

## **RAIN – Constitution**

### **1. Pre-Amble**

The organization known as **Renewing Addicts In Need (RAIN)** is a not-for-profit support group established within the Canadian Reformed Churches of the Classis Niagara district for the purpose of spiritually helping fellow church members (and possibly others) in their struggle against addiction to alcohol/drugs – both addicts and co-dependents. RAIN is a volunteer-based, non-professional support group seeking to encourage participants with the tools given by the Lord Jesus Christ, namely: prayer, God’s Word, accountability, encouragement and personal friendship.

RAIN does not wish to compete with any other support group or program but rather seeks to complement whatever other help a person may be receiving by concentrating on matters of the heart and the sanctifying work of Jesus Christ in His people. RAIN aims to help those who admit their sin of addiction, who want to break with it, who (if it was needed) have gone through detoxification and a rehabilitation or 12-Step program (or possibly are still ‘working’ such a program), and who now want/need on-going encouragement and mentoring through Scripture, prayer and development of genuine, trustworthy relationships.

As a secondary matter, RAIN will endeavour to keep updated information on hand regarding other services in this field so as to be able to refer those in need to the appropriate service.

### **2. Name Explanation**

The acronym RAIN is drawn from Psalm 72 which sings of the redeeming and renewing work of a special king whom God would one day send. According to this psalm, this king will rule over God’s people eternally, bringing justice and righteousness to bless them while crushing their oppressor. He will be given authority and power over all nations. He will also be filled with compassion for the weak and afflicted among His people and will rescue them. This king is the Lord Jesus Christ who has come, who has paid the price to redeem God’s people, and who presently reigns on David’s throne at the right hand of His Father in heaven (see Acts 2:29-36).

Because the gracious rule of Christ has begun, God’s people begin to experience all the blessings described in Psalm 72, including also v.6, “He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth.” This is a picture of the renewing and refreshing work of the Saviour in the lives of His struggling people. Like land that is in need of moisture, all sinners, also addicts, will at times feel parched and withered because of sin’s grip but Jesus promises to renew and refresh all who look to Him as Lord and Saviour.

On the cross, Christ has crushed the head of the great oppressor Satan and has in principle subdued all His enemies beneath His feet. Though this victory will only be complete on the day Christ returns, His people already now share in it and may live in the freedom He has purchased (Galatians 5:1ff). The Lord Jesus provides His blood to forgive all their sin and sends forth His Spirit to renew their spirits (Psalm 51:10). He will do this not just once but as often as His people seek His help in faith (Luke 11:13).

As a support group, therefore, RAIN in its name draws on this image of renewal and wishes to be a channel for the work of Christ in renewing His people. Fellow church members and supporters are mere instruments in the Redeemer’s hands to further His gracious work in the lives of His chosen ones. The

specific focus of RAIN is the sanctifying work of Jesus Christ, captured in the word “**Renewing.**” Christ, by means of His Spirit and Word, promises on-going renewal to His people in the struggle against sin. RAIN seeks to apply this renewing work of Christ specifically to “**Addicts,**” by which is meant those who feel a strong attraction to drug use or alcohol abuse. Which addicts in particular does RAIN seek to assist? Addicts can be at varying points along a continuum such as: in denial, in crisis, in rehabilitation, and even sober. It’s also possible to be a former addict and yet still experience strong urges. They can be believers or unbelievers, church members or non-church members. Yet, not all see themselves as being in need of help, let alone the help of Christ. The addicts RAIN aims to assist are those Christians who experience such urges and attractions, who know and confess themselves to be “**In Need,**” and who, like all true believers, openly acknowledge their sin and seek in faith the daily cleansing and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ.

### **3. Basis**

RAIN is founded upon doctrines of the Word of God, summarized in the Three Forms of Unity. All of RAIN’s activities are subject to this basis at all times.

### **4. Mission Statement**

RAIN aims:

1. To be a source of distinctly Christ-centered, spiritual encouragement and assistance to fellow sinners who struggle with attraction to substance abuse (i.e. addiction) and/or their co-dependents so that the sanctifying work of Christ may be furthered in all participants to the glory of God.
2. To encourage and facilitate the restoration of relationships which have been damaged or broken as a result of the sin of addiction, with a special focus on restoring the bonds of trust, love and fellowship between an addict and his/her co-dependent(s).
3. To further the on-going healing and sanctifying process in participants by encouraging them to serve and assist others with similar struggles, especially those within the body of Christ
4. To refer those with needs beyond what RAIN is able to address to the appropriate service in the community with the hope that in time they may join RAIN to continue growing and help others grow in Christ’s sanctifying work.

