

Church Order

**FREE REFORMED CHURCHES
OF NORTH AMERICA**

VOLUME TWO

2019 Edition

Church Order Supplements

Section A: Forms & Guides for Consistories

Section C: Mandates for Standing Committees



Church Order

of the
**FREE REFORMED CHURCHES
OF NORTH AMERICA**



2019 Edition

VOLUME TWO

Supplements

Section A: for Consistories

Section C: for Standing Committees



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July, 2019 edition

Notice: Synodically authorized changes and updates made between printed editions will appear in the most recent church order edition copy posted on the denominational website, which edition alone is considered the official version of the Church Order of the Free Reformed Churches of North America. The digital website copy is published by the Church Order Committee on behalf of the synod of the FRCNA.

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¹ For Supplements section “B” see *Church Order FRCNA, Vol.1., 62-87.*

Preface

Fulfilling the decision of Synod 2010, the Church Order Committee has been preparing a fully updated edition of the articles of the *Church Order* as used by the Free Reformed Churches.

The purpose for this edition was to incorporate all the changes resulting from the decisions of synod meetings since 1985.

We are thankful to be able to present this edition and make it available in two formats: one being posted on the internet website of the denomination (www.frcna.org/resources); the other in printed format.

This edition of our Church Order includes both the main articles of the church order (see ***Church Order Volume 1***), as well as the supplements. These supplements have been divided into three sections:

Section-A: Supplements for Consistory Use

Section-B: Supplements for Broader Assemblies

Section-C: Supplements for Standing Committees, as well as other forms that are used by our churches.

Volume 1, was printed in 2015, contains the main Church Order articles together with Supplements **Section “B”**.

Volume 2, (2019 edition, printed in 2020) includes both Supplements **Section “A”** and **Section “C”**, we are now pleased to present in print as well as in the online format.

As we present Volume Two, we want to make some introductory remarks. The supplements included in “Section A” include documents called “**concept**” regulations or forms. These are suggested for adoption (after any relevant adjustments) by local consistories to help regulate procedures

on the level of the local church life, ministry, or administration, such as the election of office bearers. Having such a set of regulations adopted by the Consistory will serve to keep proceedings consistent and help prevent arbitrariness dealings in leadership. Supplements also include concept forms, which are suggested wordings for certificates, letters, or credentials.

We remain open to feedback; if you have any helpful suggestions regarding the format in which this document is printed, have found any errors in language which we missed (in either *Volume 1* or *Volume 2*).

We want to add a note of our gratitude to Dr. L.W. Bilkes who has served faithfully on this committee for many years, even into his years of emeritation. His advice and participation in the work of this committee has been greatly valued and was much appreciated. May the Lord richly bless him, and his wife Jane, in the years to come.

It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will bless the use of this publication to help us carry out the apostolic command: “Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Cor.14:40)

May the Lord bless these efforts for the well-being of our churches and the glory of His name.

For the Church Order Committee,

Rev. John R. Koopman, chair (Chilliwack)
Mr. Ray Pennings, [Secretary](#) (St. George)
Rev. P. VanderMeyden, Archivist (Vineland)
Rev. David H. Kranendonk (Oxford)
Mr. Jerry Benjamins (Brantford)

July 2019

A. Supplements For Consistory Use

Supplement No. A -1
(cf. C.O. Article 4 & 5)

1. Regulations for the Election and Calling of Ministers of the Word

(Concept)

Article 1: Election and Calling of a Minister

The election and calling of a minister of the Word shall be performed by the Consistory, with the assistance of the voting members of the congregation, in accordance with Articles 4 and 5. Voting members are male members of the congregation who are permitted to attend the Lord's Supper and are not under censure.

Article 2: Nomination of a Minister

In the event of a ministerial vacancy, the Consistory meets for the purpose of producing a nomination. In the process of setting nominees, the Consistory is at liberty to give to the members of the congregation the opportunity to call attention to certain ministers or candidates.

To fill the vacancy, it proposes two (or more) persons from amongst whom the congregation may choose.

Article 3: Election of the Minister

After the names which have been placed on the nomination have been announced twice to the congregation, the Consistory calls a meeting of the voting members, which, under the presidency of the counsellor or his substitute and after calling upon the Name of the Lord, proceeds to the election.

Article 4: Signing of Roster and Proof of Membership

At this meeting, all those who are present shall sign a roster and the president is empowered, if necessary, to request proof of membership.

Article 5: Viable Electorate

Only those who are present at the meeting may participate in the voting.

Article 6: Electoral Procedure Prior to Vote

Before the voting begins, the President shall read again the names of the persons on the nomination. He shall further observe that an actual count is made of the church members present at the meeting and participating in the voting and also the number of votes that each of the nominees receives. The record of this voting is to be recorded in the usual minute book of the Consistory and approved and signed by the Consistory.

Article 7: Counting of the Votes

At the counting of the votes, blank ballots and other illegal votes, such as ballots with more names than the number of vacancies, other names, etc., shall be excluded from the count.

Article 8: Election of the Candidate

That person is elected who receives the most legal votes, considering that in no case is one considered elected, if he receives less than one-half plus one of an even total of legal votes cast or, in the case of an uneven total, less than half plus one-half of the total of legal votes cast and in accordance with the stipulations in articles 5 and 6, above.

When there is a tie vote, another vote shall be held. At a nomination of two persons, the voting is for one of the two.

When more than two persons have been nominated, the vote is between the two who received the most votes; in case they did not receive a majority, then one more free vote shall take place. If the votes are tied for the second time, a decision is to be made by casting lots.²

Article 9: Extension of Ministerial Call

The minister or candidate chosen by the congregation may be called by the Consistory to be the Shepherd and Minister of the congregation, whereof he is informed by the Consistory as soon as possible by means of a calling letter, signed by the President and Secretary and also by or in name of the counsellor. In this calling letter salary and benefits are to be mentioned and also a

² **Concepts** are model documents of common procedure; local Consistories may adopt a variation of these procedures, as they deem best, provided it is according to relevant articles in the Church Order (e.g. Article 4, & 5.)

commitment is to be made of an emeritus salary in accordance with Synodical stipulations.

Article 10: Acceptance of Ministerial Call

After the minister or candidate has accepted the call, the Consistory shall announce his name to the congregation on two consecutive Lord's Days, that it may thus be approved by the congregation in accordance with Articles 4 and 5 and the Form for the Ordination of the Ministers of God's Word.

Article 11: Ordination or Installation

After the approbation of the congregation and of the *Contracta*, the public ordination and/or installation according to the ecclesiastical stipulations shall take place upon the arrival of the called candidate/minister.

Article 12: Objections and Right to Appeal

Objections of a formal nature against the selection of a minister must be brought to the same meeting at which the minister is elected. Only in this case has a complainant the right to appeal to a major assembly in the event that his complaint has not been resolved.

By the Consistory mentioned in these articles is understood the broad Consistory, i.e. the Consistory with the deacons.

These regulations were adopted by the Consistory during a meeting held on _____

_____ President

_____ Secretary

Supplement No. A - 2

(cf. C.O. Article 4 & 5)

2. Call Letter

(Concept)

Free Reformed Church of _____

Rev. _____

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____, convinced of the urgent need of having its own Pastor and Teacher, has again taken up the work of calling a minister.

After having called upon the King of the Church with prayers and supplications at the meeting today of the Consistory with the voting members of the congregation, you were chosen (out of a previously made nomination consisting of you and Pastor _____), with the majority of the votes, to be our Pastor and Teacher. Thus, the Consistory has decided to extend the call to you, which we hereby do in writing. The Consistory does this with the prayer that the King of the Church, who also sends out His servants, may crown this call with His blessing and favour.

To the services that the congregation desires from its ministers belong:

- A. Preaching two times on the Lord's Day, once on what is a free subject or text out of the Old or New Testament and once on a Lord's Day, or part thereof, of the Heidelberg Catechism so that no part of the Catechism is omitted.
- B. Preaching on the Christian feast days, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day and on the Prayer and Thanksgiving days.
- C. Administration of the Holy Sacraments.
- D. Solemnizing of marriages and conducting of funerals.
- E. Instruction of the youth of the congregation in the doctrine according to godliness in weekly catechism classes, using textbooks approved by the Consistory.
- F. Visiting of the sick and family visitation and further all that which pertains to the work of a minister of the Gospel, so that it is testified to all that it shall go ill with the wicked and only those who are justified by the blood of the Cross can have

eternal peace.

All of this should be performed in strict accordance to the Word of God and in agreement with the Three Forms of Unity, the currently prevailing Church Order and the further stipulations and decisions of the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

The Consistory, prayerfully looking to the Lord, from its side promises to support you in brotherly love and communion of spirit to feed the congregation of the Lord at this place.

And in order that you, labouring in the Gospel, may also without concern live of the Gospel and because the labourer is worthy of his hire, the Consistory promises you:

- A. An annual salary of \$_____ to be paid in twelve equal monthly instalments.
- B. Free use of a parsonage.
- C. A car allowance of \$_____.
- D. Provisions for medical costs.
- E. Service increment of \$_____ for each year in the ministry to a maximum of 10 years.
- F. _____ free Lord's Days, in addition to those that must be spent in the service of vacant churches in accordance with the determination of Synod.

The Consistory also guarantees you the support in accordance with synodical stipulations for emeritus ministers, ministers' widows and orphan children in the event you should become emeritus while serving at our church or should pass away during this time.

May the Lord give you light and wisdom to make a decision that is to the glory of God and may it be to our joy, so that we may soon hear from you that you have accepted our call with much liberty.

Done in Consistory, this _____ of _____ 2_____.

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____.

Signature of the President _____

Signature of the Secretary _____

Signature of the Counsellor _____

Supplement No. A- 3
(cf. C.O. Article 5 & 10)

3. Credentials For Departing Ministers

(Concept Forms)

Instructions

1. The Consistory of the departing minister shall provide 2 copies of **Form A** and 1 copy of **Form B** to the Classis of its own congregation (or to the Consistory or Consistories that have been appointed to approve credentials.
See *Synod Contracta*, Article 5-C, Church Order).

[The *Contracta* presently consists of the Consistories of Hamilton and Dundas. See Acts of Synod 1981, art.11, p.4. and Acts of Synod 1982, art.41]

2. This *Contracta* after approval of **Form A** and **B**, shall forward 1 copy of **Form C** to the Consistory of the new congregation.
3. **Form C**, point "A", shall only be included if a movement from one Classis (Combined Consistory) or Synod to another takes place. If such is the case, 2 copies of **Form C** shall be sent to that Classis (Combined Consistory) to which the minister is going (or to the *Contracta* which is designated to approve credentials for that other region or Synod).

CREDENTIALS FOR DEPARTING MINISTERS
FORM A

The Consistory of The Free Reformed Church of _____, having heard from the Rev. _____, Minister of the Divine Word here since _____ that he desires to accept the call extended to him by the Free Reformed Church of _____, and considering that sufficient reasons have been adduced for the Consistory to acquiesce in his acceptance of this call, has in its meeting of _____ decided:

1. **to release**, with honour, Rev. _____ from his agreement with the Free Reformed Church of _____, effective the date of his installation as Minister of the Word in the church of _____;

2. **to declare** concerning Rev. _____ that during the time of his labours at the church of _____ he was faithful and diligent in his office, Christian and upright in his confession and walk, and has been inoffensive and blameless in the congregation;

3. **to give** Rev. _____ a copy of this declaration, in duplicate, so that these credentials, in accordance with Articles 5 and 10 of the Church Order, may serve to the Free Reformed Church at _____ and the Free Reformed Synod (via the Contracta) as a legal testimony of his departure from the congregation where he has served and as a good ecclesiastical attestation of doctrine and life; and

4. **to commend** Rev. _____ at his coming departure unto God and the Word of His grace; with sincere thanks for the faithful service performed here during _____ years, with the heartfelt prayer that it may please the Lord to make him to be a rich blessing in the congregation that he is about to serve.

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____.

Date: _____

_____ President
_____ Secretary

CREDENTIALS FOR DEPARTING MINISTERS
FORM B

To: the Synod (*Contracta*) of the Free Reformed Churches of North America:

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____ has the honour hereby to advise the Synod (*Contracta*) that the Rev. _____, Minister of the Word at this church since ____ (date) ____, desires to accept the call extended to him by the Free Reformed Church at _____ and considering that sufficient reasons have been adduced for the Consistory to acquiesce in his acceptance of this call,

THE CONSISTORY THEREFORE:

Resolves to discharge Rev. _____ from his agreement with the Free Reformed Church at _____, which discharge shall be effective the date of his installation as Minister of the Word in the church at _____; and

Grants this discharge in a most honourable manner, declaring that Rev. _____ all the time of his labours at the church of _____ was faithful and diligent in his office, Christian and upright in his confession and walk, being blameless and inoffensive in the congregation.

THE CONSISTORY THEREFORE:

Proposes to the Synod (*Contracta*) that the Synod, in a like manner and with a similar declaration, acquiesce in this discharge in order that the church at _____ may receive him, in accordance with Articles 5 and 10, of the Church Order, with legal testimonials of his departure from the church of _____ where he has served and with good ecclesiastical credentials concerning doctrine and life.

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____.

