



AGENDA FOR SYNOD 2004



CHRISTIAN
REFORMED
CHURCH



AGENDA FOR SYNOD 2004

June 12-19, 2004
Fine Arts Center Auditorium
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Synod 2004 begins its sessions on Saturday, June 12, at 9:00 a.m. in the Fine Arts Auditorium of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. Pedro Aviles, minister of Grace & Peace Fellowship CRC, Chicago, Illinois, will serve as president pro tem until Synod 2004 is duly constituted and its four officers have been elected.

A Service of Prayer and Praise will be held Sunday, June 13, 2004, at 3:00 p.m. at the Calvin College Chapel on the campus of Calvin College. Rev. Aviles will officiate at this service.

The congregations of the Christian Reformed Church in North America are requested to remember the synodical assembly in intercessory prayers on Sundays, June 6 and 13. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will equip the synodical delegates to serve in faith and obedience and will lead the Christian Reformed Church into new and challenging areas of ministry. May we together experience the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as we strive to know and to do the will of the Lord.

David H. Engelhard
General Secretary
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49560

I. Note to delegates

A. Delegates who travel by car are urged to carpool, if possible, to save on travel costs.

B. Plane travel is the most economical for delegates traveling long distances to synod because it eliminates lodging and meal expenses en route. Synod will pay the lower amount of the cost of airfare for one round trip or the cost of driving with the reimbursement rate of 37.5 cents per mile for U.S. delegates and 42 cents per kilometer for Canadian delegates.

C. Synod provides accidental death and dismemberment insurance (up to \$125,000) for delegates to synod. While there are exclusions and restrictions identified in the policy, travel and activities that are related to participation in synod are covered. Synod does not provide health insurance. Canadian delegates may wish to review their policies and purchase additional health insurance for the time they are at synod if their present policies do not provide adequate insurance outside of Canada.

D. Delegates should bring with them to synod their copies of the Agenda for Synod 2004 and all supplementary materials.

E. Please direct any questions regarding synod to the office of the general secretary by calling 616-224-0744.

II. Confidentiality of the executive sessions of synod

The Board of Trustees calls the matter of confidentiality to the attention of Synod 2004 and urges that all necessary precautions be taken to prevent violations of confidentiality.

Synod 1954 stated that "the very principle of executive sessions, or sessions that are not open to the public, involves the practical implication that reporters may not 'report'" (*Acts of Synod 1954*, p. 15). If reporters are not permitted to report on executive sessions of synod, it is certainly a breach of confidentiality also for delegates to the synodical assembly to report—publicly, privately, orally, or in print—on the discussions held in an executive session of synod (cf. *Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 16).

III. Audio and video recordings of synod

Synod 1979 authorized the making of an official audio recording of the entire proceedings of the general sessions of synod as a way to verify the written record of the synodical proceedings. Although the general sessions of synod are recorded, executive sessions are not taped. Delegates to synod are informed at the opening session of synod that all the general sessions are being

taped. Synod has designated that the office of the general secretary be responsible for the use and storage of these materials.

The following regulations were adopted by Synod 1989 concerning audio and video recordings of synodical sessions by media representatives and visitors:

A. Representatives of the media are permitted to make video recordings of synodical proceedings provided they observe the restrictions placed upon them by the synodical news office under the direction of the general secretary of synod.

B. *Visitor privileges*

1. Visitors are at liberty to make audio recordings of the public proceedings of synod provided they do so unobtrusively (i.e., in no way inhibiting or disturbing either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons).
2. Video recordings are permitted provided the following restrictions are observed:
 - a. Video cameras are permitted only at the entrances, not backstage or in the wings.
 - b. Auxiliary lighting is not permitted.
 - c. Videotaping is to be done unobtrusively (i.e., in such a way that it in no way inhibits or disturbs either the proceedings of synod, the synodical delegates, or other persons).

(*Acts of Synod 1989*, p. 445)

IV. Proposed daily schedule

Synod 2000 adopted several recommendations regarding the scheduling of future synods in a one-week format. Although each new assembly is free to alter the schedule, the following general schedule is tentatively in place for Synod 2004:

Opening Saturday

9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Opening session of synod

Election of officers

Finalization of committee assignments

11:00 - 12:30 p.m.

Lunch and orientation of committee chairpersons and reporters

1:15 - 3:00 p.m.

Joint meeting with the Multiethnic Conferees

3:00 - 3:20 p.m.

Break

3:20 - 5:30 p.m.

Advisory-committee meetings

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Dinner

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Advisory-committee meetings

8:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Joint meeting with the Multiethnic Conferees

9:30 p.m.

Ice Cream Social

Sunday

3:00 p.m.

Synodical worship service

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Dinner

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Joint meeting with the Multiethnic Conferees

Monday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.

Opening worship

8:45 - 9:15 a.m.

Brief plenary session

9:15 - 11:45 a.m.

Advisory-committee meetings

11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Advisory-committee meetings

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Dinner

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Advisory-committee meetings

Tuesday – Friday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	Opening worship
8:45 - 11:45 a.m.	Plenary session
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 - 5:00 p.m.	Plenary session
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Plenary session

Saturday

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	Opening worship
8:45 - 11:45 a.m.	Plenary session
(Final adjournment by 11:45 a.m.)	

DELEGATES TO SYNOD 2004

Classis	Delegates	Alternates	
Alberta North			
Ministers	Kirk M. MacNeil	Ministers	Ronald E. Klok
	Raymond A. Blacketer		Arthur L. Verboon
Elders.....	Ron L. Knol	Elders.....	Hiddo W. Born
	Henry Stikma		Thomas Oosterhuis
Alberta South			
Ministers	Curtis D. Korver	Ministers	John H. Noordhof
	Michael J. Vandyk		John Huizinga
Elders.....	Durk DeJong	Elders.....	Allen Brander
	Henry Bekkering		Allan Kielstra
Arizona			
Ministers	Jeffrey A. Dykema	Ministers	Paul J. Van Dyken
	James A. Hildebrandt		_____
Elders.....	Jose Rayas	Elders.....	Peter S. Kuczynski
	Rodney J. Hugen		_____
Atlantic Northeast			
Ministers	Russell Palsrok	Ministers	Kenneth J. Nydam
	Alvern Gelder		Derek G. Van Dalen
Elders.....	Kenneth Prol	Elders.....	Martin Vande Weert
	Calvin Hulstein		David R. Cok
B.C. North-West			
Ministers	Richard C. Koopmans	Ministers	Hilbrent Van der Heide
	Harvey J. Roosma		Darren G. Colyn
Elders.....	Andy deRuyter	Elders.....	John Van der Woude
	Dirk Jol		Gerry Ensing
B.C. South-East			
Ministers	Henry Jonker	Ministers	Gerrit J. Veeneman
	John Poortenga		_____
Elders.....	Gordon J. Dykstra	Elders.....	Aaron Baart
	Gerrit Vaandrager		_____
California South			
Ministers	Bruce Ballast	Ministers	Peter Y. Shin
	William Verhoef		Albino Melendez
Elders.....	Greg Wilson	Elders.....	Jeff Hickox
	Phil Du Bois		Ben Mulder
Central California			
Ministers	Tony W. Koeman	Ministers	George G. Vink
	Paul H. Vander Klay		John J. Berends
Elders.....	Paul W. Whatley, Sr.	Elders.....	John Padmos
	Lambert Veldstra		Tony Dykxhoorn

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Chatham		
Ministers	Vic Vandermolen	MinistersJohn Van Til
	Ralph Wigboldus	Richard J. deLange
Elders.....	Michael Talsma	Elders.....Paul Wiersma
	Arnold Deelstra	John Krale
Chicago South		
Ministers	Phillip S. Leo	MinistersW. Wayne Leys
	Duane J. Van Loo	John M. Ouwinga
Elders.....	Richard A. Molenhouse	Elders.....Robert A. Cooper
	William B. Weidenaar	
Columbia		
Ministers	Alvin J. Machiela	MinistersJelmer P. Groenewold
	Carl J. Leep	Kenneth M. Van Schelven
Elders.....	Marion J. Boersma	Elders.....Michael J. Vander Veen
	James J. Lane	
Eastern Canada		
Ministers	Herbert Vanderbeek	MinistersDavid Vroege
	Henry G. Gunnink	Nicolaas Cornelisse
Elders.....	Peter Macaskill	Elders.....Mike Van Dyke
	Bill Schuurmans	
Georgetown		
Ministers	Joel R. Boot	MinistersLarry J. Doornbos
	Robert Huisman	Stephen R. Steenstra
Elders.....	Paul Tameling	Elders.....Wilbur De Jong
	Cornelius Vander Kam	
Grand Rapids East		
Ministers	Everett J. Vander Horst	MinistersPeter M. Jonker
	Scott E. Hoezee	Michael F. Abma
Elders.....	Aldrich J. Evenhouse	Elders.....Leonard D. Blauwkamp
	John Vanderburgh	James P. Bosscher
Grand Rapids North		
Ministers	Jerome Burton	MinistersDavid Van Harten
	Jonathan L. Huizenga	John L. Witvliet
Elders.....	William Pettes	Elders.....Donald F. Oosterhouse
	Loren Snippe	Mack R. Randall, Sr.
Grand Rapids South		
Ministers	David A. Struyk	MinistersDan A. Gritter
	Ecko De Vries	Thomas B. Swieringa
Elders.....	James De Haan	Elders.....John A. De Jager
	James S. Brock	
Grandville		
Ministers	Calvin Compagner	MinistersAnthony J. Meyer
	Philip J. Boender	Daniel B. Mouw
Elders.....	James Roskam	Elders.....Terry Kimber
	Dick J. Palsrok	
Greater Los Angeles		
Ministers	Merle H. Bierma	MinistersJonathan J. Kim
	Gilbert Varela	David R. Koll
Elders.....	Stanley W. Cole	Elders.....Roy Palovicini
	Arthur E. De Jong	Francisco G. Golon

Classis	Delegates	Alternates	
Hackensack			
Ministers	Ricardo E. Orellana Clair Vander Neut	Ministers	Brian W. Bolkema Andrew R. Sytsma
Elders.....	Hernan Zapata Galen Ledeboer	Elders.....	<u>David Vander Hart</u>
Hamilton			
Ministers	Andrew Zantingh Shawn Brix	Ministers	John H. Bouwers Kevin De Raaf
Elders.....	Fred Reitsma Ralph H. Luimes	Elders.....	Bill VanStaalduinen Arie G. Van Eek
Heartland			
Ministers	David L. Heilman Ronald R. Sprik	Ministers	Michael D. Koetje Kevin J. Muyskens
Elders.....	Sherwyn R. Bolkema Donald H. Mulder	Elders.....	Kevin A. Schutte Verlyn Schaaap
Holland			
Ministers	Wayne A. Brouwer Marvin J. Hofman	Ministers	Douglas R. Fauble James Scholten
Elders.....	Roger N. Brummel Ronald Baker	Elders.....	Stanley Ellens Calvin Hoogstra
Hudson			
Ministers	Kenneth J. Verhulst Paul M. Ingeneri	Ministers	Howard J. Vugteveen John G. Keizer
Elders.....	Paul Szto Harold K. Post	Elders.....	<u>John Becanus</u>
Huron			
Ministers	Jack De Vries Stephen D. Tamming	Ministers	Edward Den Haan George Holthof
Elders.....	Ralph J. Van Dalen Henry F. Exel	Elders.....	<u>Hans Verra</u>
Iakota			
Ministers	James Hooegeveen Peter De Jong	Ministers	Bernard J. Haan, Jr. Wilfred Gesch
Elders.....	Mike Vanden Bosch Thomas Vanden Bosch	Elders.....	Verlyn De Wit Lewis Arkema
Illiana			
Ministers	Stephan R. Van Eck Joel J. Sheeres	Ministers	Gerald L. Hoek Calvin R. Hoogendoorn
Elders.....	Bernard Smit George Beezhold	Elders.....	Randall Buteyn John Faber
Kalamazoo			
Ministers	Daniel S. Sarkipato Simon A. Tuin	Ministers	Joseph A. Brinks Loren J. Kotman
Elders.....	Wayne Terpstra Ellis C. Wykstra	Elders.....	Hugh E. Meints Jack W. Karsten
Lake Erie			
Ministers	Emmett A. Harrison Clayton G. Libolt	Ministers	Randall D. Engle Leonard T. Riemersma
Elders.....	Martin V. Cunningham David Vander Haagen	Elders.....	<u>James C. Grit</u>

Classis	Delegates	Alternates
Lake Superior		
Ministers	Mark Brouwer	MinistersEvert Busink
	Henry Vander Beek	Calvin Friend
Elders.....	Griff DeGolier	Elders.....Jeff Fisher
	Tom VanEngen	Rob Visser
Minnkota		
Ministers	Bernard Dykstra	MinistersTimothy J. Brown
	William D. Vis	Harold J. Westra
Elders.....	Lyle B. Ten Haken	Elders.....Mert Gulker
	Leon Hanenburg	_____
Muskegon		
Ministers	Larry D. Baar	MinistersSteven J. Datema
	Robert L. Bierenga	Michael G. Borgert
Elders.....	Arley Bouwma	Elders.....Ronald J. Nyenhuis
	John A. Frens	Larry Hager
Niagara		
Ministers	Pieter A. Heerema	MinistersRobert J. Loerts
	Andre F. Basson	Gerald P. Van Smeedyk
Elders.....	Alex Krikke	Elders.....G. John TeBrake
	Cornelis Van Soelen	Ben Van Hoffen
Northcentral Iowa		
Ministers	Thomas J. Niehof	MinistersGeorge M. McGuire
	Gary W. Brouwers	Charles P. Walton
Elders.....	Gary W. Nibbelink	Elders....._____
	Nick Verbrugge	_____
Northern Illinois		
Ministers	John F. Schuurman	MinistersMerle Den Bleyker
	Gregory D. Schuringa	Gerald W. Frens
Elders.....	John H. Bakker	Elders....._____
	Hendrik Slikers	_____
Northern Michigan		
Ministers	Keith A. Mannes	MinistersDuane J. Timmermans
	Robert D. Steen	Joseph D. Fox
Elders.....	Donald L. Boes	Elders.....Charles B. Mackus
	Bradley W. Center	_____
Pacific Hanmi		
Ministers	Benjamin B. Jeong	MinistersChan M. Jeong
	David D. Chong	Chul H. Park
Elders.....	Abraham J. Jae	Elders.....Jin Choi
	Billy J.W. Yang	Seung J. Kang
Pacific Northwest		
Ministers	Gordon A. Terpstra	MinistersHarry Weidenaar
	Kenneth D. Koeman	Rob W. Jansons
Elders.....	John M. Oostra	Elders.....Dwight B. Van Zanen
	John A. Tibbits	Don L. Korthuis
Pella		
Ministers	Aldon L. Kuiper	MinistersJason Chen
	Thomas E. Pettinga	Gideon Wamala
Elders.....	Ken E. Slagter	Elders.....Bruce A. Groenendyk
	Paul R. Van Beek	Gordon Stuit

Classis	Delegates	Alternates	
Quinte			
Ministers	William T. Koopmans John Veenstra	Ministers	Michael F. Miedema Karl J. House
Elders.....	Hans Van Manen John Zomer	Elders.....	Clarence Beeksmas Walter Koopmans
Red Mesa			
Ministers	John W. Dykhuis W. Keith Bulthuis	Ministers	John J. Greydanus Robert Byker
Elders.....	Theodore D. Charles Willie Benally	Elders.....	Robert L. Jonkman Jasbert Williams
Rocky Mountain			
Ministers	Harold deJong Mark D. Timmer	Ministers	Donald J. Wyenberg Steven J. Alsum
Elders.....	Tim Phillips Nolan Vander Ark	Elders.....	Eugene Rubingh Russell W. Groenendyk
Southeast U.S.			
Ministers	Thomas Dykstra Stanley J. Workman	Ministers	Hector Garcia Lawrence J. Howerzyl
Elders.....	Jose A. Lopez Owen Baas	Elders.....	Brian Hekman O. Walter Portillo
Thornapple Valley			
Ministers	Scott R. Greenway William J. Renkema	Ministers	Paul R. De Vries David D. Poolman
Elders.....	Cornelius D. Korhorn Vince Bonnema	Elders.....	Dick Watzew Bill Sikma
Toronto			
Ministers	John Tenyenhuis Mark Verbruggen	Ministers	Henry Wildeboer Phil A. Apoll
Elders.....	Albert Suk Fred Van Laare	Elders.....	Henry Hofstra Don G. Vander Kooi
Wisconsin			
Ministers	Peter T. Verhulst Robert A. Sizemore	Ministers	Jeffrey Brower Leslie J. Kuiper
Elders.....	Edwin J. Nonhof Bob Boomsma	Elders.....	Frank Hollander Gary Soodsma
Yellowstone			
Ministers	Jacob Weeda Randall D. Van Osdol	Ministers	Thomas Vander Ziel Jack Huttinga
Elders.....	Marion Menning Harry Faber	Elders.....	_____
Zeeland			
Ministers	Bernard F. Tol Gerry G. Heyboer	Ministers	Steven J. Mulder Paul Bakker
Elders.....	John De Leeuw Bernard Feenstra	Elders.....	Chester Willemstyn, Sr. Bill De Kleine

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

Joint-Ministries Management Committee

Christian Reformed Church in North America-Michigan Corporation
Christian Reformed Church in North America-Canada Corporation
Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (the Board) presents this report as a summary of the activities carried out on behalf of synod during the interim between Synod 2003 and Synod 2004.

I. Introduction

A. General

The governing Board of the Christian Reformed Church is organized as two legal entities, one in Michigan and one in Canada. Together these legal entities form the Joint-Ministries Management Committee (JMMC) and are known as the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The mandate given by synod to the Board is found in its constitution and bylaws, which were revised and approved at Synod 2001 (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 519).

The Board has met two times since Synod 2003 (October and February) and is scheduled to meet again in April. At its meetings, the Board organizes its work around matters of polity, program, and finance. Polity matters often arise from assignments given the Board by a previous synod as well as the work associated with the office of the general secretary. Program and finance matters often arise out of the ministries of the agencies and the work associated with the office of the executive director of ministries.

The Executive Committee of the Board meets as needed. Canadian trustees meet separately to consider Canadian issues. This arrangement complies with Canadian regulations governing Canadian registered charities and provides a helpful way to consider and recommend solutions to issues unique to the Canadian churches.

Though the Board deals with many ecclesiastical matters as well as required corporate issues, a central focus of its work is to enhance the ministries of the whole church, especially those that are carried on through the agencies of the CRC. It is a privilege to see how many wonderful ministries the Lord is pleased to accomplish through the membership and organizations of the CRC. The work of education, relief and development, radio and TV, care and compassion, and missions at home and abroad have been blessed by God.

The Board, as synod's agent, is grateful for the opportunity to serve the whole church in these challenging times.

B. Membership

The members of the Board from the United States are Rev. Calvin D. Compagner (Region 11), Mr. Dan Cooke (Region 12), Mr. Paul Dozeman (member-at-large), Rev. Gerard L. Dykstra (Region 6), Mrs. Gail F. Jansen (member-at-large), Mr. Kenneth Kuipers (Region 10), Rev. W. Wayne Leys (Region 9), Rev. Al Machiela (Region 5), Mrs. N. Theresa Rottschäfer (Region 7), Mrs. Mamie Thomas (member-at-large), Rev. Robert J. Timmer (Region 8), Mrs. Jane Vander Haagen (Region 11), Rev. Leonard J. Vander Zee (Region 10), Mr. Marion D. Van Soelen (Region 8), and Mrs. Beverly A. Weeks (Region 11).

The members of the Board from Canada are Rev. Andrew Beunk (Niagara), Mrs. Sarah Cook (member-at-large), Mr. William Crofton (B.C. North-West), Rev. James C. Dekker (Lake Superior), Rev. Edward Den Haan (Huron), Mr. Jack Geschiere (Chatham), Mrs. Verney Kho (member-at-large), Mr. Hessel Kielstra (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Rev. Jake Kuipers (Quinte), Mr. Erno Meijers (Toronto), Mr. Keith Oosthoek (member-at-large), Rev. John Pasma (Alberta North), Rev. Bert Slofstra (B.C. South-East), Rev. Bart Velthuisen (Hamilton).

The general secretary (Dr. David H. Engelhard) and the executive director of ministries (Dr. Peter Borgdorff) serve ex officio as corporate trustees and members of the Board of Trustees.

1. Board officers: Rev. W.W. Leys, president; Mrs. G.F. Jansen, vice president; Dr. D.H. Engelhard, secretary; Rev. B. Slofstra, vice-all.
2. Corporation officers: Rev. W.W. Leys, president; Mrs. G.F. Jansen, vice president; Dr. D.H. Engelhard, general secretary; Dr. P. Borgdorff, executive director of ministries; Mrs. G.F. Jansen, treasurer; Mr. John H. Bolt, director of finance and support services.
3. Executive Committee: Mrs. S. Cook; Rev. J.C. Dekker; Rev. G.L. Dykstra; Mrs. G.F. Jansen; Rev. W.W. Leys, chair; Rev. B. Slofstra. Dr. D.H. Engelhard and Dr. P. Borgdorff serve ex officio.

C. Salary disclosure

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
19	1	3rd quartile
18	2	3rd quartile

Salary ranges within which the agencies will be reporting actual compensation for the current fiscal year are as follows:

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA 2003 SALARY RANGES

Level	U.S. Range			Canadian Range		
	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
20	\$83,581	\$104,477	\$125,371	\$107,664	\$134,580	\$161,496
19	\$76,045	\$95,055	\$114,067	\$93,401	\$116,751	\$140,102
18	\$69,696	\$87,120	\$104,543	\$81,385	\$101,732	\$122,078
17	\$64,340	\$80,426	\$96,510	\$71,249	\$89,062	\$106,875
16	\$59,858	\$74,821	\$89,786	\$62,766	\$78,457	\$94,149
15	\$56,101	\$70,127	\$84,152	\$55,657	\$69,571	\$83,485
14	\$49,245	\$61,556	\$73,867	\$49,650	\$62,061	\$74,473
13	\$43,495	\$54,368	\$65,241	\$44,604	\$55,755	\$66,907

Note: The shaded areas are not currently in use.

II. Activities of the Board

A. Polity matters

1. Interim appointments

On behalf of synod, the Board has ratified the following appointments made by classes:

Board	Classis	Member	Alternate	Term
Synodical Deputies	Eastern Canada	Rev. Nicolaas Cornelisse		2006(1)
	Grand Rapids North		Rev. Edward J. Blankespoor	
	Hackensack	Rev. John A. Algera	Rev. Douglas H. Bratt	2006(1)
	Holland	Rev. Dick M. Stravers		2006(1)
	Kalamazoo		Rev. Hendrik De Vries	
	Northern Illinois		Rev. John Schuurman	
	Pella	Rev. Kenneth L. Schepel	Rev. Aldon Kuiper	2006(1)
	Southeast U.S.	Rev. Vernon Vander Zee		2006(1)
CRC Publications	Thornapple Valley	Rev. David D. Poolman	Rev. Gerard Bouma	2007(1)
	Arizona		Ms. Jean Dykema	
	Atlantic Northeast	Ms. JoMae Spoelhof		2006(1)
	Columbia		Mr. James Kadyk	
	Hackensack	Rev. Norman B. Steen		2006(1)
	Red Mesa		Mrs. Sharon Jim	
Home Missions	Zeeland	Ms. Cornelia Steenwyk		2006(1)
	Arizona	Mr. Rodney Hugen	Rev. Jeffrey A. Dykema	2006(1)
	B.C. South-East	Rev. Henry Devries	Rev. James R. Berry	2006(1)
	California South	Rev. Cor Pool		2006(1)
	Grandville	Rev. Philip J. Boender	Rev. Kent Rottman	2006(1)
	Illiana	Rev. Philip Stel		2005(2)
	Red Mesa	Mr. Ernie Benally		2006(1)
	Southeast U.S.	Rev. Daniel G. Buis		2006(1)
	Thornapple Valley	Mr. John Van Enk	Rev. R. Scott Greenway	2007(1)
	Zeeland	Rev. Paul Bakker	Rev. John Aukema	2006(1)
World Missions	B.C. South-East		Rev. Carel Geleynse	
	Lake Superior		Mr. Greg Kasprzak	
CRWRC	Hackensack	Mr. Richard T. Dykema		2006(1)
	Hamilton		Mr. Jerry Bulthuis	
	Lake Superior, Canada	Mr. A. Blekkenhorst		
	Northcentral Iowa	Mr. Wes Bonnema	Mr. Arlie Olsen	2006(1)
	Northern Michigan	Mr. Bill Dracht		2006(1)
	Quinte		Mrs. Anne Doef	
	Thornapple Valley	Mr. Lee De Vries		2007(1)
	Zeeland		Mr. Chuck Johnson	

2. Classes that have declared the word *male* inoperative in Church Order Article 3-a

In accordance with the instructions of Synod 1995, the general secretary keeps a list of those classes that declare the word *male* inoperative in Church Order Article 3-a. Although some of these classes have developed their own regulations regarding the permissibility of women officebearers

participating in classis meetings, the following classes have adopted a decision to declare the word *male* inoperative in Church Order Article 3-a:

Alberta North	Kalamazoo
Arizona (deacons only)	Lake Erie
British Columbia North-West	Muskegon
British Columbia South-East	Niagara
Chatham	Northern Illinois
Chicago South	Pacific Northwest
Grand Rapids East	Quinte
Greater Los Angeles	Red Mesa
Hackensack	Rocky Mountain
Holland	Southeast U.S.
Huron	Toronto

3. Ethnic advisers to synod

The position of ethnic adviser was approved by Synod 1995 and reaffirmed by Synod 2000. Ethnic advisers first served at Synod 1996. Guidelines for the position were approved by Synod 1996 and incorporated into the Rules for Synodical Procedure.

The Board has appointed the following ethnic advisers for Synod 2004:

Mr. Fernando del Rosario
Mr. Joel Hill
Rev. Sheila Holmes
Mrs. Verney Kho
Ms. Sara Mills
Mr. Chris Pullenayegem
Mr. Mack Randall

4. Board nominations

a. Regional members

Whenever a new Board of Trustees member is needed from a region or when a member's first term is completed, each classis in the region is requested to submit or approve names for the position. When a slate has been prepared by the Board, the nominations are forwarded to synod for election. All first-term elections are from a slate of two nominees and all second-term elections are from a slate of single nominees (see Rules for Synodical Procedure, VI, D, 2).

The following slates of names from various geographic regions are coming to synod for election of a first term:

Eastern Canada (delegate only)

Rev. Paul R. Vander Kooy is pastor of Faith Community CRC in Milford, Nova Scotia. Previously, he taught for ten years in various Christian schools in Ontario. He has served as a delegate to synod and currently serves on the board of Dalhousie University Campus Ministry and the Maritime Day of Encouragement Committee.

Rev. Gerald (Gary) van Leeuwen is pastor of Athens CRC in Athens, Ontario. He has served on the Youth Advisory Council and as chair of the Classical Home Missions Committee. Rev. van Leeuwen has been a

delegate to synod once. He currently serves as chair of the Classical Interim Committee.

Note: Rev. Kenneth Gherels is the elected alternate for this position but was not able to accept the delegate position when it became vacant.

Hamilton (alternate only)

Rev. Kevin P. De Raaf is pastor of Faith CRC in Burlington, Ontario. He has served on the board of Home Missions, on the Classical Home Missions Committee for Classis Huron, and as delegate to synod twice. He currently serves on the Classical Home Missions Committee for Classis Hamilton.

Rev. Arie G. Van Eek, a member of Bethel CRC, Waterdown, Ontario, is the refugee coordinator for CRWRC. He has served on the Board of Trustees of Calvin College, on the World Missions board, and as a delegate to synod four times. Rev. Van Eek served as general secretary of the Council for Christian Reformed Churches in Canada for twenty years as well as a pastor for twenty years. He currently serves as church visitor and on the boards of Worldwide Christian Schools, Beginnings Counseling and Adoption, and Hamilton Asian Christian Church in Hamilton, Ontario.

Region 11

Rev. Daniel B. Mouw is pastor of South Grandville CRC, in Grandville, Michigan. He has served on the Classical Home Missions Committee and on the boards of the Christian Health Care Center and Calvin Christian School Association. He currently serves on the Classical Interim Committee.

Rev. Kenneth E. Van Wyk is pastor of First CRC, in Cuttleville, Michigan. He has served on the World Missions board twice. He currently serves on the Classical Ministries Committee and the Classical Interim Committee.

The following slates of names from various geographic regions are coming to synod for election to a second term:

Alberta South/Saskatchewan

Mr. Hessel Kielstra (incumbent) is a member of Emmanuel CRC, Calgary, Alberta. He is president and CEO of various family businesses. He majored in psychology at Western College of the University of British Columbia. He has served two terms as trustee on the board of Calvin Theological Seminary and two terms as alderman for the district of Abbotsford. He has served as elder of council and on various committees, as well as on the classis student fund committee and as vice-chair of the Calgary Christian School board.

Mr. Durk De Jong (alternate), a member of Emmanuel CRC, Calgary, Alberta, is a retired accountant. He is a graduate of the University of Calgary with a degree in accounting and is C.M.A. certified. He has served as a Ministers' Pension Fund trustee, an alternate for the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA, and as stated clerk for Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan. He has served as clerk of council for fifteen

years, as chairman of the worship committee, and as chairman of the committee of administration.

Hamilton

Rev. Barton P. Velthuizen (incumbent) is the pastor of Hagersville Community CRC, Hagersville, Ontario. He is a graduate of Dordt College and Calvin Theological Seminary. He has served on the Calvin Theological Seminary board; on the Classical Interim Committee, Classis Student Fund Committee, and Classis Nominating Committee; and as synodical delegate.

Note: An alternate for this position is being chosen in separate action.

Toronto

Mr. Enno Meijers (incumbent), a member of First CRC in Barrie, Ontario, is an assistant Crown attorney. He is a graduate of Dordt College and the University of Western Ontario. He has served as chair of the Wellandport Christian School board's promotion finance committee and education committee, and as chair of the classical advisory committee for Brock University's chaplaincy program. He has also served on the Grace CRC, Welland, Ontario, education, mandates, and worship committees and on the Community Legal Services board of directors. He has served as elder and vice-chair of council.

Mr. Donald Wiersma (alternate), a member of Clarkson CRC, Mississauga, Ontario, is presently retired from technical managerial positions in the chemical industry. He is a graduate of Calvin College with a bachelor of arts degree in chemistry. He has served on the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA; on various committees of classis, school boards, community boards, and technical societies; and several terms on church council over a twenty-five year period.

Region 5

Rev. Al Machiela (incumbent) is pastor of Sunnyslope CRC, Salem, Oregon. He is a graduate of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Westminster Seminary in California. He has served on the board of World Missions, board of Home Missions, Classical Interim Committee, and diaconal committee. He presently serves as chair of the Classical Interim Committee. He served as a missionary in Taiwan for six years and on church councils for twenty-five years.

Rev. Rod Vander Ley (alternate) is senior pastor of Tacoma Community CRC, Tacoma, Washington. He is a graduate of Dordt College and Calvin Theological Seminary. He has an honorary doctorate from Faith Seminary in Tacoma, Washington. He has served as synod delegate; synodical deputy alternate; on the boards of Home Missions, Classical Home Missions Committee, and Christian Outreach Fellowship; on the Dordt College board of trustees; and the Korean affiliation committee of Classis Pacific Northwest.

Region 8

Rev. Robert Timmer (incumbent) is pastor of Inwood CRC, Inwood, Iowa. He is a graduate of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. He has served as stated clerk of three classes, as president of

Hope Haven board of trustees, and on the Classical Interim Committee and the education committee of the Christian school. He has served as stated clerk of Classis Pella and presently serves on the Dordt College board of trustees.

Rev. LeRoy G. Christoffels (alternate) is pastor of Worthington CRC, Worthington, Minnesota. He is a graduate of Dordt College, Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, and Calvin Theological Seminary. He has served on the Synodical Interim Committee, the CRC Worship Committee, the Study Committee on Inclusive Language for God, the board of trustees of Westminster in California, and the board of Dordt College. He presently serves as stated clerk and on the Classical Interim Committee of Classis Minnesota.

Region 11

Ms. Jane Vander Haagen (incumbent), a member of River Terrace CRC, East Lansing, Michigan, is coordinator of the gifted and talented program at Lansing Christian Schools. She is a graduate of Calvin College and is working toward obtaining her masters degree from Michigan State University. She has served as elder and deacon in her local church, as a member of the seminarian support committee, as a member of the pastoral care committee, as a member of various ad hoc committees, as a deaconal liaison to faith in action committee, as a member of the local church's faith in action committee, and as a member of the committee for women in the CRC planning committee. She has also served as a member of the curriculum council committee of Lansing Christian School, as a member of various ad hoc committees, as secretary of the school board of Lansing Christian School, and as president of the local child study club. She has held several leadership positions in Classis Lake Erie.

Ms. Judy Bredeweg (alternate), a member of Church of the Servant CRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, has taught nursing at Hope College, Calvin College, Grand Valley State University, and the University of Michigan, as well as serving as school social worker for ten years at Byron Center Christian School. She has served on FISH, coordinating volunteer services; CRWRC; the Sierra Club; and as deacon. She presently serves on the West Michigan Environmental Action Council.

b. At-large member

At-large members for the Board (total of six) are also chosen directly by synod. This year Mrs. Mamie Thomas completes her second term and is not eligible for reelection. Mr. Paul Dozeman and Mrs. Verney Kho are completing their first term and are eligible for reelection. At-large positions exist to help create balance and/or provide expertise on the Board.

The following slate of names for an at-large position is coming to synod for election of a first term:

United States

Ms. Sari Mills, a member of Grace and Peace Fellowship CRC in Chicago, Illinois, is a school social worker. She has served on her church board and steering committee and as an ethnic advisor to

synod. Ms. Mills currently serves on the synodical Committee to Review the Practice of Appointing Ethnic Advisers to Synod.

Ms. Cindy Vander Kodde, a member of Sherman Street CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a homemaker and mother of nine. She serves on the advisory committee to the Race Relations Office as well as the advisory committee to the Office of Disability Concerns. Mrs. Vander Kodde currently serves as alternate on the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and as a member of the Sesquicentennial Committee.

The following names for an at-large position are coming to synod for election of a second term:

Canada

Mrs. Patricia Storteboom (incumbent), a member of First CRC, Langley, British Columbia, is a partner of Roland Transport and owner of Garden Effects Design. She is a graduate of Kwantlen University College, specializing in landscape design and maintenance. She has served as a Calvinette counselor and on its local board. She has also served on the evangelism committee, worship committee, as district visitor, on administrative council, and on public worship ministries. She presently serves on public worship ministries, and as worship coordinator, worship team leader, in prayer ministry, and on church council as elder of worship.

Note: Ms. Verney Kho recently informed the Board that her husband has taken a position in China and that she is not able to accept a second term. A nomination for an alternate to this position will be submitted to Synod 2005.

United States

Mr. Paul Dozeman (incumbent), a member of Fairway CRC, Jenison, Michigan, is currently founding a new ministry, City Restoration Ministries, with a vision to assist Christians to identify and implement the steps of prayer-based changes, both personally and in their communities, to make the influence of Jesus evident in all areas of their communities. Previously he served in management positions at Union Bank and Kirchman Corporation, where he was also owner. He has served several terms as elder and deacon. He serves as prayer coordinator for Classis Georgetown. Since July 1998, he has been involved in the Lighthouse of Prayer movement as the associate director of HOPE Ministries (Houses of Prayer Everywhere) and has been involved in several national committees defining the Lighthouse movement and city transformation.

Mr. James Clousing (alternate), a member of Bethel CRC, Lansing, Illinois, retired in 2001 from his position as executive director of employee benefits at Sara Lee Corporation. He has served as an elder and deacon of council, as well as on the Illiana school board, and he has served as president of Roseland Christian Ministries board.

5. Women advisers to synod

Synod 2000 adopted the following recommendation regarding women advisers to synod:

That until the review [of the women in office decision] in 2005, synod make provision to have up to seven women from various regions in the CRC serve as advisers to synod.

(*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 699)

Synod 2001 adopted a set of guidelines to regulate this advisory position (see *Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 493).

On the basis of the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001, the Board appointed the following women advisers for Synod 2004:

Ms. Kathleen Boldenow
Ms. Bonnie Smith
Mrs. Patricia Storteboom
Ms. Karen Wynbeek

Note: The Board will appoint additional women advisers at its April meeting.

6. Adoption of change in Church Order Article 17-d

Synod 2003 proposed to Synod 2004 that subsection 17-d be added to Article 17 of the Church Order. The whole Article is quoted below, but only section d (in italics) needs to be adopted:

Article 17

a. Ministers who are neither eligible for retirement nor worthy of discipline may for weighty reasons be released from active ministerial service in a congregation through action initiated by themselves, by a council, or jointly. Such release shall be given only with the approval of classis, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, and in accordance with synodical regulations.

-Cf. Supplement, Article 17-a

b. The council shall provide for the support of a released minister in such a way and for such a time as shall receive the approval of classis.

c. A minister of the Word who has been released from active ministerial service in a congregation shall be eligible for call for a period of two years, after which time the classis, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, shall declare him to be released from the ministerial office. For weighty reasons, the classis, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, may extend the eligibility for call on a yearly basis.

d. *In some situations, the classis may decide that it cannot declare the released minister eligible for call after the minister has completed the process of evaluation and assistance. The classis, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, shall then declare the minister to be released from ministerial office.*

(*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 624)

These changes to the Church Order are being submitted to Synod 2004 for adoption. Church Order Article 47 states that “no substantial alterations shall be affected by synod [in the Church Order] unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes.” The Church Order Supplement, Article 47 (section c) specifies further that:

c. If the churches and classes have not had prior opportunity to consider a substantial alteration, it must be submitted to a following synod, which will consider its advisability. The first decision shall be understood as a

decision to propose; the action of a following synod shall be understood as a decision to adopt.

(Church Order Supplement, Article 47)

7. Adoption of change in Church Order Articles 2, 3-a, 23, and 24

Synod 2003 proposed to Synod 2004 that a change in title be made from *evangelist* to *ministry associate* in Church Order Articles 23 and 24 as well as in Article 2 and 3-a (changes in italics):

C. *The Ministry Associates*

Article 23

a. *Ministry associates* shall be acknowledged as elders of their calling churches with corresponding privileges and responsibilities. Normally, their work as elders shall be limited to the ministries in which they serve as *ministry associates*.

b. Ordinarily, the office of *ministry associates* who serve in emerging congregations will terminate when a group of believers becomes an organized church. However, upon organization and with the approval of the newly formed council and the classis, *ministry associates* may continue to serve the newly organized church until an ordained minister of the Word is installed or until they have served the newly organized church for a reasonable period of transition.

-Cf. Supplement, Article 23-b

c. *Ministry associates* may also serve in organized congregations along with a minister of the Word and may serve as chaplains in institutional settings in the community.

-Cf. Supplement, Article 23-c

d. *Ministry associates* who desire to serve beyond their specific field of labor must secure the approval of their consistories and classes.

Article 24

a. The task of the *ministry associate* is to bear witness to Christ through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, church education, pastoral care, evangelism, and other ministries in order that *believers may be called to comprehensive discipleship and unbelievers may be called to faith*.

b. *Ministry associates* shall function under the direct supervision of the council, giving regular reports to it and being present at council meetings, particularly when their work is under consideration.

(*Acts of Synod 2003*, pp. 611-12)

Article 2

The church recognizes the offices of minister of the Word, elder, deacon, and *ministry associate*. These offices differ from each other only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor.

Article 3

a. Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the offices of minister, elder, and *ministry associate*.

-Cf. Supplement, Article 3-a

These changes to the Church Order are being submitted to Synod 2004 for adoption. Church Order Article 47 states that "no substantial alterations shall be affected by synod [in the Church Order] unless the

churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes.” The Church Order Supplement, Article 47 (section c) specifies further that:

- d. If the churches and classes have not had prior opportunity to consider a substantial alteration, it must be submitted to a following synod, which will consider its advisability. The first decision shall be understood as a decision to propose; the action of a following synod shall be understood as a decision to adopt.

(Church Order Supplement, Article 47)

Synod 2003 designated Rev. Herman Keizer and Rev. George Vander Weit to represent the changes in Church Order Articles 23, 24, 2, and 3-a to Synod 2004 (see Church Order Supplement, Article 47-e).

8. Convening churches of synod

The following churches have been designated as convening churches of synod:

2004 - Grace and Peace Fellowship CRC, Chicago, Illinois

2005 - Palos Heights CRC, Palos Heights, Illinois (synod will be held at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois)

9. Judicial Code Committee appointment and nominations

The Judicial Code Committee hears appeals from actions taken by a classis or by an agency of the Christian Reformed Church, such as where the actions are alleged to violate the Church Order. The committee’s nine members include persons with legal and nonlegal expertise and include both clergy and nonclergy. Members are from different parts of the United States and Canada.

The procedures followed by the Judicial Code Committee are set forth in Article 30-c of the Church Order Supplement. Normally, an aggrieved party brings written charges against another party, setting forth specific acts of the second party that allegedly were wrongful. The committee conducts a hearing, including witness testimony and presentation of relevant documents. After deliberation, the Judicial Code Committee announces its recommendation. Where appropriate, the committee brings its recommendations to synod for implementation.

The committee has one pending appeal that it will report to Synod 2004.

Three members of the committee are completing their second terms: Mrs. Jeanne Engelhard, Mr. Carl Oosterhouse, Mr. Loren Veldhuizen. We thank them for their faithful service and recognize the contribution they have made to the life of the church during their years on the committee.

The following nominations are presented to synod to fill the positions of those retiring:

Position 1

Ms. Susan Keesen, a member of Third CRC in Denver, Colorado, is vice president and general counsel for Ciber, Inc. She has served on the strategic planning committee and the abuse response team of Third CRC. She has also served on the boards of the American Corporate Counsel Association, the Christian Living Campuses (three years as president and five years as vice president), the Telecommunications History Group, and

MediaOne Community Relations. She currently serves on the board of the Colorado Judicial Institute and as an elder and clerk of council.

Ms. Laura B. Bakker, a member of Plymouth Heights CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a contract attorney for the Michigan Court of Appeals, doing research and writing. She has served on the publicity committee for the Kalamazoo County Bar Association; the Calvin Alumni board; the administrative board of Third CRC, Kalamazoo, Michigan; and various church committees. She currently serves on the endowment fund committee, the library committee, and the coffee fellowship committee at Plymouth Heights. Ms. Bakker serves as president of church council and chair of the administrative committee.

Position 2

Mr. Gordon Vander Leek, a member of Hillside Community CRC in Calgary, Alberta, practices law with the firm Vander Leek & Company. He has served on the board and executive committee of his church council and as president of the London Chamber of Commerce. He currently serves as the chair of the Calgary Calvin Alumni Association chapter and on a launch team for a new church plant. Mr. Vander Leek has experience in representing churches and not-for-profit organizations and understands both the law and ministry in regard to disputes.

Note: The Board regrets presenting a single nominee for this position, but at the last minute the name of a second nominee was dropped from the nomination.

Position 3

Mr. Robert L. DeJong, a member of LaGrave Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is an attorney with Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone, PLC. He has served on the board of CRC Publications, as elder and deacon at LaGrave, and as president of council.

Ms. Gail Rice, a member of Hope CRC in Oak Forest, Illinois, is an adult literacy specialist, author, and consultant. She has served as a literacy consultant to the World Literature Committee and Open Door Ministers. She coauthored the book *Creating a Quality Basic Literacy Program: A Guide for Churches*. Ms. Rice has served on various committees at Hope CRC over the past twenty-five years. She currently serves on the synodical Committee to Study Restorative Justice.

10. Historical Committee request

Synod 2003 referred to the Board of Trustees a request from the Historical Committee “to raise and retain funds for publication projects in a proposed Historical Series of the Christian Reformed Church” (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 585). After some initial conversation with the Board regarding this request, the Historical Committee reviewed its plans and has now altered its project and withdrawn the request re funding. The Board believes that it has completed its assignment in this matter and will not pursue it further.

11. Smaller churches request

Synod 2003 adopted the following recommendations that required the Board to propose some criteria, guidelines, and funding proposals regarding smaller churches whether emerging or organized:

1. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to propose to Synod 2004 criteria for the organization, de-organization, and appropriateness for subsidy of emerging and existing congregations. Specifically, such criteria will help classes and synodical deputies to determine whether, by such standards, a ministry ought to receive financial assistance or retain its status as an organized congregation. Included in establishing such criteria is a mandate to review the widely divergent practices of how membership is counted.
2. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees
 - a. To propose to Synod 2004 a list of ministries throughout the denomination that are located in high-need and/or in urban areas that reflect the CRC's commitment to minister among the poor and disenfranchised in our society. Specifically, such ministries shall qualify for special assistance that will sustain and enhance the gospel witness and reflect God's care for the poor, as well as reflect the CRC's commitment to learn together how to minister in urban and other ministries in high-need settings.
 - b. To review and revise such a list annually.
3. That synod instruct the Board of Trustees to propose to Synod 2004 a funding stream to support the ministries of smaller or needy congregations that do not qualify for assistance now available through Home Missions.

Grounds for recommendations 1-3:

1. The historic commitment of the CRC to retain, at all costs, the life and ministry of practically all congregations must be reexamined.
2. Many congregations presently lack long-term viability and have fallen below the margin of sustainability.
3. There are those ministries that reflect the presence of God in high-need areas where most CRC congregation cannot effectively minister. Such ministries deserve a broader base of support than can be generated locally.
4. Special provision must be made for the financial support of qualifying ministries in the light of the denominational priorities.

(Acts of Synod 2003, pp. 641-42)

This project was not yet complete by the time the printed agenda went to press. Because the proposals will suggest new ways of dealing with issues of membership count and congregational status, the Board believes that it would be unwise to submit the proposals in a supplementary report and expect Synod 2004 to act on them. If the proposals are ready in May, they will be presented with the Board's supplementary report but with a recommendation that they be submitted to the churches for review and for action at Synod 2005.

12. Publications and services

a. *Yearbook*

The *Yearbook*, published annually by the office of the general secretary of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, serves as a denominational directory and as a resource for statistical information. In addition to information about classes, congregations, ministers, and agencies, it contains a historical sketch of the life of the church during the previous year and provides obituary information about pastors who died during that year.

Each year, the *Yearbook* is published with greater facility than the year before because of technological refinements. The October deadline for *Yearbook* information allows us to publish in January rather than later in the year as was previously the custom. The book reflects, therefore, denominational and local-church information up to approximately August 31 of the calendar year preceding publication.

The statistics printed beneath the congregational information in the 2004 *Yearbook* in each instance show the total number of members (baptized and confessing) in a local congregation. By instruction of synod, the following membership totals are listed in the Classical Information: number of families, number of professing members over eighteen years of age, total number of professing members, total number of baptized members, and total number of members. In addition, the Classical Information includes the total number of inactive members, total number of members leaving for other CRCs, and total number of members received from other CRCs through evangelism and from other denominations.

The Directory of Churches and Ministries in the *Yearbook* includes organized churches, emerging churches, newly planted churches (not yet having statistics), and other ministries, for a total of 1025 active ministries. The return rate for questionnaires was at the 88 percent level this year so that the *Yearbook* includes current statistics for 905 ministries.

We acknowledge with gratitude the excellent services of Mrs. Nancy Haynes, *Yearbook* manager, and Mrs. Alice Damsteegt, Mrs. Muriel Lamer, and Mrs. Jan Ortiz, who assisted in gathering information, entering it into the database, copy reading, editing, and carefully attending to the myriad of details involved in publishing the *Yearbook*. The same hearty gratitude needs to be expressed to our computer staff who diligently provide the necessary support services for this exacting task.

b. *Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure*

An updated *Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure* was printed, incorporating the changes adopted and ratified by Synod 2003. These booklets are updated by the general secretary and reprinted annually, when necessary, and a copy is sent to each church.

c. *Agenda for Synod and Acts of Synod*

The publication of the *Agenda for Synod* and *Acts of Synod* is the responsibility of the general secretary. This would not be accomplished by established deadlines without the invaluable assistance of Mrs. Diane Recker, executive assistant; Mrs. Jan Ortiz, copy editor; and Mrs. Nancy Haynes, Mrs. Muriel Lamer, and personnel from CRC Product Services.

As in previous years, some decisions needed to be made about which material properly belonged in the *Agenda for Synod*. Erring on the side of grace seemed more appropriate than erring on the side of rigid regulation. Synod itself will finally decide in all cases whether the material is properly on its agenda.

d. *Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church*

During the past year, the Board of Trustees has again sent to all CRC councils updated materials for the *Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church: Your Church in Action*. Several councils ordered new notebooks because the old ones had been lost or misplaced. This binder should be kept available in every council room.

The *Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church* contains the following sections:

- 1) Ministry Shares and Offerings—This section contains financial data and a description of the programs carried on by all CRC boards and agencies as well as by accredited outside agencies. It gives assistance for scheduling special offerings and suggests announcements to be made prior to receiving such offerings.
- 2) Denominational Insights—After a brief statement on the nature of the church and on some of the principles of Reformed church government, this section provides information about the nature of our assemblies, the function of major assemblies, the agenda for synod, and the denominational program structure.
- 3) Congregational Helps—This section contains helps that are available for councils and congregations; suggested rules of procedure and model agendas for council, consistory, and deacons meetings; suggestions for congregational committees; helpful information on the use of members' gifts; and other useful information.
- 4) Ministers' Compensation Survey—By mandate of synod, a survey of ministers' compensation has been prepared each year for use by our pastors and by finance committees of the church councils. The 2003 survey will be presented to Synod 2004 and later mailed to the churches for inclusion in the Handbook. It is intended to be a helpful guide in the setting of salaries and other position-related reimbursements. Because the survey is also used by our pension committees, Synod 1988 passed the following recommendation:

That synod remind the churches that Synod 1982 adopted a recommendation to "require that all ministers complete the salary questionnaire annually to enable the pension committees to accurately calculate the average cash salary as a base for computing ministers' pensions."

(*Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 51; *Acts of Synod 1988*, p. 574)

- 5) Doctrinal and Ethical Decisions—This section is indispensable for all who wish to know the position of the CRC on various matters of doctrine and ethics. This section has recently been updated and will be sent on request to any church (or individual) who asks. It can also be found on the CRC web site at www.crcna.org/crbe/crbe_pos.htm. An abbreviated version can be purchased through CRC Publications by calling 1-800-333-8300.

e. *Index of Synodical Decisions*

The *Index of Synodical Decisions* is a valuable aid for those who need to research the decisions of synodical assemblies. The index was

updated in 2001 and is available in both book format and electronic (CD ROM) format through CRC Publications (1-800-333-8300).

f. *Manual for Synodical Deputies*

This manual is distributed to synodical deputies, their alternates, and stated clerks of classes. The manual, originally prepared by Rev. Leonard J. Hofman, was revised again in 2003 by the general secretary and distributed to those mentioned above. Anyone needing a copy of the manual may receive one from the office of the general secretary.

B. *Program and finance matters*

A good deal of the Board of Trustees' (BOT) work relates to the ministry programs, personnel, and finances of the denomination. The program and personnel details are reported to synod by way of agency reports and this section of the BOT's report in this agenda. The details about budgets and other financial matters are contained in the *Agenda for Synod 2004—Financial and Business Supplement* that is given to delegates to synod at the time the supplementary report is distributed. All requests for offerings and ministry-share allocations will be presented to synod by way of the finance advisory committee.

Regular reports are provided for the BOT at its meetings throughout the year as the Board provides oversight on behalf of synod. The primary link between the BOT and the denomination's ministries is provided for through the office of the executive director of ministries. The Ministries Administrative Council (MAC) is the interagency administrative entity that has responsibility for the administration of the denominational ministries plan, promotes collaboration among the agencies, and recommends to the Board such program matters as require its approval.

The Board is thankful to report that the cooperation among the agencies and educational institutions is very good. Joint ministry initiatives, frequent interagency consultations, and the use of shared resources are common. The Board encourages the consolidation of support functions that are common to several or all of the denominational agencies. Particular areas of expertise of one agency are made available to other agencies so that ministry effectiveness and resource efficiencies can be maximized. The result of these efforts has been gratifying while, at the same time, it is recognized that more can be done to enhance such efforts. The BOT is committed to continuing the trend of reducing duplication of skills and efforts while maintaining, as much as is possible, the specialties in ministry that pertain to specific ministry entities.

The program and financial matters that were processed by the Board are now presented to synod as information. Any matters that require action by synod are clearly identified within the body of this report.

1. Canadian Ministries

The face of ministry in Canada changed significantly in the last year. The issue of the redefinition of marriage and the concern of religious freedom for clergy who officiate at most marriages in Canada was prominent in the news. In addition, public opinion polls show a significant increase in those who claim the Christian faith and even an allegiance to Christ, but that has not shown up in increased church attendance and ministry involvement. Late in the year, the Canadian edition of *Time* magazine had a cover story on a rising interest in spirituality, especially amongst young Canadians.

Addressing such a reality is a challenge to the Christian church in Canada. Amongst our responses has been the Denominational Ministry Plan (DMP) of the CRCNA and its four strategic priorities: Leadership Development, Church Development, Integrated Ministry to Children and Youth, and Outreach and Discipling. The 2003 Canadian Ministry Forum (CMF) served to inform these priorities and their goals. Linked to those goals are four CMF goals that also guide a portion of our work in Canada. They are:

- Nurturing spiritual renewal of members (Church Development)
- Leaders identified, mentored, and affirmed (Leadership Development)
- Youth as part of the whole church (Integrated Ministry to Children and Youth)
- Developing a kingdom vision (Outreach and Discipling)

Making progress can be difficult, but there are some highlights. The Eastern Canada Leadership Development Network (ECLDN) was launched in October 2003 under the leadership of Home Missions. Fourteen persons meet on the first Saturday of each month to study and grow together. A three-year curriculum has been developed, and this seems to be off to a great start. More information concerning this initiative can be found on the website: www.ecldn.ca.

Under the auspices of the Denominational Ministries Plan, a goal team focused on Children and Youth, and a series of nine conferences are being held to help leaders grow in their ability to provide leadership. Three of these conferences were planned for Canada during 2004: Edmonton, Alberta, February 21; Langley, British Columbia, March 6; and Ancaster, Ontario, April 24.

Other aspects of Canadian Ministries include:

a. Urban Aboriginal Ministries

These ministries take place out of three centers, in Winnipeg, Regina, and Edmonton, Alberta. In February 2004, there was a celebration in Winnipeg that marked thirty years of effort to bring and apply the hope of the gospel among the aboriginal peoples of our nation.

In these three centers, there is a concern to present and live out the gospel in word and deed. Not only are circle times significant, so is the pursuit of social justice and community development. Achievement of these goals is due in part to the generous support of the CRCNA, as well as significant contributions from government and other agencies that help sustain and develop these ministry efforts.

b. Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG)

The Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG) continues its work of research, advocacy, and education on significant issues in Canadian public policy from a biblical and confessional perspective. CCG strives to develop constructive interaction with (primarily) federal policy makers, on a range of issues: Canadian poverty, the definition of marriage, international food security, and a number of related issues. CCG and its staff work in collaboration with CRWRC and the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, as well as with ecumenical partners such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Canadian Council of

Churches, and Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. In all these activities, CCG seeks to work out part of the CRCNA mission—to “pursue God’s justice and peace in every area of life” (*Our Mission - CRCNA*).

c. Social Justice

In the role of Social Justice Coordinator, Ms. Sandra Elgersma works to equip the Canadian churches in this area of ministry. Regular channels such as workshops, *The Advocate* newsletter, and the social justice web site contribute to this goal. Ms. Elgersma helps churches establish social justice committees and nurtured those in existence in 2003 through activities such as bursaries for the Just Worship conference in Edmonton, small grants, and the fall social justice committee retreat. She also produced *Shalom Seekers: Living the Call to do Justice* with the Public Justice Resource Centre, a series of workshops offering a great starting place for any adult education group, diaconates, social justice committees, or interested groups of people. The social justice coordinator also helps to address justice issues facing the institutional church, such as racism and justice for aboriginal peoples.

d. Service Link

The year 2004 marks the ninth year that ServiceLink-Canada has been in existence and has served the members of the CRC, providing them with opportunities of service through its various ministries. During the 2002-2003 year, the program gave service to 565 volunteers, 374 who served for the first time. Included in this number were 26 teams. People served in approximately 15 different countries around the world, including Canada and the United States. Youth groups, intergenerational groups, church groups, a classis group, young people, young adults, seniors, and all those in between gave over 36,400 hours to serve God by serving others. We thank God for the continued blessings in providing opportunities of service and in the transformation of many lives.

e. Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC)

Synod 2003 adopted an overture to study the issue of restorative justice. This is not a theoretical model/concept. In a number of ways, the CRC has already been involved with such matters.

The CRC is a partner with ten other churches/denominations on the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC). One of their main activities is the promotion and development of restorative justice. They also hope to establish a Centre for Justice. Contact has been made with a university to seek cooperation in developing such a center that would focus on six aims:

- Establishing a home for reflection-in-action on justice issues for a wide range of church, government, criminal justice, and community people;
- Stimulating new thinking for better justice;
- Cultivating a new generation of justice seekers, informed by God’s justice and prepared to work in community toward this goal;

- Focusing attention on the needs of victims of crime and exploring with them critical paths to healing;
- Opening up new doors into the community to engage those who are disenfranchised through their experience of the justice system;
- Bringing to the light of day the failing of current practice to serve the healing of individuals and communities exposed to the harm of crime.

The challenge that CCJC faces in these matters is similar to the concern of many others, namely, sustainable funding. Currently, the CRCNA supports this effort with a yearly contribution of \$1,500.

The CRC's representative on CCJC is Rev. John de Vries, who will complete his second term this summer. We are grateful for his work and for the experience he brings, which stems from his own career as a prison chaplain.

f. Ecumenical relations

Canadian Ministries also involves ecumenical relations. In Canada, we have built on the efforts of the former Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC). Under its auspices, we joined several ecumenical organizations wherein we continue to play a role today, such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Canadian Council of Churches, and Kairos. (See, too, the Interchurch Relations Committee report.)

Kairos seeks to engage in social transformation via advocacy in a range of involvements. Six program committees exist, and we have a delegate on each: Global Economic Justice; Canadian Social Development; International Human Rights; Environmental and Ecological Justice; Aboriginal Rights; and Education and Animation. During the past year, Ms. Mary Corkery has come to serve Kairos as its new executive director, and a new program has been launched, entitled Cultivating a Just Peace.

g. Other matters

Once again there has been considerable turnover in staff. Ms. Sandra Elgersma has left our employ in order to return to school. The Canadian director of the Chaplaincy Ministries office was closed in May 2003 due to budget constraints, obliging Rev. Seibert Van Houten to look for another ministry position. The Back to God Hour terminated an involvement with Vision TV in an effort to save funds and to take advantage of more economical broadcast vehicles.

Despite the challenges, we are blessed and consider it a privilege to be engaged for the Lord in this setting in "such a time as this."

2. Report of BOT-related ministry programs

a. The Office of Abuse Prevention

The Office of Abuse Prevention was established by Synod 1994 and functions within the organizational framework of the Denominational Offices. The fact that this ministry is needed in the church is itself a painful reality. As everyone knows, abusive behavior has been in the news a great deal during the last year. Unfortunately, the trauma in the

Roman Catholic Church, though different in its detail, is also too often found within the fellowship of the CRC. Our handling of such cases, despite all of synod's encouragement and advice, is still very uneven. The fact that each reported instance of abuse is handled by a different church council, and in a different classis, makes consistent and even-handed ministry to victims and perpetrators difficult. The Abuse Prevention office is focused on the prevention side of this painful issue. Ms. Beth Swagman is the director of this ministry, and her report is contained in Appendix A.

The Office of Abuse Prevention is recommending a revision of the guidelines that deal with sexual abuse committed by a church leader against a minor. It is recommended that synod approve the revised guidelines as presented (see Addendum to Appendix A).

b. The Office of Chaplaincy Ministries

Chaplaincy Ministries is served by the Rev. Herman Keizer, Jr., who himself is a former chaplain in the U.S. Army. Christian Reformed chaplains serve in many different settings and, for the most part, are employed by nondenominational organizations. The nature of chaplaincy work is challenging as people are encountered at their point of greatest need and vulnerability. It is all the more challenging because the ministry is often in a secular or interfaith setting. Just the same, the Christian Reformed Church's ministry is significantly enhanced by the placement of chaplains in these public institutions. Rev. Keizer's report is contained in Appendix B.

c. The Office of Disability Concerns

This is the twentieth anniversary year for the Office of Disability Concerns that was established by Synod 1984. Dr. James Vanderlaan continues to faithfully minister to and with persons living with disabilities. His report is contained in Appendix C.

d. The Office of Pastor-Church Relations and Ministerial Information Services

The ministry of this office is under the direction of Rev. Duane Visser who is assisted by Rev. Norman Thomasma. The addition of Rev. Thomasma to the staff is permitting a more serious address to the ministry of prevention. The efforts of Pastor-Church Relations are more fully described in the report that is contained in Appendix D.

e. The Office of Race Relations

It has been a tumultuous year for Race Relations. During the summer of 2003, it became necessary for Rev. Norberto Wolf to relinquish the directorship of Race Relations and, at about the same time, Dr. Peter Szto accepted a faculty position with Western Michigan University. The ministry was carried on by two regional staff members (Rev. Norberto Wolf in California and Ms. Yvonne Rayburn-Beckley in Chicago), Mr. Art Hoekstra accepted a part-time contract position to assist in the antiracism training initiative, and a number of agency staff and members of local congregations helped to keep the antiracism effort going. The Board of Trustees decided to commission a thorough review of the Race Relations ministry and to request that a review task

force make recommendations concerning the best way to move this ministry forward. A summary of that report can be found in Appendix E. The report of the task force was presented to the BOT at its meeting in February 2004. The following was decided by the BOT and is communicated to synod as information:

A. That the statement of vision and mandate for Race Relations be referred to staff for reformulation (with the intent that the revised mandate be submitted to synod for approval by way of the supplementary report).

B. That the BOT retain the present Race Relations Advisory Council, and its present name, but include the following specific details for its formation and its mandate:

1. Increase the council's membership to nine members so as to have representation from the major ethnic communities within the CRC, and so that the council is binational with three members from Canada and six from the United States. The council will have not less than five persons of color. It is understood that the Race Relations director (and other staff members as appropriate) will meet with the council at all times but not as ex officio members of the council. Other denominational staff members are available to the council as needed.
2. Review and approve the formulation of clear and measurable goals and milestones on the way to achieving the vision and mandate.
3. Review mandate-related plans and priorities.
4. Enable the communication process to various ethnic communities.
5. Provide oversight for the Multiethnic Conference.

C. That the BOT decide to phase-out the regional positions for Race Relations according to the following plan:

1. That the BOT authorize the recruitment for, and appointment of, a binational Race Relations director to be located in the Grand Rapids denominational office. The person selected for this position will preferably be a person of color. The director position will be supervised by and report to the EDM (or the proposed DDM) within the framework of the denominational offices. It is understood that this position will be supported by an administrative assistant.
2. That the BOT authorize the recruitment for, and the appointment of, a half-time (50% FTE) Canadian Race Relations staff member who will be part of the binational Race Relations office but who will primarily focus time and attention on Race Relations activity in Canada. The Canadian staff member will be supervised by the Race Relations director in terms of Race Relations activity, and will also have an administrative relationship to the Canadian Ministries Director within the framework of the denominational offices in Burlington.
3. That the full time positions of Rev. Norberto Wolf and Ms. Yvonne Rayburn-Beckley will be officially ended as of July 1, 2004.
4. That both Rev. Norberto Wolf and Ms. Yvonne Rayburn-Beckley be offered part-time (25% FTE) contract positions with Race Relations until such time that a new Race Relations Director recommends alternate staffing proposals. These .25 FTE positions will not be supported by an administrative assistant or dedicated office space. Equipment and travel expense will be reimbursed as per normal procedure.

5. That the Race Relations director be designated as an adviser to the Ministry Council.
6. That the BOT endorse the concept advanced in the task force's report that the major agencies and educational institutions each designate an in-office position to advance the work of antiracism within the agency or institution and among agency and institution-related staff. The accountability of the designated person remains to the supervisor appointed by the agency or institution.
7. That consideration of the other staffing recommendations contained within the task force's report be deferred until the new leadership is in place and a track record is established.

(BOT Minute 2834)

f. The Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action

Concerns about systemic injustice throughout the world—injustices that are the root cause of immense suffering—continue to be the focus of this ministry. The activities that engage the staff of this office are carried out in cooperation with many congregations throughout the denomination, all of the CRC agencies and educational institutions, as well as a number of partner organizations that share our concern for the poor and disenfranchised. Mr. Peter Vander Meulen directs this effort, and his report is contained in Appendix F.

g. The Office of Ministry Planning

Mr. Michael Bruinooge serves the denomination as the director of ministry planning. The basic document of reference is the Denominational Ministries Plan (DMP) that provides strategic direction for the agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church. Synod reviewed and endorsed the plan in 2002, which has since been made available in booklet form as well as posted on the denominational web site.

The plan identifies three strategic values and four strategic priorities for our denominational ministries. They are:

Strategic values:

- Collaboration
- Justice
- Stewardship

Strategic priorities:

- Church development
- Leadership development
- Integrated ministry to children and youth
- Outreach and discipling

The Board of Trustees requires the agencies and educational institutions to reflect these values and priorities in their plans and monitors programs and budgets for alignment.

In addition, the Board has adopted several goals to advance these priorities—goals that are currently being addressed by interagency teams. In each case, one of our agencies or institutions serves as the convener of the goal team. The DMP goals are listed in Appendix G.

The Board uses the ministries plan to set standards for and promote integration of our denominational ministries. For example, when the

Board conducted a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of our denominational ministries in 2002 and 2003, it was reflecting the plan's attention to *stewardship*. In the same vein, the Board appointed a committee to examine what should be our CRC ministry priorities overall. When the Board appointed a task force in 2003 to examine models for regional delivery of services to churches, it was reflecting the priority given in the plan to *helping local congregations to flourish*. In addition, the plan's attention to *collaboration* has meant that the Board regularly monitors its presence or absence in our ministries. The Board has been pleased with the cooperative spirit shown by our institutions and agencies.

Finally, the Board regards the plan as a dynamic document that must be reviewed regularly to ensure that its strategic priorities and goals reflect changing circumstances and the movement of God's Spirit among us.

h. Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE)

Last year, we reported that in late 2002 the Christian Reformed Church was awarded a significant grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. to support and strengthen pastors in their ministries. The grant amount is \$1,999,278 over five years, ending on December 31, 2007. The grant is administered out of the Denominational Office and represents a collaborative approach involving Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and the Pastor-Church Relations Office.

This year, we were very pleased with the interest shown in the SPE program by pastors, congregations, classes, and denominational agencies. The information below constitutes a summary of the program, including contact information, vision, program elements, highlights of 2003, and plans for 2004:

1) Contact Information

Web site: www.crcna.org/pastoralexcellence

Email: pastoralexcellence@crcna.org

Phone: 877-279-9994 (toll-free)

2) Vision

Today's congregations need strong servant leaders who can adapt to and grow with their congregations. For this, pastors must develop character, knowledge, and skills. Pastoral excellence is marked by:

- A deep, authentic relationship with God, marked by prayer, godliness, and fruit of the Spirit.
- A strong vision of the church's mission.
- A thorough grasp of the Christian faith and an ability to communicate it clearly.
- A healthy pastoral identity.
- An understanding of leadership in a congregational system.
- A commitment to lifelong learning.

Pastors cannot develop these traits all on their own. It takes a denomination-wide effort to develop a culture that sustains pastoral

excellence. Working together, pastors, church council members, and denominational agencies can develop practices that foster spiritually mature, imaginative congregational leadership.

3) Program elements

The core elements of the Christian Reformed Church's program are mentoring, peer learning, and continuing education.

The *mentoring* program provides for:

- Mentors for seminarians.
- Mentors for all pastors starting out in ministry.
- Annual retreats for pastors in their first five years of CRC ministry.
- Training to volunteer regional pastors—those who supervise mentor-mentee pairs.
- Matching grants to regional assemblies (classes) to hire regional pastors to provide extra mentoring for other pastors.

In *peer learning*, small groups of pastors are encouraged to pray, study, and learn from each other in a variety of formats. This is done by funding their proposals for a year of such learning.

In *continuing education*, one-to-two-day education events are funded for CRC pastors, pastors of other denominations, and spouses. These events are sponsored by CRC congregations and regional assemblies, as well as other organizations related to our denomination.

A seven-member implementation team meets monthly to review progress and make grant decisions. A ten-member advisory board meets annually to provide counsel concerning the overall direction of the program and to plan how to sustain it beyond the life of our grant.

4) 2003 Summary

- Received 39 peer learning proposals from groups of pastors (representing 345 pastors and ministry professionals and 274 congregations); approved 28.
- Received sixteen proposals to hold continuing education events for pastors; approved twelve.
- Created a manual of guidelines for applying for SPE funds.
- Approved one regional pastor matching grant (Classis Greater Los Angeles).
- Sponsored spring dinners for seminarians and spouses for orientation re the CRC's mentoring program.
- Began work on SPE monographs—Rev. Joel Kok, editor.
- Sponsored advertisements in *The Banner* and *Christian Courier*.
- Sponsored articles on pastoral leadership in *The Banner* and *Christian Courier*.
- Made presentations on SPE in thirty-four classes.
- Held first annual meeting of 10-member SPE advisory board in November 2003.

5) Plans for 2003-2004

- Hold first meeting of peer learning group coordinators on January 16.
- Attend conference of all U.S. Lilly SPE grant holders in Indianapolis on January 22-23.
- Publish first volume of monographs on the pastoral vocation July 2004.
- Accept and review new peer learning proposals from pastors; due May 1 and November 1, 2004.
- Accept and review new continuing education proposals from churches, classes, and agencies; due June 1 and December 1, 2004.
- Accept and review new regional pastor matching grant proposals from classes; due March 1 and October 1, 2004.
- Hold second annual meeting of advisory board in November 2004.
- Hold second meeting of peer learning group coordinators in November 2004.

3. Agency presentations at synod

Synod 1995 adopted a three-year rotation cycle for agency presentations at Synod. The following roster for agency presentations is scheduled for Synod 2004:

- Back to God Hour
- Calvin College
- Denominational Offices

4. Classis Pacific Hanmi Progress Report

This is the second four-year report since Classis Pacific Hanmi was organized in September 1996. The report of the monitoring committee can be found in Appendix H. The contents and recommendations are self-explanatory.

5. Succession planning

Last year the BOT reported to synod the following:

The BOT has been giving attention to the fact that a number of denominational leadership positions will undergo a change during the next several years. One such change is presently in the process with the pending retirement of Mr. Kenneth J. Horjus from the position of Director of Finance and Administration effective July 1, 2003. However, other changes should be anticipated, and the BOT is addressing the need for orderly transitions. It is in this context that the BOT wishes to report to Synod 2003 the following:

- a. The BOT has appointed a Succession Planning Committee.
- b. The BOT has authorized the Succession Planning Committee to develop a proposal that will place denominational leadership in a team of executives that is led by a leader who will replace the present positions of executive director of ministries and general secretary.
- c. The BOT's rationale for developing the single-leader model is based on the experience of the BOT since 1992 and the BOT's thinking that both the BOT and synod may be more effectively served by a single leader. To avoid placing too much authority and leadership responsibility in just one position, however, it is being proposed that the concept include a

cabinet, the membership of which may include, besides the appointed leader, other senior denominational personnel such as agency directors, a chief operating officer, a chief financial officer, and the Canadian ministries director.

No synodical action is requested at this time. Before a single-leader model would be implemented, the Board will present recommendations regarding this matter to a future synod.

(Agenda for Synod 2003, p. 43)

The BOT is now ready to present a formal proposal to Synod 2004. The complete report and accompanying documents are in Appendices I through I-7. The BOT unanimously approved the report and adopted the following recommendation for synod's approval:

That synod approve the plan to revise the senior leadership structure of the CRCNA to provide for a single position, executive director and general secretary (ED&GS), as the person responsible to the BOT and synod for implementing their decisions.

Grounds:

1. The proposed structure will clarify roles and responsibilities.
2. The proposed structure will permit creation of a director of denominational ministries position to focus on the ministries of the denomination.
3. The preceding will allow the new ED&GS more time to interact with our churches, to improve communication, and to close the perceived gap between the denomination and the churches.
4. Working relationships and accountability will be improved.
5. The proposal is the next logical step in the denomination's organizational journey of seeking enhanced effectiveness of ministry.
6. The proposal contains appropriate checks and balances in keeping with Reformed polity.

The Board also adopted the following recommendations and presents them to synod for its information:

B. [That the Board] approve the proposed position descriptions for the executive director and general secretary, the director of denominational ministries (DDM), the Canadian ministries director (CMD), and the director of finance and administrative support services (DFAS).

C. [That the Board] appoint a Search Committee of six to eight members mandated to conduct a search for the new ED&GS and the new DDM. The following task and time line is suggested:

1. That the Search Committee be appointed in April 2004 so that it is ready to begin its work as soon as Synod 2004 approves a plan.
2. That the nominees for the new ED&GS position and the new DDM position be presented to the Board for approval no later than February 2005. The Board will then be able to make a recommendation to Synod 2005 for the new ED&GS.
3. That Synod 2005 consider the Board's recommendation and approve the candidate for the position of ED&GS.
4. That the new structure be in place in the third quarter of 2005.
5. That the new ED&GS assumes the new position as soon as possible following synodical approval, receiving transitional assistance from the current EDM and current GS as he requests. It is intended that the

transition will be for no more than a sixty- to ninety-day period after the starting date of the new ED&GS.

6. That the current GS begin his special assignment as recommended within sixty days after the starting date of the new ED&GS.

D. [That the Board approve] the special assignment of the current general secretary during the time of transition from the start-up of the new structure to his anticipated retirement in 2007. The assignments shall be made by the BOT.

(BOT Minute 2827)

As is referenced in the report, this is also the formal notification to synod that Dr. Peter Borgdorff has indicated his desire to retire from the EDM position following the meeting of Synod 2005. It is the BOT's intention to initiate a process to identify Dr. Borgdorff's successor in a manner that is consistent with the recommendations contained in the report mentioned above.

6. Agency board member selection procedure

The BOT recommends to synod that the selection of all agency and educational institution board members be regulated by the following procedures:

- a. Each classis will be asked to submit one or more names for a classical or regional vacant position. The nomination(s) will be solicited by, and sent to, the office of the general secretary. Upon receipt of the nominations, the names will be forwarded to the agency or educational institution involved for review.
- b. If the procedure described above does not produce a sufficient number of persons who, in the judgment of that board meet the criteria for maintaining the synodically required diversity of board members, either as members or as alternate members, the agency or institutional board may add other names to the list of nominations submitted to the general secretary's office for election by the classes involved. In preparing nominations, each board shall:
 - 1) Adhere to the synodical policy that no more than one-half of the members of a board shall be ministers of the Word.
 - 2) Take into account applicable synodical policies that may be adopted from time to time, including, but not limited to, policies with respect to diversity, age, gender, ethnic representation, and specific expertise.
 - 3) Develop and implement rotation schedules for regions and classes so that, as much as possible, fair representation is achieved.
- c. The slates of nominees shall be returned to the classes for election. The election results by classes are submitted to synod for ratification.
- d. In order to assure compliance with, and consistency in, implementing this process, synod assigns to the BOT the responsibility of implementing and monitoring compliance with these policies.

Notes: (1) This proposed change is consistent with the synodically approved procedure for the nominating and election of BOT members except that, in

the case of the BOT, the final election is by synod itself, and (2) this change will require each denominational board to have a nominating committee or assign the nominating function to its executive committee.

7. Calvin College

The BOT approved the revised bylaws of Calvin College and conveys that as information to synod. The change in the college's bylaws pertains to a provision that at-large members of the board of trustees be permitted to serve three consecutive terms instead of the more normal two-term limit. The BOT was persuaded by the college trustees' reasoning that the complexity of governing an educational institution requires a greater degree of continuity of trusteeship. The denominational and regional trustees on the board of Calvin College will continue to be two-term maximum positions.

8. CRC Publications

The BOT wishes to inform synod that it approved the restructuring of the CRC Board of Publications from a classically based to a regionally based board to govern the agency. The restructuring will take effect July 1, 2004.

The BOT also endorses the nomination of Rev. Robert De Moor to become the editor-in-chief of *The Banner* effective September 1, 2004.

Finally, the BOT endorses the proposal being submitted to synod by CRC Publications that *The Banner* become a ministry-share-supported every-household magazine.

9. Christian Reformed Home Missions

The BOT wishes to inform synod that it approved the restructuring of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions from a classically based to a regionally based board to govern the agency. The restructuring will take effect July 1, 2004.

10. CRWRC

The BOT wishes to inform synod that it endorses the request of CRWRC that synod adopt the Micah Challenge as an expression of our denominational commitment to stand with the poor and for the cause of fighting poverty and hunger at home and throughout the world.

11. Pension matters protocol

The BOT recommends to synod the request of the Pension Trustees as follows:

That synod defer action on overtures, minority reports, and motions from the floor of synod that involve substantive matters concerning the denomination's retirement plans until advised by the U.S. and Canadian pension trustees. The same is requested for actions that may be initiated by synod's advisory committee on finance or by any other of synod's advisory committees that is at variance with recommendations made by the pension trustees or is independent of any action recommended by them. Advice to synod will be in the form of a memorandum or other materials directed to synod's advisory committee on finance, which is the committee normally designated for processing matters related to the denomination's benefit plans.

12. The Ministries Priorities Committee Report

The Constitution of the BOT charges it with the responsibility to:

Serve synod with analysis, reviews, and recommendations with respect to the programs and resources of the denomination (Article III, C).

To appropriately address this responsibility, the BOT appointed a committee in 2003 and charged it with the responsibility of reviewing current priorities as carried out by the agencies and educational institutions of the CRC. The committee presented its report to the BOT in February 2004 (see Appendix J). The following recommendations were adopted:

- A. That the BOT adopt as its priority for the next five to ten years the creating and sustaining of healthy local congregations in North America.

Grounds:

1. Many local congregations are struggling to build and maintain strong local ministries within their own ministry communities.
 2. The local congregations form the foundation that supports joint denominational ministries. If the health of these local churches is not maintained, the ability to continue joint ministries could be greatly impaired.
 3. Strong healthy local congregations are necessary to fulfill the great commission in the present North American context.
 4. The future viability of the CRCNA depends on maintaining a collaborative relationship between local congregations and the agencies and institutions of the CRCNA.
 5. This priority is strongly consistent with the strategic priorities of the Denominational Ministries Plan.
- B. That the BOT immediately create a new committee to determine the steps necessary to implement this priority. . . . The new committee should consider [the following factors in its deliberations]:
 1. Adopting specific goals for creating and sustaining healthy local congregations,
 2. Establishing a denominational Office of Congregational Services,
 3. Reviewing the present mandates of all CRCNA agencies and institutions, and
 4. Restructuring as needed to implement this new priority.
(BOT Minute 2816)

Because the committee referenced in section b above has not yet reported to the BOT, and is unlikely to do so before the September 2004 meeting of the BOT, this matter is provided for synod's information. However, if synod believes that the BOT should have chosen a different priority, this would be a good time to indicate that as an instruction to the BOT.

13. Financial matters

Most of the financial information is contained in the *Agenda for Synod 2004—Business and Financial Supplement* that will be distributed to the delegates at the time synod convenes. This supplement will include financial disclosure information, agency budgets for fiscal year 2004 (July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005), and recommended ministry-share amounts for the year 2004. In addition, synod will be asked to approve a schedule for one

or more above-ministry-share offerings for the ministries of the denomination, a quarterly offering for CRWRC (in lieu of ministry-share support), and the approval of new requests for accredited agency status for recommendation to the churches. Additional financial information and/or recommendations will also be included in the supplementary report.

14. CRC Foundation

The CRC Foundation in the United States, a Michigan 501, C (3) corporation, continues to provide support for some of the ministries of the denomination and to promote interagency projects and initiatives. In late 2003, the CRC Foundation – Canada was formed and will now similarly be active in Canada. Most of the activity of the foundation is for the current year in which funds are received and distributed. The foundation directors also function as the oversight board over denominational investments. These investments are primarily composed of temporary cash reserves and bequests that are waiting to be liquidated. Neither the foundation in Canada nor in the United States has significant long-term assets at this time.

15. Resolution for the Reformed Church in America

A communication was received from the Reformed Church in America (RCA) requesting the CRC's endorsement of the RCA's church planting goal. The following resolution was entered into the minutes of the BOT and communicated to the general secretary of the RCA:

The Christian Reformed Church in North America, having been informed by the Reformed Church in America of its "10-Year Goal" to wit:

Following Christ in mission together, led by the Holy Spirit and working with all the partners God provides, we believe that God is calling the Reformed Church in America over the next ten years to focus its efforts and resources on starting new congregations and revitalizing existing congregations, thereby empowering fruitful and faithful ministries to the glory of God

gratefully endorses and encourages the pursuit of this goal by the Reformed Church of America. It is noted that the Christian Reformed Church has a similar goal, and it is further affirmed that cooperation and sharing together in this endeavor by our respective denominations will bring even greater glory to God than is possible by either of our churches alone.

III. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. W. Wayne Leys, chairman of the Board; Dr. David H. Engelhard, general secretary; Dr. Peter Borgdorff, executive director of ministries; and Mr. John H. Bolt, director of finance and administrative support services, when matters pertaining to the Board of Trustees are discussed.

- B. That synod approve the interim appointments made by the Board to the agency and institution boards (II, A, 1).
- C. That synod by way of the printed ballot elect members for the Board of Trustees from the slate of nominees presented (II, A, 4).
- D. That synod adopt the change proposed by Synod 2003 in Church Order Article 17-d (II, A, 6).
- E. That synod adopt the changes proposed by Synod 2003 in Church Order Articles 2, 3-a, 23, and 24 (II, A, 7).
- F. That synod by way of the printed ballot elect members for the Judicial Code Committee (II, A, 9).
- G. That synod approve the Suggested Procedures and Guidelines for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse against a Church Leader (II, B, 2, a and the Addendum to Appendix A).
- H. That synod approve the recommendations contained in the report of the Classis Pacific Hanmi Monitoring Committee (II, B, 4 and Appendix H).
- I. That synod approve the recommendation regarding the Succession Plan for denominational leadership and note the projected retirement date of Dr. Peter Borgdorff (II, B, 5 and Appendix I).
- J. That synod approve the regulations and procedures for the selection and appointment of agency and educational institution board members (II, B, 6).
- K. That synod approve the protocols regarding the consideration of pension plan matters at synod (II, B, 11).
- L. That synod endorse the action of the BOT concerning ministry priorities (II, B, 12).
- M. That synod encourage churches and classes to celebrate All Nations Heritage Week from September 27 to October 3, 2004, with an invitation to celebrate All Nations Heritage Sunday on October 3, 2004 (see Appendix E).
- N. That synod receive as information the condensed financial statements for the agencies and educational institutions (see Appendix K).

Board of Trustees of the
 Christian Reformed Church in North America
 David H. Engelhard, general secretary
 Peter Borgdorff, executive director of ministries

Appendix A

Abuse Prevention (Ms. Beth A. Swagman, director)

I. Introduction

Synod 2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the mandate to begin an Office of Abuse Prevention in the CRC. This report will take a look back at some of

the accomplishments during those ten years and ahead at some of the challenges that remain.

The mandate for Abuse Prevention is to provide educational resources, develop policies, and conduct training events. These three activities revolve around two core issues: reducing the risk of abuse in the church setting and responding justly when abuse has occurred.

In the congregational setting, church leaders have a moral obligation to reduce the risk of abuse and to respond to a known offender in such a way as to reduce the risk of re-offenses taking place in the church.

A prevention strategy does three things. First, it identifies a problem. Second, it includes action steps to prevent the problem, including policies, protocols, resources, and training. Third, it examines attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate the problem or contribute to its existence. Long-lasting change occurs when attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs are addressed.

Policy development addresses the practical ways to reduce the risk of abuse and to resolve incidents that arise. Educational and training activities are more useful to help identify the dynamics of abuse as well as the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that surface when abuse is discussed. Policy development, education, and training must go hand in hand to reduce the risk that abuse will occur in the church setting.

II. Accomplishments

A. The Office of Abuse Prevention encourages each congregation to implement a child safety policy. The CRC was one of the first denominations in North America to establish a baseline child protection policy. Insurance companies have accepted the baseline policy, and it remains a model for other denominations as well. Records indicate that 41 percent of the first-edition copies of *Preventing Child Abuse* were distributed to non-Christian Reformed churches and 42 percent to Christian Reformed churches. The 2003 Yearbook survey indicates that 364 out of 1002 churches have a child safety policy.

B. The director of Abuse Prevention makes presentations at churches, classes, educational institutions, and other church-sponsored events on a weekly basis from September through May and periodically during the summer. Training addresses abuse dynamics, child safety policies, church leader misconduct, domestic violence, and learning to respond to incidents of abuse.

Rarely is training requested by or for council members. This has serious implications for prevention and response because council members are key to deciding how to protect the congregation and how to discipline known offenders.

C. The Office of Abuse Prevention continues the effort requested by synod, and begun by the Synodical Committee on Abuse, to establish a protocol for responding to allegations of abuse against a church leader. The protocol was approved in 1997 and is known as the advisory panel process. Members of a classical Abuse Response Team administer the process. Eighteen such teams exist throughout the United States and Canada, which is slightly over one-third of the classes in the denomination. We know of nine panels conducted over the past eight years. This may not represent every panel conducted, however, because the advisory panels are not accountable to the Abuse Prevention office for their activities.

III. Challenges

A. Each congregation and council needs ongoing education about abuse dynamics. There are at least four reasons why it is necessary:

1. Some people lack an understanding of what constitutes a reasonable suspicion of abuse, and, therefore, reports are not being made. Furthermore, at times, people are unaware of their legal and/or moral duty to report. Civil authorities may penalize those individuals who fail to report, fail to report in a timely fashion, or hinder an investigation.
2. Consistories, councils, and other church committees are examples of leadership teams whose members have terms of service. With frequent turnover of membership, information regarding abuse prevention is not passed on and that leaves a void for new leaders when allegations or incidents of abuse arise among leaders or within church families. Furthermore, leadership teams may not be aware of the rising risk of liability and litigation that stems from inadequate protection by the congregation or from their negligent response to an allegation or incident of abuse.
3. Leadership teams who adjudicate abuse allegations will also likely face church discipline matters or employment issues that arise from adjudication. When an allegation arises, the atmosphere becomes emotionally charged, potential legal entanglements grow, and responding to the needs of victims and offenders all contribute to making intervention stressful. Leaders need more education about abuse dynamics *prior* to facing these matters. In the past, inaction and uncertainty has taken a terrible toll on the parties involved, their families, the church leaders, and the congregation.
4. For an abuse prevention strategy to be successful, it must be widespread. The research conducted by Calvin College in 1990 regarding abuse within the CRC indicated that every demographic group and every region of North America where Christian Reformed Churches have a presence is affected by abuse.

B. When allegations of abuse are reported, some people make derogatory comments about the victim and question the validity of the allegations. These people attack the victim purely in defense of the alleged offender. Attacking and blaming the victim is a form of denial. Continuing these attacks is wrong and should stop.

Attacks against the victim also reverse the direction of blame so the victim is seen as the aggressor and the alleged offender is portrayed as the victim. Attacking and blaming the victim diverts attention away from the alleged offender and his or her behavior.

We cannot help either victim or offender toward healing and restoration unless we are clear on the issue of accountability. Accountability lies with adults, and the adult has the responsibility to maintain the safety of the relationship between adult and child. Accountability lies with church leaders, and the church leader has the responsibility to maintain the safety of the relationship for both adult and minor parishioners.

Denial is a very powerful reaction when allegations surface. When denial is unchallenged or attacks against the victim continue, the net result is an intimidating pressure felt by other victims of the same offender or by victims

of other offenders. A hostile atmosphere and intimidation are chief reasons why victims do not come forward with their stories of abuse. There is no justice when victims are intimidated into continuing their painful silence.

C. The development and growth of the classical abuse response teams has been a challenge for several years. We would like to address some of the issues impacting this program.

1. According to A, 3 above, leadership teams receive little training on abuse dynamics. Neither are leaders familiar with the advisory panel process. The resources of the abuse response teams are sometimes overlooked in classes where they have a presence, and leaders struggle to intervene when allegations of abuse arise. It is also true that leaders struggle to intervene when the class does not have a team available as a resource.
2. The role of the advisory panel vis à vis the council is another area of challenge and debate. The role of the panel is to evaluate whether the testimony before them constitutes a serious and probable allegation of abuse. The role of the council is to adjudicate the allegations and initiate steps of discipline.

Two problems have arisen. First, in several instances, the authority of the council overrides the work of the panel even though the panel receives training in the process and is likely chosen for their position on the team because of other expertise related to abuse. Second, the council is reluctant to initiate discipline believing that “humiliation” is a sufficient end to the matter, “forgiveness” is a prerequisite for moving forward, and in some cases, the “gift of preaching” overrides the egregious breach of professional ethics.

Tension has developed between the authority of the council and the expertise of the advisory panelists. Our ecclesiology grants the authority and decision-making to those who are more likely to be untrained in abuse dynamics; biased toward the party of the allegations whom they know personally; and unaccountable, except in extreme circumstances, to the next broader assembly.

To strengthen the role and authority of the advisory panel, however, is tantamount to inviting further rejection of the abuse response team model. Classes would be asked to approve the formation of a team whose work could override the authority of the very councils that the classes delegates represent.

3. Another challenge to the abuse response teams is the need for an advocate role. The advisory panel process encourages both victim and offender to attend panel sessions with a support person. This role is designed with two purposes in mind: first, to offer emotional support to the individual through the panel process; second, to facilitate the victim’s and/or offender’s understanding of the panel process. It is important that the individual comes to the panel session adequately prepared and with appropriate expectations of the process.

The role of the support person varies by who is in that role for that particular victim and/or offender. The support person does not have a role in the deliberations of the panel nor in any meetings of church leaders responding to the panelists’ report.

The net result for the victim is that he or she does not have a voice in the adjudication proceedings. However, the alleged offender not only has a voice because he or she is still a church leader but also because he or she, as a member of that church, has a supportive contingent of family, friends, and colleagues.

To maintain the voice of the alleged victim, an advocate is needed who is granted a speaking presence at church meetings during adjudication of abuse allegations as well as at a classis meeting if discipline matters reach that level.

4. Another challenge to the advisory panel process is the collection of testimony against the accused person. The panel only hears the testimony of the person bringing the accusation and whatever additional testimony may be offered to support that specific accusation. However, in every situation when a panel was convened, there were church leaders and church members of the accused person's present congregation or former congregation who were aware of other accusations or other stories of misconduct or inappropriateness.

The current process for fact-finding does not allow for the collection of this additional testimony or investigation into these other matters. The design of the advisory panel process was intentionally directed toward protecting the confidentiality of the victim and the offender. However, that design seems to serve as a shield for the accused person, preventing the discovery of potentially valuable testimony from being presented to the panelists and then to the council.

D. Policies, education, and training are useful for raising awareness of abuse dynamics that lead to prevention. The challenge for the future is to raise the consciousness of church members to the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate abusive behavior and keep denial intact. Denial often delays prevention and a just response.

The following are a few examples of attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate abusive behavior and denial:

- A church leader engages in sexual misconduct, claiming it is God's will that the relationship began.
- A council refuses to adopt a child safety policy because they are not aware of any abusive behavior that has occurred in the church.
- The spouse engages in verbal and physical battery, believing that the Bible gives authority to the spouse to discipline the partner for "mistakes."
- A parent beats a child, believing that Proverbs says it is better to use a rod than to spoil a child.
- A Sunday school teacher reneges on a commitment to report an alleged incident of abuse because the child may be lying and the parents may become angry if questioned about their discipline techniques.

The challenge is both to address these attitudes and beliefs and to find the mechanism to do it.

Finally, attached to this report are a series of guidelines that spell out more precisely the steps to be taken when a church leader is accused of abuse toward a minor. Legal reporting requirements are stringent in such cases, and

these guidelines will help churches and individuals to follow the most common steps in fulfilling the reporting obligations. It is important for synod to approve these guidelines and refer them to the churches as guidance.

Addendum to Appendix A Suggested Procedures and Guidelines for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse against a Church Leader

1. A person who receives a report of allegations of child abuse against a church leader (paid staff, officebearer, or appointed volunteer), and concludes that the allegations create a reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred, should report the matter to local police or child-protection authorities within twenty-four hours of receiving the information.

In addition, a person who has knowledge of any circumstances that create a reasonable suspicion that a church leader has committed child abuse also should report the matter to local police or child-protection authorities within twenty-four hours of coming to that conclusion.

2. As soon as possible after notifying the appropriate authorities, the person who reports the matter should contact the person (hereafter, designated person) within the accused's church who has been designated to receive any report of alleged child abuse. The person who reports the matter should describe the allegations of abuse and/or the circumstances that support the allegations of abuse to the designated person. In addition, the person who reports the matter should inform the designated person if the alleged abuse occurred in the church or in connection with a church-sponsored program.
3. The designated person should contact (1) the pastor, if the minor has not implicated the pastor; (2) a member of the church's leadership team, if the minor has not implicated this team member; (3) the church's legal counsel; and (4) the church's insurance agent.

If the alleged victim and alleged abuser are not members of the same church, each church should appoint a designated person. Together, the designated persons should maintain contact about the progress of the investigation.

Church officials may conduct their own investigation after civil authorities have begun theirs. However, church officials should not reveal the nature of the allegations to the alleged offender until the civil authorities have met with him or her.

4. If the alleged abuser admits wrongdoing against the victim at any stage of this process, the admission of guilt should be brought to the attention of the governing body of the church of the accused. The governing body should deliberate and determine outcomes according to established church polity and procedures.
5. When the designated person determines (1) that the authorities have concluded that the allegations merit serious investigation, or (2) that there

is the possibility of formal charges, the designated person should notify the governing body of the alleged abuser's church.

- a. The designated person should present to the governing body a written document that specifies the nature of the allegations and any information that is known.
 - b. The governing body should give the accused an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
 - c. In light of the information presented, the governing body should implement one or more of the following actions:
 - supervised contact at church between the accused and any minors;
 - prohibited contact at church between the accused and accuser or between the accused and any minor in the congregation;
 - suspended responsibilities from office, position, or duty with pay, when applicable, and without prejudice pending the outcome of the investigation.
6. If and when the designated person learns that the authorities have filed criminal charges against the accused, then the designated person should report this information to the governing body of the alleged abuser's church.
- a. The designated person should present to the governing body a written document specifying the nature of the allegations and any information that is known.
 - b. The governing body should give the accused an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
 - c. In light of the information presented, the governing body should implement the following actions:
 - prohibit the accused from contact with minors at church;
 - and suspend the accused from office, position, or duty with pay, when applicable, and without prejudice pending the outcome of the charges.
7. When criminal proceedings have concluded, the governing body should promptly revisit the matter, whether the result is conviction, acquittal, or dropped charges. If the criminal charges are dropped or prosecution does not result in a conviction, the governing body should decide whether or not to rescind its earlier action and/or take additional action.
8. If the accused whom the governing body has previously removed or suspended from office is found not guilty of the allegations, the governing body should not reinstate the accused to his or her previous position of leadership until they, in consultation with the police and/or child-protection authorities, legal counsel, and child abuse experts, deem it safe and proper to do so.

9. If the accused is found guilty, the governing body may (1) subject a determined abuser (hereafter abuser) to further suspension, deposition, or termination of employment, or (2) take such other action against the abuser as the circumstances may dictate.
10. A church leader (1) who has made a confession of child abuse, (2) who has been convicted of child abuse in a court of law, or (3) whom the governing body has adjudicated guilty of abuse of a minor should not be reinstated to the position from which he or she has been removed or suspended without the advice of the church's legal counsel.
11. The governing body should notify the congregation when a church leader is removed or suspended from office, position, or duty pending the outcome of an investigation into an allegation of child abuse. This notice should be in writing and should protect the identity and confidentiality of the accuser. This disclosure should be pastoral, objectively factual, and not exceed the scope of the information known about the matter at that time. In addition, the governing body should not attempt to state any legal conclusions about the guilt or innocence of any person unless and until the governing body determines that a church leader is an abuser.
12. Subject to the best interest of the abused, the governing body should notify the congregation in writing if they conclude that a church leader is an abuser. This notice should protect the identity and confidentiality of any innocent parties, including the abused person. This written communication should be pastoral and objectively factual.

Approved by Synod, 1997; Revised August 2003

Appendix B

Chaplaincy Ministries (Rev. Herman Keizer, Jr., director)

I. Introduction

Chaplaincy Ministries is the office that manages the chaplain's ministry of the denomination. The Christian Reformed Church in North America currently has ninety-four full-time chaplains, fourteen part-time chaplains, and fifteen chaplains in the National Guard and the Reserves. These chaplains serve throughout North America and in overseas assignments. Chaplains serve in such places as the military, hospitals, nursing homes, youth centers, correctional institutions, hospice centers, counseling centers, veterans' medical facilities, and, more recently, in several workplace settings. Models of community chaplaincy are emerging wherein a chaplain's ministry will consist of contracts with diverse groups, such as local businesses, social-service centers, court programs, and nursing homes. Ministry in these settings provides expanding opportunities for the future.

The Office of Chaplaincy Ministries works with prospective chaplains to review their training, certification, and application for endorsement. We have six students who are studying to be chaplains, three in clinical pastoral education, and three in the military Chaplain Candidate Program. We have a list of sixty who are interested in chaplain ministry.

The director offers our chaplains personal and professional support through periodic site visits, e-mail updates, newsletters, regional cluster meetings, and an annual conference. He also works jointly with the calling churches to provide ecclesiastical supervision.

Through the generosity of the churches, the denomination is able to assist prospective chaplains with training stipends and salary subsidies. The denomination has in place a process that encourages high quality, professional chaplain ministries. Many of our chaplains are in leadership positions because of our high educational and training standards.

New chaplains will be needed to replace those who will leave this specialized ministry. There are fifty-seven retired chaplains with whom we maintain contact and that number is growing as the chaplains age. We encourage pastors to prayerfully consider this vital and rewarding form of ministry, and we also encourage pastors to hold before their congregations the importance for the church to provide a ministry of pastoral care to those who for various reasons are unable to be a part of congregational life.

An important role for the office is our participation in governmental and professional organizations. In these organizations, standards for the practice of chaplaincy are discussed. Decisions made by these organizations have an impact on the level of training required for chaplains as well as on the development of chaplaincy programs within institutions. The Christian Reformed Church has a reputation for excellence with these accrediting and certification agencies as well as the institutions in which they perform ministry, with the result that many of our chaplains have been placed in positions of leadership and responsibility.

We note with gratitude the retirement of the following chaplains: Rev. Bill Dykstra, Rev. Harvey Kiekoover, Rev. Al Dreise, and Colonel Ren VandeSteege.

The following chaplains were added to the roster during the past year: Rev. Norman Brown, Rev. Timothy Hull, Rev. LeRae Kuperus, Rev. Charles Louvau, Rev. Nola Oppewal-Galluch, Mr. Harold Roscher, Rev. David Sutherland, Rev. Ryan Swieringa, Ms. Grace Van Staalduinen, and Ms. Ann Vander Berg.

II. Noteworthy events

A. Rev. Herman Keizer, Jr. was appointed as director for a period of up to three years by the Board of Trustees. Herm has enjoyed a distinguished and varied career as an army chaplain since 1968. He retired from military chaplaincy in March 2002 and then took up his duties as interim director. He brings a wealth of experience to his new position as he assists in developing the future of chaplaincy within the denomination.

B. The Board of Trustees cut the position of the Canadian director of Chaplaincy Ministries for financial reasons. The denomination and the chaplains thanked Rev. Siebert Van Houten and celebrated his ministry as director at the Chaplains Conference in Grand Rapids in June 2003. We pray God's blessings on Rev. Van Houten as he takes up a new ministry.

C. The United States' war with Iraq involved many of the military chaplains—active military, National Guard, and Reserves. Rev. Carl Kammeraad, a colonel in the Air Force, was called to active duty and served three months in

Ramstein, Germany. Dr. Mel Flikkema, a major in the Michigan National Guard was called to active duty and served for three months in Kuwait and Iraq. Chaplain Scott Koeman, a captain in the Army, served in Iraq with a Patriot Missile Battalion. Chaplain In Soon Gho, a captain in the Army, served with the Fourth Infantry Division. (As I write this, she is still in Iraq and is due to return home in April.) Chaplain Roger Bouma, a lieutenant commander in the Navy, deployed from Japan to the Gulf and served with the Nimitz Carrier Group. Chaplain Eric Verhulst, a lieutenant in the Navy, served in Kuwait and in Afghanistan. Chaplain Doug Vrieland, a lieutenant in the Navy, served in Japan and was deployed off the coast of North Korea. Chaplain Tim Won, a captain in the Army, served with the Tenth Mountain Division in Iraq. Rev. Lambert Sikkema, a lieutenant colonel in the Air National Guard, served in Battle Creek, Michigan. Rev. Tom Klassen, a lieutenant colonel in the Air National Guard, and Rev. James Vande Lune, a lieutenant in the Air National Guard, served at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. Chaplain Tim Rietkerk, a captain in the Army, served in Afghanistan. We are thankful to God for these chaplains and for their ministry on behalf of the men and women in the armed services of the United States.

D. The Christian Reformed Church celebrated the ordination of the first minister assigned as chaplain in the Canadian military. Reverend David Sutherland was ordained on November 23, 2003. David, in agreement with the Canadian military, is preparing for his military ministry by serving the Kentville Christian Reformed Church in Nova Scotia for two years. This experience in congregational ministry will prove to be a good foundation on which to build his ministry as a chaplain in the Canadian Forces.

E. Synod 2003 approved the Chaplaincy Ministries' mandate and related recommendations from the Board of Trustees. Synod also agreed to change the title of the office in Article 23 of the Church Order from evangelist to ministry associate. That change will be considered for ratification by Synod 2004.

F. Chaplains are aging and about forty will retire in the next eight years. In order to maintain the commitment to excellence in chaplain ministry, a special account called the Chaplain Development Fund was established within the CRCNA Foundation. This fund will be used for chaplain training, subsidy of salaries, and support for other professional training and development.

III. Challenges to the ministry

A. Chaplaincy Ministries seeks to encourage younger persons to enter chaplaincy and requests that synod encourage younger pastors to consider entering such ministry.

B. New chaplains are needed to replace those who will leave this specialized ministry. We now have no chaplains in the United State' federal prison system. We are down in the number of Air Force chaplains. The National Guard and Reserves of our military services offer the possibility to continue service to a local congregation while also ministering in the armed forces. These ministries need men and women who are under age forty. We encourage pastors to prayerfully consider this vital and rewarding ministry. We also encourage pastors to hold before their congregations the importance for the church to

provide a ministry of pastoral care to those people who for various reasons are unable to be a part of normal congregational life.

C. The office continues to seek opportunities to work collaboratively with other agencies and ministries in developing wholistic ministries.

D. The office will continue to implement the recommendations of the review committee. We will gather information from other denominations on best practices. We will establish and publish clear guidelines for the endorsement of chaplains and for the joint supervision of chaplains.

The demographics of our nations and of the church show that our population is aging. This provides both a challenge and an opportunity for ministry. Some churches have expressed a need for training materials and training for both clergy and lay persons who minister to this aging population, especially those in long-term care facilities. Chaplaincy Ministries is working with other agencies to respond to this expressed need in the church.

As the Christian Reformed Church continues to minister in these institutions and moves into the marketplaces of our society, there are many opportunities for the gospel to touch the lives of people who feel hurt, alienated, and, in some cases, abandoned. This population is the one to which chaplains are called and to which they are sent to serve. Our chaplains help people come to grips with the many vexing questions about suffering, death, loss, and quest for meaning in their lives. Our chaplains represent the church in many diverse settings, bringing samples of Christ's love and constant reminders of one's hope in Christ.

Appendix C

Disability Concerns (Dr. James Vanderlaan, director)

There are two parts to the strategy that Disability Concerns follows in carrying on its synodical mandate. First, we publish the stories of people with disabilities and the help they receive from their churches in our newsletter *Breaking Barriers (BB)* and send it in bulk without charge to all CRC congregations that agree to distribute it. In this way, we hope to alert congregations to the gifts and needs of people with disabilities.

Second, we develop and maintain a disability network of regional (classical) disability consultants and church contact people to help us provide information and advice to members with disabilities and to their church councils. The following activities fit into this two-part strategy.

I. Activities

Disability Concerns continues to develop the following:

A. Regional disability concerns committees: These committees are constituted primarily of the regional (classical) disability consultants. They give mutual encouragement and advice.

The eastern Canada committee is the oldest and is functioning well. The Chicago committee is struggling for lack of local leadership. The West Coast committee is dormant because there are only two consultants in the region. The West Michigan committee is the youngest and is busy planning its future.

B. Regional cross-disability conferences: We continue to hold the eastern Canada annual conference for the regional church contact people. We have discussed other CRC regional cross-disability conferences for Chicago and West Michigan, but they have not yet materialized.

C. Regional disability consultants: The regional disability consultants are vital in our effort to assist churches in removing the barriers that keep people with disabilities from using their gifts in the congregation. We take all the consultants to an annual disability conference once a year for instruction and inspiration.

The disability consultants are diligent in their work, but they are volunteers, and we regularly need to find successors for them. Of the Canadian classes, two presently need consultants: B.C. North-West and B.C. South-East. In the United States, twelve classes currently need consultants: Arizona, Central California, Columbia, Grand Rapids North, Muskegon, Northern Illinois, Northern Michigan, Pacific Hanmi, Pella, Rocky Mountain, Wisconsin, and Yellowstone.

