

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**CLASSIS BRITISH COLUMBIA NORTH-WEST**  
**OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN N.A.**

**I**

**CONVENING AND CONSTITUTION OF CLASSIS**

**A. Classis shall convene and be constituted ...**

1. As prescribed by the Church Order and these Rules of Procedure.
2. Normally on the first Tuesday and Wednesday of March and the Tuesday and Wednesday of the last full week of September.
3. In extraordinary meetings convened:
  - a. Upon the decision of classis.
  - b. Upon the decision of classis in Classis Contracta with a quorum of half the churches of classis plus one. (*Acts of Synod 2000, p. 668*)
  - c. Upon the request of a church to the Classical Ministry Committee for the purpose of conducting a Colloquium Doctum or the examination of its minister-elect.
  - d. Upon the request of at least three churches to the Classical Ministry Committee.

**B. Classis Meeting:**

1. Classis shall consist of two delegates from each church, one minister and one elder.
  - a. Two elders shall be delegated when a church is vacant or when its minister is unable to attend.
  - b. If no elder is available a deacon may take his/her place and shall be seated by special motion of classis.
2. Classical delegates/reporters will be reimbursed for travel and loss of wages up to the amount determined by classis and at their request. Request for reimbursement must be made to the Classical Treasurer at the meeting of classis.
3. All meetings of classis shall be open to office bearers of the churches within classis. They shall have the right of the floor upon the permission of the assembly. The public may attend the meeting unless classis decides to meet in executive session.

**C. Classis shall appoint:**

1. For each of its sessions ministers to serve by rotation as:
  - a. President, Vice-president, and Recording Clerk.
  - b. Each minister shall successively serve as Vice-president, President, and Recording Clerk according to the alphabetical order of the churches they serve.
2. For a three year term to serve as:
  - a. A Stated Clerk and a Classical Treasurer and their alternates.
  - b. They are eligible for additional terms.
  - c. Classis shall remunerate the Stated Clerk and the Classical Treasurer for their services, which remuneration shall be reviewed annually.
3. A qualified person to serve as auditor ...
  - a. Upon the recommendation of the Classical Ministry Committee.
  - b. The auditor shall serve a two-year term and be eligible for additional terms.
4. Church Visitors to serve in teams of two ...
  - a. Upon the recommendation of the Classical Ministry Committee.

- b. They shall serve a two-year term and be eligible for additional terms.
5. Church Counselors to serve vacant churches according to the rules of Synod.
6. All classical functionaries and committee members shall be elected and appointed ordinarily at the March meeting. (*See V.A.1-7. for general provisions for committees*)

## **II**

### **THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

#### **A. THE PRESIDENT:**

1. Shall assume the chairmanship of classis only for the duration of its meeting.
2. Shall call for the credentials of the delegates, and have all first-time delegates sign the Form of Subscription.
3. Shall welcome fraternal delegates and/or guests to classis, respond to greetings received or appoint delegates of classis for this purpose.
4. Shall not preside in any matter that concerns the chair or the church the chair serves.

#### **B. THE VICE-PRESIDENT:**

1. Shall render all possible assistance to the President.
2. Shall conclude the meeting of classis with devotions.

#### **C. THE RECORDING CLERK:**

1. Shall record in the concept minutes the proceedings of the meeting of classis.
2. Shall read the concept minutes at the request of the chairman and at the end of the meeting.

## **III**

### **DUTIES OF OTHER CLASSICAL FUNCTIONARIES**

#### **A. THE STATED CLERK:**

1. Shall convene the meetings of classis ...
  - a. By notifying the churches of classis, the reporters of its committees, and its denominational board delegates approx. 14 weeks prior to the date of the meeting. (*Classis Minutes, March 2002, p.368, art. 14.2*)
  - b. By preparing and sending the agenda to the councils, and others as needed, six weeks before classis meets.
2. Shall serve as the custodian of the seal, records, files and archives of classis.
3. Shall produce minutes from the concept minutes, and send them to each council and others as needed.
4. Shall keep an up-to-date record of the committees of classis and the terms of office of all classical functionaries.
5. Shall conduct the correspondence of classis.
6. Shall prepare and make available every five years to all councils a Digest of Classical Decisions and Declarations, which are operative in classis.
7. Shall convene and meet with the Classical Ministries Committee to deal with all matters related to classis during the interim between its sessions.