Date: _____

_____ President
_____ Secretary

CREDENTIALS FOR DEPARTING MINISTERS
FORM C³

The Synod (*Contracta*) of the Free Reformed Churches of North America, having seen the communication of the church at _____, that the Rev. _____, Minister of the Word at this congregation since _____, desires to accept the call extended to him by the Free Reformed Church at _____ and that the Consistory of the church at _____ has decided to acquiesce in his acceptance of this call considering that sufficient reasons have been adduced for it; has decided in its meeting of _____:

1. **To release**, with honour, Rev. _____ from his services in the Combined Consistory region of _____, which release shall be effective the date he shall be united to the service in the Combined Consistory region of _____.)

2. **To declare** concerning Rev. _____ that during the entire period of his labours in the Synod he was faithful and diligent in his office, Christian and upright in his confession and walk, being blameless and inoffensive in Synod;

3. **To give** Rev. _____ a copy of this declaration so these credentials, in accordance with Articles 5 and 10 of the Church Order, may serve to the Free Reformed Church at _____ as a legal testimony of his departure from the congregation at _____ where he has served, and as a good ecclesiastical attestation of doctrine and life; and

4. **To commend** Rev. _____ upon his departure unto God and the Word of His grace, with sincere thankfulness for the faithful service performed here during---- __ years and with the heartfelt prayer that it may please the Lord to make him to be a rich blessing in the congregation that he is about to serve.

For the above-mentioned Synod (*Contracta*):

Date _____ President
_____ Secretary

³ See point 3 of “Instructions”, above.

Supplement No. A - 4

(Cf. C.O. Article 13)

4. Credentials For Ministers' Emeritus Declaration

(Concept)

The Synod of the Free Reformed Churches, meeting on _____, 20 __, in _____ having seen and considered:

- A. the request for emeritation and the reasons adduced for it, submitted by the Rev. _____ to the consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____;
- B. the compliance with the request by the consistory;
- C. [the certificates submitted by two physicians, indicating that the Rev. _____ has been rendered incapable of performing the duties of his office. *(This requirement applies only when the applicant for emeritation has become physically or mentally incapable of discharging his usual duties and has not reached the age at which this status may customarily be requested...OR)*

considers the request justified and for that reason decides:

- 1. to grant to the Rev. _____ emeritus status, effective _____
- 2. to grant this emeritus status based on Article 13. due to _____
- 3. that according to the ecclesiastical ordinances Rev. _____ is emeritus minister of the church of _____ and consequently the responsibility for providing honourably in his need rests with the consistory of this church;
- 4. to commend the Rev. _____ to God and the Word of His grace, with sincere thanks for the faithful service performed in the above-named classis during ____ years, which service shall remain in grateful memory and with the hearty prayer that it may please the Lord to confirm the blessings on that labour in the most honourable way.

For the Synod above named, Date: _____

_____ (signature and name) _____, President of Synod

_____ (signature and name) _____, Secretary of Synod

Supplement No. A- 5

(See C.O. Article 5-F)

5. Ministerial Certificate of Release

(In connection with removal to a Church which does not stand in a correspondence relationship with the FRCNA)

The consistory of the Free Reformed Church of _____, having heard from the Rev. _____ that he wishes to accept a call from a church with which our churches do not maintain a relationship of correspondence, has decided, in its meeting of _____ 19__:

A. to release, with honour, the Rev. _____ from his bond to the Free Reformed Church of _____, this release to be effective _____ (see Art. 5-F-1);

B. to declare concerning the Rev. _____, that he, during the time he laboured in the Free Reformed Church of _____, did so faithfully and diligently, adhering in doctrine and life to the Word of God as interpreted by our Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht;

C. to commend the Rev. _____, at his coming departure, unto God and the Word of His grace, with sincere thanks for the faithful service performed here during ____ years.

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church of _____.

Date _____

(Vice) President _____

Secretary _____

Supplement No. A - 6

(cf. C.O. Articles 22 & 24)

**6. Regulations for the Election of Elders and Deacons
(Concept)**

Article 1: Proper Election of Elders and Deacons

In accordance with articles 22 and 24 of the Church Order, the elders and deacons shall be chosen by the consistory with the assistance of the voting members of the congregation, according to the stipulations of the Church Order, with observance of the rules contained in the following articles.

Voting members are those male members of the congregation who are confessing members and are not under censure.

Article 2: Calling of Suitable Candidates

During the month of _____ the Consistory shall give an opportunity to the voting members of the congregation to suggest, by means of signed letters, names of brothers whom they consider to be suitable for the office of elder or deacon. This method is optional according to the by-laws of the individual church.

At the next meeting of the consistory, the consistory may add other names to this list and from this list make up a final list of candidates of twice the number of vacancies in order that the voting members may choose half of this number.

Article 3: Calling of Electoral Meeting

After the names of the candidates have been announced to the congregation on two consecutive Lord's Days, the Consistory, during the month of _____, shall call a meeting with the voting members in order to proceed to the election of elders and deacons under its leadership and after calling upon the name of the Lord.

Article 4: Viable Electorate

At this meeting all those voting members who are present shall sign an attendance list, and the president has authority to request proof of membership and to exclude non-voting members.

Article 5: Viable Electorate

All eligible members who have signed the attendance list may participate in the vote. An absentee ballot must be submitted in a sealed envelope, signed (by hand only) on the outside. The ballots

shall not identify the voter in any way and will not be counted again if subsequent rounds of voting are needed.

Article 6: Electoral Procedure

Before the voting takes place, the President shall read the names of the persons on the nomination lists, both of the elders and the deacons, according to the nomination set by the Consistory. He shall further observe that an actual count is made of the number of church members present at the meeting and participating in the voting, plus the number of legitimate and accepted absentee ballots and also the number of votes that each of the nominees receives.

After the ballots have been counted, the chairman may announce the number of votes each nominee received. The deed of this voting shall be recorded in the usual minute book of the Consistory and approved and signed by the Consistory.

Article 7: Counting of the Votes

At the counting of the votes, blank ballots and other illegal votes (such as ballots with more names than the number of vacancies, other names, etc.) shall be excluded from the count.

Article 8: Election of the Candidate(s)

The brother or brothers who receive the majority shall be considered elected. One half of the valid votes plus one shall constitute a majority. When there is a tie vote, another election shall take place. When there is another tie vote, then the oldest in years shall be chosen. When, with a nomination of more than two persons, there is no majority of votes in the first round of voting, a second round shall take place to vote between those who received the most votes.

Article 9: Informing Elected Candidates

The Consistory shall inform the chosen brethren that they have been appointed as soon as possible. If an elected brother declines the appointment, and the Consistory approves his reasons, a new election shall take place, according to the same rules.

Article 10: Objections and Installation

After the elected brothers have accepted their appointment, the Consistory shall announce their names on two consecutive Lord's Days, in order that the congregation may approve the appointment made by the Consistory. If no legitimate objections are brought against them, they shall be installed in their office(s) on _____, or,

if for some reason that will not be possible, on the following Lord's Day, according to the form for installation of elders and deacons in a worship service of the congregation.

Article 11: Term of Office

The elders and deacons shall be chosen for a ____ year term of office. Every year a certain number of office-bearers shall retire, in accordance with a set schedule. Those who retire shall be succeeded by others. When vacancies cannot be filled in accordance with these rules, the Consistory shall have the right to re-nominate the retiring brothers, in-order to give the congregation an opportunity to reelect them.

The term of office of the elders and deacons shall begin with their installation and last—except in case of death or deposition—until successors shall have been installed in their place at the end of their term of service.

Article 12: Vacancies

When vacancies occur during the course of the year, the Consistory shall decide when they will fill the vacancies. In such instances, the Consistory shall observe these regulations except for the time element. Interim-appointed elders and deacons shall be ordained as soon as possible.

Article 13: Objections Against Procedure

Objections against methods of procedure shall be made known at the same meeting at which they occur. They who fail to do so at that same meeting forfeit their right of appeal to the broader assemblies.

These regulations were adopted by the Consistory during a meeting held on _____

_____ President
_____ Secretary

Supplement No. A - 7

(cf. C.O. Article 52)

7. Formula of Subscription

We, the undersigned, Ministers of the Gospel, Elders and Deacons of the Free Reformed Churches of North America, do hereby sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord declare by this, our subscription, that we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed Churches, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrines made by the National Synod of Dordrecht of 1618-1619, do fully agree with the Word of God.

We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by our public preaching or writing.

We declare, moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine and particularly those which were condemned by the above-mentioned Synod, but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these and to exert ourselves in keeping the church free from such errors. And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrine should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the Consistory, Combined Consistory and Synod, that the same may be there examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the Consistory, Combined Consistory and Synod, under the penalty in case of refusal, by that very fact to be suspended from our office.

And further, if at any time the Consistory, Classis or Synod, upon sufficient ground of suspicion and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine, may deem it proper to require of us a further explanation of our sentiments respecting any particular article of the Confession of Faith, the Catechism or the explanation of the National Synod, we do hereby promise always to be willing and ready to comply with such requisition, under penalty above mentioned,

Supplement No. A - 8
(cf. C.O. Article 82)

8. Certificate of Membership

(Under a Church letterhead)

L.S.

The Consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____
hereby declares that the member(s):

_____ born _____ and
_____ born _____

as far as is known to them, is (are) sound in the faith and upright in
walk. We therefore commend the above named

_____ (and) _____

to the church at _____ and request the Consistory
of that church to take him (her, them) under their Christian guidance
and supervision, permitting him (her, them) to use the Holy
Sacraments and whenever necessary to assist him (her, them) by
word and deed.

For the Consistory of the Free Reformed Church at _____
Date _____

_____ President

_____ Secretary

NOTE: This certificate must be submitted to the Consistory of the
receiving church as soon as possible. (see Church Order, Art. 82-A-3)

.....

(Reverse Side)

Married on : (Date) _____

Confession of Faith:

(Husband) _____ (Date) _____

(Wife) _____ (Date) _____

Names of Their Children:

_____ Date of Birth _____ Date of Baptism _____

_____ Date of Birth _____ Date of Baptism _____

_____ Date of Birth _____ Date of Baptism _____

Residence of the above-mentioned member(s):

Supplement No. A - 9

(cf. C.O. Article 82-A-4, also Article 60-D)

9. Certificate of Baptized Membership

(Church Letterhead)

L.S.

The consistory of the Free Reformed Church of _____ hereby notifies the consistory of the Free Reformed Church of _____ that the baptized member _____ has moved to your congregation and hereby commends the above mentioned baptized member to your spiritual care.

For the consistory of the Free Reformed Church of _____.

Date _____

President _____

Secretary _____.

.....

(reverse side)

Name of parents: _____

Born: _____, _____

Baptized: _____, _____, in the _____

Married to: _____

Present address: _____

Remarks:

Supplement No. A - 10

(cf. C.O. Article 61)

10. Forms for the Public Confession of Faith

Form “A”⁴

(Before or after the sermon, the minister requests those who intend to make public confession of their faith to arise and to reply to the following questions:)

1. Do you declare and acknowledge that the doctrine of this church, insofar as you have heard, learned, and confessed it, is the true and complete doctrine of salvation in accordance with the Holy Scriptures?
2. Do you promise that, with the grace of the Lord, you will steadfastly continue in the confession of this doctrine of salvation and live and die therein?
3. Do you promise that your life will always be, with Christ's help and grace, godly, honourable, and inoffensive, and that you will adorn your confession with good works?
4. Do you promise that you will submit and subject yourself to the instruction and admonition of the church and to church discipline, in case you should become delinquent (which may God graciously forbid) either in doctrine or in life?

Answer: Yes.

⁴ The Confession of Faith questions in Form “A” are derived from the form used by G. Voetius.

Public Confession of Faith - Alternate Form⁵

Form “B”

1. Do you believe the truth of God which is revealed in the Old and New Testament and confessed in the articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?
2. Do you promise by the grace of God steadfastly to continue in the confession of this truth of God and to live and die therein?
3. Do you confess that you abhor and humble yourself before God because of your sins and that you seek your life outside of yourself in Jesus Christ and do you desire to celebrate the Lord's Supper for the strengthening of your faith?
4. Do you confess that it is your heartfelt desire, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him according to His Word, to manifest yourself as a faithful member of the church of Christ, to contribute to the upbuilding of His church, to confess His Name in the world and to submit yourself willingly to the pastoral supervision and the discipline of the church?

Answer: Yes.

⁵ This **Public Confession of Faith: Alternate Form**, is a translation of a form used by the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. Synod 2001 decided to permit the use of these at the discretion of the local consistory. See *Acts of Synod 2001*, Article 25, p.20.

Supplement No. A – 11
(Cf. C.O. Article 70)

11. Forms for Use at Weddings

Forms for Wedding Announcement and Banns

(Concept Forms)

Form of wedding announcement to the Congregation:

The Consistory informs the congregation that
_____ (full legal name) _____ and _____ (full legal name) _____
have requested their marriage to be solemnized in this church.

Unless the Consistory is notified of legitimate objections,
this confirmation will take place, the Lord willing, on _____
at _____, the Lord willing.

Alternate (formal Publication of the Banns⁶ when applicable):

We publish the banns of marriage for
_____ (full legal name) _____ and _____ (full legal name) _____
who have asked to be united in the bonds of matrimony.
Unless the Consistory is notified of any legal impediment, their
marriage will take place, the Lord willing, on _____,
_____, at _____ o'clock in this church.

