



THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA

THE BACKGROUND

It is planned that the RPCNA Synod in June 2022 will be sending out seven congregations and three mission churches to form a new denomination in Canada, called the RP Church of Canada.

In this newsletter we are going to outline the reasons why this is happening, and what the new RP Church of Canada will look like.

What prompted the decision to have an RP Church of Canada?

It might seem like this is a sudden development, but it's not. This decision has been a long time in the making, with its genesis going back to a St. Lawrence RPCNA Presbytery meeting in April 1999. At that meeting, a motion was passed "to establish a Canadian Presbytery by July 1999." That didn't happen. Then in April 2015, the St. Lawrence RPCNA Presbytery appointed a Committee to explore a possible union of the RP and ARP Churches in Canada. While there was a strong sense of mutual respect, no progress was made again despite the time invested.

In October 2018, the St. Lawrence Presbytery appointed a committee "to initiate discussions among the Canadian ministers and elders and proceed to the formation of a Canadian RP Church." Mr. Rod Finlayson, Rev. Matt Kingswood, Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley and Rev. Scott Wilkinson were appointed committee members. In the winter of 2018/2019, Dr. Quigley, the committee chair, visited each Session in Canada and outlined the reasons for an RPCC. Reservations were expressed, but all the Sessions agreed to participate in the process on the understanding that no final commitment was being required. Since the spring of 2019, four 'Gatherings' of ministers and elders have been held to discuss issues and work on the church's new constitutional documents.

In April 2021, the participating Sessions in Ontario and Quebec presented a request to the St. Lawrence Presbytery. That led

WHY HAVE AN RPCC?

There are two reasons for an RP Church in Canada: theological and practical.

The theological reason. God created the nations according to their languages, clans, lands, and the boundaries of their dwelling places (Gen. 10:5, 20, 31-32, Acts 17:26). Psalm 2:10-12 teaches us that every civil magistrate must serve the Lord with fear and kiss the Son of God. The Westminster Confession chapter 23:3 explains that this duty means that the civil governments of every nation are to "take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, and that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, (Ezra 7:21-23, 25-28, Nehemiah 13:15-22)." This duty is rooted in every man's moral responsibility to obey and glorify God in every part of life, including the work of being a civil magistrate. The Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned the Church to make disciples of every nation (Matt. 28:19-20, Luke 24:45-47). In the Westminster Confession chapter 25:4, "particular churches" refers to national churches (e.g., the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Church of Ireland, etc.). The universal visible Church is distributed regionally among the nations of the earth. The Larger Catechism Q. #191 reminds us that when we pray "Your Kingdom come" we are asking God to grant that the civil magistrates of every nation will countenance and maintain the Church within their lands. There is a prophetic promise in Isaiah 49:23 that kings shall be foster fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the Church. This is why the idea of a nationally covenanted church is a well-established Biblical principle in reformed and presbyterian church history.

In practical terms, the need for a coherent vision to be devised and communicated within Canada necessitates a national church. It is essential that the men serving in Canada be given and take the opportunity to focus on the specific needs of the Bride in the nation. To the question – 'why would a Presbytery within the

How did the RP Church in Canada start?

In Canada, the RP church traces its roots back to mission works started by both the Irish and the Scottish RP Churches. It is both a fascinating and a sad story.

The Irish RP Connection

The first RP missionary to the Maritimes was an Irishman man called Alexander Clarke. He and his family emigrated to Canada in June 1827, and within five years, a Presbytery had been formed. One historian quoting the New Brunswick Courier says that Clarke was an "indefatigable missionary." The following 50 years saw several challenges and successes in the work, and then in 1879, the Irish Synod "somewhat reluctantly" asked the Presbytery to join the RPCNA Synod.