D. Church contact people: At present, 315 churches have church contact people in place, 153 in Canada and 162 in the United States. They see to it that *Breaking Barriers* is distributed and that disabilities are addressed. Of the 996 total Christian Reformed Churches, 412 receive bulk orders of *BB*—198 in Canada and 214 in the United States. The 97 churches receiving bulk orders but not having a church contact ask us to send the order to the pastor, clerk, deaconate, or secretary. We also send one copy to each minister, clerk, and secretary of deacons regardless of whether the church receives a bulk order.

E. *Breaking Barriers*: The circulation of *Breaking Barriers* continues to increase as the following figures show.

Issue #	Ordered
63	50,300
62	48,800
61	47,750
60	47,000
59	45,100
58	45,000
57	43,000
56	37,100

The following is the distribution breakdown for the November 28, 2003, issue # 63 of <i>Breaking Barriers</i> :	
Individual U.S.	2,735
Individual Canada	369
Quantities U.S.	18,347
Quantities Canada	23,201
Agency U.S.	1,164
Agency Canada	152
Clerks & Sec. U.S.	1,366
Clerks & Sec. Canada	456
Pastors U.S.	1,299
Pastors Canada	327
Total	49,416 plus 700 extra = 50,116

F. Agency contacts: We give class lectures and hold conversations about fieldwork at Calvin Seminary. We also have conversations with agency personnel to enhance awareness of disability issues that may arise in their ministries.

G. Participation in ecumenical and interfaith disability organizations
We participate in the following organizations:

- National Council of Churches of Christ Disability Committee
- Christian Council on Persons with Disabilities
- Pathways to Promise (mental illness and communities of faith)

H. Personal contacts: We constantly communicate by e-mail, letter, phone, and face-to-face meetings with individuals about disability matters. A daily log is kept, and, over the course of the year, this becomes an impressive record of ministry contacts and lives touched.

II. Church survey

Synod 1993 adopted the following: “That synod heartily recommend full compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act PL 101-336 and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada” (*Acts of Synod 1993*, p. 539). Disability Concerns is responsible to synod for monitoring denominational developments in achieving this compliance. The *Yearbook* questionnaires, sent annually by the general secretary to all councils, gather the data.

The questionnaire has remained unchanged from year to year, and the reader can gauge denominational efforts in including people with disabilities by reviewing the numbers below. We have included the primary figures from previous years at the end for comparison. Disability Concerns questionnaire results from *Yearbook 2003* (the database contains 996 churches) are as follows:

A. Barrier free – 432

B. Partially accessible – 456

1. Worship area – 633
2. Fellowship areas – 599
3. Classrooms – 494
4. Restrooms – 543
5. Pulpit area – 115
6. Main entrance – 563

C. Signing for the deaf – 48

1. All services/programs – 5
2. When requested – 63

D. Aids for hard of hearing and deaf – 426

1. Special hearing aids – 443
2. Captioned video screening – 31
3. Printed texts of the sermons – 75
4. Other – 53 (they consist of Power Point presentations, overheads, sermon outlines, sound systems and loops, wireless hearing aids, tapes, and video tapes)

E. Aids for the visually impaired – 368

1. Large-print bulletins – 223
2. Large-print song books – 374
3. Large-print Bibles – 318
4. Braille when requested – 26

F. Special programs – 209

1. Friendship classes – 203
2. Fellowship activities – 120
3. Christian housing assistance – 31
4. Respite care – 31
5. Other – 36 (care to shut-ins, one-on-one for children with mental impairments, special programs as needed, GEMS counseling, attention-deficit education, children's school for autistic and mental impairments, and a support network for special-needs children.)

G. Transportation – 303

1. In a lift-equipped church vehicle – 16
2. In an ordinary church-owned vehicle – 83
3. In a privately owned vehicle – 354
4. Weekly – 215
5. When requested – 289

The final question on the questionnaire asks about participation in church activities. The data generated by the answers to this question are not shown in the *Yearbook* but are helpful to Disability Concerns in tracking denominational progress in bringing people with disabilities more fully into church life. The answers this year are as follows:

H. Participation of members with disabilities serving in staff or volunteer positions in the congregation (291 churches responding)

1. Paid staff – 17
2. Officebearer – 67
3. Church-school teacher – 52
4. Usher/greeter – 163
5. Committee member – 133
6. Other – 137 (classroom attendant, friendship staff, choir, sound-booth operator; most did not state what position the person held.)

The answers to the above question for the years 1998-2003 are as follows:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Paid staff	9	23	20	13	21	17
Officebearer	32	26	34	48	61	67
Church-school teacher	36	29	42	42	49	52
Usher/greeter	102	108	116	120	155	163
Committee member	78	94	99	108	128	133
Other	66	72	70	90	106	137

Survey summary for the years 1998-2003:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Barrier-free access	368	365	318	383	394	432
Partial accessibility	459	470	417	481	528	456
Signing for deaf	31	29	35	44	45	48
Providing aids for hearing impaired	190	185	437	479	459	426
Providing aids for visually impaired	346	364	284	444	480	368
Providing special programs	240	244	225	254	244	209
Providing transportation	292	324	346	399	334	303

Appendix D

Pastor-Church Relations (Rev. Duane A. Visser, director; Rev. Norman Thomasma, educational specialist)

I. Introduction

The staff of Pastor-Church Relations (PCR) is privileged to serve the denomination in a time of new challenges for congregations, changing expectations of pastors, and growing partnerships among church agencies and within congregations.

The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program (Lilly grant) has provided funds to concentrate some of the activities of the PCR staff on mentoring programs and work with the regional pastors. This has been a year of expanding focus on education and prevention activities as well as involvement with the dynamic relationships of pastors and congregations.

II. Activities

A. One of the most demanding and consistent tasks of PCR is providing interventions and consultations with congregations and pastors. There are the challenges of conflict, crisis, and change that demand much of leaders and congregations. As we assist the pastors and congregations throughout North America, we continue to recognize both the stress and the rewards of ministry in today's culture.

B. In relation to the above intervention activity, it is appropriate to mention that there continue to be a number of separations of pastors and congregations, most by way of Article 17 of the Church Order. After the decision of Synod 2003 to clarify the procedures of Article 17, there has been an increase both in the number of pastors who become involved in evaluation before accepting another call and congregations who seek further assistance. Beyond this, however, there is the need for an expanded understanding of Article 17. It is not only used when there are problems in pastor-congregation relationships; it is also used to recognize that a pastor is leaving a congregation but is not moving to another pastoral position immediately.

C. One of the means of intervention for congregations is the use of specialized interim pastors. Currently there are four such pastors employed by the denomination:

- Rev. Melle Pool – New Life CRC, Red Deer, Alberta; Medicine Hat, Alberta CRC
- Rev. Larry Slings – Hillcrest CRC, Hudsonville, Michigan
- Rev. Leonard Troast – Jamestown, Michigan CRC
- Rev. Robert Walter, Jr – Grace CRC, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

There are a number of other active pastors who are providing interim leadership to congregations throughout the CRC. They, along with a number of retired pastors, are a valuable asset to churches that are between pastors.

Finally, PCR wishes to recognize the ministry of Rev. Allan Groen and his wife, Barbara, who retired from ministry in November 2003 after serving three congregations as interim pastor.

D. Rev. Norman Thomasma has been working with a steering committee for Specialized Ministry Staff programming. They have been working to provide important connections for church staff members who provide strategic roles in our congregational ministries but for whom there is insufficient support and clear Church Order guidelines. This has included regional roundtable meetings to gain greater understanding of specific needs and to collaborate with other groups who are seeking to provide support for youth-and-children ministers, worship coordinators, and other specialized staff.

E. Continuing education for pastors has received new impetus with the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program, but there is also a source of funds for pastors supplied by the denominational continuing-education fund. PCR administers this fund and invites application for assistance in the important activity of learning.

F. There are sixty-two regional pastors serving fellow pastors in the forty-seven classes of the CRCNA. This year, we held our biennial regional pastor's conference at the Prince Conference Center at Calvin College. The response was gratifying, and we thank these pastors for the work they do in supporting fellow pastors.

G. The mentoring program, which assigns experienced pastors to work with new pastors for the first five years of their ministry, has received close attention during this year. The staff have been involved in discussion groups with mentors and those being mentored in order to better understand the needs, successes, and challenges of this program. Rev. Norman Thomasma has been developing a manual for mentoring, and we are attempting an upgrade of our training of, and support for, pastors.

H. The Ministerial information Service maintains about seven hundred pastor profiles and congregational profiles. Through our office, and a committee of volunteers, we seek to assist congregations and pastors who are searching for a change. In 2003, we sent out over two thousand profiles. A special thanks goes to Ms. Laura Palsrok, administrative assistant for PCR, for her efficient administration in this program.

I. PCR, with the assistance of a group of pastors, has recently begun an initiative of exploring ways in which the denomination can provide assistance to pastors in retirement planning. This is a need that has been voiced by a

number of pastors, and we are seeking ways of working with the Board of Pensions and others to help in planning for this important transition.

III. Challenges to the ministry

A. PCR, with the addition of a new staff person, Rev. Norm Thomasma, continues to explore new challenges and to supply resources to pastors and congregations. Particular attention has been given to advancing the mentoring program.

B. Over the last few years there have been retirements of specialized interim pastors. There is also a growing number of pastors who are retiring—a number that will greatly increase in the near future. There is a demand for interim ministry services, and a number of CRC clergy have expressed interest in doing this type of ministry. PCR will be exploring ways in which the CRC can enhance interim ministry.

C. Specialized ministry staff are increasing in number in the CRCNA. We must continue to study ways in which the denomination can support and enhance this part of ministry.

D. Retirement initiatives will continue to be explored.

E. PCR also continues to explore ways to improve and support the relationships of ministry staff (ordained and nonordained) and congregations.

Appendix E Race Relations

It has been a tumultuous year for Race Relations since synod last met. With the resignation of Rev. Norberto Wolf as the denominational director of Race Relations last summer (continuing as a regional director based in California), and with the departure of Mr. Peter Szto from the Race Relations staff in order to return to the practice of teaching, it was decided to do a top-to-bottom review of the Race Relations ministry before proceeding to recruit new staff. The Board of Trustees appointed a review task force and that task force worked hard through the fall and early winter of 2003-2004. The task force's report was considered at the Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting in February 2004 with the following results:

1. The BOT agreed that the mandate for Race Relations needs to be restated. A revised mandate will be provided for synodical consideration by way of the BOT's supplementary report.
2. The BOT decided to phase-out the two remaining regional staff positions effective July 1, 2004.
3. The BOT authorized the part-time (.25 FTE) contract-employment of the former regional personnel until such time that other decisions can be made.
4. The BOT approved a plan to recruit a binational director to be located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a half-time Canadian staff position to be located in Burlington, Ontario.

5. The BOT agreed to appoint the Race Relations director as an advisor to the Ministry Council.
6. The BOT agreed to encourage agencies and educational institutions to assign to a specific staff person responsibility for advancing the work of antiracism within the agency or institution.
7. The BOT decided to retain but expand the present Race Relations Advisory Council. The purpose of this council is to provide encouragement and direction to the work of Race Relations. The BOT also decided that the Multiethnic Conference will be placed under the oversight of this council.

It is expected that, when new leadership for Race Relations is in place, a new chapter in the Race Relations ministry of the CRC will commence. The past thirty-five years has introduced significant change and new insights. The BOT is also committed to seeing the implementation of the decisions made in 1996 when synod adopted the report *God's Diverse and Unified Family*. The changes adopted by the BOT are intended to encourage the CRC on the journey of living our life together in racial harmony and celebrating the diversity God has been pleased to manifest among us.

The Ministry of Race Relations requests that synod encourage churches and classes to celebrate All Nations Heritage Week from September 27 to October 3, 2004, with an invitation to celebrate All Nations Heritage Sunday with special services on October 3.

Grounds:

1. The struggle against prejudice, discrimination, and racism need to be balanced by celebrating and affirming God's gift of unity in diversity through our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 2). The congregations that also celebrate World Communion Sunday can find a meaningful Christian Reformed way of doing it by combining both celebrations.
2. The financial support our ministry receives from the All Nations Heritage Sunday celebrations dramatically increases Race Relations' ability to award scholarships and grants to promote leadership of people of color in the life of our denomination.

Appendix F

Social Justice and Hunger Action (Mr. Peter Vander Meulen, coordinator)

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church has always had a good track record on addressing hunger and poverty but has realized that more needs to be done to address the *root causes* of world hunger. Understanding that hunger is always part of a complex web of natural disasters, poverty, oppression, structural injustice, and spiritual alienation, the CRC formed the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action (OSJHA) to address these root causes.

Today, the OSJHA works to develop a deeper understanding of, and response to, God's call to let justice flow like a river in our personal and communal lives and in the structures of our societies, especially as it relates to

hunger and poverty. The OSJHA not only works to educate CRC members and encourage and support their engagement in social justice issues but also is occasionally involved in direct advocacy.

The Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action acts in three ways:

(1) through congregational social justice contacts or groups, (2) through organizing collaborative efforts with existing denominational agencies and institutions, and (3) through ecumenical efforts and partnerships. In short, this office aims to be a catalyst that energizes and organizes our denomination for more appropriate, effective, and efficient action on behalf of and with the poor and the oppressed.

This office recommends strategies and sets priorities based on the needs of existing ministries to the poor and the judgments of the Coordinating Council for Church in Society (CCCiS)—a group of representatives from each CRC agency and institution.

II. What is social justice?

When we talk about social justice, we mean God's original intention for human society: a world where basic needs are met, people flourish, and peace (shalom) reigns. God calls us, the church, to participate in redeeming society so that all—especially the weak and vulnerable—can enjoy God's good gifts. To do this, we identify the barriers of what keeps people poor, hungry, and powerless and then witness and work to remove those barriers.

III. Our work

A. We assist congregations to understand and become active in social justice issues—we do this in a growing variety of ways:

1. *The Advocate* is our monthly newsletter for CRC justice activists. This increasingly popular newsletter goes in electronic and paper form to nearly one thousand addresses a month and supplies a uniquely Christian Reformed take on social justice news and events. New subscribers can sign up by sending an email to subscribe-advocate@list.crcna.net or by contacting us at 1-800-280-5275 x165.
2. Our office web site, www.crcjustice.org serves about one thousand visitors a month. In spring 2004, we will launch a new and improved web site at www.crcjustice.org that will focus on practical resources and helpful information to assist pastors, deacons, social justice committees, students, and every CRC member to live the call to do justice. Highlights include an extensive section on justice and worship with a library of prayers, litanies, and sample sermons; a new section on lifestyle, to assist site visitors in making informed, just decisions in their daily lives; and excellent resources such as *Just Basics*, our online student handbook—written by a student for students—on advocacy and action strategies.
3. *Shalom Seekers: Living the Call to Do Justice* is a workshop binder that takes a group from good intentions to justice actions. The kit helps to create or revitalize a social justice committee and to challenge and enrich Bible study or other education groups. This kit can be copied and updated, and it provides issue areas to work through, worship resources, biblical reflec-

tions, and action plan ideas to help groups let justice flow. Canadian and U.S. versions of the kit are available through Faith Alive Resources (CRC Publications) by calling: 1-800-333-8300 or visit: www.faithaliveresources.org. This excellent resource was the product of collaboration between the Public Justice Resource Centre and the Canadian Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action.

4. In Canada, network building includes regular workshops at diaconal conferences, Days of Encouragement, and other venues (i.e., adult Sunday school).
- B. In addition to our core goals of helping congregations and small groups become effective communities of salt and light, we work on education and advocacy in selected issues that relate to root causes of poverty and hunger.
1. Peace building has been an expanding effort these past two years. We continue to educate, promote, and advocate for peace and peace building. We are actively engaged in two important CRC actions: Supporting the synodical study committee on war and peace (church members can contribute to this discussion also by going to www.crcjustice.org) as well as supporting a remarkable Nigerian effort to build lasting peace among Reformed Christians in the Takum region—an area of longstanding CRC mission work.
2. In Canada, we continue to benefit from and support KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives opportunities and advocacy initiatives as well as working with the Canadian Council of Churches Commission of Justice and Peace and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. This year, we will be especially involved with the KAIROS campaign, “Cultivating a Just Peace.”
3. We facilitate advocacy to Washington or Ottawa when appropriate for our areas of focus. This year, such ad hoc advocacy included refugee issues, regulation of the diamond industry, increasing levels of U.S. assistance to the struggle against HIV-AIDS, increasing U.S. humanitarian aid to Africa, and working to ease the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

The office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, in collaboration with the agencies and institutions of the CRC, looks back with gratitude on a productive year. We look forward to continuing to assist our denomination to become salt and light in the service of God’s justice.

Appendix G

CRC Denominational Ministries Plan: Goals Adopted to Implement the Plan’s Strategic Priorities September 2002

Goal 1: Implementing the strategic value of collaboration

Denominational Office as convening agency:

Goal Statement: CRC agencies and institutions will evaluate existing networking and collaboration between themselves and other associations,

institutions, and organizations, whether Christian, interreligious, or secular, and in doing so will:

- Summarize and examine what is occurring and the benefits, risks, and challenges; and
- Assess where the greatest opportunity lies for CRC agencies and institutions to make a positive ministry impact through networking and collaboration with other groups.

Goal 2: Implementing the strategic ministry priority of church development

Home Missions as convening agency:

Goal Statement: CRC denominational ministries will covenant with classes, congregations, and other ministry partners to identify levels of ministry health and develop a plan that strengthens local ministries and enhances our partnerships.

Goal 3: Implementing the strategic ministry priority of church development

Home Missions as convening agency:

Goal Statement: CRC denominational ministries will serve congregations and classes by encouraging and supporting a denomination-wide movement that extends our kingdom witness for Jesus through increasing our capacity to plant up to thirty new churches a year.

Goal 4: Implementing strategic ministry priority of leadership development

Calvin Theological Seminary as convening agency:

Goal Statement: CRC agencies and institutions will nurture effective servant leaders for our congregations and denominational ministries by:

- Articulating a working definition of leadership that is biblically and theologically grounded, organizationally relevant, culturally responsive, and community sensitive;
- Ensuring appropriate and accessible training for leaders;
- Cultivating networks for leaders to be mentored for continued learning, professional and spiritual renewal, and revitalization.
- Expanding opportunities for leadership for women, people of color, and volunteers; and
- Supporting and advancing Christian education and Christian schools at all levels.

Goal 5: Implementing strategic priority of integrated ministry to children and youth

CRC Publications as convening agency:

Goal Statement: CRC denominational ministries will articulate and implement a vision for holistic children and youth ministry that:

- Provides means by which families and congregations can nurture children and youth in the Reformed tradition of the Christian faith;
- Reaffirms covenant theology;
- Provides guidelines and models for involving children and youth in the full life of the congregation;
- Advances Christian education and Christian schools at all levels in a way that appropriately supports holistic ministry; and
- Helps make ministry to children and youth and its support systems an integral part of the denominational structure.

Goal 6: Implementing strategic ministry priority of outreach and discipling

World Missions as convening agency:

Goal Statement: CRC agencies and institutions will ensure that all CRC mission outreach is characterized by a strong disciple-making component that reflects the values (and their implications) contained in the Denominational Ministries Plan.

Goal 7: Implementing strategic ministry priority of outreach and discipling

CRWRC as convening agency:

Goal Statement: CRC agencies and institutions will develop within eighteen months one or more models for international and domestic ministry programming that include(s) some or all of these characteristics:

- A holistic ministry foundation that reflects Reformed principles and learning from previous ministry models.
- Christian day school education as a component of mission strategy;
- Strong participation from people outside the agencies and institutions;
- A major service learning component;
- Significant engagement with local congregations;
- Engagement with, and capacity building of, the ministry partners;
- Strong collaboration at all levels; and
- A new location or locations where this model or these models can be tested.

Appendix H

Report of the Classis Pacific Hanmi Monitoring Committee

Outline of the report

- I. Introduction
- II. Background and history
- III. Review of issues that have been faced
- IV. Overview of blessings and benefits
- V. Review of the process for report to Synod 2004
- VI. Summary of current issues
- VII. Looking to the future
- VIII. Recommendations

I. Introduction

The Pacific Hanmi Monitoring Committee was formed in 1996, at the inception of the formation of Classis Pacific Hanmi, with the mandate of monitoring the development of the newly formed Korean-speaking classis. The membership of the committee was determined by Synod 1996 to be composed of one person from the then Ministries Coordinating Council (now named the Ministries Administrative Council [MAC]), two members from the new Classis Pacific Hanmi, two members from Classis Greater Los Angeles (GLA), and two members from Classis California South. (The latter two classes are the geographic neighbors of Pacific Hanmi and also were intimately involved in the proposing and the formation of classis Pacific Hanmi.) The current committee members are as follows:

Dr. Peter Borgdorff (Ministries Administrative Council)
Rev. David Daesung Chong (Classis Pacific Hanmi)
Rev. Don Klop (Classis California South)
Rev. David Koll (Classis GLA)
Rev. Peter Shin (Classis California South)
Rev. Gary Stevens (Classis GLA)
Rev. Seung-Won Yoon (Classis Pacific Hanmi)

The Pacific Hanmi Monitoring Committee was charged with reporting to their respective classes and to synod every two years as to the progress of the new classis. They were also asked to make a more thorough report to synod every four years. This report is the second major report of the committee to synod, as Classis Pacific Hanmi has now been in existence for eight years.

II. Background and history

The possibility of beginning a Korean-speaking classis was discussed in various settings during the early 1990s as the number of Korean congregations in the denomination was growing. Most of the members of Korean-speaking congregations at that time were first-generation immigrants with most of them having very little competency in the English language. Their leaders and members generally came from a conservative Presbyterian background in Korea, and they found the Presbyterian churches in America to be generally more theologically liberal than they desired. The Reformed perspective of the CRC, with its solid commitment to biblical authority, drew more and more congregations into an affiliation process with the CRC.

Through the early 1990s, the number of CRC Korean congregations grew, yet many of the leaders found the experience of participating in the broader CRC to be difficult and isolating due to the language barrier. Even with the help of simultaneous translation with radio ear-pieces, there was frustration and limited involvement. Many solid and gifted Korean leaders felt they were on the fringe of denominational and classical functions. The opportunities for learning more about the CRC and its practices were very limited.

In 1995, an overture was sent to synod by Classis Greater Los Angeles seeking approval for a group of Korean CRC congregations to begin a Korean-speaking classis. These congregations would, for the most part, come from Classis Greater Los Angeles and Classis California South and would represent approximately one-half the Korean congregations in these two classes. Within the Korean CRC community, other congregations wanted to stay in the

English-speaking context in order to be encouraged and pressed to assimilate into the mainstream of the CRC.

Synod 1995 withheld action on the overture to begin a Korean-speaking classis. There was concern that isolation would be the result rather than the desired assimilation. There was also a concern that structures of supervision and education were not adequately developed in the original proposal. The proposing committee was asked by Synod 1995 to develop the concept with greater detail, and to provide a more clearly stated rationale and plan for implementation. (See *Acts of Synod 1995*, Article 110, pp. 763-65.)

Classes Greater Los Angeles and California South together submitted a new overture to synod in 1996. This overture, essentially the same as the one submitted in 1995, proposed the formation of a Korean-speaking classis for a maximum period of fifteen years, with a variety of stipulations as to monitoring, training, and relationship with the denomination. The following statements from the *Acts of Synod 1996* (pp. 556-57) list the recommendations with their grounds:

That synod accede to Overture 56 [*Agenda for Synod 1996*, pp. 302-07], thereby approving the formation of a Classis of Korean-speaking churches out of Classes Greater Los Angeles and California South, to serve southern California, Nevada, and Hawaii, effective September 1996, for a maximum of fifteen years. The following stipulations for monitoring, training, and relationships with the denomination will apply.

- a. That the Korean-speaking classis will request advisers from at least two neighboring classes for all its meetings during the first three years of its existence. After this initial period, these advisers will be requested to attend once a year for the next two years.
- b. That synod monitor the development of the Korean-speaking classis every two years through a standing committee comprised of a person appointed by the Ministries Coordinating Council and two members each from the Korean-speaking classis, Classis Greater Los Angeles, and Classis California South. The members of this committee will report to their respective classes and to synod, through the general secretary, on the progress of the new classis and on possible ways to improve its functioning. In the fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-year reviews the committee shall make recommendations to the classes and to synod regarding the continuation of the Korean-speaking classis. Guidelines for evaluation are (1) adherence to the Church Order, (2) participation in the work of denominational boards and agencies, (3) contribution of classical and synodical ministry shares, (4) relationship with neighboring classes, and (5) seeking to increase the use of student interns trained at Calvin Theological Seminary.
- c. Pastors and other church officers will receive long-term training on the Church Order and rules for classical procedures. This training will be under the leadership of the general secretary who will use qualified persons to assist him in this work.
- d. Upon its inception the Korean-speaking classis will sponsor an intensive two-day course on ecclesiology, structure, and the Church Order for pastors, elders, and deacons.
- e. During the first five years of existence of this classis, the *Voice of the Reformed* (Korean CRC periodical) will be urged to include in every issue a section dealing with CRC government.
- f. The Korean-speaking classis will send delegates to synod and to the denominational boards as other classes do.
- g. The churches of the Korean-speaking classis will contribute their classical and denominational ministry shares.
- h. The Korean-speaking classis will appoint delegates to the Southern California Race Relations Committee and to other inter-classical bodies (CRWRC,

California Regional Leaders, etc.) and projects (Multiethnic Celebration, Camp Dunamis, etc.).

- i. The Korean-speaking classis will accept as advisers the regional representatives of CRC agencies.

Grounds:

1. Grounds A through G of Overture 56 (*Agenda for Synod 1996*, pp. 303-04).
2. This time limit ensures that this classis is formed explicitly for the purpose of providing training, orientation, and acclimation of these churches to the CRC in preparation for their full participation in regular CRC structures; the Korean-speaking classis is not intended as a permanent structure.
3. The formation of this special classis is supported by the Korean Council in North America and the Korean-ministry director, and the stipulations are agreed to by the petitioning churches.
4. These stipulations answer the issues and questions brought up by Synod 1995.

The classis was officially formed in September 1996, with seven organized congregations and three emerging congregations. The name *Pacific Hanmi* was chosen, indicating a Korean identity merged with a western region of the United States. The stipulations for training and advisers in the early years were carried out, and Classis Pacific Hanmi is now eight years old.

III. Review of issues that have been faced

The guidelines and stipulations approved by Synod 1996 were helpful for the monitoring committee, especially in the early years of its work. The following reflections are offered for synod's consideration:

A. A good relationship has existed between members of the monitoring committee and the members of Classis Pacific Hanmi. Committee members have attended classis meetings as advisers and friends, even beyond the initial five-year period suggested by Synod 1996.

B. Issues relative to "adherence to the Church Order" have emerged in a number of instances, mostly due to unfamiliarity with CRC practices and a tradition rooted in the Presbyterian system. As these issues have been addressed, the members of Classis Pacific Hanmi have been open to instruction, and members of the monitoring committee have tried to express a cross-cultural sensitivity.

C. There was an initial growth in ministry-share contribution in the early years of the existence of the classis. Giving increased from approximately \$3,000 in 1997, to \$10,500 in 1998, to \$17,000 in 1999. However, in the past three years, the increases have gone flat, and the total contributions to denominational ministries has faltered somewhat.

D. Classis Pacific Hanmi has appointed a representative to the Board of CRC Publications, CRC Home Missions, CRC World Missions, and CRWRC. They have also provided a synodical deputy for the region, and have been sending delegates to synod. This participation represents a significant increase in the degree of participation of Korean CRC members in denominational and regional matters, even though it has been accompanied by the frustrations associated with language barriers.

E. The wave of Korean immigration into the United States has continued throughout the past eight years, and new first-generation Korean-speaking

congregations continue to be formed. Because of the open posture shown by the Korean-speaking classis, and because of the continuing reputation of the CRC as a biblically Reformed denomination, many new congregations have joined Classis Pacific Hanmi and the CRC in the past eight years. As of the beginning of 2004, the classis now includes seventeen established congregations and two emerging congregations. This is a significant increase from the total of ten congregations that began the classis.

IV. Overview of blessings and benefits

It is evident at this point in the report that a variety of blessings and benefits have been discovered and experienced through the formation and existence of Classis Pacific Hanmi. Among these blessings is a consistently positive relationship between the members of the classis and the monitoring committee. The classis has been open to instruction as it has been offered. There has been a growth in the financial contributions of Korean congregations to the denominational ministries. There has been a useful entry point into the CRC for Korean-speaking congregations that wish to affiliate with our denomination. The denominational goal of multiethnicity has been advanced as the classis has grown from ten congregations to nearly twenty in just eight years.

V. Review of the process for the report for Synod 2004

At the monitoring committee meeting in April 2003, the issue of presenting a report to Synod 2004 was discussed and addressed. It was recognized that the report would need to be fairly comprehensive and involve input from Classis Greater Los Angeles, Classis California South, and also Classis Pacific Hanmi. The monitoring committee also felt it to be their responsibility to offer Synod 2004 some suggestions for the direction, future, and nature of Classis Pacific Hanmi.

A format for a September 2003 monitoring committee meeting was designed, including a morning meeting with representatives of GLA and California South and an afternoon session with members of Classis Pacific Hanmi. These discussions took place on September 8, 2003. Subsequent to that meeting, the members of the monitoring committee created this document with its recommendations and presented it in draft form to the members of Classes Pacific Hanmi, GLA, and California South. This report, as printed in the *Agenda for Synod 2004*, has been endorsed by all three classes and comes to Synod 2004 as a recommendation of the Pacific Hanmi Monitoring Committee.

VI. Summary of current issues

The discussions and considerations prompted by the making of this report brought to light a number of issues that are currently being faced as Classis Pacific Hanmi matures and progresses. The following list attempts to summarize these issues.

A. Issues regarding the continuation of Classis Pacific Hanmi

Although the original action of Synod 1996 approved the formation of a Korean-speaking classis for up to fifteen years, there has been general confusion among Korean pastors and churches regarding the nature and appropriateness of a fifteen-year time limit. It is also fair to say that within the denomination as a whole, and even among some Korean CRC members, there are

voices expressing some discomfort with the very existence of a classis separated by language.

B. Issues of loyalty to the CRC and desire to truly learn CRC polity and practice

It is not a simple matter to learn to love and be loyal to a denomination where, in too many instances, Korean-speaking members feel like outsiders. In a very practical sense, the development of such loyalty may actually be hindered by the existence of a Korean-speaking classis. Some others ask the question: "Do the Korean-speaking churches really want to be CRC, or do such congregations join the denomination only to receive our money?" It is likely that this is more a matter of perception rather than reality, but it is important to discuss and address this perception just the same.

C. Issues of parity in support of pastors

It is fair to say that the level and means of supporting a pastor is generally different in a Korean CRC than it is in a traditional CRC. The level of salary is generally less and the commitment to such benefits as health insurance and a pension plan is much lower—perhaps in many instances even nonexistent. These differences arise more from the culture and history of the Korean congregations than from a lack of commitment to pastoral support. It should also be noted that these differences are also increasingly the case in other non-Korean parts of the CRC. As the denomination plants an increasing number of congregations, and as the CRC grows and welcomes more and more congregations with diverse ethnic roots, the uniformity of support for pastors is disappearing.

VII. Looking to the future

The issues raised by this discussion are important for the denomination to face. There is only infrequent opportunity to address them, and the very process of rehearsing them for this report was beneficial for all the participants in the discussion. The monitoring committee chooses to address these issues here as a reference point that will help the synod to consider the future.

A. Issue 1—Should synod revise the fifteen-year maximum lifespan for Classis Pacific Hanmi?

In addressing this question, the monitoring committee wants to encourage reflection on the very reasons that Classis Pacific Hanmi was formed. At least four reasons can be identified:

- To facilitate communication and participation by using the Korean language.
- To achieve understanding of, participation in, and ownership of, the CRC way of doing and being church. It must be said that originally it was thought that after some years—say fifteen—these Korean churches would have learned enough, and become fluent enough in English, to once again rejoin an English speaking classis. While it is too early to speak definitively on this matter, the committee wonders whether these assumptions may prove to have been incorrect.
- To allow English-speaking classis to function without having to do classis in two languages. This was attempted and judged to be ineffective for both doing the business of classis and for training immigrant church leaders.

- To better facilitate the receiving of new Korean-speaking pastors and congregations.

With reference to the reasons for forming Classis Pacific Hanmi, the monitoring committee can report a measure of success. With the assistance of the monitoring committee, there has been significant teaching and learning. Leaders, especially pastors, in Classis Pacific Hanmi have taken significant initiative to learn and understand the *Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure*. They have met among themselves and consulted with others, including some of the denominational leaders and representatives of Calvin Theological Seminary, in order to grow in their knowledge and use of the Church Order.

There are areas in the life of Classis Pacific Hanmi that can be improved. Communication among neighboring classes is one such area. While there is not a lot of communication among the southern California classes in general, there are some joint ventures. Race Relations, New Church Development, and diaconal organizations are examples of joint activity. Participation by Classis Pacific Hanmi along with California South and Greater Los Angeles would be desirable but is not yet occurring. On the plus side, it needs to be noted that participation of Korean leaders on the national level has increased by representation from Classis Pacific Hanmi to synod and to denominational boards.

There is a growing consensus within the committee that Classis Pacific Hanmi may need to continue beyond the present fifteen-year lifespan it has been granted by synod. There are several reasons that support this consensus.

1. Classis Pacific Hanmi has shown considerable success in attracting and assisting Korean-speaking congregations to affiliate with and find their place within the CRC.
2. The formation of Classis Pacific Hanmi, as well as its present functioning, provides Korean-speaking church leaders a sense of empowerment. In other words, it is a place and context where Korean-speaking leaders can exert leadership and influence.
3. The existence of Classis Pacific Hanmi allows the English-speaking classes to function more easily.
4. The suspicion that the formation of a classis such as Pacific Hanmi would result in a group of churches “milking” resources and then “running off” has proven to be unfounded. The reality is that Korean leaders have repeatedly expressed their appreciation for the assistance that is provided by the denomination and there is evidence that the love for, and loyalty to, the denomination is a growing reality.

Despite the affirmations above, it is clear to the committee that there is a direct connection between the long-term future of a Korean-speaking classis and the continuing flow of Korean-speaking immigrants. If immigration were to substantially decline, and the membership of Korean-speaking churches increasingly is composed of American-born Korean members, the existence of a Korean-speaking classis will eventually cease. That is not to say that a classis of Korean churches (having become English-speaking or bilingual) could not continue to function, but then the question becomes: Why should it? We have some sense that the desire for cultural preservation and cohesiveness might be

attractive enough to result in some Korean churches wanting to maintain a separate Korean classis. After all, the CRC has its own history that shows how long cultural and linguistic change can take. In Southern California there are many nationalities from around the world. Many have significant enough populations to maintain language and culture indefinitely. As we seek as a denomination to experience “unity in diversity,” the issue of language as a key component of cultural expression needs to be recognized.

So, how long should Classis Pacific Hanmi remain in existence? The monitoring committee believes that it will need to be long enough to serve the Korean-speaking immigrant churches. Beyond that time, it is desirable that all congregations and classes show by their affiliation in classis that they are part of God’s diverse and unified family, and that Korean-speaking congregations, along with churches from all ethnic backgrounds, articulate and live-out a preferred future that reflects the biblical vision of worshipers “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9), being the church together and bowing down before the throne of the Lamb.

B. Issue 2—Loyalty to CRC and desire to truly learn the CRC polity and practice

As has already been stated, there is a genuine desire among the members and leaders of Classis Pacific Hanmi to learn and practice the polity of the CRC. In the rush and pressure of maintaining and growing local congregations, the pastors and leaders do not always make church polity as high a priority as they, and we, would like. The issue of learning CRC polity and practice is complicated by the absence of a simple and appropriate curriculum for training church leaders in polity matters. In addition, just understanding which provisions of the Church Order are advisory and, therefore, negotiable and which provisions are nonnegotiable is difficult and even confusing for persons who are unfamiliar with the history of the Church Order and CRC culture.

It remains a very practical challenge to develop arenas where honest conversation and mutual learning can take place. The truth is that we do not spend enough time with one another as Korean-speaking pastors and English-speaking pastors to truly understand our histories and our unwritten rules. Growth in loyalty to the CRC and the assimilation into one body as a denomination might well require significant time spent working with each other, reflecting with each other, and praying with each other. We need to build a shared history together. Both the leaders of Classis Pacific Hanmi and the members of the Monitoring Committee sense that there may be great benefit in holding a retreat where the unwritten rules and practices of both cultures are identified and discussed.

The Monitoring Committee was impressed by the zeal and stated loyalty to the CRC of the leaders of Classis Pacific Hanmi. It was helpful to hear Korean pastors explain why Korean-speaking congregations are choosing to affiliate with the CRC. Part of the reason is a shared familiarity with the CRC through the relationships that Calvin Theological Seminary has had with various Reformed seminaries in Korea. Compared to the Presbyterian churches in the Korean experience, there is more autonomy for the local congregation in the CRC. There is less bureaucracy. Because the CRC itself has recent immigration in its history and identity, there is a perceived empathy for, and understanding of, immigrant churches. Certain pastors who came into the CRC a long time ago and are still here have the respect of newer pastors who arrive here. In

summary, it was said that immigrant Korean churches live in two worlds, and the CRC is the best available fit.

The Monitoring Committee is appreciative of the current level of commitment to the CRC within the members of Classis Pacific Hanmi, and the committee is confident that pastors and other leaders will continue the journey of becoming familiar with, and increasingly practice, the polity of the CRC. Classis Pacific Hanmi needs to be encouraged to keep polity training on its agenda for several years to come so that the member congregations might benefit from such communal learning activity. In addition, the committee recognizes that developing and implementing such training will actually perform a great service for the CRC. All of us together need to learn the lessons of assimilation as increasingly we become more diverse and enriched with the heritage that each of us brings to the fellowship table of the denomination.

C. Issue 3—Parity in support of pastors

Having identified this issue, the monitoring committee observes that the financial support for pastors is a much broader concern than that of the congregations and pastors of Classis Pacific Hanmi alone. There is no doubt that this is a significant issue. However, the truth is that within the classis to this point this is not a strongly perceived problem or point of pressure. The denomination might be well served to look at this issue more closely, but the Monitoring Committee feels ill-equipped and believes it to be beyond its mandate to propose possible solutions.

We would observe that issues of parity in support do relate to a broader issue of the preferred future of the CRC as a body. How will we express both uniformity and diversity? How will we create, maintain, and enforce standards while at the same time allowing for unique local practices? In issues of multiculturalism, how can we be one in fellowship while at the same time be responsive to unique cultural and ethnic needs? How can we best learn from one another as diverse local groups? The continuing existence and development of Classis Pacific Hanmi might be a major tool for us as a denomination toward our understanding of these issues.

VIII. Recommendations

A. That synod permit the privilege of the floor to any Monitoring Committee members who are present at synod when the report is discussed.

B. That synod give thanks to God for the Korean congregations that are affiliated with the CRC and praise God for the significant growth of Classis Pacific Hanmi since its inception in 1996.

C. That synod take note that the Monitoring Committee has begun to explore that the original fifteen-year maximum time limit for the life of Classis Pacific Hanmi might be inappropriate. Therefore, it is appropriate that synod request the Monitoring Committee to continue its evaluation of this question, in consultation with the leaders of Classis Pacific Hanmi, and propose an appropriate response to this matter in a future report to synod.

D. That synod encourage the Monitoring Committee, in consultation with the leaders of Classis Pacific Hanmi, to create a curriculum for teaching CRC polity and practice to the members and member-churches of Classis Pacific

Hanmi. (This may include the potential of translating the *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government* into the Korean language.)

E. That synod encourage the leaders and member-churches of Classis Pacific Hanmi to participate in the regional CRC projects being done in Southern California and to develop ways for increasing contact between, and relationship with, non-Korean Christian Reformed congregations. (One possible project is a regional retreat with Korean-speaking and English-speaking pastors where the unwritten laws and practices of each culture are identified and discussed.)

F. That synod thank the members of the Monitoring Committee for their faithful work and encourage them to continue in this service to the broader church.

Classis Pacific Hanmi Monitoring Committee
Peter Borgdorff
David Daesung Chong
Don Klop
David Koll
Peter Shin
Gary Stevens
Seung-Won Yoon

Appendix I

Report re the Succession Plan

I. Background

The Board of Trustees (BOT) appointed a Succession Planning Committee (SPC) at its May 2002 meeting. The purpose was to advise the BOT on how to plan for and implement the transition in denominational leadership positions on the horizon for the middle of the decade. The SPC was asked to consider not only the positions of executive director of ministries and general secretary but also other senior denomination and agency positions. Those serving as members of the SPC were: Dr. Peter Borgdorff, adviser; Dr. David H. Engelhard, adviser; Rev. Arthur J. Schoonveld; Mr. William Terpstra; Mr. Edward Vanderveer, chair; Mr. Tom Van Groningen; Mr. William Weidenaar; and Rev. Stanley J. Workman.

After its initial meetings and deliberations, the SPC suggested to the BOT that (1) the committee's membership be enlarged and (2) its mandate include a review of organizational structure at these senior positions in addition to succession planning. The BOT approved this change, and the committee was enlarged to include an additional member and the general secretary as an adviser.

The SPC continued its work with review and discussion of denominational needs, meetings with denominational personnel and agency leaders, a survey of agency directors, other information gathering, and additional deliberations. This was coupled with review of possible retirement dates and transition options. Based on this information, the SPC requested the BOT to approve its consideration of developing a proposed denominational leadership model

that would combine the existing executive director of ministries and general secretary positions. The BOT granted approval for considering this option and the SPC continued its work.

What follows is the report and recommendations adopted by the Board regarding the transition of denominational leadership and the combining of the offices of the executive director of ministries and the general secretary. For more detail about the SPC's work and reflections see Appendix I-1.

II. Overview

The Board is recommending to synod that the Christian Reformed Church revise its senior leadership structure to provide for a single position with the title of executive director and general secretary (ED&GS). This person will be responsible to the BOT and synod for implementing their decisions. At the same time, it is planning to establish the position of director of denominational ministries. This person would coordinate agency and other ministry-related matters of the denomination.

The leadership team charged with implementing ministries for the denomination would be called the Ministry Council. The members of this council would consist of the executive director and general secretary, director of denominational ministries, director of finance and administrative services, director of personnel, Canadian ministries director, the directors of the agencies, and the presidents of the educational institutions. This leadership team will be charged with the responsibility of:

- Implementing the decisions of synod and the BOT.
- Administering the ministries of the denomination.
- Coordinating the ministries for effectiveness and efficiency.
- Reporting to the BOT.

The staffing structure of this proposal is shown on Appendix I-2.

A number of reasons led the Board to recommend this action. The Board believes that the proposed model will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of denominational ministries and management for the following reasons:

A. The proposed structure will clarify roles and responsibilities. The present structure reflects an artificial and unequal division of labor.

B. The proposed structure will allow the director of denominational ministries (DDM) to focus on the ministries and agencies for coordination and planning. The present executive director of ministries has far too many direct reports in terms of personnel—over twenty.

C. The proposed division of responsibilities and creation of the director of denominational ministries position should allow the executive director and general secretary (ED&GS) more time to interact with our churches. The SPC believes that one of the most important issues confronting the denomination is the perceived distance between the churches and the denomination—the gap is seen as too wide. Freeing the senior position of direct ministry management is critical to creating the time to travel, dialogue with the churches, and create ways of closing this gap.

D. The proposed structure has the inherent potential of improving working relationships and accountability. There is less organizational ambiguity and a more manageable number of direct reports to the senior personnel.

E. The proposed structure appears to be the next logical step in improving the effectiveness of the denomination. Over the years, the creation of the BOT, the position of executive director of ministries, and the Ministries Administrative Council has each improved the effectiveness of the denomination's ministry structure. This has improved the carrying out of the ministries of the CRC and the decisions of synod and the BOT. The current proposal should enable the CRC to further enhance effectiveness and adapt to future issues.

F. The proposed structure retains appropriate checks and balances. Care was taken to avoid placing too much authority and leadership responsibility in one position—primarily by the inclusion of the director of denominational ministries and the Ministries Council (MC), which is comprised of senior denominational personnel. These are senior and capable individuals who will be called upon to administer their responsibilities effectively and participate in coordinating and planning for the good of the entire denomination.

Detailed descriptions of the key components of this recommendation are attached as follows:

- Appendix I-2: Illustration of Organizational Structure
- Appendix I-3: Position Description for Executive Director and General Secretary (ED&GS)
- Appendix I-4: Position Description for Director of Denominational Ministries (DDM)
- Appendix I-5: Position Description for Canadian Ministries Director (CMD)
- Appendix I-6: Position Description for Director of Finance and Administrative Services (DFAS)
- Appendix I-7: Mandate of the Ministry Council (MC)

The Board also recommends that a continuing requirement for the position of ED&GS be that the individual is an ordained minister of the Word in the CRC. The CRC is a church organization, and the senior leadership position must be filled by an ordained person for credibility inside and outside the denomination. We also believe that it is desirable to fill the DDM position with an ordained person but that management skills are critical. In the event an ordained individual with such skills cannot be found for the position of DDM, we think that permission to consider a nonordained individual should be granted the search committee. There are a number of university programs providing training in management skills that could be considered for enhancing those skill requirements of an ordained person that is believed suitable for the position with some amount of additional training.

The cost implications of these recommendations have been carefully considered. The recommendation is cost neutral after the transition—and a transition is necessary regardless of the option chosen. The recommendation allows for future cost savings and adjustments, which can occur only after the very senior levels of the structure are changed. For example, it may be possible to shift some additional denominational workload to the Canadian ministries

director (CMD). In time, it may be that the DDM can assume the planning responsibilities of the Denominational Ministries Plan coordinator and that the current separate position can be eliminated. It may also be possible to obtain efficiencies in the organization of some of the smaller ministries by combining administrative functions. These changes cannot occur, however, unless synod first adopts the Board's recommended structure.

As noted above, additional information regarding the work of the SPC and the thinking that led to the Board's recommendation can be found in Appendix I-1.

III. Transition issues

The opportunity for major change in the denomination's leadership structure is especially possible at this time due to the anticipated retirements of the executive director of ministries (EDM) in 2005 and the general secretary (GS) in 2007. These are the years in which they reach the age that qualifies them for full retirement benefits, but their individual exact dates within the years will depend upon the transition issues.

Extensive discussions have been held with both of these individuals as to their positions. Topics discussed included the strengths and weaknesses of the current positions and organizational structure, their personal plans, and their ideas of possible changes to improve the effectiveness of the denomination's ministries and governance. Based on these discussions, the Board is of the opinion that if the recommended organizational structure is approved, the goal should be to make the change to the new management structure and personnel in 2005. This would happen after the BOT nominates and synod approves the new ED&GS and the BOT appoints the new DDM.

The current EDM has offered to stay or leave as will best serve the CRC in attracting the right individual and accomplishing the recommended transition. The Board believes that the goal should be for a transition in the third quarter of 2005. If synod approves the recommendations of this report, the current EDM will continue to provide leadership until the new ED&GS is installed and starts employment. After that, it is expected that the current EDM will assist in accomplishing an effective transition.

The current GS will not reach anticipated retirement age until 2007. However, the Board believes that it is strongly preferable to make all the changes at once to minimize the disruption and organizational ambiguities for all parties. Fortunately there are a number of special assignments that would provide meaningful duties for the current GS and permit the new ED&GS and DDM to concentrate upon the critical aspects of the organizational change. Discussions with the current GS led the Board to adopt a special assignment for the current GS that includes among other assignments the following:

A. Develop, manage, and implement the activities and events to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the CRC in 2007. This is a wonderful opportunity to start closing the gap between the churches and the denomination. This major effort would have required hiring consultants or retired personnel, who would not be as effective as the current GS in being able to work with the churches and agencies in developing activities that celebrate the ministries made possible by our members.

B. Prepare and manage the efforts for Synod 2006. The work of preparing for a well-organized synod starts soon after one is completed. In the opinion of the Board, it would be better for the new leadership not to have this task in their first year. It would be much better if they concentrate on developing a dialogue with the churches, learn the denominational ministries, and get to know the personnel who carry out our ministries.

The Board believes that the ideal transition is one where there is a very short overlap between the present leadership (the current EDM and the current GS) and the new leadership (the new ED&GS and the new DDM). The current GS will be retained, however, to handle several important but time-intensive duties to assist in a smoother transition. Such a transition will also accommodate the differences in anticipated retirement dates.

IV. Recommendation

Based upon the preceding considerations, the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA makes the following recommendation to synod:

That synod approve the plan to revise the senior leadership structure of the CRCNA to provide for a single position, executive director and general secretary, as the person responsible to the BOT and synod for implementing their decisions.

Grounds:

1. The proposed structure will clarify roles and responsibilities.
2. The proposed structure includes the creation of a director of denominational ministries position to focus on the ministries of the denomination.
3. The new structure will allow the new ED&GS more time to interact with our churches, to improve communication, and to close the gap (perceived or otherwise) between the denomination and the churches.
4. Working relationships and accountability will be improved.
5. The proposal is the next logical step in the denomination's organizational journey that seeks enhanced effectiveness of ministry.
6. The proposal contains appropriate checks and balances in keeping with Reformed polity.

Appendix I-1

Succession Planning Committee's Deliberations, Reflections, and Conclusions

I. History of the committee

The Board of Trustees recognized the importance of the upcoming turnover in the two senior denomination positions, namely executive director of ministries (EDM) and general secretary (GS). Given the lengthy time frame to conduct a search and receive BOT and synod approval, it felt the process needed to begin. In May 2002, the BOT formed a committee, which was named the Succession Planning Committee, and appointed seven persons to it. The SPC consisted of persons with experience in denominational leadership and/or those who had studied denominational restructuring for synod. Five of the members served on the BOT, with four serving as chair of the BOT—from the early years of the BOT to the present. Several of the members also partici-

pated in the recent Review Teams that studied the denominational offices and the agencies. The current EDM and GS served as advisers to SPC.

Thus, the SPC included members with a deep knowledge of the EDM and GS positions, the functioning of the current governance structure, and the organizational changes the denomination has implemented in the past fifteen years. Shortly after commencing its work, the SPC concluded that the nearness in retirement dates of the EDM and GS made it advisable to at least consider if some realignment of structure at the senior level was appropriate. This nearly concurrent retirement of the two senior individuals offers an opportunity to consider changes that could be very difficult under other circumstances. The SPC asked the BOT if it would consider expanding the committee's mandate to include such a review. The BOT approved this expansion of the SPC's mandate and the addition of one member and the GS, as adviser, to the committee.

II. Work and deliberations of the committee

The SPC began its work by recognizing the need for information, especially input and discussion concerning the perceived needs of the denomination for the next decade. It was these steps that led to the expansion of its mandate. Although there was a wide variety of information and input, key items that formed the basis for the SPC's recommendations to the Board included:

A. The work of the Review Teams that met with and reviewed the denominational offices, the key denominational functions, and the agencies. This information was especially helpful in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the current organization from many perspectives.

B. Review and discussion of the history of CRC structure and organization, especially over the past fifteen years. The denomination has been on an organizational journey. The SPC recognized that any proposed change should build on what has been implemented in the past and be consistent with Reformed thought.

C. Review of the structure of other denominations, including improvements or changes that have been implemented.

D. Personal interviews with the EDM and GS. What they perceived as the strengths of the current structure and what they perceived as the areas that are not as effective was helpful.

E. A survey of the agency directors and selected denominational staff. This included their thoughts on the unique opportunities and challenges the CRC will be facing in the next five years. Their input on governance structure was also solicited.

F. Discussion of the future opportunities and needs of the CRC. This was in the context of how organization will either assist or hinder efforts to improve the ministries and resolve several key issues. Although there were a number of issues identified, the key ones in the SPC's view are:

1. The perceived knowledge and priorities gap between the churches' and the denomination's activities.
2. The need to assist congregations that are struggling.

3. The need for denominational goals and priorities.
4. The need for effective ministry coordination among agencies.

The SPC also considered and studied the work of previous committees, some of whose proposals were approved and some of which were rejected. Based on this part of its work, the SPC decided to limit its proposals to the very senior part of the current denominational organization. The goal was to consider what, if any, next logical organizational step might improve the functioning and effectiveness of the denominational office and governance—while retaining appropriate checks and balances.

After all of its deliberations, the SPC reached the conclusions contained in the recommendations provided the Board. We believe the proposed changes are preferable to filling the current positions as the incumbents retire. There are a number of organizational ambiguities that can be resolved to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness by adopting these proposed changes.

III. Detail review of recommendations

The recommendation that is likely to draw the most attention is the proposal to have a single head of the denomination—the ED&GS. The committee recognizes the historic concern in Reformed circles of putting too much authority in the hands of one individual. Therefore the recommendations are broader and place this position in the following context:

A. The new ED&GS will report to the BOT and be responsible for carrying out the ministry plan approved by the BOT and synod. The individual will have primary responsibility for carrying out the denomination's ministry plan, but it will be managed and implemented through the DDM and the agency heads. The position will also have responsibility for ecclesiastical matters and denominational and interchurch communications. The intent is that the ED&GS position will have a broad oversight responsibility but also provide a renewed "outside" focus with the churches, classes, and other denominations.

B. The recommended DDM position is also new and will concentrate its entire attention on denominational ministries. The DDM will be expected to enhance the unified ministry of the denomination through joint strategic planning and coordination of goals while recognizing the particular responsibilities and functions of each agency and educational institution. This will involve planning, coordinating, and integrating the ministries and work into a denominational ministry program. The agency heads will work with and report to this individual as they presently report to the EDM.

C. The Ministries Council will form the senior management team responsible for all denominational ministries. This group will include the ED&GS, DDM, CMD, DFAS, directors of the agencies, presidents of the educational institutions, and the director of personnel. Each individual who heads an agency or educational institution will retain the responsibility to operate their ministry effectively and retain their separate boards. It is expected that the DDM and agency heads will also be proactive in relating to classes and congregations for information and feedback on the denominational ministries and how they are perceived. However, it is expected that as a group they will prioritize, coordinate, and assign responsibility for ministry opportunities. Thus, the intent is to provide for a collegial ministry management model that looks to the good of

the whole in addition to each part. As at present, it is expected that the BOT and synod would ask for presentations and reports from the members of the Ministries Council as they deem appropriate.

Another reason for this change is to transfer the workload of the current EDM and GS into an organizational structure that provides for organizational clarity and greater efficiency. The current EDM has too many responsibilities and direct reports to be able to devote what the SPC sees as the critical time to gain perspective, get feedback, and interact with those outside the denominational building. The current EDM has performed very well in establishing the position, but its supervisory requirements leave no time for interaction on a regular basis with the churches or classes. Thus, the SPC believes that a critical need is to realign the current EDM and GS positions into two new ones where:

- The senior position is broad and strategic in nature, interacting with and communicating with the various parts of the denomination. This is the ED&GS position.
- The second director-level position allows an individual to devote all of his/her energy on the ministries of the denomination, seeking to enhance their effectiveness and coordination by working with those managing each agency and educational institution. This is the DDM position.

Thus, while the change may appear to be small to some, it is a major change in emphasis, communication, and expected time allocation. The SPC also believes that one of the critical issues that this change addresses is the perceived distance between the churches and the denominational structure. If this gap is allowed to continue, there are many powerful, negative long-term implications. We believe that the current turnover in the EDM and GS positions allows for a meaningful opportunity to close this gap. If this goal is to be more than words, the organizational structure must create the time and the necessary position description changes to accomplish the goal. The SPC believes that freeing the ED&GS from daily responsibility in the denominational building is the only way to allow this to occur.

There are a number of important duties that are performed by the current GS that will require reassignment. The responsibility for preparing for synod will require careful study, but the SPC believes that the ED&GS and the administrative team can handle this responsibility. The consultation with churches can be handled in several ways. Some can be handled by the ED&GS as part of closing the gap between the churches and the denomination. The SPC also believes that a great deal of this, especially in Canada, can be assigned to the CMD. Over time, the SPC believes it could be healthy for the CMD to assume most of this responsibility.

The SPC discussed at length the position of CMD. We recommend that this area receive additional study, perhaps after the new structural recommendation has been implemented. The issues of the CMD relate to workload, organizational efficiency, responsibilities, and location. The SPC recognizes that when synod adopted the Canadian structure recommendation in 1997 but rejected the U.S. structure recommendation in 1999, a number of unresolved organizational complexities were created. The SPC believes that in a binational church the CMD serves a valuable purpose. However, the coordination and responsibility for certain ministries in Canada, especially those of some of the agencies, is confusing. Given the importance of this subject, we believe it needs

concentrated study rather than being handled with only the depth of information and input the SPC received on this issue. In addition, it was not part of the SPC's mandate.

It should also be pointed out that we propose that the DFAS assume responsibility for the personnel function. This is not to in any way reduce the importance placed upon the personnel function in the organization. Our goal was to reduce the number of direct reports to the ED&GS so that more time may be devoted to the critical aspects of the position. It is expected that any significant personnel issues will be discussed at the Ministry Council, which includes senior leadership. Given the size of the organization, the importance of people issues, and the need for equity among the ministries in terms of many personnel issues, we believe that the personnel function should be represented on the Ministry Council. Over time, we would suggest the personnel function should acquire a wider perspective, namely one of human relations. This broader term recognizes that people issues are sensitive and complex, yet equity and consistency are also needed in an organization. The term *human resources* has come into use to acknowledge that appropriate people are critical to any organization's effectiveness and are a critical asset that must be acquired, developed, and encouraged.

The SPC was very conscious of the economic impact of the options it considered. After the transition period, which is not lengthy, the costs should approximate the current structure. While we would have preferred to reduce costs, we felt there were areas that required additional emphasis and time. Again, these areas of emphasis are (1) closing the gap between the churches and the denominational structure and (2) the need for the DDM to give full attention to the ministries of the denomination. Thus it became our goal to obtain these benefits without adding new positions.

It is an established fact that a dual-headed organization, such as the present structure, is inherently less stable and less efficient. There are a number of times within the CRC that this has been tried and not been effective. It is a tribute to the current EDM and GS that the organization has functioned as well as it has in recent times. However, there is no clear responsibility for coordinating or setting denomination-wide goals or ministries. Many problems or issues do not fall clearly in either sphere. The responsibilities and number of direct reports is very uneven between the two positions. The risks of dropping the ball or less than effective ministries will clearly rise if both incumbents are new and inexperienced in these positions—especially if continued as they are now defined.

The SPC believes that a good organization sees organizational structure as a journey—one that builds on the past and takes advantage of the opportunities for greater effectiveness. We believe that the recommendations build upon the progress and continue the path the denomination is presently traveling. The recommendations of this report could not be considered without the progress of the past fifteen years.

From the standpoint of synod and the BOT, the proposal should provide greater stability, less ambiguity, and greater accountability. As both synod and the BOT are organizations that consist of part-time individuals, we believe these improvements should be viewed as very important steps.

IV. Approvals of appointments

The SPC suggests that given the importance of the ED&GS position, it should be nominated by the BOT and then appointed by synod. This is in keeping with the current practices for the EDM and GS.

From a standpoint of organization, the SPC suggests that synod appoint the ED&GS after nomination by the BOT. We suggest that it delegate responsibility for the appointment of the DDM, CDM, and DFAS to the BOT. The BOT would be expected to report the filling of any vacancies in these positions to synod. This procedure allows for the timely filling of vacancies in important positions when openings occur between meetings of synod. Ultimately, this recommendation comes down to the comfort level that synod has achieved with the BOT at this point in our organizational journey. As synod appoints the members of the BOT, it will still retain control over the leadership of the denomination. However, if synod prefers, it could request that the BOT appoint individuals to these positions and that it ratify the appointments.

V. Titles of positions

The SPC reviewed the existing titles of these positions as to their appropriateness. A clear goal should be to communicate what the individual's or organization's responsibilities are. After considerable review, we have suggested the titles included in this report.

We believe that the suggested title of *ED&GS* has an appropriate tie to our past. In addition, it can be understood within our denomination and in the church at large. We reviewed the titles in use by a large number of denominations and did not find any we preferred, given our denomination's history and use of titles. While the proposed title is a bit long and unwieldy, the SPC suggests that it be used as the initial title for the proposed position. Over time it may be desirable to change the title to a shorter or then more appropriate description.

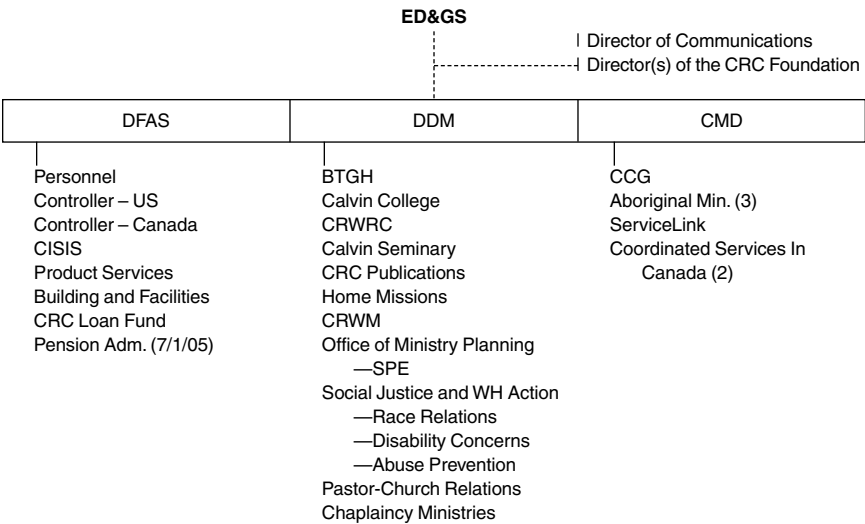
We believe the name *Ministry Council* conveys the intent of the body. The name is in accord with our Reformed usage of words. In addition, it implies the leadership and coordination present in our individual churches. In our churches, there is usually one presiding individual in the council. It is the purpose of this individual to lead where necessary, but not dominate, the council. Thus, we believe the current proposal is in accord with our Reformed history.

VI. Concluding remarks

The SPC thanks the BOT for the opportunity to serve. We have truly enjoyed the discussions and the ability to consider means of enhancing the CRC's ministries, organizational structure, and denominational cohesion. We found talented and committed Christians seeking to serve throughout the denomination. We wish to especially thank and express appreciation for the knowledge, insights, and attitudes of Dr. Peter Borgdorff, the current EDM, and Dr. David H. Engelhard, the current GS.

While reviews and studies often highlight the problems and areas where we as organizations and humans need improvement, any serious consideration also finds so much to be thankful for. Our denomination, its agencies, and its educational institutions are being used by God to bring the gospel to our members and the world. May we work together and seek his guidance to be more effective!

Appendix I-2 Illustration of Staffing Structure



Notes of explanation and rationale:

1. Within reason, the chart above seeks to equalize the number of direct reporting relationships. The result is as follows:
ED and GS – 5
DDM – 11
DFAS - 8
CMD – 6
2. The only significant change for the DFAS position is the inclusion of personnel. The DDM will still have a maximum number of eleven, but practical logistics make that essential. Consideration was given to placing the Office of Ministry Planning under the CMD, but so much of the activity of teams is Grand Rapids based that it seemed impractical. It is suggested that Social Justice and World Hunger Action pick up the three “social justice type” ministries because that seems to fit.
3. The Succession Committee believes that further attention needs to be given to balancing the workload of the DDM and the CMD. The DDM will have the director of ministry planning to assist in the ministry plan administration, and that will help. The CMD will assist the ED&GS in providing consultation services to churches, classes, and synodical deputies. Further fine-tuning may be needed once the persons involved have had the opportunity to test how well the proposed alignment of responsibilities really works.

Appendix I-3

Position Description for the Executive Director and General Secretary (ED&GS)

I. General description

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. On behalf of synod and the Board, exercise leadership as a servant of the people, the churches, and the denominational agencies and respond to invitations, maintain liaison, and visit classes and churches.
- B. Be invested with executive authority and a management responsibility that enhances the unified ministry of the CRC. Furthermore, the ED&GS shall be responsible for the overall ministries and support functions of the denomination, all ecclesiastical matters dealing with polity and church practice, and denominational and interchurch communications.
- C. Serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (the Board), and shall be responsible for its agendas, records, and communications. The ED&GS shall function as an authorized agent for the U.S. corporate entity known as the Christian Reformed Church in North America—Michigan Corporation. The ED&GS shall also be responsible for the proper administration of the corporate entity known as the Christian Reformed Church in North America—Canada Corporation, though this responsibility can be delegated to the designated resident-agent in Canada.

II. Primary qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. Be a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of the CRC who is strongly committed to the binational ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.
- B. Be theologically trained and be an ordained minister in the CRC who has served as a pastor in at least one of the congregations of the denomination.
- C. Have a good knowledge of, and commitment to, the teaching of Scripture and the Reformed confessions.
- D. Have a love for the mission of the Christian Reformed Church.

III. General responsibilities

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. Have primary responsibility for the functions of synod, the Board of Trustees, and their respective committees.
- B. Oversee and coordinate the implementation of synodical and Board decisions.
- C. Supervise the performance of, and give leadership to, the director of denominational ministries (DDM), the Canadian ministries director (CMD),

the director of finance administrative services (DFSAs), the director of communications, and the director of development for the CRC Foundation.

D. Represent the denomination, or secure the proper representation of the denomination, at civic and religious functions in keeping with its relationship to the governments of Canada and the United States.

E. Function as the chief ecumenical officer of the Christian Reformed Church in its relationship with other churches and ecumenical organizations.

IV. Accountability and terms of service

The ED&GS shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees and work under its supervision. The initial appointment shall be made by the synod of the Christian Reformed Church upon nomination by the Board of Trustees. Continued employment is subject to a favorable annual performance review by the Board.

Note: Additional information concerning the position of the ED&GS is contained in the addendum.

Approved February 2004

Addendum to the Position Description of the ED&GS

This addendum provides additional detail on the qualifications and specific responsibilities associated with the position of ED&GS.

I. Additional information concerning the responsibilities assigned to this office

The person appointed to this office shall also:

A. Serve as an ex officio, voting member of the executive committee of the Board of Trustees, the Interchurch Relations Committee, the CRC Foundation in both the United States and Canada, and such other committees as synod or the Board of Trustees may, from time to time, decide. The ED&GS shall make arrangements for, and be an ex officio member of, all synodical study committees.

B. Have the privilege of the floor at synodical and Board meetings in all matters relating to the exercise of this office. The ED&GS shall be present during all executive sessions of synod and of the Board, except when matters under discussion affect the person or performance of the ED&GS and he/she is requested to be absent.

C. Be responsible for all official publications the synod or the Board shall authorize, all synodical papers, including correspondence, surveys, reports, questionnaires, materials, and minutes produced for synod or the Board, and keep a file of synodical and Board correspondence as well as an accurate record of the proceedings of synod and the Board.

D. Be responsible for denominational archives and historical documents and administer the right of access to such documents.

E. Be responsible for making all arrangements for the meetings of synod and the Board and function as operations officer during such meetings.

F. In performing the specific duties and responsibilities of this office, it is understood that, as a binational denomination functioning in both the United States and Canada, some of the communication functions in Canada may be exercised through the office of the Canadian Ministries Director.

G. Convene and chair the meetings of the Ministries Council (MC), which functions as the senior administrative cabinet for all of the ministries and agencies of the CRC.

H. Be responsible for providing consultation services to congregations, classes, and synodical deputies on matters dealing with church polity, Church Order interpretation, synodical decisions, and ecclesiastical procedures.

I. Perform such other duties as synod or the Board shall direct.

II. Additional preferred qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall:

A. Possess personal and professional integrity, forthrightness, and compassion for the poor, the lost, and the disenfranchised.

B. Be well acquainted with the Christian Reformed denomination, its history, its churches, its ministers, its lay leaders, and its ministries in both Canada and the United States.

C. Be able to exercise authority in an unobtrusive manner in order fulfill the requirements of this position and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ministries and agencies of the denomination.

D. Be able to move with ease and dignity in North American and international ecclesiastical circles. Be congenial and cooperative with representatives of other churches as well as with members of the Christian Reformed Church.

E. Possess knowledge of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church and be competent in interpreting the same.

F. Have the ability to write and be competent in public address.

G. Demonstrate self-reliance and sound judgment in decision-making.

H. Possess administrative and organizational ability in such measure as to be able to plan and work collaboratively with others.

I. Have received appropriate educational training and prior senior management experience in which leadership and management skills have been demonstrated.

J. Have the capacity to delegate authority.

K. Have demonstrated capacity for listening, integrating ideas, and setting future priorities.

Approved February 2004

Appendix I-4

Position Description for the Director of Denominational Ministries (DDM)

I. General description

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. Exercise leadership, on behalf of synod and the Board, as a servant of the people, the churches, and the denominational agencies by responding to invitations, maintaining liaison, and visiting classes and churches.
- B. Be invested with executive responsibility and management responsibility, as directed by the executive director and general secretary (ED&GS), to enhance the unified ministry of the denomination through joint strategic planning and coordination of goals while recognizing the particular responsibilities and functions of each agency and educational institution.
- C. Develop and oversee the implementation of a denominational ministries plan as a basis for managing the planning, coordinating, and integrating of the work of the agencies and for integrating the respective missions of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary into the denominational ministry program.

II. Primary qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. Be a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ, a member of the CRC who is strongly committed to the binational ministry of the Christian Reformed Church and, preferably, an ordained minister of the Word.
- B. Have received appropriate educational training and have prior senior management experience in which leadership and management skills have been demonstrated.
- C. Have a good knowledge of, and commitment to, the teaching of Scripture and the Reformed confessions.
- D. Have demonstrated commitment to the binationality of the CRC and be familiar with, and show a good comprehension of, the diverse cultural forces at work in the United States and Canada.
- E. Have a love for the mission of the Christian Reformed Church.

III. General responsibilities

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. Have primary responsibility for all matters pertaining to the agencies, their boards, programs, and personnel, as well as for managing the relationship with the educational institutions. In addition, the DDM shall have general responsibility for the Denominational Ministries Plan and responsibility for the Office of Ministry Planning.
- B. Obtain reports from all the agencies, provide the Board with analyses and reviews of programs, and make recommendations, through the Ministries Council, with respect to the distribution of the resources of the denomination.

Serve synod and the Board of Trustees with information and advice regarding matters that relate to the ministries of the denomination.

C. Manage the implementation of synodical and Board policy decisions as they relate to denominational ministries.

D. Function as the chief administrative officer for the denomination when the ED&GS is out of the office or is in any way incapacitated.

III. Accountability and terms of service

The DDM shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees and be supervised by the ED&GS. The appointment shall be made by the Board and ratified by synod. Continued employment is subject to a favorable annual performance review by the ED&GS and reviewed by the Board.

Note: Additional information concerning the position of the DDM is contained in the addendum.

Approved: February 2004

Addendum to the Position Description of the DDM of the CRC

This addendum provides additional detail on the qualifications and specific responsibilities associated with the position of DDM for the CRC.

I. Additional information concerning the responsibilities assigned to this office

The person appointed to this office shall also:

A. Serve as the administrative supervisor of the agency directors (in cooperation with the applicable agency board), the directors of ministry programs that fall within the mandate of the Board, and the director of ministry planning. The DDM shall also maintain a direct relationship with the presidents of the educational institutions.

B. Convene meetings, on a functional basis and in various combinations, of directors or official representatives of denominational agencies and educational institutions in order to advance collaboration and cooperation among the various entities. Ensure that all agencies and educational institutions affected by any discussion and/or decision are adequately represented.

C. Submit an annual report to the ED&GS and the Board of Trustees on work being done with agencies and educational institutions based on individual goals and the strategic plan for the denomination.

D. Attend the meetings of each agency and educational institution's board as needed or desired.

E. Serve in securing the cooperation of the educational institutions affiliated with the denomination toward integration of their respective missions into the denominational ministry program.

- F. Consult with the ED&GS as necessary in the discharge of all duties.
- G. Serve as a member of the Ministry Council and function as its vice-chair.
- H. Perform such other duties as are assigned by the ED&GS.

II. Additional preferred qualifications

The director of denominational ministries shall:

- A. Be theologically trained and preferably be an ordained minister of the Word in the CRC who has served as a pastor in at least one of the congregations of the denomination
- B. Possess personal and professional integrity, forthrightness, and a compassion for the poor, the lost, and the disenfranchised.
- C. Demonstrate self-reliance and sound judgment in decision-making.
- D. Have the ability to plan and work collaboratively with everyone involved in denominational ministries. The DDM shall have the capacity to delegate authority.
- E. Have demonstrated ability in written and oral communications.
- F. Have demonstrated capacity for listening, integrating ideas, and recommending future priorities.
- G. Be able to exercise authority in an unobtrusive manner in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of denominational ministries and agencies.
- H. Have the ability to develop rapport and trust with denominational employees in order to promote job satisfaction and a high level of achievement.
- I. Have the ability to understand and act on advice with respect to budgetary guidelines, financial reports, and fiscal priorities of denominational agencies.

Approved February 2004

Appendix I-5

Position Description for the Canadian Ministries Director (CMD)

I. General description

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. Exercise leadership, on behalf of synod and the Board, as a servant of the people, the churches, and the denominational agencies by responding to invitations, maintaining liaison, and visiting classes and churches in Canada.
- B. Be invested with management responsibility, as directed by the executive director and general secretary (ED&GS), to facilitate the unified ministry of the denomination in Canada through joint strategic planning and coordination of goals while recognizing the particular responsibilities and functions of each agency.

C. Participate in developing and overseeing the implementation of a denominational ministries plan as a basis for managing the planning, coordinating, and integrating of the work of the agencies in Canada.

D. Assist the ED&GS in providing consultation services to congregations, classes, and synodical deputies on matters dealing with church polity, Church Order interpretation, synodical decisions, and ecclesiastical procedures.

II. Qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall:

A. Be a member of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) with a good knowledge of and commitment to the teaching of Scripture and the Reformed confessions, the life and polity of the CRC, and possess a love for the whole mission of the church.

B. Be theologically trained and be an ordained minister of the Word in the CRC who has served as a pastor in at least one of the congregations of the denomination.

C. Have a demonstrated commitment to the binationality of the CRC and be familiar with, and show a good comprehension of, the diverse cultural forces at work in the United States and Canada.

D. Have received appropriate educational training and/or prior ministry-management experience in which leadership and management skills have been demonstrated.

E. Possess a reputation for personal and professional integrity, forthrightness, and compassion for the poor, the lost, and the disenfranchised.

F. Demonstrate self-reliance and sound judgment in decision-making.

G. Have the ability to plan and work collaboratively with everyone involved in congregational, regional, and denominational ministries.

H. Have a demonstrated ability in written and oral communication.

I. Have the ability to understand and act on advice with respect to budgetary guidelines, financial reports, and fiscal priorities with reference to ministries in Canada.

III. Duties and responsibilities

The person appointed to this office shall:

A. Be an adviser to the Board of Directors of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation, and to the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, with reference to Canadian matters.

B. Consult with the ED&GS as necessary in the discharge of all duties.

C. Consult with the DDM in the discharge of such duties that are part of the DDM's overall responsibilities.

- D. Be a member of the Ministries Council (MC).
- E. Be a member of and chair the meetings of the Canadian Ministries Team (CMT) and function as its administrative officer.
- F. Be responsible for participating in developing and implementing, through collaborative efforts, the Denominational Ministries Plan in Canada.
- G. Review reports from all the ministries and agencies operative in Canada in order to provide, in conjunction with the DDM, annual analyses of these ministries for the Board of Directors of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation. This annual report will contain both observations and recommendations processed through the MC with respect to ministry priorities in Canada.
- H. Attend the meetings of Canadian denominational ministry boards as needed.
- I. Serve, in consultation with the ED&GS, as spokesperson for the CRC in Canada on matters of communication with the government of Canada and in ecumenical settings in Canada.
- J. Be an advocate for the ministries of the CRC generally, and for the ministries unique to Canada particularly, with Christian Reformed congregations and classes in Canada.
- K. Supervise, with the director of finance and administrative services (DFAS), the work of the financial staff in Canada. The CMD shall obtain the advice needed in matters involving finances from the DFAS.
- L. Supervise the personnel and functions of the Coordinated Services Program operative in Canada.
- M. Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors of the CRCNA-Canada Corporation or the ED&GS.

IV. Accountability and terms of service

The CMD shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees and be supervised by the ED&GS. The appointment shall be made by the Board and ratified by synod. Continued employment is subject to a favorable annual performance review by the ED&GS and reviewed by the Board.

Approved February 2004

Appendix I-6

Position Description for the Director of Finance and Administrative Services (DFAS)

I. General description

The person appointed to this office shall:

- A. Provide leadership, on behalf of synod and the Board of Trustees, as a servant of the people, the churches, and the denominational agencies by encouraging financial stewardship and fiscal responsibility in the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church.

B. Be the chief financial officer of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) and its designated agencies and committees.

C. Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the employee benefit plans (i.e., denominational insurance programs and the employee retirement plan).

D. Exercise administrative oversight over the Offices of Personnel, Product Services (graphic design, printing plant duplicating processes, shipping and receiving, purchasing, and the mail room), Information Services, Facilities and Grounds, and the CRC Loan Fund.

E. Be responsible for the administration and investment of Pension Funds maintained by the CRC.*

*Initially, pension fund administration is assigned to another person until the process of plan redesign has been completed. It is expected that the redesign of the pension plan will be completed by July 1, 2005.

II. Primary qualifications

The person appointed to this office shall:

A. Be a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of the CRC who is strongly committed to the binational ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.

B. Have appropriate training in financial management.

C. Have senior managerial experience.

D. Possess personal and professional integrity and have a love for the mission of the Christian Reformed Church.

III. General responsibilities

A. Prepare and manage the budget-development process and monitor the unified budget performance of the CRCNA.

B. Prepare and interpret a monthly consolidated statement of income and expenses, as well as other analytical reports, for the executive director and general secretary (ED&GS), the director of denominational ministries (DDM), and the Board of Trustees (BOT).

C. Supervise the work of the director of personnel, the controllers in the United States and Canada, the director of product services, the director of information services, the director of the CRC Loan Fund, and the facilities supervisor. The DFAS also maintains a communication relationship with the financial officers at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary.

D. Manage the financial resources of the CRCNA (i.e., common cash management accounts, restricted cash investments, inventory levels, accounts payable, loans receivable, and capital acquisitions).

E. Monitor, through the finance staff, the budgets of the Back to God Hour, the CRC Denominational Offices in Canada and the United States, CR Home Missions, CRC Publications, CRWRC, and CR World Missions.

F. Oversee the risk management provisions, maintaining adequate casualty and liability insurance coverage commensurate to the risks involved. The DFSA shall also ensure that adequate auditing and bonding requirements are met.

G. Establish adequate standardized operating procedures with and for classical treasurers to facilitate compliance with synodical mandates.

IV. Accountability and terms of service

The DFAS shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees and be supervised by the ED&GS. The appointment shall be made by the Board and ratified by synod. Continued employment is subject to an annual performance review conducted by the ED&GS and reviewed by the Board.

Approved February 2004

Appendix I-7

Mandate of the Ministry Council (MC)

I. Mandate

The Ministry Council (MC) shall be the senior administrative entity for the administration of the denominational ministries. As such, the MC will function with respect to the following:

A. The MC will be responsible for reviewing, recommending amendments, coordinating, and monitoring the implementation of the Denominational Ministries Plan (DMP), and make its own decisions in accordance with it.

B. The MC will monitor the decisions of all agency administrative teams and shall have the authority to require further information and/or reconsideration of a matter when, in the MC's judgment, such action is warranted.

C. The MC will review and comment on agency recommendations that are to be considered by the Board of Trustees (BOT). The MC will not ordinarily seek to alter an agency decision but, if necessary, has the right of comment on any recommendation that will be on the BOT agenda.

D. The MC will ordinarily relate to the internal operations of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary in an informational manner. The MC will have the right to address college and seminary matters that directly relate to interagency cooperation or that flow from the DMP.

E. The MC will officially endorse or not endorse all policy recommendations advanced by an agency for consideration by the BOT.

F. The MC will have the prerogative of comment and/or direct communication with an agency board when that agency's administrative staff proposes a matter for consideration by that agency board.

G. The MC shall prepare and propose a unified budget for consideration by the BOT, including but not limited to, a recommendation for the allocation of financial resources.

II. Composition

The membership of the MC shall consist of the following positions:

- The executive director and general secretary (ED&GS), who shall be its convener and chair.
- The director of denominational ministries (DDM), who shall be the vice-chair.
- The Canadian ministries director (CMD).
- The director of finance and administrative services (DFAS).
- The director of personnel (DP).
- The executive director of The Back to God Hour.
- The president of Calvin College (or his designee).
- The vice president for administration of Calvin Theological Seminary.
- The executive director of CRC Publications.
- The executive director of CR Home Missions.
- The executive directors of CRWRC.
- The executive director of CR World Missions.

III. Relationship of the MC to the ED&GS

While the ED&GS is the convener and chair of the MC, and while it is expected that the MC decisions shall be considered as significant input by the ED&GS, the ED&GS is an agent for the BOT and is accountable to the BOT for all matters that relate to that function. Therefore, the ED&GS may demur from a decision of the MC by stating the same to the MC in an appropriate manner. When such a situation develops, the ED&GS shall communicate his/her disagreement to the BOT not later than the time that the matter is placed on the BOT agenda.

IV. Appeal procedure

Decisions of the MC may be appealed to the BOT when a member of the MC, or an agency board, believes that its prerogatives or ministry is compromised by a MC decision. The action of the BOT concerning any appeal shall be final and binding on all concerned.

Appendix J

Ministries Priorities Committee Report

I. Background

As a result of the Board of Trustees' (BOT's) continuing review of the Agencies' and Institutions' Ministries Review Report and the BOT's study of the recommendations of the Review Process Committee (RPC), the Board appointed a committee of seven persons with the following mandate:

Based on the assessment of the reviews presented herewith, the Denominational Ministries Plan, the committee's own analysis of all agency and educational institution mandates, the current ministry opportunities as globally perceived, and in the light of available human and financial resources, the committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees clear overall ministry priorities that can guide the church in deciding the allocation of resources and the refining of ministry choices (BOT Minute 2680, B).

As the committee began its work, it soon discovered that while there was great diversity of thought regarding the specific priorities of each agency, institution, and office, there was also a common thread that ran through each one. That common thread was the connection of each entity with the local congregations that make up the CRCNA. At the same time, the committee discovered that many local congregations are struggling to meet their own ministry priorities. As a result, the committee soon began to focus on the needs of the broad base of local congregations that supports denominational and classical ministries.

Before seeking to determine the priority or priorities for the denomination, the committee worked to discover the purpose of the denomination. In doing so, the committee identified four distinct, though sometimes overlapping, purposes for denominations in general and the CRCNA in particular. All four focus on what the denomination can and should provide to the local churches or the broader Christian community. The denomination should provide:

A. A place to call home

A major part of a denomination's purpose is to create for congregations a sense of belonging to a greater calling and organization than can be provided at the local level. In earlier times, this sense of unity was shaped around theology borne out of the Reformation of the 1600s and further refinement of reformation theology. In later times, this sense of belonging solidified itself around an ethnic heritage as the church found its place in the "new world." For nearly one hundred years, the CRCNA was identified as the "Dutch" Reformed church. Today, while that sense of unity and belonging has diminished greatly, what unity does exist appears to be tied more to what we have done or are doing than to who we are and what we believe. While the Denominational Ministries Plan's identity statement is a good step toward rebuilding our denominational cohesion, unity today is primarily found in the work of CRWRC, CRWM, CRHM, The BTGH, our publications (particularly *The Banner*), and our college and seminary. Even many who have left the CRC continue to support these agencies and institutions and to identify with the CRC through their affiliation with these organizations.

The denominational home, in addition, provides an important and necessary place for mutual accountability of congregations, as exercised in its classical and synodical assemblies, as well as a structure for essential denominational administration.

B. Services to local churches

Already early in its history, the denomination focused its attention on providing services to the local churches, with particular emphasis on providing ministers and teachers. The very first project was the establishment of Calvin Theological Seminary in 1876, a ministry that, in the minds of some, saved the fledgling denomination from death. Historically, the denomination has provided a seminary intended primarily to train ministers (preachers) for the local churches. Once this desire for qualified pastors had been met, Calvin College was established to provide well-trained Christian school teachers to the churches. As time passed, the denomination served the local churches in other ways, not the least of which was the educational material provided by CRC Publications. In recent years, CRHM, through its Established Church Development department, has provided local churches with materials, staff,

and support intended to enhance certain aspects of local ministry. Additionally, CRWRC has provided diaconal training and resources, and our pastoral ministries and the now defunct Fund for Smaller Churches (FSC) have served the churches in their local ministries.

C. Opportunities for joint ministry

Once the seminary and college were established, the church began to look beyond its own needs. Responding to God's call, the church shifted its focus outward. Soon the primary focus of the denomination was to provide opportunities for local churches to participate in joint ministries around the world. This desire to accomplish joint ministries formed the genesis for CRWM, CRHM, CRWRC, and The BTGH. In addition, other institutions and agencies have added joint ministry components to their ministries. Calvin College, for example, while once primarily a service provider to CRC students, now provides an education to a significant number of students coming from non-CRC churches. CRC Publications, while still primarily meeting the needs of local CRC churches, also publishes and disseminates Reformed literature in Spanish and other languages for use by other denominations and communities. Even Calvin Theological Seminary, while historically focused on producing local pastors and theological professors, has shifted many resources toward its Ph.D. program, which provides little service directly to local CRC churches.

D. A voice to the international church and to society at large

This voice is important and necessary in the fractured Christian church and in our broken society. Through the work of a small but diligent group of CRC representatives, the CRCNA has had a significant impact on the broader church. Both Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, as well as others, serve to clearly articulate and espouse a distinct world and life view that has significantly impacted our culture. Similarly, members of local congregations and, to a lesser extent, persons in positions funded by the denomination, make important contributions to bringing the claims of Jesus Christ to bear in education, justice, labor, and politics.

While all four of these purposes are evident in the CRCNA, there can be little doubt that, in terms of allocation of financial resources over the last fifty to seventy-five years, the primary focus of the denomination has been in the area of joint ministry. Recent financial statements show that the total budgets of the four agencies that are primarily charged with doing such joint ministries account for nearly 75 percent of the denomination's financial resources (including both ministry shares and other sources of income).

II. The questions before us

Given the present church environment, is it time for the CRCNA to evaluate its present ministry priorities? Should we continue to focus our efforts on joint ministries or should we shift our focus elsewhere? As the average age of our denomination increases and the size of local churches continues to decline, the present denominational system is straining under the load of ever increasing expectations and declining resources. Under the present circumstances, it would appear that the denominational priority must now shift from providing joint ministry opportunities and services to assuring that we have healthy local churches. Unless we create and maintain local churches that are vital,

healthy, and growing, the present system will eventually collapse under its own weight.

Rather than simply redistributing our present declining resources, the committee believes it is time to set a new priority for the CRCNA. We recommend such a shift in priority in the full awareness that priorities are always time-bound. That which is the present priority will change with time and circumstances. The recent changes and present circumstances of the CRCNA have led the committee to focus on the health of the CRCNA and, more particularly, the health of local congregations.

If the CRCNA should choose to shift its priority from joint ministries to creating and maintaining healthy local congregations, we must also clearly define what we mean by *healthy congregations*. The committee spent a great deal of time and effort wrestling with this question. In the process, we discovered many different definitions of healthy congregations. We also discovered numerous systems and programs designed to measure congregational health. While these definitions, systems, and programs can be very helpful and may, in time, be used to assist the denomination in measuring church health, the committee bases its working definition on Acts 2:41-47.

⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

In making this choice, the committee realizes that much must still be done to refine and clarify a good working definition of *healthy congregations*.

III. Recommendations

The committee recommends:

A. That the BOT adopt as its priority for the next five to ten years the creation and sustainability of healthy local congregations in North America.

Grounds:

1. Many local congregations are struggling to build and maintain strong local ministries within their own ministry communities.
2. The local congregations form the foundation that supports joint denominational ministries. If the health of these local churches is not maintained, the ability to continue joint ministries could be greatly impaired.
3. Strong healthy local congregations are necessary to fulfill the great commission in the present North American context.
4. The future viability of the CRCNA depends on maintaining a collaborative relationship between local congregations and the agencies and institutions of the CRCNA.
5. This priority is strongly consistent with the strategic priorities of the Denominational Ministries Plan.

B. That the BOT immediately create a new committee to determine the steps necessary to implement this priority. (The BOT is encouraged to make use of the experience of the present priorities committee as it deems appropriate.) The new committee should consider:

1. Adopting specific goals for creating and sustaining healthy local congregations.
2. Establishing a denominational Office of Congregational Services.
3. Reviewing the present mandates of all CRCNA agencies and institutions.
4. Restructuring as needed to implement this new priority.

C. That the BOT activate the committee approved at the February 2003 Board meeting (BOT Minute 2680, C):

Appoint a committee of seven (7) persons with the following mandate:

The committee will review the current organizational structure of the agencies and Board of Trustees, and recommend adjustments thereto, taking into consideration synod's structure decisions of 1997 and 1999, as well as the recommendations of the Denominational Offices review team.

Grounds for B and C:

1. It is the BOT's responsibility to recommend ministry priorities to synod.
2. Setting priorities, including a decision on what the CRC should be doing in ministry, is most effectively done prior to developing strategic and measurable goals to supplement the Denominational Ministries Plan (cf. Denominational Offices Review Team Recommendations re a Strategic Plan).
3. In an environment where choices will need to be made sooner, rather than later, the BOT's guidance is needed to guide the denominational effort and its administrative implementation.
4. Significant organizational issues remain unresolved due to the decision of Synod 1999 not to adopt the U.S. Structure Committee recommendations. There continues to be confusion and differences of opinion whether the 1997 Canadian Structure decisions are operative in view of the 1999 decision. An interpretation is needed as to the meaning of the Synod 1999 declaration "that structures are already in place that can be utilized to achieve the goals of the study committee—bring about compliance, coordination, communication, and joint efforts among the agencies—without having to change the current governance structure" (*Acts of Synod 1999*, p. 596). The present relatively independent governance structure needs to be harmonized with an integrated administrative model.