#### **B. THE CLASSICAL TREASURER:**

1. Shall receive and disburse the Ministry Shares approved by Classis and Synod.
2. Shall keep an accurate record of all funds received and disbursed and shall issue receipts for monies received.
3. Shall report to each classis meeting, and give an annual report to the March meeting.
4. Shall disburse funds at least 3 times during the fiscal years, in the months of July, October and January.
5. Shall have ex-officio privilege of the floor in the financial matters of classis.

**C. THE CLASSICAL AUDITOR/REVIEWER:**

1. Shall audit/review annually the work of the Classical Treasurer.
2. Shall submit a written report to the fall meeting of classis.

**D. CHURCH VISITORS:**

1. Shall visit the churches assigned to them once a year.
2. Shall present a written report of their work to classis in the fall meeting immediately following each visit. Unless there are matters of concern in the report, the reports need not be read on the floor of classis.
3. Shall distribute these reports as follows:
  - a. Send one copy to the church visited prior to reporting to classis.
  - b. Place one copy in each church file folder.
  - c. Send an electronic copy to the Stated Clerk who has to send a copy to the Historical Committee of CRC. (*Note: see minutes of Mar'86 p.5, art.5.1.A.3.c*)

**E. CHURCH COUNSELORS:**

1. Shall report on their work with the vacant church to classis annually. (*See I.C.5.*)
2. Shall present a written report to classis upon completing their assignment.

**IV**

**MATTERS LEGALLY BEFORE CLASSIS**

**A. OVERTURES:** Councils or individuals presenting overtures to classis shall send a copy to the Stated Clerk at least 7 weeks before classis convenes.

**B. REPORTS:** Classical committees, delegates to various denominational boards and committees, and Home Missionaries shall forward their reports to the Stated Clerk 7 weeks before the meeting of classis for inclusion in the agenda. If the timing of the board meeting does not allow these delegates to follow this procedure, they shall present written reports for all Classical delegates at the beginning of the meeting. Ordinarily, reports shall not be read on the floor of classis.

**C. MATTERS PRESENTED ON THE CREDENTIALS**

**D. APPEALS:** Individual members presenting appeals to classis shall submit copies of such appeals to their council in sufficient time for their consideration.

**E. EXCEPTION:** Materials not appearing on the agenda or credentials may be taken up by special decision of classis.

V  
**COMMITTEES / TEAMS (C/Ts)**

**A. GENERAL PROVISIONS:**

1. Classis is or may be served by 3 types of committees/teams (C/Ts):
  - a. Standing C/Ts serve permanently between the meetings of classis.
  - b. Advisory committees serve for the duration of the meeting of classis.
  - c. Ad hoc committees, e.g. a study committee, which serve between the meetings of classis.
2. To legitimately function all such committees shall be appointed by classis.
3. C/T members shall be members in good standing of a church in Classis British Columbia North-West.
4. Members of a standing C/T shall be elected for a 3-year term. (*see I.C.6*)
5. Ordinarily they may serve no more than 2 full consecutive terms.
6. A proportionate number of members shall retire each year.
7. Ordinarily C/Ts shall submit two nominations for each vacancy that occurs.
8. Alternate members no longer needed. (*se Min 9/08; p484; art. 3.15*)(Rev. 1)
9. C/Ts are servants of classis and shall take action only within their mandate.
10. Each C/T, except the SFC (*see V.C.3.a.6*), shall submit a written report of its actions and recommendations in time for the agenda of each classis meeting.

**B. ORGANIZATION AND RULES GOVERNING COMMITTEES / TEAMS:**

1. The first person named in the appointment of an advisory or study committee shall serve as its chairman, and the second one named shall serve as its reporter.
2. More detailed mandates may be obtained from the various C/Ts.
3. Anyone may request to appear before a committee.
4. The chairman and the reporter of the committee shall sign committee reports.
5. In the case of a minority report, the members who favour it must sign it.
6. During the discussion of a committee report, the task of defending the report shall rest primarily upon the chairman and the reporter. These shall have precedence over every other speaker and shall not be limited as to the number and length of their speeches. Other committee members shall be subject to the accepted rules of debate.
7. Recommendations by a committee shall be considered to be main motions, and all rules applying to main motions shall apply.
8. Only when the following conditions prevail may such recommendations be recommitted to the committee:
  - a. If new facts not previously at the disposal of the committee have become available.
  - b. If classis specifies the manner in which the report is faulty and specifies what changes must be made.