This is the 1st / 2nd announcement. -----

⁶ Marriage by Banns is practiced in the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec. Legal regulation requires that “at least once, seven days prior to the date of the wedding, the intention to marry be announced in an audible voice during a divine worship service.” Our ecclesiastical practice is to do so on two consecutive Lord’s Days. In other provinces and in the U.S.A., marriages are solemnized by way of marriage licence. For religious solemnization (or confirmation) of marriages in such cases an appropriate announcement should be made in accordance with local church practices (cf. also FRCNA Church Order, Article 70)

Updated Translation of Psalter Form for Weddings⁷

Form for the Solemnization of Marriage

Whereas married persons are generally, by reason of sin, subject to many troubles and afflictions, you _____(Name of Groom)_____ and _____(Name of Bride)_____, who desire to have your marriage publically solemnized in the name of God and in this Church, may nevertheless be assured in your hearts with all certainty of the assistance of God in your afflictions.

Therefore, hear from the Word of God how honourable the marriage state is, and that it is an institution of God, which is pleasing to Him. Wherefore also He will (as He has promised) bless and help married persons, and on the contrary, judge and punish fornicators and adulterers.

I. [INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE:] In the first place you are to know, that God our Father, after He had created heaven and earth, and all that in them is, made man in His own image and likeness and God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air." (Gen.1:28) And after He had created man, He said, "It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him." And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman,

⁷ This version of the form was approved by synod in 1993. See *Acts of Synod 1993*, Article 13. Some additions have been provided by the editors [in square brackets] as optional but customary practices such as the "ring ceremony."

because she was taken out of man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father, and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." (Gen.2:18, 21-24)

Therefore, you are not to doubt, that the married state is pleasing to the Lord, since He Himself made an help meet for Adam, brought and gave her to him to be his wife; witnessing thereby that as with His hand He still brings to every man his wife. For this reason, the Lord Jesus Christ also highly honoured the marriage state with His presence, gifts and miracles in Cana of Galilee. Thereby the Lord shows that the marriage state is to be kept honourable by all and that He will always aid and protect married persons, even when they least deserve it.

To the end that you may live godly in marriage, you must know the purposes for which God has instituted the same:

The **first** is that husband and wife faithfully assist each other in all things that belong to life in time and eternity.

Secondly, that they bring up the children whom the Lord may be pleased to give them, in the true knowledge and fear of God, to His glory and their salvation.

Thirdly, that each of them may live with a good and quiet conscience, avoiding all impurity and evil lusts.

For, to avoid fornication, Scripture teaches us, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband; so that all who are come to their years, and have not the gift of continence are bound by the command of God to enter into the marriage state, with the knowledge and consent of parents or guardians and friends, and to live in all holiness with each other in this state, so that the temple of God, which is our body, may not be defiled; for whosoever defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

II. [**DUTIES OF MARRIAGE:**] Next you are to know, how each is bound to behave towards the other, according to the Word of God.

You, who are the **bridegroom**, must know that God has set you to be the head of your wife, that according to your ability, you shall lead her with discretion; instructing, comforting, protecting her, as the head rules the body; yea, even as Christ is the Head, the wisdom, the consolation and the assistance of His church. Besides, you are to love your wife as your own body, even as Christ has loved His

Church. You shall not be bitter against her, but dwell with her as a man of understanding, giving honour to the wife as the weaker vessel, considering that you are heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. Furthermore, since it is God's command, that "the man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his face", (Gen.3:19) therefore you are to labour diligently and faithfully in the calling wherein God has set you, that you may maintain your household honestly and likewise have something to give to the needy.

In like manner you, the **bride**, must know how to conduct yourself in relation to your husband, according to the Word of God. You are to love your lawful husband and to honour and respect him, and be obedient to him in all lawful things, as to your Lord, as the body is obedient to the head and the church to Christ. You shall not exercise any dominion over your husband, for Adam was first created, and then Eve, to be a help to Adam and after the fall God said to Eve, and in her to all women, "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over you". (Genesis 3:16) You shall not resist this ordinance of God, but be obedient to the Word of God, and follow the example of godly women, who trusted in God and were subject to their husbands. For example, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (1 Peter 3:6). You shall also be an help to your husband in all good and lawful things, looking after your family, and walking in all honesty and virtue, without worldly pride, so that you may give good example of modesty to others.

[DECLARATION OF INTENTION: [The minister shall ask them to *rise* and shall say:] Wherefore, _____ (N.G)._____ and _____(N.B.)_____, having understood that God has instituted marriage, and what He commands you; do you declare before God and His holy church that it is your sincere intention to live in this holy state after this manner, and do you desire that your marriage be solemnized?

Answer: 'Yes.'

[Then the minister says:] I take you all, who are met here to witness, that there is brought no lawful objection.

[Then the minister says:] The Lord God confirm your intention, which He has given you; and may the beginning of your marriage be

in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

VOWS:[At this time they shall join right hands, and the minister will say]

[To the **Bridegroom:**] _____N.G._____, Do you acknowledge here before the Lord (and His church) that you do take as your lawful wife, _____N.B._____ here present, promising never to forsake her; to love her faithfully, and to maintain her, as a faithful and godly husband is bound to do for his lawful wife; that you will live in holiness with her being faithful and truthful to her in all things according to the holy gospel?

Answer: '*I do.*'

[To the **Bride:**] _____N.B._____ Do you acknowledge here before the Lord (and this His holy church) that you do take as your lawful husband, _____N.G.____ here present, promising to love him, to be obedient to him, to serve and assist him, never to forsake him, to live in holiness with him, being faithful and truthful to him in all things, as a godly and faithful wife is bound to her lawful husband, according to the holy gospel?

Answer: '*I do.*'

[[OPTIONAL DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE:[The minister shall say:]

"In accordance with the ordinances of God and by the civil authority vested upon me (by the province/state of _____), I now pronounce you husband and wife."]]

May the Father of all mercies, who by His grace called you to this holy state of marriage, bind you in true love and faithfulness and grant you His blessing. Amen.

[[OPTIONAL RING CEREMONY:

[To the **Groom**] _____N.G._____ Do you give this ring as a symbol of your constant faithfulness and abiding love? ("*I do*")

[To the **Bride:**] _____N.B._____ Do you give this ring as a symbol of your constant faithfulness and abiding love? ("*I do*")]]

Hear now from the gospel how firm the bond of marriage is, as described by Matthew 19:3-9

The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and

saying unto Him: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He said unto them Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Believe these words of Christ, and be certain and assured, that your Lord God has joined you together in this holy state. You are therefore to receive whatever befalls you therein, with patience and thanksgiving as from the hand of God, and thus all things will turn to your advantage and salvation. Amen.

[PRAYER]: (While couple is kneeling) Let us now pray ...

Almighty God, Thou who dost manifest Thy goodness and wisdom in all Thy works and ordinances and from the beginning has said, that it is not good that man be alone and therefore has created him an helpmeet to be with him, and ordained that they who were two should be one, and who dost punish all impurity; we pray Thee, since Thou hast called and united these two persons in the holy state of marriage, that Thou wilt give them Thy Holy Spirit, that they in true love and firm faith may live in holiness, according to Thy divine will and resist all evil.

Grant them Thy blessing as Thou hast blessed the believing fathers, Thy friends and faithful servants Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Grant them Thy grace in order that they, as co-heirs of the covenant which Thou hast

established with these fathers, may bring up their children, if it pleases Thee to give them, in the fear of the Lord, to the honour of Thy holy Name, to the edification of Thy church and to the extension of Thy holy gospel.

Hear us, Father of all mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, our Lord, in whose name we conclude our prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debts. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Hear now the PROMISE of God, from Psalm 128: "Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house, thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life; yea thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel."

The Lord our God fill you with his grace and grant that you may long live together in all godliness and holiness. Amen.

Supplement No. A – 12

(Cf. C.O. Article 70)

12. Alternate Wedding Form⁸

Form for the Solemnization of Christian Marriages

We are gathered here as (congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ [with family and friends]) to witness the confirmation of the marriage, _____ (N.G.) _____ and, _____ (N.B.) _____. It is good that the marriage of believers is confirmed in such a gathering and that God's blessing may be asked to rest upon it.

God the Lord reveals to us in His Word that He has created man and woman and destined them for each other, giving to them the institution of marriage and promising His blessing upon it. God, our Father, who created heaven and earth and all that is therein, created man after His image, male and female created he them". (Gen. 1:27)

He also said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him". (Gen. 2:17) "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh". (Gen. 2:24) "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply...' " (Gen. 1:28)

This excellent gift of God has been blemished by man's fall into sin. But God, who is great in mercy, has been willing to restore the unity of marriage and to confirm His blessing. For that reason our Lord Jesus Christ has honored marriage as an institution given by His Father by His presence and miracles at the marriage at Cana. He condemned the breaking of the marriage bond when He said, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder". (Mat. 19:6)

In the apostolic teaching of the New Testament, marriage is recognized as a gift of God, sanctified through the Word of God and through prayer. The apostle calls the unity in marriage a great mystery which he relates to the unity between Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:32)

⁸ This version of the form was approved by synod in 1993. See *Acts of Synod 1993*, Article 13. It is a translation of a form that had been adopted by the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken.

For these reasons, the married state ought not to be lightly or thoughtlessly entered upon, but with reverence and thankfulness and in the fear of the Lord. The communion for all of life may thus be a matter of joy in which man and wife receive from each other love and faithfulness, assistance and dedication. Although by reason of sin also married people experience much trouble and affliction, they, nevertheless, according to the promises of God, may be assured of the grace and help of the Lord.

And that you, in your marriage, may live according to the commandments of God and out of His promises, you ought to know for what reason God has instituted marriage.

In the first place, its purpose is that man and wife, joined together in true love, may belong to each other in joy and may faithfully help and assist each other in all things which belong to temporal and eternal life.

In the second place, through marriage the human race and also the Church of the Lord are built. If it pleases God to give you children, you are to raise and lead them in the knowledge and fear of the Lord.

Further, let every man live with his wife and let every woman live with her husband in accordance with the will of God and with a clear conscience so that our bodies, as temples of the Holy Spirit, be not defiled.

Next, you are to hear from the Word of God how you are to behave towards each other in the married state.

The man, who has been put by God to be the head of the wife, shall love his wife as Christ loves His Church. He will lead and comfort her, serve and protect her even as Christ is the consolation and assistance to His Church.

The wife shall be subject to her husband even as the Church is subject to Christ. She shall love and serve her husband, follow him, with him care for the family and display the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit.

According to the commandment of God, you shall both do your work with faithfulness and dedication. You shall also understand that your family is part of a larger community and that you have a calling with respect to church and society. Walk in the fear of the Lord.

Remember that you are heirs of the grace of life. Be forgiving and live together in wisdom that your prayers be not hindered.

As we now proceed to the confirmation of this marriage, we request you, Bridegroom and Bride (to rise and) to join right hands and to repeat after me:

Bridegroom:

Do you **NG**, declare here before God (and His Church) that you have taken and do take to your lawful wife **NB**, here present and do you promise that you will never forsake her in good nor in evil days, in riches nor in poverty, in health nor in sickness, till death do you part; that you will lead and serve her in love, as a faithful and pious husband is bound to do to his lawful wife; that you will live with her in a holy manner, keeping faith and truth to her in all things according to the holy gospel?

Answer: I do.

Bride:

Do you **NB**, declare here before God (and His Church) that you have taken and do take to your lawful husband **NG**, here present and you promise that you will never forsake him in good nor in evil days, in riches nor in poverty, in health nor in sickness, till death do you part; that you will follow and serve him in love, as a pious and faithful wife is bound to do to her lawful husband; that you will live with him in a holy manner, keeping faith and truth to him in all things according to the holy gospel.

Answer: I do.

Be assured that the Lord God has joined you together and by His grace called you to this holy bond of marriage.

The Father of all mercies fill you with His grace, bind you in true love and faithfulness and grant you his blessing. Amen.

However, considering that we have no good of ourselves and that all good gifts come from above, from the Father of lights, you are asked to kneel before the face of the Lord so that the congregation may pray with and for you:

Prayer:

Merciful God and Father, who has brought this bridegroom and bride together and united them through the bond of marriage, we thank Thee for the blessing given to this couple that they may go through life together under Thy care. Grant them this grace that, through the love of Christ they may more and more grow towards each other, bound together in the unity of the true faith. Grant them the strength of Thy Holy Spirit, enabling them, as husband and wife, to live together in their family according to Thy holy will.

(Grant them thy favour that, should it please Thee to give them children, they may raise them according to the demands of Thy covenant, in the instruction, discipline and love of Christ).

Sanctify the tie that binds them, to their blessing, to the edifying of the church, as a witness to others and to the glory of Thy Holy Name. Hear us, Father of all mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, our Lord, in whose name we conclude our prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name;
Thy Kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts, even as we forgive our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.

[Ring Ceremony (optional)]

Bridegroom - do you give this ring to (NN) as a token of your true and unending love?

Answer - Yes, I do.

Place it on the third finger of the left hand.

Bride – same.]