Ministries Priorities Committee

Peter Borgdorff, ex-officio
Michael Bruinooge, advisor
Paul Dozeman
Gerard Dykstra, reporter
W. Wayne Leys, chair
William Vanden Born
Jane Vander Haagen
Edward Vanderveer
Beverly Weeks

Appendix K

Condensed Financial Statements of the Agencies and Institutions

Back to God Hour/CRC-TV Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 777	-	-	-	777
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	2,699	1,910	-	100	4,709
Receivables & Advances	50	-	18	-	68
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	751	-	-	-	751
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	4,277	1,910	18	100	6,305
Accounts Payable	482	-	-	-	482
Notes/Loans Payable	719	-	-	-	719
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	1,607	-	-	-	1,607
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	2,808	-	-	-	2,808
Net Assets	\$ 1,469	1,910	18	100	3,497
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not in use.	<p>Funds relating to annuity contracts are segregated. The income from these funds is used for payments on annuity contracts.</p> <p>Board Restrictions: 1,910,000 Estate</p> <p>In process church programs with Home Missions</p> <p>Permanently restricted endowment funds.</p>				
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Back to God Hour/CRC-TV
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual	Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:			
Ministry Share	\$	4,435	\$ 4,081
% of Total Income		48.3%	42.6%
Other Gift Income:			
Above Ministry Share	\$	3,395	\$ 3,063
Estate Gifts	\$	869	\$ 1,852
Total Gift Income		4,264	4,915
% of Total Income		46.5%	51.3%
Other Income:			
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$ -
Grants-Animation	\$	398	\$ 237
Miscellaneous	\$	80	\$ 339
Total Other Income		478	576
% of Total Income		5.2%	6.0%
TOTAL INCOME		9,177	9,572
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):			
Program Services:			
English	\$	2,875	\$ 2,702
FTEs		5	5
International	\$	2,958	\$ 3,129
FTEs		12	12
Television	\$	2,035	\$ 1,891
FTEs		10	10
Television - Animation	\$	750	\$ 849
		-	-
New Language Program Initiatives	\$	-	\$ -
		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
		-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$	8,618	\$ 8,571
Total Program Service FTEs		27	27
% of Total \$		85.7%	84.2%
% of Total FTEs		79.4%	75.0%
Support Services:			
Management & General	\$	471	\$ 513
FTEs		3	4
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Fund-raising	\$	964	\$ 1,093
FTEs		4	5
Total Support Service \$		1,435	1,606
Total Support Service FTEs		7	9
% of Total \$		14.3%	15.8%
% of Total FTEs		20.6%	25.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	10,053	\$ 10,177
TOTAL FTEs		34	36
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	(876)	\$ (605)

**Calvin College
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 1,174	-			1,174
CDs, Time Deposits	100	-	-	-	100
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	15,103	-	1,073	1,664	17,840
Inventory	513	-		-	513
Prepays & Advances	660	-	7		667
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	22,503	-	1,179	12,349	36,031
Equities	24,623	-	6,505	34,554	65,682
Partnerships	-	-	-	3,478	3,478
Property (nonoperating)	70	-	-	68	138
PP & E	122,261	-	-	-	122,261
Other	6,977	-	3,392	1,736	12,105
Total Assets	193,984	-	12,156	53,849	259,989
Accounts Payable	3,023	-	-	-	3,023
Notes/Loans Payable	50,825	-	-	205	51,030
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	5,209	-	-	-	5,209
Deferred Income	829	-	-	-	829
Other	29,956	-	142	736	30,834
Total Liabilities	89,842	-	142	941	90,925
Net Assets	\$ 104,142	-	12,014	52,908	169,064
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Over 500 accounts for instruction, scholarships, grants, research, public service, student services, etc., funded by outside sources				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	endowed gifts				

**Calvin College
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	2,853	\$	2,798
% of Total Income		3.5%		3.2%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	2,553	\$	2,677
Estate Gifts	\$	16	\$	34
Total Gift Income		2,569		2,711
% of Total Income		3.1%		3.1%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	75,741	\$	81,432
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	1,195	\$	1,687
Total Other Income		76,936		83,119
% of Total Income		93.4%		93.8%
TOTAL INCOME		82,358		88,628
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Education	\$	69,838	\$	74,555
FTEs		565		589
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	69,838	\$	74,555
Total Program Service FTEs		565		589
% of Total \$		86.9%		86.6%
% of Total FTEs		82.4%		82.3%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	4,138	\$	4,471
FTEs		44		48
Plant Operations	\$	4,355	\$	4,727
FTEs		55		56
Fund Raising	\$	2,030	\$	2,356
FTEs		22		23
Total Support Service \$		10,523		11,554
Total Support Service FTEs		121		127
% of Total \$		13.1%		13.4%
% of Total FTEs		17.6%		17.7%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	80,361	\$	86,109
TOTAL FTEs		686		716
NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)	\$	1,997	\$	2,519

**Calvin Seminary
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 326	-	-	-	326
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	1,046	-	-	-	1,046
Receivables & Advances	1,154	1,202	-	-	2,356
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	30	-	-	30
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	10,821	-	-	-	10,821
Other	29	1,222	-	-	1,251
Total Assets	13,376	2,454	-	-	15,830
Accounts Payable	493	468	-	-	961
Notes/Loans Payable	660	282	-	-	942
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	157	-	1	-	158
Other	621	-	-	-	621
Total Liabilities	1,931	750	1	-	2,682
Net Assets	\$ 11,445	1,704	(1)	-	13,148
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.	NOT INCLUDED ABOVE: Endowment, annuity, and trust funds \$14 502M, annuity payable \$405M, any balance due to other funds for these assets is included under "other" as unrestricted in Ag. Desig.				
Note 2: List details of designations.	Construction receivables and liabilities, student loan receivables, and liabilities				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	scholarship and grants				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Calvin Seminary
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	2,201	\$	2,519
% of Total Income		49.6%		47.6%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	736	\$	873
Estate Gifts	\$	79	\$	91
Total Gift Income		815		964
% of Total Income		18.4%		18.2%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	1,264	\$	1,318
Grants	\$	25	\$	369
Miscellaneous	\$	133	\$	124
Total Other Income		1,422		1,811
% of Total Income		32.0%		34.2%
TOTAL INCOME		4,438		5,294
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Instructional	\$	1,899	\$	2,471
FTEs		28		27
Public Service	\$	86	\$	66
FTEs		-		-
Academic Support	\$	727	\$	655
FTEs		3		3
Student Services	\$	477	\$	490
FTEs		4		4
Student Aid	\$	345	\$	263
FTEs		2		1
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	3,534	\$	3,945
Total Program Service FTEs		37		35
% of Total \$		77.0%		75.0%
% of Total FTEs		76.5%		77.8%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	571	\$	544
FTEs		7		5
Plant Operations	\$	260	\$	311
FTEs		2		2
Fund Raising	\$	366	\$	460
FTEs		3		3
Total Support Service \$		1,198		1,315
Total Support Service FTEs		11		10
% of Total \$		25.3%		25.0%
% of Total FTEs		23.5%		22.2%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	4,732	\$	5,260
TOTAL FTEs		49		45
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	(294)	\$	34

INCLUDED IN DENOMINATIONAL SERVICES

**Canadian Ministries
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	521	\$	583
% of Total Income		83.6%		94.6%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	60	\$	33
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$	-
Total Gift Income		60		33
% of Total Income		9.6%		5.4%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$	-
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	42	\$	-
Total Other Income		42		-
% of Total Income		6.7%		0.0%
TOTAL INCOME		623		616
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Govt. Contact/Church in Soc.	\$	26	\$	45
FTEs		1		1
Indian Ministries	\$	322	\$	359
FTEs		3		3
Electronic Media	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Canadian Ministry Forum	\$	23	\$	2
FTEs		-		-
Other	\$	27	\$	23
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	398	\$	429
Total Program Service FTEs		4		4
% of Total \$		91.5%		91.9%
% of Total FTEs		100.0%		100.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	37	\$	38
FTEs		-		-
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund Raising	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service \$		37		38
Total Support Service FTEs		-		-
% of Total \$		8.5%		8.1%
% of Total FTEs		0.0%		0.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	435	\$	467
TOTAL FTEs		4		4
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	188	\$	149

**Consolidated Group Insurance - U.S.
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	December 31, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 1,743	-	-	-	1,743
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	41	-	-	-	41
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	171	-	-	-	171
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	2,805	-	-	-	2,805
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	4,760	-	-	-	4,760
Accounts Payable	276	-	-	-	276
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	522	-	-	-	522
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	798	-	-	-	798
Net Assets	\$ 3,962	-	-	-	3,962
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Consolidated Group Insurance - U.S.
Changes in Net Assets (000s)**

	2002 Actual		2003 Actual	
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	\$	-	\$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	-	\$	-
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$	-
Total Gift Income		-		-
% of Total Income		0.0%		0.0%
Other Income:				
Participant Premiums	\$	6,677	\$	7,245
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	213	\$	100
Total Other Income		6,890		7,345
% of Total Income		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS		6,890		7,345
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Claims Expense	\$	5,110	\$	5,808
FTEs		-		-
Insurance Premiums	\$	363	\$	353
FTEs		-		-
TPA & PPO Fees	\$	612	\$	529
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	6,085	\$	6,690
Total Program Service FTEs		-		-
% of Total \$		97.0%		97.3%
% of Total FTEs		0.0%		0.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	185	\$	187
FTEs		3		3
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service \$		185		187
Total Support Service FTEs		3		3
% of Total \$		4.3%		4.3%
% of Total FTEs		100.0%		100.0%
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$	6,270	\$	6,877
TOTAL FTEs		3		3
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$	620	\$	468

**CRC Publications
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 867	500	29	-	1,396
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	790	-	35	-	825
Inventory	1,973	-	-	-	1,973
Prepays & Advances	95	-	-	-	95
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	45	-	-	-	45
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	3,770	500	64	-	4,334
Accounts Payable	479	-	-	-	479
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	638	-	-	-	638
Other	190	-	-	-	190
Total Liabilities	1,307	-	-	-	1,307
Net Assets	\$ 2,463	500	64	-	3,027
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.	Funds for new curriculum development cost				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Language and special project use - eg. Spanish & Russian				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

CRC Publications
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual	Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:			
Ministry Share	\$	364	\$ 736
% of Total Income		6.3%	12.6%
Other Gift Income:			
Above Ministry Share	\$	83	\$ 65
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$ -
Total Gift Income		83	65
% of Total Income		1.4%	1.1%
Other Income:			
Tuition & Sales	\$	5,212	\$ 4,909
Grants	\$	108	\$ 118
Miscellaneous	\$	16	\$ 14
Total Other Income		5,336	5,041
% of Total Income		92.3%	86.3%
TOTAL INCOME		5,783	5,842
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):			
Program Services:			
Banner	\$	1,122	\$ 819
FTEs		5	4
Education	\$	3,590	\$ 3,390
FTEs		23	20
World Literature	\$	728	\$ 493
FTEs		5	3
	\$	-	\$ -
		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
		-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$	5,440	\$ 4,702
Total Program Service FTEs		33	27
% of Total \$		89.5%	88.6%
% of Total FTEs		94.3%	93.1%
Support Services:			
Management & General	\$	636	\$ 603
FTEs		2	2
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Fund Raising	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Total Support Service \$		636	603
Total Support Service FTEs		2	2
% of Total \$		10.5%	11.4%
% of Total FTEs		5.7%	6.9%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	6,076	\$ 5,305
TOTAL FTEs		35	29
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	(293)	\$ 537

**Denominational Services
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 1,344	-	2,077	-	3,421
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	1,015	-	-	-	1,015
Inventory	357	-	-	-	357
Prepays & Advances	24	-	-	-	24
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	9,097	-	-	-	9,097
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	5,302	-	-	-	5,302
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	17,139	-	2,077	-	19,216
Accounts Payable	649	-	-	-	649
Notes/Loans Payable	9,480	-	-	-	9,480
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	215	-	-	-	215
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	10,344	-	-	-	10,344
Net Assets	\$ 6,795	-	2,077	-	8,872
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property currently in use.	Canadian Cash Concentration and Netting for Interest Program				
Note 2: List details of designations					
Note 3: List details of restrictions	Includes \$1,974,000 of Lilly Foundation grant balance				
Note 4: List details of restrictions					

**Denominational Services
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	1,879	\$	1,995
% of Total Income		18.4%		16.7%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	49	\$	52
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$	-
Total Gift Income		49		52
% of Total Income		0.5%		0.4%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	4,758	\$	4,111
Grants	\$	87	\$	2,183
Miscellaneous	\$	3,420	\$	3,596
Total Other Income		8,265		9,890
% of Total Income		81.1%		82.9%
TOTAL INCOME		10,193		11,937
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Synodical Services & Grants	\$	1,027	\$	881
FTEs		5		5
Soc Just Ed./Communications	\$	223	\$	253
FTEs		2		2
CRCPlan/Lilly Grant	\$	254	\$	179
FTEs		2		2
CS/PS Cost of Goods Sold	\$	5,119	\$	4,633
FTEs		31		30
Finance/Payroll/Development	\$	1,367	\$	1,527
FTEs		17		17
Information Services	\$	554	\$	530
FTEs		7		7
Personnel	\$	116	\$	126
FTEs		2		2
Total Program Service \$	\$	8,660	\$	8,129
Total Program Service FTEs		66		65
% of Total \$		88.0%		85.9%
% of Total FTEs		88.0%		87.8%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	523	\$	627
FTEs		5		5
Plant Operations/Debt Serv.	\$	608	\$	638
FTEs		3		3
Fund Raising (Foundation)	\$	51	\$	71
FTEs		1		1
Total Support Service \$		1,182		1,336
Total Support Service FTEs		9		9
% of Total \$		12.0%		14.1%
% of Total FTEs		12.0%		12.2%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	9,842	\$	9,465
TOTAL FTEs		75		74
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	351	\$	2,472

Employees' Retirement Plan - United States
Balance Sheet (000s)

	December 31, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ -	-	-	-	-
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	24	-	-	-	24
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	2,462		-	-	2,462
Equities	7,882		-	-	7,882
GICs / Stable Asset Fund	5,788		-	-	5,788
Property (non-operating)			-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	16,156	-	-	-	16,156
Accounts Payable	3	-	-	-	3
Forfeitures Due Agencies	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable		-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	3	-	-	-	3
Net Assets	\$ 16,153	-	-	-	16,153
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

Employees' Retirement Plan - United States
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

		2002 Actual	2003 Actual
ADDITIONS:			
Ministry Share	\$	-	\$ -
% of Total Income		0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:			
Above Ministry Share	\$	-	\$ -
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$ -
Total Gift Income		-	-
% of Total Income		0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:			
Employer Contributions	\$	922	\$ 912
Grants	\$	-	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$	(1,221)	\$ 2,020
Total Other Income		(299)	2,932
% of Total Income		100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS		(299)	2,932
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):			
Program Services:			
Distributions	\$	655	\$ 1,345
FTEs		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Total Program-service \$	\$	655	\$ 1,345
Total Program-service FTEs		-	-
% of Total \$		88.4%	93.9%
% of Total FTEs		0.0%	0.0%
Support Services:			
Management & General	\$	86	\$ 87
FTEs		1	1
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Fund-raising	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Total Support-service \$		86	87
Total Support-service FTEs		1	1
% of Total \$		11.6%	6.1%
% of Total FTEs		100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$	741	\$ 1,432
TOTAL FTEs		1	1
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$	(1,040)	\$ 1,500

Fund for Smaller Churches
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 1,026	-	-	-	1,026
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	1	-	-	-	1
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	-	-	-	-
Equities	-	-	-	-	-
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	1,027	-	-	-	1,027
Accounts Payable	6	-	-	-	6
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	6	-	-	-	6
Net Assets	\$ 1,021	-	-	-	1,021
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					

**Fund for Smaller Churches
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	356	\$	261
% of Total Income		91.8%		91.3%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	5	\$	1
Estate Gifts	\$	-	\$	-
Total Gift Income		5		1
% of Total Income		1.3%		0.3%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$	-
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	27	\$	24
Total Other Income		27		24
% of Total Income		7.0%		8.4%
TOTAL INCOME		388		286
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Subsidy Requests	\$	211	\$	405
FTEs		1		1
Auto & Moving Expenses	\$	15	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Small Church Specialists	\$	64	\$	58
FTEs		-		-
Education	\$	15	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Small Church Technology Upgrade	\$	16	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Small Church Program Support	\$	79	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	400	\$	463
Total Program Service FTEs		1		1
% of Total \$		97.1%		96.9%
% of Total FTEs		100.0%		100.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	12	\$	15
FTEs		-		-
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund Raising	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Total Support Service \$		12		15
Total Support Service FTEs		-		-
% of Total \$		2.9%		3.1%
% of Total FTEs		0.0%		0.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	412	\$	478
TOTAL FTEs		1		1
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	(24)	\$	(192)

**Home Missions
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 1,067	-	-	-	1,067
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	1,927	-	-	72	1,999
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	34	-	-	-	34
Investments (note 1):	860	380	15	-	1,255
Bonds	-	71	-	484	555
Equities	-	2,982	-	-	2,982
Partnerships	19	-	-	-	19
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	104	-	-	-	104
Other	-	-	-	-	-
	4,011	3,433	15	556	8,015
Total Assets					
Accounts Payable	700	-	-	-	700
Notes/Loans Payable	91	-	-	-	91
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	361	-	-	-	361
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
	1,152	-	-	-	1,152
Total Liabilities					
Net Assets	\$ 2,859	3,433	15	556	6,863
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.					
Note 3: List details of restrictions.					
Note 4: List details of restrictions.					
	Trng:\$380 Hawaii: \$1268 Estates: \$1813 NA Trng: \$15 Short term Loan:\$481 NA Trn:\$30 Trust:\$15				

**Home Missions
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	4,920	\$	4,713
% of Total Income		64.1%		62.9%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	1,737	\$	1,342
Estate Gifts	\$	271	\$	728
Total Gift Income		2,008		2,070
% of Total Income		26.2%		27.6%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	112	\$	87
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	638	\$	623
Total Other Income		750		710
% of Total Income		9.8%		9.5%
TOTAL INCOME		7,678		7,493
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
New-Church Development	\$	4,778	\$	4,077
FTEs		12		13
Established-Church Develop.	\$	1,798	\$	1,645
FTEs		16		17
Campus/schools	\$	917	\$	922
FTEs		2		2
Ministry Teams	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Ministry Development	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
	\$	-	\$	-
Total Program Service \$	\$	7,493	\$	6,644
Total Program Service FTEs		30		32
% of Total \$		84.8%		82.7%
% of Total FTEs		76.9%		78.0%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	700	\$	725
FTEs		3		3
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund Raising	\$	647	\$	665
FTEs		6		6
Total Support Service \$		1,347		1,390
Total Support Service FTEs		9		9
% of Total \$		15.2%		17.3%
% of Total FTEs		23.1%		22.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	8,840	\$	8,034
TOTAL FTEs		39		41
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	(1,162)	\$	(541)

Loan Fund
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 7,674	-	-	-	7,674
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	11,640	-	-	-	11,640
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-		-	-	-
Equities	-		-	-	-
Partnerships	-		-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	6	-	-	-	6
Total Assets	19,320	-	-	-	19,320
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Notes/Loans Payable	15,189	-	-	-	15,189
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable		-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	15,189	-	-	-	15,189
Net Assets	\$ 4,131	-	-	-	4,131
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations					
Note 3: List details of restrictions					
Note 4: List details of restrictions					

Loan Fund
Income and Expenses (000s)

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual	Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:			
Ministry Share	\$	- \$	-
% of Total Income		0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:			
Above Ministry Share	\$	- \$	-
Estate Gifts	\$	- \$	-
Total Gift Income		-	-
% of Total Income		0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:			
Tuition & Sales	\$	- \$	-
Grants	\$	- \$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	1,099 \$	965
Total Other Income		1,099	965
% of Total Income		100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL INCOME		1,099	965
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):			
Program Services:			
Loan Interest	\$	797 \$	677
FTEs		1	1
	\$	- \$	-
FTEs		-	-
	\$	- \$	-
FTEs		-	-
	\$	- \$	-
		-	-
	\$	- \$	-
		-	-
	\$	- \$	-
		-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$	797 \$	677
Total Program Service FTEs		1	1
% of Total \$		79.5%	82.5%
% of Total FTEs		50.0%	50.0%
Support Services:			
Management & General	\$	205 \$	144
FTEs		1	1
Plant Operations	\$	- \$	-
FTEs		-	-
Fund-raising	\$	- \$	-
FTEs		-	-
Total Support Service \$		205	144
Total Support Service FTEs		1	1
% of Total \$		20.5%	17.5%
% of Total FTEs		50.0%	50.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	1,002 \$	821
TOTAL FTEs		2	2
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	97 \$	144

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - Canada
Balance Sheet (000s) in Canadian \$

	December 31, 2003				
	Pension	S.A.F			Total
Cash	\$ 1,804	111	-	-	1,915
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	173	-	-	-	173
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	8,763	-	-	-	8,763
Equities	12,501	-	-	-	12,501
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	23,241	111	-	-	23,352
Accounts Payable	350	-	-	-	350
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	350	-	-	-	350
Net Assets	\$ 22,891	111	-	-	23,002
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations					
Note 3: List details of restrictions					
Note 4: List details of restrictions					

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - Canada
Changes in Net Assets (000s) in Canadian \$

	MPF 2002 Actual	MPF 2003 Actual	SAF 2002 Actual	SAF 2003 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:				
Participant Assessments	\$ 1,036	\$ 1,151	\$ -	-
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Miscellaneous	\$ (909)	\$ 2,698	\$ 2	3
Total Other Income	127	3,849	2	3
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	127	3,849	2	3
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	\$ 1,686	\$ 1,743	\$ 18	25
FTEs	-	-	-	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 1,686	\$ 1,743	\$ 18	25
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	85.3%	85.7%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%		
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$ 290	\$ 290	\$ -	-
FTEs	1	1	-	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	290	290	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1	-	-
% of Total \$	14.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%		
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 1,976	\$ 2,033	\$ 18	25
TOTAL FTEs	1	1	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ (1,849)	\$ 1,816	\$ (16)	(22)

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States
Balance Sheet (000s)

	-----December 31, 2003-----				
	Pension	S.A.F			Total
Cash	\$ 3,198	104	-	-	3,302
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	622	-	-	-	622
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	26,570	-	-	-	26,570
Equities	58,852	-	-	-	58,852
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	89,242	104	-	-	89,346
Accounts Payable	149	-	-	-	149
Notes/Loans Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	149	-	-	-	149
Net Assets	\$ 89,093	104	-	-	89,197
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations					
Note 3: List details of restrictions					
Note 4: List details of restrictions					

Ministers' Pension Fund and Special Assistance Fund - United States
Changes in Net Assets (000s)

	MPF 2002 Actual	MPF 2003 Actual	SAF 2002 Actual	SAF 2003 Actual
ADDITIONS:				
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Estate Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Total Gift Income	-	-	-	-
% of Total Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Income:				
Participant Assessments	\$ 2,701	\$ 2,889	\$ -	-
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Miscellaneous	\$ (9,275)	\$ 15,139	\$ 4	2
Total Other Income	(6,574)	18,028	4	2
% of Total Income	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TOTAL ADDITIONS	(6,574)	18,028	4	2
DEDUCTIONS (FTE = Full-Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Distributions	\$ 6,120	\$ 6,250	\$ 54	40
FTEs	-	-	-	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Total Program Service \$	\$ 6,120	\$ 6,250	\$ 54	40
Total Program Service FTEs	-	-	-	-
% of Total \$	92.4%	90.8%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total FTEs	0.0%	0.0%		
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$ 505	\$ 633	\$ -	-
FTEs	1	1	-	-
Plant Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Fund-raising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Total Support Service \$	505	633	-	-
Total Support Service FTEs	1	1	-	-
% of Total \$	7.6%	9.2%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Total FTEs	100.0%	100.0%		
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$ 6,625	\$ 6,883	\$ 54	40
TOTAL FTEs	1	1	-	-
NET ADDITIONS / (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ (13,199)	\$ 11,145	\$ (50)	\$(38)

INCLUDED IN DENOMINATIONAL SERVICES

**Pastoral Ministries
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	1,232	\$	1,310
% of Total Income		87.1%		85.0%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	138	\$	172
Estate Gifts	\$	1	\$	1
Total Gift Income		139		173
% of Total Income		9.8%		11.2%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	4	\$	7
Grants	\$	40	\$	52
Miscellaneous	\$	-	\$	-
Total Other Income		44		59
% of Total Income		3.1%		3.8%
TOTAL INCOME		1,415		1,542
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Chaplaincy Services	\$	262	\$	267
FTEs		2		3
Race Relations	\$	385	\$	408
FTEs		4		4
Pastor-Church Relations	\$	394	\$	410
FTEs		2		3
Abuse Prevention	\$	141	\$	146
FTEs		1		1
Disability Concerns	\$	172	\$	180
FTEs		1		1
FTEs	\$	-	\$	-
Total Program Service \$	\$	1,354	\$	1,411
Total Program Service FTEs		10		12
% of Total \$		98.4%		98.5%
% of Total FTEs		90.9%		92.3%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund Raising	\$	22	\$	21
FTEs		1		1
Total Support Service \$		22		21
Total Support Service FTEs		1		1
% of Total \$		1.6%		1.5%
% of Total FTEs		9.1%		7.7%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	1,376	\$	1,432
TOTAL FTEs		11		13
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	39	\$	110

**World Missions
Balance Sheet (000s)**

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ 904	2,404	906	3	4,217
CDs, Time Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	631	-	-	-	631
Inventory	262	-	-	-	262
Prepays & Advances	15	-	-	-	15
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	106	563	103	483	1,255
Equities	30	28	-	396	454
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	70	-	-	-	70
PP & E	619	-	-	-	619
Other	69	-	-	-	69
Total Assets	2,706	2,995	1,009	882	7,592
Accounts Payable	568	128	-	-	696
Notes/Loans Payable	64	-	-	-	64
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	372	-	-	-	372
Deferred Income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1,254	-	-	-	1,254
Total Liabilities	2,258	128	-	-	2,386
Net Assets	\$ 448	2,867	1,009	882	5,206
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.	Restricted Land Gift \$70				
Note 2: List details of designations.	Japan Fund \$1,886 - Legacy Fund \$585 - Insurance Fund \$171 Endowment/Annuities \$167 - Other \$57				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Restricted Gifts \$904 & Unitrust				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Endowments				

**World Missions
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual		Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:				
Ministry Share	\$	4,858	\$	4,623
% of Total Income		37.6%		36.9%
Other Gift Income:				
Above Ministry Share	\$	5,645	\$	5,424
Estate Gifts	\$	609	\$	1,139
Total Gift Income		6,254		6,563
% of Total Income		48.4%		52.3%
Other Income:				
Tuition & Sales	\$	891	\$	716
Grants	\$	-	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	913	\$	635
Total Other Income		1,804		1,351
% of Total Income		14.0%		10.8%
TOTAL INCOME		12,916		12,537
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):				
Program Services:				
Africa	\$	3,051	\$	3,362
FTEs		42		42
Asia	\$	4,140	\$	3,650
FTEs		29		25
Latin America	\$	3,369	\$	3,348
FTEs		36		33
Europe	\$	709	\$	700
FTEs		13		14
Education	\$	503	\$	608
FTEs		6		7
	\$	-	\$	-
		-		-
Total Program Service \$	\$	11,772	\$	11,668
Total Program Service FTEs		125		120
% of Total \$		88.4%		87.0%
% of Total FTEs		91.0%		89.7%
Support Services:				
Management & General	\$	863	\$	851
FTEs		5		5
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$	-
FTEs		-		-
Fund-raising	\$	681	\$	894
FTEs		7		9
Total Support Service \$		1,544		1,745
Total Support Service FTEs		12		14
% of Total \$		11.6%		13.0%
% of Total FTEs		9.0%		10.3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	13,316	\$	13,413
TOTAL FTEs		137		134
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	(400)	\$	(876)

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Balance Sheet (000s)

	June 30, 2003				
	Unrestr.	(note 2) Ag. Desig.	(note 3) Temp. Restr.	(note 4) Perm. Restr.	Total
Cash	\$ -	\$ 2,100	\$ 440	\$ -	2,540
CDs, Time Deposits	-	4	-	-	4
Marketable Securities	-	-	-	-	-
Receivables & Advances	174	-	-	-	174
Inventory	-	-	-	-	-
Prepays & Advances	774	31	-	-	805
Investments (note 1):					
Bonds	-	904	403	-	1,307
Equities	-	1,476	-	23	1,499
Partnerships	-	-	-	-	-
Property (nonoperating)	-	-	-	-	-
PP & E	84	-	127	-	211
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	1,032	4,515	970	23	6,540
Accounts Payable	2,125	-	-	-	2,125
Notes/Loans Payable	10	-	-	-	10
Capital Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Annuities Payable	379	-	-	-	379
Deferred Income	134	-	-	-	134
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	2,648	-	-	-	2,648
Net Assets	\$ (1,616)	4,515	970	23	3,892
Footnotes:					
Note 1: List details of property not currently in use.					
Note 2: List details of designations.	7-year term endowments as stipulated by Board = \$3,612 Disaster relief gifts for specific sites = \$903				
Note 3: List details of restrictions.	Mission home = \$127 Gifts rec'd for subs years = \$509 7-year term endowments as stipulated by donors = \$334				
Note 4: List details of restrictions.	Pure endowments				

**Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Income and Expenses (000s)**

		Fiscal 01-02 Actual	Fiscal 02-03 Actual
INCOME:			
Ministry Share	\$	0	\$ -
% of Total Income		0.0%	0.0%
Other Gift Income:			
Above Ministry Share	\$	9,534	\$ 8,897
Estate Gifts	\$	896	\$ 1,568
Total Gift Income		10,430	10,465
% of Total Income		83.6%	76.1%
Other Income:			
Tuition & Sales	\$	-	\$ -
Grants	\$	1,809	\$ 3,160
Miscellaneous	\$	231	\$ 134
Total Other Income		2,040	3,294
% of Total Income		16.4%	23.9%
TOTAL INCOME		12,470	13,759
EXPENSES (FTE = Full Time Employee):			
Program Services:			
Overseas programs	\$	6,925	\$ 7,956
FTEs		54	54
No America programs	\$	1,012	\$ 929
FTEs		8	8
Disaster relief programs	\$	2,234	\$ 3,220
FTEs		8	8
Education	\$	433	\$ 445
FTEs		4	2
	\$	-	\$ -
		-	-
	\$	-	\$ -
		-	-
Total Program Service \$	\$	10,604	\$ 12,550
Total Program Service FTEs		74	72
% of Total \$		83.0%	84.2%
% of Total FTEs		79.6%	79.1%
Support Services:			
Management & General	\$	1,033	\$ 1,165
FTEs		8	8
Plant Operations	\$	-	\$ -
FTEs		-	-
Fund Raising	\$	1,141	\$ 1,198
FTEs		11	11
Total Support Service \$		2,174	2,363
Total Support Service FTEs		19	19
% of Total \$		17.0%	15.8%
% of Total FTEs		20.4%	20.9%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	12,778	\$ 14,913
TOTAL FTEs		93	91
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$	(308)	\$ (1,154)

REPORTS OF AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

Each year the Board of Trustees submits a unified report to synod composed of individual parts provided by the agencies and educational institutions of the Christian Reformed Church. The individual reports appear in alphabetical order using the agency's name. Supplementary reports may be provided, if needed, at the time that synod convenes.

Writing these reports is an exercise of accountability that is appropriate in our life together as a denomination. Much of what is written is provided as information for synod. Some of the material provides a background for decisions that synod will be asked to make. In either case, these reports really are the story of what God is pleased to do through the agencies of the church. As you read the material, we invite you to join us in thanksgiving for ministry opportunities and for the many fine people who serve on your behalf at home and around the world.

Peter Borgdorff
Executive Director of Ministries
Christian Reformed Church in North America

I. Introduction

Synod has given The Back to God Hour the mandate to:

give leadership in media missions and to supervise the production of denominational radio, television, and other electronic programs, which express the Reformed faith in response to . . . need for conversion, edification, and cultural direction . . . and . . . to give leadership to the denomination as a whole and its congregations in the use of available communication media.

II. The Back to God Hour board

A. Function

The Back to God Hour is governed by a regionally representative board that meets three times a year to set policy and to evaluate the work of the staff.

B. Officers of the board

The officers of the board are Rev. Scott Greenway, president; Rev. Robert Heerspink, vice president; Ms. Willa Beckman, secretary; Mr. Marten Van Huizen, treasurer.

C. Nominations for board members

1. The following slates of names are being presented to the classes in their respective regions for vote at the spring classis meeting:

a. Region 1 (three-year term)

Rev. Harold Tinus De Jong of Chilliwack, British Columbia, is a retired pastor who currently serves part time as Minister of Pastor Care at Living Hope Christian Reformed Church in Abbotsford, British Columbia. In addition to his Calvin College and Seminary training, he received Clinical Pastoral Education (Certified College of Chaplains). During much of his active service he was a chaplain in various ministries.

Rev. Ezra Shui Cheung Ng of Richmond, British Columbia, is pastor of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church. He is a graduate of Shanghai Teachers College and China Bible Seminary. He has worked as Chinese Program Supervisor at FEBC, as a radio pastor in Hong Kong, and as a missionary.

b. Region 9 (three-year term)

Ms. Ellen Hamilton of Downers Grove, Illinois, is a member of Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church. She has a degree in accountancy and has been a bookkeeper and teacher. She has served as Coffee Break director and is currently Coffee Break leader. In addition, she has been or is on various other administrative committees for church and school.

Ms. Sheri VanSpronsen-Leppink of Lombard, Illinois, has degrees in business and communication, and is founder/principal of Trainer's Toolchest, LLC. She is a member of Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church, where she has served on various committees.

2. The following names are being presented to synod for ratification of a second three-year term:

a. Region 4

Rev. Jerry Hoytema (incumbent) of Grimsby, Ontario, is a retired pastor in the Christian Reformed Church. He has served churches in Ontario, as well as serving on many classical and denominational boards.

b. Region 8

Mr. Doug Kallemeyn (incumbent) is a member of the Christian Reformed Church in Hollandale, Minnesota, where he currently is serving as elder and Cadet counselor. Doug is also an instructor for Crossroads Bible Institute. He serves as plant manager for Horizon Foods in St. Ansgar, Iowa.

D. *Salary disclosure*

The following information is provided to synod as requested:

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation (includes housing allowance)
18	1	3rd quartile

III. The Back to God Hour ministries

The Back to God Hour in its function as the Christian Reformed Church's electronic media ministry uses radio, television, telephone, and the Internet to proclaim the historic Christian faith. People respond to the message of the gospel by phone; by mail; increasingly by e-mail; or, in a number of countries, by walking to a Back to God follow-up center or to a local church identified with The Back to God Hour. Some object to the claims of Jesus; others want to know more about him and how to serve him. Back to God Hour staff and trained volunteers supply literature, help people find a church home, refer people to Christian counselors, and pray with and for people. Prayer requests are sent to a network of partners who covenant to pray regularly.

In a world of rapidly changing technology and ministry opportunity, the staff continues to evaluate potential ministries in languages or media not currently used by The Back to God Hour for appropriate recommendation to the board or to synod. This year the confluence of reduced revenues and ministry priorities led to number of changes. These included scaling back English-language television production, reducing spending on North American English-language radio broadcasts, and increasing international English-language radio broadcasts.

A. *English-language ministry*

1. "The Back to God Hour," a weekly half-hour radio program proclaiming the historic Christian faith is heard on every continent in the world. Rev. David Feddes addresses contemporary society with timeless truth. The Back to God Hour English-language ministry is heard on nearly one hundred North American stations, on over fifteen major stations in metropolitan areas in Nigeria, as well as on short-wave radio around the world. Response to Back to God Hour English messages come from over eighty countries each year. A follow-up center in Nigeria has been organized in concert with CR World Missions' personnel and indigenous church leaders to follow up with those who respond to the broadcast.

2. The news-magazine format television program, "Primary Focus," airs on Vision TV throughout Canada and on CTS in Ontario. It is also carried in the United States on over eighty local stations. The potential viewing audience is nearly seventy million people. Responses from nonbelievers and the unchurched have been very positive.
3. The Voice of Life radio station, located on the island of Dominica, covers the eastern Caribbean islands and carries all of our English programs.
4. The English-language literature ministry includes the publication of over four hundred thousand copies of each issue of *Today* (a bi-monthly devotional), and over thirty-thousand printed copies of *The Radio Pulpit*. In addition, these publications are available on The Back to God Hour web site.
5. The Back to God Hour has also produced two animated programs for children. "The First Easter" aired on television for its third year during the Easter season of 2004. "The Prince of Peace," a Christmas special, debuted throughout the English-speaking world at Christmas 2003. In both cases, the animated programs were also produced and distributed in DVD and VCR formats.
6. "Kids Corner" radio program is now heard on over 230 stations in North America as well as throughout the eastern Caribbean islands. The Back to God Hour board approved production of 120 new "Kids Corner" programs to replace the programs that are now over fifteen years old. In March 2004, this new series of "Kids Corner" programs began to air.

B. Arabic-language ministry

The Back to God Hour maintains a cooperative ministry agreement with Words of Hope, (Reformed Church in America) and Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) for electronic media ministry to Arabic speaking people. The joint ministry maintains production studios and follow-up centers in Larnaca, Cyprus; Cairo, Egypt; and Beirut, Lebanon. This year has seen unusual interest in this ministry that addresses societies heavily influenced by Muslim belief and culture. Of special note is The Back to God Hour's relationship with the Sudan Council of Christian Churches. The Back to God Hour provides consultation regarding television production, helping the council respond to an unprecedented open door for broadcasting in this Muslim dominated country.

C. Chinese-language ministry

The Back to God Hour broadcasts in Cantonese and Mandarin cover all twenty-six provinces in China, home to over 1.1 billion people. Seven super-power stations located outside the country beam the gospel to China. Alliance Radio staff in Hong Kong work with The Back to God Hour to provide follow-up and listener contact for the sixteen programs produced each week. Rev. Jimmy Lin gives direction to this crucial ministry.

The Back to God Hour Chinese programs are heard in major metropolitan areas in Australia, Belize, Canada, New Zealand, Panama, and the United States. Significant Chinese-language ministry also takes place in some major metropolitan areas in Canada, the United States, Panama, and Belize where concentrations of Chinese-speaking people are found. In some of these areas

the programming is bilingual. The Internet ministry is proving to be a valuable tool in ministry to Chinese people in spite of attempts to curtail its use in some locations.

D. French-language ministry

The focus of the French-language ministry is Africa and Haiti. Rev. Paul Mpindi, a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo, gives leadership to this ministry. In 2003, the response to the French-language ministry was nearly seven times greater than the previous year. The follow-up center that was opened in Kinshasa, Congo, has proved to be an especially significant piece of the follow-up strategy. A program devoted to a biblical perspective on women's issues in the African context hosted by Charlotte Mpindi has been especially popular.

E. Indonesian-language ministry

Rev. Untung Ongkowidjaja, The Back to God Hour's Indonesia broadcast minister, has given leadership in developing closer ties to the Indonesian churches and has helped introduce a web site to the ministry. The Back to God Hour Board approved a long-range plan to replace the Indonesia ministry headquarters located in Jakarta. The current building, purchased over twenty years ago, was damaged by floods a few years ago. In addition, the Indonesian ministry potential is limited by the current building.

F. Japanese-language ministry

Rev. Masao Yamashita gives leadership to the electronic media ministry in the Japanese language. This technologically advanced culture shows signs of opening up to the gospel. Electronic media that allow a person to listen to the gospel in private, without risking the loss of face that a more public listening to the gospel might entail, are very valuable ministry tools in this country. In the past year, the ministry began a program aimed at children, and God has opened some doors for broadcast of children's programs in unexpected areas.

G. Portuguese-language ministry

Radio, television, and telephone are components of the media ministry in Brazil directed by Rev. Celsino Gama. The office in Campinas, Brazil, is responsible not only for production and distribution of all the Portuguese-language programs, but also for production of Back to God Hour Spanish-language television programs. The Presbyterian Church in Brazil and many of its congregations are significant partners in this ministry.

H. Russian-language ministry

Rev. Sergey Sossedkine, Calvin Theological Seminary graduate and a native of Moscow, gives leadership to this ministry. The Back to God Hour ministry to the Commonwealth of Independent States is part of a coordinated effort of Christian Reformed agencies to minister in this area of the world from its Moscow office. This year The Back to God Hour also set up a follow-up center in the Ukraine to better service listeners from this area.

I. Spanish-language ministry

Nearly three hundred radio stations and forty television stations carry Back to God Hour Spanish-language programming. This ministry reaches Central, North, and South America, as well as Spain. The Back to God Hour is also committed to reaching the large Spanish-speaking population in the United

States. Much of this population is located in major metropolitan centers or along the Mexico-U.S. border. The radio ministry features multiple formats to speak to a variety of different kinds of audiences. Rev. Guillermo Serrano gives leadership in this ministry.

IV. Cooperative organizations

- A. The Back to God Hour works closely with RACOM, an agency dedicated to support the ministry of The Back to God Hour.
- B. The Back to God Hour contracts with CRC Product Services for publication of selected materials.
- C. The Back to God Hour works with selected developing Christian Reformed congregations to raise the visibility of those new church plants through use of electronic media.
- D. The Back to God Hour partners with Crossroad Bible Institute, which provides a correspondence program as part of a follow-up ministry. This program has been very effective in the English language. This ministry expanded into the French language as well during 2002.
- E. The Back to God Hour and the education department of the board of CRC Publications are collaborating on an educational video series based on selected Primary Focus programs for adult educational programs.
- F. The Back to God Hour sustains relationships with a variety of churches, agencies, and organizations to provide broadcasting or follow-up in each of the languages.

V. Recommendations

- A. That Rev. Scott Greenway, president; and Dr. Calvin L. Bremer, executive director, be given the privilege of the floor when Back to God Hour matters are discussed.
- B. That synod elect board members to serve from the nominations presented.

Note: Recommendations on financial matters are included in the report of the Board of Trustees and will be presented to synod by way of the Finance advisory committee.

The Back to God Hour
Calvin L. Bremer, executive director

I. Introduction

This report reflects information derived from, and actions taken at, the October 2003 and the February 2004 meetings of the Calvin College Board of Trustees.

For the October 2003 meeting, the 31-member Calvin College Board of Trustees met in the Prince Conference Center on campus in regular session. Eight new board members spent a day in orientation sessions prior to full board sessions. The board focused on review, discussion, and input-gathering on the draft revision of two major college documents: *The Expanded Statement of Mission* and a rewrite of the former Comprehensive Plan, now entitled *From Every Nation*. A presentation and discussion on the draft document of the accreditation review for the 2004 accreditation by the North Central Association (NCA) was also conducted. One faculty tenure interview was held, and the board attended a presentation by the English department on campus.

Board officers elected for 2003-2004 are: Mr. Milton Kuyers, chair; Rev. Charles DeRidder, vice-chair; Ms. Cynthia Veenstra, secretary; Ms. Darlene K. Meyering, assistant secretary; and Dr. Henry DeVries, Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Information Services, treasurer.

At the February 2004 meeting, the board discussed and approved the final drafts of *The Expanded Statement of Mission* and *From Every Nation*. They also approved revisions of the board handbook, and conducted twenty-five faculty interviews—seventeen for tenure appointments and eight for first reappointment. They discussed the future challenges of the college and were presented with a proposal for a major fund-raising campaign.

II. General college matters

The board discussed the current progress of the self-study for the accreditation review by the NCA Higher Learning Commission to be completed in 2004. This three-year review process assesses and measures areas of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, enriching educational experiences, and a supportive campus environment. All areas must be aligned with the mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities of the college. A twelve-person college committee oversees the process over the three-year period and writes the self-study report. This culminates in the fall of 2004 with a campus visit by an outside assessment team.

III. Faculty

A. Faculty interviews

One faculty interview was conducted at the October 2003 meeting, while twenty-five faculty interviews were the highlight of the February 2004 meeting where the board interviewed sixteen faculty members for tenure appointments (see Recommendations) and nine for two- or three-year regular reappointments.

B. Presidential Award for Exemplary Teaching

Dr. Barbara Carvill, professor of German, was presented the twelfth annual Presidential Award for Exemplary Teaching. This award is given to a tenured

professor whose Christian commitment is readily apparent in exemplary teaching in the classroom. In addition, a cash award is provided for educational opportunities and life experiences that will enrich the recipient's career.

C. *Administrative appointments*

The college made the following administrative appointments and reappointments:

1. Jeffrey P. Bouman, M.A., Director of Service Learning, three years
2. Cynthia J. Kok, Ph.D., Counselor in the Broene Counseling Center, Adjunct in the Department of Psychology, four years
3. Kurt Schaefer, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Social Research, three years, partial load, effective July 1, 2004
4. Lugene L. Schemper, M.L.I.S., Theological Librarian, four years
5. David I. Smith, Ph.D., Director of the Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning, three and a half years, partial load, effective immediately through August 31, 2007
6. Daniel Vandersteen, M.S.W., Counselor in the Broene Counseling Center, two years
7. Randall L. Wolthuis, Ph.D., Director of the Broene Counseling Center, four years
8. Lavonne M. Zwart, Ph.D., Counselor in the Broene Counseling Center, Adjunct in the Department of Psychology, four years
9. Uko Zylstra, Ph.D., Academic Dean of Contextual Disciplines and Natural Sciences and Mathematics, three years, effective August 1, 2004

IV. Finance

The board approved the 2004-2005 budget of approximately \$79 million. Tuition was set at \$17,770; room and board at \$6,185. This represents a 5.9 percent increase in both tuition and room and board over 2003-2004. Financial aid will also increase by a similar percentage.

V. Recommendation

That synod ratify the following reappointments with tenure (*italics indicate promotion to that rank*):

- A. Kevin J. Corcoran, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Philosophy*
- B. Laura G. DeHaan, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Psychology*
- C. Fred J. De Jong, Ph.D., *Professor of Social Work*
- D. Leonard P. DeRooy, P.E., *Associate Professor of Engineering*
- E. Herman J. De Vries, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures*
- F. Simona Goi, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Political Science*
- G. Daniel C. Harlow, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Religion*
- H. Jennifer Steensma Hoag, M.F.A., *Associate Professor of Arts*
- I. Jong-Il Kim, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Physical Education*
- J. David S. Koetje, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Biology*
- K. Barbara Omolade, Ph.D., *Professor of Sociology, Dean for Multicultural Affairs*
- L. Charles W. Pollard, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of English*
- M. James K. Rooks, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Education*

- N. Elizabeth Vander Lei, Ph.D., *Associate Professor English*
- O. Kurt A. Ver Beek, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Sociology*
- P. Jolene E. Vos-Camy, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of French*
- Q. David P. Warners, Ph. D., *Associate Professor of Biology*

Calvin College Board of Trustees
Cynthia Veenstra, secretary

The seminary board of trustees presents this report to Synod 2004 with gratitude to God for his provision this past year. The seminary has experienced God's faithfulness and looks toward the future with great hope and anticipation.

I. Board of trustees

The board met in plenary session in May and September 2003 and February 2004.

The board officers are Rev. Norman L. Meyer, chair; Dr. Jacob E. Nyenhuis, vice-chair; Mr. Sidney J. Jansma, Jr., secretary.

Openings on the seminary board will be filled by regional elections and reported to synod for ratification in our supplementary report. The board recommends that Synod approve the following seminary trustee who has completed one term of service and is eligible for reappointment:

Dr. Jacob E. Nyenhuis (trustee) Region 10
(Alternate position – vacant)

In addition, the board submits to synod for election to an additional term the following slates of at-large nominees:

Position 1

Mr. Sidney J. Jansma, Jr. (incumbent) is owner and chief executive officer of Wolverine Gas and Oil Corporation, a company engaged in oil and gas exploration in the USA. He has served as chairman of the Michigan Oil and Gas Association, chairman of the Grand Rapids Christian Schools fund drive, president of the board of Bethany Christian Services, elder and chairman of council of Plymouth Heights CRC in Grand Rapids, and as a delegate to both classis and synod. He is a graduate of Calvin College and the University of Michigan. For six years he has served as a trustee on the seminary board. He is married to Joanne, and they have four children and ten grandchildren.

Mr. Bernard teVelde, Sr. (alternate) is a dairyman from Visalia, California. He is a graduate from Pierce Junior College in California. He has served three terms as elder at Calvary CRC, Chino, California and two terms as elder at First CRC, Visalia, California. He has been a delegate to classis and was a delegate to synod in 1990 and 1995 where he served on the advisory committee for educational matters. He served two terms on the Ontario, California, Christian school board.

Position 2

Dr. Margaret E. Toxopeus (incumbent), a radiologist, is president of Winchester Radiologists, P.C. in Winchester, Virginia, where she served on the Endowment Fund Investment Committee and chaired the hospital Radiation-Safety Committee. She is a graduate of Calvin College and the University of Michigan Medical School. She has taught at the medical schools of Wayne State University and Johns Hopkins University. She is a member of the Washington, D.C. CRC where she has served on the worship and music committees. She has served as a trustee of the Calvin Theological Seminary board for six years.

Rev. Mary S. Hulst (alternate) is pursuing graduate studies in communications at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church and is a 1995 graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary. She served as the pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan from 1995-2003 and has served one term as an alternate trustee on Calvin Theological Seminary's board.

II. Administration

The seminary administration includes Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. as president, Rev. Duane Kelderman as vice president for administration, and Dr. Henry De Moor as vice president for academic affairs. Dr. Ronald Feenstra serves as the director of the Ph.D. program; Rev. Donald Byker as the director of field education; Mr. Philip Vanden Berge as chief financial officer; Rev. Richard Sytsma as dean of students, director of alumni relations, and international student advisor; and Mr. David De Boer as director of recruitment and financial aid.

This year, the board reappointed (subject to ratification by Synod 2004) Dr. Henry De Moor to a three year term as vice president for academic affairs, Rev. Eugene L. Schemper to a four year term as assistant director of the library-seminary related matters and theological librarian with faculty status, and Rev. Donald E. Byker as director of field education for two years with faculty status. The seminary is grateful for their commitment and service to the seminary and to the church at large.

III. Faculty

The seminary's faculty continues to serve the church in numerous ways. Although teaching and preparing students for various forms of ministry continues to lie at the heart of their work, members of the faculty also provide education and counsel to many local congregations and broader assemblies, preach regularly, publish scholarly books and articles, attend significant conferences, and in various ways seek to stay attuned to developments in ministries in the Christian Reformed Church and the church of Christ worldwide. We are grateful to God for each and every one of these persons who contribute so much to the health and welfare of our denomination.

At its February 2004 meeting, the board acknowledged the years of faithful service of Dr. Sidney Greidanus and approved conferring upon him the title of professor of preaching and worship, *emeritus*, effective August 31, 2004, and requests that Synod 2004 also acknowledge this action with gratitude to God.

The board declared a vacancy in the department of church education beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year and authorized the faculty to initiate a search process as soon as possible.

The board dealt with the reappointment of several faculty members subject to ratification by Synod 2004 (*italics indicates change in rank*): Dr. Mariano Avila as *associate* professor of New Testament for two years, Dr. David M. Rylaarsdam as *associate* professor of historical theology for two years, Dr. Ruth A. Tucker as *associate* professor of missiology for two years, Rev. Pieter C. Tuit as *associate* professor of missiology for two years, and approved the raise in rank for Dr. Michael Williams from *associate* professor to *professor* of Old Testament.

The board interviewed and appointed Dr. John M. Rottman as associate professor of preaching for three years subject to interview and ratification by Synod 2004. (See Curriculum Vitae in Appendix A).

The board interviewed and appointed Dr. John D. Witvliet as associate professor of worship (half-time) for three years subject to interview and ratification by Synod 2004 (see Curriculum Vitae in Appendix B).

The board requests Synod 2004 to declare Dr. John D. Witvliet a candidate for ministry of the Word and eligible for call contingent upon the appointment as associate professor of worship (half-time) at Calvin Theological Seminary.

The board also approved the reappointment of Mr. Roy Hopp as adjunct professor of choral music for three years and of Rev. Andrew Beunk as instructor for computer-assisted exegesis for one year (2004-2005).

The board approved a number of part-time teaching arrangements for the 2004-2005 academic year after noting that, in view of financial restraints, these are being kept to an absolute minimum.

The board reports for information that the following leaves have been granted:

Dr. Mariano Avila	Fall quarter, 2004-2005 and Summer 2005
Dr. John Bolt	Winter quarter 2004-2005 and Summer 2005
Dr. Richard A. Muller	Spring quarter 2004-2005
Rev. Pieter C. Tuit	Spring quarter 2004-2005 and Summer 2005
Dr. Michael Williams	Spring quarter 2004-2005 and a one-course reduction Spring quarter 2005-2006

IV. Curriculum and programs

Calvin Seminary is committed to the formation of students with the knowledge, character, and skills necessary for ministry in today's world. The curriculum reflects this commitment, and changes in the curriculum reflect the seminary's attempts to respond to an ever changing ministry environment. As in most areas of life, change is taking place in curriculum at a more rapid rate today than ever before. See section VII of this report, the seminary's response to the Alternate Routes to Ministry report before Synod 2004, for a description of many of the curricular changes underway.

A. The board approved and proposes that Synod 2004 adopt the following with regard to the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy:

That the three current programs for ministerial candidacy previously adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church and administered by Calvin Theological Seminary, namely, the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC), the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (Adjusted) [SPMC (Adj.)] and the Ethnic Minority Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EMPMC) be merged into one program called the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy with reduced residency and course work requirements.

Grounds:

1. The SPMC(Adj) and the EMPMC were designed to accommodate those persons already engaged in significant ministry experience who were seeking to become ordained ministers of the Word in the CRC "whose family, geographical, and/or ministry circumstances are such that a year

at Calvin Theological Seminary poses an unreasonable hardship for the students' families and/or their local congregation" (*CTS Catalog*, p. 100). The percentage of applicants for the SPMC program in similar circumstances has increased significantly and is likely to continue to increase.

2. This proposal significantly reduces course requirements of the original SPMC program and alters the delivery system in keeping with denominational trends. At the same time, however, it retains the core values that have always been embodied in that program:
 - a. Delivery of courses specific to the Christian Reformed denomination as well as solid instruction in biblical hermeneutics, Reformed doctrine, and contemporary confession, and
 - b. Guaranteeing that the combination of all previous study and the EPMC program forms "an acceptable equivalent to the entire pre-seminary and seminary program required of Calvin Seminary graduates as preparation for Christian Reformed ministry" (*CTS Catalog*, p. 99).
3. The proposed intensive seminar and one quarter in residence at CTS will continue to provide sufficient opportunity for students to build collegial relationships and for faculty to have sufficient basis upon which to recommend persons for candidacy.
4. This proposed EPMC program constitutes a more realistic way to enhance theological coherence in leadership and the confessional identity of the Christian Reformed Church.

B. The board is proposing that the EMPC program be made available to all those seeking to enter the ministry by way of Church Order Article 7 or Article 8 and requests that synod encourage the classes and synodical deputies to either recommend it or to require it of all such applicants.

Grounds:

1. As proposed above, the EPMC program becomes a viable and realistic avenue whereby theological coherence in leadership and the confessional identity of the Christian Reformed Church are enhanced among all seeking to be ordained as ministers of the Word.
2. Classes will be at liberty to make use of the program and decide in each individual case, along with synodical deputies, whether it is useful or necessary.

C. The board established a new M.A. program called the Master of Arts in Worship in close parallel with the current M.A. in Educational Ministry.

D. The board also approved the following new courses: The Minister in Literature and Gospel Communication.

E. The board adopted the following changes (in italics) as indicated in the Seminary catalog concerning academic qualifications for admission to the M.Div. Program:

1. To qualify for admission as a candidate for the M.Div. degree, an applicant must possess an A.B. degree or its equivalent from an accredited college and have a grade-point average of 2.67 (B-) or higher. *A mature, self-disciplined learner who is at least 35 years of age may be admitted with less than an A.B. degree. Admission of such*

applicants is limited to persons with life experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level. In no case will an applicant be admitted without at least two years of appropriate college-level work with a GPA of 2.67 (B- or higher.)

2. *The following is required for admission to Master of Divinity degree candidacy:*
 - a. *At least two years of Greek*
 - b. *At least two semester-length courses each in English (including literature), history, philosophy (preferably history of philosophy), natural sciences, social science and speech.*
3. *Upon review of the applicant's baccalaureate program, the admissions and standards committee may require additional work in given disciplines as a condition for admission to the status of degree candidate. Such conditional admission does not delay one's enrollment at the seminary because the seminary offers such courses focused on preparation for theological education. These courses are ordinarily completed during the first year of seminary study and may fulfill elective course requirements. However, potential applicants should be aware that one's M.Div program is enhanced by more elective choices if all admission requirements are completed in college.*

F. The Center for Excellence in Preaching is an exciting new initiative of the seminary that holds much promise for the practice of preaching in the Christian Reformed Church and beyond. The center is still in its beginning stages but is already offering current students and existing pastors many additional opportunities for growth in preaching.

G. The seminary is grateful for a greatly expanded Continuing Education program. Our continuing education program is directed by Rev. Kathy Smith and has been greatly strengthened by our collaborative relationship with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship directed by Dr. John Witvliet. The following continuing education philosophy statement appears in our literature:

2 Peter 3:18, But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Promoting lifelong learning is an important goal of Calvin Theological Seminary. To that end, we seek to serve the church by offering resources to pastors and church leaders. Our events for continuing education in ministry, from lectures to workshops to courses, seek to bring together worship, learning, and fellowship. We believe that church leaders will find intellectual stimulation, enhancement of ministry skills, and spiritual renewal through Calvin's continuing education opportunities on our Grand Rapids, Michigan, campus and at sites around the United States and Canada.

The continuing education program has grown both in on-campus offerings and off-site events. In 2003, the Seminary sponsored continuing education events that connected with over five hundred persons at locations ranging from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Langley, British Columbia; and from Bradenton, Florida, to Los Angeles, California. The seminary is grateful to CR churches who hosted events in these cities, as well as in Ottawa, Ontario; Rochester, New York; Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Lynden, Washington. These events not

only benefit those who attend but also provide connections between the seminary and local congregations.

Over twelve hundred persons attended on-campus events in 2003, from Book of the Quarter reading groups to lectures and conferences on preaching and leadership. Highlights included seminars by Dr. N.T. Wright, now Bishop of Durham, England; Dr. Gilbert Rendle of the Alban Institute; Dr. Howard Edington of Hilton Head, South Carolina; and a number of international speakers involved in conferences and consultations on Isaiah, Evangelism; Christianity, Cultures, and Worship Worldwide; and Rural Ministry. Additionally, fifteen hundred people attended the Calvin Symposium on Worship and the Arts, a joint effort of the college and the seminary.

H. Calvin Theological Seminary continues to develop its distance learning program. The Master of Arts in Missions program (New Church Development track) is increasingly and quite successfully incorporating distance learning courses into this degree program. Students admitted to the M.A. program register at the seminary, and our professors become the professors of record. For those who do not qualify for admission at the masters level, the seminary has reached a consortium agreement with Reformed Bible College whereby students register at that baccalaureate-level institution and have a professor of record there while making use of our courses. It is our intention to keep building upon this foundation every quarter until the entire program (except for mandatory in-residence components) can be offered at a distance. In addition, we hope soon to seek approval from the Association of Theological Schools to depart from standards that require a more significant in-residence component based on our unique situation as a denominational seminary needing to respond positively to denominational needs. It should be noted that distance learning is currently limited to the M.A. in Missions program (New Church Development track). Depending on how successful we can become, we may eventually be able to incorporate elements of distance learning into other programs. The seminary is grateful to Home Missions for its generous provision of the services of Mr. Gary Teja in assisting with the ongoing development of this online program.

At the same time that Calvin Theological Seminary adapts its curriculum to an ever changing ministry environment, it remains steadfast in reflecting the denomination's historic commitment to classical, Reformed theological education that is thoroughly grounded in the Scriptures, confessions, and pastoral disciplines.

V. Students

The composition of the seminary's student body indicates a growing national and ethnic diversity. The following statistics suggest the impact our school is having beyond the Christian Reformed Church.

Christian Reformed students: 179

Non-Christian Reformed students: 111 (40 denominations)

International (does not include Canadian students): 77 (16 countries)

Programs:

M.Div.: 125

M.A.: 31

M.T.S.: 19

Th.M.: 68

Ph.D.: 32

Unclassified: 15

Male students: 230

Female students: 60

VI. General matters

The seminary's construction of a new president's home has been completed. The Parsonage was donated to the seminary by a generous donor who shares the vision of hospitality of our president and his wife Kathleen. The Plantingas have hosted students, faculty, board members, donors, and visitors to campus. The seminary is grateful for the long-term asset the parsonage will be to the seminary's ministry.

The seminary has experienced financial blessing in the form of faithful ministry-share support, above-ministry-share gifts to the general operating fund and to special projects such as The Parsonage and the Center for Excellence in Preaching. At the same time, the seminary continues to face strong financial challenges, especially in its general operating budget. The seminary board and administration continue to work hard to address this ongoing and ever growing financial challenge. The seminary is deeply grateful for the financial support of the CRC.

The Facing Your Future program for high school juniors and seniors again generated wide interest in the spring of 2003. One hundred seven nominations were received from local leaders, and thirty-five students participated in the month-long program last summer. The program is designed to expose young people to ministry and theology and to awaken and/or deepen the call to ordained ministry. This summer's three week experience will combine challenging theological education to students in the classroom with experience at one of three ministry encounter sites in North America.

For a number of years, synod has approved special offerings in our churches for the seminary's operating fund and the seminary revolving loan fund. These have been important revenue sources for the seminary and its students. This year the seminary will designate these two offerings for the Ministry Incentive Program, a revolving loan fund with a forgiveness clause for those entering ordained CRC ministry, and the Facing Your Future program, the high school youth initiative.

VII. Response to the Alternate Routes to Ministry Report

As the faculty and board of Calvin Theological Seminary (hereafter "the seminary" or CTS), we have had a number of opportunities to reflect upon and discuss the work of the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternative Routes to Ministry (hereafter "the committee"). We are grateful for the thoroughness of the committee; it has wrestled with important concerns for the Christian Reformed Church (hereafter CRC).

In this response, we first affirm areas of accord between the committee and the seminary. We recognize there is broad and deep agreement between us as to the values and goals for ministerial leadership in the CRC articulated in this report. We agree heartily with the committee that the CRC must have well-equipped and well-trained church leaders, and, in good part, we agree with the committee as to means for achieving that goal.

The second section entitled Concerns identifies three concerns we have with the report. We acknowledge with gratitude that the study committee gave the seminary an opportunity for input before finalizing its report to synod and incorporated some of our suggestions into the report. However, some of the seminary's fundamental concerns remain, and we bring them to synod's attention in this section.

The final section entitled A Third Way presents a series of seminary decisions and proposals that offer an alternative to the recommendations of the committee. We are keenly aware of the challenges of preparing educated church leaders for the twenty-first century. Over the past two years, the seminary faculty and board have engaged in discussions (sometimes separately, sometimes together) *en route* to the changes and recommendations below. These changes and proposals offer synod a third way, a way that—so we believe—will best embrace the common values and achieve the common goals of the committee, the seminary, and the CRC.

A. *Areas of agreement*

We are appreciative of the overall approach the committee has taken in fulfilling its synodical mandate.

1. We affirm the central challenge the committee lays out for itself, namely, to propose a plan that addresses this central question (p. 7): “how do we maintain a confessional, Reformed identity in a changing world?” We believe the committee has it exactly right. As the CRC becomes more diverse, as the ethnic ties and denominational loyalties that have bound us together in the past loosen, and as the interaction between the CRC and the broader Christian church increases, many in the CRC are increasingly unclear about what binds us together as a denomination. It is now more important than ever that the CRC articulate its biblical, Reformed identity in new, clear, and compelling ways and that it develop ecclesiastical policies that support and nurture that biblical, Reformed identity.
2. We affirm the four values articulated by the committee at the outset of its report (p. 3), namely,
 - The denomination's interest in and control of the formation of ministers of the Word;
 - The importance of a thorough theological education for ministers of the Word;
 - The need for more flexible means to supply pastors and leaders; and
 - A greater involvement of local churches and classes in identifying and nurturing candidates for ministry.

The first two values speak for themselves, though we would observe that neither can be taken for granted in the CRC today. Significant challenges to both of these values make it important not just to assume but also

to explain and defend these values as wise and vital for a flourishing church.

Regarding the third value listed above, we, along with the committee, recognize the growing diversity and complexity of the CRC, and affirm the particular issues identified by the committee that affect those who desire to enter ministry in the CRC—namely location, ethnicity, ministry issues, and family concerns (p. 13). The previous routes committee report summarizes the myriad of ways that synod, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Home Missions have already addressed these issues to date (*Agenda of Synod 2000*, pp. 332-37). We, along with the committee, affirm that these programs are no longer a practical way to address the ministry needs of an increasingly diverse denomination. (However, we will propose an alternative way of addressing this problem.)

Regarding the fourth value listed above, it is not clear what is meant by “nurturing candidates for ministry.” If what is meant is “the initial nurture of those who show gifts for ministry,” we heartily endorse the committee’s desire to increase the role of the local congregation and classis in the identification and nurture of future ministry leaders. We join with others in the denomination who recognize that the CRC must create a “culture of recruitment and leadership development” (a phrase CRC agencies and institutions use frequently in discussions of leadership development). In such a culture, the local church is the primary place in which members’ spiritual gifts must be identified and developed and the call to ministry received and nurtured. However, if what is meant by “nurturing candidates for ministry” is the actual training and theological education of individuals aiming for the ministry of the Word, we would maintain that this final phase of nurturing a candidate is better done by the seminary working with local congregations.

3. We affirm the need for clear standards for all ministers and evangelists/ministry associates regardless of the church order route taken to ministry. The mandates and reports of both the 1996 and 2000 study committees affirm the need for clear standards, and both reports offer clear and helpful standards of knowledge, skills, and character that are required for all ministry positions (*Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 293-96; *Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 373-75, 391-95).
4. We affirm the need to “ensure that the denomination’s ministerial requirements will be applied with consistency, fairness, and justice” (p. 25). Standards themselves mean very little if they are not effectively applied in the actual life of the church. While we have concerns about the proposal of the committee for a new denominational committee structure to apply these standards, we affirm the need to “firm up” standards for entry into the ordained ministry of the CRC, particularly by way of Church Order Articles 7 and 8.

B. Concerns

The seminary has concerns regarding the routes report in three areas: the new candidacy structure, the alternative seminary proposal, and the lack of specific training requirements for all candidates for the ministry, no matter what route they take to ordination.

1. The new candidacy structure.

The seminary wants to make sure that in its consideration of a sweeping new candidacy evaluation system, synod fully understands the comprehensive nature of its current candidacy evaluation system. Synod's current candidacy process governed by the seminary board is thorough—spanning a seminary student's entire seminary career and building upon relationships between faculty and students forged in the total community life of the seminary. The specific candidacy process includes:

- Thorough psychological testing for each potential candidate for CRC ministry by psychologists who have been oriented by the seminary as to the particular challenges of ordained ministry and the most helpful method of reporting psychological findings, and who give the seminary specific recommendations to aid the psychological growth of each student.
- A *two-year* Readiness for Ministry (RFM) program in which a small group of students meets *weekly* for prayer with an RFM leader (a faculty member), and meets *regularly* to explore issues of calling, personal spiritual formation, leadership formation, and pastoral identity.
- A holistic, *annual* assessment of every potential candidate for ministry that includes specific recommendations for growth where needed.
- A thorough process of final evaluation that includes recommendations from the candidate's church council, a complete field education portfolio, faculty recommendations based upon 3 to 4 years of interaction, and sermon evaluations by a panel of CTS board members augmented by other pastors representing a cross-section of CRC pastors.

The comprehensive nature of the current candidacy evaluation process enables significant engagement with students. In most cases, such engagement leads to significant growth. In a few cases, students strongly resist change. The seminary is accustomed to dealing with such resistance. In extreme cases, the seminary must tell students they do not meet the church's qualifications for ministry. It is difficult to render such judgments about a student. It is also difficult to deal wisely with the protests that sometimes come from the student's church council and network of support. Nevertheless, the seminary has the institutional capacity to deal with the whole range of candidacy profiles, a capacity formed in part by a long history of observing which students go on to become effective pastors and which students struggle or fail in ministry.

The Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry is proposing a shift in responsibility for candidacy assessment away from the seminary and its Board of Trustees to the proposed Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee. We are concerned about that shift and its implications. Although candidates from other seminaries do not participate in the two year RFM program, they still benefit from most of the other features of the seminary's comprehensive candidacy evaluation process. It is unclear how the seminary's candidacy evaluation process for its own students would be required to change with the proposals of the routes committee.

The seminary is concerned that synod carefully consider the advantages of its current comprehensive candidacy evaluation system as it considers other alternatives.

2. Alternative seminaries

We are concerned that the official endorsement of a number of alternative seminaries will have the inevitable effect of eroding the confessional identity of the Christian Reformed Church. The CRC has maintained its own theological seminary for over 125 years because it understands the critical influence of seminary training on pastors' theology and practice and, consequently, on the theological unity of the denomination.

The CRC has understood that the Reformed perspective is not simply a matter of several theological propositions that can be learned in a course or two but is an organic whole reaching across all the disciplines of theological education. It is grounded in a certain view of inspiration and the nature of Scripture. It embraces a deep and wide understanding of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration that is the foundation of an all-embracing world and life view. The Reformed perspective has its own peculiar take on the nature of the church, worship, preaching, and the sacraments. This perspective animates local church practices, defines denominational policy, and shapes synodical decisions. The curriculum of Calvin Seminary has been developed through the decades to enable students to understand, practice, and pass on this vision.

Most faculty members are CRC ministers, deeply committed to the denomination and its ministry, each one under the scrutiny of the church through a synodically appointed board of trustees. The CTS faculty has a strong consensus about the seminary's vision and purpose and its role in the life of the CRC.

Our concern is not that students attend other seminaries by way of exception. Our concern is that the proposal to officially endorse and so name alternative seminaries and then to design and administer student programs at each of these seminaries will inevitably weaken the CRC's unified theological vision, given the fact that CRC pastors increasingly will be educated at seminaries other than CTS, seminaries that cannot be expected to have the confessionally and denominationally integrated vision set forth above.

3. Specific training requirements for all candidates for the ministry

The seminary is concerned that the recommendations of the report do not include specific *training requirements* for all candidates for the ministry, no matter what route they take to ordination. Both the earlier and current study committees give clear and helpful *standards* of knowledge, skills, and character that are required for all ministry positions (*Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 293-96; *Agenda for Synod 2004*, pp. 395-99). The current study committee "affirms the value of theological preparation as the expected training for all candidates for the ministry, no matter what route they take to ordination" (p. 33). However, no *training requirements* are specified that apply to all candidates for the ministry, no matter what route they take to ordination. This is in spite of the fact the first four parts of the committee's mandate (9, a, b, c., d; p. 6) all involve the *training* of candidates for ministry. Indeed, one of the realities that gave rise to the appointment of both of these study committees was the lack not only of a list of qualities that should characterize a minister of the gospel (what the committee calls standards) but also of specific training and educational requirements that will ensure that all

candidates for ministry understand certain basics, e.g., a Reformed biblical worldview, a Reformed approach to systematic theology, Reformed biblical hermeneutics, CRC church history, and CRC church polity.

The closest the committee comes to a specific training requirement is the establishment of certain *competency-based standards* for evangelist/ministry associates. In explaining this term, the report says,

What the committee should look for is a level of competency that is proportional to the responsibilities of the office of evangelist. What the standards do not delineate is how the person is to achieve the competencies. They might be achieved through experience alone, through experience plus some classroom work, through mentoring, or through a completed leadership development network program.

Thus, the committee suggests that educational training is not required in order to achieve these competency-based standards.

In the case of Article 7 candidates (exceptional gifts) and Article 8 candidates (ministers from other denominations), the report allows that a candidate can come into the CRC without any education.

The seminary does support the committee's emphasis on mentoring, learning covenants, and processes of professional development that take seriously each candidate's particular gifts, cultural background, experiences, and ministry situation. Certainly, the primary formation of Articles 7 and 8, and evangelist/ministry associate candidates will take place in these ways. However, we submit that the church should not apologize for requiring minimal, specific, education and training for every candidate for ministry, regardless of the church order article by which he or she plans to enter the ministry.

Whether the synod of 2000 that appointed this study committee expected such specific training requirements for all candidates for ministry is probably less important than whether the synod of 2004 judges such training requirements to be needed. We judge that the church would be well served by adopting minimal, but specific, education and training requirements that *every* candidate for the ministry must satisfy.

C. *A third way*

Calvin Theological Seminary has always understood and embraced its role as a servant of the Christian Reformed Church. As the seminary has listened to the church, it has heard many of the same things that the routes committees have heard in recent years. Below is a series of seminary decisions and proposals that address a number of the concerns that have given rise to the routes report.

1. A new kind of SPMC (Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy)

One of the major problems that gave rise to the original routes committee was the denomination's SPMC requirements, specifically the one year CTS residency requirement for those attending other seminaries. This requirement has been judged by many to be burdensome, especially for those who live outside West Michigan, have a current ministry position, and/or have a large family. The original routes committee recommended to Synod 2000 that the SPMC residency requirement be reduced to one quarter (ten weeks) for candidates who have been members of the CRC for at least seven years. Synod 2000 asked the committee to "determine whether the

current and proposed SPMC requirements are flexible enough to meet the needs of ministerial candidates in special circumstances.”

We judge that the time has come to significantly alter the SPMC program to allow for more flexibility. Up until this year, we vigorously defended the SPMC program, believing that this program is good for the church, but the ground has shifted. We now propose a significant change in the SPMC program because we judge that the value of preserving the confessional unity of the church by retaining a single seminary is greater than the value of the SPMC program as it is currently constituted.

Section IV, A of this report contains the seminary board’s full proposal of a newly named Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy which will unite the three existing candidacy programs into one, and will require an intensive two-week summer seminar and one quarter in residence (or, for compelling reasons, the equivalent in distance education courses) for a total of eighteen academic hours (as opposed to the current SPMC program that requires three quarters in residence and thirty-six academic hours).

We judge that this new Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) could be very valuable also to those entering the ministry by way of Article 7 or Article 8, and could address the desire of the synod for more well-defined training standards for these pastors. Ideally, many of these pastors could do the ten week and two week residency program at CTS. These pastors may also have the option of taking the distance education courses as they become available. We propose that this EPMC program be made available to all those seeking to enter the ministry by way of Church Order Articles 7 or 8 and that synod encourage the classes and synodical deputies to require it of all such applicants.

One important clarification must be made regarding the current SPMC process. The SPMC program does not only involve the year (or quarter) of residency at CTS; rather, the SPMC program ideally begins whenever students begin their studies at another seminary. CTS enrolls students attending other seminaries in the synodically prescribed SPMC program as early as possible in their seminary program. In so doing, CTS can arrange a comprehensive field education program for these students, including internships and summer assignments in Christian Reformed congregations. So, the seminary already has in place a well-developed, highly individualized program for working with students who are attending other seminaries. This is an important fact to bear in mind when synod considers the committee’s proposal for alternative seminaries, each with its own ecclesiastical program of study and/or preparation. As is evident, CTS already has a system for coordinating CRC candidacy requirements with the programs of students at other seminaries.

2. A more flexible and student-friendly seminary

Calvin Theological Seminary faces pressure to make its programs more flexible and student-friendly not only from the CRC in its desire to make seminary education more accessible to a broader range of students but also from the marketplace of competing seminaries, which increasingly offer more flexible program options. The seminary believes that the changes below represent an appropriate adaptation to changing realities in the

environment and will enable Calvin Seminary to be more effective in achieving its goal of serving the church.

a. A new approach to prerequisites

Calvin Seminary and the Christian Reformed Church always have placed a high value on pastors' receiving not only a thorough theological education but also a strong liberal arts college background. That value has been reflected in various college prerequisites that must be met before students may be admitted into CTS. For some, these prerequisites have proven burdensome, particularly in the case of second-career students. Over the years, the seminary has steadily reduced the number of prerequisites. For example, a modern foreign language is now *recommended*, not *required*.

The time has come, however, to imagine a creative way to help students gain the benefits of these prerequisites without making them overly burdensome. We have identified the prerequisites in which students most frequently have deficits; namely, Greek, philosophy, science, literature, and speech, and plan to offer "required electives" at seminary. Students will be able to use some of their elective choices to take a seminary, masters-level course that will fulfill the prerequisite *and* give credit toward their seminary degree program. This adaptation will strengthen the student's overall seminary education because we will be able to link these new courses to other seminary studies. See Part IV, E, 3 of this report.

We are also proposing to synod a relaxation of the college requirement for those who are at least thirty-five years of age. We propose that mature, self-disciplined learners who are at least 35 years of age and who have life-experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level may be admitted with less than a completed B.A. degree. [A minimum of two years of appropriate college-level work with a GPA of 2.67 (B-) or higher will still be required.] See Part IV, E, 1 of this report.

b. New initiatives in language studies

Calvin Theological Seminary and the CRC have long valued the study of the Bible in its original languages as an essential component of theological education and preparation for the ministry. In the last fifteen years, excellent software has changed the way biblical languages are taught in seminary and used by many pastors. The seminary is currently considering proposals that should be decided this spring that will make the way biblical languages are taught at the seminary significantly more student-friendly and educationally effective. The two main proposals being considered are:

1) Hebrew online

The Old Testament department is currently developing an online program that would make it possible for students to take the entire Hebrew language course sequence online from their own locations. Students would be able to study Hebrew at their own pace and at their own convenience before beginning the rest of the Old Testament course sequence. The online course would be self-testing, but students would also have continuous access to the instructor and tutors. This

innovative online program would make Hebrew language learning more accessible, flexible, and tailored to individual learning needs.

2) Greek taught at the seminary

Because Greek is not taught at CTS, entering students are required to complete two years of Greek, along with other prerequisites, as part of their college training. Thus, second-career students must fulfill this requirement at local colleges at the same time they begin their seminary studies. This complicates and considerably lengthens students' program of studies. In concert with the new approach to such prerequisites (see B, 1, above) the New Testament Department would offer courses that would make it possible for second-career students to fulfill the Greek requirement at CTS. As currently envisioned the last of these New Testament Greek courses could be taken as a general elective, increasing the probability that students would be able to complete the M.Div. program in the normal four years. These courses would also provide a seamless transition from the Greek language courses to New Testament exegetical studies in terms of instructors and pedagogical approach.

c. A new approach to core and electives

The faculty is currently discussing concrete proposals that would require students in the Masters of Divinity (hereafter M.Div.) program to take fewer core courses and more electives. Each division would reduce the number of core and, for each core course reduction, designate *at least* two elective courses from which a student would choose one course. For example, the two core courses in Ethics (531-Basic Christian Ethics and 532-Christian Social Ethics) might be reduced to one, and students would then be required to take another elective in ethics, say, The Ten Commandments or The Sermon on the Mount.

This proposal offers the following advantages:

- 1) Students have more control over their academic curriculum and presumably greater enthusiasm for courses that they have had greater freedom in selecting.
- 2) The reduction in the core curriculum will reinforce the value of *lifelong learning*, inasmuch as it will be clear to students that they are not getting in their M.Div. program everything they will ever need to know.
- 3) This proposal will enable students to tailor their program somewhat to their particular interests and career aspirations, while retaining the value of a broad-based seminary education.

d. More program completions in four years

One of the market forces that works against CTS is the fact that at other seminaries students can complete the M.Div. degree in three years, or four years at the most. On the one hand, CTS is caught between these market forces that exert pressure to reduce the length of a seminary education and, on the other hand, mounting expectations (especially in the skill areas) with respect to what the seminary should teach.

The current M.Div. program is a four-year program, usually three academic years in residence and one year in a supervised internship. In

fact, many students, especially those who come to seminary with unmet prerequisites, do not complete their program in four years. We judge that we must make adaptations in the seminary program that will make it possible for a significantly greater number of students to finish their program in four years.

The seminary is optimistic that we can achieve more graduations after four years through initiatives in four areas:

- 1) The new approach to prerequisites (C, 2, a above) will alleviate some of the pressure on the length of the M.Div. program.
- 2) The reduction of core and expansion of electives (C, 2, c above) will give students more choice.
- 3) The faculty has adopted a new work load policy that puts clear and measurable limits on the number of hours spent on each course.
- 4) Another area we are exploring is the possible streamlining of field education requirements. Calvin Theological Seminary is blessed with an excellent field education program that gives students extensive and comprehensive on-the-field experiences, and then very intentionally integrates those experiences with students' work in academics and character formation. The foundations of the field education program are the Personal Qualifications for Ministry document, a two-year long Readiness for Ministry Program, and a Ministry Skill document that clearly defines the various ministry skills that every M.Div. student must demonstrate before graduation and recommendation for candidacy. The problem CTS faces is that its field education requirements are somewhere between two and four times more than those of comparable seminaries. While the common perception is that the seminary is heavy on academics and light on practical training, in fact, compared with other seminaries, we are heavier on practical training! So, while we are looking for ways to streamline the academic program without sacrificing its educational quality, we also are reviewing the field education program for ways to streamline requirements without sacrificing student learning.

We are hopeful that the changes that come from these four initiatives will result in more students being able to complete the M.Div. program in four years.

3. Unfinished business, ongoing opportunities

While we believe the changes and proposals above significantly address the concerns that gave rise to the routes report, we realize that challenges still remain and that the third way we propose does not address every concern. For example, one of the strengths of the routes report is its emphasis upon the role of the local church and classis in nurturing candidates for ministry. We refer earlier in this report to denominational initiatives to foster a culture of recruitment and leadership development in local congregations. More and more churches are also using mentoring and other ministry training tools as focused, intentional leadership development strategies. An exciting area to explore is linking seminary SPMC distance education courses with local mentoring relationships. Could mentors be the link between pastors entering the ministry through Church Order Articles 7

and 8 and the seminary SPMC online courses? Could the seminary and Leadership Development Networks work together and mutually enrich one another?

The point here is that the church needs multiple leadership development strategies and programs, and the seminary desires to be of service to the church wherever that is feasible. No single set of synodical decisions will meet all of the church's needs or reflect the myriad of ways the Spirit is at work in the church. We trust that the decisions and proposals above communicate the commitment of Calvin Seminary to be responsive to the church and part of an *ongoing* process of adaptation and renewal.

D. Conclusion

We anticipate at least two concerns that this report may raise and conclude by addressing each of them.

The first is a concern that the seminary is overreacting to current denominational pressures to become more flexible and market sensitive and has begun to compromise certain core educational values and principles. It is important for synod to know that throughout our discussions of these matters, we have approached adaptive challenges less as problems than as opportunities. We are confident that the net impact of the changes above will be to make CTS education stronger, not weaker.

A second concern we anticipate has to do with the timing of these changes in relationship to the routes report before Synod 2004. The seminary acknowledges that God has been working in our midst through a multiplicity of factors, including the fact that Synod 2004 is considering a proposal that would seriously marginalize Calvin Theological Seminary in its relationship with the Christian Reformed Church and thereby threaten the confessional unity of the Christian Reformed Church. The seminary is grateful for the routes report to the extent that it has been a factor in leading to the changes outlined in this report.

Calvin Theological Seminary has been challenged to ask anew what it means to love and serve the Christian Reformed Church. We offer this report as our best thinking, for now, on how to serve the church we love. We assure synod that Calvin Theological Seminary will continue to love, honor, and support the Christian Reformed Church whatever the outcome of Synod 2004's deliberations. You, synod, will be in our prayers, as we *trust* the seminary will be in yours.

VIII. Recommendations

A. That the Rev. Norman Meyer, chairman, and Mr. Sidney Jansma, Jr., secretary, be given the privilege of the floor when seminary matters are presented.

B. That the following board member election be approved:

Dr. Jacob E. Nyenhuis, trustee for a second term (Region 10)

C. That synod by way of the printed ballot elect members for the board from the slates of nominees presented:

Position 1

Mr. Sidney J. Jansma, Jr., trustee at-large for a third term
Mr. Bernard te Velde, Sr., alternate at-large for a third term

Position 2

Dr. Margaret E. Toxopeus, trustee at-large for a third term
Rev. Mary S. Hulst, alternate at-large for a second term

D. That the following faculty be reappointed (italics indicates change in rank):

Dr. Mariano Avila as *associate* professor of New Testament for two years;
Dr. David M. Rylaarsdam as *associate* professor of historical theology for two years;
Dr. Ruth A. Tucker as associate professor of missiology for two years;
Rev. Pieter C. Tuit as *associate* professor of missiology for two years;
Dr. Michael Williams from associate professor to *professor* of Old Testament.

E. That the following administrators with faculty status be reappointed:

Dr. Henry De Moor, vice president for academic affairs for three years;
Rev. Donald E. Byker, director of field education for two years;
Rev. Lugene L. Schemper, assistant director of the library-seminary related matters and theological librarian for four years.

F. That the following persons be appointed to the faculty of the seminary to the position and with the rank indicated (subject to interview):

Dr. John M. Rottman as associate professor of preaching for three years;
Dr. John D. Witvliet as associate professor of worship (half-time) for three years.

G. That synod declare Dr. John D. Witvliet a candidate for ministry of the Word and eligible for call contingent upon the appointment as associate professor of worship (half-time) at Calvin Theological Seminary.

H. That synod adopt the proposal regarding the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy as described in IV, A of this report.

I. That synod encourage the classes and synodical deputies to either recommend the new EPMC program to those seeking to enter CRC ministry by way of Church Order Article 7 or Article 8 or require it of all such applicants.

J. That synod approve two offerings for CTS (the International Student Subsidy Fund and the Facing Your Future program).

Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees
Sidney J. Jansma, Jr., secretary

Appendix A Curriculum Vitae

John Michael Rottman

Personal Information

Birth date: September 20, 1955

Birthplace: Muskegon, Michigan

Married to Marily Deibler Rottman; three children: Eric (14), Kylie (12), Katherine (6).

Education

Th.D. (1996)	Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto and the Toronto School of Theology
M.Div. (1987)	Calvin Theological Seminary
M.A. (1987)	University of St. Michael's College
	Specialization: History of the Early Church
B.A. (1977)	Calvin College
	Majors: Philosophy and Greek

Professional Experience

Adjunct faculty at Tyndale Theological Seminary	2002, 2003
Adjunct faculty at Ontario Theological Seminary	2001, 1996-1999
Sessional lecturer at Toronto School of Theology (Emmanuel College and Knox College)	2002, 2000-2001, 1998-1999
Lecturer in Homiletics at Calvin Seminary	2001
Editor of <i>Preaching: Word and Witness</i>	1998-2002
Assistant editor of <i>Preaching: Word and Witness</i>	1992-1998
Teaching Assistantships in Homiletics at Emmanuel College	1993-1995
Psychiatric Aide – Pine Rest Christian Hospital	1980-1984
Outreach Social Worker (Senior Services of Muskegon, Michigan)	1978-1979
Youth Homes Big Brothers Student Coordinator (Calvin College KIDS Program)	1975-1977

Pastoral Experience

Senior pastor of Grace CRC, Scarborough, Ontario	1996-present
Pastor of First CRC, Toronto, Ontario	1987-1992
Pastoral Internship at North Hills CRC, Troy, Michigan	1986-1987

Publications

Books

John Rottman and Paul Scott Wilson, eds. *Seasons of Preaching: 160 Best Sermons from the Preaching Resource Word & Witness*. New Berlin, Wis.: Liturgical Publications, 1996.

John M. Rottman, "Doing Things with Words in a Sermon: Preaching as a Performative Activity." Th.D. thesis, Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto and the Toronto School of Theology, 1996.

John M. Rottman, "Prophecy and Ecstasy in Two Heterodox Movements: Gnosticism and Montanism." M.A. thesis, University of St. Michael's College, 1987.

Articles and Reviews

Review of *Discovering a Sermon: Personal Pastoral Preaching* by Craig Dykstra.

Calvin Theological Journal. Forthcoming

Review of *Preaching Mark* by Robert Reid, *Homiletic*. Forthcoming

"Taking Abuse to the Cross: A Sermon on Judges 19" and "Undying Glory: A Sermon on 1 Samuel 4:12-22," *Preaching Great Texts* (April-June 2003).

Review of *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-first Century Listeners* by Graham Johnston. *Calvin Theological Journal* (November 2002): 407-8

"Third Sunday after Pentecost, Year B, Mark 3:20-35;" "Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B, Mark 7:24-37;" "Second Sunday after Easter, Year B, Acts 4:32-35;" "Sixth Sunday after Easter, Year C, Acts 16:9-15;" "First Sunday after Epiphany, Year B, Acts 19:1-7." In *A Biblical Exegesis for the Sunday Sermon*. Edited by Roger Van Harn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Review of *The Four Pages of the Sermon* by Paul S. Wilson. *The Banner* (12 November 2000).

Preaching: Word and Witness (regular contributions 1998-present).

Word and Witness 97/6 (November 2, 1997).

Word and Witness 96/2 (January 14, 1996).

Review of *The Preacher King* by Richard Lischer. *The Cresset* 59 (May 1996): 38-9.

Word and Witness 94/5 (September 18, 1994).

Review of *With Ears to Hear* by Robin Myers. *Calvin Theological Journal* 29\2 (November 1994): 600-602.

Word and Witness 15/2 (December 2, 1990).

Appendix B

Curriculum Vitae

John D. Witvliet

Current Appointments

Director, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 1997-present

Associate Professor of Music, Calvin College, 2002-present (Assistant

Professor of Music, 1997-2002)

Dean of the Chapel, Calvin College, 2001-present (on sabbatical, 2003-2004)

Adjunct Associate Professor of Religion, Calvin College, 1997-present

Adjunct Professor of Worship, Calvin Theological Seminary, 1997-present

Education

Ph.D. (Theology/Liturgical Studies), University of Notre Dame, 1997
Dissertation: *The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Theology and Practice of Christian Worship in the Reformed Tradition*
M.A. (Master of Arts in Liturgical Studies), University of Notre Dame, 1995
M.Mus. (Master of Music in Choral Music), University of Illinois, 1993
M.T.S. (Master of Theological Studies), Calvin Theological Seminary, 1992
B.A. (Music Major), Calvin College, 1990
Additional Study: Duke University Divinity School, 1996-1997

Ministry Experience

1. Dean of the Chapel, Calvin College, 2001-present (on sabbatical, 2003-2004)
2. Director of Music and Worship, South Bend Christian Reformed Church, South Bend, Indiana, 1993-1996
3. Graduate Assistant, Center for Pastoral Liturgy, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1994-1997
4. Music Director, Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989-1992
5. Music Director, First Jenison Christian Reformed Church, Jenison, Michigan, 1986-1989, 1991-1992
6. Christian Camps for Inner-City Youth—Camp Tall Turf, Summer Staff, 1986-1989

Teaching Experience

1. Northern Baptist Seminary: D.Min Courses (Summer 1997, 2000), D.Min. advising (2000-present)
2. Tyndale Theological Seminary: M.A. Course (Summer 1998)
3. Regent College: M.A. Course (Summer 2000)
4. Calvin College Religion Dept. Introduction to Theology, Christian Worship, 1997-present
5. Calvin College Music Dept: Campus Choir, 1997-present
6. Calvin Theological Seminary: courses taught include Introduction to Christian Worship, The Recent History of Christian Worship, Theology and Practice of Worship in the Reformed Tradition, The Doctrine of Christ and the Services of the Christian Year, Planning and Leading Congregational Worship, Music and the Arts in Christian Worship, 1997-present

Memberships in Professional Societies

1. American Academy of Religion
2. North American Academy of Liturgy
3. Calvin Studies Society
4. American Choral Directors Association
5. Choristers Guild
6. Hymn Society of the United States and Canada

Boards and Committees

1. Chair, Advisory Board, CRCNA Pastoral Excellence Initiative, 2003-2007
2. Member, Consultation on Common Texts, 1998-present
3. National Board of Directors, Choristers Guild, 1994-2003 (President of the Board, 1998-2001)

4. CRC Denominational Worship Committee, 1994-1997, 1999-2001
5. CRC Synodical Study Committee on Worship in Contemporary Culture, 1994-1996
6. Chair, CRC Cross Agency Worship Team for Implementation of Strategic Plan, 1998-2001

Grants Received

1. Oct. 1998, co-recipient, with Karin Maag, of \$4,500 Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship grant for an exploratory conference on "Change and Continuity in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Christian Worship"
2. Sept. 1998, program director for \$1.3 million Lilly Endowment grant for programs related to renewal of Christian worship practices
3. Nov. 1998, collaborator for \$50,000 Louisville Institute grant for national conference on church music at Messiah College
4. Dec. 1999, co-recipient, with Karin Maag, of \$33,000 Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship grant for collaborative book project on "Change and Continuity in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Christian Worship"
5. Nov. 2000, program director for \$1.2 million supplemental grant for Worship Renewal Grants Program
6. Nov. 2000, Luce Foundation grant of \$225,000 for three annual scholarly seminars, 2002-2005
7. Fall 2001, program director for \$7 million Lilly Endowment grant for programs related to renewal of Christian worship practices

Publications

Books Authored/Edited

1. Karin Maag and John D. Witvliet, eds. *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Change and Continuity in Religious Practice*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004.
2. John D. Witvliet and David Vroeghe, ed. *Proclaiming the Christmas Gospel: Ancient Sermons and Hymns for Contemporary Inspiration*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.
3. John D. Witvliet. *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows Into Christian Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
4. John D. Witvliet, ed. *A Child Shall Lead: Children in Worship. A Sourcebook for Christian Educators, Musicians, and Clergy*. Garland, Tex.: Choristers Guild, 1999.

Editorial Work

1. Editor. United States material in *A New Dictionary of Hymnody*, edited by J.R. Watson. London and Grand Rapids: Canterbury Press and Eerdmans, anticipated completion 2007.
2. Editor. Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000-present.
3. Editor. Vital Worship, Healthy Congregation Series. Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute.
4. Editorial Consultant. *Reformed Worship*. 1997-present.
5. Editorial Consultant. *The Worship Bible*. Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 1997.
6. Project Editor. *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*. Nashville: Abbott-Martyn Press, 1993-1994.

Worship resource/Hymnal collaborations

1. Jack Schrader, Vicki Tusken, and Robert Webber, general editors. *Renew! Songs and Hymns for Blended Worship*, Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Publishing, 1995.
2. *Sing! A New Creation*. Grand Rapids: CRC Publications/RCA Resources, 2001.
3. Mary Sytsma and Jane Vogel, general editors. *Worship Alive*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2003.
4. *The Worship Sourcebook*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive and Baker Books, 2004.

Note: A more complete Curriculum Vitae will be provided to the Advisory Committee that includes academic articles, dictionary entries, public lectures, book reviews, and conferences planned.

The mandate of CRC Publications, as adopted by Synod 1985, includes the following:

To support and communicate the Reformed faith within the Christian Reformed Church and throughout the world by directing the denomination's program of church education, periodicals, and other publications.

In carrying out that mandate, the CRC Publications Board, in 1998, adopted the following mission statement:

To provide resources that help followers of Jesus Christ to understand, experience, and express the good news of God's kingdom.

The core values that we have identified for our work are the following:

- Our resources are biblical, relevant, high quality, and stewardly.
- Our resources will faithfully reflect the worldview and interpretation of Scripture that are articulated in the Reformed confessions and expressed in *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*.
- We will treat each other and those we serve with love and respect.
- Our organizational structure, working environment, and resources will consistently reflect an antiracist perspective.

These statements undergird our work as we attempt to develop and distribute resources that serve the Christian Reformed Church and the church of Jesus Christ worldwide. The ministry of publishing is becoming an ever-greater challenge as we work in a contemporary world that reflects trends such as the following:

- Increasing anti-intellectualism
- Dwindling interest in denominations and in a Reformed interpretation of Scripture
- Shrinking number of children in the CRC
- Expanding expectations for "choices" in all areas of life
- Increasingly heterogeneous denomination
- Decreasing interest in reading
- New technology
- Rapidly expanding Protestant church throughout the Southern Hemisphere but with little theological depth.

As the result of trends such as those above, during the past few years, CRC Publications has gone through some difficult times. Our overall sales declined significantly, and we have gone through a time of significant financial stress. That forced us to go through an intensive examination of the strategic direction for each area of our ministry: *The Banner*, Faith Alive Christian Resources, and World Literature Ministries. Fortunately, our current financial situation has significantly improved, and we have identified what we believe is the right direction for each area of our ministry.

The following is a summary of the work, governance, and administrative developments of our ministry during the past year. We look to synod for

suggestions that may help us provide better service to CRC churches, members, and God's kingdom.

I. Board organization, membership, governance, and other administrative matters

A. Organization

During the past year, as has been the case for many years, CRC Publications has been governed by a board of fifty-one delegates, one nominated by each of the forty-seven classes, three at-large delegates elected by synod, and one fraternal delegate from the Reformed Church in America. The board held its annual meeting in February.

Between board meetings, an eighteen-member executive committee (elected by the board) normally meets three times annually to supervise the ongoing work of the agency. Each member of the executive committee serves on one of four subcommittees: administrative, Faith Alive, periodicals, or World Literature Ministries.

B. Officers

The officers of the CRC Publications Board through June 2004 are as follows: Rev. Clayton Libolt, president; Rev. Michael De Vries, vice president, Mr. Bert Witvoet, secretary; and Mr. Eric Van Namen, treasurer.

C. CRC Publications Board structure change

At its February meeting, the CRC Publications Board adopted a proposal to restructure the board that had been developed by a task force appointed by the board president.

The restructuring proposal was based on the conclusion that the key purpose of our board was to provide effective governance and strategic positioning for our ministry.

The key elements of the new board structure are as follows:

1. Composition (up to eighteen delegates)

- One representative from each of the twelve regions of the CRC as designated by the Board of Trustees.
- Up to six additional at-large representatives to help ensure that the board has the appropriate mix of characteristics and skills to effectively govern this publishing ministry.

2. Selection processes

- The regional representatives will be selected by the same process currently used for selecting members for other agency boards with a regional structure.
- The at-large delegates will be selected by synod from two nominees presented by the CRC Publications Board. The Board Development Committee will present nominees for these positions to the CRC Publications Board.

3. Board structure

The board officers will be president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

A Board Development Committee will be established to carry out tasks such as the following:

- Recruit and nominate new board members.
- Evaluate board performance.
- Provide for orientation and training of board members.

Councils will be formed to focus on specific areas of CRC Publications' ministry. The mandate of each council may vary depending on the needs of that area of ministry. All board members will serve on a council. Councils may add additional people selected for their specific expertise. The initial councils will be the following:

- Administrative/Finance
- Faith Alive
- *Banner* Editorial Council
- World Literature Ministries Council

4. Implementation

This new structure will be implemented beginning July 2004. The Board Development Committee will work out the specific implementation details.

D. Long-range planning

The CRC Publications Board reviewed the annual edition of CRC Publications' long-range plan as developed by staff. The plan incorporates, where appropriate, strategies necessary to implement the Denominational Ministries Plan.

E. Relationship with the denominational structure and denominational plan

CRC Publications has been a strong supporter of the Denominational Ministries Plan. Staff members from our agency have been heavily involved in the various cross-agency groups that have been appointed to carry out the plan.

As staff does its planning for new resources, it does so with careful attention to the strategic priorities and goals incorporated in the denominational plan.

More specifically CRC Publications is assigned as the lead agency for a strategic priority of the denominational plan titled, "Integrated Ministry for Children and Youth." To focus on this priority, CRC Publications convened a team of people from several denominational entities and from Dynamic Youth Ministries to develop a vision statement for this strategic priority along with strategies for achieving the vision. The key strategy carried out the past year was a series of regional conferences of pastors and children/youth leaders focused on intergenerational ministry to children and youth. These conferences were very well received.

In addition to the work directly associated with the denominational plan, CRC Publications works closely with other CRC agencies to assist them in their ministries. Examples of this include the following:

- The Faith Alive Department provides all the CRC-developed English-publishing resources needed by Home Missions and all the other agencies to carry out their ministries
- The Worship Office within the Faith Alive Department works very closely with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. This year, these two organizations copublished *The Worship Sourcebook*.

- The World Literature Ministries area of CRC Publications works closely with the mission agencies to provide publishing support for their foreign-language literature needs. Most of this work is focused on Spanish-language resources.

F. *Ministry review*

As noted in the Board of Trustees Report, all the CRC agencies and institutions have been going through a ministry review process during the past two years.

The CRC Publications Board responded to the report of the review process committee as requested.

G. *Relationships with other organizations*

CRC Publications has placed significant emphasis on developing relationships with other Christian organizations in an effort to increase the impact of our ministry and to enable us to broaden the range of resources we offer. Many of these relationships have proven to be very helpful. Some of the more significant relationships are as follows:

1. Youth Unlimited

We meet regularly with the staff of Youth Unlimited to discuss how we might better cooperate in ministry. We are now the exclusive distributor of their materials.

As a result of a proposal adopted by the Board of Trustees in response to a request from synod that the relationship between the Dynamic Youth Ministries agencies and the denomination be reviewed, the Council for Ministry to Children and Youth was established and is made up of representatives from CRC Publications, Youth Unlimited, GEMS, Cadets, and the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship. The mandate of this council, assisted by an advisory committee of volunteers, includes the coordination of children and youth ministry and ongoing leadership for this denominationally strategic priority.

2. Association of Reformed Youth Pastors

CRC Publications is also working on developing a cooperative relationship with this fledgling organization.

3. Reformed Church in America (RCA)

For a number of years, CRC Publications has had an exclusive arrangement with the Reformed Church in America (RCA) whereby the RCA carries and promotes virtually all of our resources to RCA churches and, in turn, receives a substantial discount from CRC Publications. Also, the *LiFE* curriculum and our new *Walk With Me* curriculum was developed in cooperation with the RCA.

For the past several years, this relationship has been undergoing significant stress partially due to the financial crisis of both organizations. This resulted in significant conversations on the part of leaders from both denominations. These conversations resulted in the following recommendation to both the CRC Publications Board and the RCA General Synod Council:

That we endorse as a long-term goal full partnership between the RCA and the CRC in the following areas:

- publishing resources for use in our churches and churches from other denominations
- selecting resources from other publishers for promotion to our churches
- marketing
- customer service
- order fulfillment
- warehousing
- distribution

We interpret “full partnership” to mean total integration of present operations in these areas currently carried out separately by both denominations.

This motion was approved by the CRC Publications Board and the RCA General Synod Council at their February meetings.

A task force of RCA and CRC Publications staff has been established to develop a plan to achieve this goal within three years. As part of this process, the TRAVARCA video resource program (for which CRC Publications contributes \$15,000 each year—supported by ministry share) will be evaluated.

4. Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Our entire catalog, along with an endorsement letter from the general secretary of the denomination and numerous other promotional materials, are sent to the churches of this denomination.

5. Presbyterian Church USA

During the past year, we finalized a potentially significant new relationship with the Presbyterians for Renewal organization within the Presbyterian Church (USA). This organization, serving over four thousand local congregations, is a copublisher of our new *Walk With Me* curriculum.

6. Christian Schools International

We meet regularly with staff members from Christian Schools International to discuss shared resources, plans, and other pertinent issues.

H. *Use of CRC Publications resources by CRC churches*

Most CRC churches make extensive use of the many resources offered by CRC Publications. In fact, about 90 percent of CRC churches are on our customer list.

However, there are several trends that do cause some concern. For example,

- The percentage of CRC churches that use our children’s curriculum has declined in recent years; less than 70 percent of the churches currently purchase one of our children’s curricula.
- Many churches seem to make decisions about resources without thinking about whether they are written from a Reformed perspective.
- Only about one-half of our churches purchase our resources that are focused on teaching doctrine to our high school age youth.
- Many churches are hiring staff for children and youth ministry positions who have little or no background or appreciation for a Reformed view, for example, of interpreting Scripture.

- Many pastors, who might be more appreciative of this issue, have delegated to their staff or appropriate committees the selection of resources for use in their church school.

I. *Recycling*

At its 1990 meeting, the CRC Publications Board adopted a report of the Task Force on CRC Publications and the Environment. That report contained several goals regarding CRC Publications' use of recycled paper. About 98 percent of CRC Publications' materials were printed on recycled paper during 2002.

J. *Antiracism*

CRC Publications has been an active participant in the effort of the Ministries Administrative Council to respond to synod's directive to initiate a significant response to the issue of racism in the CRC. Several years ago, the CRC Publications Board approved an extensive antiracism plan that was developed by staff. That plan is being implemented.

The CRC Publications Board has also adopted an antiracism plan developed by a board task force. The vision approved by the board is as follows:

The CRC Publications Board covenants to become an antiracist community by respecting and valuing cultural diversity as God-given assets of the human family.

The report approved by the board contained a number of strategies for helping the board achieve this vision. Much of the work of the board antiracism team has been to try to increase the number of people of color on our board. This resulted in a request to the Board of Trustees that the process of selecting board delegates be reviewed. The BOT adopted a recommendation for change in this process at its February meeting.

K. *Salary disclosure*

CRC Publications, in accord with the action taken by synod, submits the following annual compensation data:

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
18	1	3rd quartile
17	1	3rd quartile
15	2	2nd quartile

II. CRC Publications' ministry

A. *Periodicals Department*

1. *The Banner*

a. General update

The synodically adopted mandate for *The Banner* is to "inform readers about what is happening in the CRC, as well as in the church at large, to provide articles that edify and encourage Christian living, and to stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and to the culture of which Christians and the CRC are a part."

After ten years, Rev. John Suk completed his service as editor of *The Banner* in August 2003. *The Banner* changed significantly in the ten years he served as editor. It moved from a weekly to a biweekly to a monthly publication. It changed from a partly black and white, journal format to a much more interactive and colorful magazine. It is newsier, contains more pictures, more short pieces, and more levels of entry than it used to.

Starting in September 2004, Rev. Robert De Moor assumed the role of interim *Banner* editor for one year. It was necessary to appoint an interim editor because the work of the Future of *The Banner* Committee (see below and Appendix A) was not yet ready for implementation. Rev. De Moor has been doing this interim work one-quarter time while he continues as editor in chief of the Faith Alive Department of CRC Publications.

During this interim year, Rev. De Moor has continued the basic direction set by Rev. Suk. However, some new regular features have been introduced since he started this position, including the following: Ministering Together, CRC agency ministry stories; Meditations; Slice of Life; Aging Gracefully, a seniors column; and Next Gens, a feature by college-age young adults.

Some of the more popular and/or controversial articles during the past year include the following:

- the October youth issue; especially the editorial calling for more understanding of our Reformed confessions on the part of our youth
- coverage of the sexual abuse case and the response of the classical abuse response team in Alberta

The number of *Banner* subscriptions continues to decline. At the time of this writing there are 21,600 paid subscriptions, about 2,000 fewer than a year ago.

The Banner staff continues to make conscious efforts to include people of color as writers. They also are increasingly sensitive to showing “color balance” in the art and cartoons.

The decision to go monthly was made primarily for financial reasons. However, most readers seemed to welcome the change. This larger *Banner* allows for a greater variety of editorial content in each issue.

The news correspondents continue to do an excellent job of ensuring that readers of *The Banner* are exposed to a wide variety of developments in the CRC. The news section continues to be the most read section of *The Banner*.

b. The future of *The Banner*

In May 2002, the CRC Publications Executive Committee agreed that a Future of *The Banner* Committee should be appointed to “do a year-long study of the future of *The Banner*.” The key reason for this decision was the recognition that, if present trends continue, *The Banner* may face another financial crisis in about five years; thus, it was important to start this discussion now when there is sufficient time to gather the necessary information and to thoroughly and thoughtfully explore all options.

A committee of ten people was appointed, and they met throughout that fall and winter to gather information and develop and discuss alternatives.

The report of the committee was presented to the CRC Publications Board at its annual meeting in February 2003. The single recommendation of the committee that *The Banner* be changed from a subscription-based magazine to a membership-based and ministry-share-supported magazine was approved by the CRC Publications Board for recommendation to synod. The recommendation was also endorsed by the BOT.

A number of implementation issues were left unresolved at the time of the board meeting. The board and staff assumed that these could be worked out by the time that synod met last year. The two most important issues that needed to be resolved were the structure for ensuring editorial integrity for the every-household *Banner* and the specific financial plan for funding this proposal.

However, staff found it impossible to develop a proposal on these matters acceptable to the Ministries Administrative Council (made up of key staff persons from each of the CRC agencies and institutions) in time for last year's synod. So, the CRC Publications executive committee decided to withdraw the proposal from last year's synod.

Since that time, the Ministries Administrative Council has approved an implementation plan for this proposal. Key elements of this plan are the following:

- The additional funding for this proposal will come from a reallocation of the ministry-share increase that CRC Publications received for the development of its new curriculum to the every-household *Banner*. An interim funding arrangement was devised for the one year of overlap.
- A *Banner* editorial council was established and is made up of people from the Board of Trustees and the CRC Publications Board to provide advice and support for the *Banner* staff and to resolve differences regarding specific content matters, should such differences arise.

Therefore, the CRC Publications Board is now presenting the proposal from the Future of *The Banner* Committee to synod for approval. You will find this proposal in Appendix A.

c. New *Banner* editor appointment

Given the importance of *The Banner* in the denomination, and given its increased importance if the Future of *The Banner* proposal is adopted by synod, the CRC Publications Board worked carefully to ensure that the recruitment process for a new *Banner* editor was done well.

The following persons made up the search committee for a new editor: Rev. Michael De Vries (chair), Mr. Henry Hess, Dr. Clayton Libolt, Rev. John Rozeboom, Rev. Reggie Smith, Ms. Wendy Tinklenberg, and Mr. Bert Witvoet. Ms. Norma Coleman and Mr. Gary Mulder served as staff for the work of the committee. Many of the people on this committee also served on the Future of *The Banner* Committee.

The search process included these steps:

- 1) Review of *The Banner* editor's job description.
- 2) *Banner* ads, letters to local church councils, e-mails to all CRC pastors, and information on the CRCNA web site soliciting nominations and applications.
- 3) Letters to all nominees asking whether they would be willing to be considered as a candidate for this position.
- 4) Review of all candidates' resumes, writing samples, and (for those selected) sample editorials to determine which candidates would be interviewed by the committee.
- 5) Intensive interviews of each candidate by the search committee.
- 6) Decision regarding which candidate(s) to present to the CRC Publications Board.

After considerable discussion, the search committee decided to present a single nominee to the CRC Publications Board: Rev. Robert De Moor.

The CRC Publications Board believes that the process by which the new *Banner* editor is selected should be clear to everyone involved. Therefore, the board recommends the following procedure to synod for selection of the new *Banner* editor:

- 1) That synod consider only the candidate presented by the CRC Publications Board for the position of *Banner* editor. If synod believes that new or additional candidates should be considered, it should request the CRC Publications Board to submit new candidate(s) to Synod 2005. Nominations from the floor will not be accepted.
- 2) That synod interview the candidate in open session for up to one hour. The interview will be initiated by a member of synod selected by synod's advisory committee. The questions to be asked shall be selected by the advisory committee.
- 3) That following the prepared questions, the candidate will be open to delegate's questions from the floor.
- 4) That following the interview, the president shall give ample opportunity for discussion of the candidate's qualifications for the position.

The CRC Publications Board recommends that synod appoint Rev. Robert De Moor as the next editor in chief of *The Banner*, beginning September 1, 2004.

Appendices B and C contain a job description for this position and Rev. De Moor's resume.

2. *Voice of the Reformed*

For the past several years, synod has helped fund the Voice of the Reformed, a monthly periodical published by the Korean CRC community through a ministry-share allocation to CRC Publications. The purpose of this publication is to provide a bridge between the Anglo and Korean CRC communities. Accordingly, the content of the magazine often includes translations of articles and news stories from *The Banner*.

Rev. Bomsu Kim is the editor of this periodical. During the past year, the monthly print run was increased from fifteen hundred to three thousand, and the number of pages was increased from twenty-four to twenty-eight.

B. Faith Alive Department

This department, headed by Rev. Robert De Moor, publishes and distributes resources for all areas of a local church's ministry. This department has a goal to be the first stop for resources among CRC churches and a significant resource provider for other churches in the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition.

One of the actions taken as a result of the recent financial crisis was to substantially reduce the breadth of resources that will be developed. The breadth of resources had been increased because of the increasing variety of needs among our customers—it is increasingly difficult to find one resource that most of our churches will use. However, given the size of our publishing ministry, we could not financially support this increased breadth of resources.

As the result of these and other changes, such as staff reductions, increase in ministry share to support the development of our new children's curriculum, and good sales of most of our new products, this department is in considerably better shape financially than in the recent past. The board reviewed some staff plans for the long-term future of this department. They agreed with the following categorization of products to be published by Faith Alive in the future:

- Core (might not achieve full cost recovery): including Sunday school curriculum, curriculum in church doctrine for teens, Friendship curriculum, inductive Bible studies to support the Coffee Break program, *Reformed Worship*, and materials needed by the denomination and its agencies.
- Niche (full cost recovery): products that we are good at and that achieve full cost recovery.
- Strategic (income producing): serves the Reformed movement and is income producing.

However, the board recognized that firm commitment to any long-range plans needs to be withheld until we find out the sales of the new *Walk With Me* curriculum, because our children's curriculum remains the single most important source of income for our ministry.

1. Curriculum Office

Developing and producing church-school curriculum materials (for Sunday school, catechism classes, youth groups, adult small groups, and so on) continues to be the major activity of this department.

a. For younger children

By far the most significant project of this department, indeed of our entire agency during the past several years, is the development of a new children's curriculum called *Walk With Me*. The continued decline in the sales of *Bible Way* and *LiFE* curricula demonstrates the validity of the decision to develop a new curriculum. Most curriculum publishers agree that the life span of children's curriculum has declined to ten years or less. The *LiFE* curriculum was first published in 1992.

The core values of the *Walk With Me* curriculum are as follows: biblical and Reformed, easy to use, kid-friendly, faith growing, community building, diversity celebrating, and fun. A shortened marketing version of these values is "faithful, friendly, and fun."

Progress on this multimillion-dollar project continues as scheduled. Extensive plans to market the curriculum to the CRC as well as to a variety of other denominations have also been developed. This past spring, over forty previews were held throughout Canada and the United States to help inform people about this new curriculum.

This curriculum will be released this summer.

Other recent or upcoming resources for children include the following:

- A thorough revision of *Little Lambs*.
- Several more Christmas programs for children.

b. For youth

Staff has completed a substantial revision of most of the longstanding resources for youth education programs. The new courses are substantially more interactive than prior editions and thus more engaging for the youth.

Among the more significant new and/or revised resources completed recently are the following:

- *Questions Worth Asking*—a complete rewrite of the longstanding course on the Heidelberg Catechism, formerly called Landmarks.
- *No Easy Answers*—a revision of the course on ethics formerly called Decisions
- *Which Way to God* (world religions), *What's Up with the Church Down the Street* (other denominations)—courses replacing two of the three foci of the Reasons course.

Other significant recently published or soon-to-be-completed courses for youth include:

- *Sunday Morning Live*—a course on worship for teens.
- *I Believe: Getting Ready to Profess My Faith*—a mentoring resource for early teens who wish to make public profession of faith.
- *Fossils and Faith*—a course for teens on origins (published in cooperation with Christian Schools International).
- *Route 66*—a quick tour through the Bible for teens.
- A course on sects and cults.

Staff is also considering the development of a more classic study of the Heidelberg Catechism for those churches that are less comfortable with the interactive approach of *Questions Worth Asking* and for those who prefer to teach the catechism in a retreat format.

c. For adults

Because of the issues mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this section, Faith Alive has substantially reduced the variety of resources that it will publish for adults. The only Bible study series that is being refreshed (outside of the Discover Your Bible series supporting the Coffee Break program) is the Word Alive series of intensive Bible studies.

Some of the other significant resources for adults published recently or soon to be published are:

- *The Best of Primary Focus* – two videotapes of three segments each, including a discussion guide for adults, based on videos developed by The Back to God Hour.
- *Forgiveness: What the Bible Teaches, What You Need to Know*, coauthored by Andrew and Leonard Kuyvenhoven.
- *The Empty Pew: Caring for Christ's Wandering Sheep* by Louis Tamminga – offering practical helps for elders and pastors in dealing with those who neglect the means of grace.
- *Being Christian Reformed: What it Means, Why it Matters* – an interagency effort to develop a video introducing the CRC to seekers, new Christians, and other denominations.

Staff is also considering the development of a discipleship program and resource components for young adults, adults, and new Christians that includes such elements as: an introductory study on what is a disciple, worship plans, a planning guide for leaders, and short courses on a number of topics such as Bible reading, prayer, stewardship, spiritual gifts, nurturing children in the home, evangelism, marriage, hospitality, and so forth.

During this past year, staff also decided to promote the Kerygma Bible Study program and resources to our churches. This is a program of intensive Bible studies that came out of the Presbyterian Church USA. The organization that produced this program is trying to sell the program.

d. For people with mental impairments

The Friendship Ministries board, an independent ministry, continues to raise funds for supporting the development and marketing of resources for people with mental impairments. The two most significant current projects are the following:

- A total revision the basic three-year Friendship curriculum. The first year was published in July 2003. The curriculum will be called *Friendship Bible Studies*.
- The translation of the curriculum into Spanish.

e. For people with visual impairments

Working with a ministry in Minneapolis, we continue to expand the list of resources available in Braille. A small ministry-share amount is allocated for this work.

2. Evangelism Office

Our publishing partnership with Home Missions continues to provide the basis for most of the publishing we do in this area. CRC Publications and Home Missions staff meet regularly to chart our course for working together to supply the resources that Home Missions must have to accomplish its strategies for serving the churches.

Most of the publishing work has been focused on developing the Bible studies needed to support the Coffee Break and Men's Life programs. However, the staffs have agreed that, due to declining sales, we would no longer refresh the Discover Life Bible studies product line (supporting Men's Life).

One significant recent development was the buyout of the People Together series from Church Innovations. These resources feature David Stark's principle-based approach to small group ministry. We agreed to purchase the rights to these materials because they are vital to Home Missions' program of small group development. We are updating this series as necessary.

Significant resources published during the past year, or soon to be published, include the following:

- Launch and Lead Your Own Small Group: A Principle Based Approach and Seven Steps to Effective Small Group Ministry from the People Together series.
- A handbook for evangelism committees.

During the past year, staff decided, after a long and distinguished career, that the *Prayer* bulletin inserts should be discontinued due to declining sales.

3. Worship Office

Over the past few years, we have significantly cut back on our publishing of worship resources. However, some of those that we have published recently have met with excellent response. Subscriptions for *Reformed Worship* continue to climb (to more than five thousand). Also, sales of the songbook, *Sing! A New Creation* were far above expectations.

This office continues to work very closely with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. In fact, the long-time lead editor in this department, Dr. Emily Brink, is now working two-thirds time for the Institute. A new staff person, Ms. Joyce Borger has been hired by CRC Publications in this department. Ms. Borger divides her time equally between CRC Publications and the Institute.

The success of *Sing! A New Creation* caused the CRC Publications Board in 2003 to raise the question of whether we should begin to research the need for, and the advisability of, developing a new *Psalter Hymnal* over the next few years. Some of the reasons for discussing this matter now include the following:

- a. Most denominational hymnals have about a twenty-year lifespan. The current Psalter Hymnal was published in 1987.
- b. Changes in hymnody continue to accelerate. Also, there are significant areas where updating might better serve the churches; for example, many of the Psalms in the current hymnal are not being sung.
- c. *Sing!* sales demonstrate that there is still a large market for print worship resources.
- d. The CRC might be well served by a shared collection of songs that can form the backbone for our denomination's music ministry.

At its 2003 meeting, the CRC Publications Board authorized staff to conduct a study to ascertain the need for, and advisability of, developing a new *Psalter Hymnal* that would be published around the end of this decade.

Work on this study was not completed in time for the 2004 meeting of the board, so the board extended the authorization for one year.

One other significant product that will be published by this office in time for synod, in cooperation with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, is *The Worship Sourcebook*, a wide variety of practical worship resources drawn from *Reformed Worship* and a host of other sources.

Other significant products recently published or soon to be published include the following:

- *Ten Service Plans for Contemporary Worship*.
- *Prayers of the People* – a separate title containing a section of *The Worship Sourcebook*.

This office is also working on a set of worship and preaching/teaching resources to help churches increase the effectiveness of the second service.

C. World Literature Ministries

1. Introduction/overview

World Literature Ministries publishes and distributes biblical Christian literature in a variety of languages. The literature is intended to introduce its readers to, and nurture them in, a Reformed view of faith and life. This department is heavily involved in collaborative planning with other agencies—especially the mission agencies. In recent years, most of the work of this department is in Spanish under the brand name Libros Desafio.

This department has gone through a time of considerable transition during the past year, especially on the part of staff. Most of the staff personnel resigned in early 2003 as the ministry developed a response to the recommendation from the ministry review process that it no longer receive ministry share. That recommendation was not adopted, so the ministry was given new life.

