

Classis Alberta North  
of the  
Christian Reformed Church  
Rules of Procedure

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CHRISTIAN  
REFORMED  
CHURCH

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## I Introduction

### Church Order Article 39. Constituency of a Classis

A classis shall consist of a group of neighboring churches. The organizing of a new classis and the redistricting of classes require the approval of synod.

### Church Order Article 40. Sessions of Classis

a. The council of each church shall delegate a minister and an elder to the classis. If a church is without a minister, or the minister is prevented from attending, two elders shall be delegated. Office bearers who are not delegated may also attend classis and may be given an advisory voice.

#### SUPPLEMENT:

The council of each church shall delegate a deacon in addition to a minister and an elder, provided the classis approves of the delegation of deacons to its meetings. Deacons delegated to classis shall be given credentials identical to those given to ministers and elders. The gender of diaconal delegates to a classis shall be consistent with the decisions of that classis concerning the supplement to Art 3-a of the Church Order. Acts of Synod 1997 page 621)

b. The classis shall meet at least every four months, unless great distances render this impractical, at such time and place as was determined by the previous classis meeting.

c. The ministers shall preside in rotation, or a chairman may be elected from among the delegates; however, the same person shall not preside twice in succession.

## **II. Convening and Constituting Classis Meetings**

### **Convening Classis meetings**

1. Classis shall convene and be constituted as prescribed by the Church Order and by the procedures in this document.
2. Classis shall meet at least twice a year, in the spring and in the fall, on dates established by the Classical Interim Committee.
3. Each church in rotation shall serve as host, and at least one meeting a year shall be held in the Edmonton area.
4. The Council of the host church shall provide the facilities needed for the classical meetings and make arrangements for the necessary meals and lodgings. The host church shall be reimbursed by the Classical Treasurer for expenses incurred.

### **Chaplain-of-the-Day**

1. For each regular meeting of Classis, the Classical Ministries Committee will attempt to find a person able and willing to serve as Chaplain-of-the-Day.
2. The Chaplain-of-the-Day will be a person who can provide spiritual support and inspiration to the delegates and other attendees of the classis meeting. The chaplain will attend to the following:
3. Review the classis schedule to note themes for devotions and possible difficult times in the deliberations.
4. Creatively plan the devotional times in order to inspire and focus the attendees.
5. Monitor the classis deliberations and intervene with pastoral concerns as deemed necessary.
6. Monitor the pastoral needs that arise in the context of the meeting from individuals and groups, and provide individual and group support as needed.
7. Work with representatives from the Classical Ministries Committee in reviewing and determining how to address pastoral concerns listed on credential forms received from the churches.

### **Extraordinary meetings may be held:**

1. upon decision by Classis
2. upon request from five churches of Classis. This request shall be sent to the Classical Interim Committee for action.
3. by decision of the Classical Interim Committee, upon the advice of three churches to do so.
4. upon request from a church that desires a colloquium doctum or an examination for its minister-elect or evangelist-elect.
5. The Classical Interim Committee may decide that an extraordinary meeting be a 'Classis Contracta'. Such a meeting shall require delegates from at least half of the churches in Classis.

## **B. Constituting Classis:**

1. The chairman of the previous meeting of Classis or, in case of his absence, the vice-chairman of the previous meeting, or the pastor of the host church, shall:
  - a. call the meeting of Classis to order,
  - b. conduct the opening devotions,
  - c. receive the credentials of the delegates,
  - d. request delegates who are present for the first time to sign the Form of Subscription, and
  - e. declare Classis constituted.
2. Classis shall require delegates from two-thirds of the churches to be present to be legally constituted.
3. The time schedule of the sessions shall be determined by the officers-elect of Classis and shall be approved by the delegates.
4. Meetings of Classis shall be open to visitors unless Classis meets in executive session.

## **C. Closed Sessions**

1. An executive session is a session of Classis at which only the delegates and other office-bearers are present.
2. Classis may go into strict executive session when, in its judgment, such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honour or the welfare of the church in very unusual situations. In strict executive sessions only the delegates shall be present.
3. The minutes of executive sessions shall be recorded, but shall not be read in open sessions unless Classis decides that it is permissible. They shall not be published without specific instructions from Classis.

## **D. Delegates and Visitors:**

1. Deacon delegates shall be seated by majority vote.
2. Delegates whose credentials are absent or incomplete shall be seated by majority vote.
3. Delegates to Classis who attend for the first time shall sign the Form of Subscription.
4. Ordained persons who hold a special office within the boundary of Classis shall have the privilege of the floor.

## **III Officers of Classis**

### **A. General**

1. The officers of Classis shall be Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Stated Clerk.
2. The Vice-Chairman of the previous meeting ordinarily shall serve as Chairman.
3. All ministers shall serve in the office of Vice-Chairman, in accordance with the alphabetical sequence of the churches.

4. If one or more ministers scheduled to serve as officers are absent, the one next in line shall be asked to serve.

## **B. Duties**

### **1. The Chairman shall:**

- a. call the sessions to order and see to it that each session is opened and closed with appropriate devotions.
- b. welcome guests and respond to greetings received or appoint delegates to Classis to do so.
- c. ask the assembly for approval of the agenda and the time schedule.
- d. see to it that business is transacted in the proper order and that delegates observe proper order and decorum.
- e. place before Classis every motion made and seconded according to the Rules of Order (section VIII, page 18) and clearly state the question before the vote is taken.
- f. have the right to vote on any question. The Chairman always votes when the vote is by ballot. In case of a vote by the raising of a hand, the Chairman ordinarily does not vote unless he deems it necessary to make his vote the deciding one. In case the vote is tied and the Chairman abstains from voting, the motion is lost. Should the Chairman vote affirmatively, the motion is carried.

### **2. The Vice-Chairman:**

- a. shall assume all the responsibilities of the Chairman in the event of the latter's absence or when a matter under consideration concerns the chairman or the church he represents.
- b. shall render all possible assistance to the Chairman as circumstances may require.