Declaration of Marriage:

In accordance with the Laws of the (Province/ State of _____) and the institution of the Church, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Supplement – No. A-13

(Cf. C.O. Article 45)

13. Guidelines for Establishing Archives

For the Congregation

For the proper maintenance of the congregational archives, the following shall be observed:

A. Inclusion in the archives

All written materials to be dealt with or used by the clerk, treasurer or a committee of the consistory are to be included in the congregational archives, such as;

1. Incoming correspondence and copies of outgoing correspondence;
2. Minute books of the consistory as well as those of the deaconate and any committees appointed by the consistory;
3. Membership registers and/or card systems of the membership registration insofar it concerns members who have moved, died or withdrawn as well as all certificates and copies of attestations, etc., issued;
4. Cash books, etc., of the treasurer, deaconate and any other consistorial committees, with their appropriate documents;
5. Commercial documents and proofs of transactions, such as: bills of sale, proofs of possession, policies, etc.;
6. Reports and acts of Classes and Synods and reports of synodical committees;
7. Samples of letters, etc., sent to the members of the congregation.

(NOTE: It will not be necessary to keep all letters and documents mentioned under 1 and 4 above; however, this selection should not be made by only one person)

B. Organization of the archives

The various documents pertaining to one matter shall be grouped together in such a way that each matter's documents shall be included in one titled folder, numbered and ordered, each folder supplied with a table of contents and various folders placed in one box or drawer which, in turn, is provided with a title and table of

contents.

The archives are to be stored in a clean, dry place, preferably a safe. If a safe is not available in the building, use should be made of the facilities available with financial institutions.

C. Management of the archives

The archives should be managed in such a way that documents and information can be readily retrieved. It is recommended that an archive keeper be appointed who, with the clerk, is responsible for this management. The usefulness of the archives will be enhanced if both maintain an effective registration in which each document is sequentially numbered, by:

1. Cataloguing of the documents in a chronological register, according to number and date, with appropriate cross references to the minutes and the place in the archives, as well as recording of the information in a card system, according to fixed divisions;
2. Marking of the documents with a rubber stamp indicating; Archives of _____, # _____, Date _____;
3. Keeping careful records of any documents loaned out.

D. Control of the archives

When church visitors ask whether the archives are properly kept, current and in a safe place, the consistory shall not give an affirmative answer unless and except proper previous inspection indicates this is indeed so.

C. Supplements for Committees

Supplement No. C – 1

(See Church Order Art. 51)

1. Inter-Church Relations Committee

Mandate and Regulations

Mandate

1. To seek contact with churches which, to the best of our knowledge, maintain an unreserved commitment to, and agreement with (1) the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures as the Word of God, and (2) the validity and relevance of the Reformed confessions.
2. To promote dialogue with the same with a view to fostering greater understanding of each other and if possible federative unity; and
3. To grant preaching licenses to non-FRC ministers.

Contents

Section 1: Regulations Regarding Local Contact with Other Reformed Churches (Acts of Synod, 1997, pp. 123-125)

Section 2: Regulations Regarding Contact With Other Denominations (Acts of Synod, 2000, pp. 48-49)

Section 3: Regulations Regarding Inviting Guests from Other Denominations to Attend our Synod Meetings (Acts of Synod, 1999, p. 40)

Section 4: Regulations Regarding Inviting Ministers from Other Denominations with Whom we have no Official Ecclesiastical Contact (Acts of Synod, 1997, p. 27), and Expiry of

Preaching License (Acts of Synod, 2001, p. 41)

Section 5: Guideline Questions for Consistories Inviting Guest Ministers on Their Pulpits (Acts of Synod, 1999, pp. 46-48)

Section 6: Regulations Regarding Inviting Ministers to Preach Whose Membership is in an FRC Congregation but Whose Ministerial Credentials are in Another Denomination (Acts of Synod, 1998, pp. 43-44)

Section 1: Regulations Regarding Local Contact with Other Reformed Churches (Acts of Synod, 1997, pp. 123-125)

Guiding Principles

- A. When Christ prayed that His church might be one (John 17:21) He did not only pray for the future ingathering of those whom the Father gave Him and for whom He laid down His life (John 17: 20). These words also imply that it is pleasing to the Lord that the essential spiritual union which already exists among those who truly believe in the Gospel of Christ should also be preserved and manifested as much as possible in the local gatherings and federations of His Church (see Rom 12:16-18; Phil 3:16; Eph. 2:14-22; 4:1-6; Heid. Cat. L.D. 54, 55, Belgic Conf. Art. 27-30). This means that church federations which are founded upon the basis of God's Word and subscribing to the Reformed Confession, (particularly the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dort) and which have become disunited from each other due to historic circumstances and doctrinal divergences, are called upon to strive to remove the differences which separate them and thus work toward closer fellowship and, if possible, federative union with each other.
- B. It is clear that the time is ripe for increased contacts with other churches. This is especially evident in light of the following:

- a. the emergence in recent years of several conservative Reformed denominations
 - b. the perilous times in which we live
 - c. the increasing interaction between members of various Reformed churches, e.g. at Christians schools and colleges, various conferences, etc.
- C. In order for union between Reformed churches to be real and lasting, it must develop organically, from the “bottom up”, not imposed from the “top down”. This means progress toward union must not be rushed. Real, prolonged contact between different Reformed churches is essential to real unity and less likely to be regretted by either side later. It must also be evident to all that such a unification would serve the good of the Church and the glory of the Lord’s name.

With respect to local contact with other Reformed churches, the Free Reformed Churches agree to abide by the following procedure:

1. Consistorial Communication

Closer fellowship can only take place after sufficient discussions between the relevant local consistories have been held. At such meetings it must become clear that there is a unity of faith and life in accordance with the Word of God and the Reformed Confessions as well as essential agreement regarding the rules based on the Word and confessions which govern church life.

2. Congregational Communication

Since unity grows organically between churches from the "grass roots" up, genuine closer fellowship requires regular and prolonged communication between the members of the different churches in various settings (e.g. combined Bible studies, symposiums and seminars dealing with both the doctrinal and practical aspects of true religion, Reformation Rallies, combined Elders and Deacons Conferences and, when occasion permits, attending each other's worship services, etc). Such "real life" contact and fellowship among the members needs to be nurtured by the combined consistories involved.

3. Pulpit Exchanges

Occasional pulpit exchanges between churches communicating along the lines mentioned above may be arranged, but only after:

- a. 1 and 2 (above) have taken place
- b. the congregations have been made aware of these exchanges
- c. the permission of the Inter-church Relations Committee has been secured
- d. a colloquium doctum with the minister(s) involved has been conducted

4. Formal Closer Fellowship

In order for more formal closer fellowship to take place (e.g. combined worship services, acceptance of each other's membership attestations, regular pulpit exchanges, and, ultimately, complete union) the congregation(s) involved must first secure the approval of the relevant classes and, if need be, the mutual synods.

Before an overture to Synod for formal closer fellowship with another church outside our denomination can be approved the following prerequisites apply:

- a. It must be agreed upon by the mutual consistories and in consultation with the Inter-church Relations Committee;
- b. It must be a federation with which mutual contacts are maintained by the respective deputies (for ecumenical relations).
- c. This proposed closer fellowship should also have been presented to the congregations concerned. The consistory must conduct a hearing with the congregation regarding this closer fellowship and ask for the congregation's approval. Only if (upon and after the decision of the consistory) there exists a sufficient unanimity in the mindset of the congregation can the consistory take further steps toward formal closer fellowship.
- d. A thorough report giving reasons for formal closer fellowship must be presented in the overture to Synod.
- e. Synod, on the basis of the above, must be able to confirm that in all things the federation in consideration desires to be a church founded upon God's Holy Word and the Reformed creeds.

Section 2: Regulations Regarding Contact with Other Denominations (Acts of Synod, 2000, pp. 48-49)

The Free Reformed Churches have **three levels of contact** with other churches. They are as follows:

LEVEL 1 - LIMITED CONTACT

Level 1 includes the following:

1. sending a delegate(s) to attend each other's Synods (or equivalent). Visiting delegates attending our Synod may be asked for advice;
2. exchanging copies of the *Acts of Synod* (or equivalent)
3. offering spiritual support. This may include:
 - a. calling attention to each other's spiritual and ecclesiastical problems with mutual efforts toward Scriptural solutions;
 - b. warning each other of spiritual dangers which arise and which spread and begin to dominate the church of Christ;
 - c. correcting each other in love regarding any slackening in connection with the confession or practice of "the faith once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3);
4. co-operative activity in areas of common concern. For example: offering material support and co-operation or consultation with regard to mission work, theological education, etc.

LEVEL 2 - LIMITED CORRESPONDENCE

Level 2 includes the following:

1. all privileges outlined in Level 1 (above)
2. access to the Lord's Supper;
3. permission for visiting ministers to preach on each other's pulpits.

LEVEL 3 - FULL CORRESPONDENCE

Level 3 includes the following:

1. all privileges outlined in Level 1 and 2 (above)
2. the mutual acceptance of each other's (membership) attestations;
3. mutually considering each other's ministers eligible for call;
4. mutual consultation with each other regarding significant actions such as, for example, the revision of the confession or of the Church Order, the extension or modification of a relationship of correspondence, etc.;

NOTE:

1. Agreeing to establish Level 1 contact does not mean either denomination is obligated or even expected to move towards the other two levels. It does, however, open the door for such a level of contact under the blessing of the Lord. Level 1 should primarily be viewed as a communicative level in an official and brotherly manner.
2. Before any level of contact can be established it must be made evident that there is an unreserved commitment to and agreement with (1) the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and, (2) the validity and relevance of the Reformed confessions.

Section 3: Regulations Regarding Inviting Guests from Other Denominations to Attend our Synod Meetings (Acts of Synod, 1999, p. 40)

1. At each fall meeting of the Inter-church Relations Committee, the committee will decide which churches will be invited to send a representative to our synod meetings. The committee will list which churches have been invited in its report to Synod.
2. An invitation to attend our synod includes the following:
 - a. an opportunity to speak a few words of greetings on the floor of synod
 - b. permission to sit in on all open sessions
 - c. reserved seating with the body of Synod at a "visitor's table"
 - d. a copy of the agenda of synod
3. The host church should be given notice how many guest delegates to expect so they can make the necessary arrangements regarding seating and meals

Section 4: Regulations Regarding Inviting Ministers from Other Denominations with Whom we have no Official Ecclesiastical Contact (Acts of Synod 2014, Article 20, p.16, cf. p.157)

1. If a consistory plans to invite a **minister**, a **candidate** graduated at our seminary⁹, or a **seminarian**¹⁰ training at our seminary to preach¹¹ on its pulpit, it shall, before extending the invitation, ensure that:
 - a. He is a member in good standing in a Reformed or Presbyterian church
 - b. He has a valid license to preach in his church federation.
 - c. He fully subscribes to the Three Forms of Unity and/or Westminster Confession and Catechisms.
 - d. He is orthodox in doctrine and godly in his walk of life.
 - e. Has demonstrated an ability to preach in a way that is consonant with our Free Reformed distinctive of orthodox, experiential Reformed preaching.¹²
 - f. In the case of a candidate or seminarian, he has received endorsement from at least one of our full-time professors.
2. Upon meeting the requirements of item 1, the consistory shall seek advice, in writing and on a timely basis, from the Interchurch Relations Committee. The consistory shall report its findings to the committee and indicate the number of Lords Days it plans to have him preach.¹³
3. The Interchurch Relations Committee or consistory shall have a right to request a *colloquium doctum*. If the committee or consistory makes such a request, the *colloquium doctum* may be attended by two elders from the requesting consistory. A 70% majority is required in order to sustain a *colloquium doctum*.¹⁴

⁹ Currently the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary.

¹⁰ The adjective “senior” has been left out, since it proves to be problematic to apply.

¹¹ Or speak an edifying word in the case of a candidate or seminarian.

¹² 2008 Acts of Synod, page 15.

¹³ This should be helpful in determining the need for a Colloquium Doctum. See 1992 Acts of Synod.

¹⁴ Identical to our Theological Education Committee’s required percentage for accepting students for ministerial study.

4. When the advice of the Interchurch Relations Committee is negative or if after conducting the *colloquium doctum* a 70% majority is not achieved, the consistory shall not pursue the matter. Should a consistory not be able to abide by the negative advice, it may appeal to Synod.
5. Requests that have received the approbation of the Interchurch Relations Committee shall be verbally reported to Synod each year.¹⁵

[If a minister has not served in our churches for three years his name will be automatically removed from the list of ministers who have been given permission to preach on our pulpits. Reinstatement will be possible with the approval of the Executive of the Inter-Church Relations Committee.]

Section 5: Guideline Questions for Consistories Inviting Guest Ministers on Their Pulpits (Acts of Synod, 1999, pp. 46-48)

Guiding Principles

- A. The basic requirement for allowing a minister ordained in another denomination to preach from a pulpit in a congregation of the Free Reformed denomination is and remains a wholehearted commitment to the Holy Scriptures, the Ecumenical and Reformed Confessions and the Church Order.
- B. Such commitment is to be evaluated both objectively and subjectively.
 - a. Objectively: The questions formulated here are intended to assist the consistories in addressing
 - 1) some of the basic issues in the confessions and church order;
 - 2) theological matters inherent in the spirit of the confessions;
 - 3) issues which have arisen since the formulation of the confessions and church order which are deemed as infringements upon the spirit of the confession; and
 - 4) issues which are basic to the liturgy, polity, and moral outlook of our denomination.