In August of 2003, Rev. Alejandro Pimentel agreed to join our ministry as director/managing editor for World Literature Ministries. Since coming on staff, Rev. Pimentel has been engaged in a basic review of all aspects of this ministry. Among the things he has changed or is exploring to save costs and ensure an effective publishing program are the following:

- outsourcing the editorial function to contract editors
- setting a goal to eventually produce and/or reprint up to twenty books a year
- seeking and promoting native writers
- establishing a warehouse in Miami to save costs and ensure more timely fulfillment of orders
- finding ways to reduce printing costs
- ensuring that designers are familiar with the Hispanic culture and are as cost effective as possible.

During the past year, the reporting structure for this ministry was also changed. The staff now reports to the CRC Publications Board through the World Literature Ministry Council made up of board members plus agency staff that are involved in ministry to Hispanics, both in Latin and North America.

The impact of this ministry is considerable. For example, last year about fifty thousand books were sold to church leaders throughout Latin and North America. If, for example, each person purchased two books, that means that twenty-five thousand leaders were impacted by this ministry. If one takes into account all the people these leaders influence, the overall impact on God's kingdom is considerable!

2. The publishing work

a. Spanish literature

The current projects for *Libros Desafío* are the following:

- *NTC: 2 Corinthians* (Kistemaker)
- *Amistad, Year 1* [Friendship Series]
- *History of Salvation and Holy Scripture* (Ridderbos)
- *Spiritual Warfare* (Stam)
- *NTC: Revelation* (Kistemaker)
- *Le Baptême* (Marcel) [Spanish translation of French original on infant baptism]
- *God's Missionary People* (Van Engen)
- *Partnership* (Kuyvenhoven) [new edition with a revised translation]
- CITE books on CD-ROM.

b. Other languages

During the past year, this department printed the Heidelberg Catechism in Khmer.

Staff is also assessing whether to publish a Russian translation of *Engaging God's World* by Neal Plantinga.

D. Marketing Department

The functions performed by the Marketing Department include customer service, promotion, public relations and communications, sales of *The Banner* ads and subscriptions, market research and analysis, and sales forecasting. Mr. Tim Postuma serves as marketing director.

The primary vehicle for communicating about our products to the churches is our annual catalog. However, we use a variety of other strategies to do this because not all the people who need to know about our resources have ready access to our catalog. It is increasingly difficult to stand out among the clutter of promotional pieces that churches receive from publishers. Sales from our web site continue to increase; they are now approximately 10 percent of our total sales.

It is becoming clear to staff that personal contact with churches will be an increasingly important marketing strategy.

The most significant marketing project this year is the promotion of the *Walk With Me* curriculum. An extensive plan has been developed for this purpose. Key elements of that plan include the following:

- Over forty previews – evening events promoting this new curriculum
- Direct mail promotions to over 60,000 churches
- A video
- Exhibits at all three children's pastors conferences
- Newsletters.

One other significant task of this department is market research. In a time of declining sales, research becomes an ever-more-important function to help ensure that we are meeting the needs of our churches. The most significant research project undertaken this year is a significant survey this past spring of both *Banner* subscribers and nonsubscribers in preparation for the every-household *Banner*.

As can be seen from the chart below, the CRC’s publishing ministry is much broader than our own denomination; 80 percent of CRC Publications’ accounts and over one-half of our sales for our English-language products are outside of the CRC. This fact, we believe, speaks highly of the quality of the products produced by the Christian Reformed Church.

Denomination	Active Customers	%	Sales	%
CRC	857	19	\$1,408,000	47
Other	2906	64	\$1,224,000	41
Bookstores/schools	748	17	\$352,000	12
TOTAL	4511	100	\$2,983,000	100

E. *Personnel*

The CRC Publications staff team is made up of about thirty employees. Our staff is organized into four departments (Faith Alive, Periodicals, World Literature Ministries, Marketing) and an administrative office. There are currently thirty-three staff members employed by our ministry (twenty-six FTE).

F. *Finances*

The CRC Publications Board remains committed to the goal that CRC Publications’ ministry should be, as nearly as possible, financially self-supporting. However, it recognizes that there may always be projects undertaken (either because our synod or our board believes they are necessary or because synod requests them) that cannot be financially self-supporting. This is particularly true, on an ongoing basis, for our World Literature Ministries Department. However, in recent years, it was also necessary to allocate some ministry share for the development of the new curriculum.

As mentioned at the outset of this report, CRC Publications has gone through some difficult financial times in recent years. The actions taken in response to this crisis have resulted in considerable improvement in our financial situation. For example, our cash reserves are up over \$1 million from last year. However, we are not sure that our long-term financial picture is yet solid. Much depends on the success of the *Walk With Me* curriculum.

CRC Publications submits for synod’s information reviewed financial statements for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2003, and budgets for the fiscal years 2004 and 2005. These reports have been submitted to the denominational director of financial services and the Board of Trustees for placement in the *Agenda for Synod 2004—Financial and Business Supplement*.

The CRC Publications Board formally requests synod to recommend Friendship Ministries (United States) and Friendship Series Charities (Canada) to the churches for financial support in 2004.

III. Recommendations

A. The CRC Publications Board requests synod to grant the privilege of the floor to the following people when matters of CRC Publications are discussed: for the board, Rev. Clayton Libolt, president; Rev. Michael De Vries, vice president; Mr. Gary Mulder, executive director. For Faith Alive Resources and *The Banner*, Rev. Robert De Moor, editor in chief and interim editor in chief, respectively.

B. That *The Banner* be changed from a subscription-based magazine to an every-household and ministry-share-supported magazine as described in the Future of *The Banner* report (see Appendix A).

Grounds:

1. *The Banner* has long been an important part of the life of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. For much of that history, it has been a virtual town square where members of the denomination have heard the voices and seen the faces of other members, where important issues have been discussed, and where directions for the denomination have been set.
2. *The Banner* as a subscription-based magazine is less able now, and will be even less able in the future, to fulfill the role of a central forum of communication for the denomination because a decline in the number of subscribers, especially among younger and newer members, threatens its financial viability and its position in the denomination.
3. Despite the best efforts of editors and marketing staff, *The Banner* has been unsuccessful in turning around, or even interrupting, the trends toward diminishing numbers of subscribers.
4. For the past decades, churches in North America, including the CRCNA, have witnessed a loss of denominational loyalty. Getting *The Banner* into the hands of every member helps the CRC not only to reverse this trend but also to promote a strong denominational identity.
5. As the Christian Reformed Church grows more diverse, the need for a voice to call its members and congregations together, a forum to introduce members to members and ministries to ministries, and a place to discuss what involves all the diverse sectors of the CRC will become more important.
6. The *Church Herald*, which has been sent to all member households in the Reformed Church of America for a decade, has been widely read and has become an effective means of communication for its denomination.
7. The Christian Reformed Church is already sending the *CRC Source* to its member households. By incorporating the *CRC Source* into *The Banner*, savings can be achieved and better communication effected.

C. That synod adopt the following process for appointing the new *Banner* editor:

1. That synod consider only the candidate presented by the CRC Publications Board for the position of *Banner* editor. If synod believes that new or additional candidates should be considered, it should request the CRC Publications Board to submit new candidate(s) to Synod 2005. Nominations from the floor will not be accepted.

2. That synod interview the candidate in open session for up to one hour. The interview will be initiated by a member of synod selected by synod's advisory committee. The questions to be asked shall be selected by the advisory committee.
3. That following the prepared questions, the candidate will be open to delegate's questions from the floor.
4. That following the interview, the president shall give ample opportunity for discussion of the candidate's qualifications for the position.

D. That synod appoint Rev. Robert De Moor as the next editor in chief of *The Banner*, beginning September 1, 2004. (See Appendices B and C for a job description for this position and Rev. De Moor's resume.)

E. That synod recommend the Friendship Ministries (United States) and Friendship Series Charities (Canada) to the churches for financial support for 2004.

CRC Publications

Gary Mulder, executive director

Appendix A

The Future of *The Banner* Report

I. Introduction

Over a number of months, a committee appointed by the CRC Publications Board, called the Future of *The Banner* Committee, met to consider a matter of great importance for our denomination—the future of our denominational periodical, *The Banner*.¹ The committee was acutely aware that its conversations were but a small piece of a much larger conversation in the CRC, a conversation about not only the direction and future of *The Banner* but of the denomination as a whole. It tapped into this conversation in a variety of ways, including an invitation in *The Banner* to correspond with the committee, a large survey of former subscribers, a smaller telephone survey of current *Banner* subscribers, surveys conducted at several classis meetings, a survey of nine senior pastors of large and growing Christian Reformed churches, and, of course, the committee's own conversations with many people as a committee and, outside of its meetings, as individuals.

The specific dilemma facing the committee is simple enough: what to recommend to the CRC Publications Board and, through CRC Publications, to the denomination for the future of *The Banner*. Given the long-standing, almost linear, trend toward ever-decreasing numbers of subscriptions, *The Banner* will no longer be financially viable in about five years.² To this problem, a number

¹ The committee members are Carol Veldman Rudie, chair, Ken Bosveld, Jim Bratt, Henry Hess, Clayton Libolt, Gary Mulder, Reggie Smith, Kelli Schutte, Michael Van Hofwegen, Jena Vander Ploeg, and Bert Witvoet.

² This subscription decline started in 1984, when subscriptions were at almost 52,000; they are now at about 25,000. All the changes throughout the intervening years, from changing editors, to redesigns of the magazine, to increasing the amount of "practical" content, to changing the frequency of the magazine have not stopped this trend in any significant way.

of solutions present themselves. These solutions tend to fall into four basic approaches, with many variations on each:

- Accept the current trend toward diminished subscriptions as irreversible, discontinue publication of *The Banner*, and give the magazine a decorous death, rather than allow it to slowly sink into insolvency.³ Besides being a counsel of despair with respect to *The Banner* itself, a magazine with a long and important history in the denomination, this approach raises important questions about the future of the denomination. Some of these questions are discussed below.
- Continue publishing *The Banner* on the present business model as long as possible by finding new ways to cut costs and to increase revenue. *The Banner* has aggressively pursued both sides of this strategy for years. The staff of *The Banner* have made many and various attempts to increase subscription revenue by making the magazine more attractive and by increasing the sophistication of its marketing campaigns, including a brief fling with telemarketing. They have aggressively pursued advertising revenue. None of these efforts have reversed the long-term trend toward reduced subscription and revenue numbers.

On the cost side, *The Banner* has gone from a weekly to a biweekly, and, recently, to a monthly. Editorial staff has been reduced to 2.5 full-time equivalent positions. Not much margin remains for reducing costs. The present 64-page magazine could be cut to, say, a 48-page magazine, but further reductions in size, frequency, and staffing are likely to reduce the attractiveness of the magazine, thus undermining the attempt to sell more subscriptions. In the opinion of the committee, there is little reason to believe that this strategy would result in anything other than a slow death for the magazine.

- Continue to publish *The Banner* on a subscription basis, subsidizing the cost of the magazine with denominational ministry shares. Perhaps there are two strategies here. The first provides a subsidy sufficient to maintain financial solvency for the magazine at the present subscription rates, assuming something like the present size, frequency, and quality of the present magazine. However, if one plays out this scenario, the result is, once again, the death of the magazine. Assuming the present trend toward fewer subscriptions continues, *The Banner* would become more and more marginal in the life of the denomination. Soon, questions would arise about the need to subsidize the magazine. Eventually, the subsidy would be cut, the subscription cost would go up, and the magazine would be forced to cease publication.
- A second approach of this kind would subsidize the magazine at a much higher level with the goal of substantially lowering the subscription price.

³One might be inclined to take this approach, for example, if one is convinced that the underlying problem is a cultural movement away from print as a medium of communication. There is some data to support this idea. In our survey of former subscribers, a prominent reason given for no longer subscribing to *The Banner* is lack of time to read (this reason is given by 37%), and, it appears, former subscribers to *The Banner* subscribe to very few other magazines (40% of former subscribers from the U.S. and 28% from Canada spend less than \$25 per year on magazines). But does this evince a lack of interest in reading in general or a lack of interest (and therefore the time) in reading *The Banner*?

This approach builds on the idea that cost is a major reason why people do not subscribe to the magazine and why some subscribers have dropped their subscriptions. Evidence supporting this idea is as follows. In a survey of former subscribers, cost is one of the factors cited as a reason that people give for dropping their subscription to the magazine. In addition, a small marketing test indicated a higher response when the subscription cost was lowered. Caution should be exercised in interpreting these results, however. Cost was a factor in dropping subscriptions for a limited demographic slice of *The Banner* readership. The survey summarizes:

The 16% who stopped subscribing because cost was a problem can be characterized as follows: longer-term subscribers, who don't use the internet for reading, mostly females who are single (mostly widowed), 60 years old or older, with a high school education or less, currently CRC expressing a lot of loyalty to it, spending less than \$50 on magazine subscriptions, and have household incomes of less than \$50,000.

Additionally, while the marketing test was encouraging, the response rate was still low.⁴

Lowering the cost may help out the loyal and traditional readers of *The Banner* characterized by the survey, but the evidence does not conclusively support the idea that lowering the cost would bring new and younger readers to *The Banner* and reverse the long-term trend toward fewer subscribers. Moreover, there are risks associated with this strategy. If it fails, the magazine may have been fatally weakened.

- Change *The Banner* from a subscription-based to a membership-based periodical. There are a variety of ways to implement this approach, but in all cases it would involve placing *The Banner* in the hands of every member of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. This would require a substantial increase in the ministry-share allotment assigned to *The Banner*.⁵ Because this is the approach taken by the committee, it is explained in greater detail below.

One can make arguments in favor of or against any of these options, but they do not stand by themselves. Almost as soon as the committee began to consider these approaches to the problems faced by *The Banner*, it realized that we had to face another set of questions. What is the role of *The Banner* in the life of the denomination? What should its role be? What is the future of the denomination? Is *The Banner* a vestige of the past and our attachment to it mere nostalgia? If this is the case, then perhaps it would be better to let it die. Or, will *The Banner* remain important, even crucial, in the life of the denomination? Are their futures—that of *The Banner* and that of the CRC—intertwined? Surely, in that case, we would want to take firm and bold steps to insure the future of the magazine, indeed, to enhance its future. These and questions like them cannot be answering simply by looking at *The Banner*. We must also look at the future of the denomination.

⁴The response rate went from 500 to 800 for a total mailing of 70,000 households.

⁵This is the solution adopted by *The Church Herald*, the official magazine of the Reformed Church in America.

II. The future of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

What will the CRC look like in the future? There are at least a couple of ways to answer that question. The first is an attempt at prediction: attempting to discern the future by projecting present trends. Despite the best efforts of experts on religious trends in North America, this is risky business. If we cannot predict the weather for more than a few days, our ability to predict the ecclesiastical climate years and decades from now is even less. Trends cannot be confidently predicted into the future, but perhaps predicting the future is not what we are really after. The Lord will have for us what the Lord will have for us. Perhaps it would be better to ask and attempt to answer: What kind of denomination do we (the members and leaders of the CRC) believe we should be in the future? Into what kind of future do we believe that God is calling the CRC and how, in faith, do we determine to reach that future? These call forth not prediction but determination, not guessing but planning.

Of course, in planning for this future, we must take into account present trends. Many of the trends present in North American Christianity seem to point to diminished roles for denominations. When people choose a church today, denominational affiliation is far less important than it has been in the past. For congregations, this is both peril and opportunity. It is perilous because the members of the congregation are no longer constrained by denominational loyalty from leaving for other churches, often churches of quite different theological and denomination backgrounds. In addition, persons who have been affiliated with a certain denomination in the past do not feel compelled to seek out a church from the same denominational affiliation when they move. They may, in fact, wish to try out new and different ways to think and worship. CRC churches are frequently faced with defections of these kinds. However, the same trends that make it easier for people to leave also make it easier for people from outside of the CRC to join CRC churches. In this fluid atmosphere, some congregations will lose members, and others will gain members, related less to denominational affiliation than to the quality and appeal of the congregational program.

Are these winds blown by the Spirit of God or by the fetid spirits of the age? The answer surely is both, but sorting out what is a fresh breeze of renewal from God and what is the breath of the spirits of the age is not always easy. On the one hand, one could say that these trends often set congregations against one another in an unholy competition; on the other, they force congregations to attend more closely than before to the quality of their congregational lives. On the one hand, the claim could be made that these same trends tend toward theological homogenization, what has been called "the McDonaldization" of church; on the other hand, they help the church to set aside old and tired European theological differences that have for so long placed Christians over against Christians. We could go on with this analysis, but much of it is familiar and well rehearsed. We raise it only to set the context in which to raise again the question: What sort of denomination is the CRC called to be in this strange new world of church?

As congregations make their choices about how to respond to these winds of change, they go in various directions. Some hunker down more deeply in the ways they remember; other congregations experiment with the intoxication of new ways. Some downplay their denominational affiliation; others proclaim it. Often Christian Reformed congregations find themselves in the

middle, losing members from both sides. Some of their disaffected members seek out new-denomination, blue-hymnal churches where, it seems to them, the old ways are better honored. Others seek out nondenominational, praise-band churches where, it seems to these disaffected members, faith is more vibrant and personal. For churches who wish to honor both the past and future, it can seem that they are too little of either for too many people, and their numbers slowly dwindle. How can these congregations make wise choices, find the right ways, articulate the broad and precise center of the Christian gospel, and thrive in a market-driven world of church? As congregations make these choices, what should be the role of the denomination? Can and should the denomination lead or follow? Can there be such a thing as a denominational direction (more than just the sum of congregational choices) (that will shape our churches and our mission for the future)?

Another way to ask this question is whether the CRC will be a denomination with a small *d* or a denomination with a big *D*. The difference has to do with identity, not only of the denomination itself but also of the congregations and the members of those congregations. In denominationalism with a small *d*, members and congregations base their identity primarily in the local congregation. The fact that the congregation may have a denominational affiliation is not of first importance to its members or its leaders. The denomination serves the congregations by extending their ministry into the world (missions), by providing resources (education and publications), and by providing an order with which the congregation can function; but identity is congregational. A person may join a congregation without knowing or caring whether that congregation is part of a larger body. A denomination, in this scenario, should be small, efficient, and decidedly behind the scenes.

In denominationalism with a big *D*, the denomination seeks to be more—a bridge, not only among congregations but between past and future. Such a denomination is more than a collection of mission agencies and a denominational office, a polity and a set of assemblies; it is a congregation of congregations. More than that, it is a movement, a movement represented in each congregation but broader and deeper than any of them—a movement worth signing on to in its own right. In fact, if such a movement is to be worth anything, it must be broader and deeper than the denomination as well. The denomination is simply one way in which the movement takes institutional shape. Denomination with a big *D* seeks to be church, an articulation of the church of Jesus Christ. When people become part of its congregations, they are made aware that by their membership in the congregation they are also joining this broader and deeper movement and the missions that flow from it. Identity is both congregational and denominational.

Which sort of denomination does the CRC seek to be? Which will it be in the future? In official decisions and statements, the assemblies and official agencies of the CRC have repeatedly and strongly expressed the desire to be a denomination with a big *D*. The latest such statement, proposed by the Board of Trustees and adopted by Synod 2002, is a preface attached to the Denominational Ministries Plan. The preface has been published separately and distributed to the churches under the title, *What It Means to Be Reformed: An Identity Statement*. As the title indicates, the document has in mind denomination with a big *D* in which the membership identifies with the denomination. The document ends with this challenge:

Finally, one might very well ask whether this identity statement is descriptive or prescriptive. Does this identity statement *describe* what the CRC is or *prescribe* what the CRC should be? The answer is both. The identity statement should be viewed as a description of the Reformed faith at its best as well as a fervent call to live more fully into this biblical vision.

However, official statements issuing from the assemblies and agencies are only one side of the argument. Some congregations, and among them some of the newest and the fastest growing, seem to have cast their vote for denominationalism with a small *d*. Such congregations downplay or eliminate denominational references from their publications and signs, may limit their participation in denominational assemblies and committees, and shield their members from denominational controversy. Whether we need or want a denomination with a big *D* or with a little *d* threatens to become an institutional tug-of-war between the congregations on the one side and the assemblies and agencies on the other, each trying to pull the other across the line to become central in members' lives. What is at stake here? Identity. Direction. Which way is the Spirit leading?

III. An identity for the future

Where will we find identity? Consider personal identity for a moment. Ask someone who she is, and you might, depending on the circumstances, hear about where she came from, what she does day-to-day, who her family is, what she thinks and feels about a variety of subjects, and even what her dreams are. These are windows into her identity but not her identity itself. She is the product of all these things and more. Identity is never static. It never just is. It is never just the sum of this or that. What the Bible suggests is that our identity finds its unity in a dynamic relationship with whatever we count as our God. Identity—what the Bible calls heart—is a dynamic relationship with all these things as we grow toward the Lord or away from the Lord, toward what God has called us to be or away from it, toward the transformation that Paul speaks of in Romans 12 or away from it. Identity has a direction, a movement. When we stop growing, we begin to die.

So, too, with a living congregation or denomination. Depending on the circumstances, a congregation or denomination might express its identity by talking about its history, its activities, its affiliations, its teachings, or its dreams. It is all of these things and more, of course. Identity is a dynamic relationship with the Lord. It is a movement toward greater obedience or away from it, toward a fuller understanding of the Lord's purposes or away from that understanding, toward what the Lord has called it to or away from it.

In the measure that this identity is a movement toward the goal of fully serving the Lord, it becomes attractive, inclusive, and unifying. This is the genius of the Reformed tradition. It is a deep dissatisfaction with the way things are, with the depth of our present understanding, with the character of our obedience and a strong desire to belong more fully to the Lord who calls us out of darkness into light. Our pursuit of this goal is fully informed by what we have learned from the past and what we are in the present, but it leans toward the future.

Too often we have based our unity in what cannot be inclusive or unifying. We fall prey to the temptation to base our denominational identity in experiences and connections only open to those who grew up in the CRC: a common

ethnic experience, family connections, an immigrant mentality, and experiences centered on educational institutions such as Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. We have faced backward and inward. These sources of identity are necessarily exclusive, giving people the subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle message that if you did not grow up in the CRC, you will never be a full member.

The project of the CRC, represented among things by the statement of identity referenced above, is to shift from a denominational identity based on that which excludes others to a denominational identity that is open to all who would pursue a right relationship to the Lord of Life. This is a very difficult thing to do in practice. It involves a change of self-identity at a very deep but subtle level. Often, in pursuing this goal, the language of the CRC betrays it. It is common, for example, to speak of “the Reformed tradition,” but *tradition* can be a euphemism for our embracing a nostalgic lost past. Additionally, tradition, even a sturdy and beloved tradition, is not hardy enough to establish a new identity. We also need the commitments and activities of the present along with dreams and intentions for the future. Identity, if it is to be healthy, needs a mission. A healthy denominational identity is dynamic, a way in which experiences and values get pressed into action toward certain goals.

Then, what people find off-putting about denominationalism—the sense that it is all about preserving the institution, not about the mission of Jesus Christ—is overcome. This is the best of denominationalism with a big *D*. It is seeing the big picture. It is reaching out to the whole world. It is not so much a tradition as a movement with deep roots and a long future. It is not about preservation but about discovery of the full truth of Jesus Christ. It is an attempt to faithfully follow the movement of the Spirit in every age as the Spirit leads the church into all truth.

A. *The role of The Banner in the future of the denomination.*

How can this sense of a dynamic movement be fostered in our denomination? No one way will suffice. Part of the answer is the training and support of leaders for our congregations. Part of the answer is fostering new congregations and new ministries. However, such a movement in its denominational form would seem to need a voice, a pulpit. It is this that *The Banner* has been in the past, and it is this that *The Banner* can be in the future. However, it can be this, only if it is widely, if not universally, read in the denomination. It can be this only if it is in the homes of new as well as established members. It can be this only if the voice with which it speaks is a call, not to denominationalism for the sake of denominationalism, but to this movement to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century.

B. *The Future of The Banner*

If, as we have suggested above, *The Banner* has a key role to play in the future of such a denomination, then several key conclusions follow. Among them:

- *The Banner* needs to be a visionary and unifying expression of the identity of the denomination.
- *The Banner* must reach the broadest possible spectrum of people in the denomination, reaching across lines of age, race and ethnicity, geographi-

cal location, length of membership, congregation type, worship style preference, and so forth.

- *The Banner* needs to continue to be an appealing and excellent magazine.
- *The Banner* needs to be established on a solid financial base for the future.

In short, *The Banner* should strive to become the centerpiece of denominational refection and conversation, a town square, as it were, where those who care about the denomination and the broader movement that the denomination represents can meet to talk and consider how to address the challenges of the present moment.

When the committee began to look at options for the future of *The Banner* in the light of these values and goals, three things became apparent:

1. The approach that best addresses these values and goals is sending *The Banner* to every member's household, supported by ministry shares. This solution increases the readership of the magazine, provides financial stability, and promotes the role of *The Banner* as a central venue for denominational conversation and unity. The experience of *The Church Herald*, which has implemented an every-member policy, supports this approach.⁶
2. Such an approach would change the magazine in obvious and subtle ways. While the committee has only begun to think about the nature of these changes and, in any case, the details of the changes should be made together with a new editor, we have sketched out in Appendix A-1 some initial thinking about the directions such changes would take.
3. Such an approach requires careful thinking about how *The Banner* is integrated into the structures of the denomination. A plan responding to that matter has been developed and approved by the Ministries Administrative Council (MAC) and the Board of Trustees.
4. Such a move would require a sizable investment on the part of the denomination. We believe that this investment is best approached as a structural readjustment in ministry shares. The specific long-term plan for this adjustment is to reallocate the ministry-share increase that CRC Publications has been receiving for its new curriculum to the every-household *Banner*. For the interim year, during which CRC Publications will still be receiving the ministry share for the curriculum and the every-household *Banner* will also be published, a specific plan has been developed and approved by MAC.

Based on the above analysis, the CRC Publications Board recommends the following to synod:

⁶The *Church Herald* experience also addresses a key question: would a magazine that people didn't pay for directly be read and taken seriously? In a telephone survey of the RCA, two-thirds of those surveyed reported reading at least 31% of the magazine. Only 7% reported not reading the magazine at all. This contrasts with a written survey of the readership of *The Banner*, which reports that 24% don't read it at all. In addition, *Church Herald* readers appear to read more of the magazine than *Banner* readers, perhaps because they are not passing the magazine along to others.

That *The Banner* be changed from a subscription-based magazine to an every-household and ministry-share supported magazine as described above and in the appendices.

Grounds:

1. *The Banner* has been an important part of the life of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. For much of that history, it has been a virtual town square where members of the denomination have heard the voices and seen the faces of other members, where important issues have been discussed, and where directions for the denomination have been set.
2. *The Banner* as a subscription-based magazine is less able now and will be even less able in the future to fulfill the role of a central forum of communication for the denomination because a decline in the number of subscribers, especially among younger and newer members, threatens its financial viability and its position in the denomination.
3. Despite the best efforts of editors and marketing staff, *The Banner* has been unsuccessful in turning around or, even, interrupting the trends toward diminishing numbers of subscribers.
4. For the past decades, churches in North America, including the CRCNA, have witnessed a loss of denominational loyalty. Putting *The Banner* into the hands of every member helps the CRC to reverse this trend and promote a strong denominational identity.
5. As the Christian Reformed Church grows more diverse, the need for a voice to call its members and congregations together, a forum to introduce members to members and ministries to ministries, and a place to discuss what involves all the diverse sectors of the CRC will become more important.
6. *The Church Herald*, which has been sent to all member households of the Reformed Church of America for a decade, has been widely read and has become an effective means of communication for its denomination. The Christian Reformed Church is already sending *CRC Source* to its member households. By incorporating *CRC Source* into *The Banner*, savings can be achieved and better communication effected.

Addendum to Appendix A

Reflections on Editorial Guidelines for an Every-Household *Banner*

A magazine sent to every home in the denomination must be different from a subscription-based magazine. A subscription magazine is invited into a home; a membership-based magazine comes to the home without special invitation. It must earn its right to be read and to become an important part of the life of each member's home. The goal of such a magazine is to draw our denomination together both by honoring the diversity of its members and by seeking our common heart as we pursue the mission to which the Lord has called us. In doing so, *The Banner* must:

1. *Unify*. Apart from its role as the news and information medium of the Christian Reformed Church, *The Banner* must be recognized as the town

square or speakers' corner of the denomination—a place where we learn about events in our neighbors' lives, share our views and opinions, express our common beliefs and values, and lend encouragement to those who are partners in our journey of faith and service.

2. *Honor our differences.* Unity does not mean papering over differences or failing to note the diversity and variety of our denomination. For *The Banner* to serve as a unifying force within the denomination, it must reach readers from all corners of the Christian Reformed Church.
3. *Be local.* One way to better reflect and represent what is happening in the denomination is to provide greater emphasis on local news—the events and activities taking place within congregational communities. Each issue of *The Banner* should include several pages of denominational briefs, congregational briefs, submitted items, pictures, events, and achievements.
4. *Be global.* *The Banner* should consistently and powerfully present the global movement of the Spirit of God in the church and in the world. The ministry stories now included in *CRC Source* should be combined with a perspective that calls each Christian to service in God's kingdom.
5. *Be easily read.* The greatest competitor with which *The Banner* must contend is not another publication but the reader's precious and limited resource of time. Because of their busy lifestyles, younger readers, particularly those with children, tend to evaluate the value of any publication in terms of the time required to absorb the information and the usefulness of the information. For the print media, the struggle to achieve value is compounded by societal expectations of news being packaged as entertainment.
6. *Be practical.* Readers are looking for content that has practical application to their daily lives, and that addresses the issues they confront at home, work, or church.
7. *Be challenging.* The formula for long-term viability and the development of a broad readership base, is to present a full spectrum of content that delivers quality and value. To truly be a denominational publication with a future, everyone within the CRC community must have the opportunity to feel that they are reflected in and represented by the content of *The Banner*.
8. *Reach children and teens.* Being Reformed is to hold dearly to God's covenant promise to children, and instructional content geared specifically for children should also be accommodated within the pages of *The Banner*. Using the creative expertise of Faith Alive staff, appealing and exciting content can be developed that offers biblical instruction in fun-filled exercises. Similarly, considerable attention must be given to content that addresses the real world issues faced by teens. As this is one of the most difficult readership segments to attract, creative solutions must be found, including presenting youth issues in a format that lends itself to discussion by Sunday school classes and youth groups.
9. *Be consistently high quality.* The Christian Reformed Church is indeed blessed to have a publication such as *The Banner* within which it can pursue these important objectives. Through a clear mandate, broad readership base, and a

continuing commitment to editorial excellence, *The Banner* can play a central role in fostering unity and community within the denomination.

Appendix B

Position Description

Job Title: Editor in Chief of *The Banner*

Department: CRC Publications – Periodicals

Location: Grand Rapids, MI

Reports to: Executive Director and CRC Publications Board

Purpose: Responsible for the content of *The Banner* and the activities and functions of the Periodicals Department of CRC Publications.

Essential Duties:

1. Ensure that *The Banner* achieves its stated purposes [(1) to inform CRC members about what is happening in the denomination; (2) to strengthen their Christian life; (3) to stimulate them to serious reflection on the content of the Christian faith as it relates to our surrounding culture; cf. Acts of Synod 1976, p. 254] by effectively directing or performing the following functions:
 - planning issues of *The Banner*
 - writing editorials and other appropriate columns
 - making final decisions on all submitted manuscripts
 - approving all final copy and layout of each issue
 - answering all *Banner* correspondence
 - maintaining an adequate subscription level
2. Work with the executive director and finance director to ensure the continuing financial stability of *The Banner*
3. Ensure the effective functioning of the Periodicals Department within CRC Publications.
4. Assume responsibility for strategic planning for the Periodicals Department.
5. Effectively interact with people within and outside CRC Publications to promote the interest of *The Banner*.

Qualifications:

1. A personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. A member in good standing of the Christian Reformed Church.
3. In full accord with the doctrinal position of the Christian Reformed Church.
4. Thorough familiarity with the Scriptures and insight into Reformed teachings.
5. Insight regarding issues pertaining to the Christian Reformed Church, the church at large and the world of our day.
6. Demonstrated ability to write with clarity and liveliness, and to sensibly edit what others have written.
7. Sensitivity to and ability to communicate in writing to *The Banner's* diverse reading audience.

8. Ability to supervise staff in a way that leads to staff growth and development.
9. Ability to work effectively with a senior management team and with boards and committees.
10. Ability to deal constructively with a variety of opinions and with criticism.
11. General knowledge of administrative functions such as finance, planning, etc.

Education and/or Experience: An advanced degree and significant experience in a related field.

Appendix C Curriculum Vitae

Robert De Moor

Work Experience:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Jan. 1997 – present | Editor-in-Chief of Faith Alive Christian Resources, CRC Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich. |
| Sep. 1995 – Jan. 1997 | Theological Editor of the EWE Dep't., CRC Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich. |
| Jan. 1984 – Sep. 1995 | Minister of the Word, First Christian Reformed Church, Langley, B.C. |
| Dec. 1978 – Jan. 1984 | Minister of the Word, Third Christian Reformed Church, Edmonton, Alta. |
| Sep. 1975 – Dec. 1978 | Minister of the Word, Christian Reformed Church of Edson, Alta. and Christian Reformed Church of Peers, Alta. |

Work-Related Appointments:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1993 – 1994 | Chairperson, Synodical Committee to find a more effective structure for denominational ministry in Canada |
| 1991 – 1994 | Delegate to the Board of Publications, member of its executive committee since 1992 |
| 1990 – 1994 | Regional Pastor, Classis British Columbia South-East |
| 1993 | Delegate to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church and reporter of its advisory committee on missions |
| 1991 – 1993 | Chairperson, Langley and District Ministerial Association |
| 1984 – 1989 | Chair of the Committee for Contact with the Government of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada |
| 1985 | Delegate to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church |

Educational Background:

- 1972 - 1975 Bachelor of Divinity, Calvin Theological Seminary
- 1968 - 1972 Bachelor of Arts with a Philosophy major, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Ill.

Publications:

- 2002 *Reformed: What It Means, Why It Matters*, CRC Publications
- 1997 *Speaking of God: A User's Guide to Our Contemporary Testimony*, CRC Publications
- What The Christian Reformed Church Believes*, CRC Publications
- 1993 *God's Backyard: A Fresh Look at Ecclesiastes*, CRC Publications
- 1989 *Quest of Faith: Understanding What You Confess*, CRC Publications
- 1985 *The Christian and Labor Unions*, CRC Publications
- 1983 *Bible Studies on the Parables of Matthew*, insert in *The Banner*, CRC Publications
- 1976 – 2004 A number of articles in *Kerux*, *The Bridge*, *The Banner*, *Christian Courier*, *Reformed Worship*, and a variety of local newspapers

Personal:

- Born 1950 in Enschede, the Netherlands
- Immigrated to Strathroy, Ontario, Canada in 1958
- Married Margo Hofstra in 1975
- Blessed with four children, Justin, Michael, Joel, and Lisa

I. Introduction

Synod has mandated Christian Reformed Home Missions “to lead the church in its task of bringing the gospel to the people of Canada and the United States and drawing them into fellowship with Christ and His church.” The mandate is expressed in these three mission activities:

- a. Encourage and assist churches and classes in their work of evangelism.
- b. Initiate, support, and guide new-church development in cooperation with local churches and classes.
- c. Initiate, support, and guide other evangelistic ministries (i.e., campus ministry and Christian-schools ministry in New Mexico) with local churches and classes.

(Home Missions Order, Art. 2, 1992, 1979)

Home Missions’ mission statement articulates and puts in motion its synodical mandate by collaborating with regional ministry teams, classes, CRC agencies, and educational institutions in fulfilling God’s mission in North America and by providing encouragement, guidance, and assistance so that

- local congregations are healthy and mission-focused,
- new disciple-making churches are planted and multiply, and
- mission-focused communities in educational settings flourish.

This mission is supported through prayer mobilization, small group ministries, developing disciple-making leaders, coaching, consultation and training, financial assistance; working for diversity, justice, and reconciliation; and other specialized mission supports.

II. A new day in Home Missions

Christian Reformed Home Missions has reorganized with the endorsement of the executive director of ministries (EDM) and the Board of Home Missions to better serve God’s mission and to fulfill the mission mandate assigned by the Christian Reformed Church. To that end, we pray and work with our classis/regional/CRC denominational partners for no less than a mission movement through the CRC where diverse ministries of many kinds (established/new church, campus, others) are linked and supported in mission.

Through reorganization Home Missions aims to:

- Increase capacity for multiplying and supporting mission-focused churches, faith communities, and ministries (synodical Home Missions mandate, 1992, 1979).
- Nurture spiritual disciplines—chiefly prayer—that support and energize mission in order to discern and go, through the church, to where God is at work.
- Develop regional ministry teams throughout North America with local and classical partners to engage partners, cast vision, set strategy, allocate resources, recruit leaders, and pray to carry out mutual mission goals and Home Missions’ mandate.
- Advance ethnic ministry development (Hispanic, Korean and Asian, Native American, and black ministries) and the vision of a multicultural Christian Reformed Church.

- Actively respond to recommendations of the 2003 CRC ministry review team and better support the goals of the 2002 CRC Denominational Ministries Plan.

There are two main aspects to Home Missions' reorganization:

A. *The Home Missions binational office* in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has been reorganized to unify resources and ministry support. Former, separate departments of new-church, established-church, and campus ministry have been brought together in one department—ministry development. There are two additional departments—ministry teams and ministry advancement.

The ministry development department, led by Rev. Bill Van Groningen, integrates church planting and development (formerly new-church); mission focused churches (formerly established-church); campus ministry; and small groups/prayer, smaller churches support, and leadership.

The ministry teams department (leader being recruited) supports regional ministry teams and manages all ministry grants. Ministry team leaders (formerly regional and intercultural directors) report to this person.

The ministry advancement department (fundraising and communications), led by Mr. Tom Bratt, is now more integrally connected to the other teams.

Rev. John Rozeboom is Home Missions' executive director. Ms. Melissa James is the CRC finance person who supports Home Missions.

B. *Regional ministry teams* are led by persons formerly known as Home Missions regional directors and intercultural directors. These ministry teams will bring together regional Home Missions staff and local and classis leaders to cast mission vision; set goals; support local church mission and new churches; direct grants; recruit leaders; and, eventually, help to build the Home Missions budget. Some of the ministry teams will have denomination-wide responsibility to advance Asian, black, or Hispanic ministry.

III. Board and executive committee

A. *Board*

The Board of Home Missions is the agent of synod charged with guiding and carrying out the denominational home missions program. The board has fifty members. Forty-seven members are chosen by their respective classes; three are members-at-large who have special expertise. Twelve board members are from Canada and thirty-eight from the United States.

B. *Board officers*

The officers of the Board of Home Missions are Ms. Mary Buteyn, president; Rev. Keith Doornbos, vice president; Rev. John Rozeboom, secretary (executive director); Rev. Gerrit Bomhof, recording secretary; and Ms. Lynne Heyne, treasurer.

The officers of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions of Canada are Rev. Gerrit Bomhof; president; Mr. Peter Runia, treasurer; and Rev. Andrew Vander Leek, secretary.

C. *Executive committee*

The executive committee meets in September. It consists of elected delegates from the following regions:

Region	Classes	Delegates
Western Canada	B.C. North-West, B.C. South-East, Alberta North, Alberta South/Saskatchewan	Victor Chen
Central Canada	Chatham, Huron, Niagara	Gerrit Bomhof
Eastern Canada	Hamilton, Toronto, Quinte, Eastern Canada	Sam Cooper
Northwest U.S.	Pacific Northwest, Columbia, Central California, Yellowstone	Virgil Michael
Southwest U.S.	California South, Greater Los Angeles, Arizona, Pacific Hanmi, Red Mesa	Tom Doorn
Midwest U.S.	Rocky Mountain, Iakota, Minnkota, Heartland	Bernie Haan
Central U.S.	Lake Superior, Northcentral Iowa, Pella	Mark Brouwer
Chicago	Northern Illinois, Chicago South, Illiana, Wisconsin	D.A. Crushshon, Sr.
Eastern U.S.	Atlantic Northeast, Hudson, Hackensack, Southeast U.S.	Sheila Holmes
Out-state Michigan	Northern Michigan, Muskegon, Kalamazoo, Lake Erie	Ed Visser
Ottawa County	Holland, Zeeland, Georgetown, Grandville	Keith Doornbos
Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids North, Grand Rapids South, Thornapple Valley	Mary Buteyn
Members-at-Large	For Finance For Advancement For Intercultural Ministry	Lynne Heyne Mark Feldkamp Charles Brown

D. Salary disclosure

Executive persons are being paid within the approved salary ranges.

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (Includes housing allowance)
18	1	2nd quartile
16	1	2nd quartile
	1	(position vacant)
15	1	2nd quartile

E. Retirements

Three long-time Home Missions servants retired from full-time employment. Rev. Al Mulder stepped down as director of new-church development on September 1, 2003, after forty years in various capacities with Home Missions. Rev. Duane Vander Brug also retired on September 1, 2003, after serving with Home Missions for thirty-four years. He remains the part-time regional leader in the northeast United States. Mrs. Betty Veldman Wieland, former director of established-church development, retired on February 1, 2004. She began with Home Missions as a Coffee Break/Story Hour workshop leader in 1980.

IV. Home Missions' ministries

The work of the reorganized agency continues without interruption. We continue to help develop new churches, assist smaller and larger churches to

develop mission-focused goals and organizational structure, and support mission ventures in the world of education on large public university campuses and among the Navajo and Zuni peoples. Leaders will be identified and equipped for mission. Small group ministries, prayer mobilization, and grant support for mission focused endeavors will continue. We will also continue to tell the news of what God is doing in and through us as we solicit ongoing support for the mission.

However, this ongoing work will increasingly be characterized by four key themes:

- Home Missions seeks to enhance the practice of spiritual disciplines—chiefly prayer—so that we stay faithful to the mission of God among us.
- Home Missions seeks to more directly reflect and enhance the unique heritage and legacy of the CRCNA’s Reformed identity as integral to the mission-focused movement we nurture.
- Home Missions is committed to increasing the vision for and capacity of the CRCNA’s mission in North America through collaboration and teamwork.
- Home Missions continues to work diligently toward realizing more fully the multicultural vision of the CRCNA.

A. *Mission-focused churches*

Writing about new models of church ministry in their book *Beyond the Box* (Group Publishing, 2003), William M. Easum and Dave Travis remind us that the day in which we live requires that the church be a missionary. Christian Reformed Home Missions supports, equips, and encourages congregations to explore their mission-focused calling and to develop ministries that will help them carry it out. This past year, God has been inspiring and empowering individuals and churches like these:

- A small-town church invests in its children’s ministry and sees Sunday school attendance jump by twenty-six children (almost double) in one year.
- Unsure what to do with her future, a high school graduate raises her own support and serves another church for six months in a youth-staff capacity through the ENCOUNTERS (formerly SWIM) ministry. She subsequently returns to lead her own middle-school group and is attending Reformed Bible College for a youth ministry degree.
- A church serves around four hundred dinners every Wednesday night in a family friendly weeknight ministry in which eighteen people became new believers.

God is at work in churches such as these and others where the mission focus of the church is connected to the heart of God. Home Missions attempts to be an active presence in half of all CRC churches annually and to encourage all CRC churches through resources such as:

1. Coaching/Consulting—Home Missions provides coaching and consulting services for forty to fifty churches annually to help them find the next step of their ministry.
2. Conferences—Ministry conferences encourage the mission-focused work of churches and leaders. This year, about twenty churches and one hundred

leaders participated and either learned or developed skills for leadership. One participant wrote: “Words cannot express the fire in my soul. I understand so much more what an Acts 2 church is.”

3. Grants—Home Missions, in ministry year 2003, provided financial assistance to thirty mission-focused churches to support their mission programs and staff grants. Mission-focused church grants for 2003 are:

Church	City	New or Renewal
Northside Community	Patterson, NJ	Renewal
New Hope	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	New
Maranatha CRC	Belleville, ON	Renewal
Mountain View CRC	Grimsby, ON	Renewal
Grace CRC	Scarborough, ON	Renewal
Living Hope	Peterborough, ON	New
East Saugatuck CRC	Holland, MI	Renewal
Vida Nueva	Holland, MI	Renewal
Cascade Fellowship	Grand Rapids, MI	New
Coit Community	Grand Rapids, MI	New
Riverside CRC	Grand Rapids, MI	New
Roosevelt Park CRC	Grand Rapids, MI	New
Immanuel	Kalamazoo, MI	New
Montello Park CRC	Holland, MI	New
Immanuel	Burbank, IL	Renewal
Evergreen Park CRC	Evergreen Park, IL	Renewal
Park Lane CRC	Evergreen Park, IL	Renewal
Unity CRC	Prinsburg, MN	Renewal
Calvin CRC	Oak Lawn, IL	New
Second CRC	Highland, IN	New
Parkersburg CRC	Parkersburg, IA	New
Sunrise CRC	Austin, TX	Renewal
Faith CRC	Pella, IA	Renewal
First CRC	Langley, BC	Renewal
Parklane CRC	Portland, OR	Renewal
First CRC	Vancouver, BC	New
Mission to Seafarers	Vancouver, BC	New
Grace Filipino	Bellflower, CA	Renewal
Classis Central California	California	Renewal
Faith CRC	Walnut Creek, CA	New

4. Partnerships—Home Missions, in order to serve mission-focused churches more effectively, partners with agencies such as CRWRC, Youth Unlimited, CRWM, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin College. The Encounters ministry, which had sixty-one participants last year serving in sites around the globe with partner ministries, continues to provide a model for leadership development and partnership that strengthens our ministry.

5. Smaller Church Support—The smaller church support arm of Home Missions serves 335 (or 40 percent) of the 835 organized congregations in the CRCNA. Churches are classified as being smaller if they have 150 or fewer active total members or fewer than 100 active professing members.

These smaller churches defy stereotypes. They are old, young, urban, rural, suburban, thriving, struggling, growing, declining, majority culture, minority culture, wealthy, impoverished. Some were begun by Home Missions; most were not.

In February 2003, Home Missions transferred the funding for the churches of Classis Red Mesa to its smaller church program with the under-

standing that funding would continue under Home Missions oversight until new funding is developed.

The smaller church team (comprised of one binational staff and two smaller church specialists) provides information, resources, and encouragement for smaller churches with the aim of enabling them not only to survive but to thrive. This support comes primarily in the form of grants, consultations, two smaller church networks, and the smaller church newsletter, *Thrive!*

Several smaller congregations with whom we have been working are experiencing wonderful turnarounds: one has grown by over 30 percent in three years, nearly all from people who were previously unchurched; another witnessed several professions of faith last year, more than any year in recent memory.

In keeping with the decisions of Synod 1995, agreements with churches currently receiving salary funding from the Fund for Smaller Churches (FSC) will be honored under the annually diminishing subsidy system as long as the churches qualify. For the calendar year 2003, twenty-four churches were approved and received, or were eligible to receive, FSC salary subsidy for their pastors.

In addition, Home Missions has initiated other grants for smaller churches. In 2003, 50 churches received program assistance up to \$5,000, 50 received continuing education assistance up to US\$600 (Can\$720) and 67 received assistance for technology upgrades (e.g., computer, sound system, copier) up to US\$800 (Can\$1,000). One congregation, Lakeview CRC of Valentine, Nebraska, is now receiving support as a heritage church. Several other inquiries have been received.

B. Church planting and development

In Luke 15, Jesus points us to the harvest joy that is experienced when searching people are found. The following is a modern-day example:

Mr. Brian Hall is a reporter for the *Salem Evening News* in Salem, Massachusetts. He also attends North Shore Chapel, a new Christian Reformed church located there. Brian came to North Shore Chapel after the *Salem Evening News* ran a front-page article about the church. As Brian posted the article on the newspaper's web site, he was convicted to attend their worship the very next day.

The church planting strategy of Christian Reformed Home Missions is for churches to plant churches. North Shore Chapel is an example. It is a daughter church of New England Chapel, led by missionary pastor Rev. Chris Mitchell. Some churches serve as natural parents in that the vision for a new church arises from within the church itself. In other cases, churches serve as foster or adoptive parents in that the vision was initiated elsewhere, but these churches participate directly by providing resources to a new church plant in a variety of ways.

God is providing wonderful church planting leaders from increasingly diverse backgrounds. Over half of our church planters are of ethnicities other than European American. More than half of the churches begun in the last two decades enrich our denomination not only with new followers of Jesus but also with new languages and cultures. While growing in diversity, there is a

deep sense of unity around the gospel and the desire to plant culturally relevant new churches that are biblical and Reformed.

Home Missions enjoys an encouraging partnership with all the other agencies and institutions of the CRCNA. Through an interagency church planting goal team, key resources are combined from various agencies to help achieve the following goal of the Denominational Ministry Plan: “CRC denominational ministries will serve congregations and classes by encouraging and supporting a denomination-wide movement that extends our kingdom witness for Jesus through increasing our capacity to plant up to thirty churches a year.”

CRC Growth through Evangelism 1990-2003

Yearbook Year	All Churches	Newer Churches
1990	2913	216
1991	2599	305
1992	2699	416
1993	2351	474
1994	2766	768
1995	2489	1102
1996	3170	890
1997	2846	1238
1998	2738	795
1999	2777	614
2000	2462	534
2001	3005	633
2002	2563	596
2003	2650	686
2004	2939	541*

*Based on 49 churches reporting as of 2/24/04

Gradually the CRC has been learning to plant churches among our neighbors “where they are,” fully expecting that when our neighbors become brothers and sisters in Christ, they will be enfolded—along with their new congregations—into the Christian Reformed Church. About five new churches were started annually in the 1970s, ten new churches annually in the 1980s, and nearly twenty new churches each year in the 1990s. All new churches are begun with the commitment to “bring the gospel to the people of Canada and the United States, and draw them into fellowship with Christ and His church” (Home Missions mandate).

Home Missions helps churches plant churches by means of the following key strategies:

1. Prayer mobilizing and communication—Communicating the vision for a church planting movement and mobilizing prayer for enfolding people into fellowship with Christ and his church is a vital part of the process of church planting and development.

The 2003 winter edition of *CRC Source* was dedicated to the theme of church planting and helped to reinforce the “New Branches” aspect of the “Deep Roots/New Branches” campaign. The January 2004 Lord of the Harvest prayer challenge produced 42,750 bookmarks for distribution in English, with 1,100 additional copies in Spanish. Through the initiative of

Rev. Tong Park, ministry team leader for the Korean congregations and Southern California, 8,400 additional bookmarks were produced in Korean—enough for every person in every Korean CRC congregation. Additional prayer resources distributed to planters and/or CRC congregations are the monthly *PowerLink*, the quarterly *Networker*, various web resources, and other materials and networks.

2. Resourcing partners, planters, and new churches—Home Missions is eager to help classes and congregations cast vision and develop specific strategies and plans for starting new churches. One of the primary factors is selecting a qualified leader and helping that leader make a good beginning. Some of the key parts of that process are:

- Residency (for persons new to ministry or lacking planting experience)
- Coaching (wisdom, accountability, support)
- Bootcamp (an intensive planning/training week)
- Orientation (3.5 days at the binational office).

As the new churches develop, various denominational helps are available. Home Missions' services include:

- *Navigating the Growth Matrix* (video)
- Small group trainers/consultants
- Peer learning forums.

The most significant learning often occurs through planters helping one another. For the last decade, Home Missions conferences for church planters have been led almost exclusively by pastors themselves. Also, some planters have been challenged and encouraged through peer forums—intentional gatherings of small groups of selected planters to share blessings and concerns and to receive support and challenge from their peers.

We thank God for the church planters and their families who have answered the call to plant new churches. The following statistics show results of our church planting efforts as of February 24, 2004:

Church Planting/Development	2002	2003	2004*
Churches reporting	74	69	49
Main worship attendance	7718	7128	45610
Total members	6015	5620	3098
Growth by evangelism	609	686	541

*Reporting as of 2/24/04

Growth can also be seen in the diversity of the leadership within church planting and development:

Missionary Pastors – 1988-2003	European-American	Ethnic	Total
1988-2001	95	115	210
2002-2003	27	26	53
<i>Total</i>	122	141	263

New Churches – 1988-2003	European-American	Ethnic	Total
1988-2001 (13 years)	99	134	233
2002-2003 (2 years)	40	40	80

3. Financial partnering for church planting—Financial support is a key part of Home Missions’ partnership with new churches. However, as funding availability declines, partnerships with classes and other sources increase. Today, Home Missions provides grant funding for up to six years to church plants located in majority-culture communities and ethnic-language communities. For new churches in communities characterized as high need, Home Missions’ funding may continue for up to twelve years, and even longer in exceptional circumstances.

C. New and continuing work ministry year 2003 through ministry year 2004

In ministry year 2003, Home Missions provided financial assistance to approximately 114 new and emerging churches, Leadership Development Networks (LDN), and residencies. Frequently, as noted below, the actual start is preceded by a period of grant funding for residency prior to the launch of the new church. New-church starts and funding conclusions for the following periods are listed below:

New Work: Ministry Year 2003	Name	Grant Start	Site Start
1. Buena Park, CA/City on a Hill	David Chong	7/02	7/02
2. Calgary, AB/City Center	Ed & Michelle Top	2/03	2/03
3. Denver, CO/Denver LDN	Pete Van Elderen	7/02	
4. Edmonton, AB/The River Comm.	Bruce Gritter	10/01	10/02
5. Grand Junction, CO/Abundant Life	Allen Kleine Deters	7/02	7/02
6. Grand Rapids, MI/Iglesia Paz Y Esperanza	Augusto Liza	7/02	7/02
7. Grand Rapids, MI/African Comm. Fell.	Mwaya Kitavi	3/03	3/03
8. N. Pacific Reg. NCD Specialist	John Van Sloten	7/02	
9. Philadelphia, PA/Germantown	Kyuboem Lee	3/03	3/03
10. Orono, ME/Orono Comm.	Carl Bergman	3/03	3/03
11. Southern Pacific Hisp. Min. Develop.	Mirtha Villafane	6/02	
12. Standish, ME/Crossroads Comm.	Douglas Walker	1/03	1/03
13. Ventura, CA/Bridges	Bill Garner	7/02	7/02
New Work: Ministry Year 2004	Name	Grant Start	Site Start
1. Anaheim, CA/Sae Soon Church	Suil Kim	9/03	9/03
2. Cerritos, CA/Cerritos Home Ch.	Paul Cha	7/02	7/03
3. Eastern Ontario LDN	Kevin DeRaaf	7/03	7/03
4. Garden Grove, CA/GG Filipino	Elmer Tandayu	7/03	7/03
5. Grand Rapids, MI/Monroe Mall	Henry Schenkel	9/01	9/03
6. Irvine, CA/Korean-Multiethnic	C.U. Song		
7. Jackson Heights, NY/Queens	Arturo Olguin	7/03	7/03
8. Kitchener, ON/Grand River So.	Adrian VanGiessen	7/03	7/03
9. New Brighton, MN/New Life	Phonh Sinbondit	8/03	8/03
10. Olathe, KS/Pathway Community	Kevin Schutte	7/03	7/03
11. Ridgefield, NJ/The Tree of Life	Kook Sung Kim	7/03	7/03
12. Sioux City, IA/Lao Unity	Keo Phammarath	9/02	7/03
13. Socorro, TX/Valley Ridge Comm.	Jose Rayas	8/02	7/03
14. Valencia, CA/Comm. Ch. of Bel.	Eric Molina	7/03	7/03
15. West Valley City, UT/ Cambodian	Charlie Phim	7/03	7/03

Residencies	Name	Grant Start	Site Start
1. Long Beach, CA	Ryan Verwys	NA	1/03
2. Renton, WA/Evergreen Comm.	Steve Kim	4/02	6/03
3. Rockford, MI/River Rock	Paul Worster	11/02	11/03
4. Sacramento, CA/Sacramento	Doug Bouws	8/02	7/04
5. Socorro, TX/EI Paso	Jose Rayas	8/02	7/03
6. Azusa, CA/Community Harvest	Glen Garcia	7/03	1/04
7. Centennial, CO/E. Hills Multi-Cult.	Henry Serrano	10/03	
8. Folsom, CA/Sacramento Area	Derek Zeyl	6/03	7/05
9. Thornapple Valley/Grand Rapids	Burt Bolt	10/03	
10. Burlington North	Leo Gatotos		
11. Bowmanville, ON	Martin Spoelstra		
12. Sacramento, CA/Living Stones	Marc Holland	1/04	12/05

Funding Conclusions: Ministry Year 2003	Name
1. Bellflower, CA/Grace Filipino	Elmer Tandayu
2. Anaheim, CA/Grace Filipino #3	ETP students
3. Bellflower, CA (Los Alamitos)/New Life Church	John Choi
4. Burbank, CA/Bethany Korean	David Kong
5. Calgary, AB LDN	
6. Flanders, NJ/Crossroads Comm.	Paul Ingeneri
7. Florida LDN	
8. Foothill Ranch, CA/Ekklesia	Michael Bischof
9. Frankfort, IL/Bridge Comm.	Nick Ahrens
10. Franklin, MA/New England Chapel	Chris Mitchell
11. Granite Springs, CO/Sacramento	Greg DeMey
12. Hamilton, ON/New Life	
13. Hartford, CT/Christ Church of Glastonbury*	Will Garner
14. Holland, MI/Watershed	Trent Walker
15. Honolulu, HI/Hope Metro Church	Hugo Venegas
16. Horicon, WI/Marshview Ministries	David Katsma
17. Lincoln, NE/Northern Lighthouse	Sam Keyser
18. Lisle, IL/Horizon Community	Dan Jongsma
19. Muskegon, MI/Celebration Community	Don Ridder
20. Naperville, (Oswego) IL/The Peak Ministries	John Wilczewski
21. New Lenox, IL/New Life Church	Jul Medenblik
22. North Jersey LDN	
23. Classis Pacific Hanmi LDN	
24. Renton, WA/Evergreen Community*	Steve Kim
25. Rockford, MI/River Rock	Jon Huizenga
26. St. Petersburg, FL/Lao Community	
27. Sardis, BC/Heartland Fellowship	Ken Byl
28. Savage, MN/Bridgewood Community	Mark Brouwer
29. St. Petersburg, FL/Laotian	Ranong Silakhom
30. Toronto, ON/Friendship Community	Fred Wittveen
31. Tracy, CA/Heartland Church	Mark Humpreys
32. Tucson, AZ/The Village	Rod Hugen
33. Winnipeg, MB/Red River Fellowship	J. Van Drongelen

*Funding conclusions occasioned by conclusion of the ministry

D. Identified church planting and development sites

The need for church planters is urgent. The following locations have been approved and are awaiting leaders:

Maple Ridge, British Columbia; North London, Ontario; Burlington, Ontario; Los Angeles, California, Hispanic; San Joaquin County, California; Santee/East San Diego, California; Simi Valley/Moor Park, California; Vista/North San Diego, California; Denver, Colorado; Northern Colorado; Bradenton, Florida, Residency; Houston, Texas, Hispanic; Pacific Northwest U.S., undesigned.

Additional proposals are in the approval process as new sites for ministry year 2005.

The goal of “increasing our capacity to plant thirty churches a year” is in response to the potential harvest in North America. From a denominational perspective, ten to twenty new churches are needed annually simply to offset the loss of congregational mergers, closures, and departures. From a kingdom perspective, twenty to thirty new churches are needed annually to help meet the massive challenge of reaching unchurched and underchurched millions in Canada and the United States.

E. Educational mission

Institutions of higher education are a primary means by which our culture claims the hearts and minds of the next generation. The power of the gospel to transform, redeem, and renew the world needs to take root and flourish at the threshold of social and intellectual change. Because of its rich theological heritage and educational fervor, the Christian Reformed Church is uniquely gifted for this work.

1. Campus ministries

Our campus ministries seek to influence the entire university. They encourage students, faculty, and staff to love God with heart, soul, strength, and mind. They challenge institutions of power to be merciful, just, and generous in their habits and hopes. Recognizing that the church is made up of many denominations and traditions called together to herald the coming of God’s kingdom, we celebrate our unity in Christ by partnering with others on campus who confess his name.

Our foundational documents, a current list of our campus ministry locations, and a list of the personnel serving in those locations can be found on our website (www.crhmcampusministry.com).

The Christian Reformed Church is involved in campus ministry on more than forty campuses in Canada and the United States. As of September 2003, twenty-three campus ministries are supported by Home Missions’ partnership-assistance grants. These are:

Central Michigan University	University of Alberta
Chicago State University	University of Calgary
Dalhousie University	University of Guelph
Fanshawe Community College	University of Iowa
Ferris State College	University of New Brunswick
Iowa State University (Anglo)	University of Northern British Columbia
Iowa State University (Korean)	University of Toronto
Kennedy-King Community College	University of Western Ontario
McMaster University	Western Michigan University
Michigan State University	Wilfrid Laurier University & Waterloo University
Passaic County Comm College	William Paterson University
Queen’s University	York University

Regular activities for our campus ministries include weekly Bible studies for students and faculty, one-on-one counseling, large group worship and/or teaching events, small group discussions, social activities, leadership formation, special lectures and retreats, and, in some cases, a Sunday student worship service on campus. Although many of these gatherings are small, some include hundreds of students.

In addition, Home Missions supports a program of emerging leaders in our campus ministries and, when funds are available, partners with Calvin Theological Seminary to support ministry internships on campuses. Calvin College partners with Home Missions-Campus Ministry to cosponsor an annual academic/mission-focused lecture tour on major university campuses throughout North America.

2. New leader appointed

Rev. Bill Van Groningen's tenure as the Home Missions campus ministry director concluded on August 30, 2003. Following a comprehensive search, Mr. Peter Schuurman was offered the appointment to serve as the Home Missions educational mission leader. Mr. Schuurman, previously the CRC campus minister at Brock University, has advanced degrees in sociology and theology and is a regular columnist for *Christian Courier*. He will focus his work within Canada and assist Rev. Van Groningen in support of campus ministry in the United States. Together they will consult with CRC campus ministries across North America, administer partnership assistance funding, develop ministry standards and evaluation tools for campus ministries, and marshal denominational (and other) resources to further aid our campus ministries.

Through the work of the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association, the educational mission director's office supports a campus ministry journal (*Footnotes*), annual campus ministry conferences, regional campus ministry gatherings, and other leadership development activities. The director's office supports the CRCMA's ongoing work toward developing and refining the vision and goals of CRC campus ministry across North America. Together we track campus ministry trends, explore campus ministry issues and concerns, and help set the course for our ongoing mission in higher education.

3. Partnering with Red Mesa schools

Home Missions also assists the Red Mesa Christian Schools Association. The association fosters mutually beneficial programs of support (internal- and external-staff development, donor development, and so forth) for all of the Red Mesa schools. The association is currently led by a volunteer coordinator, Ms. Kathy Bosscher, the principal of Zuni Christian Mission School.

As the schools continue to renew and revise their mission-focused educational goals, Home Missions is privileged to continue to journey with them in a partnership that demonstrates modest denominational subsidies matched by increasing local ownership. A key initiative at present is the development of a renewed statement of understanding on the longer term partnership of Home Missions and the Red Mesa schools.

F. Mission-focused leadership development

One of Home Missions' seven Core Values declares that "raising up missionary leaders from each generation is crucial for equipping God's people for God's work."

1. Prayer

The task of mission-focused leadership development begins with prayer for harvest workers (Matt. 9:38). We ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers through the prayers of Home Missions staff, missionary

pastors, and the whole church. A January prayer initiative highlights the importance of this specific prayer.

In addition, Home Missions distributes various promotional materials and, with the assistance of The Back to God Hour, is developing a church planting video for vision casting and recruiting purposes.

2. Identification

Potential mission-focused church leaders need to be identified and encouraged early on. Home Missions encourages the identification of future leaders through cooperation with Youth Unlimited (specifically the Encounters program), the cross-agency Leadership Development Team, small group leaders, pastors, and the like.

3. Training

Once potential leaders are identified, they need to be trained. Home Missions assists in training in numerous ways:

a. Leadership Development Networks (LDN)

In partnership with classes, Home Missions resources fifteen LDNs and hopes to see two to four more begin during the coming year. LDNs are a three- to four-year, in-ministry training program available in Spanish or English. The current locations are:

Location	Leader	Participants
Southern Calif.	Albino Melendez	14
New Jersey	Ramon Orostizaga	28
West Michigan	Carlos Tapanes	8
Central Calif.	Kevin Adams, Paul Vander Klay	9
Chicago	Pedro Aviles	8
Chicago (BUILD)	Bob Price	7
Southern Calif.	Al Breems	10
Southern Calif.	Andy Choh	15
Red Mesa	Stanley Jim	8
Texas	Mike Johnson	15
Maine	Bill Johnson	7
North Jersey	Ricardo Orellana	16
Wisconsin	Rob Sizemore	9
Denver	Peter VanElderen	10
E. Ontario	Ben VandeZande, Adrian VanGiesen, Kevin DeRaaf	14
Total Trainees		171

b. Masters (bachelors) in missions

Home Missions has partnered with Calvin Theological Seminary and Reformed Bible College to offer a distributed education (online) program to bring accredited education to the student. Home Missions has loaned Dr. Gary Teja to the seminary one day per week to act as the director of this program. Twelve to fifteen students are currently enrolled. Each of them was oriented for online education by taking the on-campus Introduction to Church Planting course taught by Rev. Jim Osterhouse and Dr. Gary Teja.

c. Internships

On-site training takes place through internships. Nonformal internships refer to training that is not coupled with formal education. Formal internships are crafted in conjunction with seminaries. Academic internships are available for online students.

4. "Directions"

Once a mission-focused leader has been identified and trained, Home Missions determines where this person can best fulfill a missionary calling. "Directions" is followed by a three-day intensive assessment to determine the passion and giftedness of the individual. Home Missions also provides assessment interviews. Teams around North America have been trained to conduct these intensive four-hour evaluations.

G. *Prayer and small group development*

Keys in our comprehensive strategy to support mission-focused churches, church planting and development, and educational ministries are prayer and small group development. Services in these areas are utilized through individual churches, consistory retreats, small group conferences and leadership events, Leadership Development Networks, Korean small group conference, Calvin Seminary classes, Days of Encouragement, a multidenominational area prayer conference, Bootcamp, and Home Missions' sponsored conferences such as Willow Creek and Saddleback, just to name a few.

Resources and encouragement are available on our web site (www.small-groupministries.org) and in our print and electronic publications, including *Connections*, *Small Talk*, *LifeLine* (for small group leaders), and the *Prayer Paper*. Our partnership with CRC Publications/Faith Alive Christian Resources also plays a key role as we serve our denomination with resources on small groups, prayer, and evangelism.

Two major prayer events of 2003 were the fourth annual West Michigan regional prayer conference in February and the Prayer Fire Conference in October. Nearly six hundred people participated in those events. We continue to identify and train classical prayer coordinators; at this writing we have nearly thirty. In addition, Home Missions' prayer mobilizer Rev. Doug Kamstra is a participant in the denominational Prayer Leader's Network, on the Classical Renewal Ministries Team, and with the Prayer for the Harvest Initiative.

More than 4,100 persons participated in 155 leadership events in 2003, which includes small groups, Coffee Break, Story Hour, Little Lambs, and evangelism training. Small group regional representatives throughout the United States and Canada work with pastors, councils, ministry team leaders, and a variety of small group leaders to model and promote renewed vision and relationship-based ministry. Of the 155 events, 25 events were encouragement events such as director's days, rallies, and retreats.

Volunteer planners for this year's Small Group Evangelism Conference for Women, slated for July 23-25, 2004, at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, expect registration to exceed 1,500. We anticipate the July 2004 release of *Growing People through Small Groups* by Ms. Betty Veldman Wieland and Mr. David Stark (Bethany House Publishers). This is a foundational resource for our principle-based small group strategy. Bethany's project manager Ms. Julie Smith reports, "The manuscript is excellent. As I read it I realized why some groups I was in went well and why others didn't."

H. Financial partnering

Financial support is a basic part of Home Missions' partnering with church planting and development, mission-focused churches, educational mission, smaller churches, Leadership Development Networks, internships, and academic scholarships. Due to Home Missions' reorganization, grant funding is no longer administered by individual departments (such as the former ECD, NCD, campus, and so forth) but is overseen by the director of ministry teams.

Home Missions provides grant funding as follows:

Church Plants (Includes four parent church grants and six residencies)	96
Mission-focused Churches	
Mid-size Church Support	
- Outreach Staff Grants	30
Smaller Church Support	
- Salary Subsidy (FSC/Heritage Churches)	24
Technology/Program/Continuing Ed	167
Educational Mission	23
Leadership Development Networks	10
Internships	15
Academic Scholarships	12

I. Ministry advancement

1. Financial resources

Overall, gift income for Home Missions fell short of budget. Ministry share declined from the year before by \$209,000, but higher than expected estate gifts made up part of the difference, which resulted in a total reduction in giving of \$142,000. The excess of expenses over revenue was covered by using reserves from prior years.

2. Personnel

Mr. Tom Bratt was hired as director of ministry advancement and started on March 31, 2003. Home Missions notes with gratitude that along with a paid staff a number of volunteers continue to support God's mission both in the binational office and with funded ministries.

3. Communications

Home Missions uses a variety of means to communicate with our various audiences. The Internet has become an increasingly important part of the communications mix. The web is used to convey information such as news, prayer needs, donor opportunities, and so forth. Home Missions web sites include:

www.crhbm.org – Christian Reformed Home Missions
www.missionfocusedchurches.org – Mission-focused Churches
www.menslife.org – Men's Life
www.coffeebreakministries.org – Coffee Break
www.smallgroupministries.org – Small Group Ministries
www.newchurchnet.com – Church Planting and Development
www.minhisp.org – Hispanic Ministries
www.crhmcampusministries.org – Campus Ministries

Worship bulletins and related material in English, Korean, and Spanish were made available to the churches for Easter and Reformation Day. Many churches received an offering for Home Missions on those Sundays. A 16-page review of Home Missions ministry for 2003 was published in November and sent to all donors. In addition, we published four *Update* newsletters and one *Gathering* magazine and provided material for CRC *Source* and *Prayer Guide* as well as monthly bulletin announcements. All of our published material is available for downloading from www.crhm.org. Our board members and board alternates receive a monthly newsletter by way of e-mail called *First Friday Focus*. Home Missions also provides speakers for the Women's Missionary Union tours.

In December, ministry advancement department staff called 1,758 of the top Home Missions donors for the purpose of encouraging a year-end donation. Also, communications staff participate in developing copy for the "Deep Root/New Branches" church-planting campaign.

V. Evangelizing progress in 2003

Numerical growth is one measurement of ministry. By God's grace, the Christian Reformed Church has grown through evangelism by 42,777 persons since the beginning of Gathering God's Growing Family in 1988. In the 2003 reporting period, 2,939 persons were added through evangelism (compared with 2,650 persons in 2002). Total net denominational growth, however, was negative by 63 persons (*Yearbook 2004*, p. 143).

In the decade of the 1990s and so far in the 2000s an annual average of 2,700 persons were brought in through evangelism, compared with an average of 2,000 persons in the 1980s and 1,500 persons annually in the 1970s. Since 1989, new congregations accounted for 12,216 persons added through evangelism. In 2003, at least 541 people were added through evangelism in newer churches (based on reports from 49 churches).

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Dr. Mary Buteyn, Home Missions board president, and Rev. John Rozeboom, executive director, when matters pertaining to Home Missions are discussed.

B. That synod encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Easter Sunday and Reformation Day Sunday as significant opportunities to receive an offering for Christian Reformed Home Missions.

Home Missions is blessed, privileged, and profoundly challenged to join in God's mission with all of the Christian Reformed congregations and with Christian Reformed ministry agencies and schools.

Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions
John A. Rozeboom, executive director

I. Introduction

It is called the triangle of death because it is surrounded by the city cemetery, the city sewer, and the city dump. People live here because their homes were destroyed by Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

It is a low-lying, hot, humid place that reeks of rotting vegetation. When the wind is from the north, the putrid odors of a third-world dump waft over the nearly sixteen hundred people who live here.

Almost five years ago, a World Missions ministry, known as the Nehemiah Center of Nicaragua, got involved in the triangle through Pastor Osvaldo Bonilla. Since then, gang activity has all but ceased, prostitution is way down, employment is up, and people are becoming acquainted with the Savior. This community, now known as El Limonal, is just outside Chinandega, Nicaragua, not far from the Honduran border. This story of transformation is just one of many that Christian Reformed World Missions is involved in. For over one hundred years, this agency of the denomination has worked to transform communities, churches, and individual lives around the world.

Since 1888, World Missions has worked to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God and to call people to repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to God in their personal lives and their societal relationships. World Missions has worked to build the church of Christ. World Missions serves in multiple partnerships to provide for the fullness of God's grace in a broken world and to bring glory to God. World Missions is very thankful that Bringing Salvation to the Ends of the Earth is a vision that has gripped many. With a world population of over six billion people, that vision continues to challenge us and give us focus.

World Missions is the agency by which the CRC administers the joint world missions work of Christian Reformed churches (Church Order Art. 77). Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) seeks to fulfill the following mandate:

- A. Proclaim the Gospel of the growing kingdom of God.
- B. Call people of the entire world to repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to God in their personal lives and societal relations.
- C. Build the Church of Christ. Develop peoples who are gathered for worship, who train their own membership for leadership, and who are dedicated to service in and beyond the communities in which they live.
- D. Relieve suffering and minister to human needs through programs of Christian education and development, with the help of CRWRC and/or local diaconal organizations wherever possible.
- E. Encourage and enable the congregations of the CRCNA to call and commission missionaries and to provide cooperatively for their support.
(Missionary Manual, Section 109)

The tasks, however, are not ones to be done alone. Other agencies of the church have their church-given mandates. Many local CRC congregations have found opportunities to reach the ends of the earth through short- and long-term outreach programs. In many of the far-flung reaches of the earth, World Missions joined with Christian churches that are growing and developing their own programs of reaching people with the gospel. We have entered

an exciting time—the task is one to be done in partnership with others. As a result, World Missions implements its plans with a commitment to bring salvation to the ends of the earth in an effort characterized by partnerships, collaboration, and cooperation.

II. A review

A. *Looking back*

Ms. Tina Ipema served in Nigeria for nearly thirty years with World Missions. Now in her retirement, she labors in the home office in Grand Rapids once a week to work her way through the archives. She uncovers yellowed, curling letters and sepia-toned photographs that remind us of an era of missions no longer with us. She catalogues old pictures of missionaries who are hunting hippos, wearing pith helmets, and being carried in sedan chairs.

So much has changed since those photos were taken. So much has changed since the long-flowing script of those early missionaries was put down on the now-curling paper.

Yet, nothing has changed.

B. *Looking ahead*

What motivated the first Christian Reformed missionaries to go to New Mexico in 1888 or to China in 1920 is what motivates the newest recruits this year: a passion to tell the world about Jesus.

Christian Reformed World Missions has nearly three hundred missionaries in thirty countries around the world who are engaged not only in bringing people to Christ but also in reforming their communities, their worldviews, and their nations.

Someday, years from now, a new “Tina” will archive old digital photos, videos, and DVDs of missionaries who went out for the first time in 2004. The media will look old and worn; the clothing and hair styles will be quaint. Lord willing, our denomination will still have a powerful commitment to evangelize the whole world and an agency such as World Missions to help them do it.

C. *Security*

September 11, 2001, was a long time ago on the calendar, but for an organization such as CRWM, its implications are as fresh as ever. Security for our missionaries remains a high priority. Prayers, plans, talks, and contingency plans continue to ensure that CRWM is doing everything it can in this new era of terrorists’ deliberately targeting North Americans.

World Missions anticipates that for the foreseeable future greater attention to the assessment of short-term and long-term risks will be part of all CRWM planning and operating. World Missions intends to explore and respond to opportunities for new or reinforced ministry in the aftermath of these terrible events.

D. *Assessment*

CRWM is engaged in a significant revision of its long-range plan. This effort is being undertaken not only as a normal part of good planning but also in light of new opportunities for ministry at a time of financial challenge and a steady decrease over the past decade in the number of long-term missionary positions.

If effective ministry is being done, a decrease in the number of long-term positions by itself may mean little. However, such a decrease is cause for concern in an agency that has long seen itself as entirely or primarily a missionary-sending agency. While the increase in short-term missionaries is exciting and appreciated, long-term missionaries are needed for long-term change.

III. Elements in partnership

A. *With the CRC*

Our plan and budget is built on the conviction that the most basic partnership exists with the congregations of the CRC. This plan calls for long-term missionaries (plus their spouses), partners, volunteers, interns, and associate missionaries, all of whom find support from the congregations in North America. This support is measured in many ways, all of which are vital to the ongoing ministries represented in the fields and projects around the world. Currently, nearly 80 percent of all the CRCs give direct above-ministry share financial support to one or more missionaries. If measured by ministry shares, then it can be said that nearly 90 percent of CRCs financially support CRWM.

Our plan calls for a network of twenty-five regional representatives who span the continent. These work with an even greater network of local, church-related representatives whose task is to keep the outreach ministries before the church.

Likewise, partnership is seen in the form of the classically designated representatives who serve on the World Missions Board under the direction of the synod of the CRC. The plan is reviewed by the CRC and judged as to its consistency with the vision of the denomination.

B. *With other agencies of the CRC*

Our plan reflects an increasingly positive and proactive partnering with the other CRC agencies. It contains program plans for joint efforts in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Central America, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Eastern Europe. Cooperations are being formed in Mexico, Cambodia, and Bangladesh. These plans are coordinated at the field level and within the Ministries Administrative Council (MAC).

C. *With churches overseas*

In the past, church-planting ministries have included the establishment of CRC-like churches in many countries, especially within Latin America, Nigeria, and the Philippines. More recently, the strategies for the agency have shifted to a church-development strategy with the recognition of a maturing leadership in partner churches. Likewise, these partner churches have a growing vision for outreach. The partner churches in Mexico and the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines (CRCP) will figure prominently in the development of the new ministries within Mexico and in Southeast Asia respectively. The church-planting and development work in Nigeria includes staffing from partner churches.

IV. Report on mission fields and projects

During the past year, World Missions gave support to twenty-nine Reformed and Presbyterian churches, which are attended by approximately two million people. It also contributed staff and grants to twenty other

agencies and leadership-training institutions. World Missions' activities in specific mission fields are herein briefly described:

A. Africa

1. *Sierra Leone*. Through Christian Extension Services, our national partner organization, World Missions responded to requests from thirty-eight worship groups to provide training and organizational assistance.
2. *Liberia*. Though civil war forced the evacuation of missionaries from Liberia in 1990, ministry continued through grants to our partner organization, the Christian Education Foundation of Liberia. With the departure in 2003 of warlord-turned-president, Mr. Charles Taylor, hope is increasing.
3. *Nigeria*. In March, thirty years after they split, the Reformed Christian Church of Nigeria and the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria celebrated their restored relationship. Thirteen organized churches in the eastern Kambari area made progress toward denominational organization.
4. *Mali*. Several baptisms, increased demand for Christian literature, and increased interest in literacy were highlights for this work among the nomadic, Muslim Fulbe.
5. *Guinea*. Team members participated in friendship evangelism, prison ministries, and Bible studies. Missionaries also shared the leadership of Pular worship in the towns of Labe and Dalaba. There are approximately one hundred known Christians among the Fulbe in Guinea. Broadcasts over two local radio stations extend the witness to an estimated audience of three hundred thousand.

B. Asia

With its enormous population, wealth of culture, depth of history, and variety of religious heritage and practices, Asia offers a tremendous challenge to, and opportunity for, the Christian church. Increasingly, Asians are not only "out there," but they are our fellow CRC members as significant numbers of Asians settle in North America and join the CRC. It is CRWM's honor to have been given a small but important role to play in the extension of God's kingdom and his church in Asia and in partnership with Asian churches and peoples.

CRWM's ministries in Asia have been focused largely on Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Guam, Japan, and the Philippines.

1. *Bangladesh*. We plan to provide two faculty members for the College of Christian Theology in Bangladesh (CCTB) in order to enhance the development of Christian leadership in that country. Our personnel will work closely with the CRWRC team and partners by providing theological grounding for, and training in, holistic ministries by churches and Christian agencies. Our missionaries are still in language training, but, through a volunteer couple, we have provided short-term assistance to the development of CCTB's library.
2. *Cambodia*. We will focus on working under the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC), of which CRWRC-Cambodia is a member. Our work will include development of Christian leadership training and education ministries. Also expected is a study of additional ministry opportunities

that we may become involved in later. We are particularly interested in partnering with the CRC in the Philippines and in ministry in Cambodia. There may also be teaching opportunities at Phnom Penh Bible College. Short-term teaching positions for partners are also being planned. This past year, a Calvin Seminary intern served with World Missions in Cambodia.

3. *China*. CRWM ministries in China include many facets such as church-leadership development, organizational capacity building of churches and other Christian institutions, evangelism among university students and faculty, youth work development, and assistance in Calvin College's off-campus program. The primary focuses are on Christian-leadership training in China and on Taiwan and evangelism in China. In this year, we ended our direct involvement with ministries on Taiwan.
4. *Guam*. A typhoon destroyed one of our bookstores. The other was transferred to the direction of Faith Church. We had two partner teachers on Guam. The Christian Education Enhancement program provides resources to Christian schools in terms of qualified teachers, curriculum design, and administrative inputs. As of September 2003, our ministries on Guam were completed.
5. *Japan*. Our ministry focuses on planting churches in partnership with the Reformed Church in Japan (RCJ). We are currently involved with nine mission congregations. We work closely with The Back to God Hour's Japanese ministries. We are also part owner of the Christian Academy of Japan (CAJ), a Christian school that many of our missionary children attend. We have expanded into involvement in youth ministries through the RCJ.
6. *The Philippines*. The focus in the Philippines is on Christian-leadership development, church organizational capacity building, and church-planting ministries. We work mostly in partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines. We are also investing more and more in providing resources to the larger Asian community's need for leadership training and the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines' desire to develop its own mission program.

C. *Europe*

1. *France*. Through an agreement with the *Faculte Libre De Theologie*, we placed a professor at the seminary in Aix-en-Provence to teach practical theology and administer an extension training program for African church leaders.
2. *Hungarian Ministries*. Leadership training, missions consultation, and placement of teachers in church-run schools has been CRWM's strategy in this field. The Sárospatak Reformed Seminary has now trained more than 150 pastors since it reopened after the communist period. One of our missionaries, Rev. Frank Sawyer, teaches philosophy and sociology at Sárospatak Reformed Seminary. He is being given the highest academic honor that Hungary can bestow on one of its professors—University Professor. We praise God for Rev. Sawyer's dedication, and we wish him well as he continues to teach and train future leaders at the seminary.

3. *Russia*. Our work is part of an interagency ministry effort. We have two library-reading rooms that have more than three thousand registered users. An educational thrust initiated in 2003 seeks to establish a Christian Teachers Association.

D. *Latin America*

1. *Costa Rica*. CRWM continues to provide support for the development of the Evangelical University of Latin America (UNELA). The university specializes in missiological courses on the university level but can also strengthen programs of theological education on all levels, both within Costa Rica and within other Latin American countries. In addition to those in the resident program, UNELA's extension program has about five hundred students. The extension program serves students in more than a dozen countries. UNELA is working at developing three new educational programs in the areas of Christian education, pastoral care, and transformational development. CRWM also offers support to the small CRC of Costa Rica for their evangelism, leadership training, and education projects.
2. *Cuba*. The CRC of Cuba is a denomination full of vitality that continues to grow spiritually and numerically. The Cuban church has 20 established churches, 150 house churches, and prayer cells for a total of almost 5,000 worshippers. The church's holistic ministries and diaconal programs—put to the test in emergencies—has gained the respect of neighbors and government officials. Every year, several members of the CRCNA visit the CRC in Cuba to share mutual encouragement as they enjoy fellowship with this vibrant church. One of the major programs of the Cuban church is Christian education. Winabelle Gritter serves as a consultant and trainer for the Christian education department. CRWM offers support for their evangelism and Christian education programs, as well as for obtaining land and reconstructing church buildings.
3. *Dominican Republic*. The CRC in Dominican Republic has 200 congregations and about 10,000 members. The majority are Haitian. Missionaries provide training and encouragement for the major programs of evangelism, church planting, theological education, and diaconal ministries. Missionaries are making good progress in transferring the responsibility to oversee the work of the churches to very capable national pastors. The Christian Reformed schools (COCREF) have grown to 22 with a student body of 3,660. The schools are supervised and directed by capable and efficient national leaders, many of them products of this ministry. COCREF has offered life-changing Christian education for the past two decades. Partner missionaries contribute to the strength of the Santiago Christian School.
4. *El Salvador*. The country team, "Seeds of a New Creation," is working with the Reformed and other Christian churches and organizations toward the conversion, maturation, and restoration of the Salvadoran people and toward promoting justice and reconciliation in society. The country team has developed a larger network with churches and counterparts called MIES, the integrated mission of El Salvador. Missionary Ruth Padilla-DeBorst provides leadership, vision, and training. CRWRC's decision to

phase out from El Salvador is a setback for the progress the team is making and will have direct implications for the work CRWM does in that country.

5. *Haiti*. Sous Espwa (Source of Hope) is the name of the CRC ministry team in Haiti. This team works with the CRC of Haiti offering support in their leadership training and diaconal programs. The team works with the Ministry for Christian Development to develop educational programs and materials to help participants attain a higher level of spiritual, social, and professional maturity in their ministries to their churches and communities. The team also works with the Consortium for Strengthening of Christian Education in Haiti by developing Christian curriculum materials. Several partner missionaries teach in Quisqueya Christian School.
6. *Honduras*. CRWM offers support to one of the strongest CRC denominations in Latin America. Missionaries assist the church in the areas of theological education, evangelism, and church development. CRWM and CRWRC work together in various community and diaconal programs. Dr. Kurt Ver Beek and Ms. Jo Ann Van Engen work with Calvin College to offer a semester program in Honduras that focuses on upper-level Spanish language acquisition and development projects. Dr. Ver Beek is part of the country team. Partner missionaries strengthen Academia Los Pinares with their teaching.
7. *Mexico*. In Mexico, CRWM concentrates on church-leadership development and church planting and development. Another position was added for church development in Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico and the stronghold of Catholicism in the country. CRWM, in partnership with CRHM, CRWRC, and Sunshine Community CRC in El Paso, Texas, are developing various ministries in the border city of Ciudad Juarez. CRWM supports the leadership training and development of the Reformed Presbyterian and the National Presbyterian denominations in Mexico. CRWM continues its support to a developing Christian school in Belize.
8. *Nicaragua*. CRWM and CRWRC, in partnership with international and national agencies, work through the Nehemiah Center. The goal of the Nehemiah Center is to construct, model, and facilitate the application of a biblical world and life view in all aspects of life. This includes church and family; education; youth at risk; business and the professions; government; and communications, media, and the arts. Their goal is the transformation of communities and the nation. The CRCNA has had a profound influence on the development of the Nicaragua Christian Academy through partner missionary teachers and board members.

V. Ministry in Canada and in the United States of America

While the plans of World Missions international are focused on field ministry, the plans of World Missions-USA and World Missions-Canada are focused on challenging the church to support a vision for worldwide missions. Developing a strong, prayerful, financial, and caring connection with the church and its missionaries and fields and/or countries is integral to achieving that vision. Through e-mail and other technology, contact between missionary and church is greatly enhanced.

There continues to be significant variation in the level of passion for international outreach among our church members. Many of the elderly continue to be very loyal and very mission minded. The younger generation tends to be more supportive of ministry that they can be directly involved with—ministry that they perceive will make a difference. New avenues of partnering with regions and individuals and developing opportunities for ministry involvement are being explored in response to that desire.

World Missions-USA and World Missions-Canada continue to support each other through a joint-venture agreement. Both agencies use a network of regional and local representatives to make the needs and opportunities for ministry known and to nurture the church's passion for the lost and suffering of those outside our borders. These efforts are increasingly being conducted in collaboration with the other agencies and institutions of the denomination.

VI. Program report for recruitment and training

Training programs prepare long-term and short-term missionaries and summer mission program participants.

Of the support needed by World Missions to keep a missionary family on the field, approximately 45 percent comes from denominational ministry shares. An average of 11 sending and supporting churches supply most of the other 55 percent through faith-promise and other above-ministry-share support. Individuals can also support missionaries directly rather than through their local churches. Short-term partner missionaries and summer-mission participants usually serve for one to two years and do not receive salaries from World Missions. They raise their own support (travel and living allowance) from churches and friends, support themselves, or, in the case of many partner missionaries, are supported by jobs in the countries to which they go.

All of World Missions' fields and projects and 96 percent of its three hundred missionaries are connected by way of the Internet to the office and to each other. This connection greatly increases the mission's capacity for communication.

The names and addresses of missionaries and regional representatives can be found on the back pages of the World Missions calendar. They are also listed in the Directory of Agencies and Boards in the CRC *Yearbook 2004*, as are the names of World Missions' administrators.

Each year World Missions pays tribute to missionaries and office staff who are celebrating significant anniversaries of service. In 2003, World Missions honored the following for five to forty years of service to the CRC through World Missions:

Name	Place	Years of Service
Gord Buys	Nigeria/Grand Rapids Office	40
Marcea Brouwer	Grand Rapids Office	30
Dave & Joyce Campbell	Guinea	15
Janice Dykgraaf	Nigeria	15
Jeong & MiSook Gho	NA Pastorate/Japan	15
Tim & Tammy Holwerda	Philippines	10
Tina Ipema	Nigeria/Grand Rapids Office (in addition to 29 years in Nigeria)	10

Allan & Jacie Persenaire	Nigeria	25
David Radius	Grand Rapids Office	15
Tom & Cheryl Soerens	Honduras/NA pastorate & instructor of theology at Dordt College/Costa Rica	25
Bill & Dianna Steele	NA Pastorate/Guinea	10
Albert & Carolyn Strydhorst	Nigeria	10
Gil & Joyce Suh	Nigeria	5
Kathy Vanderkloet	Nigeria	15
Larry & Rose Van Zee	Nigeria	20
Stephen & Lorrie Whatley	Philippines	10
John & Shirley Wind	Honduras/Mexico	25

VII. Collaboration with other CRCNA agencies

In the international outreach effort, World Missions collaborates with The Back to God Hour, CRC Publications/World Literature, CRWRC, Calvin College, and Calvin Theological Seminary. Especially noteworthy have been the research efforts by all these agencies into new outreach in Latin America (Mexico) and Southeast Asia. Calvin Seminary made a vital contribution in the orientation of new missionary candidates. All are working together in support of ministries in various parts of Eastern Europe.

VIII. Governance and administration

The CRWM Joint Board held its annual meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, January 26-28, 2004. At that gathering, the boards of World Missions-USA and World Missions-Canada met separately to attend to matters peculiar to the Canadian and the U.S. contexts. They met jointly to address the common task of governing and overseeing mission fields and projects. The CRWM executive committee meets jointly and separately in April 2004 and again in September 2004.

IX. Long-range plan and fiscal 2003-2004

World Missions' long-range plan is available on request. This plan states our vision, mission, purpose, values, mission task, design of fields and projects, deployment guidelines and plans, and strategic issues for effective mission. This plan is used to shape the annual plan and budget. As stated previously, we are currently engaged in a significant review of the plan to find ways of integrating it more closely with the plan of the CRC.

Budget details will be provided in the *Agenda for Synod 2004—Financial and Business Supplement*.

X. Salary information

Job level	Number of positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
18	1	2nd quartile
17	1	2nd and 3rd quartiles
16	4	2nd and 3rd quartiles

XI. Recommendations

World Missions-Canada and World Missions-U.S.A. respectfully recommend the following:

A. That the president of World Missions-Canada, Rev. Ed Visser; the president of World Missions-USA, Rev. Ronald Meyer; and the World Missions executive director, Dr. Gary Bekker, be given the privilege of meeting with appropriate advisory committees of synod and represent World Missions to synod when synod deals with matters related to this agency.

B. That the Board of Trustees and synod encourage all Christian Reformed churches to recognize Pentecost Sunday as a significant opportunity to pray for and take an offering for Christian Reformed World Missions.

Christian Reformed World Missions
Gary J. Bekker, executive director

I. Introduction

In Genesis, God said that it was not good for people to live alone. He knew that we needed to live in relationship with other people, and he provided relationships for us. That same fact is true today: people exist in communities. They are part of families, churches, neighborhoods, and villages.

CRWRC believes that these communities can be the building blocks for positive change. That is why we do not limit our ministry to working with individual people. Instead, we work with neighborhoods and villages in thirty-one countries to help them overcome poverty and disaster.

Our goal is transformation. CRWRC wants communities to become places of hope and compassion where everyone is valued, supported, and has the opportunity to realize their potential as God's image bearers. That is exactly what has been happening this past year.

CRWRC worked with numerous communities to meet their immediate needs during times of crisis. When disasters struck, CRWRC responded with emergency assistance that helped more than 268,000 people meet their most basic needs. These programs were carried out in partnership with local churches and organizations so that they could be strengthened even in times of disaster.

In a similar way, CRWRC worked with 172 churches and organizations in communities that had not suffered disasters but were suffering from poverty. We trained community leaders and helped them carry out programs that assisted people in need to improve their lives. As a result, community organizations grew stronger and became better equipped to carry out ongoing ministry.

Individual people were also empowered. In total, more than 335,000 people benefited from CRWRC's community development programs. They worked together to improve their communities and their individual lives. They dug wells, attended classes, planted fields, established businesses, and created jobs. The benefits of these efforts continue today as positive change occurs. This is what transformation is all about.

CRWRC also strives for transformation on a more global level. We want people—both rich and poor—to come together, learn from each other, and grow in Christ. That is why we place an emphasis on building relationships across regions, income levels, and nationalities. We want to build up the global community and body of Christ. As a result, we offered a number of volunteer and learning opportunities this past year to help make relationships possible.

The Christian Reformed Church has shown through its participation, prayer, and financial support that they are committed to the so-called big picture of CRWRC's ministry. Thank you for being a part of this community effort.

II. Board matters

An important support to CRWRC's ministry is our board. The primary function of the board is to provide direction for CRWRC's ministry program and to encourage the vision of the organization as a whole.

The CRWRC governance structure is composed of representatives from each of the classes of the Christian Reformed Church and several members at

large. The board is organized into two divisions—one for Canada and one for the United States. The officers for the respective boards are:

A. Officers of CRWRC-Canada

Ms. Barbara Hoekstra, president
Mr. Jim Romahn, vice president
Ms. Anna Feddes, secretary
Ms. Shirley Vandenberg, treasurer
Ms. Yetty Joosse, vice-all
Rev. John Koster, pastoral advisor

B. Officers of CRWRC-U.S.A.

Mr. Randy Kroll, president
Mr. Roy Zuidema, vice president
Mr. Greg Geels, secretary
Mr. Paul Wassink, treasurer

III. CRWRC's programs and ministries

Shalom! This simple word encompasses so much of what CRWRC's transformational work is about. While only six letters long, this small word refers to the big concept of wholeness—of a life in which all relationships are harmonious and pleasing to God. Shalom is something that will not be fully realized until God's kingdom is complete, yet it is something that we, as Christians, long for, work for, and pray for each day.

In thousands of communities in thirty-one countries around the world, CRWRC is busy pursuing shalom each day. This ministry includes God's passion for justice and for the poor. It includes care of the environment and economic renewal. It includes caring for dying children; responding to crises such as war, storms, or HIV-AIDS; and advocating for just policies and systems at corporate and national levels. It includes helping the denomination that supports us to engage with these issues in a whole range of ways, resulting in a church that is empowered, compassionate, and energized about its mission.

As we have worked with 172 churches and organizations around the world to pursue shalom, we have seen miraculous things happen in people's lives. We have seen hope restored and healing take place. We have seen deserts bloom where farmers learned to harvest the scarce rain. We have seen faithful congregations, faithful pray-ers, and faithful givers support and encourage us as we work in a world that is in desperate need of the reign of the Prince of Peace. The following are a few highlights from our ministry this year.

A. Development regions

1. Asia

In Asia, CRWRC served over 111,000 participants. (Note: CRWRC defines a participant as a person who is working toward a defined goal and is being systematically monitored for progress toward that goal in any one of our partners' programs. Thus, a person could be counted as a participant in multiple programs, and, in fact, we hope for that kind of overlap as we encourage integrated approaches to bringing about lasting change in lives

and communities.) CRWRC's programs in Asia offer a wide variety of approaches to working for shalom in Muslim contexts. In Bangladesh and India, CRWRC programs are highly respected for their high-quality grassroots impacts. In the Philippines, we excel in building networks of Christian agencies that can advocate for justice. Our Indonesia programs provide a forum for the large Reformed churches to act together for justice. CRWRC's partners in Laos exhibit cooperation with the government and outstanding ability to access grants from outside the country. Our Cambodian programs offer a network of training resources. In three of these countries (Philippines, Bangladesh, and Cambodia), CRWRC works hand in hand with World Missions to pursue shalom jointly. CRWRC also participates in the interagency Asia Ministry Council.

2. Eastern Europe

In Romania, almost 17,000 participants are involved in programs that bring shalom to communities still shaped by years of Communism. Romanian and Hungarian partner organizations find ways to address the ethnic brokenness and spiritual barrenness of Romanian society. What does biblical community development look like when churches have been conditioned to focus inward for decades? We are learning it here.

3. East and Southern Africa

AIDS orphans and communities with only youth and elderly still surviving are all too common in Africa. Some 122,000 participants are served by CRWRC, and a huge network of denominations and congregations is experiencing shalom-change with us in partnerships that help churches get a new infusion of excitement as they catch the shalom vision of the Scriptures. Here, as in West Africa, CRWRC participates in an alliance with other evangelical relief and development agencies to try to access the huge U.S. government resources made available to fight HIV-AIDS. In this region, the innovative approaches to involving CRCNA folks in hands-on service opportunities are a highlight.

4. Latin America

A sobering development in this region was CRWRC's decision to evaluate three fields in depth and then to phase out one—El Salvador. This was a decision shaped significantly by financial constraints and was a sad one to have to make. Twenty-two thousand participants are served in this region, about four thousand of those in El Salvador. Our prayer is that the partner organizations there will be able to carry on their services to the poor. CRWRC participates in the regional interagency coordinating council that the CRC is piloting in this region. We rejoice at the excitement that is generated in field-level integrated teams; for example, in Haiti, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. The shalom approach is strengthened when the agencies work in genuine collaboration.

5. North America

Ten thousand participants are served in this region where the focus is on helping churches develop strong community involvement and on building the capacity of congregationally linked Christian community-development organizations. This region is unique in the integration of its development work with the membership of the denomination. Over seventy church- and

community-development partner organizations are present in this region alone. This team has worked hard to contextualize CRWRC's development approaches to building shalom in North American communities.

6. West Africa

This region reports some 51,000 participants in an especially wide variety of settings, from scattered pastoralists to urban density. HIV-AIDS is a big challenge here, as in eastern Africa, and our partners in Senegal and Nigeria are especially active in addressing it. CRWRC is the lead agency in a major effort now underway in Nigeria to build a countrywide network of Christian agencies to access U.S. government funds to address HIV-AIDS. The team here has helped CRWRC pioneer new approaches to understanding biblically based transformational development. CRWRC participates in the CRC interagency Africa Ministry Council.

B. Partners for Christian Development

Another area of CRWRC's transformational ministry can be found in Partners for Christian Development (Partners), which CRWRC helped birth and form in 1996. This affiliate organization is a membership organization comprised of visionary Christian business and professional people. Its members want to make a serious and lasting impact on our world by bringing the unique skills and experience of business people into partnership with CRWRC in order to build healthy caring communities in Jesus' name.

Partners envision a world where the love of Jesus is expressed through business and everyone has the opportunity for meaningful, productive employment.

1. Partners for Christian Development works toward this vision by:

- a. Promoting, affirming, and celebrating business and entrepreneurship as an outstanding Christian calling, vital for God's kingdom to be fulfilled.
- b. Networking together with our members in order to better develop God's resources and be faithful stewards of them.
- c. Providing opportunities for our members to become personally involved in creating jobs and economic opportunities for the poor.

2. These three thrusts result in specific programs:

- a. Partners for Christian Development sponsors an annual national business conference and local dinner programs that motivate, encourage, and refresh business professionals in their calling.
- b. Partners for Christian Development (Partners) has thirty-eight affiliated business and professional associations worldwide with seventeen associations located in developing countries. These associations provide encouragement, resources, and base support for local entrepreneurs seeking to grow and strengthen their businesses. Currently, Partners works in twenty countries where CRWRC is carrying out community-development programs.

Last year 163 Partners members dedicated 5,335 hours of service using their skills and resources as mentors offering consultation, access

to available markets and technology, capital, and encouragement. These partnerships raised US\$1.7 million and served more than 25,800 people.

We praise God for the way he is working in and moving among business people for his glory. He is truly bringing rich and poor together in ways that are transforming everyone.

C. Justice education, advocacy, and service learning

As CRWRC seeks community transformation and shalom around the world, it is also necessary to address issues of justice. Communities across the globe have taught us that the presence of injustice inhibits our ability to succeed in community-development work. In order to transform communities in a positive way, we must first address structural issues (such as good governance, distribution and protection of rights, and peace) and advocate for the oppressed.

That is why each of CRWRC's six ministry teams has a justice coordinator whose responsibilities include working with the ministry team to analyze and prioritize the justice concerns in their region. These justice coordinators work with staff and partners to develop appropriate responses to those concerns and to consider how these issues relate to ongoing development work.

Our goal is to be a catalyst for influencing our stakeholders in shaping a just world and to also join together in God's work to put things right. This year, CRWRC has 41 justice-related programs in 16 countries serving 32,975 participants.

1. Millennium Development Compact

The World Bank and the United Nations Development Program define the poor as those who live on less than US\$1 per day. Using this definition, there are 1.2 billion poor people.

The ministry of the Christian Reformed Church through CRWRC is only a small part of what is needed to eradicate poverty. It will take the combined efforts of many nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and governments to bring about the kinds of changes necessary.

2. Millennium challenge

In September 2000, 147 heads of state gathered at the United Nations 2000 Millennium Summit to commit to eliminating poverty worldwide. They said, "We will spare no effort to spare our fellow men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected."

They promised to focus on these millennium development goals:

- a. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (halving both by 2015)
- b. Achieving universal primary education (by 2015)
- c. Promoting gender equality and empowering women (eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015)
- d. Reducing child mortality (two-thirds by 2015)
- e. Reducing maternal mortality (three-fourths by 2015)
- f. Combating HIV-AIDS, malaria, and other diseases (halt and reverse spread by 2015)
- g. Ensuring environmental sustainability
- h. Developing a global partnership for development.

Progress on the goals since the summit has been disappointing. Sub-Saharan Africa is so far behind that at the current rate of change, reaching the goal of halving the poverty and hunger proportions will take until 2147. In addition, the studies indicate that removing China from the hunger statistics reveals that hunger is increasing, particularly in Africa! Worldwide, many of these indicators are going in the wrong direction.

Setting worldwide goals and asking governments to commit to them serves to help people hold their governments accountable for promises and commitments they have made to address these issues of urgency to all people.

The 2003 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Report states that what is needed from the world's rich countries to alleviate the increasing need of the world's poorest countries is policies, not charity.

For policies to change in the rich countries, the citizens of these countries must understand the issues and act to create change. This is the importance of education. The church, too, has a role in joining with other civil society actors to create change.

CRWRC has supported the millennium development goals through advocating to the U.S. government for full funding of the U.S. commitment to be part of the global partnership for development called the Millennium Challenge Account. In Canada, CRWRC is working with other nongovernment organizations to advocate for increased levels of official development assistance.

CRWRC has joined with a number of network partners to continue to bring attention to the millennium development goals. We are now working with the worldwide Micah Network and on the Micah Challenge global campaign (Wayne deJong is on the Canadian coordinating committee and Andrew Ryskamp is on the U.S. committee). We are also involved in advocacy with the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and with Inter-Action in the United States. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, we are involved in food policy work. With Canadian network partner the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD) and with the Committee for Contact with the Government (Canada) (CCG), we are advocating to the Canadian government with regard to making pharmaceuticals available more cheaply to HIV-AIDS patients in poor countries. With our Canadian network partner Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, we work on issues of global economic justice such as debt, trade, and corporate social responsibility. In July, CRWRC distributed bulletin covers to churches in Canada, calling for support of greater development assistance.

CRWRC's ongoing development work contributes to meeting those goals as communities that we work with organize themselves to create change.

D. Disaster relief and rehabilitation

"Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will not grow weary. . . ." Helping communities rely on the Lord and not grow weary during times of disaster is another important part of CRWRC's community-transformation ministry. Time and time again, CRWRC's relief team is called upon to come alongside disaster survivors and offer them a helping hand.

In North America, the material damage caused by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and fires is on the rise. The increase in frequency is such that many of these events receive only limited media coverage. We are thankful that, not

withstanding this reality, the affected communities know how to contact CRWRC's Disaster Response Services (DRS) to request help. When a DRS needs-assessment team arrived in tornado-stricken Jackson, Tennessee, they were greeted with, "Good! There are the green shirts" (referring to the distinctive green t-shirts that CRWRC's DRS volunteers wear). Not only did our disaster response teams this year address damage caused by a flood in July 2002 in Kerrville and Corpus Christi, Texas, but also the tornadoes of spring 2003 in Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, and Tennessee added to the workload, as did the devastating fires in California and British Columbia.

A total of 660 volunteers worked 83,160 hours in 12 states and provinces. They did everything from cleaning up 50 disaster sites, and interviewing more than 400 disaster survivors, to repairing and rebuilding 68 houses. This added workload, combined with the aging of our present volunteer corps, makes it necessary to continue building the profile of Disaster Response Services in our churches for financial support and the recruitment of new volunteers.