### **3. The Stated Clerk or his designate:**

- a. shall record the proceedings of the meeting.
- b. shall read the concept minutes of the previous session at the beginning of each session and shall read the concept minutes before adjournment.

## **IV. Agenda of Classis Meetings**

1. Overtures from church councils
2. Reports by committees, classical functionaries, and classical representatives.  
All standing committees and delegates to denominational boards shall report to Classis in writing at least once a year.
3. Printed reports shall not be read aloud at the meeting unless the reporter is specifically instructed to do so. This includes the Stated Clerk's report, the Interim Committee report, and all other reports or overtures. Delegates to denominational boards and

committees are to send a report to the Stated Clerk for inclusion in the Classical Agenda. Reporters may bring updates and will be available to answer questions from delegates.

4. Examination of candidates for the ministry of the Word, at the request of the calling church.
5. Colloquium doctum of ministers-elect, at the request of the calling church.
6. Appeals or protests by Councils or individual members who cannot yield to Classical or Council decisions, provided that notice and copies of the same are submitted to the bodies concerned in adequate time to prepare answers.
7. All other matters that Classis shall, by majority vote, declare to be acceptable.
8. All documents that are to be included in the Agenda of Classis shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least six weeks prior to the scheduled date of the Classis meeting.

Overtures or reports that, for valid reasons, could not be submitted within the time limits stipulated and that deal with matters that cannot be delayed until the next meeting of Classis, may be considered at a meeting of Classis by vote to do so. Councils that submit late overtures shall distribute copies to the churches for their consideration before the meeting of Classis. Copies shall be sent to all the delegates and to the Stated Clerk.

#### **Small Groups at Classis:**

1. At each classis meeting, there will be a small group session, where churches will be grouped randomly, three or four or more churches per group, to share with each other such things as blessings received, challenges that lie ahead, pains with which they struggle. This is to be seen as a small group exercise to help, perhaps especially first-time delegates, to overcome tensions, meet fellow delegates in a meaningful, sharing way, and to build a good Christian spirit of camaraderie.
2. The delegates in each group can pray with each other, lifting up one another before the Lord. Then, when classis comes together again, a brief report on these items can be shared, so that all are aware of what is happening in the churches of classis.
3. The time of sharing will be scheduled shortly after the formal opening of classis, for a maximum of half an hour.

## **V. Functionaries of Classis**

### **A. General**

1. The functionaries of Classis shall be the Stated Clerk and the Treasurer.
2. Classis shall elect a Stated Clerk and an Alternate Stated Clerk for a term of three years, which may be renewed. When the Stated Clerk can no longer fulfill the duties of the position, the Alternate Stated Clerk shall temporarily assume these duties until Classis chooses a new Stated Clerk. If Classis' choice is the current Alternate Stated Clerk, then a new Alternate shall be chosen.
3. Classis shall elect a Classical Treasurer and an Alternate Treasurer for a term of three years. When the Treasurer can no longer fulfill the duties of office, the Treasurer shall notify the Classical Interim Committee which shall appoint an auditing committee and authorize the

Alternate to serve as temporary Treasurer. After the auditors have rendered a favourable report, the alternate shall be authorized to function as permanent Treasurer of Classis. At the next meeting of Classis, another alternate shall be chosen.

4. Functionaries are eligible for re-election.

## **B. Duties**

### **1. The Stated Clerk shall:**

- a. record and preserve the minutes of Classis, sign the minutes, and prepare and distribute copies of the minutes to each church council.
- b. announce the time and place and other pertinent information concerning the meeting of Classis, compile and distribute the agenda at least four weeks before the meeting of Classis, include a list of classical functionaries and the length of their terms when election for such functions is on the agenda, and send a copy of the official credential form to all councils.
- c. carry on all correspondence for Classis and sign all legal and official documents for Classis.
- d. serve as custodian of the official seal and the files and archives of Classis.
- e. serve as a member of the Classical Interim Committee.
- f. receive an annual honorarium as established by Classis.
- g. receive reimbursement of all expenses incurred on behalf of Classis.

### **2. The Treasurer**

a. The duties of the Treasurer are:

- i. receive and acknowledge, bank, and keep a record of all contributions of the churches of Classis and
- ii. distribute these funds to the various causes for which they are designated,
- iii. pay all expenses incurred by and for Classis,
- iv. prepare an annual financial report, with sufficient copies for each delegate to Classis.

b. In the event that the Treasurer is not a delegate to Classis, the Treasurer shall have the privilege of the floor in all matters of finance.

c. The Treasurer shall receive an annual honorarium as established by Classis. In addition, the Treasurer shall receive reimbursement of all expenses incurred on behalf of Classis.

d. Books and records of the Treasurer shall be audited annually by a public accountant or by two competent auditors as decided and appointed by Classis.

e. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Student Fund Committee.

f. The Treasurer will notify Church Treasurers of the final date during the year on which funds received will be entered in the account for that year. The date normally will fall in the last weeks of the year. Monies received after the date specified will be entered in the account book for the following year.

## **VI. Classical Committees**

### **A. General**

1. Members of standing committees shall serve three-year terms. Terms shall be arranged to generate even rotation in the committee.
2. All terms begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the appropriate year.
3. Elections shall be by ballot.
4. Classis shall elect alternates to serve in the event of a vacancy on a committee
5. Alternates shall fill the unexpired parts of terms in the respective committees. At its next session, Classis shall elect new alternates.
6. Members of all committees are eligible for re-election for one additional term. The nominating committee may forward to Classis the name of an incumbent committee member as a single nominee if this is recommended by the committee in question.
7. Whenever possible, elders shall serve in each committee.
8. Elders chosen for any committee shall serve their full terms even though their term of office in council may have expired.
9. Committees shall appoint their own officers.

