



# Leaving the RCA

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Much of this material is borrowed from the ppt prepared by Willie Si (Elder, Fujian Evangelical Church, Richmond)

# Background

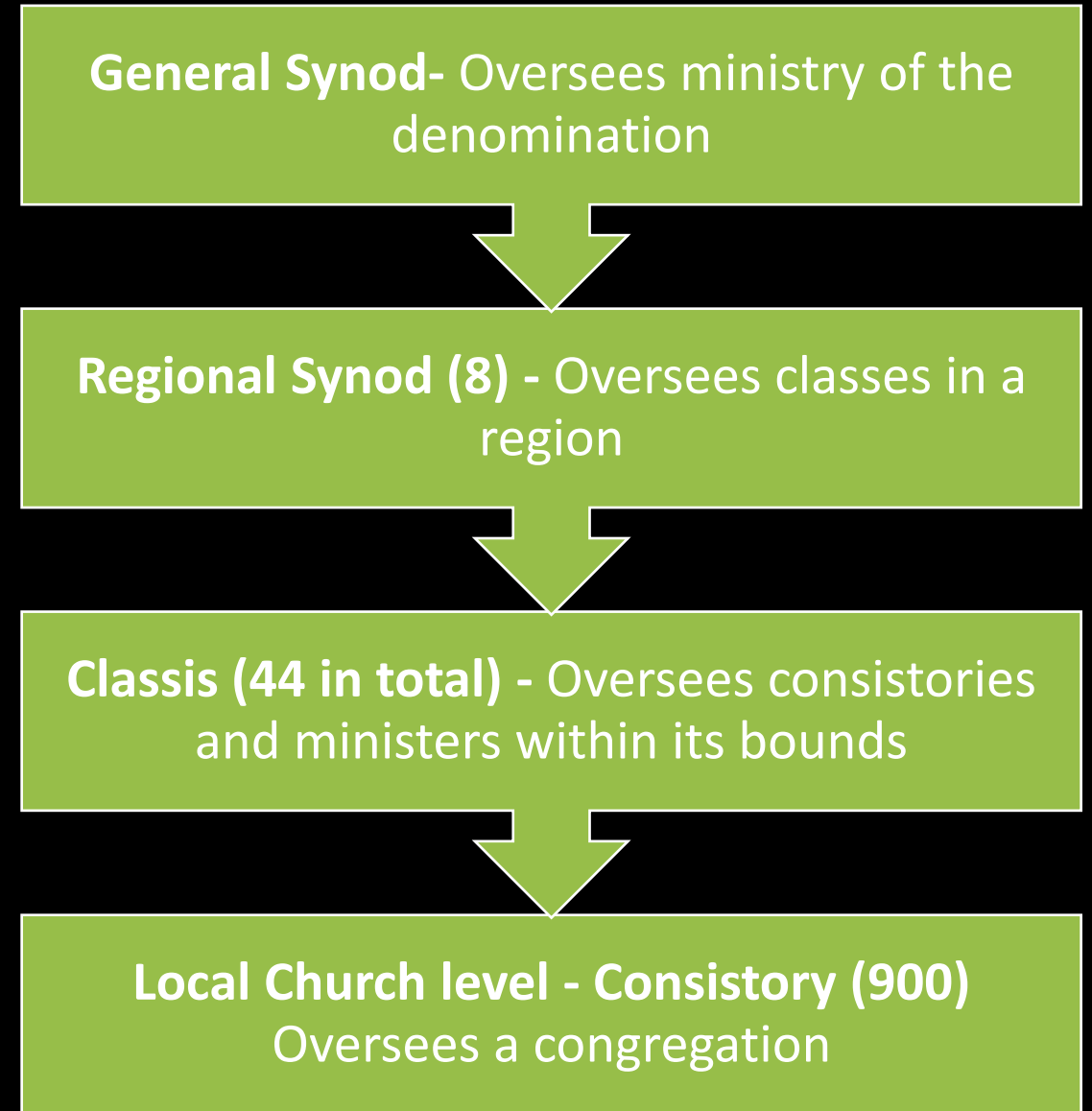
RCA has been divided over the issue of human sexuality

Marriage and Ordination

RCA's traditional stance

Issue of biblical hermeneutics

# RCA Structure



General Synod's  
attempt to make  
a formal stand

Liturgy of Marriage  
Sacrament to be written into  
the Book of Church Order  
(BCO) – Marriage is between  
a man and woman

It did not garner 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Classes  
vote to make this  
constitutional

# BC Classis



In 2018 the BC Classis churches voted to withdraw from the RCA in 5 years time if the RCA does not achieve a resolution.



