

**ACTS OF SYNOD NIAGARA 2022**  
**TWELFTH SYNOD OF THE**  
**UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA**

**OCTOBER 17-21, AD 2022**

Convened by Wellandport United Reformed Church of Wellandport, Ontario  
at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center in Buffalo, New York

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**Monday, October 17, 2022**  
**Evening Session**

ARTICLE 1

The chairman *pro tem*, Rev. Joel Dykstra of Wellandport United Reformed Church in Wellandport, Ontario, calls the meeting to order. He leads an opening devotional, reading from Revelation 5, leading in prayer, and calling the delegates to sing Psalm 67B, “O God, Show Mercy to Us.”

ARTICLE 2

The chairman *pro tem* welcomes all delegates, guests, and visitors. He gives instructions regarding the logistics of the convention center.

ARTICLE 3

The chairman *pro tem* calls the roll, which reveals that the following delegates are present:

Alto, MI	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Douglas Barnes Elder Kel Elzinga
Anaheim, CA	Christ Reformed Church	Rev. Brad Lenzner Rev. Yi Wang
Anchorage, AK	Redeemer United Reformed Church	Elder Dennis Morgan*
Apple Valley, CA	High Desert United Reformed Church	Rev. Tom Morrison*
Aylmer, ON	Bethel United Reformed Church of Aylmer	Elder Brian Hiemstra Elder James Van Gulp
Beecher, IL	Faith United Reformed Church	Rev. Nathan Voss Elder Rick Knoll

Bellingham, WA	Bellingham United Reformed Church	Rev. Benjamin Davenport* Elder Dan Hogan*
Boise, ID	Cloverdale United Reformed Church	Elder Rick Hills
Bolton, ON	Immanuel Reformed Church of Bolton	Rev. Maurice Luimes*
Bowmanville, ON	Salem United Reformed Church	Elder Paul Lawton Elder Henry Zekveld
Brampton, ON	Hope Reformed Church	Rev. John Bouwers Rev. Matthew Van Dyken*
Brantford, ON	Living Water Reformed Church	Rev. Greg Bylsma Elder Neil Benjamins
Brantford, ON	Redeeming Grace Reformed Church	Rev. Aaron Korvemaker Elder Nathan Bosscher
Brockville, ON	Bethel United Reformed Church	Rev. Pete Van't Hoff Elder Andy Piepers
Burlington, WA	Burlington United Reformed Church	Elder Steve Schut
Byron Center, MI	Covenant United Reformed Church	Elder David ten Haaf Elder Gary Van Dyke
Caledonia, MI	Trinity United Reformed Church	Elder Doug Suwyn Elder Dennis Schreur
Calgary, AB	Bethel United Reformed Church	Elder Cyril Geel
Cape Coral, FL	Trinity Reformed Church	Rev. Stephen Wetmore* Elder Ron Lotterman
Carbondale, PA	Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale	Rev. Stephen Arrick Elder Syd Coons
Charlottetown, PEI	United Reformed Church of PEI	Elder Solke De Boer
Chino, CA	First United Reformed Church	Rev. Bradd L. Nymeyer Elder Michael Kiledjian

Cincinnati, OH	Westside Reformed Church	Rev. Collin Welch Rev. Zachary Wyse
Coopersville, MI	Eastmanville United Reformed Church	Rev. Jephthah Nobel Elder Ike Spriensma
De Motte, IN	Immanuel United Reformed Church	Rev. Roberto Rossi Elder Mark Van Der Molen
Des Moines, IA	Providence Reformed Church	Rev. Jody Lucero Elder Adam Van Der Molen
Doon, IA	Doon United Reformed Church	Rev. John Vermeer*
Dunnville, ON	Grace Reformed Church	Elder Dan Lindeboom Elder Brad Bruining
Dutton, MI	Dutton United Reformed Church	Rev. Talman Wagenmaker Elder Gary Scott
Edmonton, AB	Cornerstone United Reformed Church of Edmonton	Rev. William Pols Elder Henry Greidanus
Escondido, CA	Escondido United Reformed Church	Rev. Christopher Gordon Rev. Angelo Contreras
Fresno, CA	Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. David Inks Elder Eric Anderson
Grand Rapids, MI	Sovereign Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Mitchell Dick
Grand Rapids, MI	Walker United Reformed Church	Elder Jeffrey Caspers Elder David Remelts
Grande Prairie, AB	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Keith Giles
Hamilton, ON	Rehoboth United Reformed Church	Rev. Steven Swets Elder Charlie Fluit
Hills, MN	Hills United Reformed Church	Elder John Den Besten Elder Todd Haak
Holland, MI	Faith United Reformed Church	Rev. Matthew Nuiver

Hudsonville, MI	Cornerstone United Reformed Church	Rev. Phil Vos Elder Rob Brinks
Jenison, MI	Bethel United Reformed Church	Rev. Jason Tuinstra Rev. Steve Postma
Jordan, ON	Immanuel United Reformed Church	Rev. Ryan Swale Elder Albert Brouwer
Kalamazoo, MI	Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. Chris Engelsma Elder Leon Bronsink
Kalamazoo, MI	Immanuel Fellowship Church	Rev. William Boekestein
Kansas City, MO	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Stephen Lauer Elder Wil Postma
Kelowna, BC	Grace Reformed Church in Kelowna	Rev. James Roosma
Kennewick, WA	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Craig Davis Elder Paul Scharold
Lancaster, PA	Zeltenreich Reformed Church	Rev. Robert Godfrey Rev. Austin Reifel
Lansing, IL	Oak Glen United Reformed Church	Rev. Edward Marcusse Elder Timothy Beezhold
Leduc, AB	Grace Reformed Church of Leduc	Elder Walter Vanden Brink
Lethbridge, AB	Trinity Reformed Church	Elder Mike Tams Rev. Barry Beukema
Listowel, ON	Immanuel United Reformed Church	Rev. Ancel Merwin
Littleton, CO	Coram Deo Reformation Church	Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen Elder Nicholas Sealy
London, ON	Cornerstone United Reformed Church	Rev. Steve Williamson Rev. Mitchell Persaud
Loveland, CO	Calvary United Reformed Church	Rev. Brian Vos Elder Daniel Mattson
Lynden, WA	Covenant Grace Reformed	Rev. Dale Van Dyke*

		Elder Chuck DeWaard*
Lynden, WA	United Reformed Church of Lynden	Rev. James Ogle Rev. Mark Vander Pol
Lynwood, IL	Lynwood United Reformed Church	Rev. Nick Alons Elder Robert Iwema
Medford, OR	Cornerstone Christian Church	Rev. Quentin B. Falkena Rev. Mark D. Delladio
Missoula, MT	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Jared Beaird* Elder Jeffrey Karel*
Nampa, ID	United Reformed Church of Nampa	Rev. Nick Smith Elder Mark Schiebout
Neerlandia, AB	Emmanuel Reformed Church	Rev. Ralph Pontier
New Hampton, NY	Hudson Valley United Reformed Church	Rev. Kevin Hossink Elder Gary Stellingwerf
New Haven, VT	New Haven United Reformed Church	Rev. Andrew Knott Elder Rob North
New Westminster, BC	New Westminster United Reformed Church	Rev. Gary Zekveld
New York, NY	Messiah's Reformed Fellowship	Rev. Daniel Ragusa Rev. Samuel Perez
Newton, NJ	Newton Covenant Reformed Church	Elder Peter Berlin Rev. Aaron Verhoef
Oak Lawn, IL	First United Reformed Church	Rev. Harold Miller
Oceanside, CA	Oceanside United Reformed Church	Elder Danny Miranda
Ontario, CA	Ontario United Reformed Church	Rev. Daniel Ventura* Rev. Taylor Kern*
Orange City, IA	Redeemer United Reformed Church	Elder Greg Van Holland
Oro-Medonte, ON	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Martin Overgaauw*

Pantego, NC	Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. Calvin Tuininga Rev. Scottie Wright
Pasadena, CA	Pasadena United Reformed Church	Rev. Movses Janbazian Rev. Adam Kaloostian
Pella, IA	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Greg Lubbers Elder Leonard De Vries
Phoenix, AZ	Phoenix United Reformed Church	Elder Douglas Holloway*
Pompton Plains, NJ	Pompton Plains Reformed Bible Church	Rev. Justin Nobel Elder Robert Woudenberg
Portland, OR	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Steve Oeverman Rev. Chris Coleman
Regina, SK	Redeemer Reformation Church	Rev. Brian Cochran
Ripon, CA	Zion United Reformed Church	Elder Jake Sonke
Rock Valley, IA	Rock Valley United Reformed Church	Rev. Joel Vander Kooi
Saint John, IN	Redeemer United Reformed Church	Elder Ryan Knoll Rev. Dr. Cornelis Venema
Salem, OR	Immanuel's Reformed Church	Rev. Todd Joling Elder Hans Van Dam
Sanborn, IA	Cornerstone United Reformed Church	Rev. Dan Donovan Elder Bob Anema
Schererville, IN	Community United Reformed Church	Elder Bruce Aardsma Elder Gerry Swets
Sheffield, ON	Zion United Reformed Church of Sheffield	Rev. Albert Bezuyen Elder Richard Vanderboom
Sioux Center, IA	Sioux Center United Reformed Church	Elder Andrew Geleynse Elder Dan Byl
Sioux Falls, SD	Christ Reformed Church	Elder Greg Vande Kamp Elder Joseph Hamm
Smithers, BC	Bethel Reformed Church	Rev. Simon Lievaart Elder Dirk Adema

St. Catharines, ON	Trinity United Reformed Church	Rev. Daniel Hamstra Elder John Boekestyn
Strathroy, ON	Providence United Reformed Church	Rev. Harry Zekveld Rev. Eric Pennings
Surrey, BC	Surrey Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Jason Vander Horst Elder Antonio Catamo
Telkwa, BC	Faith Reformed Church of Telkwa	Rev. Kelvin Tiemstra Elder Tylor Versteeg
Thunder Bay, ON	United Reformed Church of Thunder Bay	Rev. John Ysinga Elder Ralph Bakker
Toronto, ON	Covenant Reformed Church of Toronto	Rev. Jose J. Ramirez
Torrance, CA	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Dr. Daniel Borvan* Elder Stephen Perkins*
Twin Falls, ID	New Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. Christopher Folkerts* Elder Rob Wybenga*
Vineland, ON	Adoration United Reformed Church	Rev. Bryce De Zwarte Elder Randy Mulder
Visalia, CA	Trinity United Reformed Church	Elder Nonning Leyendekker Rev. Joel Weaver
Walnut Creek, CA	Trinity United Reformed Church	Rev. Joghinda Gangar*
Washington, D.C.	Christ Reformed Church	Rev. Dr. Brian Lee Elder Chris Robbins
Waupun, WI	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Paul Freswick Elder Joel Alsum*
Wellandport, ON	Wellandport United Reformed Church	Rev. Joel Dykstra Elder Dwight Elgersma
Wellsburg, IA	United Reformed Church of Wellsburg	Rev. Joel Worries
West Sayville, NY	West Sayville Reformed Bible Church	Rev. Andrew Eenigenburg

Winnipeg, MB	Providence Reformed Church of Winnipeg	Rev. Rich Anjema Elder Henry Nagtegaal
Woodstock, ON	Bethel United Reformed Church of Woodstock	Rev. James Sinke Elder Jonathan Zekveld
Wyoming, MI	Bethany United Reformed Church	Rev. Eric Van Der Molen Elder Robert Huisjen
Wyoming, ON	Covenant Christian Church	Rev. Tony Zekveld* Elder Andrew Hiemstra

Delegates marked with an asterisk\* arrived and were seated later or were seated when their provisional acceptance was ratified. See Articles 18, 45, and 65, below.

#### ARTICLE 4

The chairman *pro tem* gives a preliminary report on behalf of the convening consistory that the credentials appear to be in order. He notes that 12 churches have not registered any delegates, and 25 churches have registered only one delegate. Advisory Committee 1 will take note of those churches later.

#### ARTICLE 5

The chairman *pro tem* reads the Form of Subscription. The delegates rise to declare their assent to the Form of Subscription.

#### ARTICLE 6

The chairman *pro tem* declares Synod Niagara 2022 constituted.

#### ARTICLE 7

The chairman *pro tem* welcomes the following fraternal delegates and observers:

Canadian Reformed Churches	Rev. Steve Vandavelde
	Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes
Evangelical Reformed Church in India	Rev. Ameet Mohan
	Rev. Anupkumar Arun Hiwale
	Rev. Hiralal Solanki*
Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia	Rev. Alvis Sauka
Free Reformed Churches of Australia	Dr. Pete Witten
Orthodox Presbyterian Church	Rev. Iain Wright
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia	Rev. Jim Klazinga



Reformed Church in the United States	Mr. Marty Scott
Reformed Church of South Africa	Rev. Simon Jooste*
Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America	Rev. Bruce Backensto

The chairman *pro tem* informs the fraternal delegates that they have the privilege of the floor.

*The fraternal delegates marked with an asterisk\* arrived later in the meeting. See Article 18 and Article 87 below.*

## ARTICLE 8

### **Election of Officers**

- A. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for chairman of Synod.  
Rev. Bradd Nymeyer is elected by ballot to serve as chairman.
- B. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for vice-chairman of Synod.  
Rev. Mark Vander Pol is elected by ballot to serve as vice-chairman.
- C. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for first clerk of Synod.  
Rev. Doug Barnes is elected by ballot to serve as first clerk.
- D. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for second clerk of Synod.
  - 1. A motion is made and supported to suspend *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 6.10.d in order to vote by voice.  
*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*
  - 2. Rev. James Sinke is elected by a voice vote to serve as second clerk.

## ARTICLE 9

### **Reception of Provisionally Received Churches**

- 1. A motion is made and supported to ratify the provisional admittance of Cornerstone Christian Church of Medford, OR.  
*Adopted*
- 2. A motion is made and supported to ratify the provisional admittance of Anchor of Hope Reformed Church of Silverdale, WA.  
*Adopted*
- 3. A motion is made and supported to ratify the provisional admittance of Redeemer United Reformed Church of Anchorage, AK.  
*Adopted*
- 4. A motion is made and supported to ratify the provisional admittance of Redemption Reformed Church of Chilliwack, BC.  
*Adopted*

5. A motion is made and supported to ratify the provisional admittance of Christ the Redeemer Reformed Church of Eureka, CA.
6. The delegates from Medford, OR (listed in the Roll Call above) rise to give their *Adopted* assent to the Form of Subscription. The other churches are either unable to have a delegate present, or their delegates have not yet arrived.

## ARTICLE 10

### **Provisional Agenda and Advisory Committee Assignments**

- A. Motion is made and supported to adopt the Provisional Agenda.
  1. The chairman *pro tem* assigns the Supplemental Report of the Convening Consistory to Advisory Committee 1. The report includes a late communication concerning a provisionally received church (Eureka, CA) which is added to the Provisional Agenda.  
*The chairman pro tem so orders*
  2. The report of the Canadian Board of 2020 did not get repeated in their 2022 report. The chairman refers the 2020 report to Advisory Committee 2 as part of the Provisional Agenda.
  3. The amended Provisional Agenda is: *Adopted*
- B. Motion is made and supported to adopt the advisory committee assignments as listed below.

### **Advisory Committees Synod Niagara 2022**

#### **Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials, Reports, and Communication 1 & 2**

Materials: Credentials; Convening Consistory's Reports; Stated Clerk's Reports; Statistician's Report; Communication 1; and Communication 2

Chairman: Rev. Bill Pols

Reporter: Rev. Steve Postma

Members: Rev. Aaron Korvemaker, Rev. Jephthah Nobel, Elder Chuck DeWaard, Rev. James Ogle, Rev. Samuel Perez, Rev. Taylor Kern, Elder Leonard De Vries, Rev. Daniel Hamstra, Elder Tylor Versteeg, Elder Stephen Perkins, Elder Chris Robbins, Elder Dwight Elgersma, Elder Jonathan Zekveld

#### **Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Synod Wheaton 2018 Financial Report; Treasurers' Reports (U.S., Canadian, JVA); Board of Directors' Reports (U.S. and Canada); and Communication 8

Chairman: Rev. Craig Davis

Reporter: Rev. Nick Alons

Members: Rev. Tom Morrison, Elder Henry Zekveld, Elder Neil Benjamins, Elder Michael Kiledjian, Elder Gary Scott, Rev. David Inks, Elder Charlie Fluit, Elder Gary Stellingwerf, Rev. Scottie Wright, Elder Greg Vande Kamp, Elder John Boekestyn, Elder Joel Alsum, Elder Robert Huisjen

### **Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 1 to amend Church Order Article 47; Overture 14 to amend Church Order Appendix 8; and Overture 21 to amend Church Order Articles 55 & 56

Chairman: Elder Mark Van Der Molen

Reporter: Rev. William Boekestein

Members: Rev. Brad Lenzner, Elder James Van Gorp, Elder Rick Knoll, Rev. Stephen Wetmore, Elder Syd Coons, Rev. Bradd Nymeyer, Elder Brad Bruining, Rev. John M. Kistler, Elder Leon Bronsink, Elder Jeffrey Karel, Rev. Ralph Pontier, Rev. Albert Bezuyen, Rev. Jason Vander Horst, Elder Henry Nagtegaal

### **Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 2 to amend Church Order Articles 22 & 47; Overture 3 to amend Church Order Article 48; Overture 4 to add an index of synodical decisions to the website; Overture 5 to add an index of synodical decisions to the Church Order; and Overture 10 to publish a list of vacancies

Chairman: Rev. Dale Van Dyke

Reporter: Rev. Mitchell Dick

Members: Elder Gary Van Dyke, Rev. Collin Welch, Elder John Den Besten, Rev. James Roosma, Rev. Austin Reifel, Elder Timothy Beezhold, Rev. Daniel Ragusa, Rev. Daniel Ventura, Elder Joseph Hamm, Rev. Eric Pennings, Rev. Jose J. Ramirez, Elder Rob Wybenga

### **Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 11 to amend the Church Order to add national synods; Overture 12 to adopt pastoral advice; and Overture 13 to amend Appendix 4

Chairman: Rev. Quentin B. Falkena

Reporter: Rev. Chris Gordon

Members: Rev. Greg Bylsma, Elder Nathan Bosscher, Elder Ron Lotterman, Rev. Stephen Arrick, Elder Ike Spriensma, Rev. Ryan Swale, Rev. Stephen Lauer, Elder Mike Tams, Rev. Matthew Nuiver, Elder Mark Schiebout, Elder Jake Sonke, Rev. Greg Lubbers, Rev. Simon Lievaart, Elder Randy Mulder

### **Advisory Committee 6 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 15 to establish a study committee regarding virtual worship; and Overture 16 to establish a study committee regarding human sexuality

Chairman: Rev. Benjamin Davenport

Reporter: Rev. Brian Vos

Members: Rev. Douglas Barnes, Elder Rick Hills, Elder Andy Piepers, Elder Jeffrey Caspers, Rev. Barry Beukema, Rev. Andrew Knott, Rev. Aaron Verhoef, Elder Bob Anema, Rev. Dr. Cornelis Venema, Rev. Bryce De Zwarte, Elder Bruce Aardsma, Elder Andrew Geleynse, Elder Tony Catamo, Rev. Tony Zekveld

### **Advisory Committee 7 – Missions**

Materials: Missions Committee Report; Overture 6 to amend Church Order Article 10; Overture 18 to amend Church Order Article 47; Overture 19 to add a Church Order article to establish mission visitors; and Communication 6

Chairman: Rev. Ed Marcusse

Reporter: Rev. Joel Dykstra

Members: Rev. Robert Godfrey, Rev. Adam Kaloostian, Rev. Christopher Folkerts, Elder Dan Hogan, Elder Solke De Boer, Elder Adam Van Der Molen, Elder Henry Greidanus, Elder David Remelts, Elder Rob Brinks, Elder Nicholas Sealy, Rev. Steve Williamson, Rev. Rich Anjema, Elder Rob North, Elder Richard Vanderboom, Rev. Ancel Merwin

#### **Advisory Committee 8 – Website Oversight and PRCC**

Materials: Websight Oversight Committee Report; Report of the Oversight Consistory for Websight Oversight Committee; Presbyterian Reformed Chaplaincy Committee Report; and Overture 7 to redevelop the URCNA website

Chairman: Rev. Nick Smith

Reporter: Rev. Brian Lee

Members: Rev. Maurice Luimes, Rev. Jody Lucero, Rev. Mark Vander Pol, Rev. Chris Engelsma, Rev. Gary Zekveld, Rev. Jared Beard, Elder Greg Van Holland, Elder Ryan Knoll, Rev. Dr. Daniel Borvan, Rev. Paul Freswick, Rev. Joel Worries, Elder Paul Scharold, Rev. Talman Wagenmaker

#### **Advisory Committee 9 – CERCU**

Materials: Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity; Overture 8 to amend Ecumenical Guidelines; and Communication 5

Chairman: Rev. John Vermeer

Reporter: Rev. John Bouwers

Members: Elder Kel Elzinga, Elder David ten Haaf, Elder Eric Anderson, Elder Albert Brouwer, Elder Walter Vanden Brink, Elder Daniel Mattson, Elder Robert Iwema, Rev. Mark D. Delladio, Rev. Kevin Hossink, Elder Peter Berlin, Rev. Harry Zekveld, Rev. John Ysinga, Rev. Joghinda Gangar, Rev. James Sinke

#### **Advisory Committee 10 – CECCA**

Materials: Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad

Chairman: Rev. Movses Janbazian

Reporter: Rev. Steve Swets

Members: Rev. Yi Wang, Rev. Pete Van't Hoff, Elder Dennis Schreur, Elder Dan Lindeboom, Rev. Jason Tuinstra, Rev. Steve Oeverman, Rev. Brian Cochran, Elder Gerry Swets, Elder Dan Byl, Elder Todd Haak, Elder Dirk Adema, Elder Ralph Bakker, Rev. Andrew Eenigenburg, Elder Brian Hiemstra

#### **Advisory Committee 11 – Trinity Psalter Hymnal and Liturgical Forms**

Materials: *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board Report; Liturgical Forms Committee Report; Overture 9 to appoint a committee regarding choral recordings of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Psalms; and Overture 17 to amend Lord's Supper Form 1

Chairman: Rev. Joel Vander Kooi

Reporter: Rev. Zachary Wyse

Members: Rev. Matthew Van Dyken, Elder Steve Schut, Rev. Roberto Rossi, Rev. Angelo Contreras, Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen, Rev. Tad Groenendyk, Rev. Martin Overgaauw, Elder Robert Woudenberg, Rev. Chris Coleman, Elder Hans Van Dam, Rev. Dan Donovan, Rev. Kelvin Tiemstra, Elder Nonning Leyendekker, Rev. Eric Van Der Molen

#### **Advisory Committee 12 – Appeals**

Materials: Standing Committee on Appeals Report; Appeal 1; Appeal 2; Overture 20 to amend Church Order Article 31; Communication 3; and Communication 4

Chairman: Rev. Harold Miller

Reporter: Rev. Todd Joling

Members: Rev. Nathan Voss, Elder Paul Lawton, Elder Doug Suwyn, Elder Cyril Geel, Rev. Keith Giles, Elder Wil Postma, Rev. Mitchell Persaud, Elder Danny Miranda, Rev. Calvin Tuininga, Elder Douglas Halloway, Rev. Justin Nobel, Rev. Joel Weaver, Elder Dennis Morgan, Elder Andrew Hiemstra

1. The following changes from the assignments made three weeks before Synod are noted. They are reflected in the list above.
  - a. Alternate delegate Ike Spriensma replaces Larry Pals on Committee 5.
  - b. Alternate delegate Tony Catamo replaces Pete Schouten on Committee 6.
  - c. Alternate delegate Mike Tams replaces Hugo Vander Hoek on Committee 5.
  - d. Alternate delegate Dan Byl replaces Rev. Jon Bushnell on Committee 10.
  - e. Rev. Ancel Merwin (inadvertently overlooked) is assigned to Committee 7.
  