¹⁵ Thus eliminating the need for notices of approval in *The Messenger* and IRC reports to Synod.

- b. Subjectively: These questions are not intended to foster a shibboleth of "right answers" for access to our pulpits. Instead, they aim to cultivate a dialogue in and through which consistories should prayerfully discern whether there is harmony of spirit around the confessions and church order and accordingly report to the Inter-church Relations Committee.

The following is suggested to be asked of the invited minister:

Dear Rev. NN, since we have invited you to preach on our pulpit, we kindly ask you to answer the following questions. The answers can be brief. Our purpose in asking you these questions is simply to ensure that you hold to a sound view of Scripture and that your doctrinal convictions are in line with our own. Our primary question is: What is/are the doctrinal standard(s) that you subscribe to, and do you agree with the Three Forms of Unity that our churches adhere to?

A. Dogmatics

What is your view of:

1. Holy Scripture?
2. Historical-critical methods of interpreting Scripture?
3. The historicity of Gen 1-3?
4. The trinity?
5. God's sovereignty and election?
6. Creation?
7. Providence?
8. The covenant of works?
9. The covenant of grace? The relationship between the covenant of grace and election? Christ and the Covenant of Grace?
10. Law and gospel?
11. The person and work of Christ?
12. The order of salvation? (specifically, your view on assurance of faith, the relationship between justification and sanctification)?

13. The place of children in the congregation. Should we presume that the children of the congregation are regenerated?
14. The church (specifically the essence of the church and church government)
15. Women in office?
16. The relationship between Word and Spirit?
17. Infant baptism?
18. Paedo-communion?
19. Gifts of the Spirit (as glossolalia, modern prophecy, faith healing, "second blessing", etc.)?
20. Millennialism? (Pre-, Post-, or A-Mil.?)
21. Dispensationalism and Theonomy?

B. Ethics

1. What meaning do the Ten Commandments have for the Christian life?
2. What do you believe concerning the observance of the Lord's Day?
3. Do you have concerns about life styles and trends also within the more conservative Reformed churches?
4. What is your view on abortion and euthanasia?
5. How do you view the role of the government in the light of Romans 13?
6. How can a Christian be a witness to the world?
7. What is your view on the media?

C. Preaching

1. How do you select your texts for your preaching?
2. What sort of literature (commentaries) do you consult in preparing your sermons?
3. What in your opinion is balanced preaching?
4. What elements should be found in the preaching?
5. What is your view on application in the preaching? Do you make distinctions, i.e. do you discriminate among your hearers?
6. What would you understand by pastoral preaching?

7. To whom - in your view - does the Gospel call go out?
8. What place should covenant and election have in the preaching? And God's judgment?

D. Liturgy

What is your view on the following subjects:

1. Style in our worship services?
2. Place of preaching in the worship service?
3. Prayer, especially the language of prayer?
4. Use of Bible Version?

NOTE: It is to be understood that having completed its examination, the consistory will submit a detailed report to the Inter-Church Relations Committee prior to the *colloquium doctum*.

Section 6: Regulations Regarding Inviting Ministers to Preach Whose Membership is in a FRC Congregation but Whose Ministerial Credentials are in Another Denomination (Acts of Synod, 1998, pp. 43-44)

Preamble

The matter of having membership in a congregation of one denomination and ministerial credentials in another is anomalous in our experience but a reality in the North American context.

As some major Reformed bodies show signs of departing from the truth, it may be expected that concerned ministers may more and more look to conservative denominations as ours for a home.

Where such men are in good health and willing to preach, they will look for an opportunity to do so.

As long as we have vacant churches there will be a demand for such men to fill these pulpits on an ad hoc basis.

Procedure: In order to facilitate such appointments, we suggest that consistories observe the following:

Where a request is made by such a member (who is a retired minister with credentials in another denomination) to fill our pulpits, he should be instructed to transfer his ministerial credential to the local church.

When such transfer seems to be imminent, he can then be presented to the congregation to be called by them on a suitably

restricted basis and then be received, upon installation, as a minister of that church.

Where the transfer of credentials cannot be effected, he may be presented to the congregation for approbation as an elder in special service, in accordance with Article 3 of the Church Order.

In each case, the procedure must be approved by synod. In neither case will there be any financial implications for the denominational emeritus fund.

Supplement No. C – 2

2. Finance Committee

Regulations for the Finance Committee¹⁶

Part 1 - Introduction

Synod 1984¹⁷ adopted a proposal from the Committee Reorganization to merge the Synodical Committees:

- 1)Ministers' Retirement Fund,
- 2)Needy Churches Fund,
- 3)Ministers' Salary Guidelines

these funds to be administered by one Committee, called: FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Part 2 – Accounting

Synod instructed as stated in the Acts 1984, that: the Committee Ministers' Retirement Fund and the Committee Needy Churches will continue to have their own separate funds and accounting, but may be administered by one treasurer;

The Finance Committee will continue to submit individual accounting and required quotas to Synod for each Fund in its Annual Report along with recommendations for salary guidelines.

Part 3 - Administration

A - The Finance Committee shall consist of a minimum of five members, appointed by Synod upon recommendations from the Committee.

B - The term of office is for three years, however, retiring Committee members may be reappointed immediately for another term to a maximum of 4 terms (12 years).

¹⁶ These Regulations were updated and approved in their revised form by the FRCNA Synod 2019. Cf. **Acts of Synod 2019**, Art. #33, p. 33 (cf. report on p.85ff)

¹⁷ See **Acts of Synod 1984**, Article 41, p.11, 48-49.

C - The offices of the Committee are: President, Vice - President, Secretary, and Treasurer, or Secretary / Treasurer.

D - The treasurer and / or the president shall each have full signing authority and access to the Funds' assets in the bank.

E - Meetings shall be held at least once a year prior to the regular Synod meetings.

F - Books and accounts shall be maintained by the treasurer and shall be reviewed annually by two FRC members in good standing.

G - The Committee shall submit a financial statement and a report of their activities to Synod annually, including proposals and recommendations regarding quotas, salaries, and retirement funds.

H - The fiscal year of the Funds concerned shall be the calendar year.

Part 4 - Ministers' Retirement Fund

(Supplement to Article 13 C.O.)

(See also *Church Order Vol.2, A-2 Concept Call Letter* and A-4 Credentials for Emeritation, above)

The Committee is mandated to ensure the wellbeing of serving ministers are adequately cared for subsequent to their moving into an 'Emeritus' status. Until 2016, this was handled by the establishing of a 'Ministers' Retirement Fund'. An annual synodical quota was assessed at the recommendation of the Finance Committee to Synod to all congregations to fund this account in order to build up adequate reserves to fund the retiring/emergitus pastors. Annual 'retirement fund' amounts were determined and approved by Synod, both for retiring ministers as well as those for disabled ministers, widows of deceased ministers, and orphans of deceased ministers.

Commencing 2016, Synod transferred the responsibility of a minister's retirement to the congregations in which they served. Congregations are required to contribute a set annual amounts to the minister's personal RRSP. The change was applied to all serving ministers under a set age (50). Calculations of their retirement fund eligibility amounts based on service were remunerated to them individually. Those serving ministers over the age of 50, as well as those already receiving retirement benefits in the current 'Retirement Fund' and remain eligible for retirement benefits as originally planned.

Due to the changes indicated above, the fund has been reclassified as '**The Minister's Benevolent Fund**'. In case of financial hardships, congregations

whose serving ministers are no longer included in this Fund, may apply for assistance on a 'case by case' basis in the event of disabled ministers, widows of deceased ministers, and orphans of deceased ministers.

A - Background:

Article 13 of the Church Order requires that a retired minister and his dependents be supported honorably by the local church he has served last. Recognizing the fact that this may impose undue hardship for some churches, Synod has established a Ministers' Retirement Fund to provide financial support in accordance with the denominational call letter.

B - Contributions:

As a result of the changes approved by Synod 2016, those congregations now responsible for assisting their ministers in planning their retirement by contributing to their individual RRSPs will be exempt from submitting the required annual quotas less the minimum stipulated RRSP contributions as stated in the annual Synod report.

1. The Ministers Retirement Fund is funded by a quota that is established annually by Synod.
2. It is recognized that since this fund has an unfunded liability, quotas will be set at a level to help build up reserves to mitigate possible future costs.
3. Churches with their own pastor are exempted from paying the full amount to the fund (as per Synod 2016).
4. The fund can earn investment income from commercial establishments.

C – Retirement Benefits

1. The normal retiring age for a minister is 65 years of age. The sum of the retirement benefit shall be as proposed annually by the Committee and submitted to synod for approval. Only those ministers still enrolled in the Ministers' Retirement

(Benevolent) Fund commencing 2016 will be eligible for the retirement payments proposed by the Committee.

2. The Committee shall exercise in the principle of Article 13 C.O. to provide honorably for the minister in his need, likewise for the widow and orphans of the minister.

D - Disability Retirement Fund Benefits

1. As described in article 13 C.O. a minister who has become incapable of performing the duties of his office, shall be eligible for retirement benefits.
2. The minister shall be deemed to be disabled only when he is entitled to receive a disability pension under the provision of the Canada Pension Plan, or under comparable Social Security provision of the U.S.A.
3. Those ministers deemed disabled and no longer enrolled in the Ministers' Retirement (Benevolent) Fund based on the 2016 changes will be the responsibility of the congregation to which they serve. Those congregations may apply to the Ministers' Retirement (Benevolent) Fund for assistance. The request for assistance will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

E - Widows' Retirement Fund Benefits

1. Where a minister dies leaving a spouse, and his death occurs while in service, his spouse shall be entitled to a Retirement Fund benefit equal to: 80% of the sum of Retirement Fund benefit payable to a retired minister.
2. Payments of Retirement Fund benefit will cease in the month following when the widow remarries or dies.
3. The calculation method as mentioned under E shall be used for Retirement Fund benefits for a retired minister–widower.

F - Orphans' Benefits

1. Orphans of the minister or widow are entitled to receive a Retirement Fund benefit equal to the following:
 - one child - 30 % of the retirement fund benefit paid to a retired minister.
 - two children – 60% of the retirement benefit paid to a retired minister.

2. **Limit:** The total per family of three or more is not to exceed that amount of retirement fund benefit to which their mother would have been entitled. (80 % of a retired ministers' Retirement Fund benefit.

Illustration: Number of orphans: (1985 Ministers' Emeritus Fund):

- one - 30 % of \$10,584 = \$3,175
 - two - 60 % of \$10,584 = \$6,350
 - three - 80 % of \$10,584 = \$8,467 (maximum of three)
3. Payments on behalf of orphans shall be made to the person having custody and control of the orphans, or when no such person is available an authorized person may be determined by the Committee.
 4. Payments of benefits to orphans will cease in the month following in which the orphan reaches the age of eighteen years, or is employed on a fulltime basis, or dies. An exception will be made when the orphan is mentally or physically incapacitated, evidence of which must be submitted to the Committee. In order to meet necessity of life, financial assistance will be provided, if needed.
 5. The benefit to Orphans of deceased ministers no longer enrolled in the Ministers' Retirement (Benevolent) Fund based on the 2016 changes will be the responsibility of the congregation to which those ministers served. Those congregations may apply to the Ministers' Retirement (Benevolent) Fund for assistance. The request for assistance will be dealt with on a case by case basis. (Also see D-3 above)

Part 5 - Investments

1. The Committee's treasurers shall ensure that all monies (except funds required to meet current liabilities) are invested in interest bearing deposits or securities.
2. Investments shall be limited to short term bank or trust company guaranteed investment certificates, federal and provincial government of government guaranteed bonds, mutual funds restricted to "ethical companies/industries," and loans to congregations of our denomination.

3. Mutual Funds are restricted to 25% of the value of the Fund(s).
4. **The current lending guidelines are as follows:**
 - a. No more than 20% of the emeritus fund may be lent out to any one Free Reformed Church or other organization primarily supported by Free Reformed Churches.
 - b. Qualifying applicants are members' churches and/or mission posts. Lending Committee to be comprised of a quorum of the Finance Committee.
 - c. Rates to be set based on comparable investment opportunities at a major Canadian bank.
 - d. A promissory note must be signed by all parties outlining the amount, interest rate and repayment terms.
5. **The current investing guidelines are as follows:**
 - a. Investments with banks with guaranteed rates of return.
 - b. Investments with Christian organizations with guaranteed rates of return.
 - c. For the emeritus fund only - Investments in Mutual funds in consultation with a Professional Financial Planner for up to 25% of the Emeritus fund balance.
6. Long-term projections are to be updated when the Finance Committee proposes significant changes in emeritus fund benefits, assessments and/or investments policies.
7. The lending guidelines apply to the Needy Churches Fund as well.

Supplement No. C –3

(cf. C.O. Art.21)

3. Mission Committee

1. Mission Order

The Free Reformed Church of North America, in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Triune God and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, recognizes its duty to send out missionary preachers and other mission workers to proclaim the gospel and to gather into indigenous churches such as have come to believe and have been baptized as well as to assist these churches in the development of their church life, when such assistance is required.

For the sake of good order and in order to regulate the performance of this work, Mission Deputies shall be appointed by Synod and the following Mission Order shall be observed:

Article 1

Missionary ministers of the Word and mission workers (hereinafter collectively called "Mission Personnel") shall be sent out by the local church, with or without the co-operation of other local churches. No one shall be sent out without the concurrence and advice of the Mission Deputies. In the event of a conflict between the sending church and the deputies, the matter shall be referred to Synod. If no Church, acting alone or in concert with other churches, requests the sending out of mission personnel, deputies, with the advice of Synod shall approach churches to promote such sending out and shall make appropriate recommendations.