**C. STANDING COMMITTEES/TEAMS:**

**1. CLASSICAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE (CMC):**

- a. **Mandate:** the Committee shall ...
  - (1) Act for classis between meetings in matters that require immediate action.
  - (2) Ensure that the provisions of the Church Order and Classis' Rules of Procedure are adhered to.

- (3) Advise classis on requests for aid from the CRC Church Loan Fund and the Fund for Smaller Churches.
- (4) Be responsible for church visitors, church counselors, classical examinations, licensure of exhorters, financial management, abuse response, other teams i.e., Ministry to Seafarers Committee, Student Fund Committee, and diaconal related ministries.
- (5) Ensure that communication, coordination, collaboration, encouragement and vision for classis be maintained through direct consultation with all existing teams requiring additional expertise and input at a broader level.
- b. **Membership** shall consist of six members: the Stated Clerk as leader, the Classical Treasurer; the chair of the Student Fund Committee, the elected alternate stated clerk, one open-elected position and the Safe Church Team Coordinator (ex-officio).

## 2. CHURCH DEVELOPMENT TEAM (CDT):

- a. **Mandate:** The Team shall ...
  - (1) Encourage the development of new congregations that target unchurched people with creative approaches to become healthy, biblical new communities.
  - (2) Help established churches become mission shaped communities that seek the lost and disciple the found as they gather God's growing family.
  - (3) Be responsible for: church planting; multi-ethnic churches; parenting churches; small group ministry; leadership team for church leadership and ministry training; campus ministry; youth ministry. (*see Min. 9/07, art.31*) (*Rev. 1*)
  - (4) Provide leadership and assistance to the classis in developing and implementing classical strategy for evangelism and church planting, in accordance with its mandate and rules.
- b. **Membership** shall ordinarily consist of eight members, the Classis' BHM member as team leader, 4 members to represent the team responsibilities (*see a.(3) above*), and the CRHM Regional Director (ex-officio). (*see Min. 3/09, art. 3.7*) (*Rev. 1*)

## 3. STUDENT FUND COMMITTEE (SFC):

- a. **Mandate:** The Committee shall ...
  - (1) Encourage and receive applications for aid from this Fund from students who intend to study for the Christian Reformed Ministry at Synodically accepted colleges and seminaries. Students from B.C. will be given preference.
  - (2) Process all applications in accordance with SFC rules and conditions, and present them for approval to classis.
  - (3) Propose a classical Ministry Share and encourage special gifts for this Fund.
  - (4) Require students who have received aid but do not enter the Christian Reformed Ministry to repay the aid received.
  - (5) Require those who leave the Christian Reformed Ministry within five years of ordination to pay back proportionally their aid at the discretion of classis.
  - (6) Submit a written report of its actions and recommendations at least once each year in time for the agenda of the fall classis meeting
- b. **Membership** shall consist of four members. (*Rev.1*)

**4. MINISTRY TO SEAFARERS COMMITTEE (MSC):**

- a. **Mandate:** The Committee shall ...
  - (1) Submit to classis two nominations for each vacancy that occurs.
  - (2) Be responsible for the Ministry to Seafarers on behalf of both classes.
  - (3) Supervise the work of the Chaplain.
  - (4) Review the job description of the Chaplain annually.
  - (5) Prepare a budget and submit it to both classes for approval.
  - (6) Report to both classes.
- b. **Membership** shall consist of the Chaplain and 6 members who have shown interest in and commitment to the work among seafaring people, including the Classical Treasurer of Classis BCNW. Classes BCNW and BCSE shall have equal representation, and each classis may (*Rev. 1*) appoint an alternate.

**5. ASSOCIATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CAMPUS MINISTRY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA:**

- a. **Mandate:** Is spelled out in the constitution and bylaws of the association.
- b. **Membership:** The directors are to be nominated by the association and appointed by Classis. The number of directors is spelled out in the constitution and bylaws of the association.

