

New Reformed communion plans 2010 launch in Grand Rapids: World Communion of Reformed Churches

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The Christian Reformed Church, based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, will host the inaugural meeting of the newly formed, 80-million-member World Communion of Reformed Churches in the summer of 2010.

The merger, agreed to last year in Trinidad, combines the larger World Alliance of Reformed Churches, headquartered in Geneva, and the Reformed Ecumenical Council, based in Grand Rapids. Some Reformed denominations, such as the CRC, were already members of both international bodies.

Jerry Dykstra, executive director of the CRC, said the denomination agreed in December to accept the invitation to serve as one of the host churches for the June 18-28, 2010, meeting. About 1,000 delegates and visitors are expected. The merged body will “represent a significant number of Reformed churches around the world,” he said.

“Coming together like this is an example of where the ecumenical movement is going today,” said Peter Borgdorff, the former CRC executive director. Borgdorff helped to make possible the merger, which “eliminates some of the visible separation and emphasizes what we can do together,” according to a CRC news release.

“In the last ten years,” he added, “we are seeing that diversity is good. We don’t all have to be the same—as long as we realize that certain things bind us together.”

Besides the traditional Reformed churches, the new organization will be open to Presbyterian, Congregational and other denominational traditions with a Reformed heritage, Borgdorff said.