The Scots RP Connection

In the early 1800s, many Scottish Presbyterian families emigrated to Lanark County in Ontario. Initially supplied by RP ministers from America, they were encouraged when, in 1833, the Scottish RP Church sent the Rev. James McLachlan as a missionary minister to them. McLachlan was another 'worker' like the Irishman Clarke, and the church work in Upper Canada prospered under his leadership. In 1853, fourteen years before the forming of the Dominion of Canada, the Scottish RP Church took a different approach from that of the Irish and willingly transferred its members in Upper Canada into the RPCNA, with the exhortation that they become self-supporting.

With continuing emigration, the church in Canada grew to over 100 preaching

RPCC INFRASTRUCTURE

The RP Church of Canada will initially have one Presbytery. If the Lord blesses us, we will expand to two and more Presbyteries. The Presbytery will ordinarily meet twice a year to discuss the vision and progress of the church. The Presbytery will appoint the following committees to undertake the church's work.

Ottawa Theological Hall

It is imperative that we, with urgency and persistency, ask the Lord to call more men into the gospel ministry. We will re-constitute Ottawa Theological Hall (OTH) in anticipation that he will do so. This church ministry trained ministers for the Canadian Church in the 1980s-2000s, including Rev. Matt, Kingswood, Rev. Matt Dyck, Rev. Vince Ward, and Rev. Dan Dupuis. Oversight of OTH will be the responsibility of a Presbytery appointed board.

Social Media and Magazine

The church will have a website and social media presence to help establish and develop a positive identity in Canada. It will also publish both online and in print a quarterly 16-page magazine. The magazine will contain; news and events reports, congregational focus and some teaching articles. A Presbytery Communication Committee will oversee the work undertaken in these communication areas.

Camps and Conferences

We must be proactive in seeking to develop relationships at every level within the church across the nation. Towards that goal, several camps and conferences will be created. Again the Presbytery will appoint a Committee to develop and oversee this aspect of the church's life.

Church Finance

The church will need to wisely utilize the kingdom resources the Lord will bless us with to function. This, too, will be overseen by a Committee of the Presbytery.

How many congregations are involved, and is this enough for a “critical mass” to make the new church feasible?

Seven congregations, and three mission churches are currently participating in the process towards the formation of the RPC of Canada; Coram Deo RP Mission Church (BC), Edmonton RPC (AB), Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Toronto RPC) (ON), Hillside RPC (ON), Redemption RPC (QC), New Creation RPC (ON), Ottawa RPC (ON), Russell RPC (ON), Surrey Mission Church (BC), and Northshore Chines Bible Truth Mission Church (BC). Each congregational session will have to confirm a desire to be part of the sending out process at the RPCNA Synod meeting in June 2022.

In terms of ‘critical mass’ the population percentage in a Canadian RP Church, will probably be numerically stronger than what the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America is in the USA.

There are examples throughout history of how the Lord has blessed the RP Church when she has humbled herself and pleaded with God to restore and revive

SO WHAT ARE THE STEPS TOWARDS THE RPCC BECOMING A REALITY?

June 2022

At the annual Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America Synod, which will be held this year from the 21st to the 24th of June, the Canadian congregations who wish to be part of the new Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada will be sent out to form the new denomination. The new church will be established on the existing RPCNA constitutional documents with the understanding that the RP Church of Canada will meet in September 2022 to be

formed on its own constitutional documents.

By The End of 2022

A meeting will be held before the end of 2022, at which the office bearers of the new RPCC will give their assent to the new constitutional documents. The following Lord's Day the office bearers and members in each congregation will indicate their agreement to the vows of the new Church during morning worship. The RPCC will then

Please Give Thanks and Pray for these things.

Give thanks to God for our brothers in the RPCNA who have understood from early on that there is nothing either schismatic or sectarian about this decision. It is a desire that arises solely from a theological perspective and a practical necessity.

Give thanks to God that those participating are motivated by a desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, utilizing the resources he has and shall give us for the building of His bride in Canada.

Pray for those who will have additional responsibilities placed upon them with the establishment of the RPCC as they serve with humility in the areas of communications, training of men, camps and conferences and church finance.

Pray and ask God to raise men to be trained for the gospel ministry as ruling elders and deacons. Men whom Christ will call, ordain and use to establish new congregations in Canada.

