

A Message to the World Regarding the CREC Name Change

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On October 6, 2011, the CREC Church Council voted to change the name of the CREC from the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches to the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches. This change was the result of a three year deliberative process within the confederation, driven by a concern that in some parts of the United States our name was frequently misconstrued to imply certain cultural connotations that were never intended by our founders or by our churches.

It is important to convey our position on at least two aspects of this decision. First we want to be clear as to what we mean by using the word *communion*. Second, we want to be clear about the continuing nature of our *corporate polity* within the CREC.

On the matter of the word, *communion*, we are using it in the confessional sense. In the Apostles' Creed, Christians confess to believe in "the holy catholic church, the communion of saints . . ." By this we mean, *first* that by God's grace we have communion with the Triune God and with each other as we are brought into the church through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, signified by baptism. *Second*, we have communion with all the faithful saints by virtue of confessing that Jesus is Lord of all (Rom 10:9; II Cor 5:17-19; Acts 2:36ff).

The matter is well articulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 26, which says in the first paragraph, "All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in all his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. And being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces; and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man." The churches of the CREC, through the mechanism of solemn consent and covenant, do declare their intent to be in communion with one another in the sense set forth in this confessional statement.

Moreover, to cite the Preamble of the CREC Constitution, we also affirm that, "Our gathering of *churches* is not intended as a separation from other orthodox believers who confess the name of Christ, but rather as a gathering *within* that broader church, in order to work together effectively for reformation."

As to the organizational polity of the CREC, we reiterate that the nature of our gathering of churches is one of confederation. The word simply means that we have covenanted together to work for common purposes according to the Word of God and through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Father. To once again cite the Preamble of our constitution, "we intend to form a broad connection between churches which, with respect to polity, is representative, being neither hierarchical nor autonomous."

In summary, we want to make it abundantly clear that by removing the word “confederation” from our name, we are not changing the nature of our organizational unity and purpose. The name change signals an accommodation to the realities of modern discourse, not a change in direction for the CREC. Furthermore, by the adoption of a different word into our name – communion – we hope to make clear our confessional commitment to one of the great and central truths articulated by the Christian Church through the ages: that true unity in the cosmos comes about only by the world-transforming power of the incarnation, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Second Person of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ. May His name be praised forever and ever. Amen.