2. Additional changes from the assignments requested of the assembly, also reflected in the list above, include:
  - a. Rev. Steve Postma replaces Rev. Todd De Rooy as reporter for Committee 1.
  - b. Rev. Nick Smith replaces Rev. Mark Vander Pol as chairman of Committee 8.
  - c. Rev. John Bouwers replaces Rev. James Sinke as reporter of Committee 9.
  
3. The motion to adopt the advisory committee assignments as amended is:

*Adopted*

#### Article 11

A motion is made and supported to adopt the time schedule as printed on the first page of the Provisional Agenda.

*Adopted*

#### Article 12

The officers of Synod Niagara 2022 assume their duties. The chairman, Rev. Bradd Nymeyer, thanks the host church for its efforts in enabling us to meet. He urges the delegates to be on time and to be in prayer for the officers and for one another. He leads the assembly in prayer.

#### Article 13

The chairman instructs the delegates to return to plenary session at 8:00 a.m. for opening devotions.

#### Article 14

The body rises to sing *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* 233, "O Father You Are Sovereign."  
The assembly recesses until Tuesday morning.

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022**  
**Morning Session**

ARTICLE 15

Rev. Al Bezuyen reads Psalm 1, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of Psalm 42A, “As the Deer Pants for the Water.”

ARTICLE 16

The first clerk reads the Concept Minutes, which are corrected by the assembly. Motion is made and supported to approve the Concept Minutes as corrected. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 17

The second clerk reads the Press Release for Monday. Motion is made and supported to approve the Press Release. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 18

The chairman welcomes the following delegates who arrived after the roll call, each of whom rises to signify his assent to the Form of Subscription:

Rev. John Vermeer from Doon United Reformed Church of Doon, IA.

Rev. Benjamin Davenport from Bellingham United Reformed Church of Bellingham, WA.

Elder Dan Hogan from Bellingham United Reformed Church of Bellingham, WA.

Rev. Dale Van Dyke from Covenant Grace Reformed Church of Lynden, WA.

Elder Chuck DeWaard from Covenant Grace Reformed Church of Lynden, WA.

Elder Douglas Holloway from Phoenix United Reformed Church of Phoenix, AZ.

Elder Joel Alsum from Grace United Reformed Church of Waupun, WI.

Rev. Christopher Folkerts from New Covenant United Reformed Church of Twin Falls, ID.

Elder Rob Wybenga from New Covenant United Reformed Church of Twin Falls, ID.

Rev. Johinda Gangar from Trinity United Reformed Church of Walnut Creek, CA.

Rev. Stephen Wetmore from Trinity United Reformed Church of Cape Coral, FL.

Rev. Tom Morrison from High Desert United Reformed Church of Apple Valley, CA.

Rev. Jared Beaird from Covenant Reformed Church of Missoula, MT.

Rev. Jeffrey Karel from Covenant Reformed Church of Missoula, MT.

Rev. Daniel Ventura from Ontario United Reformed Church of Ontario, CA.

Rev. Taylor Kern from Ontario United Reformed Church of of Ontario, CA.

Rev. Dr. Daniel Borvan from Grace United Reformed Church of Torrance, CA.

Elder Stephen Perkins from Grace United Reformed Church of Torrance, CA.

Rev. Matthew Van Dyken from Hope Reformed Church of Brampton, ON.

The chairman also welcomes URCNA Statistician Jody Luth and fraternal delegate Rev. Simon Jooste from the Reformed Churches in South Africa.

ARTICLE 19

The chairman makes several brief announcements before dismissing the delegates to begin the work of the advisory committees.

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022**  
**Morning Session**

ARTICLE 20

Rev. Greg Bylsma reads and briefly exhorts from Luke 7:36-50, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* 291, “O for a Thousand Tongues.”

ARTICLE 21

The assembly recesses for lunch.

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022**  
**Afternoon Session**

ARTICLE 22

Rev. Brad Lenzner reads and briefly exhorts from Psalm 34 and John 19:31-36, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of Psalm 34A, “I Will at All Times Bless the Lord.”

ARTICLE 23

The chairman invites Rev. Iain Wright to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Rev. Wright reads from 2 Chronicles 27:6 and notes the importance of ordering our ways well before the Lord in the face of society’s deepening depravity. He offers encouragement for the URCNA to stand with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the face of oppression, seeking together to faithfully serve the Lord.

Rev. Robert Godfrey offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

ARTICLE 24

**Advisory Committee 11 – Trinity Psalter Hymnal and Liturgical Forms**

Materials: *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod grant committee members the privilege of the floor.  
*So ordered by the chairman.*
2. That Synod receive the report of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board.  
*Adopted*
3. That Synod heartily thank the members of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board for their work.  
*Adopted*

ARTICLE 25

**Advisory Committee 11 – Trinity Psalter Hymnal and Liturgical Forms**

Materials: Liturgical Forms Committee Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 of the Liturgical Forms Committee:  
That the websites related to our Liturgical Forms and Prayers be overseen by the Website Oversight Committee. *Adopted*
2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2 of the Liturgical Forms Committee:  
That the Canadian Corporation of the URCNA be given the responsibility of reprinting the Liturgical Forms and Prayers book if such a need should arise. *Adopted*
3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3 of the Liturgical Forms Committee:  
That the Liturgical Forms Committee be disbanded. *Adopted*
4. That Synod thank the Liturgical Forms Committee for its work. *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 11 continued in Art. 56.)

ARTICLE 26

**Advisory Committee 12 – Appeals**

Materials: Standing Committee on Appeals Report

Recommendation:

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 of the Standing Committee on Appeals Report:  
“That Synod take up the overture from Classis Southwest U.S. [Overture 20, pp.116-117] regarding Church Order Article 31 as early in the agenda as possible.” *Adopted*

**Grounds:**



- a. Our committee believes Synod’s discussion and ruling on this overture will likely provide clear direction in formulating the Advisory Committee’s advice to Synod on Appeal 2.
  - b. Our committee also believes that Synod’s resolution of Appeal 2 could affect the Advisory Committee’s advice to Synod on Appeal 1.
  - c. The sooner the Advisory Committee has clear direction from Synod on the overture regarding Church Order Article 31, the sooner the Advisory Committee will be able to complete its work on Appeals 1 and 2.
- A. The chairman notes that the Stated Clerk has the right to change page numbers, such as are included in this recommendation, to ensure that they match the printed Acts of Synod.
  - B. Motion is made and supported to amend this recommendation to strike the grounds of Overture 20. *Adopted*
  - C. The motion, as amended, is: *Adopted*

ARTICLE 27

**Advisory Committee 12 – Appeals**

Materials: Overture 20 to amend Church Order Article 31

Recommendation:

- 1. That Synod accede to Overture 20 *with* its grounds. *Defeated*

**The overture states:**

Classis Southwest U.S. overtures Synod to amend Church Order Article 31 as follows:

Remove the word “Consistory” in the second sentence and replace it with the phrase “assembly whose decision is being appealed.”

*Current wording:*

**Article 31 - Appeals by Church Members**

If any church member complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a narrower assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to the broader assemblies. An individual’s appeal must proceed first to the Consistory, and only then, if necessary, to a broader assembly. Until a decision is made upon such appeal, the church member shall conform to the determination and judgment already passed. *(See Appendix 7.)*

*Wording as amended (deletions struck-through; additions underlined):*

**Article 31 - Appeals by Church Members**

If any church member complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a narrower assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to the broader assemblies. An individual's appeal must proceed first to the ~~Consistory~~ assembly whose decision is being appealed, and only then, if necessary, to a broader assembly. Until a decision is made upon such appeal, the church member shall conform to the determination and judgment already passed. (*See Appendix 7.*)

**Grounds:**

- a. The proposed amendment would help remove any potential for misunderstanding that currently exists between Church Order Article 31 and Appendix 7, Guidelines 1 and 2.
- b. The proposed amendment uses the same language already approved by Synod [2018] in Appendix 7, Guideline 2.
- c. The proposed amendment would remove any appearance that the Church Order can be or has been changed by way of an appendix.
- d. Article 31 as amended would better serve the churches by giving further clarity to the appeal process.
- e. The appeal process is a matter that pertains to the churches of the broader assembly in common. As has been previously expressed by our churches: "The appeal process is worth taking time to improve and strengthen, as it is closely related to upholding righteousness and justice among the churches of Christ represented within our federation, and as our decisions as a church reflect our only Head, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts of Synod 2016, Article 70, pp. 73-74).

(Advisory Committee 12 continued in Art. 113.)

ARTICLE 28

**Advisory Committee 9 – CERCU**

Materials: Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 1: that Synod grant the privilege of the floor to the committee chairman and secretary when committee matters are being considered (Regulations 5.4.2). *The chairman so orders*
2. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 2: that Synod reappoint as a member-at-large Rev. Bill Boekestein to a third three-year term, to commence immediately and end on July 1, 2025. (Rev. Boekestein was first appointed by Synod 2016 to a term beginning July 1, 2016. He is eligible for reappointment.) *Adopted*
3. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 3: that Synod appoint Rev. Daniel Ventura to a term to commence immediately and end July 1, 2025. This will be his first term as member-at-large. *Adopted*

4. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 4: that Synod appoint Rev. Calvin Tuininga to a term to commence immediately and end July 1, 2025. This will be his first term as member-at-large. *Adopted*
5. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 5: that Synod maintain the budget for CERCU at \$12,500 USD per annum. *Adopted*
6. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 6: that Synod remind the churches of our mutual responsibility to engage one another in our ecumenical task through prayer, classical dialogue, local efforts, and expression of concerns. *Adopted*
7. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 7: that Synod take note that the Canadian Reformed Committee (CER) is willing to answer questions, speak at classes, and promote the unity of our churches. Synod encourages the classes to use them to that end. *Adopted*
8. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 8: that the classes be commended for their faithfulness in appointing or reappointing classical representatives (and alternates) to CERCU in the manner the classes deem appropriate. *Adopted*
9. That Synod accede to CERCU's Recommendation 9: that Synod approve the work of the committee without adopting every formulation in its various dialogues. *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 9 continued in Art. 61.)

## ARTICLE 29

### **Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Overture 18 to amend Church Order Art 47

Recommendation:

1. We recommend that Synod accede to Overture 18 to amend Article 47 of the Church Order by adding: "*A local Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before sending or removing a foreign or domestic missionary from a field,*" with one adjustment: the requirement of concurring advice, not merely advice.

Thus, the Article would read, "The church's missionary task is to preach the Word of God to the unconverted. When this task is to be performed beyond the field of an organized church, it is to be carried out by ministers of the Word set apart to this labor, who are called, supported and supervised by their Consistories. *A local Consistory shall seek the concurring advice of classis before sending or removing a foreign or domestic missionary from a field.* The churches should assist each other in the support of their missionaries."

**Grounds:**

- a. On the question of concurring advice vs. advice:
  - i. This would bring this proposed change in line with Articles 11, 22, and 32, which require concurring advice (or ratification) in important matters related to the life of our congregations.
  - ii. This proposed change reflects the language used by the Missions Committee in its report.
- b. Irrespective of whether we adopt one of the Missions Committee reports, or which of the two we adopt, this proposed change offers wisdom in our dealings with foreign and local missionaries.
- c. Our churches have agreed to “make every effort to unify all of our resources (gifts, talents, and finances) as one united federation in order to bring the gospel from our homes and churches to the nations of the world” (Acts of Synod Nyack 2012, pp. 516-517). Our commitment to unity would be enhanced and displayed through this codified change to our Church Order.
- d. To wisely send a man to the foreign field requires significant consideration and generally commits the federation to ministry in an area of the world for a considerable period of time. Having a broad base of support, agreement, and advice is an invaluable step to seeing this done well among our churches, whether this be the first man sent to a field or an additional man sent to help reinforce the work that is already going.
- e. We have agreed on page 9 in our church planting manual (*How to Plant a Reformed Church*) that sending a man to begin a new work domestically should be done with the advice and awareness of the classis. Requiring this advice in our Church Order helps a greater representation of the federation to be involved and supportive of the growing mission in the URCNA and gives good and helpful accountability to local consistories eager to begin new mission works.
- f. Removing a missionary from a field (foreign or domestic) has significant consequences for the missionary and the church/field where he served. Requiring the concurring advice of classis protects both the missionary and the field that we, as a federation, have supported.
- g. Article 11 of our Church Order recognizes the seriousness of dissolving a relationship between a pastor and a congregation. However, within the range of missions and church planting, there is no protection or safeguard in place for the well-being of either the missionary or the believers (and community) that this man may have served. This Church Order change would recognize that, equally in a mission, a minister’s call is weighty and should not be changed without the input of the classis.
- h. The inclusion of this line before the statement, “The churches should assist each other in the support of their missionaries,” presents the advice of classis in a positive light that reminds us this advice is sought as we seek to support our missionaries. Having the advice of classis before sending a man to a field increases the base of support within the URC for each of our prospective missions.

A. Discussion is held regarding the recommendation and its details.

B. Motion is made and supported to recommit this matter to the advisory committee.

*Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 7 continued in Art. 49.)

#### ARTICLE 30

The chairman announces that Rev. Eric Van Der Molen will be absent from the assembly for the remainder of the day due to illness.

#### ARTICLE 31

##### **Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Synod Wheaton 2018 Financial Report

##### Recommendation:

1. That Synod receive the Wheaton 2018 Financial Report for information.

*Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 32

##### **Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: U.S. Treasurer's Reports for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021

##### Recommendations:

1. That Synod approve the financial reports (unaudited) of the U.S. Treasurer for the calendar years of 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021. (Note: The Treasurer reports that these financial statements have been reviewed by a third-party CPA.)

*Adopted*

2. That Synod thank the Treasurer for his work.

*Adopted*

The chairman expresses thanks to the U.S. Treasurer on behalf of the assembly.

3. That Synod remind the churches of the distinction between classical dues and synodical askings by instructing the Stated Clerk to send an email to the churches clarifying this fact. (Note from our U.S. Treasurer: classical dues are not the same as the synodical "askings." Any fees that are due to a particular classis must be paid to that classis Treasurer. Any synodical "askings" must be paid to the U.S. (or Canadian) Treasurer. The URCNA askings were set at \$25.00 per family in 2022.)

*Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 33

##### **Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Canadian Treasurer's Report for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021

Recommendations:

1. That the Canadian Treasurer be granted the privilege of the floor.  
*So ordered by the chairman*
2. That Synod approve the financial reports (unaudited) of the Canadian Treasurer for the calendar years of 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021. (Note: The Treasurer reports that these financial statements have been reviewed by a third-party accounting firm.) *Adopted*
3. That Synod thank the Treasurer for her work. *Adopted*

The chairman expresses thanks to the Canadian Treasurer on behalf of the assembly.

ARTICLE 34

**Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Financial Report of the JVA for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021

Recommendation:

1. That Synod approve the financial statements of the JVA Treasurer for the years of 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021. *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 2 continued in Art. 48.)

ARTICLE 35

The chairman relinquishes the chair to the vice-chairman.

**Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 1 to amend Church Order Article 47; and Overture 14 to amend Church Order Appendix 8

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 14 to add the words “shall seek the concurring” to Appendix 8.4 of the Church Order in order to make it consistent with the language adopted in Church Order Article 64.

**Grounds:**

- a. Consistency between the language of the Church Order Appendix (8.4) and the language of the Church Order itself (Article 64) is important to prevent confusion and disagreement among the churches.
- b. Requiring concurring advice would help prevent the abuse of erasure as an attempt to cleanse the membership rolls.

- c. Requiring concurring advice would emphasize the need for the consistory to show that they have exercised due diligence in trying to contact and give pastoral care to the member(s) in question.
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation so that Appendix 8.4 would read: “Consistories may, with the concurring advice from classis, erase. ...”  
*Adopted*
- B. The motion as amended is: That Synod accede to Overture 14, so that Appendix 8.4 would read: “Consistories may, with the concurring advice from classis, erase. ...”  
*Adopted*
- 2. That this be Synod’s answer to Overtures 1 and 14. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 36

**Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 21 to amend Church Order Articles 55 & 56

Recommendation:

- 1. That Synod accede to Overture 21 with the following changes.

**(Part A)**

**Article 55 – The Discipline of a Member**

A communicant member whose sin is properly made known to the consistory, and who then obstinately rejects the ~~repeated~~ and loving admonitions of the consistory, shall, in agreement with the Word of God, be subject to church discipline according to the following stages:

A. Silent Discipline-Censure:

A member who persists in sin shall be suspended by the consistory from all the privileges of church membership, including using the sacraments and voting at congregational meetings. Such suspension shall not be made public by the consistory.

B. Public Discipline:

If the silent ~~discipline~~ censure and subsequent admonitions do not bring about repentance, and before proceeding to excommunication, the sinner's impenitence shall be made known to the congregation by indicating both the member's offense and failure to heed ~~repeated~~ scriptural admonitions, so that the congregation may speak with and pray for this member. Public discipline shall be done with the use of the appropriate liturgical form, in three steps, the interval between which shall be left to the discretion of the consistory.

- 1. In the first step, the name of the sinner need not be mentioned so that he may be somewhat spared;

2. In the second step, the consistory shall seek the advice of classis before proceeding, whereupon the member's name shall be mentioned to the congregation;
  3. In the third step, the congregation shall be informed that unless there is repentance, the member will be excommunicated from the church on a specified date.
- C. Excommunication: If these steps of public discipline do not bring about repentance, but rather harden the sinner in his ways, the consistory shall proceed to the extreme remedy, namely excommunication, in agreement with the Word of God and with the use of the appropriate liturgical form.

***Grounds for Part A:***

- a. This article more clearly defines and outlines the proper stages and steps of the disciplinary process. This article will be of immeasurable help and service to consistories, particularly those with inexperienced elders.
- b. Our current Article 55 does not explicitly use the language of ‘Silent Censure,’ nor does our article explain how silent censure is to be applied and that it is not to be made public. All of these are helpful distinctions.
- c. The paragraph on the resignation of members (which was an addition to Article 55 adopted by Synod Wheaton 2018) could now have its own article and be easier to access by our consistories.

**(Part B)**

**Article 56 – The Resignation of a Member**

In the event a member seeks to resign while under church discipline, the consistory need not proceed further with the aforementioned three steps of discipline while they warn the member against resignation. If the member remains impenitent and persists in resigning, the consistory should seek the advice of classis before acting to exclude him from membership. The consistory need not seek advice if classis has previously advised it to proceed to the second step of public discipline. Having been advised by classis, the consistory may proceed to exclude from membership the one who is forsaking Christ’s church. The consistory should notify the person of this action, admonishing him and calling him to repentance. The consistory should also inform the congregation of this action and solicit their prayers for the former member. (See Appendix 8)

***Grounds for Part B:***

- a. It makes sense to separate the stages and steps of discipline from membership resignation (as resignation is actually an intrusion upon and an interruption of the process of discipline).
- b. For ease of reading and access, it is wise to dedicate a separate article to membership resignation.

A. Discussion is held regarding the recommendation and its details.

B. Motion is made and supported to recommit this matter to the advisory committee.

*Adopted*



The chairman resumes the chair.

(Advisory Committee 3 continued in Art. 52.)

#### ARTICLE 37

#### **Advisory Committee 6 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 16 to establish a study committee regarding human sexuality

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 16 to “establish a study committee to address the biblical teaching concerning human sexuality, with a particular attention to same-sex attraction and transgenderism, providing biblical response to these matters as well as pastoral advice for both office-bearers and members on how to minister the Word of God to these matters,” with its grounds (adding to the first ground the words: “including the need for legal protection”).

