All Canada Church Summit Report

In any age, to *understand the times* with an eye to the future (1 Chr. 12:32), God's people need to become like *children, placing their hope in the Lord both now and forevermore* (Ps. 131:3).

Coming Together from East and West

From November 5–9, 2025, more than 160 participants from across Canada — officebearers, ministry leaders, and laypeople — gathered in Kitchener for the All Canada Church Summit. Described as "a national gathering of CRC and former CRC members, imagine, and build a new kind of Reformed fellowship in Canada," the event became a time of discovery, prayer, and renewed hope.

Attendees came from all twelve Canadian classes and more than fifty-five congregations, from Vancouver to Fredericton. For many, the Summit offered both a vision of what could be and a tangible sense that God was already moving in their midst.

A Week Shaped by Worship and Discernment

The Summit opened with shared meals and heartfelt conversation. Each morning began with worship led by Jeremy Zeyl and his band, whose song *"Here I Am, Show Me the Way"* became the week's refrain and prayer. The opening message from Everett Vander Horst, chair of Toward CRC Canada, invited participants to imagine a reforming future — one rooted in our shared faith tradition, gracious listening, and trust in the Spirit's leading.

Wilma van der Leek guided the gathering through the practice of **communal discernment**, helping participants listen together for God's voice amid the complexities of change. That posture — open, prayerful, and deeply relational — became a defining feature of the week.

Learning and Building Together

Participants joined one of two tracks: **Workshops** or **Working Groups**. The Workshops provided space for learning and conversation about disaffiliation pathways, Canada's shifting ministry context, and the stories of congregations already walking this road.

Meanwhile, six Working Groups met for hours each day, exploring values and vision, leadership and governance, theological identity, structure and administration, and ministry partnerships. Their task was not simply technical — it was spiritual. Each group sought to offer direction that would reflect grace and humility, and also foster collaboration. On Friday afternoon, they presented initial proposals to the whole assembly, received feedback, and then reconvened to refine their work.

One Summit newsletter report summed up the energy: "When you put passionate people together with a grand vision, beautiful things happen."

Inspiration from the Platform

The Summit's keynote speakers provided both challenge and encouragement.

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- **Dr. Melanie Humphreys**, president of The King's University, shared her experience in forming a community that is both diverse and welcoming, offering wisdom for what the church in Canada could become.
- **Rev. Paul Verhoef**, campus minister at the University of Calgary, invited participants to walk The Way of Love with courage — to follow Jesus into unfamiliar places, trusting that renewal comes when we risk faithfulness over comfort.
- **Shiao Chong**, former editor of *The Banner*, urged us to rediscover a deeply incarnational faith — one that is with the world rather than apart from it. His talk invited us to imagine a Christianity that joins God's mission in the world with humility, curiosity, and hope. All three keynotes can be viewed here.

A Spirit-Led Community

By Saturday afternoon, participants were sensing that something significant had taken shape. Working Group reports were received with joy and affirmation, outlining the early contours of a new Reformed and Canadian fellowship. Throughout the week, attendees described the atmosphere as safe and filled with grace. "It was a place that allowed vulnerability and authenticity," one participant reflected afterwards, "a place where we experienced God's presence."

Celebration and Sending

Saturday evening's delicious **banquet** provided the perfect conclusion to the on-site portion of the Summit — a joyful celebration filled with laughter, impromptu awards, games, and gratitude. It was a time to rest, to rejoice, and to recognize how God had been at work in and among us.

On Sunday morning, participants joined the congregation of **Waterloo CRC** for worship. Rev. Laura de Jong preached a vivid and memorable message, *"A Took or a Baggins?"*, challenging the gathering to take up the adventurous path of faith to which Jesus calls his followers. Her message and the service can be viewed here.

The Road Ahead

As attendees prepared for their journeys home — some travelling through early snow — they spoke of a shared sense of calling and hope. The Summit concluded with clear next steps: congregations were encouraged to become **Catalyst Churches**, committing to help shape this emerging Canadian Reformed community by prayer, participation, and representation on the Toward CRC Canada board; or **Observer Churches**, expressing support for the vision and staying connected as developments unfold.

Participants left describing the week as sacred space. It had been a time of healing, honesty, and rediscovered confidence in the Spirit's leading. "It was a privilege," one wrote, "to walk on this holy ground and to experience the richness of hope."

The All Canada Church Summit will be remembered not only for its plans and proposals, but for the way God's people encountered one another — and the Spirit — in faith and friendship. It marked a beginning: a new community its voice, its purpose, and its call to walk the way of love together.