Overseas, there was a noticeable increase in severe weather events that resulted in droughts and floods. Last year, a drought and decreased productivity levels (caused by diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria) left 12 million people dependent on food distribution in the Southern Africa countries of Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. Under CRWRC's leadership, a total of 5,964 metric tons of food and seed was distributed to 42,150 families (an estimated 252,000 people), thus staving off a much-feared famine and saving many lives. In Ethiopia, where an expected 15 million people need food aid in order to survive, more than 15,000 families are involved in food-for-work projects, thus improving their agricultural infrastructure. In Mexico, Laos, Kenya, Senegal, and Argentina, hungry people ate because of God's provision through CRWRC. In many cases, CRWRC staff was able to take the lead-member role for Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) facilitated projects. During 2002-2003, CRWRC was responsible for managing Canadian Foodgrains Bank food aid responses with a total value of US\$5.5 million.

The war in Iraq created a unique possibility for CRWRC to work for community transformation. We were able to work with local Christian churches to help them reach out to their communities at large. In distributing food to their non-Christian neighbors, these local church congregations were able to model how to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God" as well as to be witnesses of God's kingdom.

In addition to programs that provide emergency food to disaster survivors, rehabilitation programs that focus on providing long-term food security to small farmers are also growing in number and strength. These CRWRC projects are supported by the Foods Resource Bank (United States) and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (Canada). Last year, CRWRC received financing for projects in Kenya, Malawi, and Nicaragua through the Foods Resource Bank and in Niger, Mali, and Dominican Republic from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. As a result, many farmers were able to improve their crops and their potential for future harvests.

CRWRC is humbled by the growing number of organizations who have contributed to our relief and rehabilitation projects: the Reformed and Presbyterian churches of America and Canada, the fellow members in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the Foods Resource Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, the U.S. Agency for International

Development, European churches and organizations such as ZOA, the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, the CRC of Australia, and the Reformed Church of New Zealand. New in this growing list this year are the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Councils for International Cooperation with contributions to projects in Zambia and Senegal.

We thank the Lord for his provision in sending us new staff members to replace those who went on to serve him in other positions and for the strength he gave to volunteers and staff during the transition.

E. Community services

"We went with an open mind, willing to do anything and ready to serve. Little did we know that it would open our minds, that we would do everything, and that we would be served." So reflects Maria Smedes from Kingston, Ontario, who traveled with a work team to Romania this past April to assist with one of CRWRC's partners in that country. This is just one sample of people's reflections upon return from a volunteer assignment, but many others echo a similar idea of learning and personal transformation.

As noted earlier, CRWRC strives for transformation not only in the people we serve, but also in our supporting community here in North America. That is why we offer a variety of volunteer, service, and learning opportunities each year. These initiatives are planned and coordinated by ServiceLink.

1. ServiceLink United States

a. Discovery Tours

There were four successful Discovery Tours this year. These tours visited CRWRC and World Missions program sites and provided people with an opportunity to learn about our ministry firsthand. Over twenty-five CRWRC supporters from the United States and Canada went on the tours and had exciting adventures in Bangladesh-India, Romania, Haiti, and Kenya-Uganda. Participants in these tours learned firsthand about walking with the poor. Once participants return from a tour, many do presentations in their churches and continue to support CRWRC in various ways.

b. Program HOPE!

In April 2003, six young adults were selected for our new internship program—Program HOPE! This new program builds on the lessons we learned from our former Service and Training (S&T) program and strongly emphasizes the basic learning tenets of community development. Interns are currently placed in Muskegon, Michigan; Lilongwe, Malawi; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Dakar, Senegal; and Dhaka, Bangladesh.

c. Youth programs

The Encounters program with Youth Unlimited is CRWRC's vehicle to young adults ages 16-24. Young adults learn the basics of community development (community mapping, advocacy, health, and so forth). One student wrote to CRWRC several weeks after taking part in the program and stated, "this experience has changed the way I view the world, and even the way I plan my future."

CRWRC also works with Christian colleges to provide opportunities to college students. In the last twelve months, students from Calvin College have been placed in Honduras, Haiti, and Bangladesh. Students have also served in program internships with CRWRC’s Grand Rapids office. Some of those internships are within the program areas of Best Practices, Communications, World Hunger, and Partners for Christian Development.

d. Volunteer placements

Volunteer placements and hours served continues to grow steadily for CRWRC. Since the beginning of the ServiceLink-U.S. program, the number of volunteers placed has more than doubled. We anticipate growth of at least 15-20 percent in new placements annually for the next five years.

FY 01-02 # of volunteers placed: 424	Increase over FY02-03: 183
FY 01-02 # of tours and work teams: 27	Increase over FY02-03: 8
FY 01-02 # of hours served: 18,505	Increase over FY02-03: 3,954

2. ServiceLink Canada

CRWRC-Canada is in its ninth year of being involved with ServiceLink. This year saw 374 people serving in many different capacities, of which 165 made contributions to CRWRC. The opportunities that were available included two work teams to Romania, four to Guam, one to Zambia, two to Honduras, and one to El Salvador, as well as various individuals to Zambia, Malawi, Romania, Haiti, South Africa, and Niger. Individuals spent time with CRWRC partners in farming, bookkeeping, community development, relief work (food distribution), gardening, health care, and light construction. ServiceLink Canada also engages students from Kings University College and Redeemer University College.

Some interesting statistics for ServiceLink Canada this past year include a 20 percent increase in the total number of volunteers (374) involved in various ministries as compared to last year, a 29 percent increase in the number of hours (36,405) they served, and an 8 percent increase in the total number of teams (26) sent out. We praise God for willing hearts!

On an administrative level, ServiceLink now has Regional Coordinators of Volunteers (RCVs) in eleven out of the twelve classes across Canada. We are currently still looking to fill a position in Classis B.C. South-East.

We give thanks to God for his continued faithfulness in the ServiceLink program—for providing numerous volunteers who are passionate about serving God by serving others.

IV. Finance

A. Financial history

This table displays CRWRC revenues and expenses from 1996-2004 (projected).

CRWRC - CONSOLIDATED
REVENUE AND EXPENSE HISTORY/BUDGETS
(Including Disasters)

(B = Budget)

	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04B
Revenue	9,290	11,056	11,113	13,613	13,344	13,661	12,471	13,759	11,987
Overseas	5,491	5,548	5,000	5,551	6,320	6,672	6,925	8,401	7,762
North America	1,165	1,005	872	1,143	1,313	1,511	1,446	929	950
Dis. Resp. Serv.	876	1,674	1,822	2,371	3,214	3,528	2,234	3,220	977
Resource Devel.	1,026	983	1,053	1,144	1,363	1,448	1,141	1,198	1,157
Administration	894	932	1,183	1,152	1,231	1,092	1,033	1,165	959
Total Expenses	9,452	10,142	9,930	11,361	13,441	14,251	12,779	14,913	11,805
Net rev./(exp.)	(162)	914	1,183	2,252	(97)	(590)	(308)	(1,154)	182

B. Salary disclosure

In accordance with synod's mandate to report the executive levels and the percentage of midpoint, CRWRC reports the following:

Job Level	Number of Positions	Compensation quartile (includes housing allowance)
18	2	2nd quartile
16	1	1st quartile

C. Detailed financial information

Detailed financial information and budgets will be submitted to synod by way of the *Agenda for Synod 2004—Financial and Business Supplement*.

V. Resource development

CRWRC's transformational ministry is made possible through the generous donations of churches and individuals. We are grateful to God for the way in which people—and the resources needed to support them—were made available in 2002-2003 to carry out ministry around the world.

The largest percentage of CRWRC support (76 percent) comes from individuals and churches. Most of these supporters are affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church; however, individuals, schools, and congregations from outside of the CRC are becoming a larger part of our support base.

Other cooperating agencies continue to be important in the financial support of CRWRC. More than US\$2.3 million was donated by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Partners for Christian Development, and other funding agencies.

Government grants to CRWRC totaled US\$761,000, with most of this income coming from the Canada International Development Agency. CIDA has been a very significant and consistent source of program funding for over two decades.

Estate bequests and planned gifts are an increasingly important part of the resource base for CRWRC ministry. These gifts are placed in the Joseph Fund and are made available to programs over a seven-year period. As of June 30, 2003, the balance of the Joseph Fund was US\$3,945,408. More than US\$1,027,370 was contributed to the 2002-2003 budget from this source.

In addition to raising financial resources, CRWRC strives to educate and involve our North American constituency to “bring them together” with people in poverty. Last year, CRWRC did this by having staff and representatives from CRWRC’s partner organizations visit North American churches and individuals to share about their work. We also provided opportunities for North Americans to visit overseas programs, attend meetings, and/or participate in work teams. These interchanges encourage better understanding, more informed prayer, and a greater commitment to the work of the church.

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to any of the following: Mr. Randy Kroll, president of CRWRC-U.S.A.; Ms. Barbara Hoekstra, president of CRWRC-Canada; Mr. Andrew Ryskamp, director of CRWRC-U.S.A.; and Mr. Wayne deJong, director of CRWRC-Canada when CRWRC matters are discussed and need to be addressed.

B. That synod commend the work of mercy carried on by CRWRC and urge the churches to take at least four offerings per year in lieu of ministry-share support.

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Andrew Ryskamp, CRWRC-U.S.A. director
Wayne deJong, CRWRC-Canada director

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. was organized by Synod 1983 with a directive to assist organized Christian Reformed churches in financing capital improvements. The Loan Fund operates exclusively in the United States; Canada having its own, similar fund. The Board of Directors, responsible to synod, oversees the loan approval process and the determination of interest rates. The Board also establishes interest rates for securities sold—primarily to members, classes, and churches of the CRCNA.

II. Board of directors

The terms of Ms. Diane Apol and Rev. Julius Medenblik expire on June 30, 2004. Both Ms. Apol and Rev. Medenblik have served for one term and are thus eligible for reappointment. The board requests synod to ratify second-term appointments for both of these nominees

A. Position 1—ratify a second three-year term through June 2007

Ms. *Diane Apol*, a member of Bellevue CRC, Bellevue, Washington, has served as bookkeeper and member of the finance committee of her church. Ms. Apol is a graduate of Calvin College and is a Certified Public Accountant. She presently works as a part-time CPA at Benton & Bray P.S., Bellevue, Washington, and as a full-time mother for her two children.

B. Position 2—ratify a second three-year term through June 2007

Rev. *Julius T. Medenblik* is pastor of New Life Church, New Lenox, Illinois. He presently serves on the boards of the Chicago Christian Counseling Center and the New Lenox Chamber of Commerce. Rev. Medenblik is a graduate of Trinity Christian College, the University of Florida School of Law, and Calvin Theological Seminary. He was a practicing attorney prior to entering the pastorate.

The remaining members of the board of directors are Mr. James Fredricks (2005), Mr. Brian Seo (2005), Mr. Ronald Baylor (2006), and Mr. Arie Leegwater (2006).

III. Growth of operations

A. The Loan Fund is qualified to sell notes to investors in twenty-nine states and in the District of Columbia: Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin, and Washington. Efforts continue to add other states with CRC populations if cost of registration is reasonable. Indiana was added this year.

B. At the close of the fiscal year (June 30, 2003) a total of \$15,188,798 of interest-bearing notes held by investors was outstanding. Maturities range from one year to five years, and interest rates vary from 1.98 percent to 7.06 percent, with a time-weighted average of 4.04 percent. The variances in interest rates reflect market conditions at the time the notes were issued.

C. To date, over three hundred requests for loan information have been received from various Christian Reformed churches in the United States; more than one hundred loan applications have been approved. As of June 30, 2003, a total of \$11,601,978 was outstanding. Loan delinquencies do occur from time to time, but they are monitored and are minimal. As of June 30, 2003, one loan was seriously delinquent. The default of another resulted in a charge of \$192,000 to the loan-loss reserve in 2002. The Loan Fund maintains this loan-loss reserve to cover events such as this, and the reserve is adequate to cover any other potential losses.

D. Growth of operations is also reflected in the following data:

	2001	2002	2003
Cash and equivalents	\$4,485,899	\$5,231,822	\$7,673,514
Loans and accounts receivable	\$12,148,118	\$12,453,501	\$11,639,768
Equipment & software, less depreciation	\$19,214	\$12,810	\$6,405
Total assets	\$16,653,231	\$17,698,133	\$19,319,687
Notes and accounts payable	\$12,763,511	\$13,711,307	\$15,188,798
Net assets	\$3,889,720	\$3,986,826	\$4,130,889
Total liabilities and net assets	\$16,653,231	\$17,698,133	\$19,319,687

E. An audited financial report as of June 30, 2003, is printed in the Agenda for Synod 2004—Financial and Business Supplement.

IV. Sources of funding

Funds for the Loan Fund operations are derived from the following sources:

- A. The sale of notes in those states where legal approval to offer has been obtained.
- B. Gifts and bequests made to the corporation.
- C. An unsecured line of credit with a bank that permits borrowings of up to \$1,000,000. The Loan Fund currently does not have any amounts outstanding on this line of credit.

V. Staff

The Loan Fund is served by Mrs. Alice Damsteegt (60 percent of full-time) and Mr. Carl Gronsman, who also provides support to CRC Home Missions as a member of the CRCNA Financial Services staff.

VI. Recommendations

- A. That the Loan Fund's executive director, or any members of the board of directors of the Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S. be given the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to the Loan Fund are discussed.
- B. That synod ratify a second three-year term for the two board members mentioned above to serve on the board of directors of the Christian Reformed Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.

Christian Reformed Church Loan Fund, Inc., U.S.
Carl A. Gronsman, executive director

I. Introduction

The Christian Reformed Church maintains employee benefit programs that provide retirement benefits for employees of denominational agencies, local churches, and other CRC organizations.

Administration of these programs is handled jointly by the denomination's Pension Office and Office of Personnel. The responsibilities of the Office of Personnel include communication and enrollment; the Pension Office handles financial administration, accounting, control, and investment management.

II. Board matters

The ministers' pension plans, special-assistance funds, and the employees' retirement plans are governed by the U.S. Board of Pensions and the Canadian Pension Trustees. These boards meet two to four times per year, usually in joint session. Separate meetings of the boards are held as needed to address matters unique to the responsibilities of the U.S. or Canadian trustees. The U.S. Board of Pensions has five members and is chaired by Mr. Lloyd Bierma. Similarly, the Canadian Pension Trustees are five in number and are chaired by Rev. Jake Kuipers.

The responsibilities of the boards include long-term planning, benefit-related decision-making, and policy definition, as well as oversight of fund assets and investment returns. The U.S. and Canadian boards monitor the investment activities of the funds by means of regular reports from their money management firms and by ongoing analysis of portfolio returns by professional measurement and performance consultants.

III. Benefit-program activities

A. Ministers' pension plans

The ministers' pension plans are "defined-benefit" plans. Benefits paid by the plans are defined (by formula), and the funding of the plans is determined by actuarial calculations of amounts needed. Defined-benefit plans place market and mortality risk with the plan and the sponsoring organization. Accordingly, when markets fall and if members live longer than expected, the plan and the sponsor pick up the cost. While the primary purpose of the plans is to provide retirement benefits, the plans also provide benefits to the spouses of participants who die while in active ministry and to the orphans of deceased members. In addition, long-term disability benefits are provided through an insurance company to all full-time, active participants in the plans who have furnished information concerning compensation and housing that is required by the carrier.

The following is a summary of participant counts as of December 31, 2003, for each plan and in total. Participants having an interest in both plans appear in the column where their interest is the greatest.

	U.S.	Canada	Total
Active ministers	860	227	1,087
Retired ministers	388	108	496
Spouses and dependents	129	18	147
Withdrawn participants with vested benefits	77	14	91
Total	1,454	367	1,821

Ordinarily, every three years independent actuaries are employed to do a valuation of the plans. The most recent actuarial valuation was performed as of June 30, 2003, which, normally, would have furnished information needed to determine church and participant assessment amounts for 2004, 2005, and 2006. However, because the Canadian Plan was less than 80 percent funded at June 30, 2003, it will be required to submit an annual valuation to the provincial regulators. Accordingly, the pension trustees anticipate that information regarding church and participant assessment amounts for 2005 will be released to the churches and others in early fall 2004.

1. Basic assumptions and priorities

- a. The denomination and the plans are binational. In 1982, synod indicated that the church's total pension obligation to ministers and their dependents is an across-the-board denominational responsibility requiring joint financing (*Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 50).
- b. The plans are to be administered on an actuarially sound basis. Synods of 1969 and 1979 affirmed the concept of advance funding. "An actuarially sound plan is based on the principle that the cost of funding a pension for a person is incurred while one is actively employed. Therefore, an amount is set aside each year during one's career so that at retirement there will be sufficient monies to pay the pension benefits in accordance with the terms of the plan" (*Acts of Synod 1969*, p. 451).
- c. Synods, in their approval of the basic design of the plans, have endorsed the notion that all pastors retiring in a given year and having the same years of active participation in the plans should receive the same benefit regardless of differences in preretirement salaries.
- d. The value of housing, whether paid in cash or as a church-furnished home, is reflected in the design of the plans' benefit formula. This is accomplished by including housing in an income-replacement target that is comprised of the amounts paid by the denomination's plans and by governmental plans—the Social Security Administration in the United States and Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security in Canada. Retirement income from the plans and from governmental plans was targeted at 60 percent in 1992 and was increased to 70 percent in 1999. The plans' benefit formulation, currently 1.1 percent of the final average salary multiplied by the retiree's years of credited service for service through December 31, 1984, and 1.46 percent for service thereafter, reflects these targets.
- e. The determination of the funded position of the plans, including the actuarial accrued liability, is based on several significant assumptions. These assumptions are reviewed and approved regularly by the U.S. and Canadian trustees and are based on historical data and expectations for future trends. Because pensions are based on the final average salary in the year of retirement, expectations concerning increases in salaries enter very significantly into the determination of the funded position of the plans.

- f. The trustees have placed high value on availability of information concerning the plans and the interest of each participant. The plans' communication activities include the following:
- Distribution of annual statements of estimated pension benefits to all active participants. Annual statements included an estimate of pension benefits based on actual years of credited service through the date of the statement and projected benefit amounts based on an assumption of continued service to age 65.
 - Participants are furnished a plan brochure containing information regarding retirement and other benefits provided by the plans, examples of benefit calculations, and other information of interest to participants.
 - Summarized financial information for the plans is included in the annual *Agenda for Synod* and the *Acts of Synod*.
 - Classical treasurers are furnished copies of the complete audited or reviewed financial statements of the denominations' agencies and institutions, including those of the benefit plans. These are available for examination by interested parties.
 - Representatives of the plans frequently are invited to make presentations to groups of members and classes. If possible, all such invitations are responded to affirmatively.
 - Finally, plan members and others have been invited by a variety of means to direct questions to the pension office. That office is able to furnish an informed response to nearly any question concerning the plans.

2. Portfolio balances and performance

Plan assets are invested in balanced portfolios under the management of professional investment-management firms. These firms are required to adhere to the denomination's investment guidelines approved by synod in 1998, and their performance is measured against established benchmarks and regularly reviewed by the trustees. Their primary goal, set for them by the pension trustees, is to provide an above-average return and at the same time preserve principal.

In down markets, above-average returns are little comfort as portfolio balances decline and short-term funding becomes a challenge. However, on balance, it must be remembered that the plans are very long-term investors and the pension trustees have not attempted to "time the markets" with large moves in and out of equity positions spurred by timed changes in portfolio asset allocation. Such an approach to investing, although appealing at times, has been demonstrated to be distinctly unrewarding. Also it must be remembered that, in significant part, the plans' long-term financial performance has made it possible to provide the level of current and future benefits.

The plans' actuaries have informed us that as of June 30, 2003, the actuarial liability totaled approximately \$100,000,000 for the U.S. plan and \$29,600,000 for the Canadian plan. These amounts reflect the cost of the changes approved by synod in 2003 and represent the obligations that the plans have to over 1,800 active, disabled, and retired pastors, widows, and dependents.

Market value of the portfolios is summarized as follows:

	December 31, 2003	December 31, 2002
United States (U.S. \$)	\$89,047,000	\$77,517,000
Canada (Can. \$)	\$23,392,000	\$21,272,000

Total portfolio performance is summarized as follows:

	2003	2002	2001	2000	5yrs	10yrs
Canada	12.7%	-4.4%	-4.5%	-0.9%	2.8%	7.7%
U.S.	20.0%	-10.5%	-1.6%	1.0%	3.4%	8.8%

Dividends, interest, and long-term appreciation in the value of the plans' holdings are used to provide a significant portion of the resources needed to meet the plans' obligations to their active participants and to fund payments to retirees and beneficiaries. As portfolio performance statistics indicate, the plans have participated in the upside of financial markets and have suffered from market declines witnessed in the last three years. On balance, the pension trustees are grateful for portfolio performance and are mindful of both the long-term nature of the plans' obligations and the corresponding long-term nature of its investment policies and objectives as well as its funding needs.

3. Changes to the plan—approved and proposed

In 1998, the pension trustees began a review of the plans with an eye toward making them more valuable retirement vehicles if possible. Given the size of the plans and the complexity of issues involved with plan design, the trustees obtained professional assistance from the attorneys and actuaries serving the plans and engaged in conversations with the churches, plan participants, and others. These activities produced several recommendations to enrich the benefit structure of the plans and a number of other changes to the design of the plans, all of which was approved by the synods of 1999 and 2001.

Having completed, at least for the time, the task of enriching and updating the Ministers' Pension Plans, the trustees turned their attention to issues of participation and funding as well as to certain other matters that were reason for increasing concern. These matters were reviewed by the pension trustees and, following an initial review, were included in a mandate for a design-planning committee. This committee is comprised of the persons presently serving as the chair and vice-chair of the U.S. and Canadian pension trustees plus the director of pension administration as an ex officio member.

In 2003, the trustees and synod approved the first of the design-planning committee's recommended changes. These include the following, all of which is described and discussed in much greater detail in the *Agenda for Synod 2003*:

- The plans' administrative rule concerning part-time service was, by amendment, included in the text of the plan itself,
- The plan was amended to include its administrative rule concerning reinstatement of frozen participants,

- The plan was amended to remove all provision for disability benefits previously included in the plan and replaced them with commercially available disability insurance similar to what was provided for all full-time, nonordained employees of the denomination and its agencies, and
- The funding protocols for all organized churches were changed to require payment of church assessments determined at an amount per professing member age 18 and older, or, if greater, the direct costs of their “first or only” pastor’s participation in the plan.

The work of the design-planning committee is ongoing. Recently, the pension trustees approved the following recommendations received from the committee. These, in turn, are presented to synod as recommended changes to the plans, as follows:

- a. Effective January 1, 2005, the plans be amended such that credited service be granted to persons employed in endorsed chaplaincy positions provided the costs of such participation are paid by the direct employer of the chaplain, by the chaplain directly, or by some other payer as may be agreed between the plan administrator and the chaplain.
- b. Further, when such direct payments are made by the employers of chaplains, that the plans’ current provisions requiring an offset to benefits paid by the plans of any amounts received from any retirement plan sponsored by the employer for the same period of service be removed.
- c. Finally, that the foregoing be modified for chaplains in full-time military service such that denominationally funded participation is provided to the point that vesting in a military pension benefit is achieved, and that the plan’s current offset provisions be retained with respect to military service.

The pension trustees have concluded that the foregoing changes are needed for at least the following reasons:

- In many instances, employers of chaplains are as fully (or more) capable of paying the retirement and disability costs of persons in their employ as is the denomination.
- All employment-related costs, including costs associated with retirement and disability, should be assumed by employers, not by the organization that grants endorsement.
- Retirement and disability costs of persons serving the denomination’s own emerging churches are paid in full by the churches they serve. The same is true of second staff in organized churches. These practices are long-standing.
- The recent change in funding protocols for ministers serving as first or only pastors in parish settings is consistent with employer funding of the direct costs of employment and with the foregoing proposal.
- The plans have limited financial capacities that should not be used to carry the retirement and disability costs of persons employed in settings outside of the denomination.

- The possibility of receiving a commitment for payment of retirement costs from a funding source apart from one's direct employer encourages arrangements whose legitimacy is difficult to judge and monitor.
- The plans are defined-benefit plans and, as such, have very significant, fixed long-term costs that must be paid. The funding base for paying these costs is static (or diminishing) in numbers and, it is feared, in willingness to bear the costs. This bringing together of very significant, fixed, long-term costs and a funding base that seems increasingly less capable or willing to pay is cause for significant concern.
- Chaplains are presently the only CRC pastor group having their pension costs paid from a source other than their own immediate employers.
- The plans have undergone some significant changes regarding funding the retirement costs of pastors serving the denomination's organized churches. Mandating payment by employers of the pension costs of the chaplains in their employ is an entirely logical extension of these changes.
- Unlike anything permitted civilian employers where rapid vesting is required by law and regulation, military pensions do not vest until after 20 years of service. This reality puts persons serving in the military at risk of not earning any pension credits if released from military service short of a full twenty years.

4. Funding

Through December 31, 1997, the plans were funded by a combination of ministry shares and direct billings. Beginning in 1998, the plans no longer participated in the ministry-share system and, rather, were supported by means of member assessments. Under this system, pension costs associated with all "first or only" pastors of organized churches and all endorsed chaplains were funded by an assessment based on professing members age 18 or older.

Synod 2003 modified the plan's financing arrangements. Beginning in 2004, all organized churches are expected to pay church assessments determined at an amount per professing member age 18 and older, or, if greater, the direct costs of their first or only pastor's participation in the plan. The amount of the assessment for 2004 is \$26.40 per member in Canada and \$22.80 in the United States, and direct costs have been set at \$6,600 and \$5,160, respectively. These amounts are collected by means of quarterly billings to each organized church, based on reported membership statistics.

With the exception of organizations that employ endorsed chaplains, all emerging churches and each other ministry that employs a minister as a missionary, professor, teacher, or in any other capacity is required to pay the annual cost of participation in the plan. All pension assessments, however determined, are billed quarterly, and, except for endorsed chaplains, the grant of credited service for pastors in the employ of agencies, churches, and others is contingent on timely payment of amounts billed.

As discussed previously in this report, costs for 2005 will be determined based on actuarial information available to the pension trustees at their meeting in September, submitted to the BOT for consideration at its October meeting, and released to the churches immediately following.

B. *Employees' retirement plans*

The employees' retirement plans are defined-contribution plans covering unordained employees (those not ordained as ministers of the Word) of denominational agencies, committees, and churches. Contributions are paid to the plan on a quarterly basis by participating employers in an amount equal to nine percent of the compensation of the unordained employees who are participants in the plan. Participants receive quarterly statements indicating the dollar amount credited to their accounts, the value of their accounts, and the vested percentage.

Individual participants direct the investment of their account balances among eight investment alternatives in the United States and seven in Canada, including fixed-income and equity funds. The investment alternatives are currently managed for U.S. participants by Bank One, N.A. Trust Division, which also serves as custodian of the plan's assets, and, for Canadian participants, by Clarica Life Insurance Company.

At December 31, 2003, the balances in these plans totaled approximately \$16,200,000 in the United States and \$1,900,000 in Canada, and, as of that date, there were 398 participants in the U.S. plan and 96 in the Canadian plan, categorized as follows:

	U.S.	Canada
Active	261	59
Inactive	137	37

C. *Financial disclosures*

Audited or reviewed financial statements of the retirement plans, and of all of the agencies and institutions, are sent each year to the clerk of each classis with the request that they be made available to any interested party. In addition, beginning in 1999, summary financial statements are included in the *Acts of Synod*. Individualized statements are furnished to active members of the ministers' pension plans and the employees' retirement plans.

IV. **Recommendations**

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to members of the Canadian Pension Trustees and of the United States Board of Pensions and to Mr. Kenneth J. Horjus when matters pertaining to pension plans for ministers and employees are discussed.

B. That synod designate up to 100 percent of a minister's early or normal retirement pension or disability pension for 2005 as housing allowance for United States income-tax purposes (IRS Ruling 1.107-1) but only to the extent that the pension is used to rent or provide a home.

C. That synod approve the recommendations concerning changes in the design of the plans as set forth in sections III, A, 3, a, b, and c of this report.

D. That synod elect one member to the U.S. Board of Pensions and Insurance for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2003 from the following nominee(s):

1. *Mr. William Terpstra* of Lansing, Illinois, is a member of Bethel CRC where he has served as an elder. He has served on various CRC committees, and

his board service includes the CRCNA Foundation, the Barnabas Foundation, Elim Christian School, Trinity Christian College, and others.

Mr. Terpstra began his career as a certified public accountant with Price Waterhouse and has served as a senior financial executive for several energy and transportation businesses in the Chicago area. In recent years, he has been engaged in business and investment consulting, with emphasis on business acquisitions and strategic planning.

2. Nominee to be included in the Board of Trustees supplemental report to synod.

E. That synod elect two members to the Canadian Pension Trustees for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2004.

1. *Mr. Dan Van Leeuwen* is completing his first term of office and is eligible to serve a second term. According to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, his name is being submitted as a single nominee.

Mr. Dan Van Leeuwen, of Calgary, Alberta, is a member of Covenant CRC in Calgary, where he has served as treasurer and currently as chairman of their committee of administration. Mr. Van Leeuwen is a chartered accountant and administers a charitable foundation. He has served with the Denominational Loan Fund, the CRC Registered Retirement Savings Fund, and the Christian Stewardship Committee. Also, he has been a delegate to synod and has served on the Audit Committee as well as the Interim Committee.

2. One member for a three-year term from the following nominees:

- a. *Mr. Ary de Jong*, Calgary, Alberta, was employed for many years by Shell Canada in the area of pension and trust administration. He is a member of Emmanuel CRC of Calgary, and has served on its council for several terms, including the office of clerk of council.

Mr. de Jong served several terms as a trustee of the Canadian Ministers' Pension Plan and has just completed service as board member and president of the Canadian Pension and Insurance Board, Christian Schools International. In addition, he has served on various boards, CRC committees, and Christian school boards.

- b. *Mr. Harry Schep*, Ottawa, Ontario, is retired from service to the federal government where he served in a variety of administrative capacities, including financial contractual matters and negotiations. Prior to his governmental service, he was employed in the private sector as a financial executive. He is a member of Calvin CRC and has served as elder, member of its administrative board, and on various committees.

Mr. Schep's has served several terms as trustee of the Canadian Ministers' Pension Plan and as its chair. Currently, he provides financial planning and advisory services to members of the Ministers' Pension Plan.

Kenneth J. Horjus, director of pension
administration

Consolidated Group Insurance

Consolidated Group Insurance is a denominational plan that offers life, health, and dental coverage in the United States and Canada to ministers and employees of local congregations and denominational agencies. Currently, there are 1,228 participants in the program. The most significant categories of participants include 556 pastors and employees of local churches, 322 employees of denominational agencies, and 350 retirees. The plan in Canada is a fully insured plan with coverage purchased through a major health-insurance provider. The plan in Canada is supplemental to health benefits available through government health programs. In the United States, a trust has been established to fund benefits and expenses of the plan.

In the United States, the plan continues to be affected by the significantly increasing costs of health care. Changes were made during 2001 in the provider network and in the administration of claims. In addition, certain changes were made in 2002 to the plan's eligibility provisions to protect the plan against the possibility of adverse selection. Both of these changes have helped limit the impact of these increased costs.

Premiums charged by the U.S. plan are based on overall expectations of claims and administrative expenses for the coming year. For 2004, premiums for the nonretiree group were increased a modest (relative to industry averages) 6 percent. Premiums for participants who retired prior to January 1, 2004, increased by a greater amount in keeping with a policy of gradually bringing these premiums in line with the direct cost of claims for this segment of the plan's participant population. Premiums for participants who retired after December 31, 2003, were set at a level that reflects the actual expected cost of claims for their segment.

John H. Bolt, director of finance and
administrative support services

I. Introduction

The Historical Committee is a standing committee of the Christian Reformed Church that oversees the work of the denominational archives and promotes publication of denominationally related historical studies. The committee's members are Dr. Harry Boonstra (2005, second term); Rev. Michael De Vries (2006, second term); Mrs. Janet Sheeres, chair (2004, first term); Dr. Robert Swierenga (2004, first term); and Dr. Richard Harms, secretary (ex officio).

II. Archives staff

Dr. Richard Harms is the curator of the Archives, which are housed in Heritage Hall at Calvin College. As archivist, he serves the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin College. Other staff include Ms. Hendrina Van Spronsen, office manager; Ms. Wendy Blankespoor, librarian-archivist; Ms. Boukje Leegwater, departmental assistant; Dr. Robert Bolt, field agent and assistant archivist; Ms. Nateisha De Cruz, and Ms. Kay Bykerk, student assistants; and Dr. Henry Ippel, Mr. Floyd Antonides, Rev. Henry DeMots, Mr. Ed Gerritsen, Mr. Fred Greidanus, Mr. Hendrick Harms, Ms. Helen Meulink, Rev. Gerrit Sheeres, Rev. Leonard Sweetman, and Mr. John Hiemstra, volunteers.

III. Archival work during 2003

A. We maintained contact with all forty-seven classes by way of regional representatives in thirty-eight cases and with the stated clerks of the remaining five.

B. Archival records from ninety-nine CRCNA congregations (nine more than last year) were received, microfilmed, and returned. We also microfilmed the records of three Christian school organizations. The microfilm copies are stored in our vault and are available only with the written permission of the individual congregation or school. Ninety-five congregations (twelve more than last year) in seven classes (Grand Rapids East, Heartland, Hudson, Iaokota, Minnkota, Niagara, and Thornapple Valley) that were scheduled to have their minutes microfilmed within the last ten years, have done so. Given the frequency that the committee hears of missing records, these congregations and classes are to be commended for their total participation in this important work.

C. Official classical minutes were received from forty-two classes. We have contacted each of the five stated clerks in the classes that did not send records to remind them of this task. Anniversary materials were received from fourteen Christian Reformed churches.

D. This year the minutes of three churches organized in the 1980s were microfilmed for the first time. These three include the Christ's Community CRC, Chandler, Arizona; Pine Grove CRC, Howard City, Michigan; and Fellowship CRC, St. Thomas, Ontario. Two churches organized in the 1960s had their minutes microfilmed for the first time. These two were Community CRC, Tacoma, Washington, and Summitview CRC, Yakima, Washington. The total of these five churches compares to the total records from three churches organized prior to 1980 and microfilmed during 2002.

All of the churches organized before 1980 have been contacted by way of telephone, e-mail, regular mail, and personal contacts. Although a few churches have made a conscious decision not to cooperate in this effort, most seem amenable to participation. Some understand well the need for microfilming records and express appreciation for reminders. The Archives will continue to make a determined effort to microfilm records of churches that have not sent minutes within the last ten years.

The following churches, organized prior to 1970, have not had their records microfilmed (year of organization in parentheses)—the Archives will continue to encourage the officers of these churches to microfilm the official records:

Exeter, ON (1952)
Farmington, NM – Maranatha (1962)
Fountain Valley, CA – Fellowship Community (1967)
Grangeville, ID (1927)
Port Alberni, BC – First (1951)
Portland, OR – Oak Hills (1965)
Portland, OR – Parklane (1959)
Stony Plain, AB (1908)

E. The department published the twenty-second newsletter, which was distributed to all regional representatives, stated clerks of classes, the Dutch American Historical Commission, relevant periodical editors, and other interested people in the denomination.

F. Final page proofing of the *Historical Directory of the Christian Reformed Church* has been completed. It will carry an ISBN of 0-9744529-0-4, be soft-bound, and have a retail price of \$34.95. The directory will list all ministers and their biographies; a brief history of every ministry, from organized congregations to storefront Sunday schools; lay evangelists; ministry associates (evangelists); Calvin Theological Seminary faculty; Calvin College faculty; Home Missions, World Missions, and CRWRC field staff; and chaplains.

G. During the last few months, we have made a new translation of the Christian Reformed Church's *Acts of Synod 1857-1880* available at <http://www.calvin.edu/library/database/synod/> in PDF format. We have also published a listing of the marriages conducted (1896-1913) by Rev. Henry Beets, at http://www.calvin.edu/hh/family_history_resources/beets_weddings.htm. We continued to add, as we received them, family histories and genealogies to our site at http://www.calvin.edu/hh/family_history_resources/genealogies_page.htm.

H. We have completed organizing twenty-four cubic feet of records of the collection for Calvin Theological Seminary. In addition, eighteen cubic feet from the Social Research Center were added to the Calvin College collection. We also processed records from the general secretary's office of the Christian Reformed Church and collections from such groups as Dynamic Youth Ministries, Christian Reformed Conference Grounds, and the Committee for Women in the Christian Reformed Church. We also arranged approximately thirty-five cubic feet of records from various Christian schools and other agencies related to the Dutch in North America.

I. We continued the translation project for early denominational and congregational minutes. The projects that are underway are minutes of the CRC in

Luctor, Kansas; Central Avenue CRC in Holland, Michigan; Manhattan, Montana CRC; and Classis Grand Rapids East, 1892-1925.

J. We contributed to the denomination's sesquicentennial planning committee, served as members of the Association for the Advancement of Dutch-American Studies and the Dutch-American Historical Commission.

IV. Publications

A design is under way for the historical directory of the denomination (see section III, E above). Printing will be done by the denomination's Product Services. During 2003, the committee facilitated the reprint of Jacob Van Hinte's pioneering *Netherlanders in America: A Study of Emigration and Settlement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in the United States of America*. Originally published in the Netherlands in 1928, an English translation was published in 1985 by Baker Book House with the sponsorship of the Heritage Hall Archives. The Archives will oversee the distribution of this reprint of the 1985 translation.

V. Recognition

A. The committee acknowledges Rev. Michael De Vries's acceptance of reappointment and thanks him for his willingness to serve.

B. We acknowledge the following individuals who will celebrate significant anniversaries in the ordained ministry during 2004:

69 years	Elco H. Oostendorp J. Jerry Pott
66 years	Henry De Mots
65 years	John Blankespoor Garrett D. Pars
64 years	Lambert Doezeema Repko W. Popma
63 years	Eugene Bradford Harold Petroelje Gerrit H. Polman Gysbert J. Rozenboom Garrett H. Vande Riet
62 years	John A. Botting Harold Dekker Nicholas B. Knoppers
61 years	Clarence Boomsma Edward Bossenbroek Remkes Kooistra Bastiaan Nederlof Dick J. Oostenink
60 years	Peter Huisman John H. Olthof

55 years	John A. Petersen William D. Ribbens Albert J. Vander Pol Gerrit Vander Plaats Dick L. Van Halsema
50 years	Alan A. Arkema Louis F. Baker Paul E. Bakker Marvin Beelen Ralph W. Bronkema Floyd R. De Boer W. Thomas De Vries John E.F. Dresselhuis Earl D. Dykema John B. Hulst James E. Jeffers John L. Meppelink Sidney Newhouse Neal Punt Sidney H. Rooy Hubert J. Sprik Martin Stegink Anthonie Vanden Einde Maas Vander Bilt

D. The committee also reports on the following anniversaries of congregational organization:

100 years	Alamosa, CO Goshen, IN Prairie City, IA
75 years	Hamilton, ON – First
50 years	Artesia, CA – Trinity Athens, ON Cutlerville, MI – Cutlerville East Dundas, ON – Calvin Edmonton, AB – West End Fremont, MI – Trinity Grand Rapids, MI – Millbrook Grandville, MI – South Grandville Jenison, MI – Twelfth Avenue LeMars, IA – Calvin Montreal, QC – First Regina, SK – Sonlight Community San Jose, CA Truro, NS – John Calvin Vernon, BC Whitby, ON – Hebron

25 years

Almond Valley, Ripon, CA
Brighton, ON – Fellowship
Edmonton, AB – Bethel Community
Edmonton, AB – Covenant
Port Perry, ON – Hope
Menno, SD – Peace
Oakdale, CA – Community
Orange City, IA – Immanuel
Port Perry, ON – Hope
Princeton, MN – Bethel
Prospect Park, NJ – The Good Shepherd
Roselawn, IN – Community
Salmon Arm, BC
Sioux Center, IA – Faith
Sioux Falls, SD – Shalom
Tinley Park, IL – Faith
Waterloo, ON
West Olive, MI
Windsor, ON – Ambassador Community

VII. Reminders

A. We urge congregations that have or soon will observe anniversaries to send copies of commemorative materials (booklets, historical sketches, video tapes, photographs, and so forth) to the Archives. This is a convenient means for keeping a duplicate set of such materials in a secure location.

B. Of the 839 organized congregations, 659 (79 percent) have sent their minutes to the Archives for microfilming. This percentage of participation remains the same from last year. Due to the ongoing and frequent reports of lost or misplaced minutes, the committee again strongly urges the remaining 180 congregations to utilize this very inexpensive means to produce a backup copy that will be stored in an environmentally secure environment. Due to the personal nature of the contents in some minutes that are duplicated, these microfilms are stored in a vault under absolute confidence. No one, including archives staff, former pastors, former council/consistory members and others will be allowed to look at these microfilms without the permission of the individual church council written on congregational letterhead and signed by either the president or vice-president of the council/consistory.

VIII. Recommendations

A. The committee requests that Mrs. Janet Sheeres be given the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to its mandate come before synod.

B. The committee recommends that Mrs. Janet Sheeres and Dr. Robert Swierenga each be reappointed to second three-year terms as members of the Historical Committee.

C. The committee asks that synod urge congregations to continue sending copies of minutes and noncurrent membership records to the Archives in order that existing gaps in the archival holdings may be filled. Further, the

committee urges that all classes add the Archives to their mailing lists (surface or electronic) as the most expedient means to prevent gaps from occurring in the future. We also ask that synod remind the stated clerks of each classis that the records of discontinued ministries are to be deposited in the Archives.

Historical Committee

Harry Boonstra, chair

Michael De Vries

Richard Harms, secretary

Janet Sheeres

Robert Swierenga

I. Membership

The members of the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC), along with the general secretary, Dr. David H. Engelhard, and the Canadian ministries director, Rev. William C. Veenstra (members ex officio), with the years in which their terms expire are:

- From Canada: Ms. Louisa Bruinsma (2004); Mrs. Bertha Mook (2005); Rev. Richard T. Vander Vaart (2003); Rev. Ralph S. Wigboldus (2005); Rev. Michael Winnowski, president (2003); Rev. Simon Wolfert (2004).
- From the United States: Rev. Michiel M. De Berdt (2005); Rev. Philip V. De Jonge, vice president (2004), Ms. Teresa Renkema (2004); Dr. David Rylaarsdam (2006); Rev. Carlos Tapanes (2006); Mr. Abraham Vreeke (2005).

The IRC has adopted the following *modus operandi*:

- That in electing officers for our binational IRC, the president be chosen from one country and the vice president from the other, with the understanding that the vice president will assume the office of president the following year.
- That the IRC meet three times each year—in November, February, and April.
- That the IRC (ordinarily) meet once each year in Burlington, Ontario, and twice each year in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

II. Information regarding ecumenical relations**A. Fraternal delegates**

The IRC appointed the following fraternal delegates to the assemblies of churches with which the Christian Reformed Church in North America is in ecclesiastical fellowship:

1. To the Reformed Church in America (RCA) meeting in Holland, Michigan, June 8, 2003, Dr. Peter Borgdorff.
2. To the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) meeting in Livonia, Michigan, June 20-22, 2003, Dr. Clayton Libolt.
3. To the fifty-eighth General Assembly of the Reformed Church of Japan, meeting in October 2003, Rev. George Young.
4. To the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia meeting in May 2003, Rev. Lawrence Spalink.

B. Representatives and observers to ecumenical organizations

In accordance with the provisions of the Ecumenical Charter of the CRCNA, the IRC appointed representatives and observers to various ecumenical organizations. These appointees report to the IRC.

1. Dr. David H. Engelhard serves as the CRCNA's representative on the board of directors of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).

2. Rev. William C. Veenstra serves as the CRCNA's representative on the board of directors of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.
3. Mrs. Louisa Bruinsma serves as the CRCNA's representative on the board of directors of the Canadian Council of Churches.
4. Dr. George Vandervelde serves as the IRC's observer on the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches and on the Faith and Witness Commission of the Canadian Council of Churches. In both venues, he has been entrusted with important levels of leadership.
5. Dr. Lyle Bierma serves as the CRC member on the Theological Commission of the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

III. Multilateral relationships—ecumenical organizations

A. *Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC)*

The IRC maintains contact with the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) through its *REC News Exchange* and through its general secretary, Dr. Richard van Houten, whose office is in Grand Rapids. Delegates to the REC assembly being held in Utrecht, Netherlands, will be chosen in April and reported to synod in the IRC's supplementary report.

B. *Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC)*

The CRCNA is a member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and is represented on its board by Rev. William Veenstra. The EFC, which recently chose a new president, Mr. Bruce Clemenger, focuses on bringing Christians together for greater impact in mission, ministry, and witness. It does so by working closely together for ministry empowerment and by working cooperatively to address government on current issues of interest and concern.

C. *Canadian Council of Churches (CCC)*

The CRC is a member of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and is represented on its board by Mrs. Louisa Bruinsma. The CCC works primarily through its Commissions on Faith and Witness and on Justice and Peace. The CRC has personnel on both commissions, and they strive to make our voice heard in matters relating to ecumenical relations and to broad concerns within our culture and world.

Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton is the newly elected general secretary of the CCC and enters her role at a time when the long-term financial viability of the CCC needs to be addressed. Dr. Hamilton attended Synod 2003 as an ecumenical observer.

D. *National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)—United States*

Rev. Ted Haggard, Colorado Springs, Colorado, was recently elected as president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). The past two years have been a time of restructuring for the NAE with the moving of its offices from California to Washington, D.C. Now the administrative offices and the governmental offices of NAE are housed together. NAE's yearly convention is scheduled to meet in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on March 11-12, 2004. As in other years, the convention will be a time of stimulating presentations, enthusiastic worship, and organizational business.

E. World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

Synod 2002 adopted a recommendation authorizing “the IRC to apply for CRCNA membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)” (*Acts of Synod 2002*, p. 485). Following that synod, the executive committee of WARC received the application favorably and the CRCNA was received into membership.

The twenty-fourth General Council meeting of WARC will be held in Accra, Ghana, July 30 through August 13, 2004. The theme for the meeting is: That All May Have Life in Fullness. While CRC observers have attended council meetings in the past, this will be the first time that the CRC will be officially represented as a member church. The IRC has appointed Dr. David H. Engelhard as the delegate to attend the meeting in Accra. Due to higher than anticipated costs, two others who had been appointed to attend will not be going.

IV. Bilateral relationships—international

A. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN/GKN)

Synod 2003 adopted the following recommendation regarding the relationship between the CRC and the RCN/GKN:

That synod declare that the current restricted relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GKN be retained until the new Protestant Church of the Netherlands has formally begun and the IRC has had time to assess what relationship is appropriate for the CRC to maintain with the new denomination.
(*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 603)

The IRC continues its process of assessing the new church and is sending a delegation to visit with the Protestant Church of the Netherlands (PCN) leadership in May 2004. The remainder of this section provides an overview of our relationship with the GKN in recent years.

The Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have been integrally linked as churches since the 1890s when the GKN were formed. Intellectual, spiritual, and financial assistance flowed freely from the Netherlands to North America. Members felt at home in each other’s churches. Sometimes the relationship has been referred to as “mother-daughter” and other times as “sister churches.” This highlights the family connectedness that has existed in our relationship.

In the 1970s, the relationship between our churches experienced some strains and tensions. At first, the tensions were related to hermeneutics when the GKN gave endorsement to the document *God met Ons*. Later, the tensions increased when the GKN permitted gays and lesbians living in committed relationships to serve as office-bearers in their churches. The provisions of “ecclesiastical fellowship” were gradually reduced from six (full relationship) to two (partial relationship).

The most recent restriction of the relationship occurred at the synod of 1996 (see *Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 520), and, at the same synod, the Interchurch Relations Committee was mandated to intensify discussions with the GKN regarding issues that have troubled our relationship (see *Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 707 and *Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 520). The results of the intensified discussions were reported to the synods of 1998, 1999, and 2000.

The issues identified as those troubling our relationship are: (1) Scripture and hermeneutics, (2) homosexuality, (3) mission to the Jews, (4) euthanasia, and (5) Christology and the Atonement. Each of these matters was discussed at some length with representatives of the GKN over the three-year period of our conversations. Reports on the conversations as well as some analysis of the GKN positions can be found in the following places:

Agenda for Synod 1995, pp. 225-44

Acts of Synod 1996, pp. 393-410

Acts of Synod 1997, p. 526

Acts of Synod 1998, pp. 300-7

Agenda for Synod 2000, pp. 203-11

Agenda for Synod 2001, pp. 220-21

These reports identify where the GKN has altered its position in a corrective way in recent years (e.g., their view of Scripture and hermeneutics), where they have retained their view in spite of CRC objections (e.g., their view of homosexuality), and where they have addressed new concerns consistent with biblical and confessional teaching (e.g., Christology and the Atonement).

One significant factor affecting the GKN/CRC relationship is the unification and merger process (known as *Samen op Weg/Together on the Way*) that is taking place among the GKN, the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (NHK), and the Evangelisch Lutherse Kerk (ELK). The CRC has had a relationship with only one of the three denominations in the merger, and even though we are somewhat familiar with the other two denominations, they are not included in our ecumenical relationships. Recently, this merger was finalized, and the three synods have agreed on a name for the new church: Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN). Currently, the new church is scheduled to inaugurate its new existence on May 1, 2004. Thus, the *Gerformeerde Kerken in Nederland/Reformed Churches in the Netherlands* will no longer exist in the form that we have known them. "Ecclesiastical fellowship" exclusively with one of the parties to the merger seems to be prohibited by the new church's Church Order (Bylaw 14, Art. 4, pt. 1). Beginning sometime in 2004, any relationship with these churches will need to be a relationship with the whole Protestant Church in the Netherlands and not just with the GKN.

Considering the factors referenced in the preceding paragraphs, the IRC has appointed a subcommittee consisting of Dr. Lyle Bierma, Dr. David Engelhard, Rev. Leonard Hofman, and Rev. Richard Vander Vaart to prepare a report and recommendations regarding the CRC's ongoing relationship with the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. The subcommittee will visit the Netherlands in May 2004 when the first synod of the PCN is to be held. Furthermore they will hold discussions with the church's leadership about our future relationship. No final recommendations will be coming to Synod 2004, but an oral update will be available.

B. Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar

In September 2002, the general secretary of the CRC received a letter from the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. That letter read as follows:

We are very pleased to inform you that after reading and examining the documents about your denomination, and after hearing the report from Rev. Lala Rasendrahasina who met you in June 2001,

our National Council that met in July 2002 is seeking a Bilateral relationship with the CRCNA. We are convinced that as part of the Reformed Churches we need to establish direct link with other denominations in the same family in order to strengthen our faith. As you may be aware two of our ministers graduated at Calvin Seminary. Therefore we would like to deepen our relationship with you and make it more formal and official.

This church was formed in 1968 as the merger of three other denominations, namely the Church of Christ of Madagascar, the Evangelical Church in Madagascar, and the Malagasy Friend's Church (see Appendix A for a more complete description of this church.) In recent years, two of their leaders attended Calvin Theological Seminary and in that way learned much about the CRC. In consultation with the former president of Calvin Seminary, Dr. James A. De Jong, who had visited these churches, the IRC was encouraged to "reach out to this group of believers and their leadership by welcoming and accepting this invitation" for a closer relationship.

The IRC sought additional information from the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar and presents it in the Addendum to Appendix A. On the basis of this information, personal conversation with one of the church's leaders (Rev. Lala Rasendralasina) and the advice of Dr. De Jong, the IRC is recommending to synod that the CRC establish a relationship of corresponding fellowship with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. The specifics of such a relationship are defined by the Ecumenical Charter adopted by Synod 2000 (see *Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 250, pp. 251-52).

C. Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRCN) and the Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN)

As was noted in last year's *Agenda for Synod*, The Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRCN) and The Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN) had a special service of reconciliation on March 1, 2003, as the celebration of their renewed relationship following the resolution of many long-term differences. Synod 2003 also celebrated this reconciliation with a time of thanksgiving and prayer. A fraternal delegate from the CRCN (Rev. Joseph U. Ajaver) and a fraternal delegate from the RCCN (Rev. Musa A. Manasseh) will both be present at Synod 2004. A time of remembering and giving thanks is being planned during the time of synod.

D. Reformed Church of East Africa

In 2000, the delegates of the CRC to the Reformed Ecumenical Council meeting in Indonesia had an extended conversation with the delegates of the Reformed Church of East Africa about a closer bilateral relationship between our churches. This church began through missionary efforts of missionaries from South Africa in 1944 and more recently from mission efforts from the Netherlands (see Appendix B and its Addendum for more information).

The Interchurch Relations Committee is now coming to synod recommending that the CRC establish a relationship of corresponding fellowship with the Reformed Church of East Africa. The specifics of such a relationship are defined by an Ecumenical Charter adopted by Synod 2000 (see *Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 250, 251-52).

E. Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa

Contact with the leadership of the Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa was also made at the REC meeting in Indonesia. The CRCEA began when several pastors broke away from the RCEA in 1992. Whatever tensions existed at the time of the breakaway seem to have been healed and both churches are part of REC and are cooperating together. The CRCEA is located in Uganda (see Appendix C and its Addendum for additional information).

The Interchurch Relations Committee is coming to synod to recommend that the CRC establish a relationship of corresponding fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa. The specifics of such a relationship are defined by the Ecumenical Charter adopted by Synod 2000 (see *Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 250, 251-52).

V. Bilateral relationships—North America

A. Churches in ecclesiastical fellowship

The CRCNA maintains ecclesiastical fellowship with three churches in North America. They are the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), and the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Fraternal delegates are exchanged with these churches on a regular basis. The CRCNA continues in ecclesiastical fellowship with the ARPC even though it is one of the member denominations of NAPARC that has voted to terminate our membership in NAPARC. The ARPC has told us that the NAPARC decision does not affect our bilateral relationship.

B. Reformed Church in America (RCA)

Synod 2002 instructed the Interchurch Relations Committee to engage in dialogue with the Commission on Christian Unity of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). The mandate is as follows:

That synod instruct the IRC, in consultation with appropriate agencies of the CRCNA to engage in a dialogue with the Commission on Christian Unity of the RCA, to ascertain how our ministry and mission throughout the world might be strengthened by greater cooperation between our two denominations and report its findings to Synod 2005.

(Acts of Synod 2002, p. 498)

The RCA's Commission on Christian Unity was also given a mandate by its synod in 2002 that reads as follows:

To instruct the Commission on Christian unity to enter into dialogue with the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC), exploring ways of moving toward greater unity between the CRC and the RCA in their ministry and mission, beginning with a discussion of the orderly exchange of ministers, and to report to the 2003 General Synod; and further, to encourage the agencies of the RCA to continue to expand their cooperative efforts with their CRC counterparts.

On March 4, 2004, representatives of both churches met in Chicago, Illinois. The RCA was represented by Rev. David Alexander, Rev. David Baak, Ms. Sue Damon, Rev. Tom Denney, Dr. Doug Fromm, Rev. Anna Jackson, and Rev. Pedro Windsor. The CRC was represented by Rev. Philip DeJonge, Dr. David H. Engelhard, Dr. David Rylaarsdam, Rev. Richard Vander Vaart, and Rev. Ralph Wigboldus.

This was a follow-up meeting to that held in December 2002. Three items that currently are on our agenda are (1) the so-called orderly exchange of

ministers from one denomination to the other, (2) a unified approach to dealing with the Belhar Confession as requested by The Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa, and (3) a concerted effort to find new ways to cooperate in ministry and among our congregations and classes.

In addition to the brief summary above, the IRC is including some of the “next steps and ideas” that were reported to synod last year and have been endorsed in concept as the direction to follow in the conversations with the RCA:

1. Continue the dialogue by meeting more than once a year and by retaining as many of the same delegates as is practical and/or possible.
2. Determine the necessary next steps that will allow our denominations to move toward the exchange of pastors. This will include an examination of the process for an exchange of pastors and an examination of what is currently happening in union churches (what agreements they have in place).
3. Examine the Belhar Confession together because the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA) has requested both the RCA and the CRC to study and adopt the Belhar. It may be possible for our denominations to formulate a united statement of agreement on it. That would be a powerful statement to the URCSA.
4. Articulate where we are already cooperating (compile a list as complete as possible) and identify further areas where cooperation is possible.
5. Explore the question about obstacles—historical and current, theological and confessional, stereotypes and/or cultures—that do, and may, hinder seamless ministry.
6. Maintain good communication, involvement of constituencies, and publicity that celebrates present evidences of unity.
7. Invite new-idea people and enthusiastic vision casters to our meetings for consultation.
8. Each denomination will name the participants for this dialogue. By consensus, there will be four RCA delegates, four CRC delegates, and each denomination will have a staff person or ecumenical officer. Participants chosen will represent the diversities of our respective constituencies. Consultants from each church will be freely used.
9. Meetings will be held three to four times a year. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has invited us to use their building in Chicago. Grand Rapids may also be considered an alternate location periodically.

(*Agenda for Synod 2003*, pp. 236-37)

This report comes to synod as a progress report and it contains no recommendations for action at this time. The IRC has been asked to present a more complete report to Synod 2005.

C. Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC)

A report of the meeting held with representatives of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) was provided in the *Agenda for Synod 2003* on pages 237-39 and need not be repeated here. In the IRC’s supplementary report to Synod 2003 (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 505), the synod was informed of a letter received from the PRC’s Committee for Contact with other Churches, which concluded as follows:

With these matters remaining between us, it is impossible in our judgment to explore common areas of service and agreement. Since this was the purpose of your discussions with us, we see little profit in continuing to hold discussions. The gulf that separates us grows ever wider. This is still cause for grief as far as we are concerned, but that does not change the reality. We will be reporting to our synod your response to our admonition, and that no more meetings are being planned.

(*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 505)

Synod 2003 was informed that the IRC thought that “the likelihood that conversations will continue is minimal;” nonetheless, the IRC held out “a slight hope that they can be revived” (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 505). Because no further communication from the PRC has been forthcoming, the IRC regretfully informs synod that in spite of our best efforts, the conversation between the PRC and the CRC has drawn to a close with no appreciable results to show for our efforts. The IRC requests synod to declare that the mandate given it by Synod 2001 (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 481) has been fulfilled.

VI. Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church (RCC)

A. *Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist*

Synod 2002 received a lengthy report from the IRC entitled: “Report of the Interchurch Relations Committee Clarifying the Official Doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church Concerning the Mass” (see *Agenda for Synod 2002*, pp. 274-94). Synod adopted the following recommendations:

- 1) That synod receive the report as fulfillment of the mandate given by Synod 1998 to the IRC “to make an attempt to dialogue with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church to clarify the official doctrine of that church concerning the mass” (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 427).
- 2) That synod submit the report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops requesting their agreement that the report gives an accurate presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- 3) That synod ask the IRC, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
- 4) That Synod ask the IRC, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod, no later than 2006, about the value of further dialogue between the CRC and the Roman Catholic Church.
- 5) That synod send this report (Appendix D, *Agenda for Synod 2002*, pp. 274-94,) to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship and to the Reformed Ecumenical Council informing them of our study and inviting their response.

(*Acts of Synod 2002*, pp. 488-89)

Following synod, the report was sent to the Conference of Catholic Bishops in both the United States and Canada requesting what Synod 2002 asked. Letters of response were received from both conferences in which the process followed by the CRC and the written document produced are highly acclaimed and applauded. Both conferences affirm that the report “is accurate in its presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the Eucharist.” The letters received had suggestions for a few alterations that would provide a more nuanced expression in three areas. The subcommittee of the IRC that wrote the document has met to consider the suggestions, and has made recommendations to the IRC regarding them (see Appendix D for the slightly revised version of the original report).

In addition to making slight alterations in the text of the report, the subcommittee was also asked to assist the IRC to accomplish another part of the mandate it received from Synod 2002, namely to do the following:

That synod ask the IRC, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about

any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

(*Acts of Synod 2002*, p. 489)

At its February meeting, the IRC received that report and now passes it on as its report to Synod 2004 (see Appendix E). The report contains several recommendations from the IRC that come to synod for action.

B. Catholic/Reformed Dialogue

Synod 2003 approved a recommendation authorizing the IRC to participate in an ongoing dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and four Reformed denominations in the United States. The topic of this dialog is the sacramental understanding of the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) and baptism.

The first meeting of the dialog partners was held in Louisville, Kentucky, in September 2003. Dr. Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, and Most Reverend Patrick Cooney, Bishop of Gaylord, Michigan, served as cochairs of the discussion.

A second meeting is scheduled for Washington, D.C., in April 2004. The CRC participants in this discussion are Dr. Lyle Bierma, Dr. David H. Engelhard, and Dr. Ronald Feenstra. In October 2004, the dialog conversation will be held at the Prince Conference Center on Calvin College's campus with the CRC as host.

VII. Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.

Since the fall of 2001, church leaders from a wide spectrum of ecclesiastical traditions have been meeting to discuss and create a new kind of ecumenical organization that includes participants from all traditions at the same table. Currently, evangelicals only meet with other evangelicals, mainline leaders only meet with other mainline leaders, and the Roman Catholic leadership is not part of any of the current ecumenical organizations.

The fourth planning meeting was held near Houston, Texas, in January 2004. At that meeting, there was a good cross section of evangelicals, mainline, Orthodox, Pentecostals, and Roman Catholics. It was the consensus of those present that the time was right to launch the new organization and determine if the denominations represented at the planning sessions were actually interested in officially participating. The IRC has considered this matter in depth and now brings its recommendations to synod.

Appendix F contains the basic document that defines the organization and its assumptions, affirmations, and goals. Appendix F-1 provides answers to questions commonly asked by evangelicals regarding participation.

The Interchurch Relations Committee recommends the following:

1. That synod authorize the IRC to participate in the new ecumenical organization known as Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT-USA).

Grounds:

- a. The theological affirmations and the purpose of the organization are consonant with the confessions and teachings of the CRC, and the *modus operandi* (consensus decision-making) is in keeping with the polity of the CRC, namely that no external assembly makes decisions that are binding on the CRC.

- b. Participation in CCT-USA enables the CRC to fulfill “its ecumenical responsibility to cooperate and seek unity with all churches of Christ in obedience to the gospel and insofar as is commensurate with the gospel” (Ecumenical Charter, III, A, 1; *Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 248; *Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 670-71).
 - c. “The CRCNA seeks to pursue its ecumenical task by participating in ecumenical organizations, fellowships, and associations that enable it to carry out its ecumenical responsibilities broadly, effectively, and efficiently” (Ecumenical Charter, III, C, 1, b). CCT-USA provides a new opportunity to relate to a wide variety of Christian churches within a single organization.
 - d. Participating at this time will allow our representatives an opportunity to help shape the immediate future of CCT-USA.
2. That synod request the IRC to prepare a review of the relationship with CCT-USA for Synod 2010.

VIII. Nominations for membership

Four members of the IRC are completing their first term and are eligible for a second three-year term. One member (Rev. Michael Winnowski) has accepted a call to a church in the United States and is stepping down from his position as a Canadian member of the IRC.

The following names are submitted to Synod 2004 as nominees for IRC membership:

A. Canadian nominees

Position 1

Rev. Simon Wolfert (incumbent nominee) recently retired as Port Chaplain for the CRC’s Ministry to Seafarers in Vancouver, British Columbia, and is a member of Maple Ridge CRC. He is a graduate of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Free University of Amsterdam. He has been a delegate to synod two times and has been deeply involved in ecumenical activities as a CRC missionary in South America and as a CRC pastor and chaplain in North America.

Position 2

Ms. Louisa Bruinsma (incumbent nominee) is a member of Fellowship CRC, Edmonton, Alberta. She is a graduate of Trinity Christian College and is currently Director of Development for Cornerstone Counselling Centre in Edmonton. She has served on the board of The King’s University College, the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta, and has chaired the pastoral committee of Fellowship CRC. She also served six years on the Committee for Contact with the Government.

Position 3

Mrs. Claire Elgersma, a member of Community CRC in Kitchener, Ontario, is an investment adviser. She has previously served on the Interchurch Relations Committee and the advisory committee for Campus Ministry. Mrs. Elgersma has served as a Sunday school teacher and on various church committees. She currently represents the CRC on the Reformed Ecumenical Council. She also

serves as treasurer of the Institute for Christian Studies and as a member of the Stewardship Education Committee.

Dr. James R. Payton, Jr., a member of Ancaster CRC in Ancaster, Ontario, is professor of history at Redeemer University College where he teaches courses on ecumenism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Dr. Payton has had extensive experience on denominational, ecclesiastical, and nonecclesiastical boards and committees. His experience in these areas includes service as executive secretary for the Christians Associated for Relationships with Eastern Europe (CAREE), as a member of the Europe Forum (affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Christ [NCCC] in the U.S.A.), as a council member of the Sixteenth Century Conference, as a member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's Task Force on Women in Ministry, and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the *Christian Scholar's Review*. In his local congregation, Dr. Payton has served as a member of the Education Committee, the Worship Committee, the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Task Force in Ministry Committee, and as catechism teacher and elder.

B. U.S. nominees

Position 1

Rev. Philip De Jonge (incumbent nominee) has served pastorates in Holland and Jenison, Michigan. He served three years in Amman, Jordan, and six years with CRWM in Japan. He is a graduate of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary (1976). He received a master of theology degree from Calvin Theological Seminary and a doctor of ministry degree from Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan. He currently serves as pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Position 2

Ms. Teresa Renkema (incumbent nominee), born and raised in Canada, received a bachelor of arts degree in secondary education from Calvin College in 1974, and a master's degree in teaching English as a second language from InterAmerican University in Puerto Rico. She and her husband served as missionaries for sixteen years in Argentina, Central America, and Puerto Rico. Since her return to North America in 1994, she has held various teaching positions and is currently assistant professor of intercultural communication at RBC. She also is international student services coordinator at RBC. Teresa is a member of Calvary CRC in Lowell, Michigan.

IX. IRC Hospitality Committee

Rev. Michael De Berdt has been designated by the IRC to serve as the chair of the hospitality committee for fraternal delegates and observers at Synod 2004. This committee assists synod in helping visitors from other denominations feel welcome among us.

X. Representation at synod

Rev. Michael Winnowski and Rev. Philip De Jonge have been appointed to represent the IRC at Synod 2004. The IRC also requests that those members of the Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 subcommittee who are present at the time of synod be given the privilege of the floor when this matter is discussed.

XI. Recommendations

A. That Rev. Michael Winnowski (president) and Rev. Philip De Jonge, along with members of the Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 subcommittee, be given the privilege of the floor when matters relating to the IRC are being discussed.

B. That synod establish a relationship of corresponding fellowship with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (IV, B).

C. That synod designate a time during its sessions to remember and give thanks to God for the reconciliation recently experienced by the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria and the Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (IV, C).

D. That synod establish a relationship of corresponding fellowship with the Reformed Church of East Africa (IV, D).

E. That synod establish a relationship of corresponding fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa (IV, E).

F. That synod declare with regret that the conversation between the Protestant Reformed Churches and the CRC has drawn to a close with no tangible results, and that the mandate given to the IRC in 2001 has been fulfilled (V, C).

G. That synod take the following actions regarding the matter of Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Mass:

1. That synod receive the slightly revised report regarding Heidelberg Catechism Question and Answer 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist.

Ground: The changes, made in the light of comments from the various Roman Catholic respondents, render the report clearer and more accurate.

2. That synod declare the following:

- a. The Mass, when celebrated in accordance with official Roman Catholic teaching, neither denies the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ nor constitutes idolatry.

Grounds:

- 1) Official Roman Catholic teaching affirms that Christ offered a final, sufficient, unrepeatable sacrifice on the cross and that the Mass reenacts or represents that sacrifice and suffering in an unbloody manner (see section Appendix E, section II, B and Appendix D, section II).
- 2) The Roman Catholic Church holds that the ascended Christ is to be worshiped through the adoration of his body and blood, which is what it believes the consecrated bread and wine have become. In the adoration of the consecrated bread and wine, Christ is being worshiped—not the elements (see Appendix E, section II, B and Appendix D, section III).
- 3) The understanding of the Mass underlying this declaration is grounded in a lengthy conversation with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church (see Appendix E, section I).

- b. Q. and A. 80 still contains a pointed warning against any teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist that obscure the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and detract from proper worship of the ascended Lord.

Grounds:

- 1) Practices are not always in accord with official teaching. When and where that occurs, Q. and A. 80 serves as a pointed warning.
 - 2) In some places in the world today, practices associated with the Roman Catholic Eucharist obscure and distort important eucharistic teachings, as they did in the sixteenth century.
3. That synod propose to the churches that, rather than being deleted completely, Q. and A. 80 be retained but printed in a smaller font.

Grounds:

- a. Q. and A. 80 does not offer an acceptable description or evaluation of Roman Catholic eucharistic teaching or of practices in accordance with it.
 - b. In certain contexts, Q. and A. 80 has offered, and will continue to offer, a needed warning against teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist.
4. That synod propose to the churches the following format and footnotes to Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 as the way to deal with the confessional difficulties it presents:

***80 Q. How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?**

- A. The Lord's Supper declares to us
that our sins have been completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ
which he himself finished on the cross once for all.¹

It also declares to us
that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,²
who with his very body
is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father³
where he wants us to worship him.⁴

******But the Mass teaches
that the living and the dead
do not have their sins forgiven
through the suffering of Christ
unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.

It also teaches
that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine
where Christ is therefore to be worshiped.

Thus the Mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ
and a condemnable idolatry.

¹ John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25-26; 10:10-18.

² 1 Cor. 6:17; 10:16-17.

³ Acts 7:55-56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1.

⁴ Matt. 6:20-21; John 4:21-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-3.

*Question and Answer 80 was absent from the first edition (February 1563) of the Catechism but was present in a shorter form in the second edition (March 1563). The translation here given is of the expanded text of the third edition (April 1563/November 1563).

**The synod of 2004 concluded that the Mass, when celebrated in accordance with official Roman Catholic teaching, neither denies the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ nor constitutes idolatry. The same synod also concluded that Q. & A. 80 still contains a pointed warning against any teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist that obscure the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and detract from proper worship of the ascended Lord. Therefore Q. & A. 80 was not removed from the text but retained in a smaller font.

5. That synod submit the revised report and the proposed footnote to the Reformed Ecumenical Council for review at its next assembly in July 2005 and also submit the report and recommendations to those churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC and to those in corresponding fellowship with the CRC.
6. That synod ask each church council and each classis to review the proposed footnote to Q. and A. 80 and to submit their responses to the general secretary of the CRCNA by December 1, 2005, so that they can be considered by the Interchurch Relations Committee along with responses from other denominations and the REC.
7. That synod instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to receive the responses and propose any changes to Synod 2006.
8. That synod instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to send both this new report and the slightly revised earlier report to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, thanking them for their participation in dialogue with us, and also to appropriate ecumenical bodies.

H. That synod take the following actions regarding participation in Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.:

1. That synod authorize the IRC to participate in the new ecumenical organization known as Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT-USA).

Grounds:

- a. The theological affirmations and the purpose of the organization are consonant with the confessions and teachings of the CRC, and the *modus operandi* (consensus decision-making) is in keeping with the polity of the CRC, namely that no external assembly makes decisions that are binding on the CRC.
- b. Participation in CCT-USA enables the CRC to fulfill "its ecumenical responsibility to cooperate and seek unity with all churches of Christ in obedience to the gospel and insofar as is commensurate with the gospel" (Ecumenical Charter, III, A, 1; *Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 248; *Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 670-71).
- c. "The CRCNA seeks to pursue its ecumenical task by participating in ecumenical organizations, fellowships, and associations that enable it to carry out its ecumenical responsibilities broadly, effectively, and efficiently" (Ecumenical Charter, III, C, 1, b). CCT-USA provides a new

opportunity to relate to a wide variety of Christian churches within a single organization.

- d. Participating at this time will allow our representatives an opportunity to help shape the immediate future of CCT-USA.
2. That synod request the IRC to prepare a review of the relationship with CCT-USA for Synod 2010.
- I. That synod by way of the printed ballot elect members for the IRC from the slate of nominees presented (see section VIII).

Appendix A

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM)

Description taken from *The Reformed Family Worldwide* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999) pp. 351-52

After the Second World War the churches began to become independent. In 1958 the churches founded by the LMS and by French mission efforts constituted themselves respectively as the Church of Christ in Madagascar and the Evangelical Church in Madagascar; the Quaker mission was transformed into the Malagasy Friends' Church. Since the three groups were very close in doctrine and outlook, they decided to form a single church. In August 1968, during the commemoration celebration of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Prot missions, the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar was inaugurated.

The church was not immediately recognized by the state. The conflict centered on an article of the church constitution stipulating that the state had no right to make its authority manifest within church buildings; the government wanted agreement that, on the occasion of ceremonies at which state representatives were present, the national flag would be exhibited. The church was recognized only after the fall of the first republic. In 1972 the synod agreed to hand over church primary schools to the state as a contribution to general education. In the same year a central fund was created to assure the same salaries for all pastors. In the following years the church sought to become self-supporting. The church did not employ any more expatriate personnel; financially, however, the church remained heavily dependent on foreign church aid (25 percent of its total expenditures, nearly 100 percent of all development projects). In 1980 the National Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar was founded (together with the RCath, Ang., and Luth churches). Efforts were made to unify Christian language, in particular to agree on a common version of the name of Christ—the name of Jesus Christ was changed from Jesosy Kristy into Jesoa Kristy. In 1991 the Church, together with other churches, took an active part in the fall of the second republic and in the development of the new constitution of the third republic.

The church is active in many fields. Since 1990 activities have been focused in four areas: a) church, ministry, and evangelization; b) Christian education and schooling; c) administration; d) development and finances. Among new spiritual developments, the creation of the community of sisters of Mamre deserves special mention.

TM: 2,500,000 BM: 2,200,000 CM: 1,200,000 Congr: 4,510 OrdM: 900 Eld: 20,000
 Deac: 200,000 EvgHome: 500 Mission: 6 Women Ord: Yes As Ministers:
 1960/100 as Deac: since beginning/50,000 as Elders: since beginning/5,000
 ChurchOrg: parish, 35 regional synods, gen synod (every 4 years)
 Off/otherLang: Malagasy DoctrB: ApC, NicC, AthC, Statement of Faith (1958),
 catechism in the Malagasy language Infant or believer's baptism: both
 Frequency of the Lord's Supper: monthly Close relations with: Département
 Missionnaire (Switzerland) NatRel: FFKM (1980), FPM (1913) RegRel: AACC
 IntlRel: WCC (1968), WARC (1968), CWM, CEVAA, QPS TheolSchool: Three
 theolo. colleges in Mandritsara, Fianarantsoa, and Ivato, Theological Faculty in
 Antananarivo Service infrastructure: 30 ambulant hospitals, 70 community
 pharmacies, about 50 kindergartens, 340 schools Periodicals: Rojo (laity/quar-
 terly/300), Vaovao FJKM (news of church/monthly/500), Mpanolotsaina (spec/3
 per year/500), Ny Teny soa (homiletics/2 per year/1,500)

Address: Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy Eto Madagasikara (FJKM), P.O. Box 623, Lot II
 B 18, Tohatohabato Ranavalona I, Trano, Analakely, 101 Antananarivo,
 Madagascar, Tel: + 261 20 22 268 45, Fax: + 261 20 22 263 72, E-mail: fjkmdts@mts.mg.

Addendum to Appendix A

History and Description of Church Seeking Ecclesiastical Relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America

Description of your church

1. Official name of your church (in national language and in English)
 Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara
 Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
2. Address for official correspondence
 Foibe FJKM, B.P. 623, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
3. What is the leading governing body of your church? How often does it meet?
 The General Synod that meets every four years. In between two General Synod meetings there is the National Committee that meets twice a year.
4. Does your church subscribe to confessions? Please list these.
 Yes, it does: Apostle's Creed, Nicene Creed, quotation from the Scriptures, confessions agreed by the WARC and in tune with the Scriptures, any confessions used by the WCC and the All Africa Conference of Churches.
5. How many congregations are in your church? 4,800
 How many members? 3,500,000 How many pastors? 1,100
6. How is your church carrying on missionary witness? Through worship services, preaching the Word, observance of the sacraments (baptism and holy communion), evangelism campaign, exorcism and healing, church schools, faith nurture, sending/receiving missionaries, publishing Christian literature, witnessing by word and deed in society, social activities.
 Do you have organized preaching stations, evangelists, or other activity?
 Yes, we do.
7. How does your church carry on its diaconal service?
 In general each congregation carries on a ministry of mercy. Some congregations run community health centers. The church does have a development project that reaches out to the community.

History

- 8 When was your church founded? In August 18, 1968, from the merging of three missionary founded churches (see below)
9. Was your church connected with a mission or was it founded in some other circumstance? Please describe this briefly.
It was connected with the London Missionary Society, the Friends Foreign Mission Association, and the French Protestant Mission.
10. Are there other significant years or events in your church's history that the Christian Reformed Church in North America should know about?
11. With what other churches do you have close relations? Presbyterian Church (USA), United Reformed Church in UK, Eglise Réformée de France.
12. Of what ecumenical organizations or association, if any, is your church a member?
World Council of Churches, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, All Africa Conference of Churches, Council for World Mission, CEVAA (Communauté d'Eglises en Mission, former Communauté Evangélique d'Action Apostolique)

Pastor training

13. At which institutions are your pastors trained? At our local theological seminaries.

Officers in the church

14. Please list the names and addresses of the officers of your church including the moderator or president, the stated clerk or general secretary.
 - President: Rev. Edmond RAZAFIMAHEFA, BP 623, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
 - Vice-President: Rev. Lilia RAFALIMANANA, BP 623, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
 - His Excellency Mr. Marc RAVALOMANANA, BP 623, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
 - General Secretary, Rev. Charles RAKOTONIRINA, BP 623, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
 - Secretary for Church Affairs: Rev. Lala RASENDRAHASINA, BP 623, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
 - Secretary for School: Mrs. Esther RAZANAMPINOANA, BP 623, Antananarivo, Madagascar
 - Secretary for Personnel: Mr. Armand Andrianambinintoamanintriniaina RAKOTO, BP 623, Antananarivo, Madagascar
 - Secretary for Finance: Mr. Solofo RAKOTONDRAMBONINA, BP 623, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar

Appendix B

Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA)

Description Taken from *The Reformed Family Worldwide* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999) pp. 290-91

The origin of the Reformed Church of East Africa goes back to 1944, when the Dutch Reformed Church of Eldoret, a church of South African origin, started mission work and called a missionary from South Africa. In 1961 the work was taken over by the Reformed Mission League of the Netherlands Reformed Church. Since that time all aid and all missionaries have come from the Netherlands.

The RCEA became autonomous in July 1963. Until 1970 a Missionary Conference served as Executive Committee of the Synod. From 1970 a Missionary Conference served as Executive Committee of the Synod. From 1970 to 1979 a Joint Committee, composed of seven missionaries (from the Reformed Mission League) and five Africans representing the Synod of the RCEA, functioned as the Executive Committee of the synod of the RCEA. Since November 20, 1979, new structures made the RCEA fully independent.

TM: 110,000 BM: 85,000 CM: 85,000 Congr: 205 PStations: 75 OrdM: 300 Eld: 8,000
Deac: 1,000 EvgHome: 10,000 Mission: nc Women Ord: **yes** As Ministers: **no** as
Deac: 1920/40 as Elders: **no** ChurchOrg: **preaching station, local church, parish,**
presby, synod Off/otherLang: **English, Kiswahili** DoctrB: **ApC, NicC, HeidC,**
WestConf, CDort Infant or believer's baptism: **both** Frequency of the Lord's
Supper: **4 times a year depending on availability of the minister** Close relations
with: **Presb Ch of East Africa (cf.no.1)** NatRel: **NCKK (1965)** IntlRel: **WARC,**
REC Service infrastructure: **4 health centers and 12 dispensaries, two rest**
homes; every parish has its own kindergarten Periodicals: **Tuzungurize "Let's**
Talk" (quarterly/1,050)

Address: Reformed Church of East Africa (RECEA), P.O. Box 99, Kisumu Rd.,
Eldoret, Kenya, Tel: +254 321 32984, Fax: +254 321 62870

Addendum to Appendix B

History and Description of Church Seeking Ecclesiastical Relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America

Description of your church

1. Official name of your church (in national language and in English)
Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA)
Kanisa La "Kiri-Formed" La Afrika Ya Mashariki
2. Address for official correspondence
RCEA, PO Box 99, Eldoret, Kenya
Tel: 33611, E-mail: reformed@africanonline.co.ke;
reformed@multiechweb.com
3. What is the leading governing body of your church? How often does it meet:
RCEA Synod
Meets once a year

4. Does your church subscribe to confessions? Please list these.
Yes; (1) Apostles Creed; (2) Nicene Creed; (3) Athanasius Creed
5. How many congregations are in your denomination? 300
How many members? 15,000 How many pastors? 50
6. How is your church carrying on missionary witness?
Through evangelism and extension department (REC)
Reformed Evangelistic Team – Reformed in Mission (RIM)

Do you have organized preaching stations, evangelists, or other outreach activity?
We have parishes/preaching posts and evangelists working in their stations.
7. How does your church carry on its diaconal service?
We have a diaconal care and development office based at our headquarters coordinating all diaconal work in the RCEA – currently four presbyteries and forty parishes through diaconal committees.

History

8. When was your church founded? R.C.E.A. was founded in July 1963
9. Was your church connected with a mission or was it founded in some other circumstance? Please describe this briefly.
Yes. It was founded by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa through its missionary activity in Kenya (Eldoret). Later in 1961, it was taken over by the Reformed Mission League. In 1963 the synod adopted the name Reformed Church of East Africa (RECA).
10. Are there other significant years or events in your church's history that the Christian Reformed Church in North America should know about? Yes
This year in November RCEA is celebrating its 40th anniversary.
11. With what other churches do you have close relations:
Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK)
12. Of what ecumenical organizations or association, if any, is your church a member?
National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK)
WARC – EWCC (related through NCCK) – REC

Pastor training

13. At which institutions are your pastors trained?
Reformed Theological Training Institute (RITT) – diploma in theology;
St. Paul's United Theological College Limuru – bachelors post graduate degrees abroad as opportunity opens in terms of scholarships, e.g., some have trained at Calvin Seminary, others at Western Seminary (USA), Korea, and Stellensborch (South Africa).

Officers in the church

14. Please list the names and addresses of the officers of your church including the moderator or president, the stated clerk or general secretary.

RCEA Moderator:	Deputy Moderator:
Rev. Geoffrey Songok	Rev. Musa K. Maina
Box 99	Box 849
Eldoret	Eldoret
RCEA General Secretary:	Deputy General Secretary:
Rev. David Muhia	Rev. Jonathan Kangogo
Box 99	Box 99
Eldoret	Eldoret

Appendix C

Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa

Description Taken from *The Reformed Family Worldwide* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999) pp. 498-99

The Christian Reformed Church of East Africa began in Kenya in 1992, when several pastors left the Reformed Church of East Africa, in part to focus on mission fields beyond the Kenyan borders. The church is now registered in Uganda, seeks registration in Kenya, and has mission outposts in Tanzania as well. The church is educating pastors on a full and part-time basis. So far, pastors have all been serving on a voluntary basis; to raise the necessary funds the church makes bricks and does agricultural projects.

TM: 4,000 BM: 330 CM: 3,000 Congr: 80 PStations: 20 OrdM: 12 Eld: 240 Deac: 120
EvgHome: 80 Mission: Women Ord: yes As Ministers: 1998/4 as Deac: 1995/10 as
Elders: 1998/6 ChurchOrg: **congr, presby, synod, GenAssy** Off/otherLang:
English, Kiswahili, Luhya, Luganda, Kikisu DoctrB: **ApC, HeidC, CDordt,**
NicC, Infant or believer's baptism: **both** Frequency of the Lord's Supper: **twice**
monthly Close relations with: **CRCNA (1996) NatRel: none RegRel: none IntlRel:**
REC (1996) TheolSchool: Christian Reformed Bible College (Mbale) Service
infrastructure: **5 hospitals, 1 social service, farming projects**

Address: Christian Reformed Church in East Africa, P.O. Box 203, Mbale, Uganda

Addendum to Appendix C

History and Description of Church Seeking Ecclesiastical Relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America

Description of your church

1. Official name of your church (in national language and in English)
Christian Reformed Church in Eastern Africa
2. Address for official correspondence
P.O. Box 203, Mbale, Uganda
3. What is the leading governing body of your church? How often does it meet:

Synod. It meets once in a year.

4. Does your church subscribe to confessions? Please list these. Yes
Heidelberg Catechism, Apostles Creed, The Nicene Creed, Athanasius Creed, Canon of Dordt, Westminster.
5. How many congregations are in your church? 5
How many members? 500 How many pastors? 3
6. How is your church carrying on missionary witness?
Our church carries missionary witness through visitations of pastors, evangelists, and elders. They walk, and sometimes they use public means.

Do you have organized preaching stations, evangelists, or other outreach activity?
Yes, we have organized preaching in stations, evangelists, and elders.
7. How does your church carry on its diaconal service?
We have groups that contribute to one's needs in turns on a small scale.

History

8. When was your church founded?
It was founded 1992
9. Was your church connected with a mission or was it founded in some other circumstance? Please describe this briefly.
It split from RCEA to go beyond Kenya boundaries and Eastern as well as Central Africa.
10. Are there other significant years or events in your church's history that the Christian Reformed Church in North America should know about? No
11. With what other churches do you have close relation?: No
12. Of what ecumenical organizations or association, if any, is your church a member?
REC

Pastor training

13. At which institutions are your pastors trained?
Reformed Theological College, Kampala and in our own Bible school

Officers in the church

14. Please list the names and addresses of the officers of your church including the moderator or president, the stated clerk or general secretary.

Rev. Edward Kefa	Moderator, Box 203, Kijale, Kenya
Rev. Paul Gudoyi	General Sec., Box 203, Mbale, Uganda
Rev. Stephen Gidudu	Projects Chairman, Box 203, Mbale
Mr. Hiejerome Saasa	D.G.S., Box 203, Mbale
Mr. Josophat Namusoso	C.R.C.E.A. Uganda Chairman Box 203, Mbale
Mr. Moses Namisi	Youth Leader, Box 203, Mbale
Mrs. Rose Nadumgagudoyi	Women Leader, Chair Person

Appendix D

Heidelberg Catechism Q. & A. 80 and The Roman Catholic Eucharist (Revised 2004)

I. Introduction

A. *Background, mandate, and structure of the report*

In 1998, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) received two overtures concerning question and answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism (HC, Q. and A. 80). The first overture requested that Q. and A. 80 be removed from the text of the catechism because the phrase “a condemnable idolatry” should be reserved for the behavior of people who do not believe in justification by faith in Jesus Christ; because Christian love, unity, and understanding demand it; and because Q. and A. 80 was not included in the original text of the catechism. The second overture asked that Q. and A. 80 *not* be removed from the catechism, as the earlier overture had requested, on the ground that the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has never repudiated its official condemnation of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith found in the decisions of the Council of Trent (1545-63).

Synod 1998 decided not to accede to the first overture because, among other things, the overture had “not established that the language of Q. and A. 80 is an incorrect presentation of the present official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.” In addition, the synod directed the CRC Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) “to make an attempt to dialogue with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church to clarify the official doctrine of that church concerning the mass” (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 427). The following report has been written in pursuit of this mandate.

At its regular meeting in September 1998, the IRC appointed a subcommittee to carry out the synodical mandate. This subcommittee consisted of Dr. David Engelhard (chairperson), Dr. Lyle Bierma, Dr. Henry De Moor, Dr. Ronald Feenstra, and Dr. George Vandervelde. The subcommittee met with delegations of RCC theologians on two occasions: on January 27-28, 1999, at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Washington, D.C., and on August 17-18, 2001, at St. Paul’s College, Washington, D.C. The first RCC delegation consisted of Rev. John Ford, Professor of Systematic Theology at The Catholic University of America (CUA); Rev. David Power, Professor of Liturgical Theology at CUA; Rev. Berard Marthaler, Professor of Theology and Catechetics at CUA; Rev. J. A. DiNoia, Director of the Intercultural Forum at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center; Brother Jeffrey Gros, Associate Director, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (SEIA), USCCB; and Dr. Eugene Fisher, Associate Director, SEIA, USCCB. The second RCC delegation included—in addition to Ford, Fisher, and DiNoia—Monsignor John Strykowski, Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practice, USCCB; and three members of the RCC Ecumenical Commission in Canada: Sister Donna Geernaert, Bishop John Boissonneau,

and Bishop John Wingle. The participants spent most of the first meeting discussing the meaning and accuracy of the text of HC 80 and most of the second meeting reviewing and revising those sections of this report that seek to clarify Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass.

From the beginning, both sides agreed that Q. and A. 80 is organized in the following way:

Question 80: How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

Answer: (A¹) The Lord's Supper declares to us
that our sins have been completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ
which he himself finished on the cross once for all.

(B¹) It also declares to us
that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,
who with his very body
is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father
where he wants us to worship him.

(A²) But the Mass teaches
that the living and the dead
do not have their sins forgiven
through the suffering of Christ
unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.

(B²) It also teaches
that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine
where Christ is therefore to be worshiped.

(A³) Thus the Mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ

(B³) and [basically nothing but] a condemnable idolatry.

This way of dividing up the material suggests that the question asked in Q. and A. 80 receives a twofold answer: the doctrines of the Lord's Supper and the Mass differ in the way they understand both the sacrifice of Christ (A) and the presence of Christ (B). Each of these two issues is treated in three subsections: A¹ explains the Reformed view of the Lord's Supper as it relates to Christ's sacrifice, A² the objectionable part of the Roman Catholic view, and A³ the Heidelberg Catechism's response to the Roman Catholic view. B¹ explains the Reformed view of the Lord's Supper as it relates to the presence of Christ, B² the objectionable part of the Roman Catholic view, and B³ the Heidelberg Catechism's response to the Roman Catholic view.

B. Historical note

Question and answer 80 did not appear in the text of the first German edition of the Heidelberg Catechism, which probably left the publisher sometime in February 1563. It first appeared in the second German edition (March 1563) and in the official Latin translation of the Heidelberg Catechism (March 1563). It was also included, in slightly expanded form, in the third

(April [?] 1563) and fourth (November 1563) German editions, the last of which became the “*textus receptus*” of the Heidelberg Catechism and the basis for the 1975 CRC translation used above.

It is not clear why the first edition of the Heidelberg Catechism did not include Q. and A. 80. One possibility is that Q. and A. 80 was composed and added in direct response to a statement on the Mass adopted by the Council of Trent in September 1562. The first appearance of Q. and A. 80 in the *second* German edition of the catechism might indicate that the decision of Trent had not reached Heidelberg until after the first edition of the Heidelberg Catechism had already gone to press. This, however, is conjecture. We simply do not know when the statements of Trent first came to the attention of the Heidelberg theologians or whether these statements provoked a confessional rebuttal.

The only documentary evidence we have to work with is a letter dated April 3, 1563, to John Calvin from Caspar Olevianus, one of the contributors to the Heidelberg Catechism. Olevianus writes that “in the first German edition . . . the question on the difference between the Lord’s Supper and the papal Mass was omitted,” but that “after some urging on my part [*admonitus a me*], the elector decided that it should be added to the second German and first Latin editions” (*Calvini Opera* 19:684). It is not clear from this letter whether Q. and A. 80 was intentionally omitted from the first edition, whether its omission was later regarded as an oversight, or whether it was composed in response to Trent. Nor is it clear who exactly was responsible for the wording of this question. The fact that it was Olevianus who urged the elector to add this material and that the language of Q. and A. 80 is reminiscent of that of Calvin (see, e.g., “The Geneva Confession of 1536,” paragraph 16) may indicate that Olevianus, Calvin’s protégé in Heidelberg, was himself the composer.

C. Recent synodical decisions regarding question and answer 80

Recent CRC synods have on two previous occasions faced the possibility of eliminating or revising Q. and A. 80. On both occasions, synod decided not to proceed in that direction.

Synod 1975 received both an overture and a communication regarding Q. and A. 80. In the overture, a classis asked that Synod 1975 take appropriate steps to delete the part of Q. and A. 80 that describes and rejects Roman Catholic teaching, on the grounds that this section describes and negates the faith of others rather than offering “a confessional expression of the Reformed faith,” and that it “unnecessarily gives offense to inquirers of Roman Catholic background before they have had opportunity to gain appreciation for the Reformed faith” (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 646). In response, Synod 1975 referred the overture to the churches and asked the New Confession Committee to receive responses from the churches and to serve a subsequent synod with advice on Q. and A. 80 (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 106). In the communication, a minister suggested that the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, which was then in progress, should follow the first German edition, thereby omitting Q. and A. 80. Synod did not accede to this request on the grounds that the Synods of 1972 and 1974 did not require that the translators use the first German edition and that other Reformed churches use versions of the Heidelberg Catechism that include Q. and A. 80 (*Acts of Synod 1975*, p. 92).

Based on the report of the New Confession Committee, Synod 1977 made no changes in Q. and A. 80, on the following grounds: the responses from the

churches were inconclusive, weighty reasons are needed to alter a historical creed, the Roman Catholic church has not repudiated the statements of the Council of Trent that Q. and A. 80 rejects, the sharp language of Q. and A. 80 is rooted in “indignation at the withholding of assurance of salvation from believers,” and the main emphasis of Q. and A. 80 is assurance of salvation rooted in complete forgiveness of our sins through Christ’s only sacrifice (*Acts of Synod 1977*, pp. 88-89, 657-58).

D. Outline of the report

I. Introduction

- A. Background, mandate, and structure of the report*
- B. Historical note*
- C. Recent synodical decisions regarding question and answer 80*
- D. Outline of the report*
- E. List of documents cited*

II. Differences over sacrifice

- A. The teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism*
 - 1. The Lord’s Supper: Communication of redemption accomplished on the cross
 - 2. The Mass: Continual sacrificial mediation of forgiveness
 - 3. Critique of the Roman Catholic Mass: Affront to the salvation accomplished by Christ
- B. Roman Catholic teaching*
 - 1. One Sacrifice—different forms
 - 2. The Eucharist: Sacramental representation and perpetuation of the one, unique sacrifice
 - 3. The eucharistic sacrifice completes the purification of those who die in Christ
 - 4. The Eucharist: More than sacrifice
- C. Key differences between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching*
 - 1. The nature and the direction of the sacrament
 - 2. The role of the church in the mediation of salvation
 - a. Gift received or sacrifice offered
 - b. Centrality of word or sacrament
 - 3. The Mass’s efficacy for the dead

III. Differences over the presence of Christ in the sacrament

- A. The teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism*
- B. Roman Catholic teaching*
 - 1. The bodily presence of Christ in the elements
 - a. Historical statements
 - b. Contemporary statements
 - 2. Veneration of the consecrated bread and wine
- C. A key difference between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching*

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

- A. Conclusions*

B. Recommendations

E. List of documents cited

- Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982.
- Calvin, John. *Calvin: Theological Treatises*. Translated by J. K. S. Reid. Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 2000.
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II. Differences over sacrifice

A. The teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism

The Heidelberg Catechism says little about the sacrificial character of Christ's death in the questions and answers on the Lord's Supper (Q. and A. 75-80). It does, however, address Christ's sacrificial death in its earlier treatment of the Apostles' Creed. There it says that "by his suffering as the *only atoning sacrifice*," Christ has "set us free, body and soul, from eternal condemnation," and has gained for us "God's grace, righteousness, and eternal life" (Q. and A. 37, emphasis added). Then, in the introductory questions on the sacraments, the Catechism emphasizes that we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life "by grace alone because of Christ's *one sacrifice finished on the cross*," and that through the sacraments the Holy Spirit teaches and assures us that "our entire salvation rests on Christ's *one sacrifice* for us on the cross" (Q. and A. 66-67, emphasis added).

Then, in Q. and A. 80, the Heidelberg Catechism presents the Lord's Supper as a testimony to the sufficiency and finality of Christ's sacrifice on the cross (A¹), contrasts this confession to the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass as sacrifice (A²), and concludes that the Roman Catholic teaching is nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Christ (A³).

1. The Lord's Supper: Communication of redemption accomplished on the cross (A¹)

The Catechism highlights the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice in two ways. First, it is at pains to underscore the nature of Christ's sacrifice as a once-for-all event that was completed in the past. The Catechism's four-fold reinforcement of this finality is marked by the italicized phrases: "the (a) *one sacrifice* of Jesus Christ (repeated in the conclusion, A³) which (b) *he himself* (c) *finished on the cross* (d) *once for all* (see also HC, Q. and A. 66 and 67).

Secondly, having underscored Christ's sacrifice as a completed past event (redemption accomplished), the Heidelberg Catechism seeks to safeguard this once-for-all character by emphasizing a particular way in which the Lord's Supper mediates this finality (redemption applied). The

sacrament is a visible sign and pledge that “*declares to us that our sins have been [present perfect: completed action with continuing effect] completely forgiven*” by virtue of the once-for-all event. To this declaration regarding Christ’s work in the past, the Catechism joins a declaration regarding our bond to the ascended Christ: the Lord’s Supper “*also declares to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ, who with his very body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father where he wants us to worship him.*”

2. The Mass: Continual sacrificial mediation of forgiveness (A²)

In contrast to its understanding of the Lord’s Supper, the Catechism emphasizes that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that sins are forgiven only by the continual offering of the Mass by priests (“*unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests*”).

The Heidelberg Catechism’s reference to the relation of the Mass to the “dead” is best understood, not as introducing a new issue, namely, the state of the dead, but as yet another illustration of how the Mass assumes the inconclusiveness or insufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross: *even at death* the once-for-all sacrifice does not secure final salvation; to secure the complete forgiveness of those who have died requires the daily sacrifice of the Mass.

3. Critique of the Roman Catholic Mass: Affront to the salvation accomplished by Christ (A³)

On the basis of its analysis of the sacrificial character of the Mass, the Heidelberg Catechism draws what appears to be an obvious conclusion: “the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ.”

B. *Roman Catholic teaching*

Against the background of the Heidelberg Catechism’s statements, one of the two main tasks that flow out of the committee’s mandate is to determine what the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is regarding the sacrificial character of the Mass. This section of the report attempts to do just that.

Appealing to documents contemporary with, and subsequent to, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Roman Catholic representatives insisted that Q. and A. 80 misconstrues the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass. The understanding of the Mass as sacrifice, they explained, in no way detracts from the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This understanding may be summed up in the four points below.

1. One sacrifice—different forms

The Council of Trent clearly affirms the unrepeatability of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, a sacrifice which is sacramentally made present in the Mass:

He then, our Lord and God, was once and for all to offer Himself to God the Father by His death on the altar of the cross, to accomplish for them an everlasting redemption (Trent, Session 22, ch. 1; DS 1740. In the same section, Trent speaks of “the bloody sacrifice which He was once for all to accomplish on the cross”).

In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner (cf. Heb. 9.14, 27) on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner. . . . [T]he victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who

then offered Himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different. The fruits of this oblation (the bloody one, that is) are received in abundance through this unbloody oblation.”

(Trent, Session 22, ch. 2; DS 1743)

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) reaffirms Trent’s teaching regarding the unity of Christ’s sacrifice and the eucharistic sacrifice:

Through the ministry of priests the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is completed in union with the sacrifice of Christ the only mediator, which in the Eucharist is offered through the priests’ hands in the name of the whole Church in an unbloody and sacramental manner until the Lord himself come (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). The ministry of priests is directed to this end and finds its consummation in it.

(*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 2)

Both in Trent and in the Second Vatican Council, the difference between the sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass is that the one sacrifice is offered in different manners. As a sacramental representation of the *one* unique sacrifice, the Mass is said to be a “true and proper sacrifice” and “truly propitiatory” (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2, and canon 1; DS 1743, 1751; cf. canon 3, DS 1753). In our conversations, the Roman Catholic representatives interpreted “truly propitiatory” to mean that in the Mass the fruits of Christ’s propitiation become ours (a transfer that happens only in the context of faith).

On the basis of the Heidelberg Catechism, the committee challenged the Roman Catholic representatives as follows: As a *re-enactment* of the sacrifice of Christ which mediates forgiveness, the Mass detracts from the finality and sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice. To this the Roman Catholic representatives responded: Since the sacrifice of the Mass is a re-enactment and representation of *the one final, sufficient, and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ on the cross*, the Mass by its very nature as sacrament of that once-for-all event cannot detract from the one sacrifice of Christ.

2. The Eucharist: Sacramental representation and perpetuation of the one, unique sacrifice

The Roman Catholic representatives emphasized that, in Roman Catholic doctrine, the sacrifice of the Mass does not stand in competition with Christ’s sacrifice but sacramentally represents it. The duplication of the term *sacrifice* in describing both Christ’s gift on the cross and the gift of the Mass presents no problem from the Roman Catholic perspective because of a theology of sacramental representation. The *one* sacrifice, the *same* victim, is indeed offered but in an entirely different *way*, namely, *sacramentally*. By virtue of this sacramental representation, the Eucharist, far from being “basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice,” renders present the unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of Jesus Christ. At the Last Supper, Christ left the church with “a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands)” that “represents,” that is, makes present (see the explanation of “real presence” below), *in an unbloody manner* the bloody sacrifice that was “*once for all*” accomplished on the cross. In this way the “salutary power” of the cross “is applied for the forgiveness of sins” (Trent, Session 22, ch. 1; DS 1740). In the “unbloody oblation” of the Eucharist, the “fruits” of the bloody oblation are “received” (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2; DS 1743).

Similarly, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (promulgated in 1992) affirms, “The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, the *making present* and the *sacramental* offering of his *unique* sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body” (1362, emphasis added; in 1382 the term used is “perpetuated”).

In addition to representing Christ’s sacrifice, the eucharistic sacrifice perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross:

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 47)

On this view, the eucharistic sacrifice is not another sacrifice but is the perpetuation and memorial of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

According to the Roman Catholic representatives, therefore, the Heidelberg Catechism’s conclusion that the sacrifice of the Mass detracts from the sufficiency or finality of Christ’s sacrifice misconstrues the Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass as standing in competition with the cross—a construal that Trent explicitly repudiates: “By no means, then, does the latter [the unbloody oblation] detract from former [the bloody oblation]” (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2; DS 1743). Trent anathematizes anyone who says that the sacrifice of the Mass “detracts from” Christ’s sacrifice on the cross (Trent, Session 22, canon 4; DS 754).

3. The Eucharistic sacrifice completes the purification of those who die in Christ

According to Roman Catholic teaching, the offering of the Mass also for those who have died in the Lord but who “are not yet wholly purified” (Trent, Session 22, ch. 2, and canon 3) does not impugn the finality or sufficiency of the forgiveness accomplished by Christ’s sacrifice. The eternal state of those who die in the Lord is not in question. They are simply being purified for the state of full glorification. One might say, therefore, that in Roman Catholic teaching the effect of the Mass on those who die in the Lord lies not in the area of justification but of (final) sanctification.

As to the state of these departed saints, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says,

All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but [are] still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (1030)

Thus, the Roman Catholic representatives held that ascribing posthumous purifying efficacy to the Mass in no way detracts from the finality of the redemption (as the certainty of forgiveness and of eternal life) accomplished on the cross. Just as the Protestant affirmation of sanctification as a continuing process in the lives of believers does not detract from the finality or sufficiency of the cross, the belief that this process extends beyond death does not detract from the once-for-all sacrifice.

4. The Eucharist: More than sacrifice

Except for the teaching on bodily presence, the Heidelberg Catechism focuses solely on the Mass as sacrifice. Although this may be understandable in view of the polemical context, the Roman Catholic representatives pointed out that to describe the Eucharist solely as sacrifice obscures its “inexhaustible richness.” The Council of Trent affirmed in the “Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist” (1551) that in instituting this sacrament Christ

poured out, as it were, in this sacrament the riches of His divine love for men, “causing His wonderful works to be remembered,” (cf. Ps. 111 [110]:4), and He wanted us when receiving it to celebrate His memory (cf. 1 Cor. 11:24) and to proclaim His death until He comes to judge the world (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). His will was that this sacrament be received as the soul’s spiritual food (cf. Mt. 26:26) which would nourish and strengthen (cf. n. 1530) those who live by the life of Him who said: “He who eats Me will live because of Me” (Jn. 6:57).

(Council of Trent, Session 13, chapter 2, DS 1638)

Reflecting this, recent Roman Catholic teaching says that the Eucharist includes elements such as meal, spiritual nourishment, offering of thanksgiving, memorial, sign of unity, bond of love, source of grace, and pledge of future glory (Vatican II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 47; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1328-32, 1358-65). Although we acknowledge the many dimensions of the Eucharist, in the following section, we will follow the Heidelberg Catechism in focusing on the main point in dispute, namely the understanding of the Eucharist as sacrifice.

C. Key differences between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching

Taking seriously the Roman Catholic self-understanding expressed in official teaching regarding the Mass as sacrifice (presented above) and leaving aside for the moment the Heidelberg Catechism’s conclusion (“basically nothing but a denial”), it is instructive to analyze and assess some key differences between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching.

1. The nature and the direction of the sacrament

According to Roman Catholic teaching, the Eucharist is the sacrifice of the church in which the church sacramentally re-presents, and joins in, *Christ’s* sacrifice:

The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value.

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1368)

In Roman Catholic teaching, the central moment of the Eucharist is Christ’s sacrifice to which we are joined. This understanding of the Mass means that, though the entire sacrament and the effects it communicates are gifts of God, the Mass includes as a constitutive element the church’s priestly sacrifice to God (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 10).