***Grounds:***

- a. The cultural pressures and message on these matters are increasingly a matter of concern for our churches, including the need for legal protection.
  - b. Godly counsel is needed for our congregations as they minister to these challenging pastoral matters.
- Adopted*
2. That Synod mandate the committee to address the biblical teaching concerning human sexuality, with particular attention to same-sex attraction and transgenderism, providing biblical response to these matters, as well as pastoral advice for both office-bearers and members on how to minister the Word of God to these matters. *Adopted*
  3. That Synod instruct the committee to focus its attention on the nature of sin, temptation, and repentance, especially as it concerns sexual sins (for example, the use of the term “gay Christian,” the question of same-sex orientation, and how to minister to same-sex attracted members and those struggling with “transgenderism,” gender dysphoria, pornography, and other sexual sins).
    - A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by including the term “the proper use of pronouns” in the clause of examples. *Adopted*
    - B. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by including the term “sex outside of marriage” in the clause of examples. *Adopted*
    - C. The recommendation, as amended, is:  
That Synod instruct the committee to focus its attention on the nature of sin, temptation, and repentance, especially as it concerns sexual sins (for example, the use

- of the term “gay Christian,” the question of same-sex orientation, the proper use of pronouns, sex outside of marriage), and how to minister to same-sex attracted members and those struggling with “transgenderism,” gender dysphoria, pornography, and other sexual sins. *Adopted*
4. That Synod instruct the committee to make appropriate use, where possible, of such reports issued by other NAPARC churches. *Adopted*
  5. That Synod instruct the committee to include in its report a statement of affirmations and denials serviceable for legal protection for the churches. *Adopted*
  6. That Synod appoint the following seven brothers to serve on this committee:
    - a. Rev. Bill Boekestein (Michigan)
    - b. Rev. Greg Bylsma (Southwestern Ontario)
    - c. Rev. Joel Dykstra (Ontario East)
    - d. Rev. Chris Gordon (Southwest U.S.)
    - e. Rev. Andrew Compton (Central U.S.)
    - f. Dr. Jeff Doll (Michigan)
    - g. Elder Mark Van Der Molen (Central U.S.)
    - A. Motion is made and supported that Rev. Chris Gordon be designated as chairman and Rev. Joel Dykstra be designated as reporter. *Adopted*
    - B. The motion as modified is: *Adopted*
  7. That Synod instruct the study committee to report to the next Synod. *Adopted*
  8. That this be Synod’s response to Overture 16.
    - A. Discussion is held regarding the recommendation.
    - B. Motion is made and supported to recommit this matter to the advisory committee to address financial needs of the committee. *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 6 continued in Art. 46.)

#### ARTICLE 38

Rev. Todd Joling leads the assembly in devotions. He reads and exhorts from Psalm 48, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls the assembly to sing *Trinity Psalter Hymnal 223*, “Thee We Adore, Eternal Lord.”

The assembly is dismissed for a meal.

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022**

## Evening Session

### ARTICLE 39

Rev. Phil Vos leads the assembly in opening devotions. He reads Psalm 98, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls the assembly to sing Psalm 98C, “Sing a New Song to Jehovah.”

### ARTICLE 40

The chairman dismisses the delegates to take up the work of the advisory committees and, afterward, to be dismissed for the evening.

## Wednesday, October 19, 2022 Morning Session

### ARTICLE 41

Rev. James Sinke leads the assembly in devotions. He reads Genesis 28:10-22, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls the assembly to sing Psalm 33, “With Joy Let Us Sing to the Lord.”

### ARTICLE 42

The first clerk reviews the Concept Minutes, which are corrected by the assembly. Motion is made and supported to approve the Concept Minutes as corrected. *Adopted*

### ARTICLE 43

The second clerk reads the Press Release for Tuesday. Motion is made and supported to approve the Press Release. *Adopted*

### ARTICLE 44

The chairman invites Elder Marty Scott to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Reformed Church in the United States. Elder Scott commends the brothers to the important work of guarding our youth from the pervasive influence of our society’s aberrant sexual temptations. He urges the men of the URCNA to find their identity not in theological labels, but in being Biblical, while boldly striving to spread the gospel in missions.

Rev. Bill Boekestein offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Church in the United States.

### ARTICLE 45

The chairman welcomes Rev. Tony Zekveld from Covenant Christian Church of Wyoming, ON. Rev. Zekveld rises to express his assent to the Form of Subscription.

## ARTICLE 46

### **Advisory Committee 6 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 16 to establish a study committee regarding human sexuality

Recommendations:

1. That Synod set the budget for the study committee at \$10,000 USD. *Adopted*
2. That this be Synod's response to Overture 16. *Adopted*

## ARTICLE 47

### **Advisory Committee 6 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 15 to establish a study committee regarding virtual worship

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 15: “to establish a Study Committee to provide Pastoral Advice to the churches on the degree to which viewing or hearing worship via broadcast is participation in corporate worship,” with the following grounds:

***Grounds:***

- a. This is a matter relevant to the modern church.
- b. This is a matter of continuing pastoral concern in leading those who are unable or unwilling to attend in-person worship.

*Adopted*

2. That Synod mandate the study committee to address the following questions in light of Scripture, our Confessions, and the Church Order, giving special attention to Article 32 of the Belgic Confession, Lord's Days 35 and 38 of the Catechism, and Articles 37, 38, 41, and 46 of the Church Order:
  - a. Can virtual or digital worship be corporate worship?
  - b. Is its validity limited in any way, and what are the key aspects or elements that must be present?
  - c. What constitutes “the living preaching of the Word” (Lord's Day 35, Question & Answer 98)? Is the Word preached received in the same way at home as it is in the assembly?
  - d. What place do the sacraments have for those participating in virtual or digital worship?
  - e. Is participation using virtual or digital means still beneficial for those who cannot attend, and why?

*Adopted*

3. That Synod appoint the following eight brothers to serve on this committee:

- a. Rev. Danny Hyde (Southwest US)
  - b. Rev. Brian Lee (Eastern US), *Chairman*
  - c. Rev. Ryan Swale (Ontario East)
  - d. Rev. Harry Zekveld (Southwestern Ontario)
  - e. Rev. William Pols (Western Canada)
  - f. Rev. Todd De Rooy (Central US)
  - g. Rev. Russell Herman (Pacific Northwest)
  - h. Rev. Talman Wagenmaker (Michigan), *Reporter*
- Adopted*
- 4. That Synod instruct the study committee to report to the next Synod. *Adopted*
  - 5. That Synod set the budget for the study committee at \$10,000 USD. *Adopted*
  - 6. That this be Synod’s answer to Overture 15. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 48

**Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Communication 7

Recommendation:

- 1. That Synod accept the gracious offer of Escondido URC in California to host the next Synod at a date to be determined. *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 2 continued in Art. 85.)

ARTICLE 49

**Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Overture 18 to amend Church Order Article 47

Recommendation:

- 1. We recommend that Synod accede to Overture 18 to amend Article 47 of the Church Order by adding: *A local Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before sending or removing a foreign or domestic missionary from a field* – with one small adjustment.

Thus, the Article would read, “The church's missionary task is to preach the Word of God to the unconverted. When this task is to be performed beyond the field of an organized church, it is to be carried out by ministers of the Word set apart to this labor, who are called, supported and supervised by their Consistories. *A local Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before sending or removing a foreign or ~~domestic~~ home missionary from a field.* The churches should assist each other in the support of their missionaries.”

**Grounds:**

- a. Our churches have agreed to “make every effort to unify all of our resources (gifts, talents, and finances) as one united federation in order to bring the gospel from our homes and churches to the nations of the world” (Acts of Synod Nyack 2012, pp. 516-517). Our commitment to unity would be enhanced and displayed through this codified change to our Church Order.
  - b. To wisely send a man to the foreign field requires significant consideration and generally commits the federation to ministry in an area of the world for a considerable period of time. Having a broad base of support, agreement, and advice is an invaluable step to seeing this done well among our churches, whether this be the first man sent to a field or an additional man sent to help reinforce the work that is already going.
  - c. We have agreed on page 9 in our church planting manual (*How to Plant a Reformed Church*) that sending a man to begin a new work domestically should be done with the advice and awareness of the Classis. Requiring this advice in our Church Order helps a greater representation of the federation to be involved and supportive of the growing mission in the URCNA and gives good and helpful accountability to local Consistories eager to begin new mission works.
  - d. Removing a missionary from a field (foreign or ~~domestic~~ *home*) has significant consequences for the missionary and the church/field where he served. Requiring the advice of Classis protects both the missionary and the field that we, as a federation, have supported.
  - e. Article 11 of our Church Order recognizes the seriousness of dissolving a relationship between a pastor and a congregation. However, within the range of missions and church planting, there is no protection or safeguards in place for the wellbeing of either the missionary or the believers (and community) that this man may have served. This Church Order change would recognize that, equally in a mission, a minister’s call is weighty and should not be changed without the input of the classis.
  - f. The inclusion of this line before the statement, “The churches should assist each other in the support of their missionaries,” presents the advice of Classis in a positive light that reminds us this advice is sought as we seek to support our missionaries. Having the advice of Classis before sending a man to a field increases the base of support within the URC for each of our prospective missions.
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by inserting the phrase: “a foreign or home missionary to a field or” between “sending” and “or.”

*Adopted*

With this amendment, the Article would read, “The church's missionary task is to preach the Word of God to the unconverted. When this task is to be performed beyond the field of an organized church, it is to be carried out by ministers of the Word set apart to this labor, who are called, supported and supervised by their Consistories. *A local Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before sending a*

*foreign or home missionary to a field or removing a foreign or home missionary from a field. The churches should assist each other in the support of their missionaries.”*

B. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

C. The chairman rules that consistorial ratifications for this Church Order change need to be submitted to the Stated Clerk by 11:59 p.m. (Central Time) on May 1, 2023.

2. That this be our answer to Overture 18. *Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 50

#### **Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Communication 6

#### Recommendation:

1. Regarding Communication 6, the Committee recommends that Synod receive this communication for information. *Adopted*

(**Advisory Committee 7** continued in Art. 95.)

#### ARTICLE 51

#### **Advisory Committee 8 – Website Oversight and PRCC**

Materials: Overture 7 to redevelop the URCNA website

#### Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 7 *with* its grounds. *Adopted*

The overture states:

1. Mandate the Website Oversight Committee to entirely redevelop the urcna.org website, according to the following general design principles:
  - a. The homepage of the website should be overwhelmingly oriented toward a general audience of unbelievers and non-URCNA members, providing simple action items that we desire a visitor to take, such as “Find a church,” “join,” and “contact.” Note that the new RCUS website provides a good model for how this might be done (<https://rcus.org>).
  - b. Resources for members and officers should be easily accessible through a menu that directs visitors to deeper and more complex archival information.

- c. Password protected information should be provided at a deeper level of member navigation, not on the home page.
  - d. A simple, aesthetically pleasing, and well-organized design must guide visitors logically to the information they need.
  - e. An obvious search function on the homepage will use an engine that enables visitors to find the information they are seeking in a few clicks.
  - f. We should seek to incorporate seamlessly the current web properties of missions, creeds and confessions, and forms and prayers.
  - g. Branding (fonts, logos, images) must be consistent across all pages.
  - h. Integrated tools will make public information on the website easy to print, copy, and share via social media, email, and other avenues.
  - i. Navigation of the website should be mobile friendly (standard phone size, tablet-size, and desktop) and reactive to user device.
2. Provide the Website Oversight Committee with the authority to spend up to \$20,000 in order to hire professional help in the design and development of the new urcna.org website.
  3. Ask the committee to review the current website staffing (Webmaster position and job description) and recommend to the next synod the appropriate staffing to maintain the website to a suitable degree of functionality. Such considerations should include knowledge of the necessary back-end and front-end technology stack needed to maintain the website.
  4. Mandate the committee to review the website prior to each meeting of synod and make recommendations in its synodical reports on the website's status and potential need for upgrade or redesign.
  5. Amend the committee's mandate as follows: "Classes should prioritize expertise in web design and development when appointing future representatives to serve on the Website Oversight Committee."
  6. Move the organizational workflow from lifeline (lifeline@homeschool-life.com, the domain currently used to send out URCNA emails) to another service provider (such as Zoho or Google) and develop a URCNA domain email, such as "@urcna.org".
  7. Include considerations to maintain/implement/develop security protocols (public/private information stored on a database, log-in process, 2 factor-authentication, SQL-injection hacks through search bar, etc.)."



**Grounds:**

- a. As of 2022, the current website will be approximately ten years old. Based on its age and the pace of technological change, it is due for a redesign.
  - b. First impressions matter. The urna.org website is the most important outward-facing form of communication we have, and its beauty and effectiveness should be a top priority.
  - c. The current Website Oversight Committee and staff supporting the website lack a mandate to periodically revisit and redesign the website, and they are not sufficiently resourced with the manpower and financial resources to do so.
  - d. Synod should encourage the Website Oversight Committee to explore hiring professionals to redevelop and redesign our website. By analogy, just as we hire professional printers to produce our *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* and *Forms and Prayers* books, so we should consider hiring professionals to produce our electronic communications platforms.
  - e. The scale of this project is large, and the financial resources necessary to complete it are difficult to anticipate. By setting a relatively high upper limit for the budget, this overture provides the Website Oversight Committee with the flexibility it requires to complete this project in a timely and professional manner.
2. That Synod direct the Website Oversight Committee (WOC) (which includes the Webmaster) to work with the Oversight Consistory of the WOC (OCWOC), Stated Clerk, URCNA Statistician, and any other stakeholders to identify additional needs, guidance, and resources needed to complete this project, and develop comprehensive design documentation for future change management.

**Grounds:**

- a. This overture initiates a process which only the WOC has the expertise to take up, and they should do so in a manner that is sensitive to all other stakeholders.
- b. This project entails infinite details and complexity that can't be addressed by Synod.
- c. We anticipate the WOC will begin this work and report back to the next synod additional needs for guidance or resources in their recommendations.
- d. Comprehensive design documentation provides a roadmap for future improvements and modifications and ensures that all stakeholders are properly involved in that process, and it will assist a new OCWOC in learning its role.

*Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 8 continued in Art. 104.)

ARTICLE 52

The chairman relinquishes the chair to the vice-chairman.

**Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 21 to amend Church Order Articles 55 & 56

Recommendation:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 21 with the following changes.

**(Part A)**

**Article 55 – The Discipline of a Member**

A communicant member whose sin is properly made known to the consistory, and who then obstinately rejects the ~~repeated~~ and loving admonitions of the consistory, shall, in agreement with the Word of God, be subject to church discipline according to the following stages:

A. Silent Discipline Censure:

A member who persists in sin shall be suspended by the consistory from all the privileges of church membership, including using the sacraments ~~and voting at congregational meetings~~. Such suspension shall not be made public by the consistory.

B. Public Discipline:

If the silent ~~discipline~~ censure and subsequent admonitions do not bring about repentance, and before proceeding to excommunication, the sinner's impenitence shall be made known to the congregation by indicating both the member's offense and failure to heed ~~repeated~~ scriptural admonitions, so that the congregation may speak with and pray for this member. Public discipline shall be done with the use of the appropriate liturgical form, in three steps, the interval between which shall be left to the discretion of the consistory.

1. In the first step, the name of the sinner need not be mentioned so that he may be somewhat spared;
2. In the second step, the consistory shall seek the advice of classis before proceeding, whereupon the member's name shall be mentioned to the congregation;
3. In the third step, the congregation shall be informed that unless there is repentance, the member will be excommunicated from the church on a specified date.

C. Excommunication: If these steps of public discipline do not bring about repentance, but rather harden the sinner in his ways, the consistory shall proceed to the extreme remedy, namely excommunication, in agreement with the Word of God and with the use of the appropriate liturgical form.

***Grounds for Part A:***

1. This article more clearly defines and outlines the proper stages and steps of the disciplinary process. This article will be of immeasurable help and service to consistories, particularly those with inexperienced elders.
2. Our current Article 55 does not explicitly use the language of “Silent Censure,” nor does our article explain how silent censure is to be applied and that it is not to be made public. All of these are helpful distinctions.

3. The paragraph on the resignation of members (which was an addition to Article 55 adopted by Synod Wheaton 2018) could now have its own article and be easier to access by our consistories.
4. The words “and voting at congregational meetings” are not found in the current Church Order.

**(Part B)**

**Article 56 – ~~The Resignation~~ Exclusion of a Member Due to Resignation**

In the event a member seeks to resign while under church discipline, the consistory need not proceed further with the aforementioned three steps of discipline while they warn the member against resignation. If the member remains impenitent and persists in resigning, the consistory should seek the advice of classis before acting to exclude him from membership. The consistory need not seek advice if classis has previously advised it to proceed to the second step of public discipline. Having been advised by classis, the consistory may proceed to exclude from membership the one who is forsaking Christ’s church. The consistory should notify the person of this action, admonishing him and calling him to repentance. The consistory should also inform the congregation of this action and solicit their prayers for the former member. (See Appendix 8.)

***Grounds for Part B:***

1. It makes sense to separate the stages and steps of discipline from membership resignation (as resignation is actually an intrusion upon and an interruption of the process of discipline).
2. For ease of reading and access, it is wise to dedicate a separate article to membership resignation.
3. The title of Article 56 reflects the idea that exclusion and resignation are joined together in Appendix 8.3, emphasizes the action of the consistory in response to the sin of resignation, and is parallel with the title of Article 55.

- A. The recommendation is: *Adopted by 2/3 Majority*
- B. The chairman rules that consistorial ratifications for this Church Order change need to be submitted to the Stated Clerk by 11:59 p.m. (Central Time) on May 1, 2023.

ARTICLE 53

**Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 4 to add an index of synodical decisions to the website

Recommendation:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 4 with its grounds.

**Overture**

Classis Eastern U.S. overtures Synod to mandate the Website Oversight Committee to add an Index of Synodical Decisions to the URCNA website.

**Appendix 9**  
**Index of Synodical Decisions**

*All references may be found on [urcna.org](http://urcna.org) under 'Documents,' 'Synod,' or 'Missions.'*  
*This index includes particular actions of recommendation, referral, adoption, and advice.*

**Synod St. Catharines 1997**

*Letter of Call*

*Office of Deacon in the Churches Report*

**Synod Hudsonville 1999**

*Form of Subscription*

**Synod Escondido 2001**

*A Biblical and Confessional View of Missions Report*

*Synodical Affirmation of Creation in Genesis 1 & 2*

*URCNA-OPC Study Committee Report*

**Synod Schererville 2007**

*Report Regarding Justification*

**Synod London 2010**

*Federal Vision and Justification Report*

*Regulations for Synodical Procedure*

**Synod Nyack 2012**

*Report on the Level of Doctrinal Commitment Necessary*

*Report on the Synodical Study Committee on Missions*

**Synod Visalia 2014**

*The Church Planting Manual of the URCNA*

**Synod Wyoming 2016**

*Report on Membership Departures (see Church Order Appendix 8)*

**Synod Wheaton 2018**

*Affirmations Regarding Marriage*

*Guidelines for Appeals (see Church Order Appendix 7)*

**Grounds:**

- a. These references on a website index give consistories more immediate access to an overview of synodical advice and recommendations.
- b. Due to term eldership in many churches, it is difficult for elders to remain aware of synodically-approved advice and recommendations of previous synods. These

references would provide a central reference point on the website to assist our elders.

- c. Future pastors, who may be unaware of the advice/recommendations of previous synods, would now be able to have a central reference point on the website.
  - d. Future synodical decisions can be added to this overture for continuity.
  - e. The opening reference to the website gives a helpful reminder of where these documents may be found.
  - f. This format gives the website committee the ability to update the index after each synod.
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation to change the names of the synods to the standard format. *Adopted*  
*This is now reflected in the list above.*
- B. The chairman affirms that the Website Oversight Committee will have authority to include additional synodical decisions of significance.
- C. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 54

#### **Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 5 to add an index of synodical decisions to the Church Order

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 5 with its grounds.

#### **Overture**

Classis Eastern U.S. overtures Synod to add an Appendix, ‘Index of Synodical Decisions,’ to the Church Order of the URCNA.

#### **Grounds:**

- a. These references in a Church Order Appendix give consistories more immediate access to an overview of synodical advice and recommendations.
- b. Due to term eldership in many churches, it is difficult to depend on synodically-approved advice to carry on without some continual reference.
- c. Future pastors, who may be unaware of the advice/recommendations of previous synods, would now be able to have a reference in their studies of the Church Order.
- d. Future synodical decisions can be added to this overture for continuity.
- e. The opening reference to the website gives a helpful reminder where these documents may be found.

*Defeated*

2. That Synod consider this our answer to Overtures 2 and 3.

A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation to replace “2 and 3” with “5.” *Adopted*

B. The recommendation now states: “That Synod consider this our answer to Overture 5.” *Adopted*

## ARTICLE 55

### **Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 10 to publish a list of vacancies

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 10 with its grounds.

#### **Overture 10**

Classis Eastern U.S. overtures Synod to maintain and publish an official list of URCNA pulpit vacancies.

1. Delegates gathered at Synod shall determine which functionary — Stated Clerk, Statistician, or Webmaster — should be assigned the responsibility of maintaining an official list of vacancies.
2. Synod shall ensure that the list is maintained in an up-to-date fashion on the publicly available portion of the website by assigning responsibilities for doing so to appropriate parties.

#### **Grounds:**

- a. Additional information about vacancies may aid in the filling of these pulpits in a timely fashion and increase the likelihood of filling them with a suitable candidate.
- b. The federation should make known as widely as possible the need for ministers, to keep before us all the need to maintain “the gospel ministry and the schools for it” (HC Q&A 103).
- c. Current vacancies provide important information for those studying to enter the ministry and considering seeking calls in the URCNA.
- d. Vacancies should be a constant concern of prayer for the churches.

*Adopted*

2. That Synod direct the URCNA Stated Clerk to maintain our official list of vacancies.

*Adopted*

3. That the Stated Clerk instruct the Webmaster to publish this list on the URCNA website.

*Adopted*

4. That the Stated Clerk instruct the Webmaster to publish this list among the lists of vacancies the NAPARC website currently provides. *Adopted*
5. Motion is made and supported that this be Synod's answer to Overture 10. *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 4 continued in Art. 120.)