An Ad-hoc committee was formed to work towards preparing for the outcomes of the General Synod decisions in the following years.



At the General Synod meeting in 2018, the Interim General Secretary of the GS Don Poest proposed a Vision 2020 team to look into the future options of the RCA which included:

Staying Together

Radical Reconstitution/Reorganization

Graceful separation

# Vision 2020

- Due to the pandemic GS 2020 was cancelled and postponed to October 2021
- Voting results of the Final Vision 2020 Report
  - Recommendation 1 - Together, Yet Changed (Restructuring) – Passed
  - Recommendation 2 - Preserving our shared history (A New Mission Agency) – Failed
  - Recommendation 3 - Forward with Grace (Mutually Generous Separation) – Passed

Vision 2020 –  
Recommendation 1

- Appoint a team to restructure the RCA
- Four Principle
  - Classes reorganized as affinity-based rather than geographically – based
  - Classes are responsible for decisions related to ordination and marriage
  - Discipline of individual consistories occurs at the classes level
  - Regional Synod and General Synod viability re-examined
- Report back to General Synod in 2024

# Vision 2020 – Recommendation 3

- Adopt regulations for churches to withdraw from the denomination
- Churches that withdraw must affiliate with another denomination (cannot become “independent”)
- Churches withdraw from the Classes (in our case, the BC Classis)
- Requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the members of Consistory to withdraw and affiliate with an identified denomination
- Requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the members of the church approving Consistory’s recommendation



# BC Classis Fall 2021 Recommendation

- Recommendation #1 from the 5-year Adhoc team
- To encourage each Consistory (leadership team) and congregation to engage in conversations before the Spring Classes meeting 2022 about the March 2023 Five year planned departure goal
- Majority of the 9 churches in the BC Classis have expressed a desire to leave the RCA denomination
- The Affinity-based restructuring will mean that we may have a denomination that will have varying stance on human sexuality
- The ideal window to depart would be in the next 5 years before the composition of General Synod shifts to an unknown state
- After withdrawal, the church will have to remit assessments for four quarters

## Current State of the RCA

About 200 churches have left the RCA so far.

In the US some have formed a new denomination called the Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC)

In Canada, the churches that have departed from BC Classis have formed the Reformation Canada Network (RCN)

# RCN – 7 Churches

- Abbotsford – Bethel
- Langley – Home Church
- Surrey – Grace CC

## ----New churches joining the RCN----

- First Reformed Church, St. Catharines, Ontario
- Faith Reformed Church, Stevensville, Ontario
- Fujian Evangelical Church, Richmond, BC
- Surrey Connecting Church, Surrey, B.C.