The Heidelberg Catechism consistently and exclusively describes the Lord’s Supper as God’s *gift to us*, which we *receive*. This does not mean, of course, that the Godward direction is absent. In Reformed worship, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is surrounded (in anticipation and in

response to God's gift) by our doxology and thanksgiving (*eucharistia*). Indeed, the entire event is described as a "*celebration* of the Lord's Supper." This is clearly *our* celebration. Thus, though in both Roman Catholic and Reformed understandings this liturgical event as a totality is bi-directional, God-ward and human-ward, a significant difference appears. In the Mass, the God-ward direction is part and parcel of the sacrament itself. For this reason it may appropriately be called a *sacrifice, our* sacrifice. The Lord's Supper, by contrast, is never spoken of in this way; only our response to this sacramental gift may be called a sacrifice, in the sense of a thank-offering. In his "Catechism of the Church of Geneva" (1545), Calvin sums up his view of this difference:

Minister: Then the Supper is not instituted with the object that the body of his Son be offered to God?

Child: Not at all. For he himself only, since he is the eternal Priest, has this prerogative (Heb. 5:5). And this his words declare, when he says: Take and eat. For there he commands, *not that we offer his body, but only that we eat it* (Matt. 26:26).

("Catechism of the Church of Geneva," in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, p. 137, emphasis added)

2. The role of the church in the mediation of salvation

Implicit in the difference between the Eucharist as sacrifice and gift is a difference regarding the understanding of the role of the church in the mediation of salvation. It is important, however, to note that the point at issue is not *whether* the church has such a role. Because both traditions have a high view of the church and the sacraments, both ascribe a central role to the church in communicating salvation. Accordingly, the Belgic Confession maintains that outside the church there is no salvation (art. 28). More specifically, this mediating role of the church comes to expression in the common description of the sacraments as "means of grace." The Belgic Confession states that Christ "works in us all that He represents to us by these holy signs." Hence it is not erroneous to say that "what is eaten is Christ's own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood"—though "not by the mouth but by the Spirit, through faith" (art. 35).

a. Gift received or sacrifice offered

There is no dispute therefore regarding "mediation" as such. The difference concerns the manner of mediation. This can be illustrated by the way in which Christ's command regarding the celebration of his supper is construed. Calvin's argument that Christ's command was not that we "offer his body, but only that we eat it" seems incontrovertible. Of course, the Roman Catholic Church does not pull its teaching regarding sacrifice out of thin air. On the contrary, for Trent, Christ's "institution of the most holy sacrifice of the Mass" (heading of ch. 1, of the 22nd session) is foundational, but it links Christ's command to a different part of the narrative of the Last Supper. After simply recounting that Christ gave the bread and wine to the disciples, Trent continues, He "ordered them [his disciples] and their successors in the priesthood to offer, saying: 'Do this as a memorial of Me', etc. (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24)" (session 22, ch. 1; DS 1740). Trent understands the "this," which the

disciples are commanded to “do,” to refer not to receiving that which Christ gives but to doing what Christ does, namely, offering a sacrifice.

That Trent deliberately and explicitly links Christ’s command in a different way to the upper room narrative is evident in the accompanying negations. In canon 2, the Council declares: “If anyone says that by the words, ‘Do this as a memorial of Me’ (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24) Christ did not establish the apostles as priests or that He did not order that they and other priests should offer His body and blood, *anathema sit*” (DS 1752). Moreover, the previous canon explicitly repudiates a minimalist understanding of “offering,” as if it refers simply to the distribution (“offering” in this sense) of the elements to the communicants: “If anyone says that in the Mass a true and proper sacrifice is not *offered to God* or that the offering consists merely in the fact that Christ is *given to us*, *anathema sit*” (DS 1751, emphasis added). Understanding the words of institution in terms of receiving or offering Christ’s body and blood makes a decisive difference in the way in which the Lord’s Supper is said to be a “means of grace” (cf. BC, art. 33).

The different interpretations of Christ’s words of institution entail a decisive difference in identifying the primary agents of the sacramental action. If Christ commanded us to present a sacrifice, the primary celebrant of the eucharistic offering can be none other than the ordained priests. In Roman Catholic teaching, the priest, in sacramental identification with Christ, effects this sacrifice: “The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 10; cf. *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 2 and 13). In fact, while encouraging the participation of the entire community of the faithful, Vatican II allows for a priest to celebrate the Mass with no one else present (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 26-27; *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 13). Normally, however, the whole congregation celebrates the Eucharist through and with the priest. The ordained priests “unite the votive offerings of the faithful to the sacrifice of their Head” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 28). In contrast, Reformed Christians insist that Christ commanded us, not to offer a sacrifice, but only to receive the benefits of Christ’s sacrifice by eating and drinking the bread and wine. Thus, the Reformed tradition thinks of the celebrants that Jesus has in view as none other than the entire company of believers.

b. Centrality of Word or Sacrament

The Reformed confessions consistently conceive of sacraments as signs and seals of God’s promise. In explaining the nature of the Lord’s Supper, therefore, the Heidelberg Catechism underscores its character as testimony: “The Lord’s Supper *declares* to us that our sins have been completely forgiven. . . . It also *declares* to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ” (Q. and A. 80, emphasis added). A minimal understanding of this declarative function would reduce the “sacrament” to an instrument of divine pedagogy, an audio-visual aid. To understand the sacraments as merely pedagogical rituals, however, is to overlook the richness of

Reformed teaching, which describes the sacramental action as “pledge,” “sign,” and “seal.”

Thus, the Heidelberg Catechism states that Christ assures us by the “visible sign and pledge” of the Lord’s Supper

that we, through the Holy Spirit’s work, share in his true body and blood *as surely as* our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance, and that all of his suffering and obedience are as definitely ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.

(Q. and A. 79, emphasis added)

Again, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches, “as surely as I see with my eyes” the bread broken for me and the cup given to me, “so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.” Not content with describing the sacrament as a visual demonstration, the Heidelberg Catechism goes on to say,

as surely as I receive . . . and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ’s body and blood, *so surely* he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood.

(Q. and A. 75, emphasis added)

Similarly, the Belgic Confession insists that God so fully backs up this sacramental declaration that he himself, through his Spirit, in his Son, comes along with the signs, so to speak: “we do not go wrong when we say that what is eaten is Christ’s own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood” (art. 35).

The efficacy attributed to the Lord’s Supper is therefore by no means less than that attributed to the Mass, but the Lord’s Supper has its efficacy as sealed promise, as visibly signified word, as tangible declaration. The sacrament is an extension of and is subservient to proclamation. According to the Heidelberg Catechism, “The Holy Spirit produces [faith] in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it through our use of the holy sacraments” (Q. and A. 65; see also Belgic Confession, art. 33).

In the Reformed understanding of the means of grace, the overarching category is proclamation. Accordingly, the Lord’s Supper is a specific form of a *declaratory event*.

For the Roman Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council was instrumental in fostering a renewed emphasis on the word and proclamation. The Council insists that the sermon is an essential part of the liturgy and mandates that it is to focus on the proclamation of “God’s wonderful works in the history of salvation, that is, the mystery of Christ, which is ever made present and active within us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 35). Indeed, the Council states that “since nobody can be saved who has not first believed, it is the first task of priests as co-workers of the bishops to preach the Gospel of God to all men.” (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 4). Frequently the Scripture is coordinated with the sacrament as worthy of equal honor: “The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the body of the Lord, in so far as she never ceases, particularly in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ” (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, 21).

The word and the specifically sacramental action, however, can both be subsumed under the Mass: “The two parts which in a sense go to make up the Mass, viz. the liturgy of the word and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 56).

When the Council describes the specific functions of the priests, however, it becomes clear that the most unique and characteristic expression of the priestly office is the celebration of the Eucharist. The specific power conferred in the sacrament of ordination is that of effecting (by the power of the Spirit and the presence of Christ) the eucharistic sacrifice (see II. B above); in fact, “the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community [i.e., the people of God] is brought into operation through the sacraments and the exercise of virtues” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 11). Accordingly, the Council can describe “the nature of priesthood” initially without reference to proclamation: “These men were to hold in the community of the faithful the sacred power of Order, that of offering sacrifice and forgiving sins.” Only later in this section does the apostolic mission of spreading the Gospel of Christ come into play (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 2). The priests are said to “fulfill their principal function” in the Eucharistic sacrifice,” for it is there that “the work of our redemption is continually carried out” (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 13).

In the Roman Catholic understanding of the means of grace, the overarching category is sacrament. The central sacrament is clearly the Eucharist from which “especially . . . grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 10). Although in the Reformed understanding, as we have noted, the church may be said to play a significant role in the mediation of grace, it conveys grace—even in the administration of the sacraments—principally as herald.

In summary, in Reformed teaching the message is the privileged medium of grace, while in Roman Catholic teaching the Eucharist is the privileged medium of grace. This contrast does not mean that what is privileged in one tradition excludes what is privileged in the other. Rather, the center of gravity is located at a different point. The pull exerted by these different centers results in significantly different understandings of church, sacrament, and the mediation of salvation.

3. The Mass’s efficacy for the dead

Although there are significant differences between Rome and the Reformers regarding the state of departed believers and their relationship to the church on earth, this subject need not be treated as an independent topic in our current discussions with the Roman Catholic Church. The reference to “the dead” in Q. and A. 80 is significant only insofar as it reflects the issue of the efficacy attributed to the Mass and the degree to which the Heidelberg Catechism says such putative efficacy detracts from the finality and decisiveness attributed to the cross. In that regard, a difference remains in that the Reformers affirm that at the time of death, sanctification, too, is complete, for by virtue of his completed sacrifice, Christ is our sanctification.

III. Differences over the presence of Christ in the sacrament

Against the background of the Heidelberg Catechism's statements, the second main task that flows out of the committee's mandate is to determine what the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is regarding the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This section of the report carries out this task.

A. *The teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism*

In its predominantly irenic spirit, the Heidelberg Catechism presents its teaching on the Lord's Supper in questions and answers 75-79. It describes the feast as nourishment and refreshment of the soul given to the church as a sacramental sign and seal of God's gracious promises, a celebration instituted and designed to assure the believer of salvation in Jesus Christ. It asserts with great clarity that "even though it [the bread] is called the body of Christ in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments," it "is not changed into the actual body of Christ" (Q. and A. 78). Instead, the consistent formula appears to be that of "as surely as":

as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.

(Q. and A. 75)

as surely as I receive from the hand of the one who serves, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and pouredout blood.

(Q. and A. 75)

we, through the Holy Spirit's work, share in his true body and blood as surely as our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance.

(Q. and A. 79)

At the root of the Catechism's teaching lies the conviction that Christ "is in heaven and we are on earth" (Q. and A. 76), a teaching often referred to by theologians as the "extra-Calvinisticum," whereby the ubiquity of Christ's humanity is denied. The ascended Lord is host of the meal where believers are nourished "through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us . . ." (Q. and A. 76).

Then, in an uncharacteristically polemical manner, the Heidelberg Catechism proceeds—in Q. and A. 80—to single out and contrast certain aspects of its teaching with their counterparts in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the Mass. It is the Holy Spirit who "grafts us into Christ." Our Savior and Lord "with his very body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father," and this is "where he wants us to worship him" (section B¹). The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, teaches "that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine where Christ is therefore to be worshiped" (section B²). Thus, the Mass is said to be "a condemnable idolatry" (section B³).

B. *Roman Catholic teaching*

The Roman Catholic theologians with whom the committee met affirmed that the Heidelberg Catechism is substantially correct in its presentation of the Roman Catholic teaching regarding Christ's bodily presence in the consecrated bread and wine. They expressed a caution that the word *bodily* should not be

misunderstood. When Roman Catholics seek to explain the mystery of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, we were told, they generally proceed by way of the *via negativa*. Among the steps taken along that way is the denial of a localized or fleshly presence. Externally, the bread and wine retain their appearance even after consecration. Yet, at the same time, the whole Christ is sacramentally present in them—the whole Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity. Thus, he is indeed “bodily present in the form of bread and wine.”

The way in which the Roman Catholic Church has explained the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament is through the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Roman Catholic theologians with whom the committee met emphasized that what is important is affirming the real presence of Christ and the change of the elements of bread and wine. The doctrine of transubstantiation has been used in order to give a theological articulation of Christ’s bodily presence in the bread and wine. Although other explanations of this presence would be possible, none has yet been approved by the Roman Catholic Church. The next section offers a brief summary of important developments and statements in Roman Catholic teaching regarding the change in the elements of bread and wine.

1. The bodily presence of Christ in the elements

a. Historical statements

The question of the bodily presence of Christ in the elements became a significant issue during the Middle Ages. Berengar of Tours (c. 1010-1088) provoked much opposition when he maintained the real presence of Christ in the sacramental meal but denied “that any material change in the elements is needed to explain it” (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3d ed., s.v. “Berengar of Tours”). In response, Berengar’s opponents introduced a distinction between “material” and “substantial” change. The Council of Rome (1079) required Berengar to swear that “the bread and wine which are placed upon the altar are by the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of our Redeemer *substantially* changed into the true and real and life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord” (DS 700; emphasis added). In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council said, “His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body by the divine power and the wine into the blood” (DS 802). The early reformer John Wycliffe (c. 1330-84) and his followers, the Lollards, rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, arguing that the consecration of bread and wine in the Mass is not a sacrifice and that since the elements remain bread and wine, adoration of the Eucharist is idolatry. These views were among the “heresies” for which they were condemned and persecuted.

That Christ is bodily present by virtue of a change in the substance of bread and wine is stated quite clearly in the teaching of the Council of Florence (1439):

The form of this sacrament is the words of the Saviour with which He effected this sacrament; for the priest effects the sacrament by speaking in the person of Christ. It is by the power of these words that the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the substance of wine into His blood; in such a way, however, that the whole Christ is contained

under the species of bread and the whole Christ under the species of wine. Further, the whole Christ is present under any part of the consecrated host or the consecrated wine when separated from the res.

(DS 1321)

During the sixteenth century, those who tried to reform the church included the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ among the teachings that needed reform. In response, the Council of Trent stated:

To begin with, the holy Council teaches and openly and straightforwardly professes that in the blessed sacrament of the holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the appearances of those perceptible realities. For, there is no contradiction in the fact that our Saviour always sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven according to His natural way of existing and that, nevertheless, in His substance He is sacramentally present to us in many other places. We can hardly find words to express this way of existing; but our reason, enlightened through faith, can nevertheless recognise it as possible for God, and we must always believe it unhesitatingly.

(Trent, Session 13, ch. 1, DS 1636)

Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly His body that He was offering under the species of bread . . . , it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now again declares that, by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of His blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly named transubstantiation.

(Trent, Session 13, ch. 4; DS 1642)

If anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really and substantially contained, but says that He is in it only as in a sign or figure or by His power, *anathema sit*.

(Trent, Session 13, canon 1, DS 1651)

b. Contemporary statements

The Second Vatican Council initiated a number of significant renewals and reforms in the Roman Catholic Church. Given its pastoral focus, this Council made no significant revisions in the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ.

The recent *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says:

At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood. . . . The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ.

(1333)

It then proceeds to cite DS 1651 and DS 1642 of the Council of Trent, indicating in the strongest possible terms that "it is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1375). Indeed,

the Eucharistic presence of Christ begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist. Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts, in such a way that the breaking of the bread does not divide Christ.

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1377)

Similarly, in 1965, Pope Paul VI rejected seeing the Eucharist as “nothing else than an efficacious sign ‘of Christ’s spiritual presence and of his intimate union with his faithful members in the mystical Body’” (*Mysterium Fidei*, 39, quoting Pope Pius XII). Appealing to Christ’s words at the Last Supper, he said, “the very words used by Christ when he instituted the most holy Eucharist compel us to acknowledge that ‘the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins and which the Father in his loving kindness raised again’” (*Mysterium Fidei*, 44, quoting Ignatius of Antioch). Thus Christ is made present in the sacrament by

the change of the whole substance of the bread into his body and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood. . . . As a result of transubstantiation, the species of bread and wine . . . no longer remain ordinary bread and wine, but become the sign of something sacred, the sign of a spiritual food. . . . For there no longer lies under those species what was there before, but something quite different; and that, not only because of the faith of the Church, but in objective reality, since after the change of the substance or nature of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, nothing remains of the bread and wine but the appearances, under which Christ, whole and entire, in his physical “reality” is bodily present, although not in the same way as bodies are present in a given place.

(*Mysterium Fidei*, 46)

One way to get a sense of current Roman Catholic teaching is to observe that church’s response to important ecumenical developments. In its Faith and Order Paper drafted at Lima in 1982, the World Council of Churches sought to articulate a “significant theological convergence,” noting that the commission responsible for the text “includes among its full members theologians of the Roman Catholic and other churches which do not belong to the World Council of Churches itself” (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, p. ix). On the meaning of the Eucharist, it made the following assertions:

Many churches believe that by the words of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine of the Eucharist become, in a real though mysterious manner, the body and blood of the risen Christ, i.e., of the living Christ present in all his fullness. Under the signs of bread and wine, the deepest reality is the total being of Christ who comes to us in order to feed us and transform our entire being. Some other churches, while affirming a real presence of Christ at the Eucharist, do not link that presence so definitely with the signs of bread and wine. The decision remains for the churches whether this difference can be accommodated within the convergence formulated in the text itself.

(*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Commentary on Eucharist, par. 13)

The response of the Roman Catholic Church to these assertions is significant.

A distinction is made in Commentary 13 between churches that “believe” in the *change* of the elements and those which do not link Christ’s presence

“so definitely to the signs of bread and wine.” But the final sentence seems to relativize the word “believe.” It asks whether the “difference can be accommodated with the convergence formulated in the text itself.” On the one hand, we welcome the convergence that is taking place. On the other hand, we must note that for Catholic doctrine, the *conversion* of the elements is a matter of faith and is only open to possible new theological explanations as to the “how” of the intrinsic change. The content of the word “transubstantiation” ought to be expressed without ambiguity. For Catholics this is a central mystery of faith, and they cannot accept expressions that are ambiguous. Thus it would seem that the differences as explained here cannot be accommodated within the convergence formulated in the text itself.

(*Churches Respond to BEM*, p. 22)

In response to the statement in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* that the bread and wine “become the sacramental signs of Christ’s body and blood,” the official Roman Catholic response adds a comment that “the thought that they become sacramental signs is linked to the intrinsic change which takes place, whereby unity of being is realized between the signifying reality and the reality signified” (*Churches Respond to BEM*, p. 22).

It appears, then, that the official position of the Roman Catholic Church on the matter of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist has remained consistent since the Council of Trent. The Heidelberg Catechism’s representation of that position as holding that “Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine” may omit nuances of Roman Catholic teaching but is substantially correct.

2. Worship and the consecrated bread and wine

What, then, of the Heidelberg’s insistence that Christ “wants us to worship him” as seated at the right hand of God and not “in the form of bread and wine” in the elements of the Eucharist? On these points, the Council of Trent is abundantly clear:

There remains, therefore, no room for doubting that all the faithful of Christ, in accordance with the perpetual custom of the Catholic Church, must venerate this most holy sacrament with the worship of *latria* which is due to the true God. Nor is it to be less adored because it was instituted by Christ the Lord to be received. For in it we believe that the same God is present whom the eternal Father brought into the world, saying: “Let all God’s angels worship Him” (Heb. 1:6; cf. Ps. 97(96):7), whom the Magi fell down to worship (cf. Mt. 2:11) and whom, finally, the apostles adored in Galilee as Scripture testifies (cf. Mt. 28:17).

(Trent, Session 13, ch. 5; DS 1643)

And again,

If anyone says that Christ, the only-begotten son of God, is not to be adored in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist with the worship of *latria*, including external worship, and that the sacrament therefore is not to be honoured with special festive celebrations nor solemnly carried in processions according to the praise-worthy universal rite and custom of the holy Church; or that it is not to be publicly exposed for the people’s adoration, and that those who adore it are idolaters, *anathema sit*.

(Trent, Session 13, canon 6, DS 1656)

In these passages, venerating the holy sacrament means worshiping the body and blood of Christ, who is sacramentally present under the appearances of the consecrated bread and wine.

In their discussions with us, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church acknowledged the polemical tone of these statements, indicating that such may have been more appropriate in the sixteenth century than in the decidedly more ecumenical context of today. They also noted that the primary purpose of reserving (storing) consecrated elements is not to venerate the elements but to make communion possible for the dying (*Eucharisticum Mysterium* (A.D. 1967), ch. III, I, A). On the main issue itself, however, they insisted along with Trent, first, that the holy sacrament is to be venerated with the worship of *latría* and, second, that this worship does not constitute idolatry inasmuch as, in the adoration of the consecrated bread and wine, Christ is being worshiped, not the elements.

C. *A key difference between the Heidelberg Catechism and Roman Catholic teaching*

With regard to veneration, it is important to remember that the Reformed creedal tradition did not embrace the Zwinglian interpretation of the sacrament. The Belgic Confession, for example, while recognizing that eating the “living bread” is a matter of appropriating and receiving Christ “spiritually by faith,” declares the “manner” of God’s working in the sacrament to be “beyond our understanding” and “incomprehensible to us, just as the operation of God’s Spirit is hidden and incomprehensible.” Or, again, while insisting that the “manner in which we eat” is “not by the mouth but by the Spirit, through faith,” it declares that “we do not go wrong when we say that what is eaten is Christ’s own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood” and, later, that we must therefore “receive the holy sacrament” with “humility and reverence” (BC, art. 35). It seems reasonable to assert that the difference between Roman Catholic and Reformed teaching is not whether the sacramental meal should be treated with reverence but the precise manner in which that reverence is expressed. Roman Catholic teaching insists on veneration (with the worship of *latría*) of the consecrated bread and wine because sacramentally they are the body and blood of Christ. Reformed teaching requires believers to receive the sacrament in humility and reverence, since the ascended Lord is spiritually present as the host and substance of the meal. Thus, the Belgic Confession also states—with little ambiguity—the concern that “Jesus Christ remains always seated at the right hand of God his Father in heaven” and that “he never refrains on that account to communicate himself to us through faith” (BC, art. 35).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. *Conclusions*

Based upon the above study, the committee proposes the following statements as summary conclusions of the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching concerning the sacrament of the Mass:

1. Although the Eucharist is spoken of as a sacrifice, it is much more than that. It is a meal, spiritual nourishment, offering of thanksgiving, memorial, sign of unity, bond of love, source of grace, and pledge of future glory.
2. The difference between the sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass is that the one sacrifice is offered in different manners.

3. The Eucharist sacramentally represents and perpetuates the one unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
4. In the consecration of the bread and wine, the substance of the bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the body and blood of Jesus Christ.
5. In the Eucharist, the real presence of Christ means that the risen and glorified Christ is present under the appearances of the consecrated bread and wine and should be worshiped in the adoration of those consecrated elements.
6. The consecrated bread and wine deserve the adoration due to the ascended Jesus Christ. In this adoration, Christ is being worshiped, not the elements.
7. Offering Mass for the dead does not detract from the finality of redemption accomplished on the cross. The effect of the Mass on those who die in the Lord lies not in the area of justification but of (final) sanctification.

If the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States and Canada endorse the above report as an accurate presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist, that will have significant implications on whether, and how, the Heidelberg Catechism ought to be modified. If Roman Catholic teaching is as it is presented in this report, the committee has serious concerns about the Heidelberg Catechism's conclusion that "the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ and a condemnable idolatry" (Q. and A. 80). If this report accurately presents Roman Catholic teaching, there are also serious questions about the Heidelberg Catechism's representation, in Q. and A. 80, of what "the Mass teaches." Thus, if this report accurately presents Roman Catholic teaching, significant changes in the Heidelberg Catechism may be warranted.

Given the seriousness of the issues involved, including the possibility of altering one of the church's confessions, the committee believes that Synod 2002 should take every appropriate step to assure the Christian Reformed Church that the report's presentation of Roman Catholic teaching is accurate. Thus, the committee is taking the unusual step of recommending that this report be sent by Synod 2002 to the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States and Canada for their endorsement of its accuracy in presenting the Roman Catholic position. If this endorsement is granted, or even if some other response is given, the Interchurch Relations Committee should be expected to advise a future synod about any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Based upon the above study, the committee has also identified the following topics as worthy of further dialogue both within the Reformed churches and bilaterally between the Roman Catholic and Reformed churches:

1. What is the proper understanding of the nature and direction of the sacrament? Is it to be understood primarily as a sacrifice we offer or as a gift we receive?
2. What is the relationship between Word and sacrament as means of grace?
3. What is the role of the church (and its ministers) in mediating God's grace?

4. Given that both Reformed and Roman Catholic believers affirm the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, what is the significance of the differences of understanding about the nature of that presence (i.e., spiritual vs. bodily presence)? How should we understand the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper?
5. For Christians who do not believe that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, does Roman Catholic veneration of those elements constitute improper worship?
6. What implications do the differences and agreements regarding the Lord's Supper have for the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Reformed churches?

B. *Recommendations*

The Interchurch Relations Committee recommends the following:

1. That Synod receive the report as fulfillment of the mandate given by Synod 1998 to the IRC "to make an attempt to dialogue with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church to clarify the official doctrine of that church concerning the mass" (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 427).
2. That Synod submit the report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops requesting their agreement that the report gives an accurate presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist.
3. That Synod ask the Interchurch Relations Committee, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
4. That Synod ask the Interchurch Relations Committee, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about the value of further dialogue between the Christian Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church.
5. That Synod send this report to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship and to the Reformed Ecumenical Council informing them of our study and inviting their response.

Appendix E

Question and Answer 80 Report (Part II)

I. Background

In 2002, the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) presented to synod a report entitled "Report of the Interchurch Relations Committee Clarifying the Official Doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church Concerning the Mass" (*Agenda for Synod 2002*, pp. 27494). Subsequently, this report was printed in booklet form with the title *Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist*.

Synod 2002 received the abovementioned report as fulfillment of the mandate it had given IRC in 1998 (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 427). Furthermore, synod adopted the following recommendations:

- 2) That synod submit the report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops requesting their agreement that the report gives an accurate presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- 5) That synod send this report (Appendix D, *Agenda for Synod 2002*, pp. 274-94) to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship and to the Reformed Ecumenical Council informing them of our study and inviting their response.
(*Acts of Synod 2002*, pp. 488, 489)

These actions were all fulfilled shortly after Synod 2002 adjourned. To date, the CRC has received responses from the Catholic bishops but has not received any response from churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. The Reformed Ecumenical Council will not meet again until July 2005; the report will be on its agenda.

Letters have been received from the following Roman Catholic respondents:

- A. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, signed by Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Edmonton, chair of the Commission for Christian Unity. Archbishop Collins also provided a written response to our committee's followup questions regarding the original letter.
- B. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, signed by its president, Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory, Bishop of Belleville.
- C. The Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, signed by its chair, Stephen E. Blaire, Bishop of Stockton.
- D. A letter to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops from Walter Cardinal Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, who in consultation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith prepared observations regarding the process and the text of the report.

Although all the responses affirmed the accuracy of our report, Cardinal Kasper stated the conclusion most succinctly: "the Catholic doctrine concerning the Eucharist is stated clearly and accurately in this report." Still, the comments received from the Roman Catholic respondents led the committee to make slight alterations to the original report. In our view, the revised report offers a clearer and more accurate presentation of the Roman Catholic view of the Eucharist than the original did.

In April 2003, the IRC reconvened its subcommittee (Dr. L. Bierma; Dr. H. De Moor; Dr. D. Engelhard, chair; Dr. R. Feenstra; and Dr. G. Vandervelde) and asked it to provide advice and recommendations re the request of Synod 2002, namely:

That synod ask the IRC, on the basis of the response received from the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada and the United States, to advise a future synod about any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

(*Acts of Synod 2002*, p. 489)

The subcommittee met several times in pursuit of its mandate. It began by evaluating the suggestions offered by the various Roman Catholic respondents, and made some slight changes in the text, particularly in sections II, C, 2, a; III, B, 2; and IV, A, 5 and 6. Then, it undertook the more substantive task of providing advice regarding “any further action that may be needed regarding Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism” (*Acts of Synod 2002*, p. 489). The committee invited Dr. John D. Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, to one of its meetings. He provided much helpful material, including Mass liturgies from various time periods and extensive quotations from works on the practice of the Mass in the sixteenth century. The remainder of this report constitutes the analysis, advice, and recommendations provided by the subcommittee and adopted by the Interchurch Relations Committee on February 14, 2004.

II. The Heidelberg Catechism on the Mass

A. Introduction

If the committee’s earlier report is accurate in its presentation of official Roman Catholic teaching about the Mass, then what should the Christian Reformed Church do in response? In comparing the Lord’s Supper with the Roman Catholic Mass, does the Heidelberg Catechism in Q. and A. 80 accurately describe and appropriately criticize and condemn the Mass?

The committee struggled to discern whether Q. and A. 80 was written in response to official Roman Catholic teaching, to the practice of Roman Catholics in sixteenth-century Europe, or to some combination of the two. One clue is that the Catechism refers twice to what the Mass teaches. At the conclusion of the section describing what the Mass teaches, the German edition of the Catechism includes a footnote referring both to the Canon of the Mass, which was the central part of the Mass liturgy in use at the time, and to a section of “Gratian’s Decree,” an influential but not officially recognized twelfth-century collection of patristic and medieval texts on canon law. The section of Gratian’s Decree to which the Catechism refers contains excerpts from texts on the transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. So when the Catechism claims to describe what “the Mass teaches,” its footnote includes one reference to a liturgical document that would illustrate what occurs during the Mass and one reference to a document that includes statements about the transformation of the elements into the body and blood of Christ. It therefore appears that the Catechism appeals to Roman Catholic teaching *about* the Mass as grounds for its statement that the Mass teaches that “Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine.” Additionally, the Catechism seems to appeal to a liturgical text that would illustrate what actually occurs *in* the Mass as the basis for its claim that the Mass teaches that “the living and the dead do not have their sins forgiven through the suffering of Christ unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests” and perhaps also in its claim that the Mass teaches that “where Christ is ... to be worshiped” is “in the form of bread and wine.” That is, the Catechism seems to base its description of what “the Mass teaches” in part on what the Roman Catholic Church taught about the Mass and in part on the message that was conveyed by what actually happened during Mass.

Another clue to what the Catechism means comes from the commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism by Zacharias Ursinus, one of the Catechism's authors, which echoes the Catechism in several references to what "the Mass teaches." In one such instance, Ursinus quotes prayers from two different canons or liturgies of the Mass, both of which ask God to receive the sacrifice being offered for the salvation of people's souls. He then asks, "What need was there that Christ should offer himself, if the oblation of a sacrificing priest might avail for the redemption of souls?" (*Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, translated by G. W. Williard, 2d American ed., Columbus, 1852, pp. 41819). He seems to suggest that what occurs in the liturgy would lead one to think that salvation comes through the sacrifice offered by the priest, not through the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. With respect to the sacrificial character of the Mass, Ursinus, like the Catechism, seems to be saying, "When the church performs the actions associated with the Mass in the way that it does, it communicates this message."

Interpreting at least part of Q. and A. 80 in this way receives some support from the broader perspective of the Heidelberg Catechism. The Catechism often focuses on the importance to the believer of various doctrines or practices. It begins with a question that addresses the believer's comfort: "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" (Q. 1). Later, after working through the Apostles' Creed, it asks, "What good does it do you, however, to believe all this?" (Q. 59). When beginning a section on the sacraments, it says, "In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us and through the holy sacraments he assures us . . ." (A. 67). Then, regarding baptism it asks, "How does baptism remind you and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross is for you personally?" (Q. 69). It begins its treatment of the Lord's Supper by asking, "How does the Lord's Supper remind you and assure you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all his gifts?" (Q. 75). Given the Heidelberg Catechism's frequent focus on the value or impact of certain teachings or practices for Christian faith, it should come as no surprise that it concerns itself with the impact or teaching of the Mass as practiced in the world inhabited by the Catechism's authors, that is, in northern Europe in the sixteenth century.

B. The Heidelberg Catechism as response to official teaching

Although at least part of the Heidelberg Catechism appears to be addressing the teaching that arises from the practice of the Mass, it seems worthwhile to assess what the Heidelberg Catechism says if one takes it to be describing and evaluating official Roman Catholic teaching about the Mass. On this interpretation of the Catechism, it would not be an accurate description of Roman Catholic teaching to say that "the living and the dead do not have their sins forgiven through the suffering of Christ unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests." The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the "Eucharist sacramentally represents and perpetuates the one unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ on the cross" (see sections II and IV, A, 3 of *Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist*). Even though the Roman Catholic Church teaches that "Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine," when the Catechism adds the statement, "where Christ is therefore to be worshiped," it sets up a misleading contrast between worshipping Christ in heaven and worshipping him in the consecrated bread and wine. The Roman Catholic Church holds that the ascended Christ is to be

worshiped *through* the adoration of his body and blood, which is what it believes the consecrated bread and wine have become (see section III of *Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist*). So, if taken as a description of official Roman Catholic teaching, the Catechism's statements about what the Mass teaches are only partly correct.

What about the evaluative judgments that the Catechism offers? If they are taken as directed against official Roman Catholic teaching, do they offer fair criticism? In this context, the Catechism's first judgment, that "the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ," seems unwarranted. Official Roman Catholic teaching affirms that Christ offered a final, sufficient, unrepeatable sacrifice on the cross and that the Mass reenacts or represents that sacrifice and suffering in an unbloody manner.

If taken as a criticism of official Roman Catholic teaching, the Catechism's evaluation that the Mass is "a condemnable idolatry" also seems unwarranted. Roman Catholic teaching holds that one is to worship the ascended Christ through the veneration or worship of the consecrated bread and wine, which have become the body and blood of Christ. This teaching arises from taking Jesus' words, "This is my body ... this is my blood" (Mark 14:22, 24 and parallels) literally and from taking Paul to be referring to sharing in Christ's actual blood and body (1 Cor. 10:16). The Roman Catholic Church has developed the doctrine of transubstantiation in order to describe how it can be that bread becomes the actual body of Christ and wine becomes his blood (even while retaining their appearances as bread and wine). Taking these words literally is an error, in our opinion. Just as Jesus' statement, "I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5), must not be taken literally, so, too, his statement, "This is my body . . . this is my blood," should not be taken literally. Nevertheless, it seems inappropriate to charge Roman Catholics with idolatry when they are worshiping the ascended Christ through the consecrated elements.

Since official Roman Catholic teaching regarding the Mass has remained quite stable from the sixteenth century to now, the Catechism—if taken to be describing and evaluating that official teaching—is either accurate both now and in the sixteenth century or inaccurate in both time periods. The above analysis leads to the conclusion that the Heidelberg Catechism must be regarded as wrong, both now and in the sixteenth century, *if* it is taken as describing and evaluating official Roman Catholic teaching. However, as has been suggested above, the committee believes that, with official Roman Catholic teaching lying in the background, the Heidelberg Catechism seems to focus at least in part on the practice of the Mass, that is, on what the event of the Mass communicates to people. Furthermore, the practice of the Mass, and thus what the Mass communicates to people, has undergone significant changes from the sixteenth century to today.

C. The Heidelberg Catechism as response to practice

Since it may be assumed that Q. and A. 80 is not concerned with what "the Mass teaches" in isolation from the way in which the sacrament functioned in that time, it may be helpful to note some significant features of the way in which the Mass was conducted in northern Europe in the sixteenth century and compare that with the practice of the Mass today.

In the sixteenth century, the Mass was conducted in Latin, a language that very few laypersons knew. In addition, the priest conducting the Mass spoke

sotto voce, with the result that people in attendance heard mumbling in a language they did not understand. If any proclamation of the gospel occurred during Mass, it was in Latin and therefore not comprehensible by the congregation.

Because the people understood little or nothing of what was said during Mass, the event became focused on ringing bells and visual displays. The “Order of Low Mass,” the typical liturgy of the Mass in use from the thirteenth century (or perhaps as far back as the ninth century) up to the Council of Trent (1545/63), included frequent ringing of a bell. As the event of transubstantiation neared, a bell would be rung thrice and then again once. As the priest consecrated the bread in the event of transubstantiation, a bell would be rung thrice, and then three more times when the priest consecrated the wine. As one historian notes, “Just before the sacring in every Mass a bell was rung to warn worshippers absorbed in their own prayers to look up, because the moment of consecration and elevation was near. . . . In great churches where many Masses were celebrated simultaneously, those at side altars were timed so that their sacrings were staggered, none preceding that at the main Mass at the high altar” (Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992, p. 97). The English Reformer Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) described the spectacle that the Mass became. He says that people would run “from their seats to the altar, and from altar to altar, . . . peeping, tooting and gazing at that thing which the priest held up in his hands” because they “worshipped that visible thing which they saw with their eyes and took it for very God” (*Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, edited by J. E. Cox, 1846, p. 442). The custom of elevating the host (that is, the bread and the wine that were thought to become the body and blood of Christ) apparently began in the late twelfth century in response to a controversy about when the consecration occurred (Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1982, p. 186). Both Cranmer and recent historians note that during the Reformation era people would sometimes call out to the presiding priest to “hold up” or “heave higher” the host if they could not readily see it (Edward Foley, *From Age to Age*, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991, p. 111).

In this context, the Heidelberg Catechism’s emphasis on visual elements takes on new meaning. For example, the Catechism says, “as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross” (Q. and A. 75, emphasis added). Again, “he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge, that we, through the Holy Spirit’s work, share in his true body and blood as surely as our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance” (Q. and A. 79, emphasis added). In contrast to the uninterpreted—and easily misinterpreted—visual displays offered at Mass, the Lord’s Supper was presented in a language the people could understand, accompanied by the preaching of the Word of God. In order that people might rightly understand the gospel and receive the sacrament as a means of God’s grace, the Lord’s Supper was presented to all of the senses, and thus included the hearing of the Word.

In addition to emphasizing the spectacle of the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the Medieval Order of Low Mass

with which the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism would have been familiar also included frequent requests to God to accept the sacrifice being brought (by the priest on behalf of the people). Although it is hard to know when one such request stops and another begins, at least twelve times during the liturgy, God is asked (typically by the priest) to accept the sacrifice that is being offered in remembrance of Christ's death and for the salvation of those present as well as for all faithful Christians, living and dead ("Order of Low Mass," in Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, Cleveland: World Publishing, 1961, pp. 55-91). This language remained part of the liturgy produced at the Council of Trent, a liturgy that was in standard use in the Roman Catholic Church into the 1970s.

With all the emphasis in the Medieval (and even preVatican II) Mass on God's accepting our sacrifice (a sacrifice offered by the priest) and on worshipping the consecrated bread and wine, all done in a language the people did not know, one can understand why the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism came to the conclusions they did about what the Mass itself is teaching and what is wrong with that teaching. The Catechism, at least in part, responds to and criticizes an inappropriate way of conducting and presenting the Lord's Supper or Eucharist.

D. The Heidelberg Catechism and contemporary Roman Catholic practice

Insofar as the Heidelberg Catechism was responding to inappropriate practices in the liturgy of the Mass, those who use the Catechism today as their confession of faith must ask whether the inappropriate practices persist even now. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) is enormously important in this regard. It brought about or endorsed important changes in the practice or conduct of the liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. The Mass is now conducted in the language of the people—not in Latin. In a typical service, people hear Scripture read and the gospel proclaimed in a language they can understand. The Roman Catholic Church has approved new Eucharistic prayers, some of which focus less on God's accepting our sacrifice and more on other important elements of the Eucharist.

Still, Roman Catholic practices regarding the Mass vary considerably today. In North America and in many other parts of the world, the reforms of Vatican II have had a dramatic effect; the reception of the reforms advocated by Vatican II varies considerably within the Roman Catholic Church. In some places, the Catechism's description and evaluation of what is taught or communicated to people by a certain way of conducting the Mass may yet apply.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

So what should Reformed Christians do with Q. and A. 80? What, in particular, should be done with the description and evaluation of Roman Catholic teaching in Q. and A. 80?

First, although Reformed Christians continue to have genuine and significant differences with Roman Catholics on the sacrificial character of the Eucharist (see sections II, C, 1-2 of *Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist*), the differences are not such that Reformed Christians are warranted in calling either Roman Catholic teaching or the proper expression of that teaching in practice "a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of

Jesus Christ.” The Roman Catholic Eucharist may in significant ways obscure the important reality that Jesus’ sacrifice and suffering occurred once for all and has been completed. Yet, when the Eucharist is celebrated as approved by the Roman Catholic Church, it does not deny or obliterate this reality.

Second, although Reformed Christians continue to reject the teachings that the consecrated bread and wine have become the body and blood of Christ and that Christ should be worshiped through venerating or worshiping the consecrated bread and wine, they are not warranted in saying that following these teachings is idolatry. By encouraging the worship of Christ through venerating or worshiping the consecrated bread and wine, the Roman Catholic Eucharist may in significant ways detract from proper worship of the ascended Lord, Jesus Christ. Yet, when celebrated as approved by the Roman Catholic Church, it does not constitute idolatry.

In sum, it would be inappropriate for the CRC to continue, by its confession of Q. and A. 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism, to suggest that it accurately describes or fairly condemns either official Roman Catholic teaching or the practices that are in accordance with it. Question and Answer 80 contains a salutary warning against teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist that are idolatrous and that obscure the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and it may still apply to Roman Catholic practice in certain parts of the world. Nonetheless, its descriptions and condemnations cannot be said to apply to official Roman Catholic Eucharistic teaching or to practices that are in accordance with it.

B. Recommendations

1. That synod receive the slightly revised report regarding Heidelberg Catechism Question and Answer 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist.

Ground: The changes, made in the light of comments from the various Roman Catholic respondents, render the report clearer and more accurate.

2. That synod declare the following:

- a. The Mass, when celebrated in accordance with official Roman Catholic teaching, neither denies the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ nor constitutes idolatry.

Grounds:

- 1) Official Roman Catholic teaching affirms that Christ offered a final, sufficient, unrepeatable sacrifice on the cross and that the Mass reenacts or represents that sacrifice and suffering in an unbloody manner (see section II, B above and section II of *Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist*).
- 2) The Roman Catholic Church holds that the ascended Christ is to be worshiped through the adoration of his body and blood, which is what it believes the consecrated bread and wine have become. In the adoration of the consecrated bread and wine, Christ is being worshiped—not the elements (see section II, B above and section III of *Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 and the Roman Catholic Eucharist*).

- 3) The understanding of the Mass underlying this declaration is grounded in a lengthy conversation with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church (see section I above).
- b. Q. & A. 80 still contains a pointed warning against any teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist that obscure the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and detract from proper worship of the ascended Lord.

Grounds:

- 1) Practices are not always in accord with official teaching. When and where that occurs, Q. and A. 80 serves as a pointed warning.
 - 2) In some places in the world today, practices associated with the Roman Catholic Eucharist obscure and distort important eucharistic teachings, as they did in the sixteenth century.
3. That synod propose to the churches that, rather than being deleted completely, Q. and A. 80 be retained but printed in a smaller font.
- Grounds:*
- a. Q. and A. 80 does not offer an acceptable description or evaluation of Roman Catholic eucharistic teaching or of practices in accordance with it.
 - b. In certain contexts, Q. and A. 80 has offered, and will continue to offer, a needed warning against teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist.
4. That synod propose to the churches the following format and footnotes to Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 80 as the way to deal with the confessional difficulties it presents:

***80 Q. How does the Lord's Supper
differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?**

***80 A.** The Lord's Supper declares to us
that our sins have been completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ
which he himself finished on the cross once for all.¹

It also declares to us
that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,²
who with his very body
is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father³
where he wants us to worship him.⁴

******But the Mass teaches
that the living and the dead
do not have their sins forgiven
through the suffering of Christ
unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.
It also teaches
that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine
where Christ is therefore to be worshiped.

Thus the Mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ
and a condemnable idolatry.

¹ John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25-26; 10:10-18.

² 1 Cor. 6:17; 10:16-17.

³ Acts 7:55-56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1.

⁴ Matt. 6:20-21; John 4:21-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-3.

*Question and Answer 80 was absent from the first edition (February 1563) of the Catechism but was present in a shorter form in the second edition (March 1563). The translation here given is of the expanded text of the third edition (April 1563/November 1563).

**The synod of 2004 concluded that the Mass, when celebrated in accordance with official Roman Catholic teaching, neither denies the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ nor constitutes idolatry. The same synod also concluded that Q. & A. 80 still contains a pointed warning against any teachings, attitudes, and practices related to the Eucharist that obscure the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and detract from proper worship of the ascended Lord. Therefore Q. & A. 80 was not removed from the text but retained in a smaller font.

5. That synod submit the revised report and the proposed footnote to the Reformed Ecumenical Council for review at its next assembly in July 2005 and also submit the report and recommendations to those churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC and to those in corresponding fellowship with the CRC.
6. That synod ask each church council and each classis to review the proposed footnote to Q. and A. 80 and to submit their responses to the general secretary of the CRCNA by December 1, 2005, so that they can be considered by the Interchurch Relations Committee along with responses from other denominations and the REC.
7. That synod instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to receive the responses and propose any changes to Synod 2006.
8. That synod instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to send both this new report and the slightly revised earlier report to both the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, thanking them for their participation in dialogue with us, and also to appropriate ecumenical bodies.

Appendix F

Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.

I. Preamble

We are challenged as Christians by the prayer of Jesus in John 17 that all who believe in Him might be one with God and with one another so that the world would believe in him as God and Savior.

We acknowledge that this is not what we experience now and recognize that we have different histories and convictions on some key issues.

We pray for a fresh awareness of the Holy Spirit's work among us that will foster:

- relationships in which differences can be better understood, our commonalities better affirmed, and our brokenness healed by God;
- more opportunities to engage in shared witness, vision, and action;
- a strong prophetic voice of the Christian community in the U.S.A.

We believe that we will be led into these new relationships as we commit ourselves to spiritual disciplines such as prayer and study of Scripture to listen for and obey the voice of Christ.

This leads us to establish Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. to create new levels of relationships and actions that offer a shared witness for Christ to the world.

II. Theological Affirmations

Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. welcomes churches, Christian communities, and national Christian organizations that:

- believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures;
- worship and serve the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and
- seek ways to work together in order to present a more credible Christian witness in and to the world.

III. Purpose and Activity

The purpose of Christian Churches Together is to enable churches and national Christian organizations to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world. Participants in Christian Churches Together accomplish this purpose by:

- rejoicing in our faith in the Triune God;
- discerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer and theological dialogue;
- providing fellowship and mutual support;
- affirming our commonalities and understanding our differences;
- fostering Christian evangelism faithful to the proclamation of the gospel;
- speaking to society with a common voice whenever possible; and
- promoting the common good of society.

We cannot act together until we pray and walk together and understand each other better. Therefore in the early period, our primary focus should be on the first four activities. As we do this faithfully, we believe the Holy Spirit will lead us to discern how best to engage in the three remaining activities in our Christian witness to the world.

At least once a year, a General Assembly will gather usually for two and a half days for fellowship, prayer, theological discussion, and discernment of potential areas for common witness.

Christian Churches Together will sponsor in the name of Christian Churches Together, various forums, national and regional, on diverse topics (e.g., evangelism, worship, public policy). The Steering Committee will have full authority over the topics and the program (speakers, and so forth) for forums sponsored by Christian Churches Together. National Christian organizations that share Christian Churches Together's purpose and theology will be invited to participate in these forums.

Christian Churches Together is constituted by its participants and serves as a forum for them.

IV. Participation in Christian Churches Together

All who share the theological affirmations and purpose are eligible to participate in Christian Churches Together.

There will be two categories of participants:

- Participant churches that include national church bodies and associations of churches that are national in scope.
- Participant national Christian organizations.

No more than 20 percent of Christian Churches Together will be participant national Christian organizations.

The Christian Churches Together Steering Committee will develop a broad invitation list of national church bodies, associations of churches, and national Christian organizations, which will be invited to become participants in Christian Churches Together as it is founded. Participant national Christian organizations will be those that strongly share the theological convictions and purposes of Christian Churches Together, are deeply related to its churches, and have the strong support of a wide variety of churches that will compose Christian Churches Together.

Once inaugurated, and phase 2 has begun, Christian Churches Together will develop a process for issuing additional invitations for participation and for receiving applications from those churches and national Christian organizations wishing to participate. Criteria will be developed to welcome into the fellowship those national church bodies, associations of churches and national Christian organizations that, based on the discernment of the governing bodies of Christian Churches Together, will uphold its theological affirmations, further its purpose, and promote unity within the fellowship of Christian Churches Together.

All participants in Christian Churches Together will be expected to:

- uphold Christian Churches Together's theological affirmations;
- advance the purpose of Christian Churches Together;
- support the organization, both financially and through personal participation;
- share in fellowship, prayer, and dialogue with other participants in Christian Churches Together; and
- join others in common ministry as they are led by the Holy Spirit.

Those organizations that meet the criteria for participation, but are not able to do so at this time, will be invited to be observers in the meetings and gatherings of Christian Churches Together.

V. Governing Christian Churches Together

1. General Assembly

The General Assembly (meeting at least once every year usually for two and a half days) will consist of recognized senior leadership or designated representative of each participant group plus an additional representative for each five million members (or fraction thereof) in their church or association of churches. Twenty percent may also be heads of participant national Christian organizations.

For a small part of the annual meeting, the heads of participant churches and participant national Christian organizations will meet to decide upon basic issues—including at least: the addition of new participants, foundational theological documents, and Christian Churches Together's constitution.

2. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will consist of 18-24 members. Each of Christian Churches Together's five families (Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, Historic Racial/Ethnic, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic) will have three members each on the Steering Committee. Each of the five families will choose their three representatives according to their own procedures. The Steering Committee will have at least three additional at-large members. These at-large members may be representatives of participant national Christian organizations (selected according to criteria to be developed by the Steering Committee).

Upon joining Christian Churches Together, each communion or association of churches will choose which of the five families they wish to join for purposes of selecting the members of the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will elect its officers, develop bylaws (including length of term on the Steering Committee), and attend to the business of Christian Churches Together between meetings of the General Assembly. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to facilitate and serve the decisions of the General Assembly.

3. Topical Forums

Any action (declarations, policy proposals, and so forth) that develop out of the Forums sponsored by Christian Churches Together will be done, not in the name of Christian Churches Together but in the name of whatever churches, national Christian organizations, and individuals that choose to sign on to that specific item. Common action in the name of Christian Churches Together can only be done by consensus of the General Assembly.

4. Consensus Decision-making

Decisions in every setting of Christian Churches Together's life will be by consensus. Only when all members present either say yes or agree to stand aside will the body move ahead on any action. One no vote is sufficient to stop any proposed action. For every decision, representatives from each of the five families must be present.

A consensus decision-making process emphasizes the process of listening and discussion and is not merely a matter of saying yes or no. Several responses to any proposal are possible in consensus decision-making:

- 1) Yes – that means one is supportive of the proposal and will do nothing to undermine it.
- 2) No – one cannot in good conscience allow the proposal to go forward.
- 3) Stand Aside – one has reservations, but not enough to keep the group from accepting the proposal, and one will do nothing to undermine the decision.
- 4) The group by consensus can decide to make a particular decision by majority vote.

Note: In any of the above situations, but especially in 3) and 4), the group may decide by consensus to present majority and minority opinions on any given topic.

5. New Participants

In phase 2, additional participants may be admitted to Christian Churches Together by consensus decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Steering Committee.

VI. Finances and Budget

1. During phase 1

All meeting costs, including professional fees, will be covered by registration fees.

Each year, \$20,000 should be raised to cover the costs of the Steering Committee. Churches and organizations exploring participation should contribute at least \$100 annually and where possible \$1000 or more.

2. During phase 2

We anticipate a budget adequate to cover one professional, one support staff member, and other costs. The Steering Committee will seek to identify various sources of funding and develop an equitable funding formula for all participants.

This formula should include one or more of the following factors:

- number of members as defined by the communion;
- number of congregations/parishes;
- annual budget of the communion or national Christian organization;
- annual budget of communion's judicatories/sections;
- maximum–minimum; and/or
- number of persons that communions have in the General Assembly of Christian Churches Together.

VII. Time Line

1. During phase 1

This period started at the January 27-29, 2003, meeting when it was decided to invite churches and national Christian organizations formally to decide (in ways appropriate to their particular church polity) to join Christian Churches Together.

2. During phase 2

This period will start when at least twenty-five churches from an adequately representative group of the five families—Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, Historic Racial/Ethnic, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic—have formally decided in ways appropriate to each church's internal polity, to join Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.

Note: This document was first approved by consensus by the participants at the January 27-29, 2003, meeting at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. See Appendix F-1 for the list of participants. Amendments to this document were approved by consensus by the participants at the January 7-9, 2004, meeting at Camp Allen in Navasota, Texas. See Appendix F-2 for the list of participants.

Appendix F-1

List of Participants at the January 27-29, 2003, Meeting

Bishop Vicken	Aykazian	Diocese of the Armenian Church of America	Participant
Commissioner W. Todd	Bassett	The Salvation Army	Participant
Mr. John	Briscoe	NCCC USA	Participant
Bishop Tod	Brown	Catholic Diocese of Orange, California	Participant
Rev. David	Caudle	Church of the Nazarene	Participant
Rev. Rothangliani	Chhangte	American Baptist Churches, USA	Participant
Rev. Dr. Seung Koo	Choi	Korean Presbyterian Church in America	Participant
Mr. Bonn	Clayton	Nat'l Assoc. of Congregational Christian Churches	Participant
Right Rev. Dimitrios	Couchell	Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America	Participant
Sister Joan	Delaney	Roman Catholic Church	Participant
Dr. Barrett	Duke	Southern Baptist Convention	Observer
Rev. Dr. Robert	Edgar	NCCC USA	Participant

Bishop Perry	Engle	Brethren in Christ Church	Participant
Rev. Dr. David	Engelhard	Christian Reformed Church in North America	Participant
Rev. Jon S.	Enslin	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Participant
Dr. Thomas	Ferguson	Episcopal Church Center	Participant
Dr. Michael	Gillis	Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of NA	Participant
Rev. Wesley	Granberg-Michaelson	Reformed Church in America	Participant
Bishop Sang-Ehil	Han	Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee)	Participant
Bishop Roger	Haskins	Board of Bishops - Free Methodist Church	Participant
Rev. Dr. Roberta	Hestenens	World Vision	Participant
Ms. Elenie	Huszagh	NCCC USA	Participant
Friend Thomas	Jeavons	Religious Society of Friends	Participant
Archbishop Cyril Aphrem	Karim	Syrian Orthodox Church	Participant
Cardinal William H.	Keeler	Archdiocese of Baltimore	Participant
Rev. Arthur	Kennedy	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	Participant
Rev. Dr. Clifton	Kirkpatrick	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)	Participant
Very Rev. Leonid	Kishkovsky	Orthodox Church in America	Participant
Bishop James	Leggett	International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Participant
Rev. Michael E.	Livingston	International Council of Community Churches	Participant
Dr. Howard	Loewen	Fuller Theological Seminary	Participant
Rev. Rafael	Luevano	Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Office	Participant
Dr. Kevin	Mannoia	Free Methodist Church	Observer
Scott E.	McBride	Int'l. Church of the Foursquare Gospel	Participant
Ms. Retha	McCutchen	Friends United Meeting	Participant
Rev. Thomas	McGowan	Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Oakland	Participant
Sister Joan	McGuire	Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Chicago	Participant
Bishop George	McKinney	St. Stephen's Church of God in Christ Ministries	Participant
Very Rev. Dr. Michel	Najim	Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of NA	Participant
Commissioner Philip	Needham	The Salvation Army	Participant
Rev. Rodney	Parrott	Disciples Seminary Foundation	Participant
President Glenn K.	Palmberg	The Evangelical Covenant Church	Participant
Rev. Judy Mills	Reimer	Church of Brethren	Participant
Mr. Claude	Rhea, III	North American Mission Board	Observer
Dr. Ann K.	Riggs	NCC Faith & Order Commission	Participant
Rev. Ronald	Roberson	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	Participant
Rev. Dr. William G.	Rusch	Foundation for a Conference on Faith & Order In North America	Observer
Rev. Gabriel A.	Salguero	Missionary Pentecostal Churches of God, Inc.	Observer
Rev. Dr. Robert	Sawyer	Moravian Church in America	Participant
Rev. James	Schrag	Mennonite Church USA	Participant
Rev. Ronald J.	Sider	Evangelicals for Social Action	Participant
Bishop Melvin G.	Talbert	United Methodist Church	Participant
Dr. Joseph	Tkach	Worldwide Church of God	Participant
Rev. Lydia	Veliko	United Church of Christ	Participant
Mr. David	Wagschal	Orthodox Church in America	Participant
Rev. Jim	Wallis	Sojourners/Call to Renewal	Participant
Rev. Robina	Winbush	Presbyterian Church USA	Participant

Appendix F-2

List of Participants at the January 7-9, 2004, Meeting

Bishop Vicken Aykazian	Diocese of the Armenian Church
Commissioner W. Todd Bassett	The Salvation Army
Bishop Stephen Blaie	US Conference of Catholic Bishops
Most Rev. Tod D. Brown	Catholic Diocese of Orange, California
The Rev. Rothangliani Chhangte	American Baptist Churches, USA
The Rev. Dr. Seung Koo Choi	Korean Presbyterian Church in America
Mr. Bonn Clayton	Nat'l Assoc. of Congregational Christian Churches
Bishop Dimitrios Couchell	Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Sister Joan Delaney	Roman Catholic Church
The Rev. Dr. David H. Engelhard	Christian Reformed Church in North America
Bishop C. Christopher Epting	Episcopal Church USA
President Jeff Farmer	Open Bible Churches
The Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson	Reformed Church in America
The Rev. Dr. Roberta Hestenens	World Vision
Bishop Francis J. Kane	Roman Catholic Church

The Rev. Arthur Kennedy
 Bishop James D. Leggett
 The Rev. Michael Livingston
 The Rev. Rafael Luevano
 The Rev. Carlos Malave
 Dr. Kevin W. Mannoia
 The Rev. Thomas R. McGowan
 Sister Joan McGuire
 President Grant McMurray
 The Rev. A. Roy Medley
 Ms. Gail Mengel
 Father John W. Morris
 Mr. Stanley J. Noffsinger
 President Glenn R. Palmberg
 Friend Ben Richmond
 Dr. Ann K. Riggs
 The Rev. Dr. Bruce Robbins
 The Rev. Ronald G. Roberson
 The Rev. Dr. William G. Rusch

The Rev. Gabriel A. Salguero
 Bishop Nicholas J. Samra
 Dr. Robert E. Sawyer
 The Rev. Jim Schrag
 H. G. Bishop Serapion
 The Rev. Ronald J. Sider
 Dr. Gilbert W. Stafford
 The Rev. Lydia Veliko
 Dr. Daniel Vestal
 The Rev. Bert Waggoner
 Mr. David Wagschal
 The Rev. James Wallis
 Dr. Robert Welsh
 The Rev. Don Dixon Williams

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
 International Pentecostal Holiness Church
 International Council of Community Churches
 Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Officer
 Presbyterian Church USA
 Free Methodist Church
 Roman Catholic Church, Dioceses of Oakland
 Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Chicago
 Community of Christ (*Observer*)
 American Baptist Churches USA
 Community of Christ (*Observer*)
 Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of NA
 Church of the Brethren
 Evangelical Covenant Church
 Friends United Meeting
 NCC Faith & Order Commission (*Observer*)
 United Methodist Church
 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
 Foundation for a Conference on Faith & Order in NA
 (*Observer*)
 Missionary Pentecostal Churches of God, Inc. (*Observer*)
 Melkite Catholic Church
 Moravian Church in America
 Mennonite Church USA
 Coptic Orthodox Church
 Evangelicals for Social Action
 Church of God (Anderson, IN)
 United Church of Christ
 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
 Association of Vineyard Churches
 Orthodox Church in America
 Sojourners/Call to Renewal
 Christian Church Disciples of Christ
 Bread for the World

I. Brief overview

In 2003, the committee published twenty-seven sermons in three booklets of nine sermons each. For 2004, the committee is doing the same thing. However, it must be noted that 2004 is the last year of the printed booklets. The sermons are already available on the CRCNA web site (www.crcna.org), and this will be the only source of new sermons after 2004.

For churches that would like a final supply of printed sermons for reading services, the secretary has a supply of back copies that are available at \$10 per booklet of nine sermons. (Write: Mr. Ray Vander Ploeg, 37 Brick Pond Lane, Woodstock, ON, or call: 519-539-2117)

Rev. Hendrik Bruinsma's term expires this year, and he is willing to serve another term. Rev. Bruinsma is pastor of Maranatha CRC in Woodbridge, Ontario.

The committee is composed of Rev. Hendrik Bruinsma (2004), chairman; Rev. Gerrit Bomhof (2005), alternate; Rev. Jack Westerhof (2006); Rev. Ralph Koops (2005); Rev. John Zantingh (2005); and Mr. Ray Vander Ploeg, secretary/treasurer.

II. Recommendations

A. That synod approve the work of the committee and encourage the churches to avail themselves of the sermons for reading services on the CRCNA web site.

B. That synod approve the appointment of Rev. Hendrick Bruinsma for a second three-year term.

Sermons for Reading Services Committee
Gerrit J. Bomhof, alternate
Hendrik Bruinsma, chairman
Ralph Koops
Ray Vander Ploeg, secretary/treasurer
Jack Westerhof
John Zantingh

I. Background

The Sesquicentennial Committee was appointed by Synod 2001 with the following mandate:

That synod appoint a representative committee whose duty it will be to present to [synod] . . . a set of plans for a churchwide celebration of our sesquicentennial in 2007. The plans shall include a theme, programs, celebrations, publications, contests, and conferences that are suitable and significant for the occasion. An expanded budget along with possible funding sources will also be included in the proposal.

(*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 453)

The committee is composed of the following members:

Rev. Moses Chung
Rev. Michael De Vries
Dr. David H. Engelhard
Dr. Richard Harms
Rev. Stanley Jim

Mrs. Darlene Meyering
Mrs. Cindy Vander Kodde
Mr. Nate Vander Stelt
Rev. Jack Vos
Rev. Norberto Wolf

The committee reported to Synod 2003 and presented many ideas and thoughts about how the CRC's one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary could be celebrated. Synod 2003 approved the theme for the sesquicentennial (Grace Through Every Generation) and gave general endorsement to the various ideas found in the committee's report (see *Agenda for Synod 2003*, pp. 254-57 and *Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 625). It also endorsed the idea that the theme be approached through three key thoughts: remembering, rejoicing, and rededicating.

II. Plans

A. Designated dates for services

In 2003, the committee proposed that three separate dates be designated for anniversary events and that they be designated around the sesquicentennial theme and its three subthemes. The date most associated with CRC beginnings is April 7, 1857. Because the Sunday closest to that date (April 8, 2007) is Easter Sunday that year, the committee thinks that it would be unwise to choose that day for a CRC anniversary celebration. Thus, the committee proposed that April 22, 2007, be designated as Sesquicentennial Sunday and that all CRC congregations participate in a common liturgy for that day as we celebrate Grace Through Every Generation.

Two other dates were also being proposed as appropriate Sundays for rejoicing and for rededicating ourselves and our churches in God's service. June 10, 2007, is the Sunday during the week of that year's synod. The committee thinks that date would serve as a wonderful time for our congregations (or groups of congregations) not only to remember the work of synod but also to come together and once again share a common liturgy as one way to express our continuing unity as the CRC. Because a large combined worship service (Synodical Service of Prayer and Praise and the Multiethnic Worship Service) is being planned on that date for the De Vos Hall in Grand Rapids with an emphasis on remembering and rejoicing, the committee is proposing that the

liturgy prepared for this service be made available to other CRC communities throughout North America who may choose to gather for joint worship services on that day.

To conclude the series of celebrative events and to allow the churches an opportunity to rededicate themselves to ministry in their communities in North America and throughout the world, the committee also recommended that October 14, 2007, be designated as rededication Sunday. Just as Israel regularly had covenant renewal ceremonies, the committee believes that rededication ceremonies throughout the denomination will allow the CRC to recommit itself to God's service while at the same time remembering the significance of God's grace for its journey—past, present, and future.

The advisory committee dealing with this matter at Synod 2003 was concerned that having two sesquicentennial services only about six weeks apart (April 22 and June 10) may be too much. It was the intention of the Sesquicentennial Committee to make materials available for the June 10 service but not necessarily ask all churches or communities to hold special services on that day. The committee continues to believe that April 22 and June 10, as well as October 14, are important to designate as special worship dates in 2007 for our sesquicentennial. We hope that Synod 2004 agrees.

B. Popular history of CRC

Last year synod endorsed the idea that a popular history of the CRC that is affordable and readable be produced for the sesquicentennial. The committee is pleased to report that, in cooperation with CRC Publications, an author has been named and plans are well under way to identify the main contours of the book. Rev. Scott Hoezee, pastor of the Calvin CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has agreed to write the book, and we project that it will be available for the churches in December 2006. The committee continues to seek financial backing for this project so that all congregations will be able to receive a free copy for their use.

C. Other plans

*1. Edition of *Origins**

The spring 2007 issue of *Origins* (published by the Archives of the CRC) is scheduled to carry a series of articles on the various ethnic communities within the CRC. The following communities are scheduled to be highlighted: African-American, Chinese, Hispanic/Latino, Korean, Native American, and Southeast Asian. Dr. Richard Harms, a member of the Sesquicentennial Committee, is editor of *Origins*.

2. Conference planning

The committee continues to work on a proposal for a scholarly conference that will explore various aspects of CRC history. We hope that this conference can be done in cooperation with the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship. Furthermore, there is a hope that some of those presenting papers at this conference will be able to present them also at other regional locations throughout the denomination so that many will have opportunity to participate in this reflection on our history.

3. Children and youth

The committee is deeply desirous of incorporating children and youth in our anniversary experiences. We are open to suggestions that might spark our thinking. At its September 2004 meeting, the committee will give focused consideration to this aspect of the anniversary.

4. Worship

The committee has begun discussion with representatives of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship about planning a variety of services that can be used by our churches during the anniversary celebrations. Many different worship styles are present within the CRC, and the committee is hopeful that it can provide worship suggestions that are appropriate for all our congregations. We do not want any congregation to say that they were left out of the worship celebrations because their needs were overlooked.

III. Expenses

The expense projections provided last year have not altered appreciably. For the fiscal year 2004-2005, the CRC Foundation will be asked to provide the funding needed during that time period. Inclusion in the denominational budget for the following two years will be addressed next year.

IV. Recommendation

That synod approve the dates of April 22, 2007, June 10, 2007, and October 14, 2007, as the dates for sesquicentennial worship services with emphasis on the first date on remembering, the second date on rejoicing, and the third date on rededicating.

Sesquicentennial Committee

Moses Chung

Michael De Vries

David H. Engelhard, chair

Richard Harms

Stanley Jim

Darlene Meyering

Rebecca Rozeboom

Cindy Vander Kodde

Nate Vander Stelt

Jack Vos

Norberto Wolf

DENOMINATIONALLY RELATED AGENCIES

Dordt College is looking forward to celebrating its Jubilee anniversary during the 2004-2005 academic year, culminating in an on-campus celebration on July 1-3, 2005. It was the Christian Reformed Church and its vision for proclaiming the rule of the sovereign Christ over all of life that gave birth to Dordt College a half century ago. From its beginnings, Dordt College has embraced this distinctively Reformed perspective. Any strengths that we can claim have come as we have applied this perspective in various ways and throughout various disciplines. Whatever strengths we develop in the future will also be tied to our perspective.

One of our strengths, where this is particularly evident, is Dordt's ability to produce educational leaders with a pervasively Reformed worldview. Dordt College was started as a teacher's college and has prepared students for the teaching profession every year since. Dordt College has a long-standing commitment to Christian education, and we prepare a majority of our education majors for careers in Christian schools. Christian school teachers trained at Dordt College enter the profession with a clear understanding of Christian education and their role in training young people for service within the kingdom of God. Even graduates from Dordt College who teach in public schools enter their profession with a clear vision of what it means to be a Christian teacher and how to best pursue their calling in their particular circumstances.

Dordt College is determined to continue its leadership in education not only through its teacher education program but also through continued support of the Center for Educational Services and our master of education program. Our Center for Educational Services provides leadership to current teachers who are looking to develop their craft as Christian teachers. The Center offers staff development programs; in-service opportunities; and consulting services, locally, nationally, and internationally. It also arranges numerous annual educational conferences. For those teachers who wish to pursue advanced studies, our graduate education program gives them the opportunity to pursue a master of education (M.Ed.) degree with a concentration in curriculum and instruction.

In addition to training leaders in the field of education, Dordt College also provides leadership in over thirty-five additional academic disciplines. Recently, we added new majors in the fields of health science/nursing, computer networking, and criminal justice. We also added three new emphases to our engineering program: civil/environmental engineering, computer engineering, and bioengineering.

As we expand our program offerings and emphases, we also continue to encourage an educational experience that goes far beyond the classroom. We have always been a strong residential learning community where students are encouraged to support each other in and out of the classroom. We also support the education of each student through programs such as the Academic Skills (ASK) Center. This center provides academic assistance through its peer tutoring program, the Aspire program for motivated students who have the potential to succeed at Dordt, developmental courses, supplemental instruction, study skills assistance, and disability services.

In addition, we are redefining what a learning community is and where it should be. Each year, approximately 150 students take their learning on the road in the form of internships or student teaching experiences. Students also can sign up for a semester-long or summer term study programs in one of many different places in the United States or throughout the world. Last year, 76 students took advantage of such programs, including 23 students in the summer 2003 program.

Our volunteer programs are also a way of teaching students important truths. Christ's kingdom does not stop at the classroom door, and neither does service in his kingdom. Each year, over 15 percent of our student body participates in one or more of three volunteer programs: Community Outreach Program (COP), Putting Love Into Action (PLIA), and A Mission OutReach (AMOR). Countless other service opportunities are available to students each year wherein students can discover the joy of service and learn valuable lessons along the way.

Of course, none of the learning that happens in and out of the classroom can occur without a strong, supportive constituency. Dordt's constituency has been one of the strengths for Dordt College from day one. It continues to be our strength. We continue to receive significant support from our traditional constituency. We are grateful to God for the faithful support and encouragement of the Christian Reformed Church, its congregations, and its members over the past half century. We believe that, in turn, our college and our graduates have faithfully served the Christian Reformed Church and enhanced its witness throughout the world. However, we are also looking to broaden our constituency and introduce our reformational perspective to even more communities.

In the past, we also have been blessed with over half of our alumni continuing to give to the college. This says a lot about the kind of education these alumni have received and the value that they have placed on it. However, we are also looking to do more to enable our students, empower our faculty, and enhance the quality of education that Dordt College provides while recognizing that the true staying power of Dordt College does not come from the money we can generate but from the pervasively Reformed perspective that we teach. This perspective was already laid when Dordt College was founded, and it is this perspective that drives all of our activities, even today.

We trust that the Christian Reformed Church now will rejoice with us in what you have nurtured at Dordt College. Please celebrate with us throughout this year and pray that for the years ahead our college motto will remain our guide—*Soli Deo Gloria*—to God alone be all the glory.

Dordt College
Carl E. Zylstra, president

The Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) is a graduate school in the Reformed tradition. It provides creative, biblical, and thoughtful academic leadership to students and the wider Christian community. ICS is an affiliate member of the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto. In addition to its own master's degrees, ICS offers a Ph.D. program in cooperation with the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Orientation at the start of September saw one of the largest incoming classes in ICS's thirty-five year history—a 100 percent increase in enrolment over the previous year. These students have come from across Canada, the United States and, indeed, all parts of the globe to form a diverse and lively student body.

In 2003, ICS began a complex process of securing expanded degree-granting authority. In February, with the encouragement of staff of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, ICS arranged for the introduction of a private bill in the Ontario Legislature to amend the 1983 *ICS Act*. The amendment would change the current master of philosophical foundations degree to master of philosophy, and would add the right to grant the Ph.D. degree. (Currently the ICS doctoral program leads to the Ph.D. granted by the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam under a ministerial consent.) In May, ICS was informed that, as a result of a policy shift, the Minister of Colleges, Training and Universities would support the proposed amendments only after an extensive quality assessment process with the Ministry. ICS has now completed its submission for this process, and it is hoped that the process will be concluded in time for the amendment to *The ICS Act* to be addressed in the spring session of the Legislature.

In January 2004, ICS appointed two faculty members: Dr. Ronald Kuipers as professor of philosophy of religion, and Dr. Nicholas Ansell as professor of theology. Dr. Kuipers has accrued a remarkable and impressive body of published work and is regarded as one of the leading students of religion in a pluralist society in today's generation of younger thinkers. Dr. Ansell is highly regarded as an energetic and visionary scholar. He has been a popular teacher at the King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta, and has been a prolific writer and reviewer in academic and popular Christian publications, including the British magazine *Third Way*. Both Ansell and Kuipers are graduates of ICS and represent the fulfillment of one of the aspirations of the Institute's founders—already evidenced on other campuses across North America with ICS alumni as faculty—to train a generation of Christian scholars who would, in turn, train the generations that follow.

Over the past year, ICS faculty have enjoyed many academic achievements. The Association of Reformed Institutions of Higher Education (ARIHE) has created an annual lectureship to encourage a common discussion of Christian scholarship on its eight member campuses. Dr. Robert Sweetman, ICS professor of history of philosophy, was selected to be one of the ARIHE lecturers. The two other lecturers are ICS alumni and sit on our senate.

November 2003 saw the launch of the Faith and Learning Network, an ambitious project designed to improve access to Christian academic resources and scholars—particularly to scholars in the developing world. The Faith and Learning Network will serve as an online resource center that will include a

comprehensive bibliographic database of resources and a knowledge base of scholars whose academic work is rooted in the Christian faith.

ICS continues work on its capital campaign, ReGeneration! The Campaign for ICS. After eighteen months, ICS has received \$4.5 million in gifts and pledges, putting us within reach of our \$5 million target, which we expect to reach in 2004.

God has richly blessed ICS with a spirit of unity and creativity as we carry out our vision to provide globally accessible Christian graduate education. God has also given us many blessings over the past year, but we face many challenges ahead, and we look to those with joy and anticipation. Voluntary income makes up 75 percent of the ICS budget, and about 80 percent of that is provided by Christian Reformed Church members and churches. The faculty, staff, and students at ICS are grateful for the prayer and financial support coming from the CRC, and we continue to depend on your support.

Institute for Christian Studies
Harry Fernhout, president

On behalf of faculty, staff, and students of The King's University College, greetings to all delegates of Synod 2004!

The past year has seen a number of important developments at King's. Enrollments continue to grow, with 665 students enrolled last fall and a slightly lower number enrolled in the winter semester. We continue to see substantial growth in enrollment of students who are members of the Christian Reformed Church.

We are pleased to report that we have appointed a new vice president academic, to replace Dr. Keith Ward, who will retire in July 2004. Dr. Ward has served King's University College with distinction for twenty-five years, ever since its opening, first as professor of English, later as academic dean, and since 1988 as vice president academic. The new vice president academic will be Professor John Sutherland, who taught for many years at Trinity Western University in British Columbia and was dean of the business and economics faculty there. More recently, he was director of public relations for the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), working out of the CLAC British Columbia office. We look forward to his arrival this summer.

Two new faculty members joined us this fall. Dr. Tina Trigg was appointed assistant professor of English, and Dr. Chris Peet as assistant professor of psychology. Both are committed Christians who recently finished their doctorates. We are currently interviewing candidates for positions in biology, education, and computing science to be appointed in the summer of 2004. Recruiting faculty who understand and can further the mission of King's continues to be a very important and challenging task in our growing institution.

Dr. Henk Van Andel has announced his intention to retire from the presidency of King's University College effective July 2005, and a search committee has been formed to identify a new president. Your prayers for a successful search are requested.

In early December, construction started on our new five-story student residence, with completion scheduled for the summer of 2004. It will house 107 additional students and will feature "independent living" suites for senior students, with each suite having six single bedrooms, kitchen, living room, and two bathrooms. Already a significant number of current out-of-town students have indicated they want to move in next September. The new residence is expected to be selffinancing, with students paying rent for mortgage and operating costs.

Detailed design for a new classroom and office wing to our main building is under way, with construction planned to begin in summer 2004. The Growing to Serve Capital Campaign to finance the new wing is continuing, with almost \$3.3 million collected in gifts and pledges toward the \$4 million goal. We are grateful for the strong support of the community for this project and will continue to work toward reaching the goal.

In 2004, King's will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. We are grateful to God for sustaining the institution over all these years and for providing all our needs in the context of sustained growth. We expect to have a special celebration of this event in the fall.

We are thankful for the continued support we receive from CRC congregations in the form of ministry shares and collections for King's. This is very

important to us and helps us provide financial aid to students and keep tuition at an affordable level. Please continue to support King’s with your prayers, your encouragement, and your finances.

The King’s University College
Henk Van Andel, president

Redeemer University College and its supporting community are thankful for the many blessings experienced in all aspects of the institution. We have seen another tremendous year of God's faithfulness.

First, we give thanks to God for the breakthrough of having been approved for a B.Ed. degree by the provincial government and for having been granted initial accreditation for this education program by the Ontario College of Teachers. This is historic because it makes Redeemer's the only Christian teacher-education program in Ontario and one of five in all of Canada. Graduates will now be eligible to teach in Catholic and public as well as independent Christian schools.

It is also with thanksgiving that we report progress in Redeemer's campus expansion campaign. To date, almost \$5 million has been raised. The \$1.1 million east addition to the academic facilities is now complete and plans are well underway for the \$6.2 million library/classroom expansion. Together with a new residence and with infrastructure improvements, this expansion will enable us to accommodate up to 1000 students.

This year over 800 students are enrolled, which is an increase of almost 7 percent from last year, and 435 of these students live on campus in apartments and our unique townhouse style residences. The core of Redeemer's mission is to offer a scripturally directed university-level liberal arts and science education, and increasing student enrolment indicates that graduating high school students and their families agree that this is something they see as essential in postsecondary education.

Our students come from all ten Canadian provinces, and forty-eight international students hail from twelve U.S. states and eight other countries. Students represent forty-one different denominational backgrounds and a variety of racial and ethnic groups. Christian Reformed students now account for 48 percent of the enrolment, with students of Reformed background making up 62 percent of the student body. The rest of our students come from either evangelical or mainline churches. Together they experience their unity in Christ and in exploring the implications of his lordship over all of life.

As a result of increasing student numbers, we have added eight new faculty members, the most recent of whom is Dr. Craig Bartholomew, the first H. Evan Runner Professor of Philosophy, an endowed chair at Redeemer made possible by a generous donation. We have been able to launch an environmental studies program as well.

In addition to teaching, faculty continue to be of service through their scholarship. Faculty are providing leadership in the Christian community as well as in the wider academy and travel internationally to give lectures and present papers. Plans also continue for the third international conference on faith and science, organized by the Pascal Centre.

Through our students, many of whom volunteer in the downtown core, and our graduates, we are also gaining a higher profile in the Hamilton community, which is opening new opportunities for us to be a witness in our local community.

We are indeed very grateful for the prayer and financial support received from the Christian Reformed community, including the ministry shares received from area Christian Reformed churches. These are essential for our

continuing mission of providing Christian university education and promoting Christian scholarship from a biblical, Reformed Christian perspective.

Redeemer University College
Justin D. Cooper, president

Reformed Bible College (RBC) has been striving to make professional advancements in curricular and governance areas over the past few years. This is an effort we are urgent about, but it is also an effort we know must be kept in balance with the spiritual nature that has so characterized the college over the decades. As with our sister institutions of Christian higher education or service, we want to exemplify both the person of Jesus Christ and excellence in performance. We believe, that these are, and should be, complementary rather than contradictory. Prayer and grace are cherished but they should not take the place of planning and accountability. These have come together at RBC this year in the following ways:

- Raising the standards and expectations in our social work major had a positive result. Our accrediting agency and the Council on Social Work Education approved our pursuit of granting a bachelor's degree in social work. This program helps us balance the word and deed ministries we prepare our students for and helps graduates move more readily into leadership positions and graduate-level education.
- Restructuring the college at the board and administrative levels increases our efficiency and ability to respond well to changes and opportunities that occur more and more frequently in higher education.
- Intentionality toward diversity has resulted in a Diversity Council (composed of trustees and outside advisors for the purpose of strategic planning) and a Diversity Committee (for carrying out needed changes internally) being given a budget and authority to implement appropriate strategies. We are convinced, as an act of obedience to the Lord, that RBC should reflect and serve the multifaceted church of Christ at all levels of the institution.
- Strategic planning and assessment have been incorporated at all levels of the college and are being refined as we become more adept at setting appropriate goals and identifying key performance indicators.

In addition to these areas, there are many more minor adjustments and/or improvements that are taking place. Underlying these efforts is evidence of God's Spirit at work in placing a call on people's hearts to be more involved in bringing his Word into the world. Our enrollment came in larger than expected. Students increasingly speak of feeling confirmed in their sense that RBC is where God wants them, and they are excited about having the firm biblical grounding that comes along with their professional areas of study. They are focused on the ministry and kingdom-service applications of their majors in youth work, social work, missions, preseminary, and education. They express a strong, personal conviction that they are called by God into the world to make a difference for the sake of his name. What a joy to be part of their response to God by helping them prepare for service!

We are deeply grateful for the gift support we have received this year as well. The college has to carefully monitor its use of scarce resources, but we recognize that God has blessed us through generous donors—and prayer warriors—who share the vision of the college and have helped us increase the number of people, churches, and organizations we can serve through RBC.

Our sincere gratitude and thanks to the Christian Reformed Church for partnering with us and encouraging us along the way.

Reformed Bible College
Nicholas V. Kroeze, president

Evidence of the Lord's grace was abundant during the past year at Trinity. Dr. Steven Timmermans received unanimous approval from the Board of Trustees to become the college's seventh president. The former executive associate to the president at Calvin College took office at Trinity in July. He brought with him a vision for continued growth, a zeal for service-learning, and a passionate devotion to Christian education.

Trinity conducted inaugural activities for Dr. Timmermans on October 4 in Ozinga Chapel. Hundreds of students, faculty, staff, trustees, and friends of the college attended the ceremony and heard Dr. Timmermans pledge to continue Trinity's forward momentum while honoring its heritage of continuing community.

The college's enrollment numbers for 2003-2004 reflect another record-breaking year for growth in our student body. At the onset of classes in August, 957 students were registered in the traditional program, 261 in the Adult Studies program, and 45 in Semester In Spain, giving Trinity a total number of 1263. This marked the sixth consecutive year that the college established a new enrollment record.

As enrollment continues to soar, Trinity becomes more intentional about building a culturally diverse community. Dr. Nelvia Brady accepted the offer to become director of ethnic diversity, which provides a distinct voice and direction to the college's goal. Dr. Brady's experience and expertise mesh well with Trinity's mission, having recruited minorities for Fortune 500 companies and having served as the first African-American and female chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago. She also teaches in the business department.

With more students on campus, the demand for residence space has become more pressing. Last spring, the college purchased two apartment buildings in Worth, Illinois, for occupancy by 104 juniors and seniors. Alumni Hall is scheduled to open in August as the on-campus residence for 180 students. In addition to easing the housing shortage, the new building will provide facilities for conferences, conventions, and seminars on campus.

In keeping with president Timmermans' vision to "expand our reach and extend our influence," the college hosted two major conventions on campus last summer. Youth Unlimited brought its semiannual Summit conference for a weekend, attracting more than 400 teenagers to campus. The Baptist General State Convention of Illinois sponsored its weeklong education retreat on campus as well, and Trinity anticipates opening its doors to more groups in the future.

The college has initiated plans for a new facility designed specifically for the communication arts, theater, and art departments. Chicago-based Wheeler Kearns Architects has submitted several designs for consideration by the administration and board, and Trinity anticipates finalizing those plans in the spring.

The McCormick Tribune Foundation awarded Trinity a \$5000 grant in the fall to support the college's initiatives for service and partnership with two local communities. President Timmermans secured the grant after submitting a proposal for the Foundation's support of three projects: collaboration with the city of Palos Heights to revise the organization of the Lake Katherine Nature Preserve; a cooperative with Robbins, Illinois, to revitalize the entire infrastructure of the

suburb three miles east of Trinity; and a campus-wide environmental stewardship program. The grant mandates that five students and a community leader work with President Timmermans to oversee the projects, as outlined below:

- In September, Trinity students began working at Lake Katherine's clubhouse at no charge to the city, handling administrative responsibilities in the building. The preserve has been a prime location for faculty and students to conduct scientific studies and research of the wildlife and vegetation. The college will also provide teaching assistance and marketing strategies to help redefine Lake Katherine's purpose and viability in Palos Heights.
- Robbins is a community in dire need of social, educational, and economic rebirth. In August, First Year Forum, Trinity's new-student orientation program, participated in a service project there. In January, students on the McCormick Fellowship team gave a presentation to several Illinois legislators describing the village's poverty and declining infrastructure.

Teacher education remains the most frequently chosen major, with approximately 30 percent of our student body studying that field. Business majors are the second-largest group with 17 percent. Nursing (11 percent) and psychology (6 percent) are third and fourth, maintaining the same ranking as the 2002-2003 academic year. Trinity's nursing department received accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, which awarded the 10-year certification without any compliance concerns.

The relationship Trinity enjoys with its supporting churches is invaluable in providing the faculty, facilities, programs, and amenities necessary to equip our students for service that transforms culture. More than 60 percent of Trinity students come from families who are members of Reformed churches, with 43 percent coming from Christian Reformed churches. In the previous fiscal year, churches contributed \$155,821 in unrestricted gifts, accounting for nearly 11 percent of total annual unrestricted giving. The college continues to depend upon area classes for their ongoing faithful support of their regional Christian colleges.

As Trinity experiences higher enrollment numbers, the need for more facilities grows accordingly, which could have an impact on future tuition costs. Because of Trinity's dedication to sound financial stewardship and wise planning, the college recognizes the critical importance of providing assistance for families who might not otherwise be able to afford Christian higher education. Trinity Christian College seeks to fulfill its mission of preparing Christian women and men for leadership roles in church, education, business, professions, and society by continuing to offer quality educational programs taught from a Reformed perspective.

The vision of Trinity is to serve God as a community of Christian scholarship committed to shaping lives and transforming culture. The college is blessed to nurture students spiritually and prepare them intellectually for the glory of God. The campus community gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Christian Reformed Church and its members in sustaining the college through prayers and gifts. May this positive relationship continue to flourish for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

Trinity Christian College
Steven Timmermans, president

The purpose of Dynamic Youth Ministries is to support and facilitate the efforts of three exciting Christian ministries to children and youth: Cadets for boys, GEMS for girls, and Youth Unlimited for teens. The passion and mission of each of these ministries is to *lead children and youth into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ!* In recent years, these ministries have been reported to synod as part of the report of synod's Youth Ministry Committee. Synod 2003 dismissed the Youth Ministry Committee with thanks and, thus, the report of Dynamic Youth Ministries is included under Denominationally Related Agencies.

Calvinist Cadet Corps

"Anchored to the Rock" was the Cadet theme for the 2003-2004 season, introduced to Cadet counselors at the 2003 Counselors' Convention in July and to congregations on Cadet Sunday six months later. The scene of convention was a beautiful hotel in London, Ontario. The training, fellowship, and worship served to recharge the batteries, as it were, and men left the event enthusiastic for another year of service.

Conventions are an excellent way for men to share stories, concerns, challenges, and solutions. The Cadet ministry does not seem to have problems finding regional groups willing to host them, and it is interesting to note that the next two conventions are in Canada again. It will be the first time we have had three in Canada in succession, and is an indication of the apparent borderlessness of the ministry.

Planning for the next international camporee is also well underway. We anticipate bringing between one and two thousand men and boys to the Des Moines, Iowa, area for a weeklong adventure of spiritual, physical, mental, and social growth.

In news for this year, the 2004-2005 season will see the addition of two new merit badges for Cadets of middle school age, the most popular program in cadeting. The two new badges are GPS (Global Positioning System) and Government, bringing the number of badges they can work on to 104. The Government badge will focus primarily on politics and issues. Each should prove helpful to a boy's growth in its own way.

This year the Cadet Corps is making a concerted effort to promote the ministry to churches that are missing out. One of the last acts of the CRC's Youth Ministry Committee, before it disbanded, was to evaluate the Cadet ministry. Their positive evaluation ended this way:

"Many churches have been enjoying the benefits of a vital growing Cadet program for years. We encourage all churches to catch the vision for this same type of program by investing in their Cadet counselors. Give them opportunity, freedom, and resources to grow. Invest in the men who take time out to relate to boys and the Cadet ministry will grow. No not do so is a squandering of the great blessing that we have in the [Calvinist Cadet Corps] CCC."

Cadeting currently serves 613 clubs, 79 percent of which are in Christian Reformed churches. If the Cadet councils meet their promotion goals, we should have at least 30 new Cadet clubs by fall 2004. Please pray for God's blessing in this area.

Calvinist Cadet Corps

G. Richard Broene, executive director

GEMS Girls' Clubs

GEMS Girls' Clubs continues to give thanks for the growth of the ministry and the opportunities to reach more girls with the love of Christ. In 2003, more new clubs were started than ever before in our history. Currently GEMS is partnering in ministry with over 760 churches.

At GEMS, we work diligently to stay abreast of the rapid changes in our culture, and we design curriculum and events for girls and counselors that speak the truth of Scripture in the language of today. Powerhouses—large praise and worship gatherings for girls and their guests—were held in six locations across the continent in 2003 and attracted between 500 and 2,000 participants to each of these events.

Another consistent focus of the GEMS ministry is to train, equip, and inspire the 5,200 women who currently serve as mentors or counselors to the girls. Multiple training opportunities in a variety of locations are available to every counselor throughout the year. The annual counselors' convention was held at Seattle Pacific University and some six hundred women attended this training-in-leadership conference.

The third international summer camp for early teen girls—Get Connected! Camp—was held in August of 2003 at Bark Lake, in Irondale, Ontario. One hundred and eighty girls from the United States and Canada experienced life-change at this week-long, leadership-development camp. Twenty-seven young women from Christian colleges and universities were trained as faith mentors and role models and served as camp counselors for the girls.

GEMS Girls' Clubs
Jan Boone, director

Youth Unlimited

Through the following programs and opportunities, Youth Unlimited (YU) is helping churches challenge youth to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and transform their world for him.

eQuip: *eQuip*, a monthly publication, was introduced in September 2003. Youth leaders whose churches have partnered with Youth Unlimited receive this helpful resource free of charge. *eQuip* is packed with lessons, program ideas, leaders' inspiration, and helpful hints related to the challenging task of reaching today's teens with the message of Christ. For a free sample, call the Youth Unlimited office at 616-241-5616 (ext. 3042).

Encounters: Encounters is an exciting youth leadership development program for teens who want to explore God's calling in their lives. Through two- to four-week missions, Encounters gives youth the opportunity to deepen their relationships with Christ as well as to discover their gifts and how to use them in leadership. Youth Unlimited is thankful for the ministries that partner with Encounters, including World Missions, CRWRC, Home Missions, and Calvin Theological Seminary's Facing Your Future program. These partner ministries contribute to the leadership and direction of the sites and formation of the Encounters program.

Convention: The awesome location for this summer's high energy Revolution Within Convention is Estes Park, Colorado. Expecting a full house of over 2,800 youth and their leaders, the July 23-27 event will challenge youth

to strengthen their relationships with Jesus through engaging speakers, music, workshops, and fun—all in the beautiful setting of Colorado!

SERVE: Thirty-five SERVE locations will challenge youth to understand what it means to put their Christian faith and commitment to Christ into action. Each SERVE opportunity, through devotions, music, small groups, dynamic speakers, and service projects, will help youth focus on their relationships with Jesus Christ.

Partnership with Youth Unlimited: As stated in the Youth Unlimited mission, Youth Unlimited is committed to helping churches challenge their youth to give their lives to Jesus Christ. To pursue this mission, we ask to partner with the local church. A partnership agreement includes the following:

- YU agrees to continue offering biblically sound programming at reasonable cost.
- YU agrees to send all your youth leaders the *eQuip* resource publication free.
- YU agrees to offer discount coupons for leaders registering for YU events.
- YU agrees to support your ministry by being available by way of phone or e-mail.
- YU agrees to support your ministry through prayer.
- Your church's youth ministry is committed to quality youth ministry efforts.
- Your church agrees with the Youth Unlimited mission and statement of faith.
- Your church agrees to support YU in prayer.
- Your church agrees to consider YU programming.
- Your church agrees to support YU financially.

Youth Unlimited

Barry Foster, executive director

STUDY COMMITTEE

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I. Introduction

A. Executive summary

This committee was charged with the task of evaluating the present routes to ordained ministry in the CRC and recommending improvements to synod. The questions we faced are:

- What are the key components for a well-equipped ministry?
- What is the best way to recommend candidates for ministry?
- Is the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy flexible enough to encourage those who attend seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary to become future leaders in the CRC?
- What is the appropriate application of Church Order Article 7 (exceptional gifts)? Is the need criterion local or denominational?
- How do we best receive and integrate ministers from other denominations into the CRC?

- What is the impact of the Leadership Development Networks on the denomination?
- Should the oversight of the ordination process for evangelists be denominational?
- How will the denomination face the issue of evangelists' becoming ministers of the Word?
- How can the denomination, the classis, and the local congregation work together in the recruitment, formation, and deployment of people in ordained ministry?

In evaluating these issues, the committee identified several values that guided our discussion:

- We recognize that the church has a great interest in the formation of ministers of the Word, and therefore, we seek to retain and enhance the control of the denomination over that process.
- We want to retain the value reflected in Church Order Article 6 of a thorough theological education for those who are preparing for ministry. We interpret this to mean a school-based, academic education.
- We need more flexible means of supplying pastors and leaders for our future, as the denomination indicated through Synod 2000 (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 701).
- We sought to develop a process that would involve the classes and the congregations more thoroughly in identifying and nurturing candidates for ministry.

In response to our mandate, we have developed a process and structure that has the following major components:

- The creation of a new committee of the denomination—the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (an expanded version of the Ministerial Leadership Advisory Council recommended by the study committee reporting in 2000) that will have the responsibility to oversee the nurture and training of those studying for ordained ministry, whether at Calvin Seminary or at other seminaries. This committee will also recommend candidates to synod for approval (a task presently performed by the board of trustees of Calvin Seminary). Another major task would be the oversight of the process of those ministers' seeking to enter the CRC ministry through Article 8 and those who seek ordination by way of Article 7 of the Church Order.
- The creation of Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees that will identify and nurture those recommended for ministry by their local congregations. The committees will develop study and financial plans for students. These committees will replace the current Student Fund Committees within the classes.

Several changes in the process are important to note:

- Several Church Order articles will need to be changed (see Recommendations).
- As directed by our mandate, the process for identifying and nurturing candidates for minister of the Word will be more locally based in both classis and congregation; thus, the role of classis is expanded.

- The denomination, however, retains the responsibility for recommending candidates for ministry regardless of what route they take.
- Flexibility is allowed in that we have a way of monitoring and forming those who go to seminaries other than CTS.
- Provision is made for some seminaries to be *endorsed* as alternatives, as well as a way for those who might go to a seminary that is not endorsed. However, we continue to identify the M.Div. program at Calvin Seminary as the preferred route to candidacy for ministers of the Word in the CRC and encourage students to follow that route.
- We recommend that the need criterion be removed from Article 7 of the Church Order.

This new process will be in place by the fall of 2007. Necessary materials will be produced during the transition period. (An overview of this process can be seen in Appendices A and B.)

We also reviewed developments in the office of evangelist and the training programs that have begun for this office. We took note of the essential characteristics for office and made recommendations about persons moving from evangelist to minister of the Word.

B. Mandate

This report is a continuation of a study that was commissioned by Synod 1996. That year, synod appointed a committee to answer questions raised by the Calvin Theological Seminary board of trustees regarding the variety of ways ministry candidates were using to enter ordained ministry in the CRC. Additionally, a growing number of people were seeking ordination as evangelists. A variety of training models were established to meet this need. Yet, the fact that there were limited official denominational standards for this office caused concern. This first study committee (Committee to Examine Alternate Routes Being Used to Enter the Ordained Ministry in the CRC) reported in 2000. Synod adopted several aspects of the report, especially those recommendations emphasizing standards for ministry in the CRC (see *Acts of Synod 2000*, pp. 702-4). Synod also decided to commission further study in order to provide guidelines, based on the standards approved by Synod 2000, for those who come into ordained ministry through what have been described as alternate routes. The grounds for appointing this committee are found in *The Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 705. The advisory committee for Synod 2000 observed the following:

Though there is consensus regarding ministry standards, significant challenges lie in the area of positive and flexible ways to credential individuals for ordained ministry. In light of the fact that the study committee itself admits not being able to speak with a common voice and not having completed its work, we make two observations:

First, a number of alternate routes are currently being either developed or employed for entrance to the ordained ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. . . . We believe, therefore, that there remain a number of unanswered questions regarding the proposed processes for training ministers. . . .

Second, we believe further reflection and examination are needed regarding two matters related to Calvin Theological Seminary:

1. To determine whether the current and proposed Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC) are flexible enough to meet the needs of ministerial candidates in special circumstances.

2. To determine, in light of the proposed increase in congregational and classical oversight in ministry preparation, whether the Calvin Theological Seminary faculty and board of trustees should have primary responsibility to recommend candidates for the ordained ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

(Acts of Synod 2000, pp. 701-2)

Therefore, in 2000, our committee was given the following mandate by synod:

9. That synod appoint a new study committee to further explore and build on the implications of the report of the Committee to Examine Alternate Routes Being Used to Enter the Ordained Ministry in the CRC by positively identifying flexible routes to credential those who seek entrance to the ordained ministry. Specific attention is to be given but not limited to the following:
 - a. An examination of the processes currently used by a number of classes for the training of individuals for ministry—such as ethnic minorities, Church Order Articles 7 and 23 applicants, Home Missions' Leadership Development Networks—to determine their key components for the formation of a well-equipped and well-trained ordained ministry.
 - b. An examination of the proposed standardized framework for the training, education, and mentoring of evangelists (Recommendation J, pp. 307-8) to determine its key components for the formation of a well-equipped and well-trained ministry.
 - c. An examination of the proposed framework in the study-committee report for alternative routes Section VIII, B for "Changing offices (from evangelist to minister of the Word)" (*Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 300-302) and development of a denominational standard and strategy to guide the process whereby ordained evangelists can receive the additional training needed should a church consider calling such a person for a call to become a (denominationally credentialed) minister of the Word.

Ground: There is no stated policy or process for this at present in the CRC.

- d. Based on the adopted standards for a well-equipped and well-trained ministry in the light of 9, a and 9, b above, a definition of a classically based process by which ministry applicants using the current Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23 will be both encouraged to enter into the ordained ministry and be uniquely equipped for it in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.
- e. An evaluation of the proposed denominational Ministry Leadership Advisory Council and the classically based classical ministerial candidacy committees in terms of the desire to give both local churches and classes more responsibility for the ministry-formation process.
- f. An exploration of the impact of such a process for the current reading of Church Order Articles 7, 8, 21, and 23 and for the function of synodical deputies for classical examinations, and recommendations for any appropriate changes.
- g. In light of the conclusions of 9, a; 9, b; and 9, d above, an exploration of how best to recommend to synod the candidates for the ordained ministry.
- h. An examination of whether the current SPMC program and the study committee's proposed SPMC programs are flexible enough to meet the needs of ministry candidates in special circumstances.
- i. A report to Synod 2003.

(Acts of Synod 2000, pp. 704-5)

Synod 2001 added to our mandate by asking us to consider issues that had been raised in regard to Church Order Article 7. This phrase was added to our mandate:

That synod refer Church Order Article 7 and its supplement to the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry for clarification and for the formulation of guidelines for uniform application regarding the issues raised in the observations above.

(Acts of Synod 2001, p. 495)

Since the fall of 2000, our committee has met several times to fulfill this mandate. We built on the work of the first committee by developing the specifics of how local congregations, classes, and synod can work together to train and equip quality leaders for the future.

The plan that will be presented in this report is a positive response to an ongoing challenge in the CRC: How do we maintain a confessional, Reformed identity in a changing world? Fifty years ago almost all candidates for ministry were graduates of Calvin seminary. That is no longer true. The process that we are proposing strengthens ties to the denomination by engaging leaders at every level—local, classical, and denominational.

Thus, our mandate not only required us to improve routes to ministry today but to provide a map to the future of leadership development in the CRC.

C. Procedure

We discussed thoroughly the report to Synod 2000 of the previous study committee, the decision of Synod 2001 to expand the office of evangelist, and each section of our mandate. In these discussions, we rethought the issues raised in regard to ordination issues in the Christian Reformed Church.

We explored the needs of the church by means of listening sessions. In order to gain greater understanding of the issues before us, we met with the Korean ministries director for the Christian Reformed Church, the director of Race Relations for the Christian Reformed Church, the director of Urban Leadership Development for the Christian Reformed Church, two synodical deputies with great experience in dealing with Article 8 issues, the Home Missions specialist for Leadership Development Networks, two leaders of English-speaking Leadership Development Networks, one leader of a Spanish-speaking Leadership Development Network, and a representative from the Reformed Church in America who oversees the preparation of all potential candidates of ministry in that denomination. We also reached beyond our denominational boundaries as we reviewed documents from many other denominations (with a special emphasis on those with a Reformed, Presbyterian background) to discern if there are familiar patterns to be honored or new approaches to be considered in ministry leadership formation.

We sought input from others. A rough draft of our report was disseminated to some leaders and selected institutions and agencies in the Christian Reformed Church in order to receive feedback on the ideas presented.

We decided which of the ideas discovered would best serve the Christian Reformed Church and developed them into the process that we present in this report. Finally, we distributed the report to the churches for their input and advice. Correspondence was received and many of the ideas presented were incorporated into our final report.

The committee was composed of people who differed in ethnicity and in ordained-unordained status. It included a student from Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin Seminary graduates, graduates from other seminaries, someone who completed the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy, faculty and former faculty from Calvin Theological Seminary, and one leader

of a Leadership Development Network. The varied backgrounds and experiences of the committee made the discussions challenging, yet fruitful.

II. Background

A. *The routes to ordination as minister of the Word*

The Christian Reformed Church recognizes several routes into the ordained ministry as explained in Church Order Articles 6, 7, and 8.

1. Church Order Article 6 (“Eligibility for Admission to the Ministry of the Word”)

Church Order Article 6 states:

- a. The completion of a satisfactory theological training shall be required for admission to the ministry of the Word.
- b. Graduates of the theological seminary of the Christian Reformed Church who have been declared candidates for the ministry of the Word by the churches shall be eligible for call.
- c. Those who have been trained elsewhere shall not be eligible for call unless they have met the requirements stipulated in the synodical regulations and have been declared by the churches to be candidates for the ministry of the Word.

This article describes what has historically been considered the normal route to the ordained ministry in the CRC—a thorough theological education usually through Calvin Theological Seminary. For those who go to Calvin Seminary, the route to ordained ministry follows this pattern:

- Admission to the seminary by the board upon recommendations about the applicant from his/her church council, college professors, and others.
- Completion of the master of divinity degree requirements including ministry work in the churches and evidence of one’s knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, the Bible, and the teachings and practices of the church.
- Recommendation by the faculty to the Calvin Theological Seminary board of trustees for candidacy.
- Interview by the board of trustees.
- Recommendation to the synod.
- Synod declares candidacy for the office of minister of the Word.
- A call is extended from a congregation.
- Classis examines the candidate and permits ordination.

Those students who enroll in other seminaries and who want ordination in the CRCNA are expected to pre-enroll for the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC). While this program will be discussed in greater detail later in this report, it should be noted that the program requires a period of residency at Calvin Seminary.

While synod is the agency that declares a person a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC, by way of synodical mandate the Seminary faculty and board of trustees have served as agents of synod in making the appropriate recommendations.

2. Church Order Article 7 (“Admittance to Ministry without Prescribed Training”)

Church Order Article 7 reads:

- a. Those who have not received the prescribed theological training but who give evidence that they are singularly gifted as to godliness, humility, spiritual discretion, wisdom, and the native ability to preach the Word, may, by way of exception, be admitted to the ministry of the Word, especially when the need is urgent.
- b. The classis, in the presence of the synodical deputies, shall examine these men concerning the required exceptional gifts. With the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, classis shall proceed as circumstances may warrant and in accordance with synodical regulations.

The Christian Reformed Church, from its beginning, has recognized that God sometimes equips and calls people to ministry who have not gone through the *usual* channel of theological education. In order to enter the ministry of the Word through Article 7, the following steps are followed (see Church Order Supplement, Article 7):

- a. Stage one is an examination for licensure to exhort. A period of time is then established during which the person exhorts so that the churches of classis can evaluate the candidate’s reception and gifts.
 - b. If stage one is completed satisfactorily, a period of preparation is entered in which training and mentoring toward examination is designed for the potential candidate for ministry.
 - c. Stage two ends with a preparatory examination. The person is examined in biblical, theological, confessional, and historical knowledge.
 - d. If the person successfully passes the examination, he or she is declared eligible for call to the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
 - e. The final examination occurs in the classis of the church that has called the Article 7 applicant. This examination is similar to that for any candidate for ministry, excluding the biblical languages.
3. Church Order Article 8 (“Eligibility for Call”—including ministers from other denominations)

Church Order Article 8 reads:

- a. Ministers of the Christian Reformed Church are eligible for call, with due observance of the relevant rules.
- b. Ministers of other denominations desiring to become ministers in the Christian Reformed Church shall be declared eligible for a call by a classis only after a thorough examination of their theological training, ministerial record, knowledge of and soundness in the Reformed faith, and their exemplariness of life. The presence and concurring advice of the synodical deputies are required.
- c. Ministers of other denominations who have not been declared eligible for a call shall not be called unless all synodical requirements have been met.