The chairman resumes the chair.

## ARTICLE 56

### **Advisory Committee 11 – Trinity Psalter Hymnal and Liturgical Forms**

Materials: Overture 9 to appoint a committee regarding choral recordings of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Psalms

#### Recommendations:

1. That Synod request that the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board (TPH JVB) facilitate the choral recording of *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Psalms, in which they are already engaged. *Adopted*
2. That Synod request that the TPH JVB identify appropriate Christian musicians to oversee the technical matter of producing high quality choral recordings in a style that emphasizes both the musical and lyrical beauty of our Psalter collection. *Adopted*
3. That Synod request that the TPH JVB secure widespread distribution via top streaming platforms (Spotify, YouTube, Amazon Music, others as advisable). *Adopted*
4. That Synod request that the TPH JVB select key Psalms to record, including selection criteria such as beauty, theological significance, popularity, frequency of tune usage, etc.

#### **Grounds:**

- a. Our Psalter collection uses a number of popular tunes repeatedly, so recording approximately 40 key tunes could easily cover over half of the Psalms in the psalter. *Adopted*
5. That Synod include the grounds to Overture 9 in the Minutes:

#### **Grounds:**

- a. Choral recordings will assist our churches in learning the music of the new songbook.
- b. Choral recordings will serve to promote the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* and expand the impact of this work, thereby increasing the harvest from this investment of

labor and resources, and potentially increasing sales of this already popular songbook.

- c. Choral recordings will introduce and increase familiarity with the psalter collection in particular, which is unfamiliar to many of the users of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* who have never used a *Psalter Hymnal* before.
- d. Choral recordings will bring pleasure, beauty, and increased familiarity with God's word to the daily lives of the members of our churches.
- e. Choral recordings will introduce the new psalter portion of our songbook to many contemporary musicians outside the Reformed tradition who are seeking excellent settings of biblical psalms.
- f. High quality choral recordings will manifest to the world that we treasure excellence in our worship and rejoice in the beauty of congregational singing.
- g. Choral recordings of the psalter will make the worship of our churches visible on digital music streaming services, one of the most common and popular entertainment channels in the broader culture, bearing witness to the glory of God's Word and the worship of his saints.

*Adopted*

6. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 9.

*Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 11 continued in Art. 60.)

#### ARTICLE 57

#### **Advisory Committee 10 – CECCA**

Materials: Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 1 that “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Fellowship (Phase II) with the Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia (ERCLAT).” *Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

The chairman rules that consistorial ratifications for this action need to be submitted to the Stated Clerk by 11:59 p.m. (Central Time) on May 1, 2023.

2. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 2, that “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Fellowship (Phase II) with the Reformed Church of Indonesia (GGRI-NTT).”

**Grounds:**

- a. This denomination has voted to merge together as the GGRI-Nasional to form one national synod of the three separate denominations.

*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*



The chairman rules that consistorial ratifications for this action need to be submitted to the Stated Clerk by 11:59 p.m. (Central Time) on May 1, 2023.

3. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 3, that “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Fellowship (Phase II) with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.”

*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

The chairman rules that consistorial ratifications for this action need to be submitted to the Stated Clerk by 11:59 p.m. (Central Time) on May 1, 2023.

The chairman asks Rev. Jason Tuinstra to lead the assembly in a prayer of thanksgiving for these actions. Afterward, the assembly responds by singing the Doxology.

4. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 4, that “the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church (AEPC).”

***Grounds:***

- a. Since no visit has been made to the AEPC due to Covid restrictions, CECCA proposes that the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the AEPC at this time.

*Adopted*

5. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 5, that “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Free Church of Scotland.”

*Adopted*

6. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 7, that “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Sudanese Reformed Churches (SRC).”

*Adopted*

7. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 8, that “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Free Reformed Churches in Australia (FRCA).”

*Adopted*

8. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 9, that “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Evangelical Reformed Church in India.”

*Adopted*

9. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 10, that “Synod accept the recommendations of CECCA in response to Synod Wheaton’s directive to investigate and advise as to means and methods for providing diaconal services to churches abroad with which the URCNA is in Ecumenical Contact or Fellowship.” These recommendations are:

- i. That Synod authorize CECCA the amount of \$15,000 *outside of its operating budget* (to be reviewed at each synod), which CECCA is authorized to use at its discretion for the sole purpose of assisting foreign pastors and elders with travel and related expenses for the purpose of attending our synods;

- ii. That all other diaconal assistance requests by needy churches abroad with which we have ecumenical relations be referred to Reformed Mission Services (RMS) or such other similarly capable organizations as CECCA in its discretion may select for response. Grounds for choosing RMS for responding to diaconal requests are: (i) RMS is closely related to the URCNA; and (ii) RMS operates under the oversight of a local consistory, viz. the Trinity URC of Visalia, CA.
- iii. That CECCA remain at all times available to local URCNA congregations to provide information and advice relative to diaconal requests they may be considering on their own.

**Grounds:**

- a. CECCA has fulfilled the mandate given to it by Synod Wheaton 2018.
  - b. This will be helpful moving forward when we receive requests for diaconal aid.
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by inserting the phrase, “outside of its operating budget,” after “the amount of \$15,000” in section i. *Adopted*
- B. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*

10. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 11, that “Synod accept the recommendation of CECCA that its annual operating budget be designated an accruing account, the accrued amount not to exceed CECCA’s annual budget.”

**Grounds:**

- a. Invitations and attendance at international meetings are irregular. A fund that is allowed to grow can absorb these fluctuations.
  - b. This allows flexibility from year to year so that CECCA may perform its duties without undue financial constraints.
  - c. This cap ensures synod’s regulation of CECCA’s budget.
- Adopted*
11. That Synod set CECCA’s budget at \$15,000 per annum.

**Grounds:**

- a. The budget for 2022 (page 75-76 of the Provisional Agenda) was set at \$16,000. This was to take into account the request for the budget to be increased to \$15,000 at Synod 2020. The Treasurer added an extra \$1,000 to make it \$16,000, which would cover Covid/PCR tests for travel. Since Covid tests are no longer needed for travel, \$15,000 is a sufficient number.
- Adopted*
12. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 12: “Synod accept the recommendation of CECCA regarding the practice of having a member-at-large.” *Adopted*

## **Advisory Committee 10 – CECCA**

Materials: Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad

### Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to CECCA Recommendation 6: “the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia (CRCA).”

#### ***Grounds:***

- a. The CRCA is a member of the ICRC.
  - b. Though the CRCA has deaconesses, they do not serve on the church council, they do not exercise authority, and they serve as a benevolent arm of the church. We do not believe this situation would keep us from Ecumenical Contact.
  - c. We have ecumenical relations with other churches that have similar distinctions (e.g. ERQ, RPCNA, GKSA).
  - d. The work of the first step (Phase 1) of ecumenical relations involves the process of exploring the issues of church order and polity (CECCA Mandate I.2.e.).
- Adopted*
2. That Synod receive the report from CECCA without agreeing with every formulation in the report.
- Adopted*

### ARTICLE 59

The chairman invites Rev. Ameet Mohan and Rev. Anup Hiwale to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Evangelical Reformed Church in India. Rev. Mohan offers greetings to the assembly from the ERCI. Rev. Hiwale then offers encouragement to the brothers and provides a brief history of the ERCI, which is rooted in an effort begun in 2003 and is closely tied to support provided by United Reformed Church congregations. Currently, the ERCI is the church home of 1,322 families, spread through 84 churches. He notes the difficulty of ministering in India and encourages the prayers of our churches.

Rev. Jason Tuinstra offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Evangelical Reformed Church in India.

### ARTICLE 60

## **Advisory Committee 11 – Trinity Psalter Hymnal and Liturgical Forms**

Materials: Overture 17 to amend Lord’s Supper Form 1

### Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to proposed Amendment A of Overture 17 with the following grounds:

Classis Southwestern Ontario overtures Synod Niagara 2022 to direct the insertion of the text “all who desecrate the Lord’s Day;” into the long Form 1 for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper following the words: “all blasphemers”; and to make this change to the official, posted, electronic form and any future printings of the *Forms and Prayers* book, and thus direct the churches to adopt this amendment into their reading of Form 1.

**Grounds:**

- a. The entire decalogue was woven into Form 2 of the Blue Psalter Hymnal.
  - b. The Fourth Commandment is the only commandment that is not included in the new *Forms and Prayers* Form 1, and it is not included in any other Lord’s Supper form.
  - c. Since the Lord’s Day is largely disregarded in the time in which we are living, its inclusion in the form is a helpful testimony to both our members and guests as to the continuing relevance, importance, and status of this commandment.
  - d. We recognize that the new *Forms and Prayers* Form 1 is the historical version, but including the Fourth Commandment better conforms to the word of God.
- A. Motion is made and supported to replace the phrase “direct the churches” with the phrase “encourage the churches.” *Adopted*
- B. The motion as amended is: *Defeated*
2. That Synod accede to proposed Amendment B of Overture 17 with the following grounds.

Classis Southwestern Ontario overtures Synod Niagara 2022 to direct the insertion of the text “and liars” into the long Form 1 for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper between the text “all perjurers” and the semicolon and to make this change to the official, posted, electronic form and any future printings of the *Forms and Prayers* book, and thus direct the churches to insert this amendment into their reading of Form 1.

**Grounds:**

- a. “Liars” was included in Form 2 of the blue *Psalter Hymnal*.
- b. The commandment, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour,” is not addressed fully in the form, being addressed only in the legal context of perjury.
- c. In its exposition of the Ninth Commandment, Lord’s Day 43 includes “every kind of lying.”
- d. Since the truth of calling good ‘good’ and evil ‘evil’ is largely disregarded in the time in which we are living, its inclusion in the form is a helpful testimony to both our members and guests, as to the continuing relevance, importance, and status of this commandment.

*Defeated*

## Advisory Committee 9 – CERCU

Materials: Overture 8 to amend Ecumenical Guidelines

### Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 8 with its grounds.

#### ***Grounds:***

- a. The present language (“of the desirability of eventual integrated federative church unity”) already recognizes and reflects the practical reality that such unity may not always be attained.
  - b. Greater unity is always desirable, even when there must be a humble recognition that it may not always be possible.
  - c. The proposed amended language of “may or may not be desirable” does not sufficiently express the biblical injunction for greater unity where it may become possible under the blessing of God.
  - d. The proposed amendment would place us out of conformity with the commitment we have made as a member of NAPARC. We state together in the Basis of NAPARC ([naparc.org/basis/](http://naparc.org/basis/)):  
“That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of the council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, council, and cooperate in various matters with one another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice.”
  - e. It was our commitment to the basis of NAPARC that compelled our churches to adopt this very same language for Phase Two in the decision of Synod Schererville 2007, Article 92.
  - f. The decision of Synod Schererville 2007, Article 92 also clearly distinguishes between Phase Two – *Ecclesiastical Fellowship* and Phase Three A – *Plan of Union*. Phase Two speaks of the “*acknowledgment of the desirability of eventual, integrated federative church unity,*” Phase Three expresses “*a preparation for and a commitment to eventual, integrated federative church unity.*”
- A. Discussion is held regarding the recommendation.
- B. The chairman ends discussion due to the arrival of the order of the day.

(Advisory Committee 9 continued in Art. 78.)

### ARTICLE 62

Rev. Ryan Swale reads and briefly exhorts from Psalm 122, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* 524, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah.”

### ARTICLE 63

The chairman rises to express two points of personal privilege. He first expresses greetings to the assembly from Rev. Ron Scheuers, who has served at numerous synods of the URCNA. He then expresses appreciation for Rev. Joel Vander Kooi, who is about to enter emeritation.

The assembly recesses for lunch.

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022**  
**Afternoon Session**

ARTICLE 64

Rev. Aaron Korvemaker reads and briefly exhorts from Matthew 6:19-34, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of Psalm 138A, “With All My Heart My Thanks I Bring.”

ARTICLE 65

The chairman welcomes Rev. Martin Overgaauw from Grace United Reformed Church of Oro-Medonte, ON, who rises to express his assent to the Form of Subscription.

ARTICLE 66

The chairman invites Rev. Bruce Backensto to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Rev. Backensto encourages the brothers regarding their work, particularly in refining the church discipline process, indexing synodical decisions, and studying and addressing sexual sins. He updates the assembly regarding RPCNA mission works, encouraging prayer for these. Rev. Backensto also highlights some of the institutions of the RPCNA. He concludes by reading Ephesians 4:1-6 and applying it by encouraging our mutual unity as members of the body of Christ.

Rev. Bill Boekestein offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

ARTICLE 67

The chairman invites Dr. Pete Witten to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Free Reformed Church of Australia. Dr. Witten speaks regarding the challenges of the ecumenical process, describes the history and character of the churches of the FRCA, and describes the FRCA’s mission work. He encourages prayer for the FRCA, particularly in the light of a liberalizing culture, but with a view to the sovereign power of our good God.

Elder Gerry Swets offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Free Reformed Church of Australia.

ARTICLE 68

Missions Coordinator Rev. Richard Bout provides an oral report of his work, highlighting his work on new URCNA Missions prayer maps, regular weekly and monthly missionary prayer requests, website updates, and ecumenical work. He also describes his work visiting missionaries. Rev. Bout encourages prayer for our missionaries, who are on the front lines of spiritual warfare, and prayer that God would raise up more missionaries for the abundance of work that awaits. He highlights Cross Cultural Missions Training (ccmtmissions.com), a new effort aimed at exposing younger Christians to mission work and building excitement in them. Rev. Bout concludes by reading and briefly expounding on a selection from Ephesians 4.

The chairman expresses appreciation on behalf of the assembly for the work of the Missions Coordinator.

#### ARTICLE 69

### **Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials, Reports, and Communications 1 & 2**

Materials: Statistician's Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report of the Statistician. *Adopted*
2. That Synod thank Jody Luth, the Statistics and Directory Editor, for her faithful and excellent service to the churches. *Adopted*
3. That Synod remind the churches to be diligent in submitting their statistical data annually and responding promptly to the Statistician. *Adopted*
4. That Synod direct the Statistician to collect the following information and make it available for requested reports (*Synodical Procedures* 4.8.4.c. / d.):
  - a. Differentiate between Infant / Adult baptisms
  - b. Differentiate between exclusion of a baptized member and exclusion of professing members due to resignation
  - c. URCNA Membership Transfers (in / out) (Agenda pg. 79)
  - d. NAPARC Membership Transfers (in / out) (Agenda pg. 79)
  - e. Non-NAPARC Membership Release / Receptions (Agenda pg. 79)
  - f. Differentiate between elders and deacons (Agenda pg. 84)
  - g. Minister's birth year (Agenda pg. 86)
  - h. *Same church membership analysis*
  - A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by adding: "h. Same church membership analysis." *Adopted*  
*This change is reflected above.*
  - B. The amended recommendation is: *Adopted*

5. That Synod direct the Website Oversight Committee to accommodate these changes on the website in order to collect this information. *Adopted*
6. That Synod direct the Finance Committee to provide a stipend of \$4500 CAD (~\$3,300 USD) paid to the Statistician (Synodical Procedures 4.8.2).

***Ground:***

- a. This was the first term for a Statistician to provide this type of service to the churches. We determined that she was working more hours than originally expected. We believe that this stipend better reflects that value of the work of the Statistician. *Adopted*
7. That Synod reappoint, by election, Jody Luth as the Statistics and Directory Editor (Synodical Procedures 4.8.2).
    - A. The chairman clarifies that, by voting in favor of this recommendation, the assembly is thereby reappointing Jody Luth to another term as the Statistics and Directory Editor.
    - B. The recommendation is: *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 1 continued in Art. 80.)

ARTICLE 70

The chairman dismisses the delegates to resume its advisory committee work.

ARTICLE 71

Rev. Bill Pols leads the assembly in devotions. He reads Daniel 4:34-37, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls the assembly to sing *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* 425, "How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place."

The delegates are dismissed to be refreshed by a meal.

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022  
Evening Session**

ARTICLE 72

A number of home and foreign missionaries from the United Reformed Church mission works provide presentations about the works which they serve, both live and via video.



Rev. Greg Bylsma, chairman of the URCNA Missions Committee, opens this time with prayer, calls the assembly to sing the first stanza of *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, and reads Acts 1:8.

In all, 21 missionaries address the assembly personally, another four address the assembly via video, and six men lead the brothers in prayer for the missionary labors of the URCNA.

**Thursday, October 20, 2022**  
**Morning Session**

ARTICLE 73

Rev. Talman Wagenmaker leads the assembly in devotions. He reads Psalm 90, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls the assembly to sing Psalm 90A, “Lord, You Have Been Our Dwelling Place.”

ARTICLE 74

The first clerk reviews the Concept Minutes, which are corrected by the assembly. Motion is made and supported to approve the Concept Minutes as corrected. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 75

The second clerk reads the Press Release for Wednesday. Motion is made and supported to approve the Press Release. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 76

The chairman welcomes Elder Dave Westerveld from Redeeming Grace Reformed Church of Brantford, ON, who is replacing Elder Nathan Bosscher. Elder Westerveld rises to indicate his assent with the Form of Subscription.

The chairman notes that Rev. Joel Vander Kooi will be absent from the assembly for the day due to family matters.

The chairman takes note of and expresses appreciation for delegates serving at their first synod.

ARTICLE 77

The chairman invites Rev. Simon Jooste to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Reformed Church of South Africa. Rev. Jooste expresses appreciation for the work God is doing through the URCNA. He notes the challenges faced by the South African churches, where political and cultural tensions are high. He asks the brothers to remember them in prayer as they seek to navigate that challenging context, and also to pray for their theological education needs.

Rev. Jason Tuinstra offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Church of South Africa.

## ARTICLE 78

### **Advisory Committee 9 – CERCU**

Materials: Overture 8 to amend Ecumenical Guidelines

Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 8 with its grounds.

***Grounds:***

- a. The present language (“of the desirability of eventual integrated federative church unity”) already recognizes and reflects the practical reality that such unity may not always be attained.
- b. Greater unity is always desirable, even when there must be a humble recognition that it may not always be possible.
- c. The proposed amended language of “may or may not be desirable” does not sufficiently express the biblical injunction for greater unity where it may become possible under the blessing of God.
- d. The proposed amendment would place us out of conformity with the commitment we have made as a member of NAPARC. We state together in the Basis of NAPARC ([naparc.org/basis/](http://naparc.org/basis/)):  
“That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of the council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, council, and cooperate in various matters with one another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice.”
- e. It was our commitment to the basis of NAPARC that compelled our churches to adopt this very same language for Phase Two in the decision of Synod Schererville 2007, Article 92.
- f. The decision of Synod Schererville 2007, Article 92 also clearly distinguishes between Phase Two – *Ecclesiastical Fellowship* and Phase Three A – *Plan of Union*. Phase Two speaks of the “*acknowledgment of the desirability of eventual, integrated federative church unity,*” Phase Three expresses “*a preparation for and a commitment to eventual, integrated federative church unity.*”

A. Synod resumes its discussion of this recommendation, begun on Wednesday morning.

B. The recommendation is:

*Adopted*

## ARTICLE 79

### **Advisory Committee 9 – CERCU**

Materials: Communication 5

Recommendations:

1. That Synod acknowledge, with appreciation, Communication 5. *Adopted*
2. That Synod take note of the following:
  - a. We thank God that these churches could enter into ecumenical relations at the classical level (CO Article 35), and for the measure of faithfulness in the life of the churches of Classis Minnkota.
  - b. We thank God for the work of Classis Central US, encourage their continuation in the development of this bond, and commend this relationship to God for His continued blessing.

*Adopted*

ARTICLE 80

**Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials, Reports, and Communications 1 & 2**

Materials: Credentials of Synodical Delegates

Recommendations:

1. That Synod take note that the following consistories have not sent a delegation to Synod, but letters of explanation were received:
  - a. Immanuel Covenant Reformed Church, Abbotsford, BC
  - b. Belgrade United Reformed Church, Belgrade, MT
  - c. Immanuel Reformed Church, Bolton, ON
  - d. Dayspring Reformed Church, Boise, ID
  - e. Redemption Reformation Church, Chilliwack, BC
  - f. Christ the Redeemer Reformed Church, Eureka, CA
  - g. Redeemer United Reformed Church, Lacombe, AB
  - h. Parkland Reformed Church, Ponoka, AB
  - i. Christ Reformed Church, Santee, CA
  - j. Anchor of Hope Reformed Church, Silverdale, WA
  - k. United Reformed Church of Sunnyside, Sunnyside, WA
  - l. Preakness Valley United Reformed Church, Wayne, NJ

*Adopted*

2. That Synod take note that the following consistories have sent only one delegate, but letters of explanation were received:
  - a. Redeemer United Reformed Church, Anchorage, AK
  - b. High Desert United Reformed Church, Apple Valley, CA
  - c. Cloverdale United Reformed Church, Boise, ID
  - d. Burlington United Reformed Church, Burlington, WA
  - e. Bethel United Reformed Church, Calgary, AB
  - f. Sovereign Grace United Reformed Church, Comstock Park, MI

- g. Doon United Reformed Church, Doon, IA
- h. Covenant Reformed Church, Grande Prairie, AB
- i. Faith United Reformed Church, Holland, MI
- j. Immanuel Fellowship Church, Kalamazoo, MI
- k. Grace Reformed Church, Kelowna, BC
- l. Grace Reformed Church of Leduc, Leduc, AB
- m. Immanuel United Reformed Church, Listowel, ON
- n. Emmanuel Reformed Church, Neerlandia, AB
- o. New Westminster United Reformed Church, New Westminster, BC
- p. First United Reformed Church, Oak Lawn, IL
- q. Oceanside United Reformed Church, Oceanside, CA
- r. Redeemer United Reformed Church, Orange City, IA
- s. Grace United Reformed Church, Oro-Medonte, ON
- t. Redeemer Reformation Church, Regina, SK
- u. Zion United Reformed Church, Ripon, CA
- v. Rock Valley United Reformed Church, Rock Valley, IA
- w. Covenant Reformed Church, Toronto, ON
- x. Trinity United Reformed Church, Walnut Creek, CA
- y. United Reformed Church of Wellsburg, Wellsburg, IA
- z. West Sayville Reformed Bible Church, West Sayville, NY
- aa. United Reformed Church, Winsloe, PEI

*Adopted*

3. That Synod thank the churches for their explanations given. While understanding that some churches are not always able to have a full delegation, Synod encourages consistories to make it a priority to prevent scheduling conflicts that impede a full delegation from being present at Synod. In addition, Synod encourages the consistories to submit a written explanation in advance to Synod in accord with *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 1.3.
- Adopted*
4. That Synod take note that the United Reformed Church in Taber, AB, organized on October 5, 2022, which was past the registration deadline for Synod Niagara 2022.

*Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 81

#### **Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials, Reports, and Communications 1 & 2**

Materials: Convening Consistory's Report and Supplemental Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report (and the supplemental report) of the convening consistory.
- Adopted*
2. That Synod thank the Consistory of Wellandport URC for its work in preparation for Synod.
- Adopted*

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 of the Report: “that a standardized financial report format be adopted. The report should contain details as to the number of attendees (preferably with the number of delegates/non-delegates indicated), revenue and expense line items with a dollar amount over \$500 given separate line items on the report, and the costs related to CERCU/CECCA guests be separated. A template of what should be included is attached to this report.”

**Grounds:**

- a. A standard report would ensure that the financial information is presented in a consistent basis (allowing for better comparison of costs).
- b. A template would standardize what is to be included in a financial report (not leaving it to each convening consistory’s interpretation).

*Adopted*

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2 of the Report: “that the URCNA synod website continue to be used as a permanent synod website.”

**Grounds:**

- a. Money will not need to be spent to establish a new website with each succeeding synod.
- b. Online payments of fees are made more feasible as the programming does not need to be redone with each synod.

- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation to strike the word “permanent.”

*Adopted*

- B. The recommendation as amended now reads: “That Synod accede to Recommendation 2 of the Report: ‘that the URCNA synod website continue to be used as a synod website.’” This recommendation is:

*Adopted*

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3 of the Report: “that the Synod funds be held by the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA), so that the expenses of future synods will be paid (either in the form of advances to the convening consistory or as direct payments to vendors) from the JVA bank account (rather than local consistories opening bank accounts, paying for costs, and forwarding the excess to the next consistory).”

**Grounds:**

- a. Synod is a joint activity of the URCNA federation and fits into the activities of the JVA.
- b. The JVA is better equipped to exchange money from U.S. to Canadian dollars (and vice versa) and to forward money across the border. (Accounting for funds going outside Canada after synod is completed is problematic for Canadian churches.)
- c. The JVA is better suited to claim Canadian government rebates than the local Canadian church.

- d. Future synods are able to utilize the online payment system (which takes advantage of better exchange rates and a reduced risk of theft).
  - e. EFT allows for payments to be made directly from the JVA bank account (and the need for the money to be held locally is not as necessary).
- A. Motion is made and supported to insert after “(JVA)” the phrase “of the Canadian and U.S. corporations.” *Adopted*
- B. The recommendation now reads:  
 That Synod accede to Recommendation 3 of the Report: “that the Synod funds be held by the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) of the Canadian and U.S. corporations so that the expenses of future synods will be paid (either in the form of advances to the convening consistory or direct payments to vendors) from the JVA bank account (rather than local consistories opening bank accounts, paying for costs, and forwarding the excess to the next consistory).” This recommendation is: *Adopted*
6. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4 of the Report: “that the JVA Treasurer be responsible for preparing the financial report for synod and ensure that any unspent money forwarded to the local consistory is returned to the JVA account.”

**Grounds:**

- a. This follows with the passing of Recommendation 5 above. If the JVA holds the funds, it is reasonable to expect that the JVA Treasurer would be responsible for the record-keeping. *Adopted*
7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 of the Convening Consistory Supplemental Report: “that the [synod budget] shortfall be added to the synod askings.”

**Grounds:**

- a. Due to factors outside of the convening consistory’s control, there is a shortfall in the synodical budget, the amount of which is yet to be determined. The fixed costs of synod are a responsibility that all churches agree to share as part of our federation. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 82

**Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials, Reports, and Communications 1 & 2**

Materials: Stated Clerk’s Report

Recommendations:

- 1. That Synod thank the Stated Clerk for his faithful and excellent service to the churches. *Adopted*

The chairman expresses the assembly's appreciation for the Stated Clerk's helpful and diligent labors.

2. That Synod receive the Report of the Stated Clerk. *Adopted*
3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 of the Stated Clerk' Report: "That Synod instructs the Stated Clerk that he may make available to any interested parties, at their expense, the hard copies of the acts and minutes of other denominations and federations, and that he keeps, and passes on to the next clerk, the hard copy acts and directories of the URCNA and the Alliance of Reformed Churches."

**Grounds:**

- a. Most of the material from other denominations and federations is available free online.
- b. The Stated Clerk has no need to consult the acts or minutes of other federations or denominations.
- c. Transferring numerous heavy boxes from one Stated Clerk to the next is an unnecessary expense and burdensome chore.
- d. Synod Wheaton 2018 authorized the Stated Clerk to bring a recommendation on how to dispose of the archived materials from other federations and denominations.

*Adopted*

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2 of the Stated Clerk's Report: "That Regulation 5.1.2 be amended to read, 'When synod creates a committee made up entirely of synodical appointees, synod shall appoint a chairman and reporter. When synod creates a committee that includes classical appointees, synod shall appoint a convener.'"

**Grounds:**

- a. This will eliminate any confusion regarding whether synod should merely appoint a convener or whether synod should appoint a chairman and reporter.
- b. This is consistent with past practice (with one unexplained exception).
- c. There is wisdom in synod appointing a chairman and reporter for synodical committees where it appoints all the members. It requires the synodical advisory committee (which recommends) and synod (which appoints) to give attention to choosing men who are gifted in leadership, scholarship, writing, word processing, and other necessary skills for the committee's work. It also eliminates any tension within the committee regarding choosing its own leadership.
- d. Regulation 4.5.4.k gives the Stated Clerk authority to process changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to bring them into conformity with past decisions or practices.

*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3 of the Stated Clerk's Report: "That Synod amends *Regulation 4.5.4.e.*"

- i. It currently reads: ‘*Prepare and distribute the Acts of Synod. At federation expense, one copy shall be sent to each federation with whom the United Reformed Churches are engaged in any ecumenical relations or contact. All other copies shall be purchased by those who order them.*’
- ii. The recommended amendment would read (additions underlined, deletions strikethrough): ‘*Prepare and distribute the Acts of Synod in hard copy and digital form. ~~At federation expense~~, One digital copy shall be sent to each federation or denomination with whom the United Reformed Churches are engaged in any ecumenical relations or contact. Hard ~~All other~~ copies shall be purchased by those who order them.’”*

**Grounds:**

- a. This will conform the *Regulations* to the last synod’s action and preserve the decision of the last synod for future generations.
- b. The removal of the words “At federation expense” will remove the implication that a hard copy is the expected method of sending the Acts to other denominations.
- c. The inclusion of the word “digital” will make the matter clear.
- d. Regulation 4.5.4.k gives the Stated Clerk authority to propose changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to bring them into conformity with past decisions or practices.

*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

6. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4 of the Stated Clerk’s Report: “That *Regulation 4.5.4.d* be eliminated (renumbering subsequent duties) and in its place, under the duties of the convening consistory, *Regulation 1.8* be added, ‘Provide a handbook and other assistance to the next convening consistory describing the responsibilities and logistics of convening and hosting a synod.’”

**Grounds:**

- a. This is the current practice.
- b. The Stated Clerk is not involved in or knowledgeable regarding the hosting of a synod.
- c. Regulation 4.5.4.k gives the Stated Clerk authority to propose changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to bring them into conformity with past decisions and practices.

*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5 of the Stated Clerk’s Report: “That *Regulation 3.1* be amended to read (new words in italics): ‘3.1 Provisional Agenda. A provisional agenda is prepared for each synod by the convening consistory with the assistance of the Stated Clerk. Its contents shall be limited to a compilation of the reports, overtures, appeals, and communications addressed to the synod. Following the *election of officers and* the ratification of Article 32 churches and the seating of their delegates, this provisional agenda shall be acted upon for adoption before proceeding to act on any of its subsequent items.’”



**Grounds:**

- a. This will eliminate any confusion in the future.
- b. This is consistent with the practice of the last two synods where Article 32 churches were ratified.
- c. Regulation 4.5.4.k gives the Stated Clerk authority to propose changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to bring them into conformity with past decisions or practices.

*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

8. That Synod appoint, by election, Rev. Ralph Pontier to the position of Stated Clerk for a third term (Synodical Procedures 4.5.2).

A. The chairman clarifies that, by voting in favor of this recommendation, the assembly is thereby electing Rev. Ralph Pontier to another term as the Stated Clerk.

B. The recommendation is: *Adopted*

9. That Synod appoint, by election, Rev. Doug Barnes to the position of Alternate Stated Clerk for a concurring term (Synodical Procedures 4.5.2).

A. The chairman clarifies that, by voting in favor of this recommendation, the assembly is thereby electing Rev. Doug Barnes to the position of Alternate Stated Clerk.

B. The recommendation is: *Adopted*

10. That Synod thank Rev. Greg Lubbers for his service as Alternate Stated Clerk. *Adopted*

The chairman expresses appreciation to Rev. Lubbers for his willingness to serve as Alternate Stated Clerk.

11. That Synod provide the Stated Clerk a yearly honorarium of \$6,000 USD, which is an increase from \$5,000 set in 2018. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 83

**Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials, Reports, and Communications 1 & 2**

Materials: Communication 1

Recommendation:

1. That Synod acknowledge Communication 1 and the late communication contained in Convening Consistory Supplement Report item 9 concerning the reception of the following churches into our federation:
  - a. Christ the Redeemer Reformed Church, Eureka, CA
  - b. Cornerstone Christian Church, Medford, OR

- c. Anchor of Hope Reformed Church, Silverdale, WA
- d. Redeemer United Reformed Church, Anchorage, AK

*Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 84

#### **Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials, Reports, and Communications 1 & 2**

Materials: Communication 2

Recommendation:

- 1. That Synod acknowledge Communication 2 concerning the reception of Redemption Reformed Church, Chilliwack, BC into our federation. *Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 85

#### **Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: U.S. Board of Directors' Report

Recommendations:

- 1. That Synod receive the Report of the U.S. Board of Directors for information and thank its members for their work.
- 2. That Synod carry out the following actions concerning board membership:
  - a. That Synod reappoint Wil Postma, Donald Roth, and Greg Vande Kamp to serve for another three-year term on the U.S. Board. *Adopted*
  - b. That Synod instruct the Stated Clerk to send a letter to thank Gary Veldink, Robert Huisjen, Eric Brandt, and Mark Van Der Molen for their faithful service on this board. *Adopted*
  - c. That Synod appoint to three-year terms John Ehnis of Bethany URC in MI and Michael Kiledjian of First URC of Chino to serve as members of the U.S. Board. *Adopted*
  - d. That Synod instruct the Board to find and appoint the remaining two members with the advice of the next convening consistory. *Adopted*
- 3. That Synod appoint John Ehnis as the new U.S. Treasurer. *Adopted*
- 4. That Synod not accede to Recommendation 3 of the U.S. Board of Directors.

Recommendation 3 reads: “that Synod approve the distribution of \$30,000 from the Psalter Hymnal Fund to Reformed Mission Services.”

***Grounds:***

- a. This money was given as a donation for printing of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*. The donor wanted to redistribute the funds. However, this donation of \$30,000

was made directly to the Psalter Hymnal Fund, and the funds were spent for the purpose they were given.

- b. Individual donations to the Psalter Hymnal Fund are not set apart in distinct accounts.
- c. This money was not given as a loan but as a donation for the printing of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*. Although we agree with the desire to support RMS, the funds have already been spent.

*Adopted*

5. That Synod instruct the U.S. Board to equally distribute the surplus gain (\$305,000 USD currently) in the Psalter Hymnal Fund among the eight classes of our federation.

**Grounds:**

- a. The continued sale of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* has created a surplus of \$305,000 in the Psalter Hymnal Fund account.
- b. The Psalter Hymnal Fund has no need for a reserve amount in its account.
- c. This money would be helpful for classical needy church funds, church planting, or other mission works being supported by the classis.
- d. This reflects the principle that the local bodies have a better knowledge of where the needs are.
- e. ~~Keeping a large general fund balance is not in keeping with proper Biblical stewardship principles.~~

- A. Motion is made and supported to strike Ground e. *Adopted*  
*This is reflected in the text above.*

- B. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*

6. That Synod affirm that the U.S. Board has the authority to handle all necessary decisions related to litigation as stated in its bylaws (Article 2.3). *Adopted*

7. That Synod receive for information the U.S. Board's Recommendation 6: "That should Synod approve another Missions Coordinator, that such person not be an employee of the U.S. corporation." *Adopted*

8. That Synod thank the outgoing Treasurer for his labors. *Adopted*

The chairman expresses thanks to Treasurer Robert Huisjen for his many years of labor on behalf of the URCNA as U.S. Treasurer.

(Advisory Committee 2 continued in Art. 88.)

ARTICLE 86

The chairman invites Rev. Alvis Sauka to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia. Rev. Sauka provides an introduction to the Evangelical

Reformed Church of Latvia and its country. Expressing appreciation for fellowship with the URCNA, he notes how closely some of our theological professors have worked with their churches to educate students from Latvia and its broader region. Rev. Sauka describes the difficulty of life and the challenge of ministry since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, calling on the URCNA to continue in prayer that Reformed churches might boldly minister in a time and place of great need.

Rev. Dr. Cornelis Venema offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia.

#### ARTICLE 87

The chairman welcomes Rev. Hiralal Solanki from the Evangelical Reformed Church in India, who recently arrived.

#### ARTICLE 88

### **Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Canadian Board of Directors' Reports

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the reports of the Canadian Board of Directors for information and thank its members for their work. *Adopted*
2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2: "that the job description of the current Missions Coordinator include a reference to his spouse's inclusion in travel and certain events."

***Grounds:***

- a. The employment agreement of the current Missions Coordinator must reflect this fact for tax and legal reasons.
  - b. These travel expenses can be covered under his current travel budget. *Adopted*
3. That Synod not accede to Recommendation 3: "that all stipends paid by the federation be increased by the same cost of living given the Missions Coordinator."

***Grounds:***

- a. The mechanism to increase stipends already exists. If an increase is necessary, the overseeing committee or board should bring a recommendation.
- b. Job descriptions and workloads change on a regular basis. *Adopted*

4. That Synod transfer the oversight of the Three Forms website (threeforms.org) and Prayers and Forms website (formsandprayers.com) from the Canadian Board to the Website Oversight Committee (WOC).

***Grounds:***

- a. These websites have been developed by the Canadian Board and their oversight should be included in the WOC's oversight for their continued development.
- b. This reflects the purpose of the WOC.
- c. Going forward, these websites may be consolidated under the development of the new URCNA website.

*Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 2 continued in Art. 125.)

ARTICLE 89

**Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 12 to adopt pastoral advice regarding the relationship of church, state, and family

Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 12.

***Grounds:***

- a. The proposed nine points do not adequately present a comprehensive summary of biblical and confessional truths necessary to serve as Pastoral Advice for our congregations, especially given the different contexts of the churches in relationship to their local governments (ex. Heidelberg Catechism Q. & A. 104).
  - b. It is unclear as to whether these nine points are offering Pastoral Advice to the government or to the churches.
  - c. While appreciating the theological principles of these statements, the adoption of them as Pastoral Advice at this time could be viewed as merely reactionary against a global pandemic.
- A. Since this recommendation is substantially different from the proposal of the overture (*Regulations 5.2.4.*), the Stated Clerk of Classis Michigan provides a preliminary defense of Overture 12.
- B. Motion is made and supported to table indefinitely this recommendation. *Adopted*
- C. Motion is made and supported to declare that tabling indefinitely this recommendation is Synod's answer to Overture 12. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 90

## **Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 13 to amend Appendix 4 to add a sermon review in the ordination exam

### Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 13.

#### ***Grounds:***

- a. The candidate’s preaching ability has been sufficiently examined during the candidacy exam per Church Order Appendix 3.
  - b. Church Order Appendix 4 currently requires the candidate “to preach a sermon in a public worship service which he conducts under the auspices of his calling Consistory.” This requirement sets the calling consistory as the evaluator of preaching before ordination, as is fitting (Church Order Appendix 4.2.c).
  - c. The practice of the federation for ordination exams is standardized when all classes follow the current guidelines of the church order.
- A. Since this recommendation is substantially different from the proposal of the overture (*Regulations 5.2.4.*), the Stated Clerk of Classis Ontario-East provides a preliminary defense of Overture 13.

- B. The recommendation is:

*Adopted*

### ARTICLE 91

## **Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 11 to amend the Church Order to add national synods

### Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 11.

#### ***Grounds:***

- a. We do not believe that we are facing significant enough challenges to our present synodical meetings that would require this change at this time.
- b. We believe that at this time establishing national synods may have the unintended consequence of dividing the federation into two separate bodies, thereby hindering our present fellowship.
- c. This recommendation, while reducing the work of a general synod, may increase the work of the federation as matters may need to be considered at both national and general synods.
- d. While we agree that international travel throughout the pandemic and at present has been challenging, the current overture seems to assume that the situation will remain difficult and is a premature determination as a basis to change our current practice.

A. Since this recommendation is substantially different from the proposal of the overture (*Regulations 5.2.4.*), the Stated Clerk of Classis Michigan provides a preliminary defense of Overture 11.

B. The chairman ends discussion due to the arrival of the order of the day.

(**Advisory Committee 5** continued in Art. 122.)

#### ARTICLE 92

Rev. Collin Welch reads 1 Kings 3:3-14, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of *Trinity Psalter Hymnal 254*, “Let All Things Now Living.”

The assembly recesses for lunch.

### **Thursday, October 20, 2022 Afternoon Session**

#### ARTICLE 93

Rev. Jody Lucero reads and briefly exhorts from Ephesians 3:14-21, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of Psalm 103C, “Come, My Soul, and Bless the Lord.”

#### ARTICLE 94

The chairman invites Rev. Joel Overduin to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of North America. Rev. Overduin expresses appreciation for the cooperation between the FRCNA and the URCNA. In providing an overview of events in the FRCNA, he highlights the formation of a new congregation in Alberta and the ordination of two new ministers. He notes the need for more ministers among them and points out the need to address challenges arising from the cultural embrace of aberrant views on sexuality. He urges the URCNA to continue standing together with the FRCNA in trusting the Lord and faithfully preaching His Word.

Rev. Jason Vander Horst offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

#### ARTICLE 95

### **Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Missions Committee Report

*Note: Because the assembly acted to consider particular later recommendations of the advisory committee prior to acting upon earlier recommendations, the numbering of the recommendations arising from Advisory Committee 7 is not always recorded sequentially. Instead, the record*

*reflects the numbering of the recommendations as presented by the advisory committee, listed in the order of their actual consideration by the assembly.*

**Recommendations:**

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 19, which reads as follows: “that Synod give the privilege of the floor to two designated members of the majority committee when the Majority Report is on the floor, and that Synod give the privilege of the floor to two designated members of the minority committee when the Minority Report is on the floor.”

*Adopted*

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee, with a minor adjustment, which reads: “That Synod ~~direct~~ encourage each classis to establish (or maintain where already existing) a Classical Committee on Home Missions (CCHM) for promoting and strengthening evangelism and church planting throughout classis.”

***Grounds:***

- a. Jesus calls us to, “Go and make disciples of all the nations” (Mt. 28:19). Classical Committees on Home Missions can proactively consider new areas of church planting and promote this among the churches in a way that local churches seldom can do.
- b. Classical Committees on Home Missions will serve as the means by which church planters and mission-focused individuals within classis and among sending churches unite their thoughts and prayers for mutual encouragement, improved accountability, and ongoing help/education.
- c. The establishment of such committees will encourage more consistories to engage in church planting in the confidence that they will have the support of others with experience in the field.
- d. Church planters and the people they serve will have greater security with the support and advice of a whole classis.
- e. Classical Committees on Home Missions will encourage evangelism, outreach, and disciple-making throughout classes.

*Adopted*

3. That Synod commend to the classes for their consideration the following suggested guidelines for such a Classical Committee on Home Missions:

**Suggested Guidelines for CCHMs:**

- (1) Composition of Committee: Three to five at-large members of churches of classis (pastors and elders with experience and expertise in evangelism and missions); all active church planters in classis; a representative from each overseeing consistory.



- (2) Work of the Classical Committee on Home Missions –
- (a) Encourage church planters and aid their sending consistories;
  - (b) Encourage outreach and evangelism in all the churches of classis;
  - (c) Investigate potential fields as well as inquiries that arise in the region to:
    - (i) inform the consistories regarding potential new fields;
    - (ii) connect consistories with selected fields;
  - (d) Work with overseeing consistories and church plants to provide internships for identifying/training church planters (which could entail the maintenance of a classical fund that will cover or offset internship costs that most churches cannot handle);
  - (e) Give advice to classis regarding the sending and removing of church planters;
  - (f) Keep the churches aware of financial needs in the support of church planters;
  - (g) Report to classis on the work of the committee in general;
  - (h) Disseminate updates throughout classis on current church plants;
  - (i) Where difficulties between calling churches and missionaries arise, classical church visitors from the committee could be invited to assist in resolving problems;
  - (j) Work toward the creation of a Classical Home Mission Fund to help new missions get established and to fund those that are lacking support.