### **B. Standing Committees**

#### **1. Classical Interim Committee:**

- a. Mandate:
  - i. Do all things entrusted to it by Classis and all things that require the action of Classis prior to its next session.
  - ii. Carry out, or arrange to be carried out, Classis assignments for which no agent was designated at the time of the classis meeting.
- b. Membership: Four members, plus the Stated Clerk.
- c. Meetings: As needed.
- d. Specific tasks
  - i. Set dates for classis meetings.
  - ii. Appoint officers and host church.
  - iii. Appoint Counselors, upon request of a church without a minister. They shall assist that church as prescribed by the Church Order and by relevant synodical decisions and shall submit a written report to Classis at the completion of their tasks.
  - iv. Handle credentials of ministers leaving or entering Classis.
  - v. Make arrangements for colloquium doctum and other classical examinations of candidates for the ministry, evangelists, and applicants for licensure to exhort.
  - vi. Appoint a credentials advisory committee, a finance advisory committee, and a classis expense advisory committee.
  - vii. Appoint other ad hoc advisory or study committees to serve Classis as the need for these arises.
  - viii. Call a special meeting of Classis when five churches request it.

- ix. Decide whether to call a special meeting of Classis when at least three churches request it.
- x. Submit a report of its actions to Classis for approval at its next session.

## **Classical Appointments**

1. Arrange classical preaching assignments in response to requests by vacant churches and churches whose minister is incapacitated. Requests should be made to the Classical Interim Committee, at least three weeks before Classis meets.
2. The number of Classical appointments ordinarily shall be two per month.
3. No church shall receive classical assignments during the months of July and August.
4. Councils of vacant churches shall reimburse the ministers filling classical appointments for traveling expenses. Exceptions to this rule may be decided by Classis from time to time.
5. Classical appointments shall be distributed equally among the ministers of Classis, as much as possible.

## **2. Classical Ministries Committee**

- a. Mandate: To bring order and quality to the meetings of classis.
- b. Membership: Members of the Classical Interim Committee plus a representative from each of the following:
  - Campus Ministry Committee, Youth Ministry Committee, Cuba Connection Committee, Home Missions Committee, Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference, Classical Abuse Response Team, Chaplains, Pastor-Church Relations Committee.
- c. Meetings: At least six times per year.
- d. Specific tasks
  - i. Consult with classical and regional representatives on denominational agency boards or committees, mainly with respect to coordination of reporting schedules. Such representatives are encouraged to request meetings or discussion time with the committee regarding special concerns or issues.
  - ii. Coordinate the presentation of reports to the next two or more meetings of classis, and hear reports on new plans for the different ministries within Classis.
  - iii. Map out the agenda for classis meetings in three distinct blocks: local, classical, and denominational ministries.

## **3. Pastor-Church Relations Committee**

*The mandate of the Pastor-Church Relations Committee of Classis Alberta North is to help churches and pastors foster healthy pastor-congregation relationships.*

The committee will:

1. Inform Classis how to build healthy churches and healthy pastor-congregation relationships, and how common stressors in churches and pastor families can best be addressed.
2. Be available to church councils for consultation in matters of pastor-congregation relationships.

3. Work with pastors and spouses (in the event the pastor is married) and family members, in the following ways:
  - a. Be available as a spiritual and emotional resource as needed.
  - b. Work towards forming small geographically-based Support and Accountability Groups of pastors and spouses that organize events for fellowship, sharing, and offering support and understanding to each other. Each of the groups will have its own coordinator.
  - c. Organize regular conferences for pastors (and spouses) for the purpose of personal inspiration, fun and networking, worship and learning.
4. Be available (or help find resources) for mediation and dispute resolution.
5. Encourage churches to observe Pastor and Staff Appreciation Sunday in October of each year.

#### **4. Classical Home Missions Committee**

- a. **Mandate:** *To assist and encourage existing and emerging congregations of Classis Alberta North (CAN) in their respective outreach mission and ministries.*
- b. **Accountability:** The CHMC is accountable to Classis Alberta North (CAN) and serves Classis with recommendations and reports in it's area of responsibility.
- c. **Membership:** The committee will consist of 7 members including 3 Pastors and the Diaconal Consultant.

d. **Meetings:**

The committee will meet at least four times a year.

e. **Specific Tasks:** There are four specific areas of responsibility:

- i. Evaluation and Encouragement
- ii. Education and Resources
- iii. Financial Aid
- iv. New Church Development

f. **Criteria for the disbursements of funds Purposes:**

1. Committee meeting expenses
2. Travel by committee members
3. Promotion-what, how?
4. Conferences and speakers
5. Grants (operating and capital) to church plants or emerging churches
6. Land purchases
7. Building construction
8. Books and other publications

g. **Criteria and other guidelines:**

1. Requests for funds for a given calendar year, along with complete supporting documentation, must be received, in writing, by committees not later than July 1 of the preceding year. Two copies need to be provided.

If no approval by classis is required for the committee's action on a particular type of request, the committee may, at its discretion, receive such requests at any time. Normally, no special meetings will be called to consider requests for funds, and written requests need to be received at least one week before a scheduled meeting of the committee, to be considered at that meeting.

2. Proposed use of funds must be within the mandate of the Home Missions Committee responsibilities in Classis Alberta North.
3. Receipt of full and detailed financial documentation from the requesting group before approval is given.
4. Receipt of a full and detailed financial report at the end of each grant period (normally one year) before funds for a subsequent year are released.
5. A time limit of three years for any grant or subsidy program.
6. Approval by classis is required for grants or subsidies in excess of \$5,000 per year.
7. The Home Missions Committee may disburse monies from the Home Missions Fund in amounts not exceeding \$5,000.00 per member church year, total approvals not to exceed \$10,000.00 per year. Any disbursement shall meet the approved criteria.
8. Detailed year-end reports will be made to classis by the committee. Normally this will be done at the spring meeting of classis.

