

**The United Reformed Churches in North America**  
**Synod Niagara 2022**  
**Press Release #4**  
**Thursday, October 20, 2022**

Rev. Talman Wagenmaker led the Synod in its opening devotions by reading from Psalm 90, leading in prayer, and calling the assembly to sing TPH #90A.

Rev. Simon Jooste from the Reformed Church of South Africa, Rev. Alvis Sauka from the Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia, Rev. Joel Overduin from the Free Reformed Churches of North America, and Rev. Jim Klazinga from the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia gave fraternal addresses throughout the day. The shared zeal for bringing the gospel to the nations and the shared burden in the hardships of the work brought the assembly to prayer for the churches.

Synod received a communication from Classis Central US about its interactions and growing relationship with Classis Minnkota of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and Synod expressed its gratitude to the Lord for the measure of faithfulness in the life of the churches of Classis Minnkota.

Overtures to adjust the language used to describe the different phases of our fraternal relations and to add a sermon review to the procedures for an ordination exam were not adopted by the Synod. Synod decided to withhold action upon an overture that requested Synod to adopt nine affirmations to assist the churches in delineating the responsibilities of and the relationships between the church, state, and family.

The afternoon and evening sessions brought the Synod into weighty deliberations over the future of our cooperation in and the oversight of mission works in the URCNA. Despite the nuances of different opinions and visions for how that cooperation should be encouraged, the unity of the delegates in their desire to see the URCNA be more fruitful in proclaiming the gospel to the lost was unmistakable. May the Lord be praised through the decisions of Synod, and even more by the work of the churches to be lights shining into the darkness!

Synod encourages the classes of the URCNA to either establish or maintain a Classical Committee on Home Missions for the promotion and strengthening of evangelism and church planting throughout each classis. Synod decided not to create the position of Home Missions Coordinator but chose to create distinct Synodical Committees on Foreign and Home Missions that will provide counsel to the federation, classes, consistories, and mission works.

In addition, Synod encourages consistories that are overseeing foreign mission works to cooperate in creating field committees that will assist the missionaries or long-term missionary helpers on a particular field. The overseeing consistories will continue to exercise supervision over the missionaries and long-term missionary helpers, while a more unified vision for the broader mission field will help to pool resources beyond the reach of a local church.

Rev. Richard Bout, who has served as the Missions Coordinator of the URCNA since he was appointed by Synod Visalia 2014, was appointed by Synod Niagara 2022 to take on the newly-created position of Foreign Missions Coordinator. Working alongside the Synodical Committee for Foreign Missions, he will focus on providing counsel, encouragement, support, and prayer to missionaries beyond Canada and the United States, as well as to their overseeing consistories, their classes, and the federation. When the recommendation was made that Synod approve of the work of Rev. Bout with hearty support, that recommendation was adopted without dissent. Truly the Lord is magnified through faithful service!

Synod also worked its way through reports from the Convening Consistory of Synod Niagara, the Stated Clerk, the US Board of Directors, the Canadian Board of Directors, as well as the Website Oversight Committee and its Overseeing Consistory. Gary Fisher, the webmaster for the official URCNA website (*urcna.org*), was thanked for his faithful labors and was reappointed to the work.

After a long but fruitful day, the delegates were dismissed “with hearts and hands uplifted” (TPH #388) and will be called to order once again on Friday morning for the final day of Synod Niagara. To God be the glory!