

Regional Synod Overtures

Empower Regional Synod of Canada to Form Independent Denomination

8. The Regional Synod of Canada overtures the General Synod to empower the Regional Synod of Canada to form an independent Canadian denomination with full fellowship of pulpit and table with the Reformed Church in America and the recognition of each other's ministries, in keeping with the authority and responsibilities of the classes and the consistories, and to take steps to adopt an agreement for the orderly exchange of ministers and an affiliation agreement that allows the two denominations to work together in Global Mission and Church Multiplication.

Reasons:

1. The General Synod has the authority to grant this overture:
Book of Church Order (BCO), Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2 (2023 edition, p. 69)
Sec. 2. The General Synod shall exercise an appellate supervisory power over the acts, proceedings, and decisions of the lower assemblies.
Sec. 3. The General Synod shall form regional synods. It may make changes in their boundaries, and may transfer classes and churches from one regional synod to another.
Though not explicitly stated, it seems contained within the logic of the General Synod being able to form regional synods that it would have the ability to “form, combine, or disband” regional synods in a way similar to the lower assemblies (e.g., *BCO* Chapter 1, Part III, Article 2, Section 3 [2023 edition, p. 65]), which would include the ability to empower the regional synod to form an affiliate denomination.
2. An affiliated denomination of the Reformed Church in Canada would best be able to serve and further ministry within the unique context of Canada. Canada has a distinct history that poses specific challenges for gospel ministry. The majority of the work of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) is focused on the work in the United States and addressing the particular needs and challenges of that context. This makes sense because the significant majority of the membership and congregations of the RCA are within the United States. However, our Canadian context requires a particular contextualization of the church in Canada. An affiliate relationship would allow us to maintain our relationship with our mother church in the RCA, but also to grow into maturity as Canadian churches seeking to live out our Reformed faith in Canada.
3. All three classes of the Regional Synod of Canada (British Columbia, Canadian Prairies, and Ontario) overtured the regional synod to pursue this course. Each congregation was also surveyed for feedback, and an overwhelming majority are in favor of this direction.
4. The Regional Synod of Canada has a desire to continue sharing ministers, working together in Global Mission and working together in Church Multiplication with the RCA.
5. This request is in line with the overall direction of the restructuring process and its proposals regarding global churches in relationship to the RCA.

6. There is precedent for entities that previously belonged directly to the Reformed Church in America to move to a new affiliate relationship, such as Western Theological Seminary and the colleges of the RCA. These affiliate institutions have both continued relationship and a certain level of personal autonomy, which aligns with the desires of the Regional Synod of Canada.