The Acts & Proceedings of the 171st Regular Session of the GENERAL SYNOD

eformed Church in America

Convened at

Community Center

Sioux Center, Iowa

June 13-17, 1977

Vol. LVII

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OFFICERS OF GENERAL SYNOD
1977-1978

President . . . . . Rev. Albertus G. Bossenbroek

Vice-President . . . . . Rev. Harvey T. Hoekstra

General Secretary . . . . . Marion deVelder, to 8-31-77
Arie R. Brouwer, from 9-1-77

Treasurer . . . . . Mr. Anton E. Mickelsen

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1977-1978

MINISTERS	ELDERS
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Harry Buis	Wilfred Huenink
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Minutes of General Synod

Appendix 1 – Directory and Financial Reports

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1977

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Calendar of Special Days

1977

Labor Sunday	September 4
Day of Commitment	September 12
Christian Education Sunday	September 25
Christian Education Week	September 25-October 1
World Wide Communion Sunday	October 2
One Great Hour of Sharing	October 2 or other Fall Sunday
Laity Sunday	October 9
World Order Sunday	October 16
Ecumenical Youth Week	October 16-23
Reformation Sunday	October 30
World Community Day	November 4
Stewardship Sunday	November 6
Thanksgiving Sunday	November 20
Universal Bible Sunday	November 20
National Bible Week	November 20-27
Thanksgiving Day	November 24
Board of Pensions Sunday	December 4
Christmas	December 25

1978

Epiphany	January 6
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	January 18-25
Reformed Church Youth Sunday	January 29 or other January or February Sunday
Ash Wednesday	February 8
Boy Scout Sunday	February 12
World Day of Prayer	March 3
Day of Prayer for Crops and Industry	March 9
Girl Scout Sunday	March 12
Passion Sunday	March 12
Palm Sunday	March 19
Holy Week	March 19-25
Maundy Thursday	March 23
Good Friday	March 24
Easter Sunday	March 26
Religion in American Life Month	April
National Christian College Day	April 16
Rural Life Sunday	April 30
Ascension Day	May 4
May Fellowship Day	May 5
National Family Week	May 7-14
Festival of the Christian Home	May 14
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General Synod, 1978	June 11-16

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ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS

THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY FIRST GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA CONVENED IN REGULAR SESSION AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER, SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, MONDAY, THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF JUNE, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVEN AT TWO P.M., CENTRAL DAYLIGHT TIME, AND ADJOURNED ON FRIDAY, THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF JUNE, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVEN AT 8:45 P.M., CENTRAL DAYLIGHT TIME.

I. FORMATION OF THE SYNOD

ARTICLE 1

Opening of the Synod

The Synod opened with a Service of Worship led by the Rev. Howard G. Hageman, President, New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

ARTICLE 2

ROLL OF GENERAL SYNOD

President: Dr. Louis Benes, 423 Rosemary, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Vice President: Rev. Albertus G. Bossenbroek, 18 Olinda Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706
General Secretary: Dr. Marion de Velder, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF ALBANY

CLASSIS OF ALBANY

Ministers

Frederick Musson, West Coxsackie, NY 12192
Christian Walvoord, 738 New Scotland Avenue, Albany, NY 12208
William Cameron, 56 Orange Street, Albany, NY 12210

Elders

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Dorothy Geyer, 117 Adams Place, Delmar, NY 12054
Jeannette Schuyler, 47 Amsterdam Avenue, Menands, NY 12204

CLASSIS OF COLUMBIA-GREENE

Ministers

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Warren Fullerton, Box 115, RD#2, Germantown, NY 12526

Elders

William Teetsell, Box 303, Philmont, NY 12565
Wesley Lorenz, Jr., Germantown, NY 12526

CLASSIS OF MONTGOMERY

Ministers

George B. Van Pelt, Jr., 914 Ridgewood Road, Herkimer, NY 13350
Richard Vander Borgh, 18 S. Otsego Street, Mohawk, NY 13407

Elders

Loxie Wood, 3 Huffman Street, Johnstown, NY 12095
Fred Venema, RD#2, Addison, Ontario, Canada

CLASSIS OF ROCHESTER

Ministers

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Robert Ondra, 232 Canandaigua Street, Palmyra, NY 14522

Elders

Buryle Marvin, 337 Lowden Point Road, Rochester, NY 14612
Lewis Mayeu, 38 Maple Avenue, Sodus, NY 14551
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CLASSIS OF SARATOGA

Ministers

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Elders

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Roger Sherman, 91 Pearl Street, Schuylerville, NY 12871

CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY

Ministers

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Elders

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CLASSIS OF SCHOHARIE

Ministers

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Elders

Donald Snyder, Berne, NY 12023

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF CHICAGO

CLASSIS OF CHICAGO

Ministers

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Elders

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Larry Hess, 4001 S. Wesley Avenue, Stickney, IL 60402
Peter Elgersma, 37 E. 141st Street, Riverdale, IL 60627

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Elders

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CLASSIS OF ILLIANA

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David Phillips, 1819 Quaker Street, Pekin, IL 61554

Elders

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Robert Venema, Spring Valley Road, Fulton, IL 61252
John Haverhals, 1634 W. Moss, Peoria, IL 61606

CLASSIS OF WISCONSIN

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Harold Hesselink, 2238 N. 30th Street, Sheboygan, WI 53081
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CLASSIS OF HOLLAND

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Chester Postma, 238 West 15th Street, Holland, MI 49423
Dennis Mulder, 866 West 25th Street, Holland, MI 49423

Elders

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Elsie Lamb, 6383 Richmond Road, RR#2, Hamilton, MI 49419
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Willard Wickers, 267 Central Avenue, Holland, MI 49423

CLASSIS OF KALAMAZOO

Ministers

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John Padgett, R#3, Plainwell, MI 49080

Elders

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Edward Folkersma, 7387 Ravine Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Harold Wiessner, 10823 S. Westnedge, Kalamazoo, MI 49002
Jerold Brown, 2024 Nichols Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

CLASSIS OF LAKE ERIE

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John Staal, Box 57, Rockwood, MI 48173

Elders

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CLASSIS OF MUSKEGON

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John Faas, 1731 Dykstra, Muskegon, MI 49445
Armand Renskers, 301 Washington, Grand Haven, MI 49417

Elders

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Kenneth Deater, 1519 Hansen Street, Muskegon, MI 49445
Gilbert Hoefakker, 1085 E. Larch, Muskegon, MI 49442
Harold Poort, 14707 Leonard Road, Spring Lake, MI 49456

CLASSIS OF NORTH GRAND RAPIDS

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Howard Schipper, 834 Lake Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506
George Brown, 920 Reynard, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Adrian Newhouse, Grant, MI 49327

Elders

Harmon Bosch, 17080 Moon Road, Casnovia, MI 49318
Robert Veenstra, 1949 7th NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Earl Breuklander, 1289 Lancaster, N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Clarence Roersma, 1946 Lake Michigan Drive, N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504

CLASSIS OF ONTARIO

Ministers

Willem Kroon, 617 Hwy. 8, P.O. Box 47, Fruitland, Ontario LoR 1Lo
Peter Yff, 201 Paradise Road North, Hamilton, Ontario I8S 3T3

Elders

William Oosterink, 127 Brock Street, Thamesord, Ontario NoM 2Mo

CLASSIS OF SOUTH GRAND RAPIDS

Ministers

James DeWitt, 7737 Cardinal Drive, Jenison, MI 49428
Wayne Kiel, 6590 Cherry Valley Road, RR#1, Middleville, MI 49333
Leonard Weesies, 7666 Fairlawn Street, Jenison, MI 49428
Peter Muyskens, 3148 Carmel Street, S.W., Grandville, MI 49418
Elton Van Pernis, 4700 Brooklyn S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Elders

Fred Wormmeester, 3554 68th Street, Byron Center, MI 49315
Lambert Idema, 47 76th Street SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49508
Bert Kloet, 9440 Byron Center Road, S.W., Byron Center, MI 49315
Robert Bont, 3350 Barrett Street, S.W., Grandville, MI 49418
Bert Joldersma, 888 Andover Ct. S.E., Kentwood, MI 49508

CLASSIS OF ZEELAND

Ministers

Ronald Geschwendt, 148 E. Central Avenue, Zeeland, MI 49464
Jack Van Heest, A-4714 142nd Avenue, Holland, MI 49423
Gordon Alderink, 439 S. Main Street, Fennville, MI 49408
Folkert Faber, 2340 Riley Street, Jamestown, MI 49427

Elders

Cornelius Kammenga, 6375 36th Avenue, Hudsonville, MI 49426
Donald DeGlopper, 9474 Port Sheldon Street, Zeeland, MI 49464
Lawrence Timmer, 14488 Baldwin Street, West Olive, MI 49460
John DeWitt, 1255 32nd Avenue, Hudsonville, MI 49426

