

# UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FROM DENOMINATION Q & A

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## **Is there a summary available of our contributions to the RCA (i.e. dues, travel expenses, insurance)?**

Funds sent to the RCA fall into two categories: Assessments and Askings. Assessments are required payments that allow the denomination to function and carry out initiatives approved by the General Synod. (General Synod is the yearly gathering of delegates from the entire denomination.) Askings are optional payments churches can decide whether or not they want to make in order to invest in ministry efforts of the denomination.

To our knowledge, Faith Church has always fully paid both our Assessments and Askings. In 2020 we paid a COVID discounted amount of \$312,933.03. In 2019 we paid \$317,681.92.

## **We heard good RCA programs could be replaced but did not hear what programs we love as part of the RCA.**

The majority of what we “love” about the RCA happens within our classis. (The New Thing Classis is churches in the South Suburbs of Chicago and Northwest Indiana who are committed to church multiplication and ministry expansion.) We love helping, encouraging and being held accountable to keep stretching in order to reach disconnected people! From the denomination as a whole, we really appreciate our connection to world missions such as our partnership in Brazil. Our intention is for our connection to our current RCA missions partners to continue should we exit the RCA.

## **How do I prevent this from happening in the future? I’m thinking out of the 200 like-minded churches, there are likely egalitarian vs complementarian.**

While only God is in control and knows the future, we do try to use the intelligence He has blessed us with to do this as wisely as possible. This is the reason we are doing as thorough an examination of potential future partners as possible. We are studying their statements of belief and rules by which they operate to evaluate

potential for alignment. We also are having discussions with leaders from these organizations to hear their interpretations of those documents and the current state of their ministry.

In terms of egalitarian and complementarian, we believe that there can be biblical interpretations that support both of these stances. Our goal would be to partner with an organization where both of these interpretations are allowed to practice and there is not pressure to conform to the one you do not hold to as a church.

## **What if we don’t believe in everything the next denomination believes in?**

Please read the response to the above question regarding prevention of this happening in the future. Additionally, please know we are hoping whoever we would partner with would have the same mindset Faith Church currently has.

From our “Discover Faith” class booklet: “Some beliefs and practices of our church differ from those found in other Christian traditions. We respect the beliefs of other traditions but believe that our practices reflect the teachings of the Bible on some issues where Christians disagree.

However, we think these issues are non-essential to the Christian faith. Beliefs that we view as “non-essential” include things like infant baptism vs adult baptism. We work with our brothers and sisters in the faith who disagree with us on the non-essentials.

Essential beliefs pertain to salvation – there is only one way to salvation through Jesus Christ – we stand firm on that belief.”

## **Explain more about the “New Thing”. Does it become its own denomination or denomi-network?**

Our New Thing Classis is the area churches we partner with in ministry. To this point, each church has expressed a desire to all join in something larger together. For potential partners who have a “Classis” structure, we are



asking if our classis could remain intact if we were to join with them. None of the churches have expressed a desire for us to do intensive work needed to begin something brand new.

**Are we worried about negative responses to why we are leaving? Cancel culture, etc.**

Unfortunately, throughout our history Faith Church has been the recipient of many negative responses. Thankfully, we have continued to operate with the main question being, “What is God calling us to do?” When our leaders feel unified in clarity of direction, we have a confidence to move forward and allow others to respond however they’d like.

**What do you foresee will happen to the RCA? Do we expect collapse?**

Our hope is that God would do an amazing thing, the entire RCA would return to its’ orthodox, historic and conservative interpretation of Scripture and that there would be revival!

However, aside from that happening, based on what has happened in other denominations who have followed this path, we foresee decline within the RCA. Total collapse? There are many churches within the RCA who have large financial endowments, which can continue to help sustain their ministries, so a total collapse would probably not happen for a long time.

**What if we don’t want to leave the denomination, where does our membership go?**

Should Faith Church exit the denomination, all Faith Church members would no longer be part of the RCA. If you are a member of Faith Church who would like to continue to be a member of the RCA, you would need to transfer your membership to another RCA Church. However, before making that kind of decision, we would ask you to wrestle with the question of “What mission do I most align with?”

**Could you list the top handful of actual theological issues in question?**

The main theological issue is the authority and interpretation of Scripture where now there is deviation from the orthodox, historic and conservative approaches to those topics. This has been brought to the forefront

mainly around human sexuality. The RCA as a whole, and Faith Church, have continued to hold to the belief that God’s best for us, as taught in the Bible, is that sexual relationships are reserved for one man and one woman within the bonds of a marriage relationship. The progressive theology that is within the RCA, and many other places, believes people have been created just as they are by God and are allowed to receive their sexual pleasure by whatever means they desire. It goes beyond monogamous homosexual relationships to include mixed marriages, thripples and many other perversions of what we believe God intended.

While sexuality is the lightning rod topic, other theological areas of concern are Universalism where people believe that Jesus is just one of the ways of being reconciled and restored to our Heavenly Father. This negates the deity of Jesus and is completely contrary to Scripture.

Historical Adam is another example. There are many who say and teach, even in our denomination’s seminaries, that Adam and Eve in the Bible were just representations of human beings, they didn’t actually exist. That brings up questions as to how sin entered our world and is contrary to Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—”

**My question relates to the synod or classis meetings that you all have been a part of. These clear violations of the Bible that now are considered acceptable by the RCA. I think it would help me and others understand how these non christian views can make it up to the top of the RCA if you explain their argument for them.**

We have not experienced these differing theologies within our own classis. We know that these theologies exist and are supported in some other classis. Our direct contact only happens at the General Synod level. (The General Synod is the annual gathering of delegates from the entire denomination.) The issue is our polity or governmental structure.

There is no method for a classis to bring a charge, or call for correction, against another classis. Changes to the Book of Church Order require an approval of 2/3 of all the classes. Which, with where the denomination currently is, would never pass. So classes who continue to hold the beliefs of the denomination (like ours) cannot bring correction to those who are operating in a contrary manner and those who are in these contrary classis



seem to be ok with it. It is sad that while the denomination has never changed their orthodox, historic and conservative interpretation, the bodies that could bring correction have not.

**Do you foresee there being any changes to the way the Worship messages are delivered each week or how they are delivered?**

We do not.

**Sports teams and activities have a long history as a form of outreach for our church. That has departed. Can we have a new awakening or is it an insurance issue?**

Not really sure this has to do with our denomination; however, our previous experiences in sports leagues have proven to be more detrimental than beneficial in our church's witness both to those who are disconnected and Christians from other churches. We have seen fruit when athletes from Faith Church join teams from local leagues and get to know their neighbors in that way.