#### **4. Campus Ministry Committee**

- a. Mandate: *Develop and supervise, on behalf of Classis, the work of the Campus Minister.*
- b. The mission objectives of the campus ministry are ranked as follows:
  1. To articulate and advance the Reformed world and life view within the larger academic community.
  2. To identify and gather the Christian Reformed students on campus into a community of believers, equipping them to live their faith and to give it expression, within the context of their academic studies and their vocation.
  3. To minister to non-Christian Reformed students, faculty, and staff within the campus community.
  4. To address the personal, academic, and faith concerns of students, by providing pastoral counsel and support.
  5. To call to faith in Jesus Christ the non-Christian members of the campus community.
  6. Report to Classis regularly on the work of the campus minister and the ministry on campus.
- c. Membership: Six members, plus the campus minister as a non-voting member. The membership shall consist of one minister, one member from the supporting community, two professors, and two students.
- d. Meetings: As needed, but at least six times per year.
- d. Specific tasks:
  - i. Conduct a formal evaluation at the end of each academic year. Provide a summary of each annual evaluation to the Stated Clerk, normally by June 30.
  - ii. Prepare a budget for the coming calendar year and present it in time for consideration at the fall meeting of Classis.

## 5. Youth Ministry Committee

*a. Mandate: The Classical Youth Ministry Committee uses the acronym CLIF (Communicate, Liaison, Investigate and Facilitate) as a guideline for its work. This set of directives was developed and recommended to each Classis by the denominational Youth Ministry Committee in 1995.*

Note: When the phrase 'youth ministry' is used it refers to the work of the church that includes or relates to those in the 3-25 age bracket, such as the educational programs, GEMS, Cadets and youth groups, discipleship and service programs.

1. Communication
  - a. Communicating and promoting to Classis the various activities of the ministries and programs for youth in Classis Alberta North.
  - b. Communicating the needs of today's youth, current trends, resources, and opportunities in youth ministry to churches, youth leaders, and church councils.
2. Liaison: Serving as a liaison between local congregations, ministry leaders, the denominational Youth Ministry Committee, CRC Publications, Dynamic Youth Ministries, and Classis.
3. Investigation
  - a. Investigating the needs and trends of youth within Classis.
  - b. Investigating current journals, books, conferences, and other available resources about youth and youth ministry today in order to develop youth ministry expertise.
4. Listening to and dialoguing with youth and their leaders.
5. Facilitation
  - a. Facilitating a network between the congregational youth ministries of Classis.
  - b. Facilitating effective functioning of the Leagues, Councils, and educational ministries of the Classis.
- b. Membership
  - Chairperson
  - Secretary
  - Parent representative
  - RYNA representative
  - Central Alberta League representative
  - Young Adult representative
  - Cadets representative
  - GEMS representative
  - Church Education representative
  - Pastoral Advisor
  - Youth Ministry Consultant, ex officio
- c. Meetings: As needed.
- d. Specific tasks
  - i. Supervise the work of the Youth Ministry Consultant.

ii. Administer the distribution of grants towards the cost of youth ministry projects in Classis.

e. Grant guidelines

**i. For whom?**

Grants are for ministries that involve youth ages 3-25 in the Christian Reformed churches of Classis Alberta North. Preference will be given to youth ministry activities sponsored by organizations affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church.

**ii. For what?**

The general purpose of every grant must be to support or develop effective youth ministry. Priority will be given to events and/or programs that:

- a. Support, train or help to develop leaders
- b. Involve more than one church or youth group
- c. Are service or outreach oriented
- d. Enable more young people to participate in or benefit from a particular ministry.

**iii. How much?**

- a. Classis Alberta North has set aside \$5000 annually to support youth ministry efforts in its region.
- b. The grant recipient is expected to cover at least 50% of the cost of the event or program. Therefore, the maximum amount that may be requested is 50% of the total expenditures for the activity.

**iv. Application Terms and Requirements**

- a. Applications will be reviewed once a year.
- b. The deadline for all applications is February 28 of that year.
- c. A grant shall be used within 12 months of when it was received (unless the grant recipient receives permission from the Classical Youth Ministry Committee (the 'committee') to use the grant within another specific period of time).
- d. The grant must be used for the purpose for which it was granted (unless an alternative to that purpose is approved by the committee).
- e. If a grant recipient does not use/need all the grant money, the unused portion shall be returned to the committee.
- f. Grant recipients shall provide the committee with a report of how the funds were used, including a financial record for the event, within one month after it has taken place. If this report is not received, no other grants shall be distributed to that recipient until such time as the report has been received.
- g. The grant recipient gives the committee (or its representative) permission to examine the records and accounting of the event for which the grant was received.

## **6. Student Fund Committee**

- a. *Mandate: Provide financial assistance to members of churches in Classis Alberta North who are preparing for full-time ministry (ordained or unordained) in the Christian Reformed Church.*
- b. Membership: Three members plus the Classical Treasurer. There shall be one alternate.
- c. Meetings: As needed.
- d. Specific tasks
  - i. Consider whether support to new applicants can be given and, if so, to advertise this in the churches and the official church papers.
  - ii. Report to Classis on applicants to the Student Fund.
  - iii. Consider the form of financial help to be given to the applicant, i.e., underwriting a student loan that shall be repayable in part or whole when the student enters the ministry, or by providing an annual grant.
  - iv. Provide an annual report of the finances of the fund through the Treasurer of Classis.
  - v. Report each year on the standing, progress, and financial need of the students supported by Classis.
- e. Requirements for application. Each applicant must:
  - i. Be a professing member of one of the churches of Classis Alberta North.
  - ii. Submit a letter of application to the committee by July 1 before the anticipated academic year.
  - iii. Present a satisfactory letter of recommendation from his/her home church council as to godly conduct and suitability for employment in full ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
  - iv. Submit a transcript of high school and/or college credits, which will indicate the applicant's ability to pursue academic programs of study in preparation for employment in full-time ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
  - v. Upon first application, appear before the Student Fund Committee for an interview. The need for financial assistance must be demonstrated at this interview.
- f. Requirements of beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries shall:

