

## Report of the General Synod Professorate

The office of General Synod professor involves representing “the living tradition of the church in the preparation and certification of candidates for its ministry,” as well as exercising “the ministry of teaching within the RCA as a whole” (*BCO*, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 8, Section 1, [2018 edition, p. 72]). We fulfill this office both individually and collectively. Elected and installed by the General Synod, we remain amenable to the General Synod in matters of doctrine, striving at all times and in all ways to fulfill our calling faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully. This is the professorate’s eighth annual report to the General Synod.

There are presently six General Synod professors: Dr. Jaeseung Cha, from New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS); Drs. Carol Bechtel, Timothy Brown, and James Brownson from Western Theological Seminary (WTS); and Drs. Chad Pierce and Cornelis Kors from the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA). Each professor was nominated by a theological agent of the General Synod and then elected by the General Synod to exercise a substantial and continuing role in preparing candidates for ministry in the RCA under the authority of their nominating agency.

The General Synod professors are represented on the Pastoral Formation Oversight Board (PFOB), and we continue to be in dialogue with that group about matters pertaining to the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry (CFM). We are also represented on the committees of the MFCA that recommend the granting of the CFM to students at non-RCA seminaries and candidates pursuing the Approved Alternate Route (AAR) to ordination. We set and evaluate the written examinations for the AAR candidates.

As a body, the professorate has met once in the past year. Our fall meeting was held at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. In addition to reporting concerning our work on various committees, our primary concerns were three-fold. First, we continue to discuss, in consultation with the newly formed PFOB, the role of each agent in the examination for and awarding of the CFM. We will continue to collaborate with the PFOB if and when any changes or clarifications are proposed. Second, we continue to discuss prospective candidates who would be good fits for the office of General Synod professor. Finally, we discussed some issues related to the proposed reorganization of the denomination to be decided in 2020.

As a body and as individuals, we mark with sadness and appreciation the upcoming retirement of our friend and colleague, the Rev. Dr. Cornelis Kors. This announcement came after our meeting; therefore, more details will be included in a later report. We thank Cor for his tireless work helping to identify, prepare, and equip women and men for ministry in the RCA. We pray God’s blessings upon him in his retirement.

In all of our work, we continue to explore new possibilities for our collective role. We are grateful for having been charged with this call and are deeply sensible of our responsibility to the church. We solicit your prayers and your advice, and we are committed to engaging conversation at all levels of the RCA’s life and work.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Pierce (moderator), together with the entire professorate, including Carol Bechtel, Timothy Brown, James Brownson, Jaeseung Cha, and Cornelis Kors.