Article 2

The Mission Deputies shall function as a Committee appointed by and responsible to Synod to which it shall give a yearly account of its actions, or more frequently if such is required. This Committee shall consist of no less than seven members, each to serve a three-year renewable term. Synod shall also appoint two alternate members.

In addition, one deputy (with alternate) shall be from each sending church. The latter will be appointed by the consistory of the sending church(es) and their terms shall expire at the end of three years or whenever the sending church ceases to be such, whichever occurs first.

The Committee shall elect its own functionaries.

The Committee shall carry out all mandates given to it by Synod that pertain to mission activity.

Article 3

The Committee shall meet as often as required and at least once each year. The consistory of each sending church may request meetings with the Committee whenever required and may be presented by the deputy or alternate from their midst.

In the event that more than one church sends mission personnel to the same field, these churches are to co-operate with each other through the Committee.

Article 4

The Committee shall at all times maintain the closest possible relations with mission personnel and they with the Committee and the calling church(es). Mission personnel is to submit quarterly written reports to both the calling church(es) and to the Committee.

Article 5

The calling and sending of a missionary Minister of the Word is done by the local church upon recommendation of the consistory and the Committee which, together, determine the particulars of the letter of call and the instructions.

The appointment of other missionary workers is done by the Committee which will determine the particulars of their position and instructions as well as matters relating to the material aspects of their call.

A. Young men who feel called to be Missionary Ministers of the Word ought to pursue the regular channels of preparation for the gospel ministry;

B. Others who wish to work in any non-ordained capacity ought to present themselves to the Committee only upon first having been examined and recommended by their own consistory. Should they

then be accepted and require further training, this training shall be regulated by the Committee. If the Committee becomes aware of a need for additional mission personnel, it shall have the liberty to advertise this need;

C. No one shall be sent out without the approval of Synod.

Article 6

The sending out of ordained Missionaries shall take place according to the form approved by Synod. The sending out of non-ordained mission workers shall also take place in a worship service.

A. All mission personnel shall have their membership and credentials in the sending church.

B. The sending church is to oversee, as much as possible, the confession and walk of life of the mission personnel. Should any problems arise in this area, the consistory, with the advice of the Committee, shall act in accordance with the pertinent provisions in the Church Order.

Article 7

All arrangements for material needs such as education, pensions, etc., shall be made by the Committee.

Article 8

The field of mission labour for all personnel shall be determined by the sending church with the advice and approval of the Committee which shall have been mandated for this by Synod. If, in case of emergency, a change must be made in the designation of the field, the consistory of the sending church, with the Committee, shall take appropriate action and give full account to Synod.

Article 9

The costs of sending out and of the further labours of all mission personnel shall be borne by the sending church. They authorized to assist sending churches from the general mission fund and is also to be diligent in gathering monies for this fund. In case of need, the Committee has the authority to request extra collections for the mission.

Article 10

The treasurer of the Committee shall be responsible for the administration of the general fund. He shall make payments only as directed by the Committee. The Committee shall also present to Synod an annual financial statement with a budget for the following year.

Article 11

The Committee bears the responsibility for all mission property.

Article 12

A missionary minister, receiving and accepting a call to a field of labour other than the appointed one (as outlined in Article 8), shall give his sending church and the Committee two months not before he leaves his field of labour.

Article 13

No missionary minister or worker shall perform labours on behalf of or in conjunction with other churches or organizations without the approval of the sending church and the Committee and then only in compliance with and pending Synodical approval of a written statement of co-operation.

Article 14

This Mission Order may be altered, amended and revised only as Synod orders.

2. Free Reformed Missions International Inc.

In order to deal with various legal and administrative challenges that accompany working in various countries, a corporation named Free Reformed Missions International Inc. was established by Synod 1999 to carry out mission activities. The members of the Corporation include the delegates to Synod and the members of the Mission Committee.

The annual meeting of the Corporation is held during the regularly scheduled synodical sessions and the Directors of the Corporation carry out their mandate in a manner similar to other synodical committees, albeit through a different legal structure. When establishing the corporation, Synod approved the following motions:

- That the Executive of the Mission Committee be appointed as signing officers of the corporation.
- That the corporation have a maximum of 12 Directors.
- That Directors be appointed for three-year terms, and be eligible for reappointment three times (for a total of 12 years).
- That there be a built-in rotation system;
- That the Directors receive no remuneration, but that all expenses incurred in the exercise of their duties are covered;
- That the terms of these Directors shall be implemented according to the schedule of rotation that existed for the Foreign Missions Committee;
- That the Head Office of the Corporation be at the Vineland Free Reformed Church;
- That the Corporation have a fiscal year end of December 31;
- That By-law 1 and By-law 2 of the Corporation be approved;
- By-Law 1 contains primarily definitions and legal requirements related to a corporation's legal standing and is not reproduced here.

BY-LAW NO. 2

ARTICLE ONE – NAME

The name of the corporation shall be **Free Reformed Missions International**.

ARTICLE TWO – PURPOSES

- 2.01 The Corporation exists to assist the Free Reformed Churches of North America to be obedient to the command of the Lord to bring the gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Triune God and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded.
- 2.02 The purpose of the Corporation is to assist these Free Reformed Churches:

.01 To proclaim the Gospel of salvation in and through the Lord Jesus Christ within Canada and around the world.

.02 To gather believers together and institute indigenous churches for worship, fellowship and service.

.03 To assist these churches in the development of their church life including preaching, teaching, administration of the Sacraments, Bible translation, literature production and distribution, music, vocational training, Christian education, health care, and the training of nationals for all these.

.04 To select, train, equip, employ/fund and supervise missionary preachers and missionary workers.

ARTICLE THREE – OBJECTIVES

3.01 – Summary Objective –

The summary objective of the Corporation is to enable these Free Reformed Churches to advance, demonstrate, disseminate, implement, promote, preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people everywhere and hereby fulfill the command of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that His Gospel be preached in all the world as a witness for all nations.

3.02 – Spiritual Objectives –

The spiritual objective of the Corporation is to enable these Free Reformed churches to do the following, provided that the objects shall include only those which are, at law, exclusively charitable and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, and to accomplish the aforesaid objects:

- (a) To uphold and promote the statement of faith contained within the corporation's governing documents;
- (b) To glorify God and to promote worship of Him as the only true and living God (Heb.10:19-25);
- (c) To teach the scriptures as the sole authority and conduct of the church and of individual believers (1 Tim.3:16; Acts 17:2,11);
- (d) To carry out the missionary and evangelistic commission given for the furtherance of Jesus Christ's kingdom (Matt.28:19-20);
- (e) To administer the ordinances of baptism and holy communion (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26);

- (f) To provide spiritual and educational training to equip the individual believer;
- (g) To conduct regular religious worship services;
- (h) To spread the Word of the Gospel through preaching, seminars, literature, radio and other forms of mass media;
- (i) To work towards the institution of self-sufficient Reformed churches and denominations in foreign countries by the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit in accordance with all the provisions as set forth in the Holy Bible.
- (j) To maintain missionary church and teaching facilities.

3.03 – General Objectives –

For the attainment of the above objects and as incidental and ancillary thereto, to exercise any of the powers as prescribed by the Canada Corporations Act or any other statutes or common law relating to charities and in particular, without limiting the generality of the foregoing:

- (a) To acquire by purchase, lease, devise, gift or otherwise real property and to hold such real property or interest therein necessary for the actual use and occupation of the corporation or for carrying on of its charitable undertakings and when no longer necessary, to sell, dispose of and convey the same or any part thereof;
- (b) To purchase, lease or build churches, schools, educational facilities and property deemed necessary for the development of any of the aforementioned objectives;
- (c) To provide physical facilities, equipment and personnel as are necessary for the proper functioning of the Church and related ministries as set forth herein;
- (d) To acquire by purchase, contract, donation, legacy, gift, grant, bequest or otherwise any personal property and to enter into and carry out any agreements, contracts or undertakings incidental thereto and to sell, dispose of and convey the same or any part thereof as may be considered advisable;

- (e) To buy and sell printed materials, recorded materials and musically recorded materials and material goods of all other kinds required in connection with the maintenance and growth of a Church, School, College or Community and the associated and related needs of their members;
- (f) To receive, maintain and disburse a fund or funds supplied from time to time or any part thereof or any income there from for charitable purposes and for the attainment of these objects;
- (g) To invest and reinvest the funds of the corporation in such manner as determined by the Directors from time to time and in making such investments the Directors shall not be limited to investment authorized by law for Trustees, provided that such investments are reasonable, prudent and wise under the circumstances and do not constitute either directly or indirectly a conflict of interest;
- (h) To accumulate from time to time part of the fund or funds of the corporation or the income thereof subject to any statute or laws from time to time applicable;
- (i) To organize, direct, manage and support other organizations that are dedicated to the achievement of the aforementioned objects;
- (j) To conduct all other activities that may be incidental and conducive to the achievement of the aforementioned objects.

ARTICLE FOUR – STATEMENT OF FAITH

- 4.01 We believe in one holy, sovereign, creating, maintaining and redeeming God, eternally existing in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 4.02 We believe the Bible to be fully the only infallible and inerrant Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, authoritative and sufficient in all matters of faith and conduct, normative for all peoples, at all times, in all cultures.

- 4.03 We believe that all people are made in the image of God, but have fallen in Adam and have incurred both God’s holy wrath and their own shame and guilt. All are therefore in utter need of redemption.
- 4.04 We believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, the incarnate Son of God, the only Saviour, having in one person the fully divine and fully human natures, thus being both God and man. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death and atonement, bodily resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father.
- 4.05 We believe in the justification of sinners by God’s grace, through faith in Christ alone, apart from works.
- 4.06 We believe in the Holy Spirit and in His convicting, regenerating, sanctifying and reviving work, by whose indwelling the Christian is empowered to live a godly life.
- 4.07 We believe that the church consists of men, women and children irrevocably called by God the Father into the fellowship of His Son and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
- 4.08 We believe that one of the primary tasks of the church is to spread the Gospel throughout the world.
- 4.09 We believe in the unity of all believers who together form the one, holy and universal church of which Christ is the head.
- 4.10 We believe in the visible, personal return of the Jesus Christ in power and great glory, to judge both the living and the dead.
- 4.11 We believe in the resurrection of the body, the eternal life of the saved and the eternal punishment of those who have rejected Him.
- 4.12 While the Bible is our supreme standard, we believe that the Creeds hereinafter identified, accurately summarize the main doctrines of the Bible. We subscribe to the three Creeds of the early church: The Apostles’ (c150 AD), Nicene (381 AD) and Athanasian (500 AD) Creeds. We further subscribe to the three historic Reformed Creeds: The Belgic Confession of Faith (1561 AD), The Heidelberg Catechism (1563 AD), and The Canons of Dort (1619 AD). We refer to the latter three as The Three Forms of Unity.

ARTICLE FIVE – AFFILIATIONS

This corporation shall be an independent ministry affiliated with the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

ARTICLE SIX – DISSOLUTION

In the event that the corporation be dissolved, and upon payment of all outstanding debts and liabilities of the corporation, any and all surplus funds of the corporation shall be distributed among ministries of a similar nature as determined by the Board of Directors, provided that such charities are registered with Revenue Canada for the purposes of the Income Tax Act of Canada.

ARTICLE SEVEN – AMENDMENTS

The governing documents of the corporation may be amended by a by-law enacted by a majority of the Directors at a meeting of the Board of Directors and sanctioned by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the corporation at a meeting duly called for the purpose of considering the subject amendment.

Supplement No. C – 4

(Cf. C.O. Article 21)

4. Outreach Committee Order

(Adopted at Synod 2011)¹⁸

General Regulations

I. Name

The name of the committee shall be the Outreach Committee of the Free Reformed Churches of North America

II. Purpose

In obedience to the command of Christ to preach the gospel to all nations beginning at Jerusalem, the purpose of the committee is to facilitate, in conjunction with the churches, the spread of the gospel within North America and around the world and to establish congregations of the Free Reformed Churches of North America where there is not yet such a church.

III. Structure and Accountability

A. The Outreach Committee deputies shall function as a committee appointed by and accountable to synod to which it shall give a yearly account of its actions, or more frequently if such is required. As a standing committee of synod, the committee shall carry out all mandates given to it by synod.

B. The committee shall consist of no less than seven members. Members of the committee must be male members in good standing of one of the Free Reformed Churches of North America. Synod shall also appoint two alternate members. In addition, the churches which have supervision over a home mission work shall appoint one deputy

¹⁸ See *Acts of Synod 2011*, Article 50, p.42-43.

(with alternate) who will sit on the committee as an ex officio member.

C. Each member of the committee will serve a three year term. The terms can be renewed at the discretion of the committee and pending the approval of synod for a maximum of four terms. The terms of ex officio members will expire at the end of three years or whenever the supervising church ceases to be such, whichever occurs first.

D. The committee shall elect its own functionaries, i.e. chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer who shall each serve a three year term. The committee shall ensure that not all functionaries complete their terms at the same time.