  - i. Apply each year for assistance for the upcoming school year and demonstrate the need for financial assistance.
  - ii. Follow a course of study appropriate to the intended field of work.
  - iii. Inform the committee of any intention to suspend studies temporarily and to re apply for assistance when studies are resumed.
  - iv. Be under no obligation to repay any money received from this fund provided that he/she serve in full-time ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
  - v. Repay within five years all monies received from the fund upon failure to complete the required academic program and/or to enter into full-time ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
- g. Special Cases

Anyone indebted to Classis on account of student aid repayment (section f.v above), for whom the payment of such debt causes extreme hardship, may apply to Classis, with the

recommendation of his/her church council, to be acquitted of his/her debt either in whole or in part. Classis shall consider each case on its own merit.

h. Procedure

i. Applications will be reviewed at the July/August meeting of the committee for approval at the fall Classis meeting.

ii. Grants will be limited to available funds. When insufficient funds are available to meet all requests, preference will be given to seminary students seeking ordination.

## **7. Cuba Connection Committee**

a. Mandate: To nurture a partnership between the Iglesia Cristiana Reformada en Cuba (ICRC) and Classis Alberta North.

b. Membership: Five members and one alternate. Whenever possible, one person should be Spanish speaking. Whenever possible, a council member shall serve on the committee. Representatives from World Missions (CRWM), World Relief (CRWRC), and the Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference shall serve as ex officio members.

c. Meetings: As needed.

d. Specific tasks

i. Keep regular contact with the ICRC.

ii. Implement a schedule of exchange visits every two years between ICRC and Classis Alberta North with appropriate funding from outside the budget of Classis.

iii. Respond to needs and prayer requests communicated to us by the ICRC.

iv. Maintain regular communication between the committee and churches relaying those requests.

v. Provide projects in consultation with ICRC that individual churches or groups could support through CRWM-Canada. The funds for these projects are understood to be over and above the CRWM grant for Cuba and the regular classical budgets

vi. Report regularly to Classis on its activities.

## **8. Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference**

Decisions regarding the relationship of NADC to Classis. [1987.94:37]

That NADC become a standing committee of Classis.

That Classis invite representatives of deacons to all Classis meetings and give them the privilege of the floor on all matters pertaining to and relating to NADC matters.

That Classis remind the churches of the basic principle that 'the offices differ from each other only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor' (Church Order Art. 2)

That Classis urge the churches to ensure that the diaconate has sufficient freedom to carry out its functions and make binding decisions within its distinct area of responsibility.

### **a. Mandate (from 1991 Constitution)**

i. To promote the effectiveness of the work of the deacons in our congregations by holding regular meetings to consider and discuss matters pertaining to the office of deacon.

- ii. To establish closer contact and fellowship between these diaconates, sharing resources and diaconal training.
  - iii. To provide a collective voice for diaconal matters.
  - iv. To serve the member diaconates with advice on local problems which they may bring to the attention of this conference.
  - v. To cooperate in resolving matters, or in undertaking joint projects that lie beyond the scope of individual diaconates and are properly presented to the conference.
  - vi. To assist needy diaconates.
  - vii. To consider and act upon matters referred to by classis.
  - viii. To receive, allocate, and disburse funds in accordance with the purposes outlined above.
  - ix. To work cooperatively with the Christian Reformed World Relief committee (CRWRC).
- b. Membership**
- i. The board consists of members of the executive, one representative from each diaconate, and the advisory members.
  - ii. The executive consists of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, member-at-large. Advisory members: pastoral adviser, CRWRC board member, diaconal consultant.
  - iii. Officers are elected from nominations submitted by the diaconates, and require the approval of classis.
- c. Meetings:** Normally two general conference meetings per year.
- d. Specific tasks:** As described in the constitution.

## 9. Classical Abuse Response Team

- a. Mandate:** Overall goals are:

To create awareness of the sin and pain of abuse

To make the church a safer place

To create pathways to healing.

The Team has **three components:**

- i. A 14-member group (Advisory Panel) from which listening panels can be formed as needed.

- ii. An education group

- iii. Support groups that may be formed as a result of the work of a listening panel.

**b. Membership:**

- i. Members of the Classical Abuse Response Team shall be elected and appointed by Classis. Terms are as for all Standing Committees.

- ii. The Advisory Panel shall be made up of fourteen members. Recruitment shall be from the following areas: seven members from the Parkland area (Ponoka and south), and seven members from the northern Alberta area (Leduc and north).

- iii. Members of the Advisory Panel shall be both men and women, members of the professions that provide therapy or counseling, social services, legal expertise, education, and pastoral ministry. In addition, there may be members-at-large who are not associated with a particular professional group but who, in the judgment of Classis,

have demonstrated an appropriate awareness of abuse and the degree of wisdom and compassion that is needed on the Panel.

iv. One member shall be designated by Classis as the convener.

c. **Meetings:** As needed.

d. **Specific tasks**

i. When requested by a church's council to assist it in dealing with an abuse allegation, the designated Convener of the Team shall assemble a five-member Advisory Panel, drawn from Team members who, as much as possible and advisable, live in the church's geographic area. Each Advisory Panel ordinarily will have on it a therapist, a lawyer, a pastor, a social worker, and an educator. No member of the Team is to serve on an Advisory Panel that deals with allegations of abuse arising from within his/her own congregation or when there are familial connections between the member and the alleged abuser or the person(s) making the allegation.

ii. The Advisory Panel will deal with allegations of abuse, made by an adult against a church leader, in the manner outlined in 'Procedures and Guidelines for Handling Abuse Allegations Against a Church Leader' adopted by Synod 1997. All written records of the Advisory Panel shall be maintained in a manner that ensures the confidentiality of their contents.

iii. The Team shall present an annual report to the March meeting of Classis, keeping in mind the need for confidentiality in such a report.