**6. ABUSE RESPONSE TEAM (ART):**

- a. **Mandate:** The Team shall ...
  - (1) Form an Advisory Panel, the purpose of which is to hear allegations of adult survivors of abuse charged against church leaders, using guidelines offered by the Synod of CRC. The Advisory Panel will provide the church council with a summary report that includes recommendations for pastoral care and/or discipline.
  - (2) Form an Education Component to provide education to the churches upon request of either pastors, councils, congregations, etc., about the dynamics of abuse.
  - (3) Form a Support Component to provide support to victims and/or offenders of abuse through pastoral counseling, civil/criminal proceedings, family breakdown, etc.
  - (4) Submit to classis two nominations for each vacancy that occurs.
- b. **Membership:** each church council to appoint a representative to the ART.

**7. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:**

- a. **Mandate:** The Committee shall ...
  - (1) Solicit the churches and committees/teams for nominees to serve in the various classical and denominational functions. The main functions to be filled are the following: members of: classical committees/teams and functionaries, the Board of Trustees (BOT) of the CRCNA, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, Christian Reformed World Missions, Christian Reformed Home Missions, and CRC Publications; and Synodical Deputy.
  - (2) Allow for additional nominations from the floor of classis.
  - (3) Propose these nominees to classis by presenting classis with a printed ballot listing all the nominees for the vacancies except for delegates to Synod.

- b. **Membership** shall consist of three members including a member of the CMC.  
(Rev. 1)

**D. ADVISORY COMMITTEES:**

1. Advisory committees shall serve for the duration of the current meeting in order to facilitate the work of classis.
2. Advisory Committees shall present their recommendations as motions, which need to be seconded from the floor.
3. If any such motion is substantially different from an Overture or Study Committee report submitted to classis, the recommendations of the Overture or Study Committee report shall take precedence.
4. The Classical Ministries Committee or Stated Clerk shall propose Committee members and the President of classis shall appointed them.

**E. AD HOC / STUDY COMMITTEES:**

1. Ad hoc or Study committees shall serve for a time and purpose as specified by classis and shall report as instructed by classis.
2. Classis may appoint Ad hoc or Study committees as the need arises.

**VI .**

**CLASSICAL APPOINTMENTS**

- A. Definition:** Classical Appointments are appointments made by classis of ministers to conduct services in vacant churches (churches without pastors).
- B.** The Classical Ministry Committee shall assign classical appointments to a vacant church upon her request.
- C.** The Stated Clerk shall prepare the **Schedules** for Classical Appointments, and for ratification by the Classical Ministry Committee.
- D. Reimbursements:**
  1. Vacant churches shall reimburse visiting ministers directly for their travel cost.
  2. Travel cost exceeding the limits of the church's responsibility as set by classis can be claimed by the church from the classical expense fund by submitting a request to the Stated Clerk.
  3. Lodging, if needed, is to be supplied by the church and not included in the travel cost.
  4. The vacant church shall reimburse the church of the visiting minister an amount per service set by classis.

**VII**

**EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES**

- A.** As soon as a candidate has accepted a call, the council shall notify the Stated Clerk.
- B.** When a candidate accepts a call, the Stated Clerk shall request and receive from him:
  1. A copy of the Letter of Call and
  2. A copy of the letter of acceptance.
- C.** The Classical Ministry Committee shall make arrangements for the examination, which shall be conducted according to the rules of Synod.

## **VIII**

### **DELEGATES TO SYNOD**

- A. Classis shall elect at its fall meeting two ministers and two elders and their alternates to serve as delegates to the annual Synod.
  - 1. The minister who has served the greatest number of years in our classis without having been delegated to Synod while in this classis shall be appointed as first minister delegate. The other minister shall be elected by a free vote of classis as second minister delegate.
  - 2. The elder delegates shall be chosen from nominations presented by the church councils. Nominations may also be made on the floor, provided the persons so nominated have indicated their availability to serve.
- B. Elders or deacons delegated to Synod will be reimbursed for loss of wages up to the amount determined by classis. Requests for reimbursement must be made to the Classical Ministry Committee.

## **IX**

### **RULES OF ORDER**

In our ecclesiastical assemblies, "ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner," as Article 28 of our Church Order stipulates. Our classis meetings should therefore not be bound to observe detailed parliamentary rules. These may be proper in other gatherings, but they do not fit into the pattern of ecclesiastical assemblies, which demand a large measure of freedom in discussion and action. However, a few general rules of order may serve a good purpose.

#### **A. CLOSED SESSIONS OF CLASSIS**

- 1. An executive session means a session of classis at which only the delegates and council members are present. Classis shall not exercise the right to go into executive session except in unusual or delicate situations.
- 2. Strict executive session means only the delegates shall be present. Classis retains the right to go into strict executive session whenever it judges such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honour or the welfare of the church in very unusual situations.