### **5. Structure**

*5.1 Leadership* - RAIN leadership is open only to communicant members of the Canadian Reformed Churches and those in formal ecclesiastical fellowship with this federation of churches. All leaders are expected to lead by example as living members of the church, striving to lead a God-fearing life through regular Scripture meditation and prayer.

- RAIN leadership is comprised of four parts:
  1. **Canadian Reformed Ministers** (in the district of Classis Niagara) –
    - a. To appoint and/or renew the term of a Coordinator
    - b. To advise the Coordinator as he/she may request it in general, as well as specifically in his/her work of appointing and/or renewing the terms of members of the Steering Committee
    - c. To meet at least once per year with the Coordinator to keep abreast of the work and provide spiritual encouragement and support for the Coordinator.

*RAIN Constitution*

2. **A Coordinator** who will be selected by the majority consensus of the local Canadian Reformed ministers (in the district of Classis Niagara). The Coordinator's tasks are as follows:
  - Upon the advice of the local ministers, to appoint individuals to the initial Steering Committee.
  - In consultation with the Steering Committee and the individual ministers of the relevant congregations, to appoint individuals and/or renew their term of service to the continuing Steering Committee.
  - To serve as an *ex-officio* member of the Steering Committee, assisting with advice and direction as needed.
  - The Coordinator will serve a 6 year term which is renewable upon the recommendation of the Steering Committee in cooperation with the Coordinator.
  
3. **A Steering Committee** which oversees the direction of all local RAIN support groups, appoints leaders for them, helps set them up and works to ensure the effective and beneficial running of all groups.
  - The Steering Committee will, if feasible, consist of one member of each of the local congregations or support groups to a maximum of 6 persons, excluding the Coordinator who will be an *ex-officio* member.
    - Members will serve a three year term which is renewable upon the recommendation of the Steering Committee in cooperation with the member.
  - The Steering Committee shall endeavour to meet at least twice annually with all local support group leaders to encourage them in their tasks and to facilitate good communication and cooperation for the effective and beneficial running of all groups.
  
4. **Local support group leaders** who run the meetings.
  - A single group may have more than one leader with each taking turns leading meetings in rotation. These leaders are chosen and appointed by the Steering Committee from local volunteers.
    - Leaders will serve a three-year term which is renewable at the discretion of the Steering Committee in cooperation with the individuals.
  - There will be, according to feasibility, two kinds of local groups, one for addicts and one for co-dependents. All groups will endeavor to hold a meeting once every second week. These groups will endeavour to meet together, as a rule, every third meeting as a way to facilitate the restoration of damaged or broken relationships between addicts and their co-dependents.
  - Local groups shall endeavour, in turn, to host a social gathering at least once per year to which all the other RAIN support groups in the Niagara area are invited. The purpose is to facilitate a broader development of the bonds of

fellowship and love for mutual support and encouragement in the struggles against addiction.

*5.2. Oversight and Discipline*

1. Difficulties within a local support group which cannot be resolved internally may be addressed to the Steering Committee, who shall seek to do due diligence in hearing and adjudicating the dispute in accordance with biblical principles, and whose decision shall be respected and followed. The Steering Committee reserves the right to dismiss a leader who, for whatever reason, is not found to be conducive to the fruitful running of the local RAIN support group.
2. Difficulties within the Steering Committee which cannot be resolved internally may be addressed to the Coordinator, who shall seek to do due diligence in hearing and adjudicating the dispute in accordance with biblical principles, and whose decision shall be respected and followed. The Coordinator reserves the right to dismiss a member of the Steering Committee who, for whatever reason, is not found to be conducive to the fruitful running of the Committee.
3. Difficulties with the Coordinator which cannot be resolved within the Steering Committee may be addressed to a meeting of Canadian Reformed ministers in the district of Classis Niagara, who shall seek to do due diligence in hearing and adjudicating the dispute in accordance with biblical principles, and whose decision shall be respected and followed. This meeting of the ministers has the right to dismiss the Coordinator who, for whatever reason, is not found to be conducive to the fruitful running of RAIN. These ministers shall then select and appoint a new Coordinator.