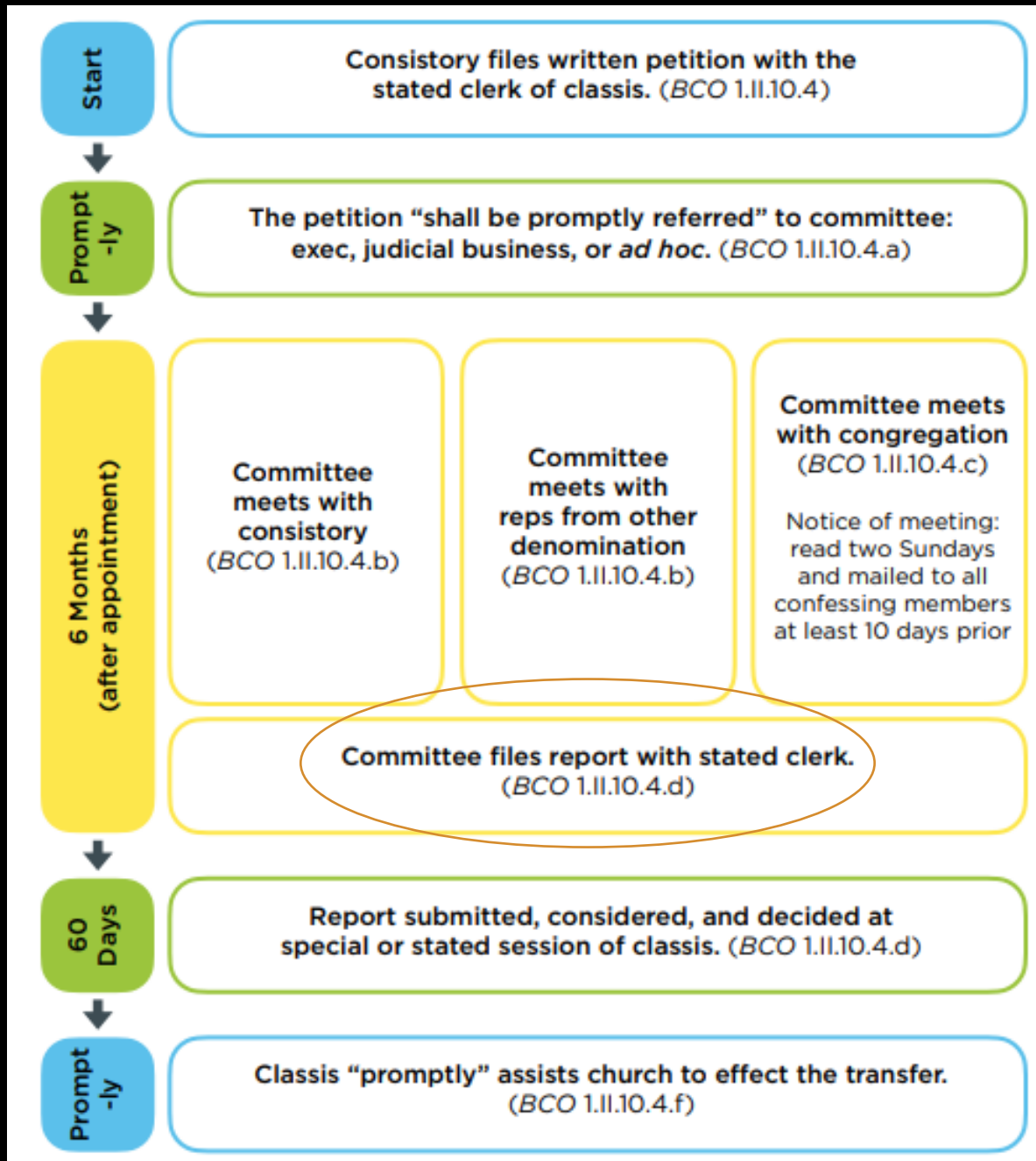
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# CHURCH WITHDRAWAL PROCESS



START WITH PETITION  
TO TRANSFER

COMMITTEE INVESTIGATES

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

60 days  
max

CLASSIS VOTES

# NLCC

- NLCC agrees with the departing churches over the biblical teachings on human sexuality
- Transmountain matters and delay in our process
- Elders actively researching denominations to see suitability given NLCC's distinctives beyond the biblically orthodox understanding of human sexuality
  - For example:
    - New Life dedicates as well as baptizes infants, as well as performs believers' baptism for adults
    - Women in leadership
    - Allows NL to hold their property and assets (as the RCA has allowed us)
  - Considerations regarding the licensing and ordination requirements for ministers since the present pastors of NLCC are both ordained.

# NLCC

- Looking for a denominational home that has a clear moral vision that upholds the biblically orthodox view of human sexuality and one that will also enhance/support the vision New Life has?
- Possibility of multi-affiliation/networks
- Waiting for clarity in our options before asking the congregation to vote on giving permission to withdraw from BC Classis
- No (or minimal) disruption to the current vibrant fellowship and witness we are experiencing as a congregation

# What to Expect in the Coming Months

- Elders will continue to research denominations and dialogue with various representative leaders to explore our options
- Congregational meetings :
  - Bring proposals of possible denominational options
  - Congregational vote to give permission for the leadership team to apply for withdrawal from the Classis (thereby from RCA)
- Begin the process of transferring to a new denomination