E. The treasurer of the committee shall be responsible for the administration of the general fund. He shall make payments only as directed by the committee. The committee shall also present to synod an annual financial statement with a budget for the following year.

IV. Frequency of Meeting

The committee shall meet as often as required and at least once a year. The consistory of church which has supervision over a home mission station may request meetings with the committee whenever required and may be represented by their delegated deputy or alternate.

Regulations Regarding Home Mission Stations

I. Guiding Principles

A. The work of home missions is primarily the task of the local church, giving due observance to Article 15 of the C.O., recognizing that it may be profitable in some localities for two or more churches to co-operate in this work.

B. The particular manner in which the churches desire to regulate the work of home missions is left to the responsibilities of the local consistories with the understanding that all be undertaken in harmony and in accordance with the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, and the Church Order of the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

C. Although the local church is charged with the work of home missions, all the churches, acting in concert through the synodical deputies for Outreach, are involved in this work; therefore, no local home mission work is to be performed without regard to the guidelines appended to this Order.

D. The above stipulations shall apply in situations where a church is able fully to underwrite all the aspects of a local home mission project. In cases where such a project is, either in nature or in scope, beyond the competence of the local church(es), the denominational Outreach Committee deputies are to be consulted.

II. Home Mission Personnel

A. There are two kinds of home mission personnel: ordained home missionaries and non-ordained home mission workers.

B. The calling and sending of a home missionary minister of the Word is done by the local church upon recommendation of the consistory of the supervising church(es) and the committee which,

together, determine the particulars of the letter of call and the instructions.

1. A consistory may call any Free Reformed minister or candidate for the ministry in the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

2. All stipulations for a regular call shall apply. Such a minister will be installed as a Minister of the Word in the supervising church, assigned with the special task of labouring in home missions. As such:

a. His credentials will reside in the supervising church

b. He will perform all his labours under the supervision of this church

c. He will be a member of the consistory of this church

d. His salary, benefits are to be the responsibility of this church

e. Upon termination of his labours, he remains the responsibility of this church

3. A home missionary minister, receiving and accepting a call to a field of labour other than the appointed one (as outlined in Art. 7) shall give his sending church and the Committee two months' notice before he leaves his field of labour.

C. The appointment of other missionary workers is done by the committee which will determine the particulars of their position and instructions as well as matters relating to their remuneration. All non-ordained mission personnel shall have their membership in the supervising church(es).

1. Young men who feel called to be home missionary ministers of the Word ought to pursue the regular channels of preparation for the gospel ministry.

2. Others who wish to work in non-ordained capacity ought to present themselves to the Committee only upon first having been examined and recommended by their own consistory. Should they then be accepted and require further training, this training shall be

regulated by the committee. If the committee becomes aware of a need for additional mission personnel, it shall have the liberty to advertise this need.

3. If a brother, in the course of his duties, should be required to speak an edifying word and perform other labours in the congregation, he should be installed in the office of elder, subject to the stipulations governing such an installation (C.O. Articles 3 & 22 & Supplement 7). In all circumstances, the consistory supervises his labours and is responsible for his material needs.

D. No one shall be sent out without approval of synod.

E. The sending out of ordained home missionaries shall take place according to the form approved by synod. The sending out of non-ordained mission workers shall also take place in a worship service.

F. The sending church is to oversee, as much as possible, the confession and walk of life of the mission personnel. Should any problems arise in this area, the consistory of the sending church(es), with the advice of the committee, shall act in accordance with the pertinent provisions in the church order.

G. The field of mission labour for all personnel shall be determined by the sending church with advice and approval of the committee. If, in case of emergency, a change must be made in the designation of the field, the consistory of the sending church(es), with the committee, shall take appropriate action and give full account to synod.

H. The committee shall at all times maintain the closest possible relations with mission personnel and they with the committee and the sending church(es). Mission personnel are to submit quarterly written reports to both the supervising church(es) and to the committee.

I. At least once a year a delegation from the committee, consisting of at least two members, shall visit the home mission project and

consult with the various parties concerned. In the event that more than one church sends mission personnel to the same field, these churches are to co-operate with each other through the committee.

J. The costs of sending out and the further labours of all mission personnel shall be borne by the sending church(es). The committee is authorized to assist sending church(es) from the general mission fund and is also to be diligent in gathering moneys for this fund. In case of need, the committee has the authority to request extra collections for the mission.

K. No home missionary minister or worker shall perform labours on behalf of or in conjunction with other churches or organizations without the approval of the sending church and the deputies, and then in compliance with the pending synodical approval of a written statement of co-operation

III. Establishing Home Mission Stations

A. Home mission stations are to be established according to local circumstances.

B. Worship services and other gatherings in which words of edification are spoken or approved sermons are read, whether on Lord's Day or at other times, are under the auspices of the consistory of the nearest Free Reformed Church.

C. When the situation warrants it, the consistory of that church will give direction and assistance in choosing a provisional board to run the affairs of the station. Such a board shall consist of no fewer than three members of that station.

D. Before being established as a home mission station, they who are in regular attendance there shall join themselves to the Free Reformed Church nearest them (C.O Article 39)

E. As soon as possible, the consistory of the supervising church shall call a home missionary to labour in the station with a view to it to becoming an instituted congregation of the Free Reformed Churches.

F. When the station becomes a congregation, (C.O. Art 38) the relation with the Home Missionary shall, at that moment, terminate; however, it remains the sole responsibility of the supervising church. Should a newly instituted church desire to call the Home Missionary as regular minister, such a call shall not be extended without prior consultation with the Outreach deputies or synodical deputies appointed thereto in keeping with the spirit of Article 49 C.O.

G. The relation between the home missionary and the home mission station will terminate upon the station being instituted as a congregation. Upon the termination of such a relation, the home missionary remains under the supervision and care of the church which had originally called him, of the synodical outreach committee deputies, until such a time that these deputies can assign him to another field of labour, to which he must then be called by one of the other churches. When circumstances warrant and with synodical approval (cf. Guideline, 1F), a newly instituted church may call its former home missionary to become its pastor.

H. A home mission station, in striving to become an independent congregation, should seek to become financially self-supporting as soon as possible. The amount of financial support from Outreach deputies is to be set in consultation with the supervising church. If financial assistance continues to be needed after a congregation has been instituted, it is to be provided along the following scale of percentages of the amount given during the last full year immediately preceding the institution:

Year 1 80 %

Year 2 60 %

Year 3 40 %

Year 4 20 %

I. The committee bears the responsibility for all home mission property not acquired by the members of the home mission station or by the supervising church. Where joint moneys have been used to acquire any properties or possessions, joint consultations will be needed for their disposal.

IV. Institution of a New Church

A. A new church is not organized by a man, but Christ blessing the ministry of the church, gathers His church by His Word and Spirit (Acts 2:47). While the gathering of a congregation of believers constitutes a church in its essence, the institution of the offices is necessary for the existence of a new church in its complete and authoritative form.

B. The decision to institute a new church should not be made by classis (synod) or the supervising church without first receiving a (written) request for institution from the confessing members of the mission station. When conditions are ready for institution, the consistory of the supervising church may encourage the members to make such a request.

C. The procedure for instituting a new church is as follows:

1. Petition: All confessing members desiring a Free Reformed Church in a new locality and all professing Christians of Reformed persuasion who are not members elsewhere desiring to join the proposed new church shall sign a petition addressed to the classis (synod) requesting the approval and assistance of the classis (synod) for the institution of a new church.

2. Approval: The classis (synod) shall consider whether the applying group is large enough to be organized, whether there are enough brethren who could serve as office bearers, and similar questions. If upon due consideration, the classis (synod) acts favorably upon the request, it shall appoint a neighbouring consistory to assist the group in the institution of the new church.

3. Membership Acceptance: At a worship service of the group the decision of classis (synod) is announced and the date of a future membership meeting for the purpose of electing office bearers, giving at least four weeks' notice. It is also announced that those desiring to become members of the new congregation should present their certificates to the meeting of the supervising consistory which shall take place within the following two weeks. Those applicants who have not yet made confession of faith and desire to

do so shall be examined by the consistory. The consistory shall consider these applications and announce the additional names of those who have been accepted as members. Those who have yet to make confession of faith must have done so prior to the meeting in order to participate in voting. From the number of members and other circumstances the supervising consistory shall determine the number of elders and deacons which are to be chosen.

4. Membership Meeting: At the announced membership meeting the names of all those who have been accepted as confessing members shall be announced. All confessing male members shall be given the right to vote. The voting members present shall sign an attendance list. The number of elders and deacons to be chosen shall be announced. By way of open ballots a vote shall be taken until the required number of brethren have been chosen.

5. Installation of Office Bearers: If no legal objections are received by the supervising consistory, then two weeks later the brethren chosen shall be installed into their respective offices during a worship service. Upon their installation, a new church is established.

Regulations Regarding Radio Evangelism

I. Each year the committee shall recommend to synod a radio minister and an assistant radio minister who, together, shall be responsible for providing regular broadcast material

A. The assistant minister is to provide a minimum of four broadcasts per annum

B. The radio minister shall also supervise the administration of the broadcast

II. At each meeting, the radio minister shall give a report of the affairs and status of the broadcast to the committee

Amendments

This order may be altered, amended, and revised only as synod orders.

Supplement No. C – 5

(Cf. C.O. Art. 11)

5. Needy Churches Fund

Mandate & Regulations

A. General Regulations of Supervision

1. Synod has established a NEEDY CHURCH FUND with the mandate to grant financial assistance to needy churches; synod has since its establishment mandated the Finance Committee to manage this fund.
2. The purpose of the Fund is the granting of salary assistance and other financial allowances as mentioned in the section "GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS' SALARIES AND ADDITIONAL BENEFITS" to churches which have done their utmost to meet the basic requirements as set by Synod and have found themselves unable to do so;
3. In granting financial assistance from this Fund the FINANCE COMMITTEE will consider conditions of need as related to congregational income, financial commitments to the various Church Funds, including exceptional related financial burden;
4. The Finance Committee shall use careful discretion when considering financial assistance for congregations who are building or remodeling church or parsonage property, or have considerable bank assets. (cf. *Acts of Synod 2008*, p.27)
5. Congregations who are in need of assistance shall make application in writing to the committee submitting such information as requested by the Finance Committee. Included in this request shall be financial and other pertinent information as outlined in the Finance Committee Form A (available from the Finance Committee). (Cf. *Acts of Synod 2008*, p.27)
6. The Consistory of the supported congregation is committed to submit any information to the FINANCE COMMITTEE in relation to the financial assistance;
7. The FINANCE COMMITTEE shall process the application for assistance without delay after approval is finalized.
8. Financial assistance is granted for the period of one year. Every year thereafter financial support will be extended after receiving

written application including the required financial statements as mentioned under #5;

9. The FINANCE COMMITTEE will make recommendations to Synod in their Annual Report to what extent financial contributions to this Fund is required, by collections, and or quota;
10. All activities in relation to financial assistance to congregations will be included in the committee's Annual Report to Synod.

B. Regulations Regarding Needy Churches Fund¹⁹

(cf. Church Order, Article 11)

- A. The Deputies (three or five members appointed by synod), have the mandate to grant financial aid to needy churches.
- B. The Deputies shall have complete control of this fund for the needy churches.
- C. This fund is created and maintained by collections and gifts.
- D. ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS:
 1. Consistories unable to meet their obligations as stated in Article 11 are eligible for financial aid.
 2. The Finance Committee shall use careful discretion when considering financial assistance for congregations who are building or remodeling church or parsonage property, or have considerable bank assets. (cf. *Acts of Synod 2008*, p.27)
- E. Deputies shall allocate financial aid to consistories to enable them:
 1. to call their own minister
 2. to meet their obligations as stated in Article 11
 3. to continue to comply with their usual obligations in situations of special difficulty.
(Again, with regard to a church which is building or remodeling a church or parsonage, the committee shall use careful discretion. Cf. D-2, above.)
- F. With regard to the support referred to in D-1 and D-2, the Deputies shall:

¹⁹ In their original form these regulations were approved by Synod 1985.

1. adhere to the regulations stipulated by Synod concerning salaries of ministers
2. take into account the provisions outlined in Article 11-A of the Church Order.
3. A church receiving funding from the Needy Churches Fund shall be relieved from the assessment charge for Needy churches. (cf. *Acts of Synod 2006*, Art. 19-4-a)

G. APPLICATION:

The Consistories will have the opportunity each year to submit a request to the Deputies for financial support, if they need it. This request must include:

1. a statement of receipts and disbursements of the last year;
2. a statement of assets and liabilities and possible funds of the church per Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 of that year;
3. a budget of receipts and liabilities for the current year;
4. an estimate of the aid which the consistory considers to be necessary;
 - a. special attention must be given to the circumstances of the minister of the Word and his family in establishing the estimate.
 - b. Deputies are authorized to ask for more explanations if necessary.
 - c. All data received from the consistories are confidential.

H. DISBURSEMENT:

1. Deputies must decide about the requests for support as soon as possible.
 2. The financial aid may be given at the most for the period of one year. Every year thereafter the aid can be extended if necessary.
- I. Deputies are obliged to give account of their conduct and their financial control to Synod.

