

# Synod Schererville 2007

## Press Release

United Reformed Churches in North America

Synod Schererville



Wednesday, 11 July 2007

PALOS HEIGHTS, IL – Delegates to the Sixth Synod of the URCNA named a committee to study doctrinal commitment and membership on Wednesday.

The proposal for the committee sought to help guide congregations which must wrestle with the degree to which prospective members must agree with URC doctrine before joining the Church.

After some debate concerning the wisdom of committing the matter for study, delegates agreed on Wednesday to form a study committee of six men.

Another request concerning the admission of members sought to remove a requirement to examine those transferring into URC congregations from sister-Church federations.

Currently, Article 44 of the Church Order requires that those entering a URC from a different denomination must be examined by the elders concerning their faith and life. This overture sought to allow Churches to exempt those coming from denominations with which the URC has close ecumenical ties.

Although the measure occasioned some debate, it was approved by a required two-thirds majority. It now must be ratified by two-thirds of the consistories before taking effect following the next synodical meeting.

Military chaplains were at the heart of another matter addressed on Wednesday.

According to U.S. military regulations, the URC is not currently recognized as a “qualified Religious Organization” for endorsing chaplains for U.S. military service. However, several denominations with which we have ecumenical relationships belong to a joint commission which endorses and oversees their chaplains.

After brief discussion, delegates agreed to seek associate membership in the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel. This membership would enable URC ministers to enter the U.S. military as chaplains.

In other business transacted on Wednesday, Synod Schererville 2007:

- Determined to add a section on Church polity to the candidacy examination which is administered to men seeking eligibility to enter the ministry.

- Agreed to a request to form a new Pacific Northwest Classis from 12 Churches in California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. These Churches formerly belonged to Classis Southwest US and Classis Western Canada.
- Agreed to enter into ecumenical contact with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) and the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.
- Received greetings from fraternal delegates from the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Reformed Church in the US; a fraternal visitor from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated); and several URC missionaries.

Information concerning the continuing deliberations and decisions of Synod Schererville 2007 will be made available each day, the Lord willing.