This article has been used as a channel into ordained ministry in the CRC for pastors from other denominations. In order to enter the ministry of the Word through Article 8, the following process is followed (see Church Order Supplement, Article 8).

If a church is unable to obtain a pastor within the CRC (after a period of sustained effort), a minister from outside the denomination may be called. The usual process is:

- A congregation receives permission from its classis to call someone from outside the CRC.
- The minister applies to the classis of the church desiring to call him or her.
- *Note:* A minister may also apply apart from a congregation's extending a call. In this case, the minister would make application to the classis nearest him or her.
- The classis declares that there is a need to call a minister from outside the CRC, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies.
- A period of preparation is arranged by the classis.
- There is an examination in regard to soundness of doctrine, sanctity of life, and doctrinal purity.
- The person is declared eligible for call to ministry in the CRC.

B. The routes to ordination as evangelist/ministry associate

In addition to these articles concerning the minister of the Word in the CRC, there are also provisions in the Church Order that regulate the office of evangelist. Created in 1976, the office of evangelist initially provided a means for the church to recognize work being done in many unorganized churches by lay workers, many of whom were graduates of Reformed Bible College. The relevant Church Order articles regulating the office of evangelist are:

1. Church Order Article 23:

- a. The evangelist shall be acknowledged as an elder of his calling church with corresponding privileges and responsibilities. His work as an elder shall normally be limited to that which pertains to his function as evangelist.
- b. Ordinarily, the office of an evangelist working in an emerging congregation will terminate when a group of believers is formed into an organized church. However, upon organization and with the approval of the newly formed council and the classis, the ordained evangelist may continue to serve the newly organized church until an ordained minister is installed or until he has served the newly organized church for a reasonable period of transition.
- c. An evangelist may also serve an organized congregation along with a minister of the Word.
- d. Any service or assignment beyond his specific field of labor requires the authorization of his consistory and the approval of classis.

2. Church Order Article 24:

- a. The task of the evangelist is to witness for Christ and to call for comprehensive discipleship through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, evangelism, church education for youth and adults, and pastoral care, in order that the church may be built and unbelievers won for Christ. He shall also equip fellow believers to participate in the work of evangelism.
- b. The evangelist shall function under the direct supervision of the council, giving regular reports to it and being present at its meetings whenever possible, particularly when his work is under consideration.

In summary, these various and synodically approved routes to office of minister of the Word and evangelist will be the focus of our report. Our

mandate calls for us to develop flexible means that will provide a foundation for well-trained and, therefore, well-equipped leaders for the CRC.

C. *Leadership numbers: history and projections*

In the process of examining the routes into ministry in the CRC, we considered the need for leaders in the future. Of course, there is always a need for qualified, trained, and deployed leaders in the church, but the statistical analysis below suggests this need may intensify in the CRC in the next fifteen years.

One factor to be considered is the number of ministers who are expected to retire over the next seventeen years. It should be noted that beginning in 2006, this number will increase significantly.

Ministers Expected to Retire (2004-2020)

2004	19	2013	26
2005	14	2014	42
2006	37	2015	47
2007	44	2016	47
2008	31	2017	49
2009	42	2018	42
2010	40	2019	52
2011	47	2020	39
2012	50		

In addition to retirements, it is likely that resignations, separations, and dismissals will add to the number of persons leaving the ministry over the next ten years. The table below shows the number of those leaving the ministry through retirements and through Church Order Articles 14, 16-c, 17-c, 82, 83, and 90 for the period 1992-2003.

Persons Who Have Exited Active Ministry in the CRCNA (1992-2003)

Year	Retirements	Art. 14	Art. 16-c	Art. 17-c	Art. 82, 83 (90)
1992	26	6	0	2	1
1993	27	21	2	3	1
1994	28	19	0	1	3
1995	32	15	0	0	1
1996	24	17	1	1	4
1997	25	13	0	1	0
1998	21	17	1	1	1
1999	17	13	0	1	0
2000	25	18	0	2	0
2001	28	10	0	1	3
2002	28	10	0	2	0
2003	26	10	0	4	0

It needs to be noted that these numbers reflect a period of significant upheaval in the CRC and, therefore, might not be indicative of future trends. Nevertheless, it is to be assumed that, due to a variety of factors, there will continue to be a number of persons who leave the ministry for reasons other than retirement.

In order to ascertain the future need for leaders, it is essential to compare the above numbers with the number of those expected to enter the ministry. The tables below indicate the number of persons who have entered the ministry of the CRCNA through Articles 6, 7, and 8 between the years 1992-2003.

**Persons Declared Eligible for Office of Minister
of the Word in the CRCNA (1992-2003)**

Year	Art. 6 Theologically Educated	Art. 7 Exceptionally Gifted	Art. 8 From Other Denominations
1992	37	1	17
1993	29	0	17
1994	24	3	22
1995	23	4	6
1996	24	0	16
1997	26	3	16
1998	29	2	13
1999	32	3	21
2000	34	3	9
2001	22	8	18
2002	27	5	14
2003	39	7	23

This quantitative analysis of those entering and leaving the ministry strongly suggests that there will be a growing need for pastoral leaders within our denomination over the next decade. When the denominational goal of planting up to thirty new churches per year is also factored in, the need for well-trained and well-equipped leaders becomes even greater.

Over the past few years, the rate of churches without pastors has hovered around 10 percent. Interpreted negatively, this means some churches have had difficulty finding a pastor, often extending the period of vacancy into a number of years. Interpreted positively, a 10 percent vacancy rate has allowed for the ongoing movement of pastors, often allowing both churches and pastors to experience a much-desired fresh start. However, if the present trend continues, the CRCNA could well have a growing vacancy rate in the next decade. If so, churches will suffer for lack of qualified and equipped ministers of the Word, and our goals for new church development will remain unmet.

III. Issues relating to the routes to the office of minister of the Word

A. Church Order Article 6 (*theological students*)

1. Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC)

Article 6 of the Church Order deals with the minister of the Word and the training required of persons ordained to that office. While it assumes that most students will attend Calvin Theological Seminary, it also deals with students who study at seminaries other than the seminary of the Christian Reformed Church. The Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC) was established to accommodate a growing number of students who were receiving their degrees from seminaries other than Calvin Seminary. This program calls for the student to pre-enroll and follow a prescribed plan during the years spent at another institution. The current SPMC program intends to achieve a number of goals, including preparing persons in Christian Reformed Church history, polity, and Reformed Confessions; giving the seminary faculty and board of trustees exposure to the student so that a recommendation can be made to synod regarding the person's fitness for ministry; enabling persons to become acquainted with the various agencies of the Christian Reformed Church; and providing opportunity for summer ministry in Christian Reformed churches.

As we considered this route into ministry, we became aware of several issues that affect those who desire to enter ministry in the CRC.

a. Location

Where a particular seminary is located, both geographically and culturally, can be an important factor in one's choosing a seminary. A seminary located in a large city, for example, is able to offer different kinds of programs from those in rural settings. Prospective students may choose a seminary based on its particular location and emphases.

b. Ethnicity

No one seminary can provide culturally relevant degree tracks for the needs of all ethnic groups. An Anglo-centric program is perceived by some as foreign and cumbersome. Prospective ethnic minority students may seek to pursue their educations at institutions that provide a familiar context for living, learning, and serving.

c. Ministry issues

Many potential students hear their call to ministry while involved in ministry in their local churches or classes. Their involvements can be highly specialized and dependent on the individual's leadership or vision. Such a person may wish to pursue an education in as nondisruptive a way as possible and will look for local training in a particular ministry track. Someone pursuing international missions, for example, may choose a seminary based on its ability to prepare him or her for this particular calling.

d. Family concerns

Spouses have careers, children require particular schools, and certain health needs require specialized medical care. Crossing national boundaries can create special problems for students when spouses are unable

to work or health care is unavailable. These issues and others can prevent a prospective student from considering a particular seminary.

Our mandate calls for us to examine whether the current SPMC and previous study committee's proposed SPMC programs are flexible enough to meet the needs of ministry candidates in special circumstances. A survey of participants in the SPMC program done by the previous study committee showed that students who completed the additional year at Calvin Theological Seminary found their experience there to be helpful, but most questioned whether the value was worth the amount of time and cost it required. The previous study committee recommended certain revisions to the SPMC program. Among them was the recommendation that the full year of the program was for anyone who has been a member of the CRC for fewer than seven years. For those who have been members for more than seven years, the residency and course requirements could be met through a combination of distance-education courses, summer courses, and a final full-time residency for one quarter at Calvin Seminary.

In summary, the challenge we face is how to encourage persons who have a passion for ministry to enter the ministry of the CRC and to maintain strong academic standards, yet not exclude persons who are not able to follow the normal route into the office of minister of the Word. Given the complexity of people's individual situations and the diversity of cultures within our denomination, it is increasingly difficult for one seminary to be the sole institution for the training and equipping of ministers in the Christian Reformed Church.

2. Models from other denominations

In the course of our study, we examined how other denominations provided programs for those who do not attend their denominational seminary. The following is a summary of what some of those we studied are doing to meet the needs of a diverse constituency.

a. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) does not have a denominational seminary. Persons aspiring to enter the ministry apply to their presbytery (our classis) through their session (our council). The presbytery then (1) ensures that the person has a broad range of biblical gifts as well as spiritual maturity to warrant their approval to seek ordination, and (2) takes the student under supervisory care so that he achieves the appropriate training.

In order to be licensed to preach, the student must have completed a bachelor of arts degree, at least one year of seminary training—including sermon preparation and exegesis in Greek and Hebrew—and an assigned theological paper prior to a presbytery examination. Throughout the licensure period, the individual is fully responsible and accountable to the presbytery. Only upon completion of all presbytery requirements is the individual eligible for call to a congregation.

To fulfill their denominational standards for ministry preparation, the OPC's Christian Education Committee formed a subcommittee called the Committee on Ministerial Training. This committee holds annual

meetings in various regions of the country; thus providing an assessment center for persons under the care of presbytery.

b. The Presbyterian Church (USA)

Persons who wish to pursue ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA), whether by enrolling in one of the denominational seminaries or in another approved seminary, must go through two stages in their preparation. The first is the inquiry stage. During this time, the presbytery seeks to find out more about the person's call and suitability for the ministry. The presbytery and the relevant session then review supporting information from others along with six prepared statements by the individual. Upon recommendation, a person moves to the candidacy stage.

During the candidacy stage, the presbytery supervises while the person pursues theological and field education. Annual reports are submitted to the presbytery and interviews take place at regular intervals. After the second year of theological training, the candidate is eligible to take ordination examinations. During the final year of completion of the presbytery requirements, the candidate may begin pursuing a call from a church.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) does allow for three exceptions: (1) the waiver of some of the requirements by the presbytery, (2) the commissioning of a lay pastor by a presbytery (though ordination of this type is not transferable), and (3) the entry of persons from emerging immigrant or refugee churches. All of these exceptions, however, require a two-thirds majority vote of the presbytery.

c. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

The process in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is similar to that of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Those pursuing theological education may attend Covenant Theological Seminary, the official seminary of the PCA, or another seminary approved by the denomination. Additionally, the PCA has what is called an "extra-ordinary clause" for the admission of persons who have both the requisite gifts for ministry and an adequate knowledge of the Reformed faith. This requires a two-thirds majority vote by the presbytery and must be approved by the general assembly (synod). This has been done to encourage Hispanic, Portuguese, and African American pastors and congregations to consider membership in the PCA.

d. The Reformed Church of America (RCA)

The usual channel for persons seeking ordination in the Reformed Church of America (RCA) is to attend one of the two denominational seminaries. The Ministerial Formation Coordinating Agency (MFCA) oversees all ministerial preparation, both for those attending an RCA seminary as well as for those who attend a non-RCA seminary.

A special subcommittee of the MFCA, Reformed Candidates Supervision and Care Committee (RCSC), works with persons who do not choose to attend one of the denominational seminaries. In these cases, the applicant must be an active member in an RCA church. Upon voicing a desire to enter the ministry, the applicant meets with the consistory that in turn discerns the qualifications of the individual and

determines whether or not to recommend him or her to the appropriate classis committee. The classis committee also interviews the applicant and makes a recommendation to classis. Upon satisfactorily completing the interview process, the applicant is accepted as a candidate and is placed under the care and supervision of the classis. The classis then makes an application for the certificate of fitness for ministry with either the chosen RCA seminary or with the RCSC. The appropriate agency then walks the candidate through the certification process—a process that takes a minimum of twenty-seven months.

During the final year, the candidate is given a provisional license. When all requirements have been met, either the chosen denominational seminary or the RCSC grants the certificate of fitness for ministry. After the certificate of fitness is granted, the candidate is examined for licensure and ordination. After the person has received a call, the sponsoring classis or the new classis will ordain the individual.

The RCA also has developed a new process for the ordination for those who are gifted and called but who cannot earn a master of divinity degree or its equivalent from an accredited seminary. The process is called the Approved Alternate Route. It takes into account the person's experience, demonstrated ability, and the clear call to the ministry. The program is also overseen by the MFCA.

One aspect of the RCA's approach that we found especially appealing is the fact that four courses are taught regionally throughout the denomination for anyone who does not take the *normal* route to candidacy by way of their denominational seminaries. These courses are RCA church history, creeds and confessions, church order, and worship, and they are rotated to the various regions.

3. Observations and conclusions regarding Article 6 issues

Based on our examination of the issues and what we learned from other denominations, the committee has made the following observations and formed the following conclusions:

- a. In our estimation, neither the present SPMC nor the SPMC program proposed by the previous study committee is flexible enough to meet the growing needs of our denomination. Therefore, the plan we propose seeks to maintain the best of the SPMC program but adds other features that provide flexibility along with accountability. This fulfills the part of our mandate that requires an examination of whether the current SPMC program and the (previous) study committee's proposed SPMC programs are flexible enough to meet the needs of ministry candidates in special circumstances.
- b. Other denominations similar to the CRC are wrestling with the matter of seminary training and training for those who have special gifts. Most have clear structures for both the student pursuing the regular seminary course as well as for the student who follows a special program due to unusual circumstances.
- c. In other denominations, the classis and/or presbytery has a significant role to play in caring for students once they have been approved by the presbytery for pastoral training. It has been noted that much more is

done for the student at the classical level in Presbyterian denominations than at the classical level in the Christian Reformed denomination. As we addressed our mandate in 9, d (a definition of a classically based process for ministry applicants using the current Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23) and 9, e (an evaluation of classically based Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees), we moved in the direction of greater classical involvement for several reasons:

- Classical student fund committees already exist in our classes; the proposed CMCC expands on that role.
 - The proposed plan integrates the individual, the congregation, and the denomination through the pivotal connection of the classis.
 - It honors the particular geographical, cultural, and local ministry circumstances within a classis.
 - The precedent of other denominations where the classis and/or presbytery has a significant role in the preparation of individuals for ministry provides successful models for this approach.
- d. Other denominations have come to the point of realizing, for financial or cultural reasons, that students cannot always attend denominational seminaries. They have thus provided for alternate routes for such persons to pursue ministerial training.
- e. Other denominations have built in the flexibility of providing alternate routes for their prospective ministers to accomplish their seminary training while simultaneously safeguarding both their denominational and their theological distinctives.

Note: The Christian Reformed Church has a long-standing practice of church-directed training for ministers of the Word. The principle behind this practice has been that the training of ministers of the Word is the responsibility of the church. In light of the committee's mandate to find ways of providing greater flexibility of routes to meet the needs of ministry candidates in special circumstances, how can this principle be maintained? The committee will be proposing that certain seminaries be designated as *endorsed alternatives* to the preferred route of Calvin Theological Seminary. Among other criteria identified later in this report, it is expected that all endorsed-alternative seminaries will provide an education that is comparable in academic scope, level of practical training, and general Reformed perspective to that which the church provides through Calvin Theological Seminary. By this means, the church will provide more flexible, alternate ways to maintain its long-standing requirement that ministers of the Word receive a satisfactory theological education (Church Order, Article 6) that is supervised by the church. Further, having endorsed alternative seminaries will enable the church to structure programs in cooperation with a manageable number of schools to help maintain involvement in and oversight of student programs. It will also provide practical guidance for the classical committees that will develop specific programs of study for particular individuals.

B. Church Order Article 7 (exceptional gifts)

1. History

Historically, the churches of the Reformation maintained that a thorough theological education is a requirement for admission to the ministry of the Word. However, almost from the very beginning, those same churches also provided for exceptions to that rule. The first such exception was put into a Church Order at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1574. It spoke of the qualities that must be present in those seeking to be declared candidates: “godliness, humility, spiritual discretion, wisdom, and the native ability to preach the Word.” Interestingly, Dordrecht’s provision was used infrequently except for four main “waves” of admissions: (1) in the 1570s when the Dutch Reformed Church was establishing itself in what had recently become a country free from Spanish occupation, (2) in the early 1600s when the Arminian controversy created great need, (3) in the mid 1800s when the churches of the secession of 1834 looked for “like-minded” ministers, and (4) in the late 1800s after yet another secession from the state church in 1886. Just seven years later, in 1893, the synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN—a union church made up mostly of members who seceded in 1834 and 1886) decided to “put the brakes” on the last “wave” of admissions by declaring:

The Reformed churches do not acknowledge any other route to the ministry of the Word than that of theological studies, except only in those extremely unusual cases where, by way of great exception, the Lord in his sovereign mercy bestows the necessary gifts through other means [freely translated].

2. Present process

True to its tradition, the CRC has always been committed to requiring extensive formal theological education for its clergy. Recognizing that the Holy Spirit sometimes uniquely equips people for ministry, the Church Order of the CRC includes a long-standing provision to admit to the ministry of the Word those who do not have the prescribed theological training. Church Order Article 7 currently reads:

Those who have not received the prescribed theological training but who give evidence that they are singularly gifted as to godliness, humility, spiritual discretion, wisdom, and the native ability to preach the Word, may, by way of exception, be admitted to the ministry of the Word, especially when the need is urgent.

While the regular academic preparation is not expected of an Article 7 candidate, a 1971 synodical directive to Calvin Seminary instructed the seminary to work with the classes for preparation of such Article 7 candidates (*Acts of Synod 1971*, pp. 124-25). This directive was not meant to ignore a person’s native gifts but rather to prepare as well as possible such a person for ministry if such seminary preparation, in a classis’ judgment, was thought to be in the interest of the church. Thus, the action indicates that Articles 6 and 7 are not mutually exclusive.

Virtually all of the admissions (approximately sixty) to the office of the minister of the Word through Article 7 have been made since 1980, even though this article has been in effect since the inception of the CRC. Article

7 is an alternate route to ordained ministry in the sense that this article is to operate only as an exception to the general rule that the church requires an extensive theological education of its ministers.

In this committee's judgment, the CRC should retain most of the provisions of Article 7 as they are given in the supplement to Church Order Article 7. The one change we would recommend has to do with the issue of need. Synod 2001 mandated this committee to address this issue. The occasion for synod's concern re the "need step" in Article 7 was related to an incident that happened on October 17, 2000, when the synodical deputies did not concur with the decision of Classis B.C. North-West to proceed with an examination of a candidate by way of Article 7 of the Church Order. The key issue was that the deputies and classis disagreed about the nature of the need that was to be established. The deputies felt that "urgent need is preponderantly a regional concern and must be established thereon." The classis argued that the denominational need for pastors was great enough so that "it was appropriate to proceed via Article 7" (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 494). Noting that ambiguity exists, Synod 2001 decided to add these words to our mandate:

That synod refer Church Order Article 7 and its supplement to the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry for clarification and for the formulation of guidelines for uniform application regarding the issues raised in the observations above.

(*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 495)

Currently, synodical deputies must first concur with a classis that there is a need for the use of Article 7 before processing such a candidate. The CRC, however, has struggled in its use of Article 7. Does the lack of need for ministers at any given time virtually render this provision inoperative? Or is it the case that even when there is no quantifiable need the church must acknowledge that the Lord uniquely equips people for ministry? Is the need to be defined locally or denominationally?

No churches made use of Article 7 in the CRC's time of greatest need—the late 1800s and early 1900s. The first Article 7 case did not arise until 1918, when J. Balt began his ministry at East Palmyra, New York. His tutor, the Rev. H. Bel, indicated at the time that he had "no recollection as to need in the churches at that time." In a separate case, Classis Hudson simply recognized "a good mind, an exceptional memory and the gifts of public address." In yet another case, Classis Pella refused admission to a certain M. Bouma in 1924. Need was not addressed. The only reason, as the classis indicated to synod, was "lack of the necessary gifts."

The evidence shows that in the practice of our denomination the need factor did not begin to play a role until mission fields were in great need of ministers of the Word. In 1947, a synodically appointed committee was still arguing that gifts alone, not need, are determinative in particular cases. Synod, however, ruled otherwise. Guided, among other things, by the consideration that there was a large enrollment of seminary and preseminary students, this assembly was the first to introduce the need factor into the denomination's provisions by declaring that "this article should function only in cases of great need" and that we must maintain, in theory and practice, the idea that the "regular door to the ministry is a thorough academic training."

The report of Synod 1947 was modified somewhat by Synod 1965, which adopted the following language for Article 7: those who qualify “may, by way of exception, be admitted to the ministry of the Word especially when the need is urgent.” While observing that need must be considered in the context of the whole denomination, given that synodical deputies are present at examinations of Article 7 candidates, Synod 1970 also rejected a study committee’s need-only approach. Synod 1979 did not accede to an overture requesting that the wording of the article be changed from “when the need is urgent” to “when these gifts meet a ministry need within the church.” Two of the grounds of its decision were:

2. The presence of exceptional gifts does not require the church to ordain the person who possesses them.
3. The synodical and church order regulations have always kept a balance in the application of Article 7 between gifts and needs.

(Acts of Synod 1979, p. 77)

Synod’s judgment of CRC practice as “balanced” is puzzling. How much of a balance has been kept up to this time? Candidates under Article 7 are only considered, regardless of the exceptional nature of their gifts, when a need is first established. Classis Minnesota North (now Lake Superior) complained to Synod 1979 that the “need” criterion has been “consistently interpreted by synodical deputies and by synod to mean ‘only when the need is urgent.’”

Furthermore, the character of so-called need is sometimes disputed (see *Acts of Synod 2001*, pp. 494-95). While need has traditionally referred to denominational need, those who entered the ministry of the Word by way of Article 7 had a local church ready to call them upon their becoming eligible. Only recently, with a case in Classis Eastern Canada and another in Classis Huron, have classes declared candidates for ministry with the denominational need for pastors as the definition of need.

3. Conclusions and recommendation regarding Article 7 issues

The committee thus judges that the CRC has come to understand the need criterion of Article 7 as prescriptive rather than descriptive as it was in the early history of the provision. It may also be that classes and synodical deputies have confused the need criterion of Church Order Article 8 with that of Article 7. Our committee believes that the church would be better served to return to the earlier understanding of Article 7. So as to provide direction and clarity to the church, the committee recommends that the phrase, “especially when the need is urgent” be dropped from Church Order Article 7.

Grounds:

- a. When candidates for ministry are declared by way of Article 6, there is no official declaration of need. By providing the education necessary for a well-equipped ministry, the church has already determined that a need exists. Those who become candidates by means of their exceptional gifts (Article 7) should not have an extra criterion added.
- b. Synod 2001 adopted as a guideline that “in ordination, the church recognizes that a person has the appropriate excellencies for ministry, the callings of Christ and the people of God, and a call to a role of pastoral responsibility” (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 504). If someone gives

evidence of calling and extraordinary gifts for the office of the minister of the Word, yet lacks the prescribed theological training, the church is wise to recognize that such gifts are God's gifts to the church, and that such gifts, when exercised, only enrich the church's ministry. Indeed, as Monsma and Van Dellen write in *The Revised Church Order Commentary* (1967 edition):

When God qualifies a man for the ministry by endowing him with excellent and extraordinary gifts for that office, then to be sure the Church of Christ is in duty bound to recognize this fact with appreciation.

(*The Revised Church Order Commentary*, p. 45)

While this committee recommends deleting the need criterion from Article 7, it also wants to emphasize that the CRC must continue to acknowledge the exceptional nature of this route to ordained ministry. It is intended to usher into ordained office only those who have native abilities for the ministry of the Word. Article 7 must not be used to ordain (1) those who have recently taken some theological education but who have not yet completed their programs; (2) those whose pursuit of the required theological education at seminary is made difficult by geographical or financial constraints; or (3) those with marginal character, knowledge, or skills.

C. *Church Order Article 8 (ministers from other denominations)*

1. Current process

Church Order Article 8 and its Supplement address the question of how ministers from other denominations enter the ministry of the CRCNA. Specifically, Article 8-b and 8-c read as follows:

- b. Ministers of other denominations desiring to become ministers in the Christian Reformed Church shall be declared eligible for a call by a classis only after a thorough examination of their theological training, ministerial record, knowledge of and soundness in the Reformed faith, and their exemplariness of life. The presence and concurring advice of the synodical deputies are required.
- c. Ministers of other denominations who have not been declared eligible for a call shall not be called unless all synodical requirements have been met.

While these two points address the question of standards for ministry, Church Order Supplement, Article 8 both raises the question of need and describes the synodically approved process for ordained ministers from other denominations to enter the CRC ministry. A summary is as follows:

- a. As it relates to the church, only those churches that have put forth a sustained yet unsuccessful effort to secure a minister from within the CRC and who have a viable ministry may consider calling a person from outside the CRC. As it relates to the pastor, he or she must apply to the CRC classis in, or closest to, the proposed field of ministry (Church Order Supplement, Article 8, D, 1-2).
- b. First step: the classis, with the approval of the synodical deputies, must establish need in order to obtain the services of a minister from another denomination. Classis engages in deliberation about need based on an actual application by a pastor. Included in the minister's application is a statement of health, appropriate diplomas (credentials), and an

evaluated psychological report. Such approval is to be reported in *The Banner* (Church Order Supplement, Article 8, D, 3-7 regarding need).

- c. Second step: a *colloquium doctum* is held but only upon the approval of established need made at the previous classis meeting. Upon approval of the examination, the council is free to extend a call to the pastor (Church Order Supplement, Article 8, D, 3-4, 8-10).

The number of ordained individuals entering the ministry of the CRCNA through Article 8 has steadily increased during the last thirty years and the importance of this alternate route needs to be recognized. The 19 entrants from 1970-1979, the 59 from 1980-1989, and the 137 from 1990-1999 reveal the willingness of churches to seek ministry leaders outside the CRCNA (*Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 329, 344). Additionally, given the expected number of retirements, the envisioned number of new church plants, and the projected number of seminary graduates, it seems safe to say that the next decade, as the previous three, will likely experience an increase in the number of those who will use Article 8 to seek entrance to the CRCNA ordained ministry.

2. Conclusions and recommendation regarding Article 8 issues

In the spirit of Article 8, the previous Committee to Study Alternate Routes to Ministry, Synod 2000, and the Church Order, the current committee endorses the need for standards that honor our Reformed theological, confessional heritage. Such standards, however, are meaningless unless they come to living expression in both vital faith and ministry competence. Any separation of knowledge, character, and skills will greatly impoverish the gospel ministry that God has entrusted to his church. This wholistic standard must be the common thread that ties the denomination, classis, local congregation, and candidate together.

It is significant, therefore, that Church Order Supplement Article 8 suggests that the need of the incoming minister to secure employment is not as important as the need of the church's ministry to be effectively served by her or his ministry gifts. So-called gifts become the crucial concern for using this route to enter the ministry. Specifically, Church Order Supplement, Article 8, D, 5 states:

The need for calling a minister of another denomination shall be acknowledged when:

- a. The minister to be called has such extraordinary qualifications that the church recognizes that it would be important for the denomination to acquire his service, or,
- b. The need of a particular congregation for a pastor is so urgent that it can be met only by calling a minister from another denomination, or,
- c. The minister is a new-church developer and is being called to start a new church, or,
- d. There is a need for indigenous leadership in a multicultural or ethnic minority church.

There is, of course, great need in the Christian Reformed Church for ministers of the Word to serve both established churches and new church plants. One of the concerns for our committee, therefore, was to find the

appropriate process for this alternate route that would ensure theological and confessional integrity and, therefore, ministry fit. In short, what process can and should be developed to ensure that Article 8 does not become a quick fix for either a minister's need for employment or a church's desire to fill a vacancy?

Our committee believes that the process for entrance and acceptance through Article 8 should be expanded and made more intentional. There are two reasons for this conviction. First, determining that there is a good theological and ministry fit between an applicant and the denomination requires sufficient time. Second, other denominations have used an expanded process with good success. It is our hope that this process will turn the initial favorable impressions of a minister from another denomination into a healthy relationship upon which an eventual engagement will lead to a long, happy marriage!

As is noted in the proposal, "The plan for ordination by way of Church Order Articles 6, 7, and 8," (see section IV and the process in Appendix A), the Article 8 process will require the candidate to serve a mutually agreed upon specified period of time as stated supply in order to determine the mutual fit for ministry. It requires the candidate to enter into an individually shaped learning covenant to satisfy the denominational standards of character, knowledge, and skills. It also requires a candidate to engage in a mentoring relationship in order to better understand the ecclesiastical and ministry culture of the CRCNA. This, it is hoped, will afford the candidate a better opportunity for long-term, effective (successful) service in the church, and it will confirm to the church that it has indeed received from the Lord a person well suited and called to minister within the CRCNA.

Proposing an expanded and more intentional process for Article 8 entrants to the ministry, however, is not unique to our study committee. Synod 1985 received a report from the Committee to Study the Ordination of Pastors from Multiracial Groups. This study proposed an "affiliation process" that was required of those churches and pastors entering the CRC. Many of the churches and pastors using this process have been from ethnic minority communities. A recent assessment of the program, not yet processed by the Board of Trustees or synod, was given to our committee. This assessment document states: "One of the weak points in the process has been the orienting of new pastors. Some classes have done that well, but in most cases, too little attention has been given to orientating, assimilating, and mentoring new leaders."

When individual ministers or churches desire to affiliate with the CRCNA, the rewritten affiliation report recommends a three-phased process. Phase 1, "Getting Acquainted," is a period of time during which both parties learn about each other, develop a meaningful relationship, and explore whether there is a mutual desire to affiliate within the CRCNA. Phase 2, "Fellowship and Affiliation," is a period of time when the classis will "seek to acquaint itself more fully with the background, values, beliefs, and vision" of the pastor or faith community, and the new pastor or faith community will "orient themselves more fully with the confessions, theology, polity, and practices of the CRC." Phase 3, "Mentoring," is a period when, after acceptance into the CRCNA, the pastor and/or community of faith is mentored into the "full life" of the church's fellowship.

This process is not far removed from the process our committee proposes. Perhaps the biggest, and not insignificant, difference is that our committee believes the process needs the involvement of the local congregation, the classis through its CMCC (Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee), and the denomination through the SMCC (Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee). The above-mentioned review of the current affiliation process, however, places the entire process in the hands of a classical committee. Because Article 8 addresses itself to the need of the church and not merely the need of the candidate, it is the entire church that should ensure theological and ministry fit. Additionally, because the credentialing of ministers of the Word is a denominational function, local and regional input alone is insufficient.

As a whole, this committee celebrates the opportunities to gain new leaders through the alternate route outlined in Article 8. Fresh input is healthy; however, we must not betray the essential confessional, Reformed identity that defines the ministry that God has entrusted to us. Our committee believes that both the reception of fresh input and the retention of our Reformed identity are honored in our suggested process. The process outlined below creates a usable and effective structure that will produce a more uniform practice regarding Article 8 than is currently the case.

IV. The plan for ordination by way of Church Order Articles 6, 7, and 8

A. Our mandate

As a result of our examination of the issues listed above, our committee developed the following process that we believe will meet our needs for future ministerial leaders in the CRC. This process details five routes (three routes through Article 6 and one route each through Articles 7 and 8.) These routes more fully engage the local church and the classis in the process of identifying and developing leaders. This process will assist the church because it will provide a consistent, denominational standard of theological education prior to ordination, yet allow for the varying circumstances of life experiences, geography, and cultural diversity within which our future ministers hear their calls. Thus, these future ministers will be encouraged to pursue ordination in the Christian Reformed Church. This process engages the congregation, classis, and seminary in the training of ministers of the Word.

This proposal fulfills the mandate given this committee by Synod 2000:

- d. Based on the adopted standards for a well-equipped and well-trained ministry in the light of 9, a and 9, b . . . , a definition of a classically based process by which ministry applicants using the current Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23 will be both encouraged to enter into the ordained ministry and be uniquely equipped for it in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.
- e. An evaluation of the proposed denominational Ministry Leadership Advisory Council and the classically based classical ministerial candidacy committees in terms of the desire to give both local churches and classes more responsibility for the ministry-formation process.
- f. An exploration of the impact of such a process for the current reading of Church Order Articles 7, 8, 21, and 23 and for the function of synodical deputies for classical examinations, and recommendations for any appropriate changes.

- g. In light of the conclusions of 9, a; 9, b; and 9, d . . . , an exploration of how best to recommend to synod the candidates for ordained ministry.

(*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 705)

B. *Proposed committees*

The work of two proposed committees, one classical and the other synodical, will ensure that the denomination's ministerial requirements will be applied with consistency, fairness, and justice. The committee proposes the following recommendations:

1. The Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (SMCC)

Our proposal requires that a new standing committee of synod be formed. We recommend calling it the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (SMCC). This committee is comparable in purpose and mandate to the MLAC (Ministry Leadership Advisory Council) that was suggested by the previous alternate routes committee (see *Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp. 308-9). The change in name emphasizes its primary purpose—supervising the ministerial candidacy process.

a. Membership

The Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee shall be appointed by synod and be composed of the following members:

- Three ministers of the Word who are pastors of congregations
- One minister of the Word (not necessarily a pastor of a congregation)
- Four nonclergy people
- One member of the Calvin Seminary faculty
- The general secretary (ex officio with voting privileges)
- One additional person with training and/or experience in higher theological education

The following will serve as nonvoting advisers:

- A representative from Christian Reformed Home Missions
- A representative from Christian Reformed World Missions
- The director of Race Relations
- The director of Pastor-Church Relations
- The director of the Chaplaincy Ministries

The relevant synodical guidelines regarding length of terms, geographical distribution, and the ethnic and gender diversity of its members will apply to this committee.

b. Mandate

The SMCC shall:

- 1) Establish with the approval of synod standards that will result in consistency, fairness, and justice in applying the denomination's requirements for each person who desires to become a minister of the Word in the CRC, whether applying under Article 6, 7, or 8 of the Church Order.
- 2) Maintain, clarify, and periodically review these standards.

- 3) Assist the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees by providing them with information, counsel, and resources as they oversee each individual preparing and/or applying to become a minister of the Word in the CRC. The SMCC will also provide training for the CMCC members in the fulfillment of their responsibilities in this new system.
- 4) Approve each individual's application to begin preparing for the ministry, including a proposed study plan and a financial plan.
- 5) Implement and maintain regular contact with the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees to determine who is under their care and that proper procedures are being followed.
- 6) Recommend candidates to the synod of the CRC upon the individual's completion of the Ministry Readiness Portfolio. Synod will still approve candidates for ministry.
- 7) Establish, maintain, and review a list of endorsed alternative seminaries and ensure that a CRC presence is established in each of these institutions to assist students who are preparing for ordained ministry in the denomination. The list of endorsed seminaries will be established on the basis of theological and confessional fit, as well as on the level of academic rigor and standards. Synod will approve the initial list and any subsequent additions or deletions from the list.
- 8) Grant denominational licensure to exhort to students studying for the ordained ministry in the CRC.
- 9) Provide support and accountability throughout the preparatory process for women whose council or classis has not declared the word *male* in Church Order Article 3 inoperative.
- 10) Provide resources to equip classes (through the CMCC) for the candidacy and ordination exams so that there is consistency throughout the denomination. These guidelines will enable some standardization so that equality in examination is realized.
- 11) Report annually to synod on its work.

2. The Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (CMCC)

A second structure necessary to the proposed plan is the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee. We propose that all classes disband the current student fund committee and create in its place a Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (CMCC). This committee will also be responsible for maintaining a student fund for the support of those preparing for ordained ministry.

a. Membership

The membership of the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (CMCC) will be composed of individuals who have a passion for the church's ministry, who are knowledgeable about ordination issues, and who reflect the diversity within the classis. Its exact composition will be

left to the discretion of each classis, but no committee shall have less than 50 percent ministers of the Word. The size of the committee should be allowed to fluctuate somewhat, depending in part upon the number of persons within the classis preparing to enter the ordained ministry at any given time.

Synodical guidelines regarding the composition of committees shall be observed.

b. Mandate

The mandate of each CMCC shall be established by each classis, but shall include at least the following responsibilities:

- 1) Encourage gifted individuals within the churches of the classis to consider pastoral ministry as a vocation.
- 2) Approve each individual's application to begin preparing for the ministry (whether by Church Order Articles 6, 7, or 8) and forward their recommendation to the SMCC.
- 3) Provide pastoral support and nurture to all those belonging to its churches who are preparing for ministry under the provisions of Church Order Articles 6, 7, or 8. This will include providing a mentor for each applicant as well as training for the mentors.
- 4) Recommend and administer the distribution of appropriate financial resources to assist those preparing for ministry under Articles 6, 7, or 8.
- 5) Draft, with the individual, a study plan and financial plan (Article 6), or a learning covenant and financial plan (Articles 7 and 8). These plans will be forwarded to the SMCC.
- 6) Oversee and supervise the entire process of ministry preparation and formation as outlined in "The Ordination Process under the Provisions of Church Order Articles 6, 7, and 8" (see Appendix A).
- 7) Ensure that opportunities for fulfilling the individual's learning covenant (Articles 7 and 8) are provided—preferably within the bounds of classis and its churches.
- 8) Recommend and endorse individuals for candidacy under the provisions of Church Order Articles 6, 7, or 8 upon completion of the individual's Ministry Readiness Portfolio. Such recommendations will be forwarded to the SMCC.
- 9) Assist the classis in appropriately celebrating the progress of those preparing for the ministry under its care, giving thanks to God for his provision of faithful and gifted leadership for his church.

Through the creation of a Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee and its counterpart in each classis, the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee, candidates for ministry who have demonstrated gifts for and potential in ministry enter a process that encourages leadership formation, spiritual growth, academic preparation, and authentic practice of the skills and knowledge needed to fill the office. Each stage of the process brings greater levels of responsibility, accountability, and competency as individu-

als journey through the ordination process and are equipped to become the gifted leaders that God has called them to be.

C. The process to ordination

With the creation of these two committees, we see the process toward ordination proceeding as follows:

Note: This process is presented in chart format in Appendix A.

1. For the individual

- a. An individual applies to the council, indicating his or her intentions to prepare for the ministry under the provisions of Church Order Articles 6 or 7.
- b. The individual's gifts have been demonstrated in the context of the congregation.
- c. Before receiving a council's recommendation, an individual must be a member of a particular CRC congregation for:
 - 1) A minimum of one year in the case of an Article 6
 - 2) A minimum of three years in the case of an Article 7

Note: Either the congregation determines the need to extend a call outside the denomination in the case of an Article 8 or the ordained minister from another denomination seeking to enter the CRC contacts the CMCC regarding the process to be followed.

- d. The individual continues to maintain close ties of support and fellowship with the home church throughout the process.
- e. Primary responsibility for the completion of the Ministry Readiness Portfolio (Appendix B) rests on the individual.

2. For the council

- a. The council endorses the individual's application, forwarding it to the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee following the council's assessment of the person's gifts and call through conversation, observation, and further opportunities to demonstrate leadership and skills for ministry.

Note: In the case of an Article 8, the request for eligibility for call is forwarded to the CMCC.

- b. The council commits to journey with the individual through his or her time of preparation.
- c. The council provides support and accountability for the individual throughout the preparatory process and offers the opportunity to exhort at least once annually.
- d. At the end of the preparatory period, the council endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry and forwards that recommendation to the CMCC.

Note 1: In the case of Articles 7 and 8, the council also prepares an assessment and a performance review of the individual and forwards this to the CMCC.

Note 2: In the case of Article 8, the council recommends that the individual be declared eligible for call and forwards this recommendation to the CMCC.

3. For the classis

- a. After receiving an endorsement from a local council, the CMCC interviews the individual regarding his or her call to the ministry. If the individual is considering attending a seminary other than Calvin Theological Seminary, the CMCC discusses the individual's reasons for this choice. A study plan and a financial plan are drafted. If all preliminary discussions are satisfactory, the CMCC arranges for a classical interview.

Note 1: If an Article 7 ordination is being applied for, the CMCC must also receive at this time a statement of health and an evaluated psychological report. The individual is also interviewed by the CMCC to determine whether ordination under Article 7 is appropriate. If all preliminary discussions are satisfactory, the CMCC arranges for a classical interview.

Note 2: If an Article 8 ordination is being applied for, the individual meets with the CMCC to review credentials, diplomas, health, and psychological fitness. If the CMCC determines that everything is in order and that ordination under the provisions of Article 8 may proceed, it recommends a classical interview. Classis, on the basis of that interview, determines desire and calling to the CRC and determines whether ordination under Article 8 is appropriate. Classis then approves the appointment of the individual to a term as stated supply in a church in the classis. A learning covenant is drafted and adequate financial compensation is arranged.

- b. The classis then interviews the Article 6 individual regarding his or her call to ministry and endorses the individual's application.
- c. The CMCC forwards the study and financial plan, along with classis' endorsement, to the SMCC and the individual's seminary.

Note 1: The learning covenant and financial plan for Article 7 applicants must be forwarded to the SMCC.

Note 2: The application, learning covenant, and financial compensation plan for Article 8 applicants must be forwarded to the SMCC.

- d. Classis commits to journey with the individual through the years of preparation and appoints a mentor who supports the individual with prayer, spiritual direction, and pastoral nurture.
- e. Classis continues to provide annual accountability, pastoral care, and mentoring throughout the period of preparation. Nine to twelve months prior to an anticipated candidacy, the classis interviews Article 6 individ-

uals regarding their readiness for ministry. Classis should schedule this to fit the classis calendar and the student's academic program.

- f. On receiving the endorsement of a council for the candidacy of the individual, the CMCC meets for a final interview with him or her. Based on the satisfactory completion of the Ministry Readiness Portfolio, the CMCC recommends classical endorsement. Classis endorses the individual as a candidate and forwards this to the SMCC.

- In the case of Articles 7 and 8, the CMCC affirms that the learning covenant has been completed.

- g. Article 7 individuals are examined and endorsed by classis; that endorsement is forwarded to the SMCC.
- h. Article 8 individuals are interviewed through a *colloquium doctum* in the presence of the synodical deputies and are declared eligible for call as ministers of the Word in the CRC. Classis informs the SMCC of its action.

4. For the denomination

- a. Through the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee (SMCC), all the work of the CMCC is approved.

- In the case of Articles 7 and 8, the SMCC concurs with the classis on the appropriate use of the church order articles.

- b. The SMCC will establish and maintain a list of endorsed alternative seminaries for preparation for ministry in the CRC.
- c. Upon receiving and approving the application for preparation for ministry from a classis, a Ministry Readiness Portfolio is opened in the name of the individual (see Appendix B).
- d. During the period of study and preparation, the SMCC provides counsel, advice, and resources to the CMCCs as required or requested.
- e. Active and retired pastors in the regions of the endorsed seminaries and in the classes can assist the SMCC in its work.
- f. Interviews for licensure to exhort will be arranged by the SMCC through panels of persons qualified to conduct such interviews. For CTS students the SMCC may request the CTS board to provide a panel or panels to interview them and report their recommendation(s) to the SMCC.
- g. Upon receiving a classical endorsement for candidacy, the SMCC through its examining panels conducts an interview with the candidate. Upon the satisfactory completion of the interview and a review of the individual's Ministry Readiness Portfolio or an assurance that the learning covenant has been completed, the SMCC recommends candidacy for ministry and forwards it to synod. For CTS students, the SMCC may request the CTS board to provide a panel or panels to interview them and to report their recommendations to the SMCC.
- h. Synod then declares the individual a candidate for ministry of the Word in the CRC.

D. Seminary routes

1. Calvin Theological Seminary

Calvin Theological Seminary remains the preferred route to ordination through Church Order Article 6 in our plan. There are many reasons that church councils and classes should encourage study at Calvin Seminary, including

- a. The curriculum is consciously Reformed and designed with an organic integrity and holistic unity toward preparing persons for ministry in the CRC;
- b. The professors are ordained in the CRC and committed to its ongoing mission and ministry;
- c. At Calvin Seminary, future ministers will be able to develop a collegial spirit with their colleagues as they spend time together;
- d. Calvin Seminary will be the attractive financial choice due to denominational support;
- e. The completion of the Ministry Readiness Portfolio will be more easily accomplished in partnership within the denomination.

2. Endorsed alternative seminaries

We propose inviting a limited number of seminaries to enter into a relationship with the CRCNA through the SMCC. Invitations would be limited to those who meet the following criteria:

- a. A theological orientation that is compatible with educating ministers of the Word for a confessionally Reformed church.
- b. Willingness to work on the design and administration of student programs as required by the CRC endorsed seminary protocol as developed by the SMCC.
- c. Geographical proximity to Christian Reformed congregations to enable concurrent supervised ministry, to allow for mentoring by a local representative of the SMCC, and to allow for continuing membership in a CRC congregation.
- d. Geographical spread for the set of endorsed seminaries as a whole to provide options for endorsed theological education to as many CRC people as possible.
- e. Accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.
- f. An academic curriculum comparable to that required for the master of divinity degree at Calvin Theological Seminary.
- g. Field education that is comparable to that required by Calvin Theological Seminary and that accommodates learning in a CRC setting.

By officially endorsing a number of alternative seminaries, the church provides students who are preparing for the ministry at a seminary other than Calvin Theological Seminary with some direction and guidance as to

which seminaries are most compatible with our own academic and theological values. Similarly, CMCCs will also be given a reasonable level of assurance that the institutions on the endorsed alternatives list have met the criteria that potentially indicate a “good fit” in terms of our own expectations of how best to train and be prepared for ministry.

On each endorsed alternative seminary campus, the SMCC will ensure that a CRC presence is established. A local pastor or church leader will meet with students at least monthly, will be available to students for consultation when desired, and will serve as mentor to the student. The local leader will also serve as partner with the CMCC to assist the student through the ministry preparation process, helping to ensure that the requirements of the Ministry Readiness Portfolio are met. These denominational representatives could also serve the student by arranging the licensure exam or by mentoring the student in matters related to CRC polity, CRC church history, and the Reformed confessions.

In partnership with the endorsed alternative seminaries, the CRC students would receive credit for courses that are CRC specific in content, i.e., CRC polity, church history, and the Reformed confessions. These courses could be individually mentored, taught by Calvin Theological Seminary professors in a region, taught by local CRC clergy, or taken on line through Calvin’s planned distance learning.

While this approach will include some new expenses, it is more financially feasible than establishing Calvin Theological Seminary satellite campuses.

3. Other seminaries

We have already identified reasons why an individual might choose to study at a seminary other than Calvin Theological Seminary or one of the endorsed alternative seminaries. Therefore, the opportunity to attend other (nonendorsed) seminaries also needs to be left open as an option for students to pursue. However, the student will not be afforded the advantages of studying at Calvin Theological Seminary or at one of the endorsed seminaries and will have to demonstrate through the completion of his or her Ministry Readiness Portfolio that the standards for becoming a candidate as a minister of the Word in the CRCNA have been met. This will be more difficult and costly in such a setting, but it will still be possible by gaining needed education through a variety of avenues.

E. Benefits of this plan

In light of our mandate and our analysis regarding trained ministers for the CRC, the proposed plan has the following benefits:

1. It provides avenues for entrance into CRC ministry that are more flexible than those of the current Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (see Appendix E and section III, A, 1 of this report).
2. It promotes the role of the congregation in identifying and developing leaders. The process, therefore, begins where the person is well known and has had an opportunity to exercise giftedness.
3. It identifies the classis as the appropriate place to oversee the preparation and growth of an individual for ministry. If the individual is studying at a

seminary in or near the classis, the CMCC can more easily give direct guidance than can a synodical body.

4. It affirms the value of theological preparation as the expected training for all candidates for the ministry, no matter what route they take to ordination.
5. It provides for consistency in that every individual preparing for ministry will be held to the same set of basic standards regardless of the type or amount of seminary education, with the exception of demonstrated competence in the biblical languages for those pursuing ordination through Article 7 (see the Ministry Readiness Profile in Appendix B).
6. It continues to affirm that Calvin Theological Seminary is the preferred route to the office of minister of the Word.
7. It allows for just and equitable standards to be applied consistently to all who seek ordination in the CRC.
8. It provides flexibility and encouragement for those coming from ethnic minority backgrounds and local ministry circumstances to meet the requirements for ordination through alternate routes.
9. It affirms that the conferring of candidacy is the responsibility of synod.
10. It will provide welcoming exposure to the CRC for those who attend other seminaries.

F. Differences in this plan

This plan will involve several changes in our current practice of preparation for ministry; for example:

1. The oversight of the candidacy process will be the responsibility of the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee.
2. It more fully engages the local church in the process of ministerial development by supporting those preparing for the ministry of the Word, recognizing the importance of their place in the covenant community, and celebrating the role that the local congregation has played in the nurture and raising up of this leader.
3. It gives the classis the authority, tools, and resources it needs to discern properly the appropriate route for an individual to undertake by recognizing that a classis is the church body best able to make this determination.
4. It allows for the possibility of culturally contextualized and geographically appropriate training of ministers by allowing them to be trained and educated in the places where they are currently exercising their gifts and experiencing their call to ministry.
5. It transfers the granting of licensure from the board of Calvin Theological Seminary to the SMCC with the exception of the classical licensure granted to those in the first step of the Article 7 route.
6. It transfers some of the tasks of the synodical deputies to the SMCC. The synodical deputies' presence will still be required for the *colloquium doctum*

of an Article 8 and the classical examinations of candidates after they have accepted a call in a congregation of the CRC.

7. It bases the appropriate use of Article 7 for ordination solely on exceptional and singular giftedness and not on need.
8. It expects that certain seminaries will be endorsed as “endorsed alternative seminaries” to Calvin Theological Seminary.

G. The Ministry Readiness Portfolio

As noted above, each individual who prepares for ministry is responsible for completing a Ministry Readiness Portfolio as determined and agreed upon by the individual, the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee, and the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee. The contents of this portfolio will vary somewhat among those in the route of Article 6 and those in the routes of Articles 7 and 8. This portfolio will continue to guard our understanding that “the completion of a satisfactory theological training shall be required for admission to the ministry of the Word”; while at the same time it acknowledges the exceptional gifts of Article 7. The portfolio also reflects that the basic standards for all ministry positions are character, knowledge, and skills.

The Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee will be responsible, on behalf of synod, for defining and revising the contents of the portfolio. The chart that details the various aspects of the portfolio appears in Appendix B.

V. The plan for the office of evangelist/ministry associate

A. Our mandate

Another part of our mandate has to do with the office of evangelist in the Christian Reformed Church.

Specific attention is to be given but not limited to the following:

- a. An examination of the processes currently used by a number of classes for the training of individuals for ministry—such as ethnic minorities, Church Order Articles 7 and 23 applicants, and Home Missions’ Leadership Development Networks—to determine their key components for the formation of a well-equipped and well-trained ordained ministry.
- b. An examination of the proposed standardized framework for the training, education, and mentoring of evangelists (Recommendation J, pp. 307-8) to determine its key components for the formation of a well-equipped and well-trained ministry.
- c. An examination of the proposed framework in the study-committee report for alternate routes, Section VIII, B for “Changing offices (from evangelist to minister of the Word)” (Agenda for Synod 2000, pp. 300-302) and development of a denominational standard and strategy to guide the process whereby ordained evangelists can receive the additional training needed should a church consider calling such a person to become a (denominationally credentialed) minister of the Word.

(Acts of Synod 2000, P. 704)

B. Leadership Development Networks

The first part of our mandate in regard to the office of evangelist required us to determine the key components in the processes that classes use for training people for the office of evangelist. When the office of evangelist was created in 1978, most who first applied were graduates of Reformed Bible College who

were serving in smaller churches. There were no specific expectations regarding the training one received prior to ordination. There was no specified place to go to receive training as preparation for the office. In fact, little was said about what to expect from those who entered into the office. Classis California South began to develop what are now called Leadership Development Networks. It called Gary Schipper in 1989 to develop a program whereby Hispanic church planters could be trained and deployed for the harvest. This program has since expanded through the denomination with Hispanic evangelist training centers in six different centers around the United States (Los Angeles, Chula Vista, Camarillo, Miami, West Palm Beach, and New Jersey). Three more centers are planned (Grand Rapids; Holland, Michigan; and Sunnyside, Washington). In 1995, Classes California South and Greater Los Angeles invited Al Breems to begin a similar training process for people who speak English. Soon Leadership Development Networks were scattered across the United States and Canada. At this writing, there are ten centers (Southern California, British Columbia, Texas, Chicago (2), Denver, Central California, New Jersey, Maine, and Wisconsin) with several more in various stages of planning.

1. Similarities

What are the similarities of the programs? All of them are intended to be comprehensive and to integrate character, knowledge, and skills in the training process.

As we saw earlier, these are the same elements that make up the training for a minister of the Word, and they constitute the primary similarity between the programs—they focus on these areas for a period of three years of study. Other similarities include (1) a focus on the second-career individual, (2) a combination of classroom and mentor training, (3) on-site training with involvement in the local church, and (4) local initiation.

2. Differences

There are differences between the programs as well. Training in these areas is different from one program to the other. Some are classroom oriented; others are driven by the mentor model. Some have a goal of producing ordained evangelists; others seek to prepare leaders for the church, whether staff or volunteer. Most have local boards to which they report; others report to a classical committee.

3. Conclusion and proposal

In evaluating this part of our mandate, we find that the essential elements for a well-equipped and well-trained evangelist are an emphasis on character, knowledge, and skills.

a. Previous committee's proposal

Because there are many of these programs, some have voiced concerns about the lack of denominational standards and guidelines for the office of evangelist and for the Leadership Development Networks in general. Therefore, the previous study committee recommended that the general requirements for the training of evangelists be standardized. See Appendix C for these recommendations compared with other standards adopted by Synod 2000 and earlier.

b. This committee's proposal

We have been privileged, in our study, to meet with several of the leaders of the Leadership Development Networks, including Rev. James Osterhouse, the Christian Reformed Home Missions' Leadership Development Network specialist. In that role, he invites the leaders to yearly meetings at which materials and techniques are shared. Through this means, the programs are developing stronger standards for the office of evangelist.

A set of standards for evangelists was initially developed by the leaders of the Leadership Development Network (LDN) and later honed by our committee. We propose that these standards be adopted by synod and referenced by the classes at the time of an evangelist's ordination. Please note that these are competency-based standards. In other words, what examiners should look for is a level of competency that is proportional to the responsibilities of the office of evangelist. What the standards do not delineate is how the person is to achieve the competencies. They might be achieved through experience alone, through experience plus some classroom work, through mentoring, or through a completed leadership development network program.

The proposed standards are as follows:

Qualifications	Evangelist/Ministry Associate
<i>Character</i>	The evangelist is mature in Christ. "Christlikeness" covers all of what it means to be godly. The following guidelines, which are rooted in Scripture (references are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive), suggest many aspects of godly character:
	1. Devoted to Jesus - The evangelist is "in Christ" (John 15:5), filled with his Spirit (Acts 1:8), and exercises personal spiritual disciplines.
	2. Committed to the church and its mission (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Eph. 4:11-13, 1 Tim. 5:22) - The evangelist is a person in Christian community. She/he has been tested and proven. She/he has been recognized as prepared for ministry by the community of believers and evidences accountability to it.
	3. Called and gifted (Matt. 28:16ff, Acts 1:8) - The evangelist has a calling from God that is confirmed by the church. That calling provides her/him with a mission, with vision, and with intrinsic motivation. She/he ministers out of giftedness (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12, etc.).
	4. Filled with love (Matt. 22:37-40) - The evangelist is characterized by love—love of God, love of self, and love of others, including lost and diverse people.
	5. Possesses the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) - The evangelist gives evidence of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.
	6. Possesses the qualities of an office-bearer (1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9) - The evangelist demonstrates such qualities as being: reputable, loyal, self-disciplined, respected, hospitable, mature, honest, sincere, teachable and able to teach, emotionally stable, blameless, lover of God and not money, resilient, responsible, not quick-tempered, not overbearing, not quarrelsome, not abusive (of others or substances), managing her/his own household well (including spousal support of ministry), risk-taking, flexible, adaptable, etc.

Qualifications	Evangelist/Ministry Associate
	7. Has a servant's heart (Matt. 20:26) - The evangelist is a servant-leader.
	8. Possesses wisdom (Prov. 1:1-7) - The evangelist lives according to God's design, recognizes Christ as "wisdom from God" (1 Cor. 1:30, Col. 2:3), and seeks wisdom from above (James 1:5, 3:13).
	9. Manages life well - The evangelist practices good stewardship of time, talents, finances, and physical creation (Gen. 1:27-28, Ps. 8:6-8).
	10. Eager to learn - The evangelist is a lifelong learner, ever studying God's word and world (Ps. 19) and demonstrates that she/he has been and is currently being mentored.
<i>Biblical Knowledge</i>	The evangelist has a working knowledge of the Bible in her/his native language, and:
	a. is able to identify Scripture's main themes (covenant, kingdom of God, <i>missio Dei</i> , etc.) and to locate their place in the redemptive history that is centered in Christ;
	b. has command of the divisions of Scripture (Law, prophets, gospels, epistles, etc.), the historical and literary contexts of each biblical book, and basic hermeneutical principles required to interpret them;
	c. is able to demonstrate knowledge of key Scripture passages, and to apply them appropriately to life and ministry.
	Based on the above, the evangelist is able to prepare and preach/teach meaningful and motivational messages/lessons that are true to Scripture. The evangelist is able to communicate clearly the gospel to unbelievers and believers.
<i>Theological Knowledge</i>	1. The evangelist has knowledge of doctrinal standards and systematic theology at the level of Berkhof's <i>Manual of Christian Doctrine</i> . This would include knowledge of Reformed systematic theology, the Ecumenical Creeds, and the three confessional standards of the Christian Reformed Church. Furthermore, the evangelist is able to differentiate and defend the Reformed faith biblically from other systems of thought, both Christian and non-Christian. She/he is able to reflect from a biblical perspective on the cultures, circumstances, and events of everyday life and ministry.
	2. The evangelist has a basic knowledge of church history (including Christian Reformed Church history and culture) and is able to apply its lessons to present reality and ministry.
<i>Skill - Practice of Ministry</i>	Evangelists give evidence of ministry skills. The skills necessary for ministry are many, and not all evangelists possess them in the same measure. (Someone in a ministry position that extends the pastoral office will be expected to demonstrate skills only in relation to the particularity of her/his position.) Evangelists, whether in specialized ministry within an organized congregation or in new church development, use skills to lead the church of Jesus Christ to fulfill the New Testament purposes of outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and service.

Qualifications	Evangelist/Ministry Associate
	1. Leadership & Administration - The evangelist is able to help people and the church move from where they are to where God wants them to be. To do this, evangelists possess such skills as: casting vision; creating ownership; creating functional organizational systems; resolving conflict; developing gift-based ministries; planning ministry; developing and mentoring leaders; and managing time, money, and people (according to principles of CRC polity).
	2. Outreach - The evangelist is able personally to share (witness); to defend (apologetics) the faith; and to lead the church in reaching out to the lost, in receiving them, and in developing new churches.
	3. Worship - The evangelist is able to prepare and deliver messages/teach lessons (homiletics), administer the sacraments, and lead in worship and prayer.
	4. Pastoral Care - The evangelist possesses relational skills that enable her/him to provide personally and through the church (corporately) pastoral care, visitation, small groups, youth ministry, spiritual counsel, and conduct of weddings and funerals.
	5. Fellowship - The evangelist is able to foster a nurturing Christian community.
	6. Discipleship - The evangelist is able to raise up, teach, and nurture disciple-making disciples.
	7. Service - The evangelist is able to respond to personal and community needs by mobilizing the church for ministry.
	8. Specialized - The evangelist has any necessary skills specific to her/his particular calling within the church.
<p>C. <i>From evangelist/ministry associate to minister of the Word</i></p> <p>The third part of our mandate in regard to the office of evangelist is to examine</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the proposed framework . . . for “Changing offices (from evangelist to minister of the Word)” (<i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i>, pp. 300-302) and development of a denominational standard and strategy to guide the process whereby ordained evangelists can receive the additional training needed should a church consider calling such a person to become a (denominationally credentialed) minister of the Word. (<i>Acts of Synod 2000</i>, p. 704)</p> <p>1. Previous committee’s recommendation</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The framework that was proposed by the previous study committee involved four steps (see <i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i>, p. 301) and is summarized as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The evangelist who is already serving in a full-time ministry indicates a desire for ordination as a minister of the Word. b. The classis in which the ministry is located follows the synodically approved procedures for Article 7 ordination. They determine (1) if a need exists, and (2) if the candidate is qualified. c. The classis communicates to the Ministry Leadership Advisory Council that it is satisfied in regard to the issues listed above. The MLAC then develops a program of study and monitors it as an agent of synod. 	

d. After successfully completing the program of study, the candidate is examined by the MLAC.

2. Proposed process

We have considered the previous committee's framework in our discussions. Our committee, as noted earlier in this report, is recommending changes in the process of declaring candidates for ministry. In the new system being proposed, an ordained evangelist would be treated the same as would any other person seeking ordination through Church Order Article 7. The primary issue would not be what course of study was followed but whether or not the person has had experience and/or mentoring and/or education that has resulted in developing qualities that would enable the person to serve with the breadth and depth needed to be a minister of the Word.

In the system of candidacy that we are proposing, the process of moving from evangelist to minister of the Word would be as follows:

- Those serving as evangelists who feel led to seek ordination as minister of the Word will apply to their CMCC, which will then work with the SMCC to determine to what degree the standards for the office of minister of the Word are present.
- At that point, the candidate would be treated as an Article 6 or Article 7 applicant and would follow the process as outlined earlier in our report.

The key to this process is adhering to the principle of proportionality. Because the person is going to serve on a broader basis as a minister of the Word (denominational rather than classical), greater knowledge and skill are required. Therefore, we believe that the way to approach this issue is to consider this as a competency-based situation. What competency level do we desire? If the competency level desired is the same as that for ministers of the Word, the task of the CMCC and the SMCC is to determine whether that competency level has been attained and, if not, how the applicant will attain that which is missing.

In matters of character, of course, depth and breadth may not be related to age. An older candidate for minister of the Word, for example, may not have grown as much in character as a younger evangelist. Thus, good examination questions for someone switching offices may be: What have you learned about yourself emotionally since your last examination? How did you manage the ministry that you were involved with before? How have you grown in maturity? Classes should require the candidate to articulate his or her growth in character and would do well to challenge a person to take greater steps toward growing in godly character, perhaps requiring that a person undergo a mentoring program.

In matters of biblical and theological knowledge, ministers of the Word are expected to know more and to be able to integrate that knowledge more extensively than evangelists. The key question is one of integration: How does your biblical, historical, and systematic theology together illumine your practice of ministry? The extent of one's theological knowledge should be at least as broad as that of L. Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*.

In matters of ministry skills, ministers of the Word are expected to apply such skills on a broader level and in a more exceptional way than an evangelist.

Clearly, classes will have to consider each case individually. They will need to make wise judgments on the basis of a person's proven ability in the office of evangelist, his or her exceptional gifts for the ministry of the Word, and recommendations from the SMCC when it approves the candidate's application for ordination as a minister of the Word. A suggested comparison of standards for evangelist and minister of the Word can be found in Appendix D.

D. Changes from Synod 2001

1. The changed character of the office

As we were in the process of defining and refining the qualifications for the office of evangelist, Synod 2001 made a decision that directly affected our work. It adopted the following guideline regarding this office:

The office of evangelist may be understood to have the character of pastoral extension. Evangelists extend the work of pastoral leadership by founding and working in new congregations and by extending the ministry of organized congregations into specialized areas, including, but not limited to, youth ministry, education, pastoral care, worship, and evangelism (cf. Church Order Article 24). By the broader application of the office of evangelist, with its existing regulations, to a variety of ministry positions, the church avoids the multiplication of offices and provides a way of recognizing and regulating a variety of pastoral positions in our churches. These ministry positions may be identified by titles that indicate their ministry distinctiveness such as chaplain, pastor of education, pastor of youth, minister of congregational life, and so forth.

(Acts of Synod 2001, p. 506)

Synod 2001 also adopted the following change to Church Order Supplement, Article 23:

The office of evangelist is applicable to a variety of ministries, provided that these ministries fit the guidelines for ordination adopted by Synod 2001 and that the other Church Order and synodical regulations for the office of evangelist are observed. These include the ministries such as education, evangelism, music, and ministries to children, youth, adults, and others within or outside of the congregation. Before examining a person for the office of evangelist or granting permission to install a previously ordained evangelist in a new position, the classis, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, will determine whether or not the position to which the person is being called fits the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001. In addition, the candidate for the office of evangelist must have proven ability to function in the ministry to which he or she is being called.

(Acts of Synod 2001, p. 507)

2. Observations and conclusion

Our committee, which was considering standards for this office, was left with these questions: Are there now really many, varied offices that are subsumed under the umbrella of the office of evangelist? Or, is there still one office with a variety of expressions? If the former is true, that means that the standards that apply for the office of evangelist will be different depending on which one of the offices a person enters. If the latter is true,

then the standards will be the same for everyone, but the expected expertise that is required will be specific to each person's particular responsibility within the office of evangelist. We have chosen the latter interpretation. In other words, if someone is applying for ordination as an evangelist, the basic standards in regard to biblical knowledge, theological knowledge, and character will remain consistent. The standards in the area of skill will have some variation depending on the nature of the ministry in which an evangelist serves.

Examination for the office of evangelist, then, will involve meeting the standards set forth earlier in regard to character (heart) and knowledge (head). Specific questions regarding competence (hands) will relate to the person's area of expertise and calling.

It is our recommendation that this understanding be adopted by synod as a guideline for those conducting examinations for the office of evangelist.

VI. Implementation

A. *What is needed to make this plan a reality?*

The changes that we propose affect many people now preparing for ministry. Therefore, we recommend that synod establish a three-year transition period, with full implementation of this adjusted process for ministerial candidates to begin in the fall of 2007. During the next two years, there is much to be accomplished by the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee. If this plan is approved, we would expect the following schedule to be a guideline for the SMCC's work:

2004

- Communicate changes to the CRC through letters to classes, churches, and an article in *The Banner*.
- Investigate the potential list of endorsed alternative seminaries. This will involve examining the curriculum of each seminary through its publications, through on-site visits, and through the appointment of a liaison to those schools who will establish a CRC presence for its students.
- Communicate with Christian colleges and the CRC students in those colleges who may be considering ordained ministry in the CRC.
- Begin development of handbooks for classes, councils, Calvin Seminary, and endorsed alternative seminaries that delineate clearly the paths into ministry in the CRC and each assembly's role in that path.
- Communicate with classes regarding the transition from Student Fund committee to Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees.
- Identify and recruit ongoing members for the committee and acquaint them with the work of SMCC.

2005

- Communicate changes once again to the CRC churches and classes.
- Propose endorsed alternative seminaries to synod for their approval.
- Complete handbooks mentioned above. Provide handbooks to CMCCs and church councils.
- Provide regional training sessions for CMCC members on the process.
- Develop a standardized health reporting form so that there is consistency throughout the denomination.

- Provide a manual for students considering ministry in the CRC that outlines their responsibilities in fulfilling the Ministry Readiness Portfolio in a timely manner. Distribute that manual to all students preparing for ministry in the CRC.
- Recommend replacement of members on SMCC as needed.

2006

- Communicate updates to the CRC through various channels.
- Communicate expectations to students.
- Develop standardized assessment tools that are culturally attuned for use by the SMCC.
- Recruit those individuals that will be the local presence at the endorsed alternative seminaries. Provide training and resources for their work.

B. *The proposed process*

To accomplish all of these tasks in time for full implementation by 2007, we recommend that the present study committee continue serving for the next three years. An appropriate change in membership will be accomplished during that time by use of staggered terms for members.

Grounds:

1. The issues that we have been facing are complex, and the system proposed is new. The present committee has been grappling with the issues and developing the system, and therefore has the knowledge to move forward effectively.
2. The appointment of the current study committee as the interim SMCC would allow for more rapid progress on the tasks outlined above without the necessary lag time and increased costs for another committee to be recruited and oriented to the task.

Members of the present committee willing to serve on the continuing committee are:

Dr. Bruce T. Ballast
Dr. Gary J. Bekker
Rev. Shawn R. Brix
Mr. Ted Charles
Dr. Henry DeMoor, Jr.
Dr. Robert den Dulk

Dr. David H. Engelhard
Dr. Calvin Hoogendoorn
Rev. Michael S. Johnson
Rev. Thea N. Leunk
Rev. Kenneth M. Vander Horst

Note: Rev. Roger Ryu was originally appointed to this committee but will not be serving on the continuation committee. Therefore, another ethnic minority member will need to be appointed. Mrs. Jill Louters also asked to be relieved of continuing service on this committee.

C. *Estimated costs*

One issue that we discussed is the cost of changing the way we nurture, support, and declare candidates for ministry. Of course, any projections are estimates, but we do want synod to be aware that there will be additional costs for implementing and maintaining this system.

Expenditure	Estimate
Staff Costs	
Years 1-3 of plan	
Part-time assistant to the General Secretary (approximately 10 hours per week)	\$ 7,800
Allocation of some of the General Secretary's time	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
Total:	\$13,800
Years 4-8 of plan	
Part-time assistant to the General Secretary (approximately 20 hours per week)	\$15,600
Part-time administrator or allocation of the time of a current administrator	<u>\$25,000</u>
Total:	\$40,600
Onsite staff at the endorsed seminaries	\$ 2,500
Training Costs	
Years 1-3 of plan	
Classical Ministry Credentialing Committees (during years 1-3)	\$25,000 to \$40,000
Mentors (travel, trainers, supplies, etc. in at least six regions of the denomination)	\$30,000 to \$40,000
Years 4-8 of plan	
Training of new CMCC members and new mentors	\$20,000 to \$30,000
Faculty stipends for CRC related courses	\$20,000
Mailing Costs	
Workbooks, training manuals, forms, etc.	\$5,000
Meeting costs for the Synodical Ministry Credentialing Committee [Meeting costs include travel, lodging, and meals]	\$6,000 (per meeting)
Classical Costs	
Travel for committee members	Minimal
Travel, lodging, meals for students required to meet with the CMCC or with classis. [No figure is possible because it is not known how far the student(s) will need to travel and what mode of transportation will be used.]	Unknown
Cost to students at endorsed seminaries:	
Health exam	Variable
Evaluated psychological report	Variable
Travel (may be shared with classis)	Variable
Vocational assessment	Unknown
Tuition for CRC related courses (CRC polity, history, etc.)	Current credit-hour cost at CTS
Yearly enrollment fee	To be determined
Summary	
Costs borne by synod	
Years 1-3	\$86,000 to \$110,000
Years 4-8	\$98,000 to \$110,000
Costs for each year will be dependent upon the number of students studying at seminaries other than Calvin and the costs incurred for mentors; administrative staff; and additional faculty to teach foundational CRC courses, such as polity, CRC history, etc.	
Cost recovery:	
Enrollment fee (paid yearly by students at endorsed seminaries) e.g., 500/yr. x 15 students = 7500	\$7500
Tuition fees for CRC related courses 187 x 3 hrs. x 15 students = 8400	\$8400
Monies saved on synodical deputy travel for ordination issues	\$10,000

Costs borne by a classis

There will be additional costs for committee travel and meals because the CMCC will be expected to fulfill a larger, more complicated task than the current Student Fund Committee that it will replace.

There will be expectations that classes pay for or assist in paying the travel costs of students who will need to meet more frequently with the classis and/or the CMCC.

Costs borne by students

The costs identified above re health, psychological, and vocational exams will need to be borne by students either as part of their seminary tuition or as their own responsibility if these factors are not part of their seminary programs. Because costs are variable, no specific figure can be given.

Cost savings to students

Students at endorsed seminaries will save the cost of the SPMC year currently spent at Calvin Seminary (\$30,000 to \$35,000)

VII. Recommendations

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Bruce Ballast, Rev. Calvin Hoogendoorn, and Rev. Thea Leunk.

B. That Synod adopt the ministerial formation process for those seeking to be ordained ministers of the Word for all routes to the ministry in the CRCNA (see section IV) including the proposal for the establishment of Classical and Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committees complete with their mandates and membership composition. The mandate for the Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee shall become Church Order Supplement, Article 21.

Grounds:

1. It provides for a classically based process through which people will be encouraged, well-trained, and well-equipped for ministry in the CRC.
2. It more fully engages the local church in the process of ministerial development and recognizes the importance of the local congregation in nurturing and raising up leaders.
3. It provides consistency yet flexibility in routes to ministry.
4. It honors the diversity of cultures and people's life situations.
5. It honors the status of CTS as the preferred route to ministry.
6. It creates opportunities for the continued enrichment of the denomination while maintaining our confessional, Reformed identity.

C. That synod adopt a change in Church Order Article 7, namely, that the phrase, "especially when the need is urgent" be deleted.

Grounds:

1. When candidates for ministry are declared by way of Article 6, there is no official declaration of need. By providing the education necessary for a well-equipped ministry, the church has already determined that a need exists. Those who become candidates by means of their exceptional gifts (Article 7) should not have an extra criterion added.
2. Synod 2001 adopted as a guideline: "In ordination, the church recognizes that a person has the appropriate excellencies for ministry, the callings of Christ and the people of God, and a call to a role of pastoral responsibility" (*Acts of Synod 2001*, p. 504). If someone gives evidence of calling and

extraordinary gifts for the office of the minister of the Word, yet lacks the prescribed theological training, the church is wise to recognize that such gifts are God's gifts to the church, and that such gifts, when exercised, only enrich the church's ministry. Indeed, as Monsma and Van Dellen write in *The Revised Church Order Commentary* (1967 Edition):

When God qualifies a man for the ministry by endowing him with excellent and extraordinary gifts for that office, then to be sure the Church of Christ is in duty bound to recognize this fact with appreciation.

(*The Revised Church Order Commentary*, p. 45)

D. That synod adopt the proposed standards for those seeking to be ordained as evangelists/ministry associates and that these standards be placed in Church Order Supplement, Article 23 (see table in section V, B, 3, b).

Ground: The standards identify and clarify the key components for the formation of a well-equipped and well-trained ministry.

E. That synod appoint the members of the present study committee to serve as the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee for a three-year start-up period.

F. That synod adopt the following change in Article 21 of the Church Order and add a statement to the supplement describing the change:

1. *Current:* "The churches shall encourage young men to seek to become ministers of the Word and shall grant financial aid to those who are in need of it. Every classis shall maintain a student fund."
2. *Proposed:* "The churches shall encourage young men to seek to become ministers of the Word and shall grant financial aid to those who are in need of it. Every classis shall appoint a Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee and maintain a student fund."

Ground: A Church Order change is necessary to require classes to alter their current structure.

G. That synod amend Church Order Supplement, Article 22 regarding the process by which licensure to exhort is granted. The following changes are recommended (new wording in italics):

Church Order Supplement, Article 22

A. Rules for Licensure

1. The ~~Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary~~ *Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee* may grant licensure to conduct religious services in our church only to such as
 - a. ~~are enrolled as regular students~~ *approved as students for minister of the Word and enrolled in a seminary program.*
 - b. ~~have successfully passed the final examination of the junior year in the seminary~~ *have successfully completed the final examinations of one full year of seminary including work in biblical, theological, and preaching courses.*

2. The ~~board~~ SMCC shall not grant licensure to such students until it has made sure of the following with respect to each applicant:
 - a. That ~~he is a~~ *they are* ~~member~~ *members* in good standing in our churches.
 - b. That ~~he has~~ *they have* spiritual qualifications necessary for the ministry, and that ~~he~~ *they* considers ~~himself~~ *themselves* called of God to prepare ~~himself~~ *themselves* for the office of ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - c. That ~~he~~ *they* intends to enter the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.
 - d. That ~~he has~~ *they have* sufficient knowledge of the Bible, and especially of our Reformed principles, to act as a guide to others.
 - e. That ~~he speaks~~ *they speak* acceptably and to the edification of the churches. It is left to the discretion of the ~~board~~ SMCC, however, whether it will obtain this information by consulting the seminary faculty or by examining the applicant.
3. The ~~board~~ SMCC has the right to extend the licensure of those who want to take postgraduate work but with the understanding
 - a. that this privilege is to be granted only to such who are taking postgraduate work in theology and declare that it is their definite intention to enter the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.
 - b. that this extension is valid for no more than one year.
 - c. that further extension may be given at the end of the first year in case the applicant makes ~~his~~ *a* request in writing, and at the end of the second year if ~~he~~ *applicants* appears in person and ~~is~~ *are* willing to submit to another examination (the latter part of this Rule 3, c does not apply to those who are taking postgraduate work in theology outside of the United States or Canada).
4. The ~~board~~ SMCC is obliged to revoke the licensure
 - a. of those who have completed their theological studies but have failed to take steps to enter into the sacred ministry of the Word.
 - b. of those undergraduates who either discontinue their studies or fail to enroll again at the seminary.

Note: If the above recommendations are adopted, changes will also need to be made in Church Order Supplement, Article 6.

H. That synod adopt the following guideline re the examination of evangelists/ministry associates:

An examination for the office of evangelist/ministry associate will require that all evangelists/ministry associates meet the church's standards for character and knowledge whereas the standards for skill competence will relate specifically to the particular evangelist's/ministry associate's area of calling and expertise.

I. That synod dismiss the committee with thanks.

Committee to Provide Alternate Routes
to Ministry

Bruce Ballast, chairman

Gary Bekker

Shawn Brix

Ted Charles

Henry De Moor

Robert den Dulk

David H. Engelhard (ex officio)

Calvin Hoogendoorn

Michael Johnson

Thea Leunk

Kenneth Vander Horst

Note: Rev. Roger Ryu and Mrs. Jill Louters served as members of this committee, but the press of other duties prevented them from attending any meetings for the past two years.

Appendix A

The Ordination Process under the Provisions of Church Order Articles 6, 7, and 8

The Pre-enrollment Stage	Article 6 M.Div. Calvin Seminary	Article 6 M.Div. Endorsed Seminaries	Article 6 M.Div. Other Seminaries	Article 7 Exceptional Gifts	Article 8 Ordained Minister from Another Denomination
The Council					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council determines the need to extend a call to a minister outside the CRC.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual is a member of a CRC congregation for a minimum of 1 year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual is a member of a CRC congregation for a minimum of 1 year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual is a member of a CRC congregation for a minimum of 1 year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual is a member of a CRC congregation for a minimum of 3 years. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual's gifts have been demonstrated in the context of the congregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual's gifts have been demonstrated in the context of the congregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual's gifts have been demonstrated in the context of the congregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual's exceptional gifts have been demonstrated in the context of the congregation. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates apply to their councils, indicating their intentions to prepare for the ministry under the provisions of Church Order Article 6. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates apply to their councils, indicating their intentions to prepare for the ministry under the provisions of Church Order Article 6. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates apply to their councils, indicating their intentions to prepare for the ministry under the provisions of Church Order Article 6. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates apply to their councils, indicating their intentions to enter the ministry of the Word under Church Order Article 7. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual's application, forwarding it to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual's application, forwarding it to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual's application, forwarding it to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual's application, forwarding it to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council forwards the request to declare eligibility for call to the CMCC.

The Pre-enrollment Stage	Article 6 M.Div. Calvin Seminary	Article 6 M.Div. Endorsed Seminaries	Article 6 M.Div. Other Seminaries	Article 7 Exceptional Gifts	Article 8 Ordained Minister from Another Denomination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council commits to journey with the individual through the time of preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council commits to journey with the individual through the time of preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council commits to journey with the individual through the time of preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council commits to journey with the individual through the time of preparation. 	
The Classis					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC receives the request of a congregation to call such an individual.
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ordained individual who seeks ordination in the CRC informs the CMCC of that intention.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC receives the application for ordination under the provisions of Church Order Article 7, a statement of health, and an evaluated psychological report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC reviews the credentials, diplomas (ordinarily an M.Div.), statement of health, and evaluated psychological report.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC interviews the individual regarding his/her call to ministry, drafts a study and financial plan, and recommends a classical interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC interviews the individual regarding his/her call to ministry and reasons for the choice of seminary, drafts a study and financial plan, and recommends a classical interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC interviews the individual regarding his/her call to ministry and reasons for the choice of seminary, drafts a study and financial plan, and recommends a classical interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC interviews the individual to determine whether ordination under Article 7 is appropriate and recommends a classical interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC interviews the individual to determine whether ordination under the provisions of Article 8 is appropriate and recommends a classical interview.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis interviews the individual regarding his/her call to ministry and endorses the individual's application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis interviews the individual regarding his/her call to ministry and endorses the individual's application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classis interviews the individual regarding his/her call to ministry, grants permission for attendance at this seminary, and endorses the individual's application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis interviews the individual to determine calling and exceptional giftedness and whether the use of Article 7 is appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis interviews the individual to determine desire and calling to the CRC and determines whether this is an appropriate use of Article 8.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The CMCC forwards the study plan to the SMCC and the individual's seminary.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC forwards the study plan to the SMCC and the individual's seminary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC forwards the study plan to the SMCC and the individual's seminary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis grants licensure to exhort within classis and informs the SMCC of its work. 	

The Pre-enrollment Stage	Article 6 M.Div. Calvin Seminary	Article 6 M.Div. Endorsed Seminaries	Article 6 M.Div. Other Seminaries	Article 7 Exceptional Gifts	Article 8 Ordained Minister from Another Denomination
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMCC works with the individual to draft a learning covenant and financial plan and then forwards this to the SMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMCC works with the individual to draft a learning covenant and forwards this to the SMCC.
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinarily, the classis requires the individual to serve for a specified term as stated supply with appropriate compensation in a church in its classis whenever possible and assists in locating this position if necessary. It then forwards this to the SMCC.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis commits to journey with the individual through the years of preparation and appoints a mentor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis commits to journey with the individual through the years of preparation and appoints a mentor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis commits to journey with the individual through the years of preparation and appoints a mentor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis commits to journey with the individual through the period of preparation and appoints a mentor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis commits to journey with the individual through the period of preparation and appoints a mentor.
The Synod	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC approves the application to begin preparation for ministry, as well as the proposed study plan and financial plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC approves the application to begin preparation for ministry, as well as the proposed study plan and financial plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC approves the application to begin preparation for ministry, as well as the proposed study plan and financial plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC approves the application and learning covenant of the individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC approves the application, learning covenant, and recommended financial compensation of the individual.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC concurs with the classis that the use of Article 7 is appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC concurs with the classis that the use of Article 8 is appropriate.
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC, if necessary, helps locate a stated supply position. The preferred location is within the classis receiving the request.

The Study and Preparation Stage	Article 6 M.Div. Calvin Seminary	Article 6 M.Div. Endorsed Seminaries	Article 6 M.Div. Other Seminaries	Article 7 Exceptional Gifts	Article 8 Ordained Minister from Another Denomination
The Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council provides support and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council provides support and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council provides support and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council provides support and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council provides support and accountability.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council offers the opportunity to exhort at least once annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council offers the opportunity to exhort at least once annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council offers the opportunity to exhort at least once annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council offers opportunities for fulfilling the learning covenant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council offers opportunities for fulfilling the learning covenant.
The Classis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the CMCC, the classis provides annual accountability, pastoral care, and mentoring for the individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the CMCC, the classis provides annual accountability, pastoral care, and mentoring for the individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the CMCC, the classis provides annual accountability, pastoral care, and mentoring for the individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the CMCC, the classis provides annual accountability, pastoral care, and mentoring for the individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the CMCC, the classis provides annual accountability, pastoral care, and mentoring for the individual.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis offers opportunities for fulfilling the learning covenant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis offers opportunities for fulfilling the learning covenant.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately twelve months prior to anticipated candidacy, the classis interviews the individual at one of its meetings regarding the readiness for ministry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately twelve months prior to anticipated candidacy, the classis interviews the individual at one of its meetings regarding the readiness for ministry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately twelve months prior to anticipated candidacy, the classis interviews the individual at one of its meetings regarding the readiness for ministry. 		
The Synod	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC provides counsel, advice, and tools to the CMCC as required and/or requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC provides counsel, advice, and tools to the CMCC as required and/or requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC provides counsel, advice, and tools to the CMCC as required and/or requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC provides counsel, advice, and tools to the CMCC as required and/or requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC provides counsel, advice, and tools to the CMCC as required and/or requested.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensure is granted by the SMCC after an interview at Calvin Seminary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensure is ordinarily granted by the SMCC after an interview at the endorsed seminary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensure is ordinarily granted by the SMCC after an interview at the closest endorsed seminary or Calvin Seminary. 		

The Candidacy Stage	Article 6 M.Div. Calvin Seminary	Article 6 M.Div. Endorsed Seminaries	Article 6 M.Div. Other Seminaries	Article 7 Exceptional Gifts	Article 8 Ordained Minister from Another Denomination
The Council				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council prepares an assessment and performance review of the individual and forwards this to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council prepares an assessment and performance review of the individual and forwards this to the CMCC.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards its recommendation to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards its recommendation to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards its recommendation to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards its recommendation to the CMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council recommends that the individual be declared eligible for call as a minister of the Word in the CRC and forwards this to the CMCC.
The Classis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC conducts its final interview of the individual, reviews the Ministry Readiness Portfolio, and recommends classical endorsement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC conducts its final interview of the individual, reviews the Ministry Readiness Portfolio, and recommends classical endorsement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC conducts its final interview of the individual, reviews the Ministry Readiness Portfolio, and recommends classical endorsement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC affirms that the learning covenant has been completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMCC affirms that the learning covenant has been completed and forwards this information to the SMCC.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classis endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards this to the SMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classis endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards this to the SMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classis endorses the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards this to the SMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classis examines the individual and endorses him or her as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards this to the SMCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon receiving concurrence from the SMCC that the learning covenant is complete, classis interviews the individual through a <i>colloquium doctum</i> in the presence of synodical deputies, declares the individual eligible for call as a minister of the Word in the CRC, and informs SMCC of its action.
The Synod	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC interviews and recommends the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards that recommendation to synod. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC interviews and recommends the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards that recommendation to synod. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC interviews and recommends the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards that recommendation to synod. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC interviews and recommends the individual as a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the CRC and forwards that recommendation to synod. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMCC concurs with the CMCC that the learning covenant has been completed and informs classis that it may proceed with a <i>colloquium doctum</i>.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synod declares the individual a candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synod declares the individual a candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synod declares the individual a candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synod declares the individual a candidate. 	

Appendix B

Ministry Readiness Portfolio

When Needed in the Process	What Is Needed	Article 6: CTS	Article 6: Endorsed Seminary	Article 6: Other Seminary	Article 7	Article 8
Initial	Autobiography	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Initial Final	Endorsement for candidacy by church council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Initial Final	Endorsement for candidacy by a classis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Final	Faculty endorsement	Communal endorsement from CTS faculty	Communal endorsement from seminary faculty	Two letters of endorsement from the individual's seminary professors, one of whom is the student's advisor.	Testimony from council, classis, or presbytery concerning purity of doctrine and sanctity of life	Testimony from council, classis, or presbytery concerning purity of doctrine and sanctity of life
Final	Competence in academic areas	Official CTS transcript with M.Div. posted	Official transcript from other seminary with M.Div. or its equivalent posted	Official transcript from endorsed seminary with M.Div. or its equivalent posted	Evidence of educational history shown through official transcripts or their equivalent	Evidence of educational history shown through official transcripts or their equivalent
Final	Evidence of competence in biblical exegesis using Hebrew and Greek	Transcript	Transcript	Transcript	No	No
Final	Demonstrated adequate knowledge of the Bible	Bible knowledge test administered by the SMCC at Calvin Seminary	Bible knowledge test administered by the SMCC at the endorsed seminary	Bible knowledge test administered by the SMCC at Calvin Seminary or the endorsed seminaries	Bible knowledge test administered by the SMCC at Calvin Seminary or the endorsed seminaries	Bible knowledge test administered by the SMCC at Calvin Seminary or the endorsed seminaries
Annual Final	Ministry evaluations	Field education, CPE, etc.	Field education, CPE, etc.	Field education, CPE, etc.	Council to provide assessment of performance in ministry	Council to provide assessment of performance in ministry
Final	Demonstrated emotional and relational readiness for ministry	Evaluated psychological report	Evaluated psychological report	Evaluated psychological report	Evaluated psychological report	Evaluated psychological report
Annual File	Positive vocational assessment	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Final	Positive health certificate	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Annual	Affirmation of character development	Letter from faculty advisor	Letter from faculty advisor and from CRC appointed mentor	Letter from faculty advisor	Letter from mentor	Letter from mentor

When Needed in the Process	What Is Needed	Article 6: CTS	Article 6: Endorsed Seminary	Article 6: Other Seminary	Article 7	Article 8
Annual	Demonstrated expected progress in degree program	Official CTS transcript	Official transcript from endorsed seminary	Official transcript from seminary attended	Not applicable	Not applicable
Initial Final	A personal statement of faith	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Annual Final	Demonstrated familiarity with and commitment to the three forms of unity and willingness to sign the Form of Subscription	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Initial	Full disclosure of any acts of official discipline, criminal charges, or ecclesiastical complaint	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required

Appendix C

Recommendation to Synod 2000

The previous study committee made this recommendation, which was not adopted by Synod 2000.

That synod establish as policy, through an amendment of Church Order Article 23, that before ordination as an evangelist, a person should go through a period of training, education, and mentoring. The following framework should serve as the basis for all evangelist-training programs in the CRC and should be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23:

1. *Character of the evangelist:* Discussion of and training in love for the lost, a commitment to purity, demonstrating a servant's heart, being a person of prayer, and consideration of the evangelist and his family.
2. *Biblical foundations:* The evangelist should have read through the Bible carefully with these goals in mind:
 - a. Knowing the historical, literary, and canonical context of each biblical book.
 - b. Being able to identify Scripture's main themes and to locate their place in the redemptive history that is centered in Christ.
 - c. Being able to identify the larger divisions of Scripture (law, prophets, writings) and the hermeneutic principles required to interpret them.
 - d. Being able to apply the message of a book or section of Scripture in a manner relevant to contemporary society and current issues.
3. *Theological foundations:* The evangelist should know Reformed systematic theology with the following particular concerns in focus:
 - a. Being able to identify the major loci of Reformed theology and the key issues in each one.
 - b. Being able to identify the differences between the Reformed faith and other Christian traditions as well as non-Christian faith traditions present in North America.
 - c. Being able to defend the Reformed Christian faith biblically.

- d. Having a working knowledge of general church history and North American church history, including CRC history.
- 4. *Practice of ministry*: The evangelist should be
 - a. Acquainted with basic theories and types of preaching.
 - b. Conversant with techniques of assimilation and pastoral care.
 - c. Trained in different approaches to outreach and gospel communication to unbelievers in the contemporary context.
 - d. Trained in the basic skills of pastoral care.
 - e. Trained in church education.
 - f. Trained in CRC Church Order.

(*Agenda for Synod 2000*, pp.307-8)

The above recommendation was not adopted by Synod 2000.

The following table compares the various standards that have been proposed that affect the office of evangelist.

Comparison of Minimum Standards for Evangelists/Ministry Associates

Type of Standard	Church Order Supplement, Article 23-b (currently functioning: approved by past synods)	<i>Acts of Synod 2000</i> , Recommendations 3-7, pp. 702-4 (Synod adopted for all ministry positions and thus currently applicable to evangelists)	Alt. Routes Committee 2000 Recommendations J, 1-4 (<i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i> , pp. 307-8) (not adopted and thus currently not functioning)
Godly Character	<p>Examination in the following areas:</p> <p>c, 4) practical matters regarding Christian testimony, walk of life, relation to others, love for the church, interest in evangelism, and the promotion of Christ's kingdom (approved by Synod 1979, <i>Acts of Synod 1979</i>, pp. 67-68; re-approved by Synod 2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i>, p. 507).</p> <p>The classis shall ensure that the candidate meets the standards of character, knowledge, and skill adopted by Synod 2000 (<i>Acts of Synod 2000</i>, p. 702-4) (approved by Synod 2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i>, p. 508).</p>	<p>4. Remind the churches that are seeking guidance in setting standards for effective ministry of the general scriptural teaching concerning personal qualifications for ministry as found in passages such as Matthew 18; 20:20-28; 28:18-20; Acts 6; 2 Cor. 4; 5; Ephesians 4; 1 and 2 Timothy.</p> <p>5. Synod affirms and refers to the churches the following basic character standards for all ministry positions and personnel, recognizing that they must be adapted to specific circumstances and situations.</p> <p>Any person called to serve Christ in a CRC ministry position should be:</p> <p>a. Publicly committed to Christ and his church, submitting to its discipline.</p>	<p>J. That synod establish as policy, through an amendment of Church Order Article 23, that before ordination as an evangelist, a person should go through a period of training, education, and mentoring. The following framework should serve as the basis for all evangelist-training programs in the CRC and should be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23:</p> <p>1. <i>Character of the evangelist</i>: Discussion of and training in love for the lost, a commitment to purity, demonstrating a servant's heart, being a person of prayer, and consideration of the evangelist and his family.</p>

Type of Standard	Church Order Supplement, Article 23-b (currently functioning: approved by past synods)	<i>Acts of Synod 2000</i> , Recommendations 3-7, pp. 702-4 (Synod adopted for all ministry positions and thus currently applicable to evangelists)	Alt. Routes Committee 2000 Recommendations J, 1-4 (<i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i> , pp. 307-8) (not adopted and thus currently not functioning)
		<p>b. Exemplary in piety and holy conduct of life, a humble person of prayer who trust in God's providence.</p> <p>c. Of good reputation, emotionally mature, honest, trustworthy, reliable.</p> <p>d. Caring and compassionate for the lost and weak.</p> <p>e. Eager to learn and grow in faith, knowledge, and love.</p> <p>f. Joyful in affirming the goodness of God's creation and communicating to others a delight in beauty.</p> <p>g. Sensitive to others in all their personal and cultural variety. (See also Calvin Theological Seminary's Personal Qualifications for Ministry—<i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i>, pp. 345-50.)</p>	<p><i>Note:</i> The following personal qualifications were presented to Synod 2000 but not adopted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religious commitment 2. Discipline and self-control 3. Affirming of others 4. Loving toward others 5. Honesty 6. Service without regard for gain 7. Leadership qualities 8. Wisdom 9. Emotional health <p>(See <i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i>, pp. 345-50 for more detail re each topic.)</p>
Knowledge - Biblical Foundations	<p>Examination in the following areas:</p> <p>c, 1) Knowledge of Scripture (approved by Synod 1979, <i>Acts of Synod 1979</i>, pp. 67-68; reapproved by Synod 2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i>, p. 507).</p> <p>a, 2) Evidence (diplomas, transcripts, etc.) of formal general education (approved by Synod 1979, <i>Acts of Synod 1979</i>, pp. 67-68; reapproved by Synod 2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i>, p. 507).</p>	<p>6. Synod affirms and refers to the churches the following basic standards of biblical-theological knowledge expected of all persons hired in ministry positions in a Christian Reformed church:</p> <p>a. Biblical foundations: Any person called to serve Christ in a CRC ministry position should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Know the content of the Old and New Testaments. 2) Know and be able to explain the basic structure and flow of biblical redemptive 	<p>J. That synod establish as policy, through an amendment of Church Order Article 23, that before ordination as an evangelist, a person should go through a period of training, education, and mentoring. The following framework should serve as the basis for all evangelist-training programs in the CRC and should be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23:</p> <p>2. <i>Biblical foundations:</i> The evangelist should have read through the</p>

Type of Standard	Church Order Supplement, Article 23-b (currently functioning: approved by past synods)	<i>Acts of Synod 2000</i> , Recommendations 3-7, pp. 702-4 (Synod adopted for all ministry positions and thus currently applicable to evangelists)	Alt. Routes Committee 2000 Recommendations J, 1-4 (<i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i> , pp. 307-8) (not adopted and thus currently not functioning)
		<p>covenantal history centered in Christ (promise and fulfillment).</p> <p>3) Be able to identify main themes (covenant, kingdom of God, holiness) of Scripture as well as the large divisions (law, prophets, writings) and specific types of biblical literature.</p> <p>4) Be able to articulate the significance of the various sections, books, or types of biblical literature to contemporary issues and questions.</p>	<p>Bible carefully with these goals in mind:</p> <p>a. Knowing the historical, literary, and canonical context of each biblical book.</p> <p>b. Being able to identify Scripture's main themes and to locate their place in the redemptive history that is centered in Christ.</p> <p>c. Being able to identify the larger divisions of Scripture (law, prophets, writings) and the hermeneutic principles required to interpret them.</p> <p>d. Being able to apply the message of a book or section of Scripture in a manner relevant to contemporary society and current issues.</p>
Knowledge - Theological Foundations	<p>Examination in the following areas:</p> <p>c, 2) Knowledge of Reformed doctrine.</p> <p>c, 3) Knowledge of the standards of the church and the Church Order (approved by Synod 1979, <i>Acts of Synod 1979</i>, pp. 67-68; re-approved by Synod 2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i>, p. 507).</p>	<p>6. Synod affirms and refers to the churches the following basic standards of biblical-theological knowledge expected of all persons hired in ministry positions in a Christian Reformed church:</p> <p>b. Theological foundations:</p> <p>Any person called to serve Christ in a CRC ministry position should:</p> <p>1) Know and be able to explain the basic teachings of the universal Christian traditions concerning God, humanity, the person and work of Christ, salvation, the church, the last things.</p>	<p>J. That synod establish as policy, through an amendment of Church Order Article 23, that before ordination as an evangelist, a person should go through a period of training, education, and mentoring. The following framework should serve as the basis for all evangelist-training programs in the CRC and should be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23:</p> <p>3. <i>Theological foundations</i>: The evangelist should know Reformed systematic theology</p>

Type of Standard	Church Order Supplement, Article 23-b (currently functioning: approved by past synods)	<i>Acts of Synod 2000</i> , Recommendations 3-7, pp. 702-4 (Synod adopted for all ministry positions and thus currently applicable to evangelists)	Alt. Routes Committee 2000 Recommendations J, 1-4 (<i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i> , pp. 307-8) (not adopted and thus currently not functioning)
		<p>2) Know, be able to explain, be ready and willing to defend the three forms of unity and a Reformed confessional stance on key doctrines such as predestination, unity of the covenant, infant baptism, millennialism, the cosmic scope of the Reformed worldview.</p> <p>3) Have a rudimentary knowledge of and ability to respond to the key challenges posed to the Christian and Reformed faith in North America by the major world religions, the major cults, and the various forms of New Age spirituality.</p> <p>4) Know the key concepts of CRC church polity.</p>	<p>with the following particular concerns in focus:</p> <p>a. Being able to identify the major loci of Reformed theology and the key issues in each one.</p> <p>b. Being able to identify the differences between the Reformed faith and other Christian traditions as well as non-Christian faith traditions present in North America.</p> <p>c. Being able to defend the Reformed Christian faith biblically.</p> <p>d. Having a working knowledge of general church history and North American church history, including CRC history.</p>
Ministry Skills	<p>b. Presentation of a sermon: (approved by Synod 1994, <i>Acts of Synod 1994</i>, p. 490; re-approved by Synod 2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i>, p. 507).</p> <p>a, 2) Evidence...of specialized training in the ministry area to which the candidate is called (approved by Synod 2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i>, p. 507).</p> <p>The classis shall ensure that evangelists, especially those working at some distance from their calling congregations, will have proper supervision and support for the ministry (approved by Synod</p>	<p>7. Synod affirms and refers to the churches the following as the basic standards of the skills expected of all persons hired in ministry positions in a Christian Reformed church:</p> <p>Any person called to serve Christ in a CRC ministry position should:</p> <p>a. Be prepared "to give an answer to everyone who asks [you] to give the reason for the hope that [you] have" (1 Peter 3:15).</p> <p>b. Be able and willing to make a clear presentation of the gospel to an unbeliever.</p> <p>c. Be able to teach and disciple persons to deeper faith in and</p>	<p>J. That synod establish as policy, through an amendment of Church Order Article 23, that before ordination as an evangelist, a person should go through a period of training, education, and mentoring. The following framework should serve as the basis for all evangelist-training programs in the CRC and should be added to Church Order Supplement, Article 23: The evangelist should be:</p> <p>4. <i>Practice of Ministry</i>: The evangelist should be</p> <p>a. Acquainted with basic theories and types of preaching.</p>

Type of Standard	Church Order Supplement, Article 23-b (currently functioning: approved by past synods)	Acts of Synod 2000, Recommendations 3-7, pp. 702-4 (Synod adopted for all ministry positions and thus currently applicable to evangelists)	Alt. Routes Committee 2000 Recommendations J, 1-4 (<i>Agenda for Synod 2000</i> , pp. 307-8) (not adopted and thus currently not functioning)
	2001, <i>Acts of Synod 2001</i> , p. 508).	obedience to Jesus Christ. d. Be able to prepare and deliver short biblically based messages for public occasions (nursing homes, prisons, civic occasions). e. Be capable of effectively leading a group in various tasks, including Bible studies, task completion, resolving conflict.	b. Conversant with techniques of assimilation and pastoral care. c. Trained in different approaches to outreach and gospel communication to unbelievers in the contemporary context. d. Trained in the basic skills of pastoral care. e. Trained in church education. f. Trained in the CRC Church Order.

Appendix D

Recommended Standards for Evangelist/Ministry Associate Compared to Similar Standards for Minister of the Word

Qualifications	Evangelist	Minister
<i>Character</i>	The evangelist is mature in Christ. "Christlikeness" covers all of what it means to be godly. The following guidelines, which are rooted in Scripture (references are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive), suggest many aspects of godly character:	The minister is mature in Christ. "Christlikeness" covers all of what it means to be godly. The following guidelines, which are rooted in Scripture (references are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive), suggest many aspects of godly character:
	1. Devoted to Jesus - The evangelist is "in Christ" (John 15:5), filled with his Spirit (Acts 1:8), and exercises personal spiritual disciplines.	1. Devoted to Jesus - The minister is "in Christ" (John 15:5); filled with his Spirit (Acts 1:8); exercising personal spiritual disciplines.
	2. Committed to the church and its mission (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Eph. 4:11-13, 1 Tim. 5:22) - The evangelist is a person in Christian community. She/he has been tested and proven. She/he has been recognized as prepared for ministry by the community of believers and evidences accountability to it.	2. Committed to the church and its mission (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Eph. 4:11-13, 1 Tim. 5:22) - The minister is a person in Christian community. She/he has been tested and proven. She/he has been recognized as prepared for ministry by the community of believers and evidences accountability to it.

