

## Report of the Professorate

The office of General Synod professor involves representing “the living tradition of the church in the preparation and certification of candidates for ministry,” as well as exercising “the ministry of teaching within the RCA as a whole” (*BCO*, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 8, Section 1 [2019 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: Jaeseung Cha from New Brunswick Theological Seminary; Carol Bechtel, Timothy Brown, and James Brownson from Western Theological Seminary; and 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 professorate is represented on the Pastoral Formation Oversight Board (PFOB) and continues 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.

The General Synod professors mourn the untimely loss of two of our previous coworkers and office bearers. Allan Janssen and Gregg Mast both played a significant role in the preparation of candidates for ordination to the office of minister of Word and sacrament in the RCA. We extend our sympathy to Colleen and Vicki as well as their broader families. We are thankful for Al and Gregg’s love for God and God’s church. We wait with hopeful anticipation of the resurrection of the dead, when all will be made new.

As a body and as individuals we mark with sadness and appreciation the retirements of our friends and colleagues, Tim Brown and Cornelis Kors. Brown has served Western Theological Seminary faithfully both as its president and as the Henry Bast Professor of Preaching. Kors served the MFCA as its director. Together, they lived into their calling of shaping generations of pastors and teachers “to preach and teach the good news of salvation in Christ, to build up and equip the church for mission in the world, to free the enslaved, to relieve the oppressed, to comfort the afflicted, and to walk humbly with God” (from the Declaration for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, *BCO* Formulary No. 3 [2019 edition, p. 133]). We pray that God will continue to bless them and “prosper the work of [his] hands” (Psalm 90:17).

### Conclusion

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, General Synod professorate,  
together with the entire professorate, including Carol Bechtel, Timothy Brown, James Brownson,  
Jaeseung Cha, and Cornelis Kors.