

The *Hesed* Project

Wise Words from Church Members – Unity

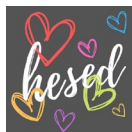
Introduction

Hesed Project CRC has been in contact with leaders and members of various Christian Reformed Churches who are preparing letters, gravamina, and overtures to express their concerns about some of the decisions made by Synod 2022 with regard to human sexuality. We respect that each gravamen or letter is a personal and pastoral matter between an office bearer or member and their church council. They contain words of wisdom that are useful for others; sharing common themes, without identifying information and with permission, is consistent with one of Synod's decisions, which called for continued research and dialogue. Synod then went on to contradict the focus on dialogue by creating conditions of fear, exclusion, and punishment. The Hesed Project CRC will continue to promote open discussion and continuous learning. That's what Hesed – God's gracious and steadfast lovingkindness – looks like in our world.

The wise words are organized into six different themes. The wise words are organized into six different themes. This document explores Unity and How We Make Decisions, but the full document, with all six themes, is available [here](#).

1. Chastity and Heidelberg Catechism Question & Answer 108
2. Interpretation of Scripture
 - Covenant, Belonging, and Unconditional Love
 - Image-bearing, Moral Agency, and Conscience
 - Creation Order and Creation Norms
3. Harm
4. Justice: An essential, missing piece
5. Local Church as Locus for Pastoral Care
6. **Unity and How We Make Decisions**

Interested in engaging with other church leaders on any of these topics or with other questions you may have? Send us a confidential email and let us know what avenues you're exploring or the assistance you may need. The Hesed Project CRC is happy to help. [Email us](#).



Unity and How We Make Decisions

- Synod 2022's decisions harm the unity of the Christian Reformed Church and are causing deep divisions within local congregations. Pastors of local congregations state that issues of human sexuality are not settled within their congregations. They say the best way to move forward is to continue the conversation in reliance on both Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit, rather than forcing some out.
- This interpretation of our confessions chose a harsh course rather than recognizing there is more work to do before we have clarity as a denomination. The need for more time was evidenced by the number and substance of overtures calling for caution in 2022, and now by the sudden increase in use of gravamina as many office bearers and members wonder if they can remain in the CRC.
- Decisions of such consequence should be part of a slow-moving process, involving considerable debate and multiple Synods. The post-COVID timing of this conversation, the reports of what happened within the committee, the desire to go from pastoral advice to confessional status so quickly, the dismissive manner in which those who disagreed were treated, and the limited way members of the LGBTQ+ community were engaged did not allow for the robust discernment process that such a decision requires for the sake of clarity, our witness to Christ, and unity of the church. This was reinforced immediately after Synod when many delegates who voted in favour of confessional status called for on-going conversations and many delegates who disagreed said they were not heard. It seems the process used was designed more for division and forced compliance than for wisdom and unity.

