive of first-timers.

But the officers were not short on synod experience; between them they had 20 synods under their belts.

Rev. Aldon Kuiper, Classis Lakota, was elected president. He is a veteran of nine previous synods. Rev. Peter Slofstra, Classis Quinte, was elected vice president.

Chosen as first and second clerk, respectively, were Rev. William Verhoef, Classis California South, and elder Wendy Gritter, Classis Toronto.


Rev. Bill Vis: “While neither of these churches has breathed a hint of leaving [the denomination], the reality is, if they cannot go to their classis meeting, they will leave.”

their congregations,” she said. “I was one of those girls.”

Once the decision was made, with a very close vote, a few delegates shared their opinions of its consequences.

“While neither of these churches has breathed a hint of leaving [the denomination], the reality is, if they cannot go to their classis meeting, they will leave,” said Rev. Bill Vis, Classis Grand Rapids North.

Rev. David Snapper, Classis Pacific North-West, urged CRC leaders to reconcile with those who oppose the full inclusion of women in ministry.

“We’ve lost a lot of members over [the issue of women in office],” he said. “We are not innocent in what happened. I can’t think of anything that would be more encouraging than if leaders found out their brothers and asked for forgiveness.”

Synod in fact made a statement of repentance for past hurts caused (see p. 30).

Synod also instructed the CRC’s Board of Trustees to have executive director Rev. Jerry Dykstra and others work with the two churches in order to try to “seek ways forward.”

Later that same day, Rev. Henry DeMoor, synod’s adviser on church polity, reminded delegates of something he heard from the late Rev. John Kromminga, former president of Calvin Theological Seminary: “An airplane needs both its right wing and its left wing to fly. The same applies to the church.”

—Roxanne Van Farowe

Rev. Aldon Kuiper, synod president: “Any further discussion or silly comments?”