Qualifications	Evangelist	Minister
	<p>3. Called and gifted (Matt. 28:16ff, Acts 1:8) - The evangelist has a calling from God that is confirmed by the church. That calling provides her/him with a mission, with vision, and with intrinsic motivation. She/he ministers out of giftedness (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12, etc.).</p>	<p>3. Called and gifted (Matt. 28:16ff, Acts 1:8) - The minister has a lifelong calling from God, confirmed by the church. That calling provides her/him with a mission, with vision, and with intrinsic motivation. She/he ministers out of giftedness (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12, etc.).</p>
	<p>4. Filled with love (Matt. 22:37-40) - The evangelist is characterized by love—love of God, love of self, and love of others, including lost and diverse people.</p>	<p>4. Filled with love (Matt. 22:37-40) - The minister is characterized by a great love—love of God, love of self, and love of others, including lost and diverse people. Because of the great extent and degree of leadership, she/he is able to absorb the pain of others, and be graceful in the midst of conflict.</p>
	<p>5. Possesses the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) - The evangelist gives evidence of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.</p>	<p>5. Possesses the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) - The minister gives evidence of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.</p>
	<p>6. Possesses the qualities of an office-bearer (1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9) - The evangelist demonstrates such qualities as being: reputable, loyal, self-disciplined, respected, hospitable, mature, honest, sincere, teachable and able to teach, emotionally stable, blameless, lover of God and not money, resilient, responsible, not quick-tempered, not overbearing, not quarrelsome, not abusive (of others or substances), managing her/his own household well (including spousal support of ministry), risk-taking, flexible, adaptable, etc.</p>	<p>6. Possesses the qualities of an office-bearer (1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9) - The minister demonstrates such qualities as being: reputable, loyal, self-disciplined, respected, hospitable, mature, honest, sincere, teachable and able to teach, emotionally stable, blameless, lover of God and not money, resilient, responsible, not quick-tempered, not overbearing, not quarrelsome, not abusive (of others or substances), managing her/his own household well (including spousal support of ministry), risk-taking, flexible, adaptable, etc.</p>
	<p>7. Has a servant's heart (Matt. 20:26) - The evangelist is a servant-leader.</p>	<p>7. Has a servant's heart (Matt. 20:26) - The minister is a servant-leader.</p>
	<p>8. Possesses wisdom (Prov. 1:1-7) - The evangelist lives according to God's design, recognizes Christ as "wisdom from God" (1 Cor. 1:30, Col. 2:3), and seeks wisdom from above (James 1:5, 3:13).</p>	<p>8. Possesses wisdom (Prov. 1:1-7) - The minister lives according to God's design, recognizes Christ as "wisdom from God" (1 Cor. 1:30, Col. 2:3), and seeks wisdom from above (James 1:5, 3:13).</p>

Qualifications	Evangelist	Minister
	<p>9. Manages life well - The evangelist practices good stewardship of time, talents, finances, and physical creation (Gen. 1:27-28, Ps. 8:6-8).</p>	<p>9. Manages life well - The minister practices good stewardship of time, talents, finances, and physical creation (Gen. 1:27-28, Ps. 8:6-8), and demonstrates that she/he has done so while serving an established congregation.</p>
	<p>10. Eager to learn - The evangelist is a lifelong learner, ever studying God's word and world (Ps. 19) and demonstrates that she/he has been and is currently being mentored.</p>	<p>10. Eager to learn - The minister is a lifelong learner, ever studying God's word and world (Ps. 19) and demonstrates that she/he has been and is currently being mentored. She/he has a plan for informal, nonformal, and formal education appropriate to development as a minister of the Word.</p>
<i>Biblical Knowledge</i>	The evangelist has a working knowledge of the Bible in her/his native language, and:	The minister has an intimate knowledge of the Bible in her/his native language, and:
	a. is able to identify Scripture's main themes (covenant, kingdom of God, <i>missio Dei</i> , etc.) and to locate their place in the redemptive history that is centered in Christ;	a. has a thorough understanding of Scripture's main themes (covenant, kingdom of God, <i>missio Dei</i> , etc.) and can expound on redemptive history that is centered in Christ;
	b. has command of the divisions of Scripture (Law, prophets, gospels, epistles, etc.), the historical and literary contexts of each biblical book, and basic hermeneutical principles required to interpret them;	b. has a thorough understanding of the large divisions of Scripture (Law, prophets, gospels, epistles, etc.), the historical and literary contexts of each biblical book, and basic hermeneutical principles required to interpret them;
	<p>c. is able to demonstrate knowledge of key Scripture passages, and to apply them appropriately to life and ministry.</p> <p>Based on the above, the evangelist is able to prepare and preach/teach meaningful and motivational messages/lessons that are true to Scripture. The evangelist is able to communicate clearly the gospel to unbelievers and believers.</p>	<p>c. is able to demonstrate knowledge of key Scripture passages, and to apply them skillfully to life and ministry.</p> <p>Based on the above, the minister demonstrates excellence in preaching meaningful and motivational messages and teaching lessons that are true to Scripture. The minister is able to communicate clearly the gospel to unbelievers and believers.</p>

Qualifications	Evangelist	Minister
<i>Theological Knowledge</i>	<p>1. The evangelist has knowledge of doctrinal standards and systematic theology at the level of Berkhof's <i>Manual of Christian Doctrine</i>. This would include knowledge of Reformed systematic theology, the Ecumenical Creeds, and the three confessional standards of the Christian Reformed Church. Furthermore, the evangelist is able to differentiate and defend the Reformed faith biblically from other systems of thought, both Christian and non-Christian. She/he is able to reflect from a biblical perspective on the cultures, circumstances, and events of everyday life and ministry.</p>	<p>1. The minister demonstrates a broad and deep knowledge of doctrinal standards and systematic theology at the level of Berkhof's <i>Systematic Theology</i>. This would include knowledge of Reformed systematic theology, the Ecumenical Creeds, and the three confessional standards of the Christian Reformed Church. Furthermore, the minister is able to differentiate from and offer biblical and rational arguments for the Reformed faith in relation to other systems of thought, both Christian and non-Christian. She/he is able to reflect from a biblical perspective on the cultures, circumstances, and events of everyday life and ministry.</p>
	<p>2. The evangelist has a basic knowledge of church history (including Christian Reformed Church history and culture) and is able to apply its lessons to present reality and ministry.</p>	<p>2. The minister has a thorough knowledge of church history (including Christian Reformed Church history and culture) and is able with skill to apply its lessons to present reality and ministry.</p>
<i>Skill - Practice of Ministry</i>	<p>Evangelists give evidence of ministry skills. The skills necessary for ministry are many, and not all evangelists possess them in the same measure. (Someone in a ministry position that extends the pastoral office will be expected to demonstrate skills only in relation to the particularity of her/his position).</p> <p>Evangelists, whether in specialized ministry within an organized congregation or in new church development, use skills to lead the church of Jesus Christ to fulfill the New Testament purposes of outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and service.</p>	<p>Ministers demonstrate proven ministry skills and give evidence of their use in past ministry experience. The skills necessary for ministry are many, and not all ministers possess them in the same measure.</p> <p>Ministers use skills to lead the church of Jesus Christ to fulfill the New Testament purposes of outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and service.</p>
	<p>1. Leadership & Administration - The evangelist is able to help people and the church move from where they are to where God wants them to be. To do this, evangelists possess such skills as: casting vision; creating ownership; creating functional organizational systems; resolving conflict; developing gift-based ministries; planning ministry; developing and mentoring leaders; and managing time, money, and</p>	<p>1. Leadership & Administration - The minister is able to help people and the church move from where they are to where God wants them to be. To do this, ministers possess such skills as: casting vision; creating ownership; creating functional organizational systems; resolving conflict; developing gift-based ministries; planning ministry; developing, mentoring, and training leaders and ministry</p>

Qualifications	Evangelist	Minister
	people (according to principles of CRC polity).	workers; and managing time, money, and people (according to principles of CRC polity).
	2. Outreach - The evangelist is able personally to share (witness); to defend (apologetics) the faith; and to lead the church in reaching out to the lost, receiving them, and in developing new churches.	2. Outreach - The minister is able personally to share (witness); to defend (apologetics) the faith; and to lead the church in reaching out to the lost, receiving them, and in developing new churches.
	3. Worship - The evangelist is able to prepare and deliver messages/teach lessons (homiletics), administer the sacraments, and lead in worship and prayer.	3. Worship - The minister demonstrates excellence in preaching messages (homiletics) and teaching lessons, administering the sacraments, and leading in worship and prayer.
	4. Pastoral Care - The evangelist possesses relational skills that enable her/him to provide personally and through the church (corporately) pastoral care, visitation, small groups, youth ministry, spiritual counsel, and conduct of weddings and funerals.	4. Pastoral Care - The minister demonstrates great relational skills that enable her/him to provide personally and through the church (corporately) pastoral care, visitation, small groups, youth ministry, spiritual counsel, and conduct of weddings and funerals.
	5. Fellowship - The evangelist is able to foster a nurturing Christian community.	5. Fellowship - The minister is able to foster and maintain a nurturing Christian community.
	6. Discipleship - The evangelist is able to raise up, teach, and nurture disciple-making disciples.	6. Discipleship - The minister is able to raise up, teach, and nurture disciple-making disciples.
	7. Service - The evangelist is able to respond to personal and community needs by mobilizing the church for ministry.	7. Service - The minister is able to respond to personal and community needs by mobilizing the church for ministry.
	8. Specialized - The evangelist has any necessary skills specific to her/his particular calling within the church.	8. Specialized - The minister has any necessary skills specific to her/his particular calling within the church.
Appendix E Functions of the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC) <p>The functions of the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC) program are fourfold: (1) to prepare persons in Christian Reformed history, polity, practice, and Reformed confessions; (2) to give the seminary faculty and the seminary board of trustees exposure to the student so that a recommendation can be made to synod regarding the person's fitness for ministry; (3) to enable students to become familiar with the Christian Reformed Church's ministries/agencies; and (4) to provide opportunities for field education in Christian Reformed churches. In regard to number one, we expect that a variety of venues such as distance learning, intensive seminars taught at</p>		

endorsed alternative seminaries or other regional locations, and tutorials through Calvin Theological Seminary will meet this need. This plan envisions this kind of training for all Article 6, 7, and 8 individuals and provides it in places that are closer geographically to the students. The SMCC will be responsible to provide for this training. In regard to number two, the CMCC and the individual's church council will give testimony to the person's fitness for ministry, the field education sites where the student serves will provide recommendations, and recommendations will be received from the individual's seminary (see the Ministry Readiness Profile, Appendix B) to assist the SMCC in its recommendation to synod. The requirements of number three can be met through a trip to Grand Rapids, Michigan, or Burlington, Ontario, and/or by exposure to denominational ministries on a regional basis. Number four, we assume, will still be required and will be met by each student.

OVERTURES, COMMUNICATIONS, AND APPEALS

Overture 1: Propose a Means by Which Requested Ministry Shares Are More in Line with the Expected Recovery of Funds

In 2002, Classis Alberta North sent an overture to synod regarding ministry shares and the unseemly gap between the monies requested and the monies expected to be received. Synod chose not to accede to this overture, combining its response to our overture (Overture 6) with its response to Overture 5, which requested a revision in the manner of ministry-share assessment. Though related in their request for the appointment of a study committee to address the concerns raised, each overture had a distinctive focus. Classis Alberta North believes that in the process, the concerns raised by our overture were not actually addressed. In order to place these concerns before synod in a manner that will allow them to be addressed, we have simplified our overture by not asking that a study committee be appointed. Rather, we propose a direct request that articulates our specific concern and asks for a specific answer.

I. Background

Over the last twenty years, the gap between ministry-share monies requested and ministry-share monies received has increased significantly. Whereas in 1981 the denomination received 89 percent of what was requested, by 1996, this figure had slipped to 63 percent and has hovered near there ever since; in 2001 the rate was 62.8 percent. It is the size of this gap between what is requested and what is received that must be addressed.

Note: Since 1993, the actual figures identifying the “shortfall factor” are no longer provided in the *Acts of Synod* or in the *Agenda for Synod*, but they are published in a financial supplement provided to delegates. Technically, the figures are still published openly, but, in reality, these figures are not as readily available to members of our denomination. The result is decreased transparency.

In 1992, synod received a report from the Committee to Study Denominational Funding that concluded that “the quota system continues to be a sound, viable avenue to provide a stable base for denominational ministry funding” (*Acts of Synod* 1992, p. 686). Recommendations were made in the areas of education, standardization, and promotion with the hope that such efforts would strengthen a basically sound system of raising monies for denominational ministry. In spite of these efforts and recommendations, the gap between what has been requested and what has been received remains huge.

Respecting the vital role of ministry shares in the life of our denomination, and recognizing the need to include a shortfall factor of some kind in the budgeting process, we nevertheless are convinced that the present situation is unhealthy, unwise, and unworkable in the long term. It is not a shortfall factor or experience factor per se that concerns us. It is a question of how great such a factor can be before it raises questions of credibility and undermines the trust that is so essential to having this arrangement work well. If the cord of trust is stretched too far and if the gap between what is requested and what is received is perceived as simply too great, then that gap becomes a credibility gap. Continuing to ask congregations for a full contribution (100 percent) becomes more and more problematic when the average return is less than two-thirds.

While we acknowledge that there is risk involved in either shrinking or maintaining the gap, it is our conviction that to maintain the credibility and the honor of ministry shares and the denominational ministries they support, we require more realistic numbers.

II. Overture

Classis Alberta North overtures synod to propose a means by which ministry-share monies requested are more in line with the ministry-share monies we may realistically expect to receive.

Grounds:

1. The demonstrated decline in ministry-share receipts over the past twenty years has shown no evidence of a turnaround.
2. Recent communications from the denominational office confirm that ministry-share income is a deepening concern (cf. January 2002 letter from Dr. Peter Borgdorff to each church council).
3. The size of the gap between monies requested and monies received raises the question of credibility.
4. The size of the gap between monies requested and monies received raises the question of sustainability.
5. Providing what is requested would demonstrate transparency with respect to a delicate financial concern and in that way strengthen trust between the denominational establishment and the denominational members.
6. Synod 2002 failed to address the concerns raised in our overture (Overture 5, *Acts of Synod 2002*, pp. 363-64).

Denominational Ministry Share Recovery Rate

% = percentage of requested monies actually received for that year

Year	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
%	88	89	87.9	86.2	88.6	86	84.1	83.9	82.2	78.6	78.1	n/a
Year	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	
%	69.5	69.4	70.3	67	63	61.3	62.4	65.8	64.6	62.8	71	

Classis Alberta North
Homer G. Samplonius, stated clerk

Overture 2: Study the Ministry-Share System

I. Background

Over the history of our denomination, the ministry-share system has proved to be an effective system for funding denominational ministries. This system was based on a covenant concept—that we commit together to fund and carry out joint ministries. This system allowed us to fund and carry out ministries that could never have been done by one or two congregations alone.

That being said, the ministry-share system is being threatened today. In many churches, local ministry is receiving priority over denominational causes. The gap between monies requested and monies received has grown substantially over the past years.

The response of past synods has been education and promotion of the present system. Perhaps we need to consider a new approach to funding denominational ministries.

II. Overture

Classis Grandville overtures Synod 2004 to appoint a study committee to reexamine the system of ministry shares to see if there is a new or better or more equitable way of raising funds to meet denominational ministry needs.

Grounds:

1. The percentage of ministry shares collected has substantially declined in the past several decades.
2. There is a growing diversity among congregations as to the priority of congregational ministry needs versus denominational ministry needs.
3. The future viability of our denominational ministries requires us to reexamine how we fund them.

Classis Grandville
Robert Heerspink, stated clerk

Overture 3: Extend Ministry-Share Reduction Formula from 72 to 24 Members

Classis Pacific Northwest overtures Synod 2004 to extend the ministry-share reduction formula from 72 to 24 members.

Grounds:

1. The reality in the CRC is that there are a rapidly increasing number of smaller, organized churches (especially ethnic, rural, and Home Missions plants outside of regions with a significant CRC heritage population base) that have fewer than thirty families, or 72 members. (According to statistics from *Yearbook 2003*, there are 121 congregations [both emerging and organized] in the CRC with 0-50 members and an additional 136 such congregations with 51-100 members.) While these churches often still wish to maintain support for denominational causes, they are increasingly unable to contribute ministry shares at the present 50 percent “expected” level.

2. The inability for smaller congregations to contribute their expected ministry shares has been exacerbated this year because they have now been called upon to cover the full cost of each of their minister's pension plan benefit (2004 - \$5167 per year).
3. The payment of denominational ministry shares (or at least a plan to achieve 100 percent payment) is also a prerequisite in applying for a loan for the CRC Building Loan Fund, which impacts smaller churches seeking loans for purchasing or enlarging their facilities. With the new assumption of the full cost of a minister's pension plan benefit, the goal of 100 percent payment (even with the present reduction formula, i.e., 50 percent expected level) becomes increasingly elusive.
4. The impact of decreased giving toward denominational ministries would be minimal. One estimate is that ministry-share giving to the denomination by smaller congregations (under 72 members), using this proposed formula (and their present rate of giving), would decrease by approximately \$60,000. This figure also, understandably, cannot take into account the new situation in which smaller churches are assuming the full cost of each of their minister's pension plan benefit.
5. While the figure of 72 members (30 families) has been used by the CRC as a guideline for the organization (and viability) of a church for many years, there are other precedents. According to Jewish custom, a synagogue may be formed when there is a minimum of 10 adult ("bar mitzvahed," 13 or older) male members, on the basis of the practice of tithing, whereby 10 tithing men could support one Levite/priest/rabbi. Therefore, the bottom figure of 24 members (10 families) is used in this proposal.

Classis Pacific Northwest
Gordon Terpstra, stated clerk

Overture 4: Revise Ministers' Pension Funds Assessment Calculation

Classis Eastern Canada overtures synod to revise the Ministers' Pension Funds (MPF) assessment calculation adopted at Synod 2003 to reflect greater equality among its members. We request that all organized churches be required to pay MPF assessments determined at an amount per active professing member age 18 and older, or, if greater, *a percentage of the direct costs of their "first or only" pastor's participation in the plan according to the ministry-share reduction formula adopted by Synod 1987 (see *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*, p. 342).*

Grounds:

1. The new formula for determining each church's pension responsibility has put an unfair burden on the smaller churches because they must face increases of up to 100 percent or greater, whereas larger churches must adjust to increases of 20 percent.
2. Each congregation is called in Church Order Article 15 to "provide for the proper support of its minister(s)." The focus for this article has typically been the minister's salary, fringe benefits, and housing and is

based on 1 Corinthians 9:14, where Paul writes, “In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.” Yet, it is interesting to note that there is no mention of provision for the minister’s pension—primarily because this was deemed to be a service provided by the denomination and funded by its members.

3. The denomination has sought to fund the Ministers’ Pension Fund through a couple of different ways. In 1997, synod moved from a “combination of ministry shares and direct billings” to its current form where there is an “assessment on each professing member of the denomination age 18 or older” (*Agenda for Synod 2003*, p. 212). The changes adopted at Synod 2003 seek to continue in this endeavor to have a denominationally provided service that is funded by *all* of its members, but the decision of 2003 places greater responsibility on smaller churches by establishing a minimum contribution to the Ministers’ Pension Fund regardless of their size.
4. The larger churches are still subsidizing the majority of the funds. They are being asked to make contributions to the pension fund that are 20 percent greater than in 2003—an increase in Canada from \$22 per member to \$26.40 per member. Yet, it could be argued that the larger churches in our denomination also have greater capacity to contribute more due to their larger membership rolls.
5. The difficulty with the decision of Synod 2003 is that the increased cost for maintaining the Ministers’ Pension Fund that is being placed on the smaller church is much greater than is reasonable. Consider two churches from Classis Eastern Canada for example:
 - a. *Church A* has 151 professing members 18 or older
 - Its 2003 assessment was \$3,322.
 - In 2004, the assessment will be \$6,600, which is a 99 percent increase, or \$43.71 per member.
 - With the changes proposed by this overture, the membership calculation and expense would be 126 active members: 72.31 percent of \$6,600 = \$4,773.
 - b. *Church B* has 113 professing members 18 or older
 - Its 2003 assessment was \$2,486.
 - In 2004 the assessment will be \$6,600, which is a 165 percent increase, or \$58.41 per member.
 - With changes proposed by this overture, the membership calculation and expenses would be 92 active members: 58.26 percent of \$6,600 = \$3,846.

Classis Eastern Canada
James Kooistra, stated clerk

Overture 5: Reconsider and Revise the Decision of Synod 2003 re the Funding of the Ministers' Pension Plans

Classis Central California overtures Synod 2004 to reconsider and revise the decision of Synod 2003 regarding the funding of the Ministers' Pension for all churches with 225 or fewer members (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 600, Art. 26, 7).

Grounds:

1. This decision effectively shifts the responsibility of providing pensions for Christian Reformed Church ministers from the entire denomination to the local church that the pastor may be serving at any specific time. (This marks a significant shift from denominational responsibility to local responsibility. Such a shift undermines the Christian Reformed Church's commitment to provide equally for all its retired ministers regardless of where they may have been called. Historically, the denomination has been committed to providing pension based on years of service and not on the ability of any specific church to provide for that pension.)
2. Under the previous benefit plan, the denomination provided pension to all its ministers, including those who are called to smaller, underprivileged churches. Under the new plan, many pastors of these smaller, underprivileged churches will be at high risk for losing or significantly reducing their pension benefits.
3. Some churches will no longer be able to attract a pastor if they are unable to pay for pension benefits.
4. In effect, this new policy solves the pension plan's difficulties by excluding all those who cannot afford it.

Classis Central California
Harold Hiemstra, stated clerk

Overture 6: Reverse Decision re Assessments for Ministers' Pension Fund

I. Preamble

Last year, synod approved a change in the funding of the Ministers' Pension Fund by assessing each church a minimum amount. This change has a dramatic impact on smaller churches with ministers of these churches being held hostage to a council and congregation that may be unable or unwilling to pay the minimum amount to Ministers' Pension Fund. The threat that all disability protection and pension benefits will be withdrawn unless a congregation presents a timely payment will lead to serious repercussions for pastors and families. This recent change in funding will have a dramatic impact as smaller churches scramble to find new money to make up this drastic increase. While the appeal for special offerings to offset the impact is honorable, churches are already committed to many causes, and it is not realistic to expect that a million dollars can be raised in time for the small churches to comply with these demands.

Because churches over 250 members will be assessed Can\$26 per member and churches below will be assessed the minimum of \$6,600 per congregation, the impact of this minimum assessment is extremely unjust and unbalanced. In our classis, the impact on the Canadian churches will look like this:

First CRC, Barndon	\$61.68 per member
Emo CRC	\$39.28
Bethlehem CRC	\$47.14
First CRC, Thunder Bay	\$26.00
Hope CRC	\$26.00
Covenant CRC	\$26.00
Good News CRC	\$101.53
Transcona CRC	\$32.67

The smaller the church, the greater the burden for their pastor's pension and disability. This is grossly unjust and unfair.

II. Overture

Therefore, Classis Lake Superior overtures synod to reverse the decision of Synod 2003 to bill churches a minimum amount for the Ministers' Pension Fund and to replace it with a funding assessment based on a per-member assessment.

Grounds:

1. This distributes the load equally among all churches.
2. This negates the need for the emergency offerings.
3. This is both fair and just.
4. This does not penalize small churches because of their size.

Classis Lake Superior
Steven Zwart, stated clerk

Overture 7: Reassess the New Payment Plan for Ministers' Pension Fund

Classis of the Heartland overtures synod to reassess the new protocols for payment of the Ministers' Pension Fund and return to an equal per family assessment for funding the ministers' pension program.

Grounds:

1. We question synod's approving something without knowing just what it will be. Pension trustees told Synod 2003 the following:

Historically low interest rates and approximately three years of declining values in the financial market, taken together, have diminished current portfolio income and values. The consequence is that both the U.S. and Canadian plans are significantly under-funded. The challenge of funding the plans is made more difficult by the declining number of reported members age 18 and over on which pension assessments are based. In order to return the plans to the required funding levels, it will be necessary to substantially increase the assessment per confessing member for the calendar year 2004 and beyond. Congregations will be notified of the precise increase as soon as that information is available this fall.

(Acts of Synod 2003, p. 457)

It seems as though synod had not yet been given all the details, but they are saying to just go ahead.

2. The above paragraph states that substantial increases per professing members will be required. It says nothing of setting minimum numbers

of professing members per church. A 25 percent increase per confessing member is very substantial increase in itself.

3. In times such as we have gone through since 9-11, with the increasing cost of insurance, low interest, and plummeting markets, it is our human nature to be concerned. We all will have to live with less. Is it mandatory to maintain the levels required for this fund or can it like millions of others, downsize and live with less? Are other agencies of the denomination going to have to work with a much smaller budget because the pension is a direct assessment and their ministries are not?
4. The small churches of our denomination are already struggling due to the economy just to pay their local budgets. With this added burden and how it is to be implemented, it seems that this just might be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Synod has already realized some of this and has made provisions for help for three years, but that does not solve the matter. It is nothing more than a Band-Aid.
5. When you look at certain smaller churches, you can see the percentage of increase they are expected to pay.

Church	Paid in 2003	Pay in 2004	Percent increase
Ireton CRC	\$3,186.00	\$5,160.00	62%
Hawarden	\$2,448.00	\$5,160.00	110%
Hospers	\$2,600.00	\$5,160.00	98%
Le Mars	\$3,000.00	\$5,160.00	72%
Ocheyedan	\$3,080.00	\$5,160.00	68%

Classis of the Heartland

M. Dale Fopma, stated clerk

Overture 8: Revise Payment Plan for Ministers' Pension Funds

Classis Minnkota overtures Synod 2004 to instruct the pension plan trustees to return to funding the pension plan for first ministers of organized churches by means of church assessments based on the number of active professing members age 18 or older in every church.

Grounds:

1. The present plan of having all churches pay the direct cost of their pastor's participation in the plan is adding to the financial burden and creating increased hardship for small churches that are struggling to survive following the elimination of Funds for Smaller Churches (FSC) support. Because of the elimination of FSC support, some small churches have closed and/or are closing their doors while others just barely cling to existence. To ask them to pay an additional three or four thousand dollars per year for their minister's pension may well spell the end for them.
2. Our heritage has been that we are a large covenant family and that we have pledged to love and support one another as we serve the Lord together. Until recently, that included providing financial assistance to our brothers and sisters in Christ in small churches, which by reason of location and/or population are unable to be self-supporting. This new

direction in policy of refusing mutual financial support, that is, the elimination of FSC and forcing each church to pay the direct cost of its minister's pension makes a mockery of our heritage.

3. Returning the minister's pension fund to a denominationally funded basis will obviate the need for special collections and special funds. This would assure equitable pension distribution among all "first or only" ordained ministers regardless of other sacrifices that may have been made to serve smaller, less prestigious churches. It would refute the inference of an un-Christlike, unloving attitude implied by the statement in the *Agenda for Synod 2003*, pages 211-12:

The greater the amount of subsidy from larger to smaller churches the greater the risk of larger churches becoming dissatisfied and unwilling to carry the load. Where the point of refusal might lie is open to question; however, the assumption that there is such a point is not . . . Continuation of past protocols for funding and subsidizing would push the cost of the plans past the point where simple refusal to pay likely would become an unpleasant reality.

Are those for whom Christ gave his body, blood, and very life on the cross really so unwilling to share with their brothers and sisters in smaller churches the material blessings he has given?

4. It will enable some small churches to keep their ordained ministers instead of losing them, and also perhaps to fill vacancies that will inevitably occur in the future. Some CRC ministers are willing to work for less than the recommended salary, but very few are willing to work without pension benefits. In fact, it is the guarantee of future pension benefits that has persuaded some ministers to go to small churches. If this overture or one similar to it is not adopted, many small churches will lose their ordained ministers and be unable to attract replacements in the future.

It has been stated at synod that small churches do not necessarily deserve to have ordained ministers. Why is that? Do larger churches deserve them because they have the money to pay for them, while smaller churches do not? If it is indeed the amount of money that a church can raise that determines whether or not it deserves an ordained minister, we desperately need to reconsider our denominational values and priorities.

5. Small churches no less than large ones are in danger of being led astray, away from the amazing gospel of God's wonderful grace and our Reformed understanding and exposition of his Word. We think that our denomination would be better served by maintaining wherever possible ordained, seminary trained ministers in the small outposts and hinterlands rather than concentrating multiples of them in a few large congregations.

Classis Minnkota

LeRoy G. Christoffels, stated clerk

Overture 9: Withhold Action on Recommendations of the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry

I. Overture

Classis Grand Rapids East overtures Synod 2004

A. To withhold action on the recommendations of the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry.

Grounds:

1. The report's recommendations will create Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees that will have a mandate that is beyond what most classes can adequately or realistically accomplish.
2. The report notes that Calvin Theological Seminary will be the *preferred route*, but the recommendations remove the seminary and the board of trustees of the seminary from the candidacy process. The proposed decentralized structure for candidacy, in fact, places Calvin Theological Seminary at a disadvantage because it creates an *incentive* for students to choose a seminary closest to their home classis.
3. This report does not demonstrate the inadequacy or inflexibility of the present Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC) programs offered by Calvin Theological Seminary.
4. The report's recommendations will erode the quality of Reformed theological education that our ministry leaders receive.
5. The report recommends procedures that will come at a very high financial cost.
6. The report's recommendations, if followed, may very well threaten denominational unity and exacerbate the erosion of our confessional identity.

B. To ask the committee to return to Synod 2005 with revised recommendations for the routes to ministry associated with Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23.

C. To ask the committee to engage in a dialogue with Calvin Theological Seminary so that the concerns regarding the apparent inflexibility of the SPMC program for those who have not attended Calvin Theological Seminary are adequately met.

II. Appreciation for the report

A. *The report takes seriously the nature and intent of Church Order Article 7*

The report wisely acknowledges the "exceptional" nature of this article in the Church Order. It also wisely notes that entering the ministry via Article 7 should not be used for those who have begun a theological education but have not completed their program; those who feel too inconvenienced by the pursuit of a theological education; and those who do not have the requisite character, knowledge, or skills for ministry.

The report places in the hands of local congregations and then local classes the responsibility to review a person's intention to enter ordained ministry under Article 7. According to the report, it would be the responsibility of classis to interview candidates who are seeking ordination via Article 7 and to

determine whether ordination via this article is appropriate. The local classis would also be responsible for obtaining an overall statement of health. It would also be the local classis that drafts a learning covenant and financial plan for the candidate. These would receive the approval of a synodically appointed committee. These recommendations honor and address the concerns that gave rise to the formation of this committee.

The recommendation that those wishing to enter ordained ministry via Article 7 are members of a CRC for a minimum of three years is a prudent one.

The recommendation to drop the phrase, “especially when the need is urgent” from Church Order Article 7 is also in keeping with Articles 6 and 8, which do not have a need clause.

B. The report takes seriously the nature and intent of Church Order Article 8

In a similar way, the report honors and addresses the concerns regarding the lack of denominational guidelines and standards for the increasing number of candidates who are entering ministry in the CRC via Church Order Article 8. This report notes that it would be primarily the responsibility of classis to ensure that a candidate is fit, in body and mind, for the ministry. The classis would also ascertain whether ordination under the provisions of Church Order Article 8 is appropriate. The report’s recommendation that there be denominational oversight and input from a synodically appointed committee is also prudent. The report is also wise to recommend that the process include a period of stated supply with a particular church and a learning covenant with the classis.

C. The report takes seriously the need for evangelists/ministry associates who wish to become ministers of the Word to follow the above-mentioned procedure of Church Order Article 7

This overture appreciates the care with which this report brings standards and a blend of classical and denominational oversight to the candidacy process for those pursuing ordination via Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23.

III. Concerns and difficulties with the report

A. Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees (CMCC) for all candidates are unrealistic

The report recommends the formation of Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committees in each classis “to oversee and supervise the entire process of ministry preparation and formation.” The proposed mandate for these CMCCs is huge.

It is one matter for these proposed classical committees to oversee and supervise the entire process of ministry preparation for those desiring to enter the ministry via Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23. It is quite another to give such committees the burden of also overseeing and supervising those desiring to enter ordained ministry via Church Order Article 6. Such a task is beyond what most classes can adequately or realistically accomplish.

B. The long-term effects of a decentralized structure raises many concerns

One must ask what the effects will be of placing much more of the hands-on oversight and supervision of *all* candidates for ordained ministry in the hands of these proposed CMCCs. The report uses the language of the CMCC’s

journeying with the candidates in a process that ends with recommending and endorsing the candidates.

Such a classically based regional structure raises many questions:

- Would not such a structure create an *incentive* for students to choose a seminary closest to their home classis? In other words, would there not be a structural incentive for a student from Vancouver, British Columbia, to choose Regent College over Calvin Theological Seminary; or for a student from Los Angeles, California, to choose Fuller Seminary over Calvin Theological Seminary?
- How does such a decentralized structure fit with the report's designation of Calvin Theological Seminary as the *preferred route*? How can a student from Vancouver, British Columbia, attending Calvin Theological Seminary be adequately supervised by Classis B.C. North-West's CMCC? Or how can a student from Los Angeles, California, attending Calvin Theological Seminary be adequately supervised by Classis Greater Los Angeles's CMCC?
- What would be the effects of such a decentralized candidacy structure on the classes closest to Calvin Theological Seminary? Would not many Calvin Seminary students a long distance from their home classis prefer to be supervised by the CMCC of a more local classis? Would not this structure put an undue amount of work and financial burden on the CMCCs of classes in and around Grand Rapids?

C. *The report fails to demonstrate that the present SPMC program is not working*

The mandate of this committee called for them to examine whether Calvin Theological Seminary's current "SPMC program . . . [is] flexible enough to meet the needs of ministry candidates in special circumstances."

The report offers very little evidence that the present SPMC program is not working. It presents very little evidence that the present SPMC program is inflexible. In fact, the report admits that those students who completed an additional SPMC year at Calvin Theological Seminary found their experience there to be helpful. Therefore, it seems overly hasty to effectively eliminate the SPMC and EMPMC programs altogether, which is what adopting the report's recommendations would do. To help demonstrate just how flexible the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy (SPMC) and the Ethnic Minority Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EMPMC) are, please refer to the 2003 Calvin Seminary Catalog (pp. 98-101), which is also available on line at: www.calvin-seminary.edu/pubs/catalog.pdf.

D. *Priority of individual needs over communal needs*

The report lists some of the special circumstances that might prevent a candidate from attending Calvin Theological Seminary even for a short time. These special circumstances include location, ethnicity, ministry issues, and family concerns. The report also concludes—again, with little real evidence—that it is "increasingly difficult for one seminary to be the sole institution for the training and equipping of ministers in the Christian Reformed Church." This is a rather sweeping conclusion, but is it justified? Does it warrant the committee's recommended sweeping changes to the candidacy process for those entering by way of Church Order Article 6?

A problem we perceive in the logic of this committee's report is that it places the needs of the *individual* candidates ahead of the needs of the *community*, namely the Christian Reformed denomination. In other words, it places the individual need not to be inconvenienced or temporarily relocated above the communal need of the Christian Reformed Church for leaders who are well-educated and trained within the Reformed theological tradition. It is only because individual needs are trumping communal needs that the committee concludes that it is increasingly difficult for one seminary to be the sole institution for the training and equipping of ministers in the CRC. If anything, Calvin Theological Seminary is more ethnically diverse today than it has ever been. If anything, we live in a more transient society than ever before, and relocating for the sake of one's education is easier today than it was half a century ago.

E. Lack of specificity regarding the concept of endorsed alternative seminaries

This report acknowledges the new category of endorsed alternative seminaries. It describes these seminaries as those that have met a list of criteria that potentially indicate a "good fit" in terms of our own expectations. Here is the crux of the problem: How does one discern which seminaries do and which seminaries do not warrant the endorsed-alternative designation? This is a much more difficult challenge than it appears.

It is telling that this report does not actually give one example of a possible endorsed alternative seminary. Will specific regions (such as the Pacific southwest) lobby for local seminaries (such as Fuller Seminary) to be considered an endorsed alternative based more on location than on academic and theological credentials? Will certain segments of our denomination (such as those with a particular theological perspective) lobby that a particular seminary with a similar theological perspective (such as Mid-America Seminary) be considered an endorsed alternative seminary? Clearly, designating those that will and those that will not be endorsed alternative seminaries will be more difficult than this report acknowledges.

One clear advantage of Calvin Theological Seminary is that providing a solidly Reformed theological education to the ministry leaders of the Christian Reformed Church is paramount in its mission and purpose. The denomination has entrusted this institution with this task, and it has been fulfilling this task for over a century. In many respects, it is the only truly endorsed seminary.

F. The report overstates the quantitative need

The report includes numbers and graphs that suggest that a lack of qualified and equipped ministers is inevitable unless something radical is done. In support of the so-called need, the report uses strong language: "if the present trend continues, the CRCNA could well have a growing vacancy rate"; "churches will suffer for lack of qualified and equipped ministers of the Word."

A close tally of the numbers presented, however, does not warrant such a negative prognosis. The quantitative need is not nearly as apparent, and the shortage of qualified ministers is not nearly so inevitable.

G. The report understates the qualitative need

While this report highlights the *quantitative* need for ordained ministers, it clearly understates the *qualitative* need for Reformed leaders. This report notes

a need for well-trained and well-equipped ministers of the Word. It also notes the need for an “extensive formal theological education,” and for a “satisfactory theological education.” What is *strikingly* rare in this report is the need for a thoroughly Reformed theological education. This understatement of the need for ministers who are solidly trained in the fundamentals of Reformed theology leads to the assumption that the designation of endorsed alternative seminaries will not be difficult to find.

The understatement of the Reformed quality of the education of ministry candidates is coupled with an overall erosion of academic standards in this report. Gone is the need for comprehensive examinations in Greek and Hebrew. Gone is the need for an oral comprehensive examination. The only requirement in these areas is a transcript. The last remaining comprehensive examination to be retained by this report is the Bible knowledge test, the least “academic” comprehensive examination presently required.

H. The costs—financial and otherwise—of these recommendations have not been adequately ascertained

The report notes that there will be financial costs to this restructuring of the candidacy process. However, these costs have not been adequately articulated.

A large question is: Can the denomination really afford to have a fully functioning SMCC, plus fully functioning CMCCs, plus paid liaisons at the proposed endorsed alternative seminaries, plus maintain the high standards of Reformed theological education at Calvin Theological Seminary? Can we truly do all of these things? Is it not true that Calvin Theological Seminary is already finding it financially difficult to provide Reformed theological education to its present students? Would not the adoption of these recommendations erode denominational commitment to and financial support of Calvin Theological Seminary?

Beyond the financial costs, there are also the potential costs to denominational unity and our confessional identity of accepting these recommendations

IV. Summary of concerns and conclusions

The Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry was formed to investigate ways to bring official denominational standards to bear on those entering ordained ministry. What it telling is that in the mandate for this committee, seven out of eight tasks (a-g) refer to an examination of the processes governing Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23. Only one task (h) asks for an examination of the current SPMC program, which has a direct bearing on those entering the ministry via Church Order Article 6. Yet the recommendations of this report call for a restructuring of all the routes into ordained ministry, including Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8, and 23.

It is also ironic that although this report originally arose out of questions and concerns raised by the Calvin Theological Seminary board of trustees mainly regarding those entering ministry via Church Order Articles 7 and 8, it is now this very board of trustees and the seminary it represents that will be removed from the candidacy process if this report’s recommendations are adopted.

This overture believes that many of the concerns with this report would have been ameliorated had the report focused on addressing the original concerns raised by the Calvin Seminary board of trustees, namely concerns of

those planning to enter ordained ministry via Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23. Had the report recommended classical committees with a synodical oversight committee to oversee and supervise only the candidacy process of those entering via Church Order Articles 7, 8, and 23, then many concerns raised by this overture would be addressed.

With respect to those who attend seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary but who wish to be ordained in the CRC via Church Order Article 6, this report neither demonstrates nor establishes *why* the process of their candidacy should be taken out of the hands of the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary and its board of trustees. Calvin Theological Seminary remains the body that has received the denomination's trust to provide well-trained and well-equipped ministry leaders. It is the contention of this overture that Calvin Theological Seminary remains the best-equipped institution to review what a candidate needs and to provide an appropriate program to fulfill the communal need for ministers who are well-trained in the fundamentals of Reformed theology and practice.

Classis Grand Rapids East
Philip R. Lucasse, stated clerk

Overture 10: Alter Recommendation F in Alternate Routes to Ministry Report

Classis Eastern Canada overtures synod to alter the words "young men" to "gifted persons" in Recommendation F of the report of the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry.

Ground: This change will bring consistency with the remainder of the report re gender and age qualifications.

Classis Eastern Canada
James Kooistra, stated clerk

Overture 11: Postpone Action on the Recommendations of the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry

I. Background

Synod of 1996 commissioned a study committee to evaluate various ways in which ministry candidates were being prepared for and ordained to Christian Reformed ministry. That committee reported to Synod 2000, which approved the recommended standards for the office of ministry, but the question of various routes to ordained ministry remained unresolved. The matter was referred to the committee that is now scheduled to report to Synod 2004. This committee has presented the church with a large report. The report details the need for qualified ministers and evangelists. It deals with admission to Christian Reformed ministry under Church Order Article 6 (approved theological education), Article 7 (exceptional gifts), and Article 8 (ministers from other denominations). In recommendations designed to meet the need of the church for qualified ministers, the report calls for significant changes and

additional structures on synodical, classical, and local levels. The report also allows for the designation of certain “endorsed” seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary. It also recommends a procedure for entrance into Christian Reformed ministry by those who receive their training in nonendorsed seminaries. At such endorsed or nonendorsed seminaries, the report assumes that qualified Christian Reformed trainers will be available on-site to provide specialized instruction in matters such as Christian Reformed Church history, Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church, and confessional preaching. The report endeavors to provide an estimate of what the new program might cost on the classical and denominational levels. In view of the complexity of the report and its far-reaching implications, it seems obvious that the church and its ministries need more time than has been available to digest the report and its recommendations.

II. Overture

Classis Grand Rapids South overtures Synod 2004 to defer action on the recommendations of the Committee to Provide Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Ministry and to instruct the committee in the following matters:

- A. To receive reactions from the church to the report and its recommendations;
- B. To solicit reactions from the denominational ministries that are directly involved in the training and calling of persons for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, namely Calvin Theological Seminary, Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Chaplaincy Ministries;
- C. To provide Synod 2005 with a report on reactions that it may have received from the church as well as the results of its solicitation from the relevant denominational ministries.

Grounds:

1. Local congregations, area classes, and the appropriate denominational ministries need more time than was made available to study and react to a large report that calls for far-reaching changes in the preparation and ordination of ministry candidates.
2. Synod would be well served by official responses to the recommendations from those denominational ministries that currently participate most directly in the preparation and calling of candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

Classis Grand Rapids South
Joseph Vanden Akker, stated clerk

Overture 12: Alter Report re Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members Recommended to the Churches by Synod 2002

I. Background

Our churches must continue to address the fact that sexually intimate same-gender (same-sex) relationships and same-gender civil unions or marriages are increasingly recognized as legitimate in our society. Our churches must

continue to clarify our responses in ministry to members struggling with same-gender attractions and encourage each other to maintain the position we have taken as a redemptive witness to our culture through these challenging times.

Our denomination is facing the question of whether church members in sexually intimate same-gender relationships may serve in office. Classis Toronto and First CRC, Toronto, are specifically addressing this matter.

The encouragement and guidance synod could give all consistories in transitioning from pastoral care and admonition to discipline for members in sexually intimate same-gender relationships would benefit all our churches. We believe the primary way for congregations and consistories to deal with this issue begins with ongoing pastoral care and specific admonition to church members living in such practices. This approach addresses the question of membership prior to the question of office and will help us deal biblically and according to our Church Order with this matter.

However, we believe the transition from admonition to discipline has been left ambiguous by the omission in Synod's 2002 Pastoral Guidelines of a critical statement that was found in an earlier set of those guidelines (Synod 1999) namely, the statement that reads as follows: "On the one hand, their sexual drive impels them to seek a deeply intimate personal relationship with another, but at the same time, Scripture forbids such sexual intimacy with persons of the same sex" (emphasis added) (see *Acts of Synod 1999*, p. 602, C, Recommendations, 5, a; and *Agenda for Synod 1999*, p. 252).

We also believe congregational pastoral care ministries would be strengthened by reminding consistories of our denominational covenant to transition from admonishing members practicing sexually intimate same-gender relationships (including so-called committed relationships) to disciplining members, as we would with all those living persistently in disobedience to God's will.

These actions will help our congregations and their leaders respond to these difficult situations with greater clarity and will bring greater unity among our churches in this matter.

II. Overture

Classis Columbia overtures synod:

A. To reinsert the following sentence from the Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members report under part 2, section III, E, The gift of celibacy (self-control); (*Agenda for Synod 1999*, p. 252; proposed reinsertion underlined):

On the one hand, their sexual drive impels them to seek a deeply intimate personal relationship with another, but at the same time, Scripture forbids such sexual intimacy with persons of the same sex.

at the end of the second paragraph of the Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members report, part 2, section III, E, The gift of celibacy (self-control); (*Agenda for Synod 2002*, p. 321).

The end of the paragraph with the proposed reinsertion would read as follows:

Persons who are homosexual, like other adult singles, often struggle intensely with their sexual drives. On the one hand, their sexual drive impels them to seek a deeply intimate personal relationship

with another, but at the same time, Scripture forbids such sexual intimacy with persons of the same sex.

Ground: This omission is inconsistent with synod's position in the pastoral guidelines of the 1973 (see *Acts of Synod 1973*, p. 632 re homosexuality) and 1999 (see *Acts of Synod 1999*, p. 602) reports and sends a mixed message to our congregations.

B. To remind consistories that where ongoing pastoral care and admonition are provided for members practicing sexually intimate same gender-relationships but admonition is rejected and persistent sinful behavior continues, the privileges of communicant membership must be suspended.

Grounds:

1. This clarifies the actions implied and assumed in the Pastoral Guidelines of the 1973, 1999, and 2002 reports and reaffirms our commitment to Church Order Article 80 and the Supplement to Articles 78-81 (subsection b.):

b. A person who persistently rejects the admonition of the consistory shall be suspended from the privileges of communicant membership.*

**Note:* Synod 1991 said the following re privileges of communicant membership: "'The privileges of communicant membership' include but are not limited to participation in the sacraments, the right to vote at congregational meetings, and eligibility to hold office" (*Acts of Synod 1991*, p. 718).

2. This encourages spiritual restoration for members in the spirit of the Pastoral Guidelines of the 1973, 1999, and 2002 reports.
3. This will help consistories address and answer the question of a member's eligibility for office when that member continues to practice a sexually intimate same-gender relationship.

Classis Columbia

Howard B. Spaan, stated clerk

Overture 13: Enhance Deliberative Nature of Synod

I. Overture

Classis Grand Rapids East overtures synod to take the following actions to enhance the deliberative nature of synod so the denomination is better served:

A. Instruct the synodical officers to give synodical delegates adequate time to discuss all recommendations presented by synod's advisory committees.

Ground: Delegates to recent synods, and especially to Synod 2003, have observed that synodical discussions on important issues have been rushed.

B. Change the date of its annual meeting so that it begins on the second Thursday, instead of the second Saturday, in June.

Grounds:

1. The current schedule has not increased elder participation, which was one of the primary reasons for adopting it. There is no reason to believe that moving to the above schedule will decrease elder participation.
2. This schedule will reduce the number of absentees on the first day of synod. This schedule will give synod more days before the Sunday of the second week, thus reducing the pressure to rush through synod's business that increases, especially for delegates scheduled to preach, as that Sunday gets closer.
3. This schedule places Sunday, a slower-paced, relaxed day, in the middle of the synodical experience where it is more needed than at the beginning of the synodical experience when synod is just starting its work.
4. This schedule will assist the Multiethnic Conference, which meets every other year on the weekend of synod, by providing an opportunity for the delegates of that conference to experience a synodical session at which substantial matters are discussed.

C. Mandate a review of the proposed schedule by Synod 2010.

Ground: This will give synod five years to determine the effect of this schedule, two of them involving the Multiethnic Conference.

II. The deliberative nature of synod

In recent years, synod took steps to shorten its schedule so it could transact the business of the church in fewer days. For example, a new nominating procedure is now used to elect officers. The time allotted to fraternal delegates has been decreased from two hours to one. Instead of reading minutes at the beginning of each session, the minutes are reviewed by a committee and posted for all delegates to review in their free time. In 1998, an electronic balloting system, a system that saves a great deal of time, was introduced. Recent synods have completed their business in five days or less while previous synods remained in session for seven days or more.

Though this change has been welcome, some have questioned whether our increased desire for shorter synods has adverse effects on the deliberative character of synod. This is an important question because synod sets policies that govern all of us. Decisions that are made without adequate discussion not only negatively impact the ministries of our congregations, but they also diminish the respect that our membership has for synod itself.

Maintaining the deliberative nature of synod is a very difficult matter and is probably one that is impossible to legislate. A debate should not continue when everything that can be said has already been said, yet a debate should not cease without adequate time given to discuss the matter at hand. Especially on complicated and weighty matters, unrealistic time limits tend to diminish respect for synodical process and for synodical decisions.

Over the years, synod has accepted motions limiting speeches to one or two minutes with the claim that "anything worth saying can be said in that amount of time." Over the years, delegates have objected to such motions, asserting that such limitations turn delegates into billiard balls that simply bounce off each other. A number of delegates have reminded synod that classes send people to synod to conduct the church's business in a deliberative manner.

This concern was raised again at Synod 2003 in the discussion of the report of the Committee to Examine Life Issues Raised by Bioscience and Genetic Engineering. The Wednesday evening session and part of the Thursday morning session were spent discussing four recommendations of the study committee—recommendations that could be described as the theological and biblical framework within which the report operated. When synod resumed its discussion after lunch on Thursday, five of the study committee recommendations and one of the advisory committee recommendations remained. Three of the study committee recommendations dealt with how the already adopted recommendations applied to the lives of the members of the denomination. One of the recommendations addressed whether or not the study committee report should be sent to our members for guidance. Another encouraged our members to use the report and the guiding principles adopted by synod to guide them as they addressed policies of governmental agencies. The final recommendation addressed whether or not synod's actions were its answer to the overtures submitted to it by the churches and classes (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 644).

Unfortunately, a motion to limit the discussion on all six recommendations to fifteen minutes (an average of two and a half minutes per recommendation) was accepted and approved. Because delegates had discussed this subject for hours, it is easy to understand how many thought they had already spent enough time on it. Yet, they had spent no time at all discussing the recommendations that would most directly affect the lives of our members. One delegate expressed his dismay that synod was willing to spend hours debating theological matters but was willing to spend only fifteen minutes discussing pastoral matters. The seminary professor who chaired the study committee said, "I think it was unwise of synod to reflect and debate on important parts of our report for only fifteen minutes . . . and then vote so quickly. I was surprised by it all, and disappointed" (*The Banner*, July 2003, p. 27). A member of the denomination, himself an elder delegate to a previous synod, expressed his disdain saying, "Considered, meaningful debate sometimes takes time. The issue of bioethics is exceedingly complicated. Given the complexity of this issue, it's not clear how such rushed debate is supposed to yield well-considered, meaningful help for CRC members. It is also unclear why anyone outside the CRC should care what synod's majority 'declares' following an artificially time-limited discussion like this one" (*The Banner*, July 2003, p. 27).

One of the recommendations that synod did not discuss at all was the one to "recommend this report to the churches for study and reflection on these important life issues raised by bioscience and genetic engineering" (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 644). Even before synod met, this was a crucial matter. Three classes submitted overtures asking synod not to recommend the report to the churches. Classes Lakota asked for additions that would "make the report more scientifically sound and pastorally credible" (*Agenda for Synod 2003*, pp. 435-36). Classis Grand Rapids South, citing a number of scientific lapses, asked that the report be referred back to the study committee and asked that the committee be expanded "to include at least one Reformed physician whose practice is in this specialty area and one Reformed bioethicist" (*Acts of Synod 2003*, pp. 519-38). Classes Grand Rapids East asked synod to withhold action on the report and "to commission a task force . . . to write scientifically accurate material for the guidance of our members who seek advice on these issues" (*Acts of Synod 2003*, pp. 538-49).

This matter was even more crucial when synod, at the conclusion of the fifteen minutes allotted to discuss the remaining six recommendations, voted to defeat two recommendations of the study committee that were foundational to the report. In spite of this, synod, without any discussion, recommended the report to the churches “for study and reflection.” On a number of very crucial matters, the report says one thing, and the action synod took says exactly the opposite. The report and synod’s action on it are contradictory. It should not surprise us if our members are confused when they study and reflect on the report.

Synod can and ought to do better. The denomination expects that the decisions it is asked to follow and the reports recommended to it for guidance will be the result of adequate, prayerful deliberation. When synod fails to give any or inadequate time to the discussion of matters entrusted to it, it does itself and the entire denomination a disservice. Synod needs to instruct its officers to give synodical delegates adequate time to discuss each recommendation presented by synod’s advisory committees.

III. The history of synod

The deliberative nature of synod can also be enhanced and other benefits secured if a change is made in the dates that synod meets. A brief history of synod’s meeting dates illustrates that.

A. Pre-1996

In the decades prior to 1996, synod’s meetings spanned two weeks. A worship service was held on Monday evening. Synodical sessions began on Tuesday and continued till Saturday noon. Saturday afternoon was spent playing golf, visiting, or interacting with other delegates, and Sunday was a day of rest and worship. Typically, synod ended on the next Thursday or Friday. For example, in the decade before 1996, a decade when the use of women’s gifts was discussed at almost every synod, synod ended on Wednesday afternoon once, Wednesday evening twice, Thursday morning once, Thursday afternoon three times, Thursday evening twice, and Friday morning once. Thus, on average, synod was in session approximately eight and one-half days, four and one-half days the first week and roughly four days the second week.

B. 1996-2000

In 1996, synod decided that it would move to a one-calendar-week synod. The primary reason for doing this was that synod hoped that many more elders would be willing to serve if synod was confined to one week. This larger pool of elders would increase the diversity of professions and the ages of elder delegates because many of the delegates up to this time were either retired or were schoolteachers—people who could attend synod without financial penalty. Another reason cited for the change was financial—a shorter synod would cost less.

C. 2000 review

Synod 2000 reviewed the move to a one-calendar-week synod, a synod that now finished the church’s business in five days instead of eight and a half. Because bookkeeping methods had changed, the review committee indicated that it was difficult to provide clear cost comparisons. Because synodical

delegates were lodged fewer nights and fed fewer meals, the committee deduced that the direct costs were lower.

The review committee indicated that there was no evidence that the move to a one-week synod had increased the availability of elder delegates. The average age of the elders at synod changed very little, and the number of elders interested in attending synod had not increased. From 1990-1996 when synod met over two calendar weeks, the *Acts* indicate that all classes had two elder delegates at each synod. The *Agenda* lists elder alternates, those elders who are called to serve should a delegate be unable to do so. Although most of the eighty-four elder alternate positions were full, during the years 1990-1996, the full number of alternates fell short by 6, 6, 3, 14, 6, 9, and 18 in the respective years.

From 1997 through 2000, the first four years of the one-calendar-week synod, the *Acts* indicate that all classes had two elder delegates except for one year when one classis was represented by only one elder. The *Agendas* indicate that the full number of elder alternate positions was short by 17, 20, 21, and 17. It is difficult to know if this lack of interest in synod would have been even greater had synod still been on a two-calendar-week schedule. It is also difficult to know if other factors contributed to a lack of interest in synod. Nonetheless, it is evident that the move to a one-calendar-week synod did not result in greater elder participation.

The move to a one-calendar-week synod did create at least one difficulty. To make sure that no elder delegate would be forced to miss work on Friday, synod began at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon. All delegates could use Friday evening or Saturday morning to travel. Unfortunately, some delegates decided that they would not miss much if they arrived at synod on Monday morning. From 1990-1996 when synod was on a two-calendar-week schedule, the highest number of absentees on the first day was two. In 1997, the first year of the one-week synod, ten delegates were absent. In 1998, that number rose to sixteen. In 1999, twenty-nine delegates, over 15 percent, missed the opening session and the beginning of their committee work. The review committee observed, "The increased absences may be due primarily to the start of synod on Saturday and some perception that the real work of synod did not begin until Monday" (*Agenda for Synod 2000*, p. 411).

D. 2000 changes

In an attempt to address the high rate of absenteeism on synod's first day, the committee recommended that synod begin at 1:00 p.m. instead of 4:00 p.m. Instead, Synod 2000 decided to begin at 9:00 a.m. Though this helped reduce the number of absentees (2001=9; 2002=7; 2003=6), the absentee rate is still much higher than it was when synod began in mid-week.

This change to 9:00 a.m. on Saturday impacted synod in another way. Although synod still meets only for five days, it can no longer be called a one-calendar-week synod. Once again, two calendar weeks are involved because the majority of the delegates must use the Friday of the first week as a travel day.

IV. A proposed schedule change

We have noted that the attempt to fit synod into one calendar week has not increased elder participation, the primary reason for the change. We have noted that synod is once again a meeting that takes a part of two weeks. We have

noted that most recent synods have finished their work in five days. If Synod 2003 would have allowed adequate discussion on all recommendations of the study report on bioscience and genetic engineering, it would probably have finished its work in another half day. Even if the church takes steps to enhance the deliberative nature of synod, it is not likely that synod will last more than six days. Thus, it could be argued that the schedule that synod currently uses need not be altered. We believe, however, that there is a better way to schedule the five or six days of synod that will assist synod as it strives to enhance its deliberative nature, that will secure other benefits, and that will not raise costs significantly. This overture requests that synod begin its meetings at 9:00 a.m. on the second Thursday, instead of the second Saturday, in June.

There are a number of benefits to this change. First, this schedule enables ministers to conduct worship services on the Sunday before synod. This is especially important for those who live in areas where pulpit supply is difficult to secure and for ministers of our multiethnic churches who find it difficult to find a substitute who can speak the language of the congregation. This will also reduce the rate of absenteeism on the first day of synod for both minister and elder delegates.

Second, this schedule will help increase the deliberative nature of synod because it gives synod more days before the Sunday of the second week. Some delegates believe that part of the pressure to rush through its business results because some ministers, scheduled to preach on the Sunday after synod, become more anxious to return home as Sunday gets closer.

Third, this schedule puts Sunday, a slower-paced day, in the middle of the synodical experience rather than at the beginning when synod is just starting its work. Not only will delegates have this day available for relaxation and reading, but delegates who have spent three days working and meeting together will more easily interact with each other on Sunday because of their shared experience. For example, delegates from Western Michigan took a bus to Sioux Center for Synod 2003. There was significantly more interaction on the bus ride home because of the shared synodical experience. The same dynamic will characterize delegates as they gather for worship and as they interact with each other in the dorms on Sunday.

Fourth, this schedule will assist participants of the Multiethnic Conference that meets every other year on the weekend that synod meets. One of the goals of the conference is to give our ethnic minority members a taste of how our broadest assembly functions. However, because synod currently begins on Saturday, synodical delegates are in committee, not in plenary session, most of Saturday and Monday. If synod begins on Thursday, it will be addressing a number of matters in plenary sessions on Saturday and Monday when the conference meets.

V. Conclusion

It is possible to begin synod even earlier in the week, but such a schedule would not enhance its deliberative nature. Delegates would be tempted to rush through the business in an attempt to complete the work by Saturday. Not only would this not serve the church well, but it would also involve Sunday travel, something that synod has attempted to avoid.

Meeting in the time frame proposed by this overture will enhance the deliberative nature of synod and will secure other benefits for synod itself and

for the Multiethnic Conference. We encourage synod to adopt this schedule beginning in 2005 and to review it in 2010.

Classis Grand Rapids East
Philip R. Lucasse, stated clerk

Overture 14: Provide Guidelines and Procedures for Pastors Who Receive Calls Requiring a Cross-Border Situation

Classis Toronto requests the synod of the CRCNA to implement guidelines and procedures for pastors who seek postings in a cross-border situation.

Pastors who serve in a cross-border situation are not able to obtain comprehensive or accurate information on immigration policies or requirements and are mostly left to fend for themselves. This can lead to difficulties for spouses and families in terms of employment, insurance, tuition for children, pension benefits, and even obtaining a car loan. A well-informed pastor faced with such a situation would be in a position to evaluate such a move and how it will affect his family life and, ultimately, his work.

Grounds:

1. Many denominational ministries seek funding and support across borders in North America. We often think of ourselves as a North American denomination.
2. Our seminary trains both U.S. and Canadian pastors who often serve internships in either or both countries and when accepting calls, often serve in either jurisdiction where the need/opportunity exists.
3. Although free trade allows pastors certain privileges, spouses and children are not so well served.
4. Pastors and local churches often do not have the expertise or resources to navigate the immigration maze on their own.
5. Pastors would be free to pursue ministry without immigration worries.
6. Collectively, we would probably have a lot of immigration information available from many who have experienced that. We need to share it and make it available.

Classis Toronto
C. Nick Overduin, stated clerk

Overture 15: Advise Church Councils to Refrain from Participation in Interfaith Worship Services

I. Background

One of the great challenges to the Christian faith in the twenty-first century is that of religious pluralism. Increasingly, Christian leaders are challenged to interact with non-Christian religions. Therefore ministers of the Word, as leaders in the Christian Reformed Church, must be especially concerned in such a religious context to express the uniqueness of the Christian faith in both word and action.

II. Overture

Classis Thornapple Valley overtures Synod 2004 to advise church councils to urge CRC ministers to refrain from participating in interfaith worship and/or prayer services that are specifically intended to present a picture of false ecumenical unity that includes religions or faiths that deny that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, the only Savior of sinners, and the one Mediator between God and man.

Note: This overture is not intended to:

- limit participation in interdenominational worship/prayer services.
- limit pastor's participation in interfaith discussions, debates, and other such forums.
- prohibit or limit pastors or missionaries from giving a prayer at civic functions and special celebrations such as public school baccalaureates and Rotary clubs.
- reprimand pastors who unintentionally find themselves in a worship service that includes participants from other faiths.
- discourage pastors from pursuing various forums so that the gospel of Christ might be presented.

Grounds:

1. The Old Testament clearly teaches that God requires that he alone be worshipped, without any commingling with other religions. (Exodus 20:3-6; Deuteronomy 6:4).
2. The New Testament clearly teaches that the gospel ought not be confused or compromised, particularly not by those who are church leaders. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Gal. 1:6-9; 2:11-16).
3. The confessions of our church clearly echo the teaching of Scripture on this matter (Belgic Confession Art. 36, H.C. Q/A 117). Therefore, in all situations, ministers ought to avoid giving the impression that all religions lead to God, and instead offer a clear and consistent witness that Jesus Christ is the only way to God the Father.
4. An ecclesiastical statement on this matter provides a clear answer when ministers are invited to participate in religious events.

Classis Thornapple Valley
William J. Renkema, stated clerk

Overture 16: Revise Church Order Article 16

Classis Columbia overtures Synod 2004 to revise Church Order Article 16 to allow a terminal leave of absence for a minister under Article 16 rather than as presently specified under Article 17.

I. Rationale

At present, Church Order Article 17 is the designated instrument for a minister who desires to pursue specialized training—such as C.P.E. training and/or internship—with a mind to serve in an area of ministry outside the purview of the local church and has no intention to return to service in his/her congregation.

We think approval for a terminal leave can be handled more directly, simply, and adequately on the council level under a revised formulation of Church Order Article 16 rather than under Article 17 with its broader requirements and putatively adversarial tone.

Article 17 calls for “weighty reasons” to justify a terminal arrangement, a higher standard than “valid reasons” as required by Article 16 as justification for a temporary leave. We think a legitimate terminal leave petition can be adequately adduced by a council on the basis of Article 16’s valid reasons rather than Article 17’s weighty reasons.

Article 17 requires the adjudication and oversight of the classis and synod by way of the synodical deputies. A valid request for a terminal leave need not require evaluation and supervision at a level broader than that of the council.

Following is the proposed revision of Article 16 (proposed revisions in italics):

A minister who for valid reasons desires a temporary *or a terminal* leave of absence from service to the congregation must have the approval of the council, which shall continue to have supervision over him. *Valid reasons for a leave of absence include advanced study, specialized training, and illness or temporary incapacity. Before a terminal leave is granted, the council shall obtain the endorsement of the Classical Interim Committee.* In all cases of a temporary leave of absence, the minister shall return to service in that congregation. *In cases of a terminal leave of absence, the church and minister may pursue the calling process.*

Grounds:

1. In keeping with the intent of Article 16, a request for a terminal leave of absence, such as for specialized ministerial training, can be adduced by the council on the basis of valid reasons.
2. The specifics of a terminal leave of absence approved under a revised Article 16 can be adopted and fully supervised by council by way of a written mutual agreement with the minister and need not be subject to additional consideration and approval by classis or synodical deputies as is required by Article 17.
3. The endorsement of the Classical Interim Committee will prevent the improper use of Article 16 in situations where the dynamics prompting the pastor’s termination should be prompted by way of Article 17.

II. Addenda

Following are suggested regulatory stipulations as supplementary to a revised Article 16:

1. The terminal provision of Article 16 may not be used to circumvent the application of Article 17 in order to avoid addressing tensions, perceptions, or ill feelings related to the termination of the pastor’s service.
2. Before a terminal leave is granted, the council and minister shall adopt a written termination agreement specifying matters such as termination date, ecclesiastical supervision, severance and moving compensation, and interim pension funding.

3. Should the council and minister arrive at an impasse in adopting a mutual termination agreement, they have recourse to Article 17.

4. A minister granted a terminal leave of absence shall be eligible for call for two years following the date of termination. Extensions after two years may be granted annually, subject to the recommendation of council and the approval of the classis with the concurrence of the synodical deputies.

Classis Columbia

Howard B. Spaan, stated clerk

Overture 17: Exercise Special Discipline re Officebearers of First CRC, Toronto, Ontario

Classis Illiana overtures Synod 2004 to exercise special discipline (under Church Order Article 83) upon the officebearers of the council of First CRC of Toronto.

Grounds:

1. The council has seriously deviated from sound doctrine by its decision to allow individuals engaged in homosexual fornication to be eligible for ecclesiastical office.
2. The council has seriously deviated from sound doctrine by allowing individuals engaged in a lifestyle of homosexual fornication to continue as members in good standing without discipline for their ungodly behavior.
3. The decision of council is contrary to the Scriptures and previous decisions of synod (cf. Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9; *Acts of Synod 1973*, pp. 50-53; Report pp. 609-33; *Acts of Synod 1997*, pages 554-57, 622-23; and also the CRC's *Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members*).
4. The council of First Toronto has not rescinded nor repented of its decision. The desire to bring the matter before the church for discussion does not address the fact of the matter that even though the council's decision will not be presently implemented, it still stands.
5. For over a year no action has been taken. It seems that the ecclesiastical process has been cynically manipulated in an attempt to avoid any meaningful censure or discipline. Refusal to apply discipline tacitly condones ungodly conduct.
6. By refusing to address this issue, Classis Toronto and synod appear to be acquiescing to First Toronto's disobedient decision. Further procrastination will impair the church's witness as the pillar and ground of the truth and will significantly compromise the gospel.

Classis Illiana

Stephan R. Van Eck, stated clerk

Overture 18: Instruct Classis Toronto re Discipline of Consistory of First CRC, Toronto, Ontario

I. Background

In March 2003, Classis Yellowstone submitted the following overture to the synod of the CRCNA meeting at Dordt College in June 2003:

Classis Yellowstone overtures Synod 2003 to apply special discipline, according to Church Order Article 83, to the Council of the First Toronto Christian Reformed Church who made the decision to carry out a congregational vote considering “nominations of gay and lesbian member, including those living in committed relationships, for all elected (church) offices.”

Grounds:

1. Synod can influence First Toronto Christian Reformed Church.
2. The action of the Council of the First Toronto CRC in allowing any of its members to live in “committed same sex relationships” (cf *The Banner*, March 2003, p. 8) is a clear violation of Scripture regarding the sin of homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26, 27; Genesis 19) and of the guidelines given to the Christian Reformed Church by Synod 1973.
3. The action of the council of the First Toronto CRC in deciding “to consider nominations of those living in committed same-sex relationships for all elected offices” violates the biblical standards (1 Timothy 3:1-12; Titus 1:6-9) for bearing office in the church of Jesus Christ.

(*Agenda for Synod 2003*, p. 430)

Synod 2003 responded to our overture by deciding to withhold action, citing the fact that Classis Toronto is addressing this matter and quoting Church Order Article 28-b: “A major assembly shall deal only with those matters which concern its churches in common or which could not be finished in the minor assemblies.”

II. Analysis

Classis Yellowstone believes Classis Toronto’s inaction in regard to First Toronto’s decision to allow members of its congregation to live in committed same-sex, though noncelibate, relationships is one of grave importance for the CRCNA and its churches in common regarding its reputation of holiness and biblical obedience to God’s commands.

In correspondence with the consistory at First Toronto, one of our congregations asked: “Do the phrases ‘*committed same sex relationships*’ (cf. *The Banner*, March 2003, p. 8) and ‘*gay and lesbian members living in committed relationships*’ (First Toronto’s letter received by Classis Toronto on June 25) mean that these members in your congregation are practicing homosexual acts in the context of these relationships? If so, how is that not a violation of the teachings of Scripture referenced in Ground 1 of our overture? How is participation in homosexual acts not sinful behavior?” First Toronto’s reply gave no satisfactory answer to our questions. (All written correspondence with First Toronto will be available to synod.)

Therefore, we are compelled to urge the church to act. What glory to God can be given when we as a denomination stand idly by while we know that actions that the Lord refers to as an “abomination” are being practiced in one of our congregations without any corresponding discipline? How can the holiness of the CRCNA and its love for the Word of God be defended if we fail

to act with regard to this sin in our midst? We believe that to fail to act is an indication of deep spiritual decay in the CRCNA.

III. Overture

Classis Yellowstone overtures Synod to instruct Classis Toronto to exercise special discipline with regard to the Consistory of the First CRC of Toronto for its failure to place under discipline those members of the congregation who are living in committed same-sex, though noncelibate, relationships.

Grounds:

1. Such relationships are contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God, which makes it clear that all acts of homosexuality are sinful acts (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26, 27; Genesis 19).
2. Such relationships are plainly contrary to the current understanding of the CRCNA regarding the practice of homosexuality (statements of pastoral advice in the *Acts of Synod 1973*, section c., p. 52).
3. It is profoundly counterproductive to the biblical witness of the CRCNA to the world in general, to the members of the CRCNA, and to those inquiring about the standards of the CRCNA to knowingly allow one of its congregations to permit such sinful practices without a godly confrontation of those involved in such practices with the standards of the Word of God through the proper exercise of biblical discipline.
4. Synod 2003 and Classis Toronto have failed to address in a timely manner these unbiblical practices of the members of the First CRC of Toronto who are living in committed, same-sex, noncelibate relationships. It is unwise and irresponsible for the CRCNA to wait for the very congregation, which allows such relationships, to attempt to redefine the historically accepted interpretations of Scripture regarding these matters.
5. The church is commanded not to tolerate unbiblical practices.

(Rev. 2:6) But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

(Rev. 2:14-16) Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

(Rev. 2:20) Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

(Rev. 3:15-16) I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth).

The Lord of the church commands us to be holy. As long as we tolerate any committed, same-sex, noncelibate relationships, which exist in the congregation of the First CRC of Toronto, we become participants with them. The Heidelberg Catechism (Q. & A. 99) urges us not to be “silent bystanders” when it comes to dealing with sin.

6. It is time for the CRCNA to heed the admonition of Scripture: "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them" (Eph. 5:6-7).

Classis Yellowstone

Delbert D. VanDenBerg, stated clerk

Overture 19: Adjudicate Nonconcurrence Decision of Synodical Deputies

I. Background

In September 2003, Classis B.C. South-East was asked to examine Mr. David Hornor of Abbotsford under Article 7. Before an examination could begin, the matter of urgent need had to be established. Therefore, a position paper was presented to classis providing grounds to declare that urgent need exists. The classis then decided that urgent need had indeed been established. This decision is consistent with declarations of this classis in the recent past, e.g., in the cases of Mr. Merwin Rylaarsdam (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 650) and Mr. Ed Top (*Acts of Synod 2002*, p. 509).

The synodical deputies, however, did not concur, indicating in their report that they "do not believe that an urgent need currently exists for ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the CRC." After discussion, the classis asked the deputies to reconsider their decision. The deputies did so, but indicated that they still did not concur with the declaration of classis regarding urgent need. Thus, the matter must automatically go to Synod 2004 for adjudication (*Acts of Synod 1908*, p. 36-37).

II. A critical assessment of the synodical deputies' position

A. In the first of two grounds for their decision (dated September 30, 2003), the synodical deputies referred to information they had recently received from the general secretary. The deputies wrote in their report, "currently, though there are between 130-140 churches that are vacant, our denominational General Secretary, David Engelhard recently in-formed synodical deputies that only around 85 of these will be actively calling ministers. This does not take into account the 39 candidates from the class of 2003 currently available for call."

It appears that the deputies are referring to the general secretary's August 6, 2003, letter addressed to synodical deputies, alternate synodical deputies, and stated clerks of classes, specifically the paragraph that begins on the bottom of page two. In that paragraph, the general secretary writes, "the data shows that there are 139 congregations without pastors [as of July 22, 2003]. . . . Once the new candidates are placed and retirees accounted for, I think it is safe to say that we have approximately eighty-five congregations actively calling ministers."

It is our contention that the synodical deputies have substantially misread the general secretary's letter. The general secretary's letter quoted above says, "Once the new candidates are placed," and the synodical deputies' report states, "This [potential number of actively calling churches] does not take into account the 39 candidates . . ." (emphases added). Thus, the deputies have

implied that there will be significantly fewer congregations calling ministers than the number estimated by the general secretary.

It should also be noted that the total number of vacant congregations of the Christian Reformed Church has not decreased since the candidates graduated in June 2003. On July 22, 2003, there were 139 vacancies (see above); there were 144 vacancies as of December 3, 2003 (Office of Pastor Church Relations). It appears that the number of graduating candidates has balanced other factors that affect the number of congregations without a minister but not enough to reduce the total number of vacancies.

We believe, then, that the first ground adduced by the synodical deputies for their nonconcurrence with the declaration of classis is based on a significant misinterpretation of the (conservative) estimate provided by the general secretary in his August 6, 2003, letter.

B. The synodical deputies' second ground for their nonconcurrence is that they "have not been presented with any evidence that the Hillside CRC has been in the past actively seeking out an ordained minister to fill its vacancy." To the best of our knowledge there is nothing in Church Order Article 7, its supplement, or any synodical decision that requires that an Article 7 candidate must fill the vacancy of a congregation that has been unable to obtain a minister. (That condition is explicitly stated in supplement D, 1 of Article 8, not Article 7.)

III. Overture

Classis B.C. South-East overtures Synod 2004 not to approve the work of the synodical deputies with respect to their advice given, and actions taken, in Classis B.C. South-East on September 30, 2003.

Grounds:

1. By substantially misinterpreting the advice of the general secretary's letter of August 6, 2003, the deputies reached an unsupportable conclusion relative to the Article 7 need criterion. The estimated number of vacant congregations is significantly greater than the estimate used by the deputies.
2. The deputies have mistakenly applied Church Order Article 8 to an Article 7 situation. Article 7 does not specify that a candidate must be called to a vacant church that has been unsuccessfully endeavoring to obtain a minister.

Classis B.C. South-East

Gerrit J. Veeneman, stated clerk

Overture 20: Return to Previous Policy of Voting Individually on Ministerial Candidates at Synod

I. Background

On June 17, 2003, synod made the decision to "declare candidates for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church by voting for all recommended candidates as a group" (*Acts of Synod 2003*, p. 594). This decision, which sprang from a minority report, was enacted without any debate being allowed. This

was a marked change from past years when voting had been either separated by gender (1996-1997) or by individual name (1998-2002). It caused those who oppose women's ordination to either not vote at all or to bind their conscience by voting for women as well as men, even though Synod 1996 had stated: "Respect for the conscience of those who oppose women in office demands that we honor the decision of Synod 1995 on this matter" (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 551). The decision of 1995, of course, had declared that both views, for and against women's ordination, "honor the Scripture as the infallible Word of God, on the issue of whether women are allowed to serve in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist" (*Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 727).

II. Overture

Classis Atlantic Northeast overtures synod to return to its previous policy of voting on each applicant for ministry individually, as was done from 1998-2002.

Grounds:

1. Having one vote, for both men and women candidates for ministry, as was done on June 17, 2003, binds the conscience of those who hold the view that the offices of the church belong to men only. At Synod 2003, one delegate (a father of one of the candidates) was forced to make a choice between voting no on his own son's candidacy or violating his conscience by voting in favor of the women candidates.
2. Voting on each applicant individually was established in 1998 and surfaced again in 1999 with the following substantial grounds (*Acts of Synod 1999*, p. 623):
 - a. This allows synod the opportunity to decide on each candidate individually as to qualifications for ministry in the CRC.
 - b. This allows those who are conscientiously opposed to having women serve in ecclesiastical office to abstain from voting on female candidates and the opportunity to vote on male candidates.
 - c. We believe this to be in the spirit of the decision of Synod 1995, which sought to "ensure that trustees and delegates may not be forced to participate against the dictates of their consciences" (*Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 735).
 - d. As stated in the observations of the advisory committee re Overture 12 to Synod 1998, "... by proposing to vote on the candidates as a block, synod, in effect, 'forces' those un-persuaded of women's ordination either to abstain from voting on all candidates or to violate their consciences by voting one way or the other" (*Acts of Synod 1998*, p. 362).

When Synods 1998 and 1999 both declared that voting would be done on ministerial candidates individually, that ruling became "settled and binding." A settled and binding decision can only be changed if sufficient and new grounds are presented (Church Order Article 31).

3. Since synod has declared that "there are two different perspectives and convictions, both of which honor the Scripture as the infallible Word of God, on the issue of whether women are allowed to serve in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist" (*Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 727), it is inconsistent not to recognize both views as equally valid by having individual votes.

4. Having one vote rather than individual votes, as was done on June 17, 2003, further alienates those who hold the view that women are not to serve in the ordained offices of the church and will lead to further fragmentation of the CRC.

Classis Atlantic Northeast
Kenneth Prol, stated clerk

Overture 21: Study the Efficacy of the Form of Subscription

I. Background

One of the congregations of Classis B.C. South-East sent an overture regarding the effectiveness of the Form of Subscription as an accountability tool for our denomination to the September 2003 meeting of classis.

An overture advisory committee, appointed to advise classis concerning this issue, decided to survey the member churches of classis. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the churches in Classis B.C. South-East returned the survey. The results were as follows:

- Approximately one-third of B.C. South-East churches either do not use the Form of Subscription or have serious concerns about it.
- Approximately one-third of B.C. South-East churches have some concerns about the Form of Subscription but still continue to use it within the accountability system of their leadership.
- Approximately one-third of B.C. South-East churches see no significant problems with the Form of Subscription and use it faithfully.

The advisory committee recommended that classis send an overture to synod regarding this matter.

II. Overture

Classis B.C. South-East overtures Synod 2004 to study the efficacy of the Form of Subscription as an accountability tool within the Christian Reformed denomination.

Grounds:

1. Many churches, at least within Classis B.C. South-East, no longer use the Form of Subscription because many individuals have difficulty signing the document for a variety of reasons including:
 - a. Some of the historical language contained in the Form of Subscription is regarded as “intolerant” in our culture.
 - b. The Form of Subscription raises theological issues to which people take exception.
 - c. Our culture is adopting different understandings of truth rather than the pervasive modernism promoted by this document.
2. When a tool such as the Form of Subscription becomes ineffective in our culture and time, a study into the reasons and attempts to once again make it effective is justified.

Classis B.C. South-East
Gerrit J. Veeneman, stated clerk

Overture 22: Appoint Study Committee to Examine “Third Wave” Pentecostalism

I. Overture

The council of the Plymouth Heights CRC overtures Synod 2004 to appoint a study committee that will examine the biblical teaching, Reformed confessions, theological implications, and pastoral dimensions of “third wave” Pentecostalism (spiritual warfare, deliverance ministries, and so forth) with a view to providing advice to the churches.

Grounds:

1. The Neo-Pentecostalism report of 1973 is now thirty years old and does not address the theological, missiological, and pastoral challenges to the church by the so-called third wave Pentecostalism.
2. In developing specific ministries (prayer, evangelism, and deliverance ministries in particular), individual Christian Reformed Churches are utilizing a wide range of training materials, conferences, and programs that originate from a third wave perspective.
3. The biblical/theological base of much of the material being used is speculative and, at times, in conflict with a broader kingdom perspective.
4. The churches would be well served by a thoughtful report on some of the new issues raised in third wave Pentecostalism.

II. Background

The third wave (after the first wave of classic Pentecostalism from the 1900s and the second wave of Neo-Pentecostalism in the 1960s and 1970s) is characterized by the notion of “power encounters,” or “spiritual warfare,” or “deliverance ministries,” in which the Holy Spirit is enlisted as a warrior against cosmic evil powers. Other language commonly used, especially in the Vineyard fellowship of churches associated with John Wimber is “signs and wonders.” Other names associated with the third wave are Charles Kraft, Peter Wagner, and Neil Anderson. According to one scholar, “the origin of the Third Wave Movement is often considered to be the controversial course, ‘MC 510: Signs, Wonders and Church Growth’ taught by John Wimber at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1982.” (Wonsuk Ma, “A ‘First Waver’ Looks at the ‘Third Wave’: A Pentecostal reflection on Charles Kraft’s Power Encounter Terminology,” *Pneuma* 19/2 [Fall, 1997]: 189-206)

The third wave has had a significant impact on worldwide Christianity, notably through the spread of Vineyard churches and the numerous para-church “deliverance ministries” such as Neil Anderson’s Freedom in Christ Ministries, Don Rogers’ Spiritual Warfare Ministry, and the confessionally Reformed based ministry of The Dunamis Project of Presbyterian-Reformed Ministries International, directed by Zeb Bradford Long.

An imaginative portrayal of spiritual warfare has also become a staple of the Christian fiction world through the writings of Frank Peretti; Tim La Haye in the Left Behind series; and their many imitators. Many of these works find their way into the libraries of CRC congregations as well as those of individual CRC members. Christian Reformed young people attend retreats with names such as Acquire the Fire, and adults are often encouraged to attend conferences and seminars on prayer and spiritual warfare that leave many of them

with more questions than answers. Some of their teachings and emphases are good and overdue, but they are often accompanied by extreme and unbiblical perspectives on the spiritual world.

The third wave has been controversial in evangelical churches and even among Pentecostals themselves (see Thomas D. Pratt, "The Need to Dialogue: A Review of the Debate on the Controversy of Signs, Wonders, Miracles and Spiritual Warfare Raised in the Literature of the Third Wave Movement," *Pneuma* 13/1 [1991]: 7-32). Reformed theology, with its strong emphasis on the kingdom of God as a present as well as a future reality, needs to be in dialogue with those who are discussing the third wave. Many CRC congregations have experienced conflict with respect to the issue of spiritual warfare and it is important that the church as a whole be given clear biblical-theological as well as pastoral guidance.

Council of Plymouth Heights CRC,
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Tom Brassier, clerk

Communication 1: Council of Graafschap CRC, Holland, Michigan

We appreciate the intent of Classis Toronto to restore confessional integrity to the churches within its constituency through its work with the council of the First CRC of Toronto on the issue of the ordination of practicing homosexual members. However, we deeply regret the tone of leniency. We have several things in mind.

1. It is difficult to understand why First CRC, Toronto, needs a year to study a position it already has taken and is acting upon. This biblical study should have preceded taking a stand, especially considering the position taken by synods 1973 and 2002. Compliance with synodical position should be both in confession and in practice.
2. We commend Classis Toronto for revising its judgment of compliance by rescinding the statement “meeting the urgings” and making a lesser statement, “an appreciative step.” However, by requesting a study paper to be submitted to classis more than twelve months after the issue arose, classis appears willing to tolerate an unbiblical viewpoint for an unusually long time on this issue of contemporary concern. Previous synods have clearly spoken on this issue. It is not new ground. The Matthew 19 explanation of Adam and Eve as a creation ordinance, the Leviticus 18 prohibitions, the Romans 1 statement calling this “indecent acts,” and the 1 Corinthians 6 listing of homosexuals as being outside the kingdom of heaven clearly judge homosexual practice as sinful.
3. Christian ministries, such as Focus on the Family and Metanoia, have developed meaningful ministries to lead homosexual people out of this problem. This ministry of release and healing, done in love, should be the proper answer to people struggling with homosexuality.
4. To allow people in homosexual unions to hold office would suggest that these people are already members in good standing in the church. The biblical evidence and synodical statements would suggest this should not be. Also, taking Communion in this sinful lifestyle would risk eating and drinking judgment unto oneself.
5. Many churches and members of our denomination are concerned with compromising this principal issue. Lenient response is dangerous at a time when the issue of sexual immorality is damaging to the witness of Christ in the churches. Dealing with this problem as a call to repentance and healing

rather than acceptance of this behavior is urgent for the unity of our denomination and the integrity of our witness.

Council of Graafschap CRC, Holland, Michigan
Bill Sytsma, clerk

Communication 2: Classis Northcentral Iowa

Classis Northcentral Iowa chose not to adopt the following document as an overture but believes the concerns expressed in it are of sufficient merit to be presented to synod as a communication:

The issue of alternative routes to ministry is a timely and diverse issue. On one side, our churches need solid biblical and theological training for their leaders. On the other side, our churches face a shortage of leaders. Our denomination has recognized that one reason for this shortage is the route by which people are admitted to the ministry. The synodical study committee that addressed this issue has done extensive work but has failed to arrive at an adequate solution. In fact, they have actually created greater obstacles for those wishing to become ordained through Article 6, while removing necessary safeguards for those wishing to become ordained through Article 7. The proposal requires potential seminary students to be interviewed by a classical committee prior to attending seminary. To be interviewed by a classis can be an intimidating prospect. This interview could possibly hinder students from considering seminary by giving them one more hurdle to overcome. The seminary is already active and equipped to help a potential candidate confirm God's call to ministry, but this process often happens while attending seminary, not before. To require potential students to verbalize this call will actually hinder them in their route to ministry.

Furthermore, while the proposal hopes to level the playing field for Articles 6 and 7, in fact, a double standard is developed. The basic skills required for ministry are not level for those entering the ministry by either means. For example, in the area of language training, a classis will not expect a person applying through Article 7 to have a solid grasp of Hebrew and Greek. Yet, that is an important requirement for those entering the ministry through Article 6. In this, and other areas, a double standard is being applied. Either the languages are important for a minister of the Word and Sacrament, or they are not.

Along these lines, there is a basic fault in how Article 6 and Article 7 applicants are viewed. The proposal implies that those entering through Article 7 have exceptional gifts, while those entering through Article 6 do not have exceptional gifts, that their gifts are earned through seminary education and are not God-given. God does bestow gifts on people called to ministry, but there is no way to distinguish between "exceptional" gifts and "normal" gifts.

Furthermore, the proposal calls for a committee to be formed on a classical level that would oversee the process for a ministry applicant. Already the ministers of the classes are stretched to the limit of their time and energy. To require another committee to be formed to interview prospective students would exceed the resources of the classis.

In addition, the proposed Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee and Classical Ministerial Candidacy Committee do not contain the necessary expertise to adequately evaluate a candidate. The group that qualifies these students should have sufficient seminary participation, as they best know the students, their academic and personal qualifications, as well as current trends in the theological environment.

Finally, the proposal calls for the removal of the words “urgent need” from Article 7. This is not necessary. In fact, these words are self-governing. If there is not a great need in the denomination, churches will naturally seek out ministers who have attended seminary. If there is an urgent need, then the requirement is met.

Further study should be given to more widespread educational possibilities. Satellite or extension classes from Calvin Theological Seminary, or partnerships with regional seminaries throughout North America, provide a better opportunity to both increase the numbers of those entering the ministry and maintain the proper level of quality control. More focus must be given as to why people are not able to attend Calvin Theological Seminary rather than to lower the standards of being ordained.

Classis Northcentral Iowa
Thomas J. Vos, stated clerk

Communication 3: Classis Northcentral Iowa

We express our deepest dismay and concern at the decision of Synod 2003 to adopt several recommended changes to the Ministers’ Pension Fund (MPF). These changes penalize the pastor for a council’s delinquent payment, and they have dramatically increased the costs on small churches with already strained budgets. Specifically, we express our dismay for the following reasons:

1. These new rules seem to militate against the notion of establishing a denominational covenant system of providing an equitable pension for CRCNA pastors, regardless of their fields of service.
2. These new rules place an inordinate financial burden on smaller churches without a viable and funded remedy to help them carry that burden.
3. Moreover, many smaller churches, obligated to high pension fund payments, will be forced to reduce ministry-share contributions.
4. Withholding credit for time served functionally disciplines the minister when she/he is not worthy of discipline under Church Order Article 83 by depriving the minister of due compensation.
5. This regulation of the MPF fails to follow the proper channels of discipline by which the local council is responsible “for the proper support of its minister” (cf. Church Order Article 15).
6. Admonition and discipline is the exclusive prerogative of a church assembly, not a church agency.

7. This regulation of the MPF puts the minister in an ethical dilemma by forcing her/him to self-advocate for financial matters. This endangers the pastor-church relationship.

Classis Northcentral Iowa
Thomas J. Vos, stated clerk

Communication 4: Classis Pacific Northwest

I. Classis Pacific Northwest asks Synod 2004 to consider the following background to the report on Alternate Routes to Ministry

For eight years, committees appointed by various synods have been wrestling with the question of how to adequately supervise the theological education of our church leaders in rapidly changing times. Several times their reports have been sent back to committee either because of changes made at a previous synod or because of a change in the scope of the issues that the committee has been called upon to address. The current committee now brings its final report in which it has sought to grapple and come to terms with the many issues assigned to it.

Clearly, we live in changing times that call upon us to approach matters in fresh ways that can best enable us to achieve our desired goals of reaching the lost for Christ and building up his church, in particular, the Christian Reformed denomination. It is also clear that we live in a time when synods will no longer require all ministers, or other church leaders who are ordained to various tasks in the church, to receive all their schooling at Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS). For too long, the additional year at CTS often referred to as a year of “penance” has been viewed as more of a hindrance than a blessing to those desiring to enter ministry in the CRC. Neither the SPMC nor the EMPMC programs, except in a few instances, have proved to be very effective and, in fact, have frequently been aborted after a candidate has been ordained to the ministry.

A number of years ago, Church Order Article 8 began to be used more frequently than it had been for some time. This was caused initially by an increase in the number of multiethnic churches that affiliated with the CRC and, in more recent years, by a shortage of ministers, especially as the rate of new church plants accelerated. The historic approach of examination by a local classis together with synodical deputies no longer seems to function well. It is not clear whether the process itself is flawed or the execution of that process lost its integrity and therefore became flawed.

We are convinced that the process set into place by Synod 1985 (currently being updated), a process that is designed to provide adequate time for the classis to get to know and train both the pastor and the church, is adequate, especially if it is supplemented with training provided under the direction of CTS. If the churches are unwilling to follow the current synodical guidelines, we should not believe that they can be forced to do so by a larger bureaucracy such as that envisioned by the proposed Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee. Several alternative suggestions such as a written examination prior to the public classical examination have been suggested as a means to

assist the local classis and the synodical deputies that would both benefit and clarify the process, yet allow it to remain on a classical level.

In more recent times, a whole new issue has been stirred into the equation. First, the office of evangelist was redefined several times, and later this office was totally redesignated by the term *ministry associate*. While this redefined office may obviate the need for admitting “gifted” people to ministry by way of Article 7, it has raised more questions than it answers. Synod has attempted to address the many variations and shades of meaning that can be subsumed under the new office of ministry associate and the qualifications needed for such ministers by introducing the “principle of proportionality.” The report goes to great lengths to set forth recommended standards in several pages of the appendix; however, in practice, it will be extremely difficult to maintain such multiple distinctions. The question becomes all the more significant when some who are ordained to the office of evangelist are church planters while others may be church administrators or the directors of children’s ministry.

Because this is the case, synod should separate the issue of alternate routes to the ministry from the issue of qualifications for ministry associates. No one really knows how this proportionality matter will be handled by individual classes three to five years down the road. The changes in direction initiated in 2000 for evangelist and now, to a degree extended to church administrators, children’s worship directors, youth directors, and a host of others, are too new for us to have a good grasp of and ought not to be a part of such a sweeping change as the current report is recommending. While Synod 2000 requested the committee to give this matter consideration as a part of its final report, it is less than clear that doing so has made the report better. In fact, it only serves to complicate matters more.

As we have indicated, we believe that the committee has sincerely sought to follow the mandate given to it by synod. Nor do we dispute the fact that they have wrestled with those significant issues that now face the church. Nevertheless, we do not agree with the final outcome and recommendations and believe, in fact, that to adopt the report as it now stands threatens the confessional identity of the denomination and the theological coherence and reformedness of our leadership. It also risks using up considerable of our diminishing classical and denominational resources with results that are unpredictable at best and may be, in fact, far worse than our current situation.

The report itself states “that Calvin Theological Seminary is the preferred route to the office of ministry of the Word.” While the report reviews models from several other denominations, there appears to be little evidence of actual discussion with CTS or cost analysis regarding moving the seminary out to the churches in such a way as to give more on-site instruction both in various areas of educational deficit and to those who need it. Such a move would cause the seminary to become more involved in the life of the church and could make use of other leaders in the church, some of whom might serve as adjunct faculty of the seminary to assist in teaching area seminars for those seeking admission by way of Article 8 or who need to have additional training besides what they have received from a seminary in order to enter by way of Article 6.

While we must continue “to affirm that Calvin Theological Seminary is the preferred route to the office of ministry of the Word,” we cannot continue with the status quo. We must identify other potential seminaries and set forth clear

guidelines as a basis of identifying such seminaries for those who may choose that route. We should also identify clearly the core courses that need to be taken under the auspices of CTS to ensure our confessional identity and theological coherence. CTS should immediately seek ways to deliver such courses by revising its current SPMC/EMPMC programs into 2-4 week segments that can be taken on-site or through some form of distance learning.

II. Questions or recommendations from Classis Pacific Northwest

The formation of the SMCC is a matter of concern to Classis Pacific Northwest.

A. Can the process that the board currently uses be modified to incorporate the review of students from both CTS and the other synodically approved proposed seminaries?

B. Is it possible for the CTS faculty to expand their job descriptions so that we find them teaching and having influence in other parts of the country and in other institutions which are: (1) approved seminaries or (2) currently being operated by classes throughout the United States and Canada?

C. Could the local church or classis be involved in some of the evaluation and/or preparation of long distance students prior to their involvement of the formal evaluation boards (SMCC or CTS board of trustees)? Ideas include standardized testing of the student and/or mentoring.

D. Can the issue of qualifications for ministry associates (youth ministry coordinator, children's ministry pastor) be handled completely separate from the issue of alternate routes to ministry?

Classis Pacific Northwest

Gordon Terpstra, stated clerk

Appeal 1: Classis Toronto

I. Background

At its meeting of Thursday, January 22, 2004, Classis Toronto unanimously voted to proceed to the next steps in the ordination process for Mr. Paul Vandenbrink according to Article 7. However, the synodical deputies did not concur. Later that day, the classis unanimously decided to appeal to synod in regard to their ruling.

The wording of the ruling by the deputies is as follows:

Synodical deputies Henry De Bolster (Classis Hamilton), John Kerssies (Classis Huron) and Bernard Bakker (Classis Quinte) having heard the examination of Paul Vandenbrink in accordance with the provisions of Church Order Article 7 and its Supplement, do not concur in the decision of Classis Toronto, in session on January 22, 2004, to proceed to the next step.

Grounds:

1. Paul Vandenbrink does not qualify for Article 7 because he has followed a theological training and has graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary with an MA with in emphasis in systematic theology.
2. Calvin Seminary has an SPMC program for which the candidate is able to apply.

Recommendation: We encourage Paul Vandenbrink to take the SPMC program and encourage Classis Toronto to make it possible for him to complete the prescribed theological training for the Minister of the Word.

Classis Toronto wants synod to know that it is fully aware of the following CRC emphases regarding ordained ministry:

- A. The Christian Reformed Church has always valued a seminary-educated and well-trained clergy.
- B. For many years now, the Christian Reformed Church has emphasized the value of some Calvin Theological Seminary experience even for those pastors who have most of their training elsewhere.
- C. The Christian Reformed Church has always made provision for the ordination of those whom the Holy Spirit has blessed with exceptional gifts for ministry, even if they have no seminary training. These provisions are recognized in Article 7 of our Church Order.
- D. In 1987, synod expressed its concern that the provisions of Article 7 not be used as a route to ordination for seminary graduates who wish to avoid the

requirement of a Calvin Theological Seminary experience (Acts of Synod 1987, p. 620).

Classis Toronto also wants synod to be aware of the following circumstances regarding the proposed candidacy of Mr. Paul Vandenbrink:

A. In the year 2000, Mr. Paul Vandenbrink was graduated from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia with a master of arts degree in religion. He had been there with only a desire to study theology and no sense of call to formal ministry. In 2000-2001, he taught Bible at Toronto Christian High School.

B. After a successful year as a teacher, Mr. Vandenbrink desired to continue his work with youth in the church setting. He was engaged by Springdale Christian Reformed Church to serve as youth director. In 2002, Mr. Vandenbrink was granted a license to exhort by Classis Toronto.

C. In 2003, the encouragement of others and the work of the Holy Spirit led Mr. Vandenbrink to sense a call to be ordained for ministry.

In addition to the above and in an attempt to clarify our appeal, synod should know that:

A. In January 2004, Classis Toronto, being satisfied with the psychological report and having received the appropriate recommendations required by Church Order Article 7, voted unanimously to determine that the need had been established for Mr. Vandenbrink to enter the ministry of the Word according to Article 7 of the Church Order. Upon examination, classis, again by a unanimous decision, also determined that he demonstrates exceptional gifts for ministry.

B. The synodical deputies, H.R. DeBolster, B. Bakker, and J. Kerssies, did not concur with the decisions of Classis Toronto. They indicated that because Mr. Vandenbrink has seminary training the provisions of Article 7 are not available to him and that to seek ordination he must fulfill the requirements of the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy at Calvin Theological Seminary.

II. Appeal

Classis Toronto appeals from the decision of the synodical deputies re Mr. Paul Vandenbrink's application for ministry by way of Church Order Article 7.

Grounds:

1. Upon graduation from seminary, Mr. Vandenbrink did not come to Toronto with a desire to circumvent the rules of synod for ministerial candidacy. At that time, seeking ordination was not on his mind. It was later that Mr. Vandenbrink received a sense of call to the ministry.
2. Holding strictly in this case to the rules as now written obtains a strange anomaly. If two persons later in life are both deemed to have exceptional gifts for ministry, the one who has no formal theological training may be declared exempt from the need to obtain any, but the one who happens to already have a great deal of formal theological training is absolutely required to obtain more, at great sacrifice to his family and the church he serves.

3. There is precedence for the decision of Classis Toronto. In 1996, synod approved the work of its synodical deputies M. D. Geleynse, E. Gritter, and H. R. DeBolster when they concurred with the decision of Classis Toronto, which established the need for Mr. H. Richard Nanninga to enter the ministry of the Word by way of Church Order Article 7 (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 461), even though Mr. Nanninga had significant formal theological education. Mr. Nanninga had two years of seminary training and had obtained a master of Church education degree. Although Mr. Nanninga's training was at Calvin Theological Seminary, he had taken just two of the courses normally required in the year-long Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy. His studies also did not include many of those courses for the M.Div. degree that would be required of Mr. Vandenbrink to even qualify for SPMC at Calvin Theological Seminary. Classis Toronto is also confident that around our denomination the mere possession of some formal theological training has not in every instance precluded the use of the provisions of Church Order Article 7.
4. It may be significant to observe that the delegates to Classis Toronto were unanimous in the determination of the exceptional nature of Mr. Vandenbrink's gifts as well as in the decision to appeal the nonconurrence of the synodical deputies in this case.
5. Although the synodical deputies' decision would require Mr. Vandenbrink to enter the SPMC program at Calvin Theological Seminary, the synodical requirements for admission to this program preclude his participation in it at this time. He has not obtained the M.Div. degree.

Classis Toronto

C. Nick Overduin, stated clerk

Appeal 2: Council of Springdale CRC, Bradford, Ontario

I. Appeal

The council of Springdale Christian Reformed Church appeals to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America the following decision of Classis Toronto made at its meeting on June 25, 2003:

That Classis Toronto, honouring the decisions and pastoral guidelines of 1973 and 2002 in the matter of Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members, accepts First CRC's response as meeting the urgings of Classis Toronto in January 2003, with the provision that Toronto I presents its study no later than September 2004.

Grounds:

1. We understand First CRC to be saying that they should not have made the decision without first coming to Classis with Biblical rationale for that decision and then asking Classis to advise/endorse such a decision. First CRC is apologizing for their decision and now wants to proceed according to proper ecclesiastical procedures.
2. First CRC states that they "earnestly desire to be a vibrant member of the CRCNA," which means remaining within the covenant of churches as commonly understood.

3. First CRC states they regret not bringing their decision to Classis Toronto for consideration at an earlier stage in the process. They will not nominate gay and lesbian members living in committed relationships for elected office.
4. First CRC is committed to discerning the meaning of acting “on the recommendations of the report on homosexuality (2002).”
5. First CRC’s intention to prepare and present an overture to Classis on this issue reflects the spirit of the synodical report of 2002: “We believe it is important for diverse perspectives to be openly discussed and examined. We also believe that it is important that members of our church family who experience same-sex attractions can belong to, openly participate in, and be ministered to within the fellowship of the church. It is our hope that the work of this committee and the contents of the report that follows will advance that end and assist our churches in ministering more effectively in the name of Christ” (p. 5-6, Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members: Reports of 1973 and 2002).

Grounds:

1. The response of First CRC Toronto does not meet the “urgings” of Classis Toronto adopted at its meeting in January 2003 and forwarded to First CRC, Toronto. First CRC Toronto was urged to, but has not, repented of its action affirming the validity of committed same-sex relationships. First CRC Toronto was urged to, but has not, rescinded its decision to consider nominations of gay and lesbian members, including those living in committed same-sex relationships for all elected offices. First CRC Toronto was urged to, but has not, made any commitment to minister to gays and lesbians according to the synodical reports of 1973 and 2002.
2. The decision of Classis Toronto allows First CRC Toronto to continue to affirm the validity of committed same-sex relationships and to conduct their ministry to gays and lesbians according to the principle that a committed same-sex relationship is a valid Christian lifestyle. Thus, the decision of Classis Toronto is not in harmony with the Scriptures that teach that homosexual behavior, including that which occurs in a committed same-sex relationship, is contrary to God’s design for sexual expression and is sinful. Furthermore, the decision of Classis Toronto is not in harmony with the synodical reports of 1973 and 2002 that teach that all homosexual practice is contrary to the revealed will of God.
3. The decision of Classis Toronto is not in harmony with the synodical decision of 1975 that:

Synodical pronouncements on doctrinal and ethical matters are subordinate to the confessions, and they shall be considered settled and binding unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order. All office-bearers and members are expected to abide by these synodical deliverances.

(Acts of Synod 1975, p. 44)

4. In that First CRC has not repented nor rescinded nor provided any biblical grounds for their action, the decision of Classis Toronto allows the officebearers of First CRC Toronto to continue to act in violation of their ordination vow to do their work in “submission to the government and discipline of the church” (*Psalter Hymnal*, p. 996).

II. Background

The council of First CRC Toronto presented to the congregation a proposal to “consider nominations of gay and lesbian members, including those living in committed relationships, for all elected offices.” At a congregational meeting on September 29, 2002, more than two-thirds of the members of First CRC Toronto voted to adopt the council’s proposal.

At its January 2003 meeting, Classis Toronto decided

- 1) To urge the Council of First CRC, Toronto to repent of their action affirming the validity of committed same-sex relationships;
- 2) To urge the Council of First CRC, Toronto to rescind the decision to consider nominations of those living in committed same-sex relationships for all elected offices. First CRC of Toronto must respond in writing to this urging by the time of the printing of the Agenda of the May 22, 2003 meeting of Classis Toronto; and
- 3) To urge the Council of First CRC, Toronto to minister to gays and lesbians according to the biblical teaching and pastoral guidelines outlined in the synodical reports relating to homosexuality of 1973 and 2002.

Classis Toronto also declared in its grounds for this decision that “the members of the council of First CRC in acting unilaterally in contradiction to the synodical decisions of 1973 and 2002 are violating their ordination vows.”

In its response, dated April 8, 2003, and printed in the agenda for the May 22, 2003, Classis Toronto meeting, First CRC Toronto requested that classis

Allow us a period of 15 months to compile a document that articulates our position, with God’s Word as our guide, and to compose a pastoral framework of ministry with people of same sex orientation that would be in harmony with Synod’s call for ministry, would honor the Great Commandment, and would restore to dignity those who have often been marginalized in our Church. First CRC would report to Classis in September of 2004. During those 15 months, we request that Classis Toronto encourage local congregations to see how they can best minister to gays and lesbians. We respectfully request that further discussion of and response to the January 2003 recommendations of Classis be postponed until September 2004.

At its meeting on May 22, 2003, with respect to the situation at First CRC Toronto, Classis Toronto had before it

- An overture from Springdale CRC;
- An overture from Maranatha CRC;
- A recommendation from the classical advisory committee;
- A second communication from First CRC Toronto that stated:

At our May 5 council meeting, we considered the response we had received to our initial response to Classis Toronto. We were aware of the acute distress our response had caused, and were further informed by two caring pastors who visited with us. Having already decided not to nominate persons in committed same gender relationships for this year, and consistent with our expressed deep desire to remain part of the Christian Reformed denomination, we decided to further defer such nominations. We respectfully request that further discussion of the decision of the Classis meeting of January 2003 be deferred until there has been opportunity to present our study in September of 2004.

Classis Toronto decided to postpone any decision and adjourned to meet on June 25, 2003. At this meeting Classis had before it:

- The overture from Maranatha CRC;
- The overture from Springdale (a copy of which will be made available to the advisory committee);

- An overture from Second CRC, Brampton,
- A new recommendation from the classical advisory committee; and
- A third communication from First CRC Toronto expressing:

A. Regret that we did not bring our decision to Classis Toronto for consideration at an earlier stage in the process. We recognize the ensuing reactions and responses from sister churches were, at least in part, due to this infraction of customary church protocol. After considerable prayer, soul searching and discussion, we will refrain from acting on our earlier decision ‘to nominate gay and lesbian members living in committed relationships’ for elected office,

B. Prepare and present to Classis Toronto—in accordance with traditional ecclesiastical procedure an overture based on a biblical study of what it means to act on the recommendations of the report of homosexuality (2002) that addresses the issue of ministry to and inclusion of homosexual members in our church communities. The Council and congregation of First CRC of Toronto earnestly desire to be a vibrant member of the CRCNA.

To that end, we regard the statements above as our response to Classis Toronto’s request to rescind. This opens the way for communal dialogue and the opportunity for a safe place to speak without fear of recrimination. In sum, First Toronto CRC considers itself blessed to be an inclusive fellowship of faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord. The congregation cherishes the gifts the Spirit endowed its membership, including its gay and lesbian members. We feel confident about our future together as a safe fellowship of faith. It is our fervent prayer that our brothers and sisters of Classis Toronto uphold First CRC in their prayers as they seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We know the road ahead will not be easy, but we long to be with you on this journey.

After discussion, Classis Toronto at its meeting on June 25, 2003, made the following decision:

That Classis Toronto, honouring the decisions and pastoral guidelines of 1973 and 2002 in the matter of Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members, accepts First CRC’s response as meeting the urgings of Classis Toronto in January, 2003, with the provision that Toronto I presents its study no later than Sept., 2004.

III. Requested action

Should Synod 2004 be minded to sustain our appeal, the council of Springdale CRC requests synod to take one of two following courses of action:

- A. That synod instruct Classis Toronto to initiate the application of special discipline to the officebearers of First CRC; or
- B. That synod act directly by initiating the application of special discipline to the officebearers of First CRC.

Council of Springdale CRC
Bradford, Ontario
Harm Horlings, clerk

Personal Appeals

1. Mr. J. Hermany
2. Rev. R.J. Meyer

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