**Needy Churches Fund - Appendix
FORM A**

THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA

The following items will be considered when a church applies for financial assistance through **Needy Churches**:

- Name & address of church requesting financial assistance
- How long has the church been established?
- What is the trend in membership over the past 5 years?
- Amount of funds being requested
- Purpose or use of funds being requested
- Please outline details of repayment (i.e. annual, monthly, no repayment expected, etc.)
- Indicate whether this is a “one-time request”. If not, please provide details as to expectation for future years.
- Please provide the full financial statements for the past 3 fiscal years (including balance sheet, profit/loss statement and budget for each year). While the statements will be reviewed in their entirety, special attention will be given to the following items:
 - Cash balances
 - Investments (including those reserved for capital purposes – i.e. building)
 - Debt levels
 - Tithing/Donation amounts
 - Expenses
- Please provide a copy of the Budget for the current and projection for next two fiscal years.

Supplement No. C –6

6. Regulations of the Publications Committee

MANDATE

Whereas the ministry of the Word is the primary task of the church, the church should see to it that all efforts be made to publish material in support of this task. In order to facilitate and co-ordinate this task, a Synodical committee shall be appointed, referred to as the Publications Committee, which shall carry out the mandate to provide the churches with whatever publications may serve them and in accordance with to the following order.²⁰

ORGANIZATION:

Members of this committee are appointed by Synod for a three-year term. The committee makes recommendations to Synod for appointment and reappointment of members.

The mandate of the committee is to publish materials within the cash flow created by synodical assessments and collections.

The officers of the committee are elected by the committee, and the appointment of the editor and assistant editor of "The Messenger" are ratified by Synod.

The committee appoints members to all its subcommittees for a three-year term. Appointees to ad hoc committees will serve for the duration of the project. The Publications committee requires a report from each subcommittee in time for the spring and fall committee meetings containing:

- a) Progress report
- b) Suggested (new publications report)
- c) Financial report per year end
- d) Budget for next calendar year (for October committee meeting)
- e) Any other matters requiring the approval or advice of the Publications committee.
- f) Any matters, which may require the approval of Synod.

²⁰ See also *Church Order*, Article 55.

FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

Funding is provided by a) synodical assessments b) subscriptions to the Messenger c) sale of publications d) donations

The committee coordinates the funding for all the projects under its supervision, and requires each subcommittee to prepare a detailed financial statement and budget for each year.

Publication inventory management and reordering, when approved through the budget, will be the responsibility of the New Publications Development committee. Physical inventory and supplies will be kept as designated by this committee.

An administrator is appointed to keep the accounts of the Publications committee, and will maintain separate accounts for:

a) The Messenger, detailing receipts from:

- 1) subscriptions
- 2) donations

b) Other Publications.

The administrator will submit an annual report to the committee detailing all expenses, income and receivables for the above on a calendar year basis. The Publications committee will combine the material from the various sub committees and the administrator, as required, in its annual report to synod.

Supplement No. C-7

7. Ministerial Mentorship Guidelines

1. Upon the decision of Synod to declare an applicant to be candidate for the ministry in the Free Reformed Churches, the Synod shall appoint an experienced minister to function as mentor during the first period of his official work as minister of the Word.
2. After his ordination this brother, like all other ministers of the Word, is to carry out the work of his office under the direct supervision and responsibility of his local Consistory. The Consistory will then also support him with their advice and assistance and show the necessary pastoral concern and care for their own pastor and teacher and his family. At the same time the Consistory may expect pastoral care and leadership from their minister.
3. The local Consistory is to conduct its own matters unhindered and Synod, as a broader ecclesiastical assembly, has the task to oversee all the ministers of the Word in accordance with the Church Order. In addition to this, in the beginning period of the official work of the yet inexperienced minister, Synod, by way of a synodically appointed mentor, shows this extra care towards him with a view to his personal and ministerial development as office-bearer.
4. The task of a Ministerial Mentor is:
 - a. To maintain personal contact with the newly ordained minister of the Word for the period of one year; which contact consists of:
 - 1) To visiting this brother, if possible, once every two months.
 - 2) To confer together about matters, which have come up in his ministry, and offering him advice in these things.
The new minister on his part has the right to approach the mentor, when he is in need of advice. On its part the consistory, in consultation with its minister, also has the right to approach the mentor.
 - b. The mentor shall give a report of his mentorship after a year in which he reports only how often and in what manner the

contact and consultation has taken place without revealing the specific content of the cases discussed, since these matters are first and foremost the responsibility of the local Consistory. This report must therefore first be passed by the Consistory before it is received by Synod.

- c. If deemed necessary, the mentor may propose to Synod, in consultation with the young brother, the extension of the mentorship by half a year -- at the most one year -- and then again to report according to sub “b” above.
5. After the mentor has given his report he shall be discharged by Synod.

Supplement No. C-8
(See C.O. Art. 19, 20)

8. Theological Education Committee Regulation

A. Mandate

The Theological Education Committee is mandated to carry out the relevant responsibilities described in the FRCNA Church Order Articles 19 & 20:

1. Under the heading TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD, Article 19 states: *The churches, whenever necessary, shall put forth every effort to ensure that there may be students who are being trained in theology and that these, if necessary, are financially supported.*²¹
2. Under the heading THEOLOGICAL TRAINING, Article 20, states: *The churches shall take care of the theological training for the ministry of the Word, the regulation of which shall be made by the Synod.*
- 3.

In harmony with this primary mandate to provide the best training of our Free Reformed theological students and in distinction from it, is the mandate to be involved in the management of the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, which has as its vision the provision of godly, sound, Reformed, experiential men for ministry in the world-wide church (Acts of Synod 2012, article 9).

B. Policy Regarding Admission to the Theological Education Program:

Prerequisites for admission of applicants are the following:

- A personal letter of application, exploring in some detail the call to the ministry;
- Written testimony from the applicant's consistory;
- Written report from his personal physician attesting to good health;

²¹ Regarding financial support, see Theological Student Support Committee, C.O. vol. 2, Supplement No. C-9.

- Ability to demonstrate knowledge of the Scriptures and the Three Forms of Unity.
- Ability to subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity without qualification or exception.
- At least one year in active fellowship and membership within a local Free Reformed congregation.

Academic qualifications include:

- Completion or near completion of a Bachelor's degree strongly recommended.
- Ideally, the successful completion of the following college level courses:
 - o Greek (Koiné / N.T.) – 4 semesters
 - o English (including composition and speech) – 4 semesters
 - o Philosophy (including logic) – 2 semesters
 - o History (including European) – 4 semesters
 - o Modern Foreign Language (preferably Dutch) – 2 semesters
- Attainment of a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.7 (B-).

Note: In exceptional cases, at the discretion of the committee, "mature students" may be admitted into the program without a university degree.

The process is as follows:

1. After having met with their consistory, new applicants are examined by the Theological Education Committee, which shall normally take place at its regular spring meeting.
2. The meetings of the Committee during which applicants are to be examined must be constituted by a quorum of 80% and students for the ministry must be accepted by at least a 70% majority. (*Acts of Synod 1982*, Art.54, cf. *Acts of Synod 1983*, Art.13, *Acts of Synod 1984*, Art.6, *Acts of Synod 1994*, Art.49)
3. The Committee (secretary) must inform the Theological Student Support Committee of any applicants who have

been accepted into the Theological Education program.
(Cf. Supplement C-9).

C. Policy Regarding Theological Training:

1. The theological training of students shall take place under the guidance of the Committee according to the curriculum outlined in the Theological Education Handbook as approved or revised by Synod (*Acts of Synod 1990*, Art.47)
2. Each student is to follow a term of internship training under one of our experienced ministers (*Acts of Synod 2000*, Art. 46).
3. Each student who continues in the program will pass through four phases: 1. The probationary phase (usually first year); 2. the under-care phase (usually second year); 3. the licensure phase (usually third and fourth years), after which they proceed to the candidacy phase. (*Acts of Synod 2014*, Art. 22; see also *Acts of Synod 2017*, Art. 18.4).
4. Each student will proceed through the Committee's process of goal assessment (*Acts of Synod 2013*, Art. 21).

D. Policy Regarding Candidacy and Eligibility for Call:

1. A student who has completed the Theological Education program, and who is recommended by the Committee for final examination by Synod, shall upon the approval of Synod be declared Candidate and, unless otherwise decided by Synod, is immediately eligible to be called by the churches.
2. In the event that a candidate does not receive and accept a call within two years from the date of Synod having presented him to the churches, this period of candidacy will lapse without further action on the part of Synod. If he should desire to see this period extended, he should show cause for this at Synod and Synod may extend this twice for one year, provided he again present himself to Synod to request each such extension (*Acts of Synod 2008*, Art. 27).

Supplement No. C-9
(See C.O. Article 19)

9. Theological Student Support Committee

(Revised June 2017)

MANDATE

The mandate of the Theological Student Support Committee is to provide financial assistance to those theological students who are in need as stated in C. O. Article 19.

REGULATIONS

1. In providing and administering this assistance, Synod has established the THEOLOGICAL STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE consisting of members, appointed by Synod.
2. The members of this Committee are appointed for a term of three years; after which the members' term shall expire, however the retired member may be re-elected for another term.
3. Every year the Committee shall make an announcement, that young men who have a desire to become a minister of the Word in our churches, may submit a request for financial assistance, providing a favorable report from the Theological Education Committee is issued.
4. The Committee is not responsible for providing payment for services rendered by the students in the various churches.
5. The Committee shall make a full investigation of the applicant's financial status and will grant him a study allowance according to his need;
 - 5.1. The Committee shall require from the student full disclosure of all his liquid and non-liquid assets.
 - 5.2. The Committee is not responsible for any outstanding loans.
6. Every year the Committee, after having received a renewed request from those being financially supported, and following a recommendation from the Theological Education Committee concerning the student's study performance and walk of life, shall again determine the amount of financial assistance for one year;

- 6.1. The Committee shall request from the student an estimated budget of living expenses, each year, for review.
- 6.2. The Committee shall require from the students that they report any change in support payment requirements, for re-evaluation
7. Monies for this Fund are to be raised through quota as stipulated by Synod and through special gifts, donations, etc. Payments of quotas are due and payable every three months in advance.
8. The determined support payments shall be forwarded to the students on a monthly basis.
9. The treasurer of the Fund shall receive, disburse, and keep records of all monies in the Fund.
10. A financial statement accompanied by written report concerning the Committee's activities shall be rendered each year to Synod.
11. Candidates after six months will not receive any further financial support from the Theological Student Support Committee if during a period of six months they have not received a call nor accepted a call. (Synod 1990)
12. Upon receiving and accepting a call during the first six months, the Theological Student Support Committee will make arrangements with the Candidates till they have been ordained in the ministry. (Synod 1990)
13. Support Reimbursement
 - 13.1. In the event that a student, in the judgement of this Committee and the Theological Education Committee has discontinued his study without just cause, the student is obliged to reimburse the Committee for all the monies he has received in respect of financial study assistance.
 - 13.2. In the event that a candidate for the ministry has withdrawn his candidacy or left the Free Reformed denomination to other than a denomination with which we have Complete Correspondence (cf. C.O. Art.51, Level 3), without just cause, as determined by Synod, he shall be obliged to reimburse the Committee for the total amount he has received in respect of financial study assistance.²²
 - 13.3. Any minister who leaves the ordained ministry without just cause, as determined by Synod, or accepts a call outside of

²² See *Acts of Synod 2017*, Article 23.

the Free Reformed denomination or denominations with which we have Full Correspondence, within ten years, shall be obliged to reimburse the Committee for the total amount he has received in respect of financial study assistance minus ten percent (10%) for every full year he has served as minister in the denomination.

13.4. The Committee will make proper arrangements for repayment with the person concerned.

14. The Committee, in order to carry out Article 13 shall require from every student a signed document, reading as follows:

I agree to reimburse the Free Reformed Churches of North America for all the monies owing when the circumstances exist which are described in Article 13 in the REGULATIONS of the Theological Student Support Committee.

Signed: _____.

Date: _____

Witness: _____.

Date: _____

15. These Regulations may be altered, amended and revised by Synod only.

Supplement No. C-10

10. Youth and Education Committee

Mandate

The Youth and Education Committee shall:

1. Give advice and direction to the youth regarding Camp, conferences and other matters relating to the youth of our denomination.
2. Publish the Youth Messenger as the official publication of the Free Reformed Churches.
3. Provide advice to the youth regarding the use of educational materials as it relates to Bible studies, Reformed doctrine, and practical issues.
4. Make good, Reformed study material available.
5. Deal with matters referred to this committee by Synod and local consistories.
6. Submit an annual report to Synod of the activities of the committee.

Supplement No. C-11

11. Ethical- Public Affairs Committee

Mandate

(Cf. *Acts of Synod 2006*, Art.53, p.45)

(Purpose)

“That a Standing Committee Ethical-Public Affairs be formed to assist consistories in dealing with ethical/moral issues.

(Mandate)

It is mandated:

1. To focus on providing resources to consistories without necessarily developing public positions on these issues;
2. To facilitate the networking of Free Reformed and other Reformed professionals involved in the occupations where these issues might have to be dealt with, so that their expertise can be utilized;
3. To identify individuals who might serve as a resource for consistories to access in order to confidentially seek advice on specific cases.
4. To initiate and promote contact with government.

The committee is asked to work with a focus on reproductive techniques, life support issues, counselling and sexual matters.

[End of Church Order & Supplements, vol.2/2]