## 10. Nominating Committee

a. **Mandate:** Serve Classis by soliciting and presenting nominations for committee and other positions that need to be filled.

b. **Membership:** Three members, one of whom shall be a current member of the Classical Interim Committee. That member shall be the convener for the committee. The other two shall be ministers, elders, or ex-elders, elected by classis.

c. **Meetings:** As needed.

d. **Specific tasks**

i. Receive, through the office of the Stated Clerk, a list of committee and other positions that will become vacant in the following year. This event should occur in January of each year.

ii. Send to the churches a list of all the vacancies for nomination or renomination, inviting them to submit names in writing to the nominating committee.

iii. Invite and accept nominations from church councils, through the office of the Stated Clerk. Standing committees of Classis also may make nominations for committee membership. Such committees are advised to consult with the nominee's council when they nominate.

iv. Present to Classis a ballot that lists all nominees, with sufficient copies for all delegates.

v. All nominees must consent to their nomination.

## **11. Church Visitors**

Church Order Article 42. Church visitors.

a. The classis shall appoint at least one committee composed of two of the more experienced and competent office-bearers (two ministers or one minister and one elder) to visit all its churches once a year.

b. The church visitors shall ascertain whether the office-bearers faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and properly promote the edification of the congregation and the extension of God's kingdom. They shall fraternally admonish those who have been negligent and help all with advice and assistance.

c. The churches are free to call on the church visitors whenever serious problems arise.

d. The church visitors shall render to classis a written report of their work.

One copy of Church Visitors' reports goes to the Stated Clerk, and one goes to the church visitor coordinator, who will make copies of previous visits available to the visitors.

## **12. Nomination and Election**

### **1. Committee members**

a. Ordinarily, at least one non-ministerial nominee shall be placed on a ballot for committee membership.

b. All nominations shall be in the hands of the nominating committee at least two weeks prior to the meeting of Classis.

c. At the discretion of Classis, nominations from the floor of Classis may be accepted.

2. Delegates to denominational boards, Synodical Deputies, and their alternates, shall be chosen for three-year terms. Alternates shall function in the absence of primi delegates.

3. Church visitors and their alternates shall be elected for three-year terms.

4. Delegates to Synod

a. Delegates must be able to be present at the next Classis meeting.

b. Prior to balloting the Stated Clerk shall inform Classis who served as delegates to Synod the two previous years.

c. One of the ministerial delegates and one alternate shall be selected by rotation, from a list of names prepared by the Classical Interim Committee.

d. Elder delegates and alternates to Synod shall be presented for nomination by Councils as well as from the floor of Classis.

## **13. Advisory and Study Committees**

### **1. General**

a. The person named first at the appointment of the committee shall be its chairman and the one named second its reporter.

b. Any member of Classis may appear before any committee concerning matters referred to it.

- c. Committee reports shall be signed by the chairman and the reporter of the committee.
- d. In case of a minority report, each report must be signed by the members of the committee who favour it.
- e. During the debate the task of defending the report shall rest primarily upon the reporter and the chairman of the committee.
- f. Recommendations made by a committee are to be considered main motions. Only on the following conditions may such recommendations be returned to the committee:
  - i. New facts that were not at the disposal of the committee have become available,
  - ii. Classis specifies the matters in which the report is faulty, and specifies what changes must be made,
  - iii. The motion to recommit is carried by majority vote.

## 2. **Finance Advisory Committee**

The Classical Interim Committee shall appoint an ad hoc finance advisory committee at the fall session, with the mandate to review each of the budget requests of the various classical committees, and to prepare a unified recommendation to classis.

## 3. **Other Advisory Committees**

- a. Are appointed by the Classical Interim Committee or, if necessary, by the officers of Classis. They serve only for the duration of a session of Classis.
- b. The Classical Interim Committee shall appoint, for each meeting of Classis, a credentials advisory committee and a classis expense advisory committee.

## 4. **Study Committees**

- a. Serve for a limited period of time in order to study certain matters for Classis and report at the next session of Classis.
- b. Ordinarily are appointed by the officers of Classis or by the Classical Interim Committee, upon decision by Classis to do so.

# VII. **Classis Finances**

- 1. The churches of Classis are expected to pay the classical ministry shares during the first four months of the year.
- 2. Travel expenses incurred by the delegates ordinarily shall be paid by the local church. Classical functionaries who are not delegated by a church shall be reimbursed by Classis according to a specified rate. Delegates are expected to travel together as much as possible.
- 3. All budget requests for classis funds must be submitted to the treasurer by a stated deadline. The treasurer will prepare a unified budget package be sent to the churches with the agenda. If a classical ministry fails to submit a budget request on time, the treasurer will submit a budget amount equal to that for the current year or less.

## VIII. Rules of Order

I. The chairman shall:

- a. remain impartial on pending questions. In case the chairman wishes to speak on a pending question, he shall relinquish the chair to the vice-chairman and not resume the chair until the question has been disposed of. The chairman may speak while holding the chair to state matters of fact or to inform Classis regarding points of order.
- b. recognize for debate only those who seek recognition in the proper way. In case several delegates to Classis seek recognition simultaneously, the chairman shall give recognition with discretion.
- c. have the prerogative of declaring a motion or person out of order. If such a ruling is disputed, it shall be submitted to the meeting for decision by majority vote.
- d. make an immediate ruling on points of order raised. If a member objects to the ruling, the ruling may be reversed by majority vote.

2. A main motion is a motion that presents a certain subject to Classis for its consideration and action.

a. A main motion is acceptable if it meets the following conditions:

- i. The mover has been recognized by the chairman.
- ii. The motion has been seconded.
- iii. The motion has been recognized as acceptable by the chairman.
- iv. At the request of the chairman, the motion has been presented in written form.

b. A main motion is not acceptable under any one of the following conditions:

- i. It conflicts with the Scriptures as interpreted in the Forms of Unity or it conflicts with the Church Order.
- ii. It conflicts with a decision already made by Classis;
- iii. It is substantially the same as a motion already rejected by Classis, or it interferes with the freedom of action by Classis in a matter that was previously introduced but of which no disposal was made.
- iv. Another motion is before Classis.