A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by striking from Guideline (1) the phrase: “all active church planters.” *Adopted*

B. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by inserting at the end: “from each consistory overseeing an active church planter.” *Adopted*

C. Guideline (1) of the suggested guidelines now reads:  
 Composition of the Committee: Three to five at-large members of churches of classis (pastors and elders with experience and expertise in evangelism and missions); and a representative from each consistory overseeing an active church planter.

D. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2 of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee which reads, with slight adjustments: “That Synod establish a Synodical Committee on Home Missions composed of one representative from each classis for the purpose of ~~developing~~ promoting church planting resources, ~~and promoting~~ communication, and support between the classes of the federation.”

**Grounds:**

- a. Church planting seems to become more difficult each year in our post/anti-Christian society. While church planting at home is best executed by consistories in connection with and aided by classis, this work would be enhanced through broader communication, prayer support, and practical advice that could be

generated through a synodical committee that devoted its attention to this sole purpose.

- b. A Synodical Committee on Home Missions will continue to facilitate federation-wide communication that will promote the development and implementation of effective and responsible church planting practices.
- c. The good promotion of both home and foreign missions in the federation is well served through two separate committees. It would be wise for us to emulate this division of labor, which is well-attested throughout the history of faithful denominations.

*Adopted*

5. That Synod adopt the following mandate for the SCHM:

(1) Composition of the Committee: a representative from each classis, ~~plus a Home Missions Coordinator (if approved in the recommendation that follows)~~. It might be ideal for each classis representative also to be serving on a Classical Committee on Home Missions. (See Advisory Committee Recommendation 2 above.)

(2) Work of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions:

- a. Meet four times each year (most meetings conducted remotely);
- b. Report to synod regarding the committee's work and the state of church planting;
- c. Report to each classis by means of classis representative serving the committee;
- d. Maintain a website for posting news, resources, etc.;
- e. Promote resources for evangelism, disciple-making, and church planting;
- f. Promote tools for consistories/classes to use in the evaluation of church planters/plants;
- g. Identify training and developmental programs for home missions;
- h. When requested, advise Classical Committees on Home Missions;
- i. Annually inform the federation of the varying financial needs of church plants.

A. Motion is made and supported to amend this recommendation by replacing "plus a Home Missions Coordinator (if approved in the recommendation that follows)" with "plus the Missions Coordinator."

B. Motion is made and supported to table this recommendation until after Recommendation 6 is considered.

*Adopted*

6. That Synod not accede to Recommendation 3 of the Majority Report.

A. Recommendation 3 states: "That Synod create a full-time position for a Home Missions Coordinator who serves the Synodical Committee on Home Missions."

B. The recommendation to not accede to Recommendation 3 is:

*Adopted*

C. Recommendation 6 having been adopted, the assembly turns again to consideration of the previously tabled Recommendation 5.

5. That Synod adopt the following mandate for the SCHM:
  - (1) Composition of the Committee: a representative from each classis, ~~plus a Home Missions Coordinator (if approved in the recommendation that follows)~~. It might be ideal for each classis representative also to be serving on a Classical Committee on Home Missions. (See Advisory Committee Recommendation 2 above.)
  - (2) Work of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions:
    - a. Meet four times each year (most meetings conducted remotely);
    - b. Report to synod regarding the committee's work and the state of church planting;
    - c. Report to each classis by means of classis representative serving the committee;
    - d. Maintain a website for posting news, resources, etc.;
    - e. Promote resources for evangelism, disciple-making, and church planting;
    - f. Promote tools for consistories/classes to use in the evaluation of church planters/plants;
    - g. Identify training and developmental programs for home missions;
    - h. When requested, advise Classical Committees on Home Missions;
    - i. Annually inform the federation of the varying financial needs of church plants.
  - A. Motion is made and supported to amend the "Composition of the Committee" section by inserting: "plus the missions coordinator" where text previously was stricken.
  - B. Motion is made and supported to table this motion to amend (and, by *Regulations* 6.3.2.e, the rest of Recommendation 5) until after Recommendation 17 is considered.
 

*Adopted*
7. That Advisory Committee Recommendation 6 is Synod's answer to Recommendations 4 and 5.
 

*Adopted*
8. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6A of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee and appoint a Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions (or direct one half of the current Synodical Missions Committee to become the SCFM) to advise the federation, classes, consistories, and mission works in starting, strengthening, and at times closing foreign mission fields.
  - A. The brothers deliberate on the recommendation.
  - B. The chairman ends discussion due to the arrival of the order of the day.

(Advisory Committee 7 continued in Art. 97.)

#### ARTICLE 96

The chairman invites Rev. Jim Klazinga to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. Rev. Klazinga expresses appreciation for the

assembly's decision to move into Phase 2 – Ecumenical Fellowship with the PCEA. He also brings greetings from the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, expressing appreciation on their behalf for the assembly's decision to enter Phase 1 – Ecumenical Contact with the CRCA. Rev. Klazinga offers a brief primer on the background and distinctives of the PCEA. He explains some of the challenges facing their churches and expresses appreciation for the URCNA. He encourages the brothers to remember well our fundamental unity in Christ.

Elder Gerry Swets offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.

#### ARTICLE 97

### **Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Missions Committee Report

*Note: Because the assembly acted to consider particular later recommendations of the advisory committee prior to acting upon earlier recommendations, the numbering of the recommendations arising from Advisory Committee 7 is not always recorded sequentially. Instead, the record reflects the numbering of the recommendations as presented by the advisory committee, listed in the order of their actual consideration by the assembly.*

#### Recommendations:

8. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6A of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee and appoint a Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions (or direct one half of the current Synodical Missions Committee to become the SCFM) to *provide counsel to* ~~advise~~ the federation, classes, consistories, and mission works in starting, strengthening, and at times closing foreign mission fields.
  - A. The assembly resumes deliberation regarding Recommendation 8.
  - B. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by replacing “advise” with “to provide counsel to.” *Adopted*
  - C. Recommendation 8, as amended, is: *Adopted*
9. That Synod compose the SCFM in the following manner: One representative appointed by each classis, two at-large members appointed by Synod, and the Missions Coordinator (or Foreign Missions Coordinator, if that position is created by Synod). All committee members should have experience in foreign missions, the desire to work closely with a team, and the ability and willingness to travel. *Adopted*
10. That Synod accept the following mandate for the work of the SCFM, with several small adjustments:
  - a. To continue the regular work of the previous Synodical Missions Committee by serving the federation through the development of policies, *and the promotion of*

training and resources for foreign missions (see previous mandates given to the Missions Committee).

- b. To serve the federation by **giving counsel to** consistories that seek to open or close a foreign field.
  - c. To receive and publish the reports, goals, and concerns of the various foreign fields to the churches of the federation in order to encourage and facilitate greater unity throughout the federation in prayer and in the use of resources (e.g. manpower, money, etc.). This will help us achieve our goal of establishing and/or strengthening foreign federations composed of faithful Reformed churches.
  - d. To help all consistories to become involved in foreign missions by providing expertise, ~~advice~~ **counsel**, and coordination in the expansion of current fields.
  - e. To aid in the investigation and planning of new foreign fields, where applicable.
  - f. To work with consistories through “field committees” that will determine the particular posts that are to be occupied on foreign fields, and to communicate throughout the federation where there is need for more missionaries.
  - g. To aid in developing potential missionaries by connecting interested individuals with current missionaries (and with calling consistories, where necessary) for short-term service abroad.
  - h. To work with young people who are interested in foreign missions by organizing internships, cross-cultural missions training, and medium- to long-term mission trips.
  - i. **To give counsel** ~~To serve as an advisory body~~ to the classes of the federation **when advice is sought by a Consistory for** the sending of missionaries to or removing them from foreign fields.
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend point d. of the recommendation by replacing “advice” with “counsel.” *Adopted*
- B. Motion is made and supported to amend point i. of the recommendation by replacing “To serve as an advisory body ...” with “To give counsel ...” *Adopted*
- C. This recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*
11. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6B of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee, which reads: “That Synod approve the creation of field committees which will integrate resources and personnel in the URCNA for the supervision of particular foreign mission fields. A foreign mission field is a geographic and cultural region where the URCNA is seeking to establish and strengthen local congregations for the glory of God (for example: Mexico, Ecuador, Italy, Romania, etc.).”
- Motion is made and supported to table this matter in order to first consider Recommendation 13. *Adopted*
13. That Synod appoint the following as the mandate for the work of the field committees:
- a. To meet regularly for the mutual encouragement, accountability, and prayer support of the particular foreign field.

- b. **To assist the field by means of helping in** ~~To supervise the field itself by means of~~: establishing priorities; setting a budget for mission expenses beyond the salary and care of missionaries or missionary helpers and their families; encouraging mission zeal on the field; encouraging zeal in sending congregations through regular communication; growing the mission by determining particular posts that could be occupied on the field, and recommending these posts to the churches; helping with the stabilization of the field in the event of retirements or furloughs; giving help in times of crisis; determining the suitability of prospective candidates who are being considered for work on the mission.
  - c. To encourage broader support for the mission by facilitating communication among the consistories, the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, the classes, and the mission field.
  - d. To visit the field by means of delegation, in cooperation with sending churches, at least once every two years.
  - e. To serve as an advisory body to the classes of the federation:
    - i. when they seek advice about sending new missionaries;
    - ii. when they seek advice about removing missionaries from foreign fields;
    - iii. when there are inter-personal tensions on the field.
  - f. To work directly with office bearers on the field so that their perspectives and opinions are carefully considered. With time, the local leadership will take more responsibility for the direction and decisions made on the field.
  - g. To respect the decision of overseeing Consistories that decline to take part in field committees.
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by replacing “To supervise the field itself by means of” with the phrase: “To assist the field by means of helping in.” *Adopted*
- B. Motion is made and supported to table this recommendation in order to take up Recommendation 16. *Adopted*

16. That Synod adopt as Grounds for our Recommendations 8-15.

*For full text of the proposed Grounds, see below in Article 101.*

- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by striking the word “ownership” from ground b. *Adopted*

Ground b. reads (with the adopted amendment noted):

While the oversight of missionaries (and missionary helpers) remains exclusively under the calling consistory, this new model makes the development of our mission fields a matter of federational cooperation, ~~ownership~~, and care. Knowing that the work of foreign missions is a complex undertaking and that the Lord directs us to seek safety in a multitude of counselors (Prov. 11:14), we maintain that by voluntarily committing ourselves to meaningful cooperation on the foreign field through field committees, a SCFM, and classical advice, we can: better protect against mistakes

that can hurt missionaries and those they serve; provide practical accountability to sending consistories, and thereby decrease the possibility that faithful oversight of the mission will be neglected in times when work in the local church becomes overwhelming; demonstrate humility and teamwork that will better reflect the principles and patterns we find in Scripture, and thus better promote the cause of Christ in the nations and better care for those sent to serve that cause; and strive to strengthen current fields before starting new ones.

B. Motion is made and supported to table the recommendation in order to take up Recommendation 13. *Adopted*

13. That Synod appoint the following as the mandate for the work of the field committees:

- a. To meet regularly for the mutual encouragement, accountability, and prayer support of the particular foreign field.
- b. **To assist the field by means of helping in** ~~To supervise the field itself by means of:~~ establishing priorities; setting a budget for mission expenses beyond the salary and care of missionaries or missionary helpers and their families, *and beyond the budgets of indigenous churches*; encouraging mission zeal on the field; encouraging zeal in sending congregations through regular communication; growing the mission by determining particular posts that could be occupied on the field, and recommending these posts to the churches; helping with the stabilization of the field in the event of retirements or furloughs; giving help in times of crisis; determining the suitability of prospective candidates who are being considered for work on the mission.
- c. To encourage broader support for the mission by facilitating communication among the consistories, the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, the classes, and the mission field.
- d. To visit the field by means of delegation, in cooperation with sending churches, at least once every two years.
- e. *To provide counsel* ~~To serve as an advisory body~~ to the classes of the federation:
  - i. when they seek advice about sending new missionaries;
  - ii. when they seek advice about removing missionaries from foreign fields;
  - iii. when there are inter-personal tensions on the field.
- f. To work directly with office bearers on the field so that their perspectives and opinions are carefully considered. With time, the local leadership will take more responsibility for the direction and decisions made on the field.
- g. To respect the decision of overseeing Consistories that decline to take part in field committees.

A. Motion is made and supported to amend point b. of the recommendation by inserting: “and beyond the budgets of indigenous churches” after “and their families.” *Adopted*

B. Motion is made and supported to amend point e. of the recommendation by replacing “To serve as an advisory body ... ” with “To provide counsel ...” *Adopted*

C. The recommendation as amended is: *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 7 continued in Art. 101.)

ARTICLE 98

Rev. Daniel Hamstra reads John 15:1-12, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* 404, “The Church’s One Foundation.”

The assembly is dismissed for a meal.

**Thursday, October 20, 2022  
Evening Session**

ARTICLE 99

Rev. Steve Swets reads Psalm 66:1-3a, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of Psalm 66A, “O Shout to God with Joy.”

ARTICLE 100

The chairman announces that Elder Jake Sonke from Zion United Reformed Church of Ripon, CA, Rev. Roberto Rossi from Immanuel United Reformed Church of DeMotte, IN, and Rev. Eric Van Der Molen from Bethany United Reformed Church of Wyoming, MI, will be departing from the assembly after this evening’s session.

ARTICLE 101

**Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Missions Committee Report

*Note: Because the assembly acted to consider particular later recommendations of the advisory committee prior to acting upon earlier recommendations, the numbering of the recommendations arising from Advisory Committee 7 is not always recorded sequentially. Instead, the record reflects the numbering of the recommendations as presented by the advisory committee, listed in the order of their actual consideration by the assembly.*

Recommendations:

11. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6B of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee, which reads: “That Synod approve the creation of field committees which will integrate resources and personnel in the URCNA for the assistance of particular foreign mission fields. A foreign mission field is a geographic and cultural region where the URCNA is seeking to establish and strengthen local congregations for the glory of God (for example: Mexico, Ecuador, Italy, Romania, etc.).”



A. Discussion on Recommendation 11 resumes, Recommendation 13 having been addressed.

B. The recommendation is: *Adopted*

12. That Synod compose the field committees in the following manner:

- a. Two to three office bearers (active or inactive) from each sending church with missionaries or long-term missionary helpers on a particular field;
- b. Two representatives of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions (see Recommendation 6A);
- c. Any missionaries and long-term (two years and over) missionary helpers on the field;
- d. The Missions Coordinator (or Foreign Missions Coordinator) as an advisory/non-voting member.

*Adopted*

Rev. Mitch Persaud, Elder Wil Postma, Rev. James Sinke, and Rev. Doug Barnes request that their negative votes be recorded.

14. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6C of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee with adjustments, which reads:

“That Synod affirm that the local consistory has exclusive authority:

- a. To ~~call/send missionaries and missionary helpers~~ *call and send missionaries, and to deploy and recall missionary helpers*, and to oversee their life and doctrine.
- b. To aid the mission work in the spiritual care of its people, as is necessary and appropriate, *and to regulate worship services.*
- c. *To direct the mission it has established and supervises.*

“In light of the above, every sending consistory should ~~is encouraged to~~:

- (1) Have two qualified church representatives actively serving on a field committee;
- (2) Acquire a thorough knowledge of that field with which they are involved;
- (3) Maintain regular contact with the missionary and his family for ongoing faithfulness in overseeing the missionary’s life and doctrine *and in regulating the worship services;*
- (4) Have a representative visit the missionary at least once every two years;
- (5) Ensure adequate financial support for the missionary (or long-term missionary helper) and his (her) family where applicable.”

A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by adding a third point to the affirmation: “To direct the mission it has established and supervises.” *Adopted*

B. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by inserting “and to regulate worship services” in the point b. of the affirmation. *Adopted*

C. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by inserting “and in regulating the worship services” in point 3 of the encouragements. *Adopted*

- D. Motion is made and supported to amend the affirmation by replacing “is encouraged to” with “should.” *Adopted*
- E. Motion is made and supported to amend point a. of the recommendation by replacing “to call/send missionaries and missionary helpers” with: “to call and send missionaries, and to deploy and recall missionary helpers.” *Adopted*
- F. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*
15. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6D of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee, which reads: “That Synod encourage but not mandate involvement in the new plan for foreign missions for all sending churches of the federation.” *Adopted*
16. That Synod adopt as Grounds for our Recommendations 8-15.

***Grounds:***

- a. Throughout our history many decisions have been made in an effort to encourage the faithful and fruitful promotion of Christ’s kingdom outside of the United States and Canada. At Synod Escondido 2001 we adopted the idea of using Joint Venture Committees to aid the churches in overseeing and caring for foreign missionaries. At Synod Nyack 2012 we agreed to “make every effort to unify all of our resources (gifts, talents, and finances) as one united federation in order to bring the gospel from our homes and churches to the nations of the world.” At Synod Wyoming 2016 we adopted the URCNA Foreign Missions Manual as helpful guidelines to assist consistories, missionaries, and church planters in the day-to-day activity of foreign missions. The current proposals take numerous elements not only from all past decisions of the URCNA in connection with foreign missions but also from the lessons learned in researching the successes and failures of sister churches and our own history, combining these things in a way that faithfully promotes meaningful and intentional cooperation throughout the federation, while keeping local consistories and congregations intimately involved in the work of foreign missions.
- b. While the oversight of missionaries (and missionary helpers) remains exclusively under the calling consistory, this new model makes the development of our mission fields a matter of federational cooperation and care. Knowing that the work of foreign missions is a complex undertaking and that the Lord directs us to seek safety in a multitude of counselors (Prov. 11:14), we maintain that by voluntarily committing ourselves to meaningful cooperation on the foreign field through field committees, a SCFM, and classical advice, we can: better protect against mistakes that can hurt missionaries and those they serve; provide practical accountability to sending consistories, and thereby decrease the possibility that faithful oversight of the mission will be neglected in times when work in the local church becomes overwhelming; demonstrate humility and teamwork that will better reflect the principles and patterns we find in Scripture, and thus better promote the cause of Christ in the nations and better care for those sent to serve that cause; and strive to strengthen current fields before starting new ones.

- c. The partnership among our churches, sending consistories, and those serving on foreign fields will be greatly strengthened by this approach. Supporting foreign fields as a united federation (by means of consistorial partnership in field committees and a Synodical Foreign Missions Committee) will create a more united vision for our mission to the world and will help pool resources that are often beyond the reach of a local church, without minimizing its involvement in the mission.
- d. The involvement of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions and the employment of field committees will help us to establish, develop, and maintain foreign fields in a more productive and responsible way. It will help us practically apply what we have already agreed upon in our Foreign Missions Manual: to commit ourselves to the bolstering of current fields with a team approach, and to carefully research new fields so as not to render the federation ineffective by spreading ourselves too thin. We can expect such humble and intentional partnership to result in greater readiness, responsibility, and resilience in foreign missions.
- e. The work of those serving in foreign missions will be far more encouraging, edifying, and enjoyable than in our current model. Representatives from sending consistories, from the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, and from the foreign mission itself will spend the vast majority of their time together in hands-on work, growing through shared knowledge and prayer, and encouraging one another by means of their field committee connection. This will build camaraderie and mutual support among sending churches, missionaries, and denominational representatives in a way that practically demonstrates our unity in mission. We can expect this new approach to result in greater faithfulness and effectiveness in foreign missions for the increasing joy of all parties involved, and ultimately for God's glory.
- f. By strengthening federational cooperation we will assist sending consistories in improving support and care for their missionary while also strengthening the responsible care of a respective field. By working with a team, consistories will better understand the foreign field, the training that is requisite for deployment, and what proper care of their missionary will involve. Moreover, a consistory will give that care to its missionary in partnership with the synodical/field committee that allows for a more “field-driven” mission, as opposed to a “top-down” approach.
- g. Historically, a majority of Reformed and Presbyterian communions have favored a more “denominational” approach to foreign missions. God has greatly blessed many communions that have partnered in this way for more faithful stewardship in the use of his gifts. The 1939 model used by the CRC was a great blessing to that denomination in helping them to send many hundreds of missionaries and missionary helpers in a coordinated way. Something very similar can be seen in the work of the OPC today.
- h. A Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions under these guidelines will help provide an infrastructure that creates more on-ramps for men and women to serve on the foreign field. Over the last few years, we have seen several URCNA members (missionaries, seminary students, and others interested in missions)

leave our churches to serve in other NAPARC communions that possess greater vision and infrastructure for missions. With the sending consistories and federated churches working together through field committees, the establishment of a broader support network for long-term faithful and effective care of both the mission field and missionaries will create an attractive and exciting place in which to serve the Lord.

- i. Nearly all of our current sending churches have committees to aid them in overseeing the mission field. This plan reinforces our current model with broader cooperation across the federation.

*Adopted*

17. That Synod accede to Recommendation 7 of the Majority Report of the Missions Committee with the following minor adjustments: “That Synod reassign the current Missions Coordinator to become the ~~interim~~-full-time Foreign Missions Coordinator who works alongside the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions.”

Specific Tasks of the Foreign Missions Coordinator:

- (1) To visit missionaries and their fields from time to time, as directed by the SCFM, for the purpose of counseling them concerning their work and of promoting such understanding and harmonious cooperation between the workers of the various posts as shall secure the harmony and advancement of the work. *He shall provide to the overseeing consistories timely and thorough reports of all such visits.*
- (2) As time allows, to visit potential fields or current fields for longer periods of time in order to assist missionaries or to investigate new fields.
- (3) To assist the SCFM in all its work.
- (4) To serve as an advisory member on the various field committees.
- (5) To visit as many classical meetings and congregations as occasion may require, or as the SCFM may advise and his other duties will permit. The purpose of these visits shall be to enlighten our people on the subject of missions in all its branches, to stimulate prayer for missions, and to encourage participation in the work of missions.\*
- ~~(6) He shall encourage young men and women to consecrate themselves to the cause of missions and help them through the process of preparing to go to the field.\*~~
- (7) To promote and organize mission festivals and conferences, and to present the cause of missions upon these occasions.\*
- (8) To promote giving, by individuals and by congregations, and publish financial needs of foreign mission works to the churches.\*
- (9) To provide the SCFM with bi-monthly reports of his work.\*
- (10) To work together with the Synodical Committee on Home Missions as necessary.
- (11) To edit and publish (together with the Synodical Committee on Home Missions) *The Trumpet*, and to distribute other missionary

newsletters and information.