*5.3 Participants* – Participation in local RAIN support groups is geared toward church members but is open to anyone who does not oppose RAIN's basis (as above) and is prepared to abide by all of RAIN's tenets as set out in the Constitution.

- Participation is voluntary and free of charge
- Participants in the meeting may not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Participants must be seeking what RAIN is providing, namely assistance in progressing in the sanctifying work of the Lord Jesus Christ who is pleased to use the means of God's Word, prayer as well as brotherly accountability and encouragement to accomplish this (see Lord's Day 32 & 33 & 1 Corinthians 12).
  1. Those who struggle with sins other than attraction to drugs and/or alcohol abuse and who may wish to attend RAIN for encouragement and support in their struggle may attend (under these same guidelines) at the discretion of the group leader and always with the understanding of what RAIN's primary focus is.
- Participants not following the guidelines may be dismissed from a given meeting at the discretion of the group leader(s). If the behaviour is not rectified and curbed to align with RAIN's basis, mission statement and guidelines, future participation may be forbidden at the discretion of the group leader(s).

**6. Guidelines for Support Meetings**

1. Understanding that addiction, as all sin, begins with the sinful desire of the heart (Matthew 15:18,19), and that Jesus Christ has died to forgive also these sins and sent His Spirit to combat in His people all sinful desires of the flesh (Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 5, esp. v.16-26), RAIN aims to assist the process of sanctification in all participants using the means which Christ provides:

## *RAIN Constitution*

prayer, discussion/sharing of struggles, Scripture meditation, mutual accountability and encouragement based on God's Word, and personal friendship.

2. Each support meeting will:
  - a. Begin with prayer, asking for the Lord's blessing and seeking the Holy Spirit's illumination.
  - b. Focus on a Scripture meditation geared toward the spiritual struggles which addicts and co-dependents may face.
  - c. Foster discussion of the issues/struggles/victories in the lives of participants as they are related to addiction, aiming to have burdens shared and to give biblical direction and encouragement moving forward.
  - d. Conclude with prayer both thanking the Lord for His gifts and blessings as well as interceding for the specific needs of the participants.
3. Each participant is to:
  - a. Honour the leader's guidance of the meeting and show respect for all participants
  - b. When sharing, keep the focus on one's own thoughts, feelings and actions
  - c. In general, keep sharing time to under 5 minutes (to allow time for others).
    - i. When circumstances call for it, the leader, at his/her discretion, may give more time.
  - d. Not interrupt or talk (whisper or otherwise converse) while others are sharing
  - e. Feel free to, in an attitude of brotherly humility, offer support, encouragement and direction that agrees with God's Word
  - f. Out of love for God and neighbour, guard the confidentiality of all participants according to the ninth commandment (see Lord's Day 43)
4. Regarding confidentiality, as a rule what is said in the meeting stays in the meeting. Exceptions to this would include when the participant himself or another person is in harm's way, when the law of the land is broken, or when a person shows a hardening in sin and needs to be addressed by individuals according to Matthew 18:15-20.
5. The leader of the meeting is to ensure that the meeting is conducted in a brotherly manner in accordance with these guidelines.
  - a. The leader is free to assign certain participants (with their agreement) to conduct certain portions of the meeting (e.g. prayer or Scripture reading) but the leader remains in charge and responsible for how the meeting is run.
  - b. The leader shall endeavour to keep the length of the meetings to one hour or less.

### **7. RAIN as Referral Service**

1. To be able to refer those with needs beyond what RAIN is able to address and who may approach RAIN for assistance, RAIN will endeavour to maintain a current list of support services (with all necessary contact information, hours of operation, and, where applicable, an estimate of the cost for the participant) within or near the Niagara area.
  - a. This list will include detoxification centers, rehabilitation centers, crisis intervention services, Christian (or otherwise reputable) counselling services, Alcoholics Anonymous, any Christian 12 Step program and whatever other service may be of help.
  - b. This list will be maintained by a member of RAIN Steering Committee who shall ensure the accuracy of the information and circulate any updates to the rest of RAIN Steering

*RAIN Constitution*

Committee as soon as possible. This information may be freely disseminated to any and all who may benefit from it.

**8. Changes to This Constitution**

1. Changes to this constitution can only be made by majority vote of the Steering Committee plus the consent of the Coordinator.

*\*Adopted in this final form by the initial Steering Committee via email the week of October 14, AD 2012*