3. A motion to amend is a proposal to alter a main motion in language or in meaning before a decision is taken on the motion.

a. A motion to amend may propose to delete, to insert, or to substitute certain words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs.

b. A motion to amend is not acceptable if it nullifies the main motion or is not germane to it.

c. A motion to amend an amendment is permissible.

4. A motion to postpone, to table, to defer, or to withhold action

a. A motion may be made to postpone consideration of a matter to a later time in the same meeting. Such a motion to postpone is debatable.

b. A motion to table or to defer a matter (to a future meeting or indefinitely) is not debatable.

c. If Classis prefers not to take any action regarding a matter before it, it may adopt a motion to withhold action. A motion to withhold action is debatable.

5. Objection to a ruling of the chairman

If a delegate challenges a ruling of the chairman or objects to the consideration of a question, the matter shall be referred to Classis for decision.

6. Right of protest

a. It is the right of any delegate to protest against a decision by Classis. Protests should be registered during the session in which the decision was made. Protests must be registered individually and not in groups.

b. Delegates may ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made immediately after the vote is taken.

7. Call for a division of the question: At the request of one or more delegates, a motion consisting of more than one part must be divided and voted upon separately.

8. Discussion

a. A speaker must be recognized by the chairman in order to obtain the floor.

b. If a delegate who has the floor fails to adhere to the point under discussion or should become unnecessarily lengthy in his remarks, the chairman shall call attention to these faults and insist on clarity and brevity.

c. If a delegate has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall be given priority by the chairman.

d. When the chairman judges that a motion under consideration has been debated sufficiently, he may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of Classis supports this proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.

e. Any delegate who deems a matter to have been debated sufficiently may move to close the discussion. Those who call the question shall be recognized in the same manner as others who gain the floor of Classis, i.e., by taking their turn on the list of those who have requested the privilege of the floor. If a majority is in favour of ceasing debate, the vote on the matter before Classis shall be taken only after those who had previously requested the floor have had an opportunity to speak.

9. Motions to bring a matter once decided again before classis if a delegate, for weighty reasons, desires reconsideration of a matter once decided, the following course may be pursued:

a. A motion may be made to reconsider the matter. The purpose of this motion is to propose a new discussion and a new vote. The motion must be made by one who voted with the prevailing side.

b. A motion may be made to rescind a previous decision. The purpose of this motion is to annul or reverse such a decision. Rescinding applies only to decisions taken by the Classis in session; it does not apply to decisions taken by previous Classis.

c. A succeeding Classis may alter the stand of a previous Classis or it may reach a conclusion that is at variance with a conclusion reached by an earlier Classis. In such cases the most recent decision invalidates all previous decisions in conflict with it.

10. Voting

a. Voting may be by voice, by rising or by raising a hand, or by ballot.

b. If the chairman is unable to determine from a voice vote which opinion has prevailed, or if the chairman's judgment is questioned by a delegate, he shall ask for a vote by rising or by raising of hands.

- c. In questions dealing with persons, matters of discipline, or other matters of a critical or sensitive nature, the vote ordinarily will be taken by ballot.

## **X. Examinations**

### **A. Applicants for a License to Exhort within Classis Alberta North**

#### 1. Preparatory Matters

- a. Applications shall be made to Classis.
- b. Classis shall determine that there is need for additional exhorters.
- c. The applicant shall be examined at a subsequent meeting of Classis.
- d. The applicant shall submit the following to the Stated Clerk at least two months before the examination by Classis:
  - i. A letter requesting licensure.
  - ii. A letter of recommendation from the Council of the local church.
  - iii. Two sermons written by the applicant of which one will be on a text assigned by the Classical Interim Committee.
- f. The applicant shall be scheduled to conduct a worship service and preach a sermon on the text assigned, in one of the churches in Classis. Two representatives of Classis will be present.

#### 2. Examination

- a. One of the Classical representatives shall read a written report on the sermon preached and the manner in which the worship service was conducted.
- b. Classis shall entertain a motion that the examination proceed. Adoption of this motion shall not preclude further discussion on matters included in sections i.e or 2.a above.
- c. The examination shall be conducted by a minister appointed by Classis and shall cover relevant biblical and theological matters.
- d. The decision to grant the application shall be made in executive session.
- e. The initial license to exhort shall be valid for a period of one year. Renewals shall be for a period of two years.
- f. Applications for renewal of license shall be in writing and should include a listing of preaching assignments during the previous term.

### **B. Candidates for the Ministry of the Word**

#### 1. Preparatory Matters

- a. As soon as a candidate for the ministry of the Word has accepted a call from one of the churches of Classis, the council concerned shall notify the Stated Clerk.
- b. The council of the calling church will, if at all possible, invite the candidate to be present within the bounds of Classis four weeks prior to the examination in order to meet with the council, the examiners, and other ministers in Classis, and to preach in neighbouring churches.

Adequate financial and lodging arrangements must be made for the candidate by the calling church.

c. Upon acceptance of a call the candidate shall send the following documents to the Stated Clerk:

- i. A diploma from the Seminary and proof of candidacy.
- ii. The letter of call.
- iii. A copy of the letter of acceptance.
- iv. A certificate of church membership.

d. The Classical Interim Committee shall appoint examiners from Classis: three sermon critics who are to be present at the worship service in which the sermon is preached and two to conduct the actual examination at the time Classis meets.

e. The Classical Interim Committee shall assign to the candidate a text on which to prepare and deliver a sermon. This shall be done four weeks prior to the examination.

f. The candidate shall send copies of the sermon on the assigned text to the two sermon critics and the Stated Clerk at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination.

g. The candidate shall send copies of two additional sermons to the sermon critics and the Stated Clerk. These sermons are to be a Catechism sermon and an Old/New Testament sermon (depending on the assigned text).

h. The Stated Clerk shall provide copies of all the candidate's sermons to the three Synodical Deputies and to each delegate to Classis.

i. The Stated Clerk shall send a copy of the examination schedule, together with a designation of the Synodical Deputies expected to be present, to each Synodical Deputy.

j. The Stated Clerk shall send a copy of the examination procedure to the candidate.

k. Before the examination takes place the Stated Clerk shall report to determine that the credential documents are in order.