(12) To maintain (together with the SCHM) the URCNA Missions website.

\* *The asterisks above indicate language taken from the 1939 CRC mission order.*

**Grounds:**

- a. The work of foreign missions is a great, God-glorifying task. A Foreign Missions Coordinator (FMC) will help promote this work, enabling the federation and its missions committees to maintain a balanced and conscientious approach to foreign and home missions, and to engage more efficiently in the work that is peculiar to each.
  - b. For the last seven years, Rev. Richard Bout has faithfully served as the Missions Coordinator for the federation. If the Synod decides to establish a SCFM, Rev. Richard Bout would bring experience, devotion, and expertise to the role.
  - c. The current Missions Committee found that both missions models that it researched recognized the importance of full-time coordinators/secretaries who can serve the churches with a focus upon either the foreign or domestic work.
  - d. Financial support from the churches has been very strong for the current missions coordinator position, as well as for new mission works that have begun in the last few years.
  - e. A Foreign Missions *Committee* ~~Coordinator~~ will help the federation to recruit seminarians for foreign missions by developing and helping to maintain on-ramps to foreign fields. Together with the Synodical Committee on Home Missions, the FMC can arrange internships and guide interested parties to the foreign field.
- 
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by adding to Specific Task 1: “He shall provide to the overseeing consistories timely and thorough reports of all such visits.” *Adopted*
  - B. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by striking Specific Task 6. *Adopted*
  - C. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by replacing “Coordinator” with “Committee” in ground e. *Adopted*
  - D. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*
  - E. Recommendation 17 having been addressed, the assembly returns to consideration of an amendment to Recommendation 5, tabled previously (see Article 95).
5. That synod adopt the following guidelines for the SCHM:
- (1) Composition of the Committee: a representative from each classis, ~~plus a Home Missions Coordinator (if approved in the recommendation that follows)~~. It might be ideal for each classis representative also to be serving on a Classical Committee on Home Missions. (See Advisory Committee recommendation 2 above.)

- (2) Work of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions:
- a. Meet four times each year (most meetings conducted remotely);
  - b. Report to synod regarding the committee's work and the state of church planting;
  - c. Report to each classis by means of classis representative serving the committee;
  - d. Maintain a website for posting news, resources, etc.;
  - e. Promote resources for evangelism, disciple-making, and church planting;
  - f. Promote tools for consistories/classes to use in the evaluation of church planters/plants;
  - g. Identify training and developmental programs for home missions;
  - h. When requested, advise Classical Committees on Home Missions;
  - i. Annually inform the federation of the varying financial needs of church plants.

A. From Article 95: Motion is made and supported to amend this recommendation by replacing "plus a Home Missions Coordinator (if approved in the recommendation that follows)" with "plus the Missions Coordinator." *Defeated*

B. The recommendation, as previously amended, is: *Adopted*

18. That Synod note that churches may bring nominations to future synods for the foreign missions coordinator position using the already approved procedure for nominating a Missions Coordinator, namely:

- (1) Each classis is encouraged to nominate a minister of the Word for the position of Foreign Missions Coordinator. Nominations shall include:
- a. The church council that is prepared to supervise the minister of the Word, who would also function as the federation's Foreign Missions Coordinator. This minister may already serve the council and their local church, or he might be a minister to whom the council would extend a new call, pending his appointment to the position of Coordinator by synod.
  - b. A clarification of whether the calling church would be lending this man to the work of the Foreign Missions Coordinator as a full-time position or whether the calling church envisions for the man a division of labor between the local church and the broader federation. (Although it would be ideal for the minister to be fully on loan to the federation for the work of missions, the calling council may wish to retain the man for some degree of local ministry, and this should be outlined to synod in the nomination.)
  - c. A compensation plan for the Foreign Missions Coordinator in his work and, if applicable, the level of support that will be coming from the calling congregation. The compensation plan should focus on adequate provision of salary, housing, medical, and retirement needs (Church Order Article 10), based on cost of living in the area of the calling church, as well as suggested amounts for items like office, equipment, and travel. The committee will make itself available to interested churches to help set ballpark figures in this regard. Details of the proposed compensation will be subject to the approval of synod.

- d. A brief introduction to the man; which should include a resume of service in the church and the particular gifts and experience that such a man would bring to the position of Foreign Missions Coordinator.
- (2) From the pool of nominees synod shall elect a Foreign Missions Coordinator. The election shall be by a majority vote, taken by ballot.

**Grounds:**

- a. This process is already approved by synod, and it will be necessary to fill the position should synod create it.

*Adopted*

19. That Synod approve the *concept* of two national Missions Funds and task the corporations of the federation (one in the U.S. and one in Canada) to explore the potential establishment of these funds and to report back to the next synod for final consideration by the churches.

**Grounds:**

- a. There have been repeated communications which have come to the Missions Committee from individuals who wish to donate funds that would promote URCNA missions in general rather than going to a single mission work, but heretofore there has been no mechanism by which to receive such donations. National/federational funds would allow for a more proactive approach to investigating potential fields and developing potential servants for the expansion of Christ's kingdom through URCNA missions.
- b. The tasks outlined above do not infringe upon the authority or work of local consistories.
- c. Discussion of financial legalities on the floor of synod are difficult. At past synods this has led to confusion that has proved sufficient to kill concepts while legalities remained unclear. The Missions Committee knows that it is not the body best equipped with insight into financial and legal details, but we felt it would be premature to ask others to investigate this before having synod's endorsement of the general concept.

*Adopted*

20. That Synod accede to Recommendation 10 of the Missions Committee Report, which reads: "That Synod adopt the following as encouragement to the churches regarding those who labor in educational ministries:

- (1) That educational missionaries with a domestic focus (e.g. Divine Hope, Redemption Prison Ministries) be adopted by the classis in which they operate, and that these classes see how they can best serve these men and their calling churches in a way that fits the needs of each particular situation. The synodical committees would be happy to help in giving advice, should it be requested.
- (2) That other extraordinary missionaries sent by URC consistories, though not considered here, approach the Missions Committee to develop guidelines, so that they are not neglected within the support structures of the federation regarding the work of missions.

- (3) That men engaged in such ministry be recognized under Article 47 of the Church Order, and therefore have the advice of their classis before accepting such a position as a URCNA missionary. We make this recommendation due to the weighty responsibility of those who would take on teaching in this capacity, and as it helps the classis to own and support its educational missionaries in a proper and encouraging way.
- (4) If so desired, classis can appoint a man serving in this capacity to be its representative for the Synodical Missions Committee on Foreign or Home Mission.”

**Grounds:**

- a. Such men need to be, and are currently, called and overseen by local consistories. The work of Divine Hope, MINTS, Redemption Prison Ministries, and other such organizations is overseen administratively by their own organizational boards. Usually these ministries will not be exclusively URCNA but are missionary efforts that combine gifts, manpower, and accountability with other like-minded Reformed and Presbyterian churches. Men involved with MINTS span a broad geographic spectrum within the URCNA and have historically had calling churches in at least three of our classes. Their focus is primarily on the foreign field. Men involved with Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary have historically had calling churches within Classis Central U.S. They labor in U.S. prisons. Our pastor involved with Redemption Prison Ministries has his calling church within Classis Western Canada. Their focus is in prisons in Canada. We have many ordained ministers functioning with an educational focus. Others in this realm teach in seminaries, including but not limited to Mid-America Reformed Seminary and Westminster Seminary California. Such men have historically not been considered missionaries (educational or otherwise) within the URCNA.
- b. The diversity of oversight structures within educational missions makes it difficult, if not impossible, to give advice that would apply across the board.

*Adopted*

21. That Synod accede to Recommendation 11 of the Missions Committee Report with one little adjustment, namely that the portion of the Committee’s Report entitled *International Seminary Students and the URCNA* be adopted as encouragement to the churches in working with international seminary students who desire to return to their home countries as URCNA missionaries (see pages 289-294 of the Agenda for Synod).

*Defeated*

22. That Synod accede to Recommendation 12 of the Missions Committee Report that Synod: “encourage the classes of the federation as well as the Missions Committees to use the document *International Seminary Students and the URCNA* as they advise churches and international students regarding cooperation with foreign nationals in gospel ministry abroad.”

*Defeated*

23. That Synod accede to Recommendation 14 of the Missions Committee Report, namely, that Synod approve the work of the Missions Coordinator with hearty support.



*Adopted Without Dissent*

24. *This recommendation was withdrawn by the Advisory Committee.*

25. That Synod accede to Recommendation 16 of the Missions Committee Report, namely, to continue Rev. Richard Bout's salary, expenses, and yearly raises as set by previous synods and with yearly cost of living increases as determined by Statistics Canada.

*Adopted*

26. That Synod establish the budget of the URCNA Missions Committee based upon the decisions of Synod as follows:

~~(1) If committee size is unchanged (17 men), to increase the budget to \$22,000 USD per year.~~

(2) If the committee is divided into a Synodical Foreign Missions Committee and Synodical Home Missions Committee, that the yearly budget ~~of each committee be set at \$11,000 USD~~ of the Synodical Home Missions Committee be set at \$13,000 USD and the yearly budget of the Synodical Foreign Missions Committee be set at \$11,000 USD.

~~(3) If the committee is reduced to its original size of 9 but otherwise unchanged, to set the budget at \$16,000 USD per year.~~

**Grounds:**

- a. Increases in travel costs have been significant for all areas of travel in recent years.
- b. Changes to the size of the committee would require changes in their budget.

A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation to set the yearly budget of the Synodical Home Missions Committee at \$13,000 USD and the yearly budget of the Synodical Foreign Missions Committee at \$11,000 USD. *Adopted*

B. The recommendation as amended is: *Adopted*

*Note: \$2000 from the budget of the Synodical Home Missions Committee is designated to cover travel costs for the Synodical Foreign Missions Coordinator should he be asked to visit home missionaries or sending consistories.*

27. That Synod change point A.4.c of the "Policies for the Synodical Missions Committee and Missions Coordinator" as follows:

From: c. The Clerk – shall keep minutes of all the regular meetings of the Missions Committee, and shall be responsible to present these minutes to the councils of all congregations of the URCNA. The Clerk and/or the Chairman shall serve as signatories for all official documents of the Missions Committee.

To: c. The Clerk – shall keep minutes of all regular meetings of the Missions Committee, and shall be responsible to present a yearly report of the Missions Committee's activities to the councils of all congregations of the URCNA. The

Clerk and/or the Chairman shall serve as signatories for all official documents of the Missions Committee.

***Grounds:***

- a. Presenting minutes of all meetings to all councils in the federation is a requirement given to no other standing committee of synod except the Missions Committee.
- b. Reports on Missions Committee activities are available twice annually at classis meetings through classical representatives.
- c. One annual, written report will highlight key activities of the Missions Committee for the attention of the churches.

*Adopted*

28. That Synod declare that of the two classical representatives currently serving on the Missions Committee, one shall serve on the Synodical Committee for Foreign Missions and the other on the Synodical Committee on Home Missions until each classis is able to appoint representatives to these two committees. The representatives themselves are left to decide who will serve on which committee.

*Adopted*

29. That Synod declare that the Missions Committee be disbanded at the end of 2022 with our most hearty thanks for the years of diligent service.

*Adopted*

ARTICLE 102

**Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Overture 6 to amend Church Order Article 10

Recommendation:

1. That Synod declare that Synod's earlier answer to Overture 18 (regarding amendment of Article 47 of our Church Order) is our answer to Overture 6.

*Adopted*

ARTICLE 103

**Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Overture 19 to add a Church Order article to establish mission visitors

Recommendations:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 19, which calls for the establishment of Missions Visitors.

***Grounds:***

- a. The concerns raised in this overture can be addressed through the work of the Church Visitors.
- b. We have appointed field committees to visit foreign missionaries.

- c. We have appointed two missions committees which can accomplish some of this work.

*Adopted*

2. That Synod encourage consistories, Church Visitors, the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, the Synodical Committee on Home Missions, and the Classical Committees on Home Missions to take note of the questions provided in the background of this Overture, namely:

(1) To the mission:

- a. Describe your history as a church plant and the body of believers God is developing. What obstacles – practical, material, or spiritual – has the church plant faced? In what ways did these obstacles become part of God’s means of showing His grace?
- b. What signs of growth do you see in the ministry, in the number of individuals reached, or within individuals that regularly attend? How are believing and unbelieving parents, singles, children, elderly, and others being ministered to? How do you nurture the communion of the saints? How have you seen regular attendees growing in their love for the Lord, for one another, for the Word of God and for worship, for Reformed theology and for the Three Forms of Unity? What materials have you found useful in leading membership classes?
- c. What leadership roles are taken by non-officers in the church plant? Do people joyfully offer their gifts to the church? How do you protect people from burnout? How are you working toward developing future office bearers?
- d. How have you worked to reach the lost in your area? What role does prayer have in this?
- e. What obstacles do you face personally? How are you approaching these challenges?
- f. Describe your relationship with the planting church. How do you and lay officers of the church plant participate in consistory and council meetings? What advice or direction have you been given by your planting church? How often do they visit you in person? How do you decide nonessential questions like the frequency of observing the Lord’s Supper in worship, whether the minister wears a robe, or how to collect the offering?
- g. How have you communicated your needs to other URCNA churches? Who is praying for you? How do they receive updates, and how have you let the church plant know they are being cared for by sister churches? How has our classis been helpful in supporting the ministry? Is there anything our churches can do to assist you better?
- h. Are there other like-minded churches in your area? How is your relationship with them? Where would there be need for the gospel in surrounding areas in which our classis might consider planting another church? Are there groups that are in your area that are culturally distinct in a way that a particular ministry to them should be considered?
- i. To what degree is the church plant self-financing? To what degree do you receive outside funds? What are you doing to raise financial support?

- (2) To the planting church:
- a. How do you support the church plant? When was your last visit? How do officers of the church plant participate in consistory and council meetings? In what ways do you give advice?
  - b. What is your impression of the growth in the church plant? Is the relationship positive? How do you work to promote a healthy, God-glorifying dynamic between the church plant and planting church, so that matters of finances and control are not the primary concerns in your meetings?
  - c. Do you have concerns about continuing as the planting church? If you were to have to dissolve the church plant or seek another church to assume responsibility for it, do you have a plan to care for the minister's needs and for the needs of those in the church plant?
  - d. How do you personally support and encourage your missionary?
  - e. How has classis been helpful collectively and as local churches in supporting the work?
  - f. How does the church plant administer the Lord's Supper if a local elder is not present?
  - g. Do you have questions about planting this church?

*Adopted*

The chairman asks Rev. Joel Dykstra to pray for the missions-related decisions just made, and for the missionary efforts of the URCNA. Rev. Dykstra leads the assembly in prayer.

(Advisory Committee 7 continued in Art. 123.)

#### ARTICLE 104

The chairman relinquishes the chair to the vice-chairman.

#### **Advisory Committee 8 – Website Oversight and PRCC**

Materials: Presbyterian Reformed Chaplaincy Committee Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report from the Liaison Committee for the PRCC with thanks.  
*Adopted*
2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 as perfected: "That Synod set the budget for the PRCC at \$3,300 USD per annum to cover: required denominational contributions; the travel costs of attending Commission meetings should a representative attend; and individual chaplain dues should they be submitted."

***Grounds:***

- a. The Advisory Committee perfected the dollar amount requested to include travel costs.

- b. The \$3,300 USD requested covers the following expenses:
  - i. \$2,000 USD in denominational contributions (\$1,000 per chaplain, per year);
  - ii. \$800 USD (approximately) in chaplain dues, covering both chaplains.
  - iii. \$500 USD in potential travel costs.

*Adopted*

- 3. That Synod request the Consistory of Faith URC of Beecher, IL, to revisit the question of whether the URCNA should remain an associate (non-voting) member of PRCC or pursue full (voting) membership and report back with a recommendation to the next synod.

***Grounds:***

- a. Synod 2007 voted to apply for associate membership in part due to expediency (*Acts of Synod 2007*, Article 42.1.E).
- b. The PRCC report highlights a number of pressing issues for chaplains which may recommend that the URCNA play a voting role in this body.
- c. Fifteen years have passed since the decision of Synod 2007, and we now have a second chaplain, which recommends reconsideration of full membership.

*Adopted*

ARTICLE 105

**Advisory Committee 8 – Website Oversight and PRCC**

Materials: Report of the Oversight Consistory for Website Oversight Committee

Recommendations:

- 1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 with grounds: “That Synod change the wording of Article 4.7.4.o of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* (concerning postings to the “Recent Ministerial News” section of the website) as indicated below. Additions are in *italics* and deletions are in ~~striketrough~~.”

**Current:**

Post the ministerial information received from the consistories of the federation, including the calling of pastors, the answer to this call, availability for call, dissolution of ministerial relationship, the sustaining of ordination and candidacy exams, receiving a license to exhort, suspension, reinstatement, deposition, emeritation, and the deaths of ministers that take place in our federation.

**Proposed:**

Post the ministerial information received from the consistories of the federation, including the calling of pastors, the answer to this call, availability for call, dissolution of ministerial relationship, the *scheduling and* sustaining of ordination, ~~and~~ *candidacy and licensure* exams, ~~receiving a license to exhort~~, suspension, reinstatement, deposition, emeritation, and the deaths of ministers that take place in our federation.”

**Grounds:**

- a. It is useful to announce in advance the *scheduling* of ordination, candidacy and licensure exams, not just their sustaining.
- b. The new wording is clearer than the old.
- c. The WOC agrees with the recommendation.

*Adopted by 2/3 Majority*

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2 with grounds: “That the budget for the WOC no longer be funded from annual Classical ‘askings’ (currently \$100 USD or \$125 CAD), and instead the WOC budget would be a line item in the synodical budget.”

**Grounds:**

- a. Their budgeting process would become more like the other synodical committees.
- b. This recommendation comes from the WOC, and we concur with it, and therefore their request comes as a recommendation from us as well.
- c. Pam Hessels, URCNA Canadian Treasurer, agrees with this.

*Adopted*

3. That Synod authorize the next convening consistory of synod to name, upon recommendation by the Grace United Reformed Church Consistory, a successor for the Website Oversight Committee, and that this be Synod’s answer to Recommendation 3: “That Synod find a replacement for the Grace United Reformed Church Consistory as the Oversight Consistory for the Website Oversight Committee.”

**Grounds:**

- a. The OCWOC requested that synod find a replacement for it.
- b. The OCWOC is best suited to confirm the willingness and suitability of volunteer consistories for this service, which cannot be secured before the end of the current Synod.

*Adopted*

4. That Synod direct the Stated Clerk to send a letter of thanks to Elder Larry Van Den Berg of Grace URC Waupun, WI.

**Grounds:**

- a. Elder Larry Van Den Berg started working in 2007 with the URCNA website, building the federation directory, hosting the website and administering the domain, and managed custom application development as requested.
- b. Elder Larry Van Den Berg has asked to take a break after 15 years of service to the URCNA website as he transitions into retirement.

*Adopted*

5. That Synod thank the Grace United Reformed Church Consistory for its fifteen years of work serving as the Oversight Consistory for the Website Oversight Committee, and that

this be Synod's response to the Website Oversight Committee's Recommendation 6 (p. 306).

*Adopted*

## ARTICLE 106

### **Advisory Committee 8 – Website Oversight and PRCC**

Materials: Website Oversight Committee Report

#### Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 of the Website Oversight Committee: “That Synod set the annual budget for the WOC starting in 2023 at \$3,000 USD; this recommendation is contingent upon Synod approving the above-mentioned recommendation from the OCWOC to change the WOC’s funding model. This amount is roughly in line with previous annual expenditures of money received through classical askings.” *Adopted*
2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2: “That Synod request the synodical committees of the federation to work with the Webmaster to ensure their committee pages on www.urncna.org include their membership, their mandate, and significant documents relating to their committee.”

#### **Grounds:**

- a. This enables members, sister churches, and other visitors (in the case of public information) to be informed of the work being done throughout the federation.
  - b. While this is not a new request, it is important that it be kept before the synodical committees.
- Adopted*
3. That Synod change the annual honorarium for the Webmaster, Gary Fisher, to \$6,000 USD, starting in 2023, and that this be our answer to Recommendation 3.

#### **Grounds:**

- a. Synod 2018 set the current honorarium to \$5000 USD as of January 2019.
  - b. \$6,000 USD more accurately reflects cost of living increases since 2019.
- Adopted*
4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4: “That Synod approve a one-time additional “thank you” honorarium payment of \$1,000 USD (payable in 2023) to Gary Fisher for his substantial work helping to launch the new Synod registration website in 2020 (and used for the first time in 2022).” *Adopted*
  5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5: “That Synod thank Gary Fisher for his faithful labors as the federation’s Webmaster, and that he be reappointed.” *Adopted*

The chairman instructs the Stated Clerk to send a note of thanks to Mr. Fisher.

6. That Synod accede to the Webmaster's Recommendation 1: "That Synod encourage our churches, classes, and committees to keep their pages on the federation website updated periodically, at least when changes occur, so that members, sister churches, and other visitors (in the case of public information) can be informed of the work being done throughout the federation."

**Grounds:**

- a. The Webmaster's request is more extensive than WOC Recommendation 2.