#### **B. A MAIN MOTION**

This is a motion that presents a certain subject to classis for its consideration or action.

- 1. A main motion is acceptable under the following conditions:
  - a. If the mover has been recognized by the President.
  - b. If it is seconded by a member of classis.
  - c. If the motion has been recognized as acceptable by the President.
  - d. If, at the request of the President, the motion has been presented in written form.
- 2. A main motion is not acceptable under the following conditions:
  - a. If it conflicts with the Church Order or is contrary to Scripture as interpreted in our Forms of Unity.
  - b. If another motion is before classis or if it conflicts with any decision already made by classis.
  - c. If it is verbally or substantially the same as a motion already rejected by classis or



if it interferes with the freedom of action by classis in a matter that was previously introduced but of which no disposal was made.

**C. A MOTION TO AMEND**

This is a proposal to alter a main motion in language or in meaning before final action is taken on the motion.

1. A motion to amend may propose any of the following: to strike out, to insert, or to substitute certain words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs.
2. A motion to amend an amendment is not a proper motion if it nullifies the main motion or is not germane to it.
3. A motion to amend is permissible and is called a secondary motion. (Only one motion to amend a pending amendment is in order at one time.)

**D. A MOTION TO DEFER/TABLE OR WITHHOLD ACTION**

1. When classis deems it advisable, it may table a motion temporarily. Tabling a motion implies that the assembly will resume consideration of the motion at a later hour or date.
2. If a matter has been deferred to a definite time, and classis is at that time busy with an undecided question, classis need not be disturbed or interrupted in its work by the consideration of postponed matters, if this matter can wait until the question before classis has been disposed of.
3. If classis prefers not to take action regarding a matter, it may adopt a motion to withhold action.

**E. OBJECTION TO A RULING OF THE PRESIDENT**

If any member is not satisfied with the ruling of the President, the matter is referred to classis for decision, with the Vice-President presiding over the challenge to the chair.

**F. RIGHT OF PROTEST**

It is the right of any member to protest against any decision of classis. Protests should be registered immediately, or during the session in which the matter concerned was acted upon. Protests must be registered individually and not in groups. Members may, if they feel the need, ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made immediately after the vote is taken.

**G. CALL FOR A DIVISION OF THE QUESTION**

At the request of one or more members of classis, a motion consisting of more than one part must be divided and voted upon separately, unless classis decides that this is not necessary.

**H. PROCEDURAL INQUIRY**

Any member of classis may request advice of the President as to how to accomplish a purpose for which he does not know the proper means.

**I. MOTIONS TO BRING MATTERS ONCE DECIDED AGAIN BEFORE CLASSIS**

If any members of classis for weighty reasons desires reconsideration of a matter once decided, the following course may be pursued:

1. A motion may be offered 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.)
2. A motion may be made to rescind a previous decision. The purpose of this motion is to annul or reverse such a previous discussion. (Rescinding applies to decisions taken by the classis in session; it does not apply to decisions taken by previous classes. A succeeding classis may alter the stand of a previous classis; it may reach a conclusion, which 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.)

## **J. DISCUSSION**

1. A speaker to obtain the floor must be recognized by the President.
2. If a member having the floor should fail to adhere to the point under discussion or should become unnecessarily lengthy in his/her remarks, the President shall call his/her attention to these faults and insist on pointedness and brevity.
3. If any member has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall ordinarily be given priority by the President.
4. When the President believes that a motion under consideration has been debated sufficiently, he may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of classis sustains this proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.
5. Whenever any member of classis deems a matter to have been debated sufficiently, the member may move to close the discussion. Those who call for 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. The vote on the motion to cease debate shall be taken at once. Should a majority be in favor of ceasing debate, the vote on the matter before classis shall be taken only after those who had previously requested the floor have been recognized.

## **K. VOTING**

The various methods of voting are:

1. By voice (Yes or No). This is the ordinary method of voting.
2. By the raising of the right hand so a count can be taken. The count is to be recorded by the Vice-president and clerk.
3. By ballot. In delicate cases of discipline and other matters of a personal or critical nature and/or of great importance, including the election of persons, classis shall vote by ballot.

## **L. RULE CHANGES**

These rules for classical procedure may be suspended, amended, revised, or abrogated by a majority vote of classis.