## 2. Examination

a. The examination shall be scheduled for the day session of Classis.

b. A classical examiner shall introduce the candidate to Classis.

c. The examination shall consist of inquiry into three main areas as follows:

### i. Practica

The examiner shall inquire into the candidate's relationship with God, his/her commitment to the ministry, his/her understanding of the meaning and relevance of the ministry for our times and his/her loyalty to the church, and related matters.

Classis shall see to it that the candidate is given every opportunity to convey his/her convictions regarding the place and task of the ministry and to indicate how the candidate envisions the proper approach to the work.

The Synodical Deputies and delegates shall have opportunity to ask additional questions.

Before proceeding to the next area of inquiry, a motion to proceed shall be made and carried.

### ii. Sermon Evaluation

In the presence of the candidate, the written sermons shall be evaluated. Attention shall be given to the manner of conducting a worship service.

One of the sermon critics will examine the candidate in the area of exegesis and hermeneutics as it relates primarily to the sermons presented. The candidate shall not be limited in the examination to the biblical material on which the sermons are based.

Additional questions with reference to the preached sermon and its delivery, as well as to the exegetical-hermeneutical approach of the candidate, may be directed to the candidate.

Before proceeding to the next area, a motion to proceed shall be made and carried.

Concurrence from the Synodical Deputies with the decision is required before continuing.

iii. Biblical and Theological Position: (minimum 30 minutes per candidate)

The examination shall be confessional in focus and the examiner is to probe the position of the candidate in the teachings of Scripture.

The examiner shall inquire into the candidate's biblical and theological judgment, competence, and soundness.

Opportunity shall be provided for additional questions, with no specific time limit.

3. Admission to the Ministry

a. A motion to admit shall be received and given preliminary consideration in executive session.

b. Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit shall be offered.

c. The Synodical Deputies shall leave the assembly to prepare their recommendation.

d. Classis shall vote by ballot. In case of a bare majority the chairman shall call for further discussion in order to achieve greater unanimity, following which a second vote shall be taken. If the desired greater unanimity is not reached the matter shall be tabled until such time as will be deemed appropriate by Classis.

e. The Synodical Deputies shall present their written statement from which it will become evident whether or not they can concur with the decision of Classis.

f. In the event that they do not concur, Classis and the Synodical Deputies may try to reach a unified decision.

g. In the event that agreement cannot be reached between them, the matter is to be referred to Synod for final adjudication.

4. Interpretive Matters

a. A motion to proceed implies that the candidate has been examined adequately in a particular area.

b. A motion to cease the examination shall be in order after each portion of the examination if it is judged that the candidate is incompetent or is clearly in conflict with Scripture or the Standards of Unity. Such a motion shall carry with a two-thirds majority.

C. Candidate for the Ministry via Church Order Art. 7 and 8.

(Admission to the ministry without the prescribed theological training, and Art. 8 (ministers from other denominations).

The Stated Clerk and the Classical Interim Committee shall arrange for these examinations according to the synodical decisions (see the appropriate Church Order Articles and their supplements, and relevant synodical decisions, Manual of Church Government 2001 pp. 63-81).

## **E. Candidate for Evangelist/Ministry Associate**

- a. The calling church shall notify the Stated Clerk, requesting an examination in a specified field (e.g. evangelism, chaplaincy, youth, educational, or music ministry).
- b. The Stated Clerk shall request the candidate to supply the Classical Interim Committee with a council recommendation from the church in which the candidate holds membership, and with any evidence of specialized and formal training (diplomas, certificates, transcripts), and a copy of the document of appointment and job description from the church which is requesting ordination.
- c. The Stated Clerk shall forward the job description to the Synodical deputies for their evaluation (the synodical deputies shall conclude that the job description meets the guidelines of Synod 2001 for evangelists/ministry associates.)
- d. Where appropriate the Classical Interim Committee shall assign a preaching text for the evangelist, and appoint two sermon critics.
- e. The examinations schedule shall be:
  - i. Practica: Christian testimony, walk of life, relationship to the Lord and others, love for the church, interest and expertise in the chosen area of ministry, and the promotion of God's kingdom.
  - ii. Biblical Theological to focus on the candidate's knowledge of Scripture and theological competence and Reformed doctrine.
- f. When an evangelist/ministry assistant accepts an appointment to another field of labour, he/she shall submit to such an examination as is deemed appropriate by the classis to which the candidate's calling church belongs, and shall be ordained in the new field of labour.

## **D. Assigning of Mentors**

- a. For newly ordained pastors mentors are appointed by the Director of Pastor-Church Relations in consultation with the classis in which the pastor serves. Newly ordained pastors, ministers released via C.O. Art 17-a, and ministers entering from other denominations, are assigned mentors for a 5- year period.
- b. The assigned mentor shall establish a pastoral relationship with the colleague he/she is assigned to for discussion, guidance, listening, encouragement, confrontation, and prayer.
- c. Classis, or its designates, shall appoint a mentor to newly ordained evangelists/ministry associates, and to all successful applicants for license to exhort within Classis Alberta North.
- d. Mentors shall serve for a two year period.
- e. Classis shall maintain a list of Mentors and Mentees, including termination dates.
- f. The assigned mentor shall establish a pastoral relationship with the colleague he/she is assigned to for discussion, guidance, listening, encouragement, confrontation, and prayer