*Adopted*

7. That Synod encourage convening consistories and the Webmaster to collect and securely store on the federation website records from past and future Synods, particularly planning and working documents, and that this be Synod's answer to Webmaster's Recommendation 2.

**Grounds:**

- a. These documents and records may be useful for future convening consistories and for historical purposes, so that the collective wisdom of previous Synod planners can benefit those to come.
- b. Provisions for this possibility have already been incorporated into the website but can be improved upon as necessary.
- c. This recommendation was developed by the Webmaster in discussions with the Convening Consistory for Synod Niagara.

*Adopted*

8. That Synod thank the WOC for its continuing work.

*Adopted*

The chairman resumes the chair.

ARTICLE 107

Rev. Keith Giles reads Psalm 24:7-10 and Acts 1:6-11, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* 388, "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers."

**Friday, October 21, 2022  
Morning Session**

ARTICLE 108

Rev. Chris Gordon reads and briefly exhorts from Psalm 91, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of Psalm 91B, "Who with God Most High Finds Shelter."

ARTICLE 109



The first clerk reviews the Concept Minutes, which are corrected by the assembly. Motion is made and supported to approve the Concept Minutes as corrected. *Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 110

The second clerk reads the Press Release for Thursday. Motion is made and supported to approve the Press Release. *Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 111

The chairman notes that Elder James Van Gulp from Bethel United Reformed Church in Aylmer, ON, has departed from the assembly due to family matters; Elder Greg Vande Kamp from Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls, SD, has departed from the assembly due to family matters; and Elder Randy Mulder from Adoration United Reformed Church in Vineland, ON, has departed from the assembly due to illness.

#### ARTICLE 112

The chairman invites Rev. Steve Vandervelde to bring greetings to the assembly on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Rev. Vandervelde expresses the love of the Canadian Reformed Churches for the United Reformed Churches. He points out examples of efforts that have been made to help members of our federations to get to know one another. Rev. Vandervelde heartily encourages further efforts to get to know and to deepen our love for one another.

Rev. Joel Dykstra offers a brief response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

#### ARTICLE 113

##### **Advisory Committee 12 – Appeals**

Materials: Appeal 1 and Appeal 2

##### Recommendations:

1. For Appeal 1, that Synod set the time limit at five minutes each for oral presentations by the appellant (or his representative) and the narrower assembly's delegate. *Adopted*
2. For Appeal 2, that Synod set the time limit at five minutes each for oral presentations by the appellant (or his representative) and the narrower assembly's delegate. *Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 114

##### **Advisory Committee 12 – Appeals**

Materials: Appeal 2 and Communication 4

- A. The reporter for Advisory Committee 12 reads the summary of Appeal 2 and Specification of Error 1.
- B. Rev. Doug Barnes, representative for the appellant, the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church of Pella, IA, makes a brief oral presentation summarizing the appellant's case.
- C. Rev. Brian Lee, representative for the respondent, Classis Eastern U.S., makes a brief oral presentation summarizing the respondent's case.

## ARTICLE 115

### **Advisory Committee 12 – Appeals**

Materials: Appeal 2 and Communication 4

Recommendations:

1. That Synod find Specification of Error 1 is sustained.

#### **Specification of Error #1:**

“Classis Eastern U.S.’s disposition contradicts Appendix 7 to the Church Order, Guidelines for Appeals, which explicitly **permits** an individual appeal of a classis decision and **requires** such an appeal to be directly initiated with the assembly whose decision is being appealed.”

#### **Grounds:**

- a. The articles of our Church Order provide succinct governing principles, while the Appendices to the Church Order provide expanded and detailed procedures which are fully in accord with those principles.
- b. Appendix 7, Guidelines for Appeals, which was adopted at Synod 2018, explicitly states that these guidelines are “*in accord with Church Order Articles 29 and 31*” and that “*these guidelines shall serve as the standard for admissibility of an appeal*” [Appendix 7, Introduction]. This shows that Synod adopted the Guidelines for Appeals with the explicit understanding that the more detailed provisions of those guidelines were in accord with the general principles found in the Church Order.
- c. Appeal Guideline 1 explicitly guarantees an individual right to appeal a classis decision:

*“Appellant: An appeal may be made by a consistory or an individual who is a member of a church within the federation. The appeal may be submitted by the appellant himself or by a representative. **Any consistory or church member may appeal against a decision of any assembly of the federation**” [emphasis added].*
- d. Appeal Guideline 2 explicitly requires the initiation of the appeal to be filed with the assembly whose decision is being appealed:

*“Origination: An appeal must first be made to the assembly whose decision is being appealed before appealing to broader assemblies. The assembly whose decision is being appealed is the respondent to the appeal” [emphasis added].*

Guideline 2 makes no distinction between appeals initiated by assemblies and those initiated by individuals. This guideline clarifies that *every appeal* must be initiated with the assembly which rendered the decision being appealed. In the present case, the decision being appealed was made by Classis Eastern U.S. Therefore, the Appellants were not merely permitted, but were *required*, to initiate their appeal with Classis Eastern U.S.

*Adopted*

2. That Synod sustain Appeal 2.

**Grounds:**

- a. In Appeal 2, “the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church of Pella appeals the judgment or decision of Classis Eastern U.S. to rule the individual appeal of Elder Mark Van Der Molen and Rev. Doug Barnes ‘out of order’ on the stated ground that ‘*Church Order articles 29 and 31 do not allow an individual to directly initiate an appeal against the decision of a classis.*’” However, finding that the Specification of Error 1 is sustained invalidates this ground since Appendix 7 clearly states that individuals may bring an appeal to any ecclesiastical assembly. Appendix 7 cannot be read in harmony with the decision of Classis Eastern U.S.

*Adopted*

3. That Synod direct Classis Eastern U.S. to reverse the appealed decision.

**Grounds:**

- a. The error of Classis Eastern U.S. is of importance, as it contradicts Appendix 7 of our Church Order and would set a precedent in which classes are free to disregard the Appendices’ clear guidelines.
- A. Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by striking from the ground everything following “Church Order.” *Adopted*
- B. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 12 continued in Art. 117.)

ARTICLE 116

The chairman expresses thanks to the Missions Coordinator, Rev. Rich Bout, for his faithful labors on behalf of the missions of the URCNA.

ARTICLE 117

## **Advisory Committee 12 – Appeals**

Materials: Appeal 1 and Communication 3

- A. The reporter for Advisory Committee 12 reads the summary of Appeal 1 and Specification of Error 1.
- B. Motion is made and supported to table indefinitely the adjudication of this appeal.

***Ground:***

- a. This appeal needs first to be adjudicated by Classis Eastern U.S.
- C. Motion is made and supported to amend the motion to table indefinitely by adding a ground to the motion, specifying: “This appeal needs first to be adjudicated by Classis Eastern U.S.” *Adopted*
- D. The motion to table indefinitely, as amended, is: *Adopted*

ARTICLE 118

Rev. Ralph Pontier rises to a point of personal privilege.

ARTICLE 119

The chairman relinquishes the chair to the vice-chairman.

Rev. Mitch Dick rises to a point of personal privilege.

ARTICLE 120

## **Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 2 to amend Church Order Articles 22 & 47

Recommendation:

- 1. That Synod not accede to Overture 2 with its grounds.

***Grounds:***

- a. There is no precedent for such a parenthetical statement appended to the Church Order (all current parenthetical statements refer to appendices of the Church Order itself).
- b. Such parenthetical additions to the Church Order would threaten its simplicity.
- c. The adoption of Overture 4 by this Synod has satisfied the good intention of this overture to make accessible certain past decisions of synods which might pertain to the Church Order by providing for the publication of certain synodically-

approved and adopted decisions, documents, manuals, etc. on the URCNA website.

Overture:

Classis Eastern U.S. overtures Synod to add a parenthetical statement at the end of Articles 22 & 47 in the Church Order: *'(See The Church Planting Manual adopted at Synod 2014 for helpful guidelines at urcna.org).'*

- A. Since this recommendation is substantially different from the proposal of the overture (*Regulations 5.2.4.*), Rev. Robert Godfrey, as a representative from Classis Eastern U.S., provides a preliminary defense of Overture 12.
  
- B. The recommendation is: *Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 121

#### **Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 3 to amend Church Order Art 48

Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 3 with its grounds.

***Grounds:***

- a. There is no precedent for such a parenthetical statement appended to the Church Order (all current parenthetical statements refer to appendices of the Church Order itself).
- b. Such parenthetical additions to the Church Order would threaten its simplicity.
- c. The passing of Overture 4 by this Synod has satisfied the good intention of this overture to make accessible certain past decisions of synods which might pertain to the Church Order by providing for the publication of certain synodically-approved and adopted decisions, documents, manuals, etc. on the URCNA website.

Overture:

Classis Eastern U.S. overtures Synod to add a parenthetical statement at the end of Article 48 in the Church Order: *'See Affirmations Regarding Marriage adopted at Synod 2018 for helpful guidelines at urcna.org.'*

- A. Since this recommendation is substantially different from the proposal of the overture (*Regulations 5.2.4.*), Rev. Robert Godfrey, as a representative from Classis Eastern U.S., provides a preliminary defense of Overture 12.
  
- B. The recommendation is: *Adopted*

## ARTICLE 122

The chairman resumes the chair.

### **Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures**

Materials: Overture 11 to amend the Church Order to add national synods

#### Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 11.
  - a. We do not believe that we are facing significant enough challenges to our present synodical meetings that would require this change at this time.
  - b. We believe that at this time establishing national synods may have the unintended consequence of dividing the federation into two separate bodies, thereby hindering our present fellowship.
  - c. This recommendation, while reducing the work of a general synod, may increase the work of the federation, as matters may need to be considered at both national and general synods.
  - d. While we agree that international travel throughout the pandemic and at present has been challenging, the current overture seems to assume that the situation will remain difficult, and is a premature determination as a basis to change our current practice.
- A. Synod resumes its discussion of this recommendation, begun on Thursday morning.
- B. The recommendation is: *Adopted*

## ARTICLE 123

### **Advisory Committee 7 – Missions Committee and Overtures**

Materials: Missions Committee Report

#### Recommendations:

1. That the representatives of Classis Southwestern Ontario be appointed as the conveners for both committees.

#### ***Grounds:***

- a. While neither newly established committee contains members, the decision of Synod is to divide the two representatives from each classis who were serving on the Missions Committee between the two newly established committees. Thus, each of the representatives of Classis Southwest Ontario will serve on one of the two newly established committees, making it possible for each to convene one of our newly established committees.

- b. Both Rev. Greg Bylsma and Rev. Steve Williamson are able to convene each of these committees.
  - c. Convening a meeting does not imply that the convener is the chairman of that committee. Both committees will need to elect their own executive committees. *Adopted*
2. That Synod appoint Rev. Ken Anema, currently of Divine Hope Seminary, and Mr. Al Rumph from Bethany URC of Wyoming, MI, as the members at large of the SCFM, each for a three-year term.

***Grounds:***

- a. Rev. Anema is involved in the work of missions currently and brings invaluable experience to this committee.
- b. Mr. Al Rumph has extensive missionary experience and expertise that will greatly assist the work of this committee. *Adopted*

ARTICLE 124

- A. Rev. Greg Bylsma rises to a point of personal privilege.
- B. Motion is made and supported to add a note to Art. 103, under recommendation 26.B.: “\$2000 from the budget of the Synodical Home Missions Committee is designated to cover travel costs for the Synodical Foreign Missions Coordinator should he be asked to visit home missionaries or sending consistories.” *Adopted*

ARTICLE 125

**Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Interim Budget and Proposed Budget

Recommendations:

- 1. That Synod encourage the U.S. and Canadian Boards to bring recommendations to the next synod for future honoraria amounts for the treasurers. *Adopted*
- 2. That Synod increase the Canadian Treasurer’s yearly honorarium to \$6000 CAN from \$5000 CAN.
  - A. Motion is made and supported to increase the Canadian Treasurer’s yearly honorarium to \$6000 USD (in its Canadian equivalent). *Adopted*
  - B. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*
- 3. That Synod increase the JVA Treasurer’s yearly honorarium to \$9000 CAN from \$8000 CAN.

A. Motion is made and supported to increase the JVA Treasurer’s yearly honorarium to \$9000 USD (in its Canadian equivalent). *Adopted*

B. The recommendation, as amended, is: *Adopted*

4. That Synod increase the U.S. Treasurer’s yearly honorarium to \$6000 USD from \$5000 USD. *Adopted*

(Advisory Committee 2 continued in Art. 129.)

ARTICLE 126

Rev. Kevin Hossink reads 1 Corinthians 1:4-9, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* 529, “Lead Me, Lord, Lead Me in Thy Righteousness.”

The assembly recesses for lunch.

**Friday, October 21, 2022**  
**Afternoon Session**

ARTICLE 127

Rev. Bill Boekestein reads Psalm 46, leads the assembly in prayer, and calls for the singing of Psalm 46C, “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength.”

ARTICLE 128

The chairman notes that Elder Joel Alsum from Grace United Reformed Church of Waupun, WI, has departed from the assembly.

ARTICLE 129

**Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters**

Materials: Interim Budget and Proposed Budget

Recommendation:

1. That Synod adopt the following budget. *Adopted*

Federation Budget  
Budget: Combined US and Canadian  
In USD (amounts budgeted in Cdn\$ converted at 1.40 - Cdn\$ items identified with \*)

Item	Report	2023	2024	Notes
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Acts of Synod	1-C	-			
Bank Charges		50		50	
Committee Expenses					
CECCA	10-A	15,000		15,000	
CERCU	9-A	12,500		12,500	
Home Missions Committee	7-A	13,000		13,000	1
Foreign Missions Committee	7-A	11,000		11,000	1
PRCC Liaison	8-B	1,300		1,300	
Sexuality Committee	6-B	5,000		5,000	1
Virtual Worship Committee	6-A	5,000		5,000	1
Directors & Liability Insurance					
Canadian Board		714	*	714	*
U.S. Board		1,000		1,000	
Dues					
ICRC		2,200		2,200	2
MNA / PRCC	8-B	2,000		2,000	
NAPARC		1,000		1,000	2
Government Filing Fee					
Canadian Churches		14	*	14	*
U.S. Churches		20		20	
Missions Coordinator					
Salary + Benefits		98,573	*	101,531	*
Mileage	Synod 2014	5,000		5,000	4
Book Fund	Synod 2014	1,500		1,500	4
Office Supply		1,000		1,000	5
Travel	Synod 2014	15,000		15,000	4
Communication / Telephone		2,000		2,000	5
Postage / Supplies					
Treasurer(s)		136		136	
Stated Clerk	Synod 2018	500		500	
Professional fees					
Canadian Churches		2,036	*	2,036	*
U.S. Churches		250		250	6
Synod	Synod 2018			4,000	
Honoraria					
Treasurer(s)					
Canadian		4,286	*	4,286	*
Joint		6,429	*	6,429	*
U.S.		6,000		6,000	
Clerk	1-C	6,000		6,000	
Web Master	8-D	7,000		6,000	

Statistician	1-D	3,464	*	3,464	*
Website					
Maintenance	8-D	3,000		3,000	
Redevelopment	8-A	10,000		10,000	
CECCA Benevolence	10-A	7,500		7,500	7
Synod Deficit	1-B				
		225,508		231,466	
Estimated "askings" / family	Cdn	53.67		54.82	
	US	38.98		39.79	

#### Notes for the budget

- 1 A new committee
- 2 No budget requests were given for ICRC and NAPARC dues. The amount presented is from the most recent dues paid. CERCU and CECCA representatives did not project any increases.
- 3 Salary and benefits increased at current rate of inflation of 7% and converted into US\$
- 4 No budget request has been provided by these items. We have assumed the amounts budgeted in 2014 are sufficient.
- 5 Office supply and telephone/communication budgets were decreased by \$3K (combined) in 2022 to reflect more closely the actual costs incurred each year. These budget items were previously established in 2014.
- 6 Fees for external accountant increased by \$150 in 2023 and again in 2024 to cover anticipated increase in fee for the review engagement. U.S. Board has requested \$250 to be budgeted for 2023 & 2024 for their external accountant review.
- 7 The \$15,000 will be collected over two years, rather than collecting the full amount in the year of Synod.

### ARTICLE 130

#### Elections of Functionaries

The chairman notes that all elections and appointments have been completed except for the appointment of alternate treasurers, which the respective boards of directors are able to complete on their own.

### ARTICLE 131

#### Time and Place of Next Synod

- A. Escondido United Reformed Church has already been appointed as the next convening consistory.

B. Motion is made and supported to schedule the next synod for June 17-21, 2024.

*Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 132

A. Motion is made and supported to ask the officers of Synod to review and approve the final section of Concept Minutes.

*Adopted*

B. The chairman notes that the Concept Minutes will be available on the Synod website for a week, and corrections will be welcomed by the first clerk. They can be directed to him via email: rev.doug.barnes@gmail.com.

C. Motion is made and supported to ask the officers of Synod to review and approve the final Press Release.

*Adopted*

#### ARTICLE 133

The chairman expresses heartfelt thanks to the Convening Consistory and the members of Wellandport United Reformed Church; to our pianist, Leo Joewono; to those who provided food and technical assistance; to our Stated Clerk, Rev. Ralph Pontier; and to the officers of Synod: Second Clerk Rev. James Sinke, First Clerk Rev. Doug Barnes, and Vice-Chairman Rev. Mark Vander Pol.

He also expresses sincere appreciation for the chairmen and reporters of Synod's advisory committees, as well as to the delegates themselves, who willingly gave of their time and gifts to serve the United Reformed Churches in North America.

The vice-chairman rises to express the assembly's appreciation for our chairman, Rev. Bradd Nymeyer, noting the selflessness, humility, and grace that he has demonstrated. The assembly rises with applause to echo his sentiments.

#### ARTICLE 134

The chairman reads Psalm 90:17, leads the assembly in a closing prayer, and calls the brothers to sing the Doxology.

#### ARTICLE 135

Motion is made and supported to adjourn.

*Adopted*

# SYNOD NIAGARA 2022

## INDEX OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS WITHIN ACTS OF SYNOD

### COMMITTEE 1

- | Art. # | Material:  |
|--------|--|
| ▪ 69   | Report of the Statistician                                 |
| ▪ 80   | Credentials  |
| ▪ 81   | Report of the Convening Consistory and Supplemental Report |
| ▪ 82   | Report of the Stated Clerk and Supplemental Report         |
| ▪ 83   | Communication 1  |
| ▪ 84   | Communication 2  |

### COMMITTEE 2

- | Art. # | Material:                                 |
|--------|---|
| ▪ 31   | Synod Wheaton 2018 Financial Report       |
| ▪ 32   | U.S. Treasurer's Reports                  |
| ▪ 33   | Canadian Treasurer's Reports              |
| ▪ 34   | JVA Financial Reports                     |
| ▪ 48   | Communication 7                           |
| ▪ 85   | Report of the U.S. Board of Directors     |
| ▪ 88   | Report of the Canadian Board of Directors |
| ▪ 125  | Interim Budget and Proposed Budget        |
| ▪ 129  | Interim Budget and Proposed Budget        |

### COMMITTEE 3

- | Art. # | Material:          |
|--------|--------------------|
| ▪ 35   | Overtures 2 and 14 |
| ▪ 36   | Overture 21        |
| ▪ 52   | Overture 21        |

### COMMITTEE 4

- | Art. # | Material:   |
|--------|-------------|
| ▪ 53   | Overture 4  |
| ▪ 54   | Overture 5  |
| ▪ 55   | Overture 10 |
| ▪ 120  | Overture 2  |
| ▪ 121  | Overture 3  |

### COMMITTEE 5

- | Art. # | Material:   |
|--------|-------------|
| ▪ 89   | Overture 12 |

- 90 Overture 13
- 91 Overture 11
- 122 Overture 11

## **COMMITTEE 6**

- | Art. # | Material:   |
|--------|-------------|
| ▪ 37   | Overture 16 |
| ▪ 46   | Overture 16 |
| ▪ 47   | Overture 15 |

## **COMMITTEE 7**

- | Art. # | Material:                        |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| ▪ 29   | Overture 18                      |
| ▪ 49   | Overture 18                      |
| ▪ 50   | Communication 6                  |
| ▪ 95   | Report of the Missions Committee |
| ▪ 97   | Report of the Missions Committee |
| ▪ 101  | Report of the Missions Committee |
| ▪ 102  | Overture 6                       |
| ▪ 103  | Overture 19                      |
| ▪ 123  | Report of the Missions Committee |

## **COMMITTEE 8**

- | Art. # | Material:  |
|--------|--|
| ▪ 51   | Overture 7   |
| ▪ 104  | Report of the PRCC Liaison                                     |
| ▪ 105  | Report of the Oversight Consistory for Web Oversight Committee |
| ▪ 106  | Report of the Web Oversight Committee                          |

## **COMMITTEE 9**

- | Art. # | Material:   |
|--------|---|
| ▪ 28   | Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity |
| ▪ 61   | Overture 8  |
| ▪ 78   | Overture 8  |
| ▪ 79   | Communication 5   |

## **COMMITTEE 10**

- | Art. # | Material:   |
|--------|---|
| ▪ 57   | Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad |
| ▪ 58   | Report of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad |

## **COMMITTEE 11**

- | Art. # | Material:   |
|--------|---|
| ▪ 24   | Report of the <i>Trinity Psalter Hymnal</i> Joint Venture Board |
| ▪ 25   | Report of the Liturgical Forms Committee                        |
| ▪ 56   | Overture 9  |
| ▪ 60   | Overture 17   |

## **COMMITTEE 12**

- | Art. # | Material:                                   |
|--------|---|
| ▪ 26   | Report of the Standing Committee on Appeals |
| ▪ 27   | Overture 20                                 |
| ▪ 113  | Appeal 1 and Appeal 2                       |
| ▪ 114  | Appeal 2 and Communication 4                |
| ▪ 115  | Appeal 2 and Communication 4                |
| ▪ 117  | Appeal 1 and Communication 3                |