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW JERSEY

CLASSIS OF BERGEN

Ministers

Richard Koerselman, 48 Arthur Street, Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660
Andrew Mouw, Jr., 420 Valley View, Englewood, NJ 07631
Mark C. Hesselink, 245 Larch Avenue, Bogota, NJ 06703

Elders

Gilbert Hunt, 117 Henry Street, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604
Walter Miller, 17-04 Split Rock Road, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410

CLASSIS OF NEWARK

Ministers

Larry G. Suntken, 81 Mount Hebron Road, Upper Montclair, NJ 07093
Charles D. Morris, 10 Bellevue Avenue, Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Elders

James C. Hockley, 49 Lake Drive, Lake Lackawanna, Stanhope, NJ 07874
Lonzy McCarey, Sr., 31 Plum Street, Newark, NJ 07101

CLASSIS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Ministers

William H. Jewett, Box 25, Brielle, NJ 08730
Imre Bertalan, 179 Somerset Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Arthur W. Landon, 62 Hance Avenue, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724
James Dunham, c/o C. A. De Bruin, 210 Main Street, Pella, IA 90219
John P. Muilenberg, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 652, New York, NY 10027

Elders

Fred Horsfall, 55 Parkway Place, Red Bank, NJ 07701
William Howarth, 11 Burton Avenue, South River, NJ 08882
Hazel Rindone, 1424 8th Avenue, Neptune, NJ 07753

CLASSIS OF PALISADES

Ministers

Victor D. Valdes, 819-15th Street, Union City, NJ 07087
Kenneth A. Christman, 113 W. 5th Street, Bayonne, NJ 07002
Derrick W. Bluschke, 9210 Brigadoon (Lackland AFB), San Antonio, TX 78250

Elders

William Gilmour, Jr., 1 Grand Avenue, Rutherford, NJ 07070
Harry Allan, 72 West Eighth Street, Bayonne, NJ 07002

CLASSIS OF PARAMUS

Ministers

David Chen, 303 Prospect Street, Ridgewood, NJ 07450
Arvin Ten Brink, 354 Rock Road, Glen Rock, NJ 07452
Melchior Van Hattem, Jr., 400 Warren Avenue, Hohokus, NJ 07423
Robert Marsh, 535 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland, NJ 07436

Elders

Egbert Van Haften, 14 Taylor Drive, Closter, NJ 97624
Richard Lagerveld, 15 Peters Lane, North Haledon, NJ 07508
Nathaniel Burgess, 367 Oakwood Drive, Wyckoff, NJ 07481
Betty Young, 227 Hamilton Avenue, Glen Rock, NJ 07452

CLASSIS OF PASSAIC

Ministers

Paul Babich, 235 Washington Street, Boonton, NJ 07005
Gordon L. Robinson, 455 Newark Pompton Turnpike, Wayne, NJ 07470
Charles B. Bigelow, 61 Main Street, Little Falls, NJ 07424
Raymond Olthof, 91 Third Avenue, Hawthorne, NJ 07506

Elders

Walter Pruicksma, 84 Greendale Road, Clifton, NJ 07013
Robert Baugh, 44 Fourth Street, Pequannock, NJ 07440
Jacob Vander Meer, 517 Goffle Road, Wyckoff, NJ 07481
Fred Hunt, 78 Ridgewood Road, Clifton, NJ 07012

CLASSIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Ministers

Thomas Bos, 944 Second Street Pike, Richboro, PA 18954
Barry Traver, 552 Seville Street, Philadelphia, PA 19128

Elders

Doris Zell, 155 Maple Avenue, Willow Grove, PA 19090
Ralph Angstadt, 4542 Manayunk Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19128

CLASSIS OF RARITAN

Ministers

Robert C. Engel, 581 Bridgewater Avenue, Somerville, NJ 08876
Thomas Harris, 1445 Millstone Main Street, Somerville, NJ 08876
Gerard J. Koster, Box 98, White House Station, NJ 08889

Elders

Ralph Thomson, P.O. Box 216, Middlebush, NJ 08873
Mildred Dyrsten, Forest Avenue, RD#1, Princeton, NJ 08504
Clara Higgins, RFD#1, Somerset, NJ 08873

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW YORK

CLASSIS OF BROOKLYN

Ministers

Charles Vander Beek, 15 Himrod Street, Brooklyn, NY 11221
Rodwell Morgan, 1062 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233

Elders

Marien LoPreto, 2225 E. 74th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11234
William White, 19½ Stanhope Street, Brooklyn, NY 11221

CLASSIS OF MID-HUDSON

Ministers

Richard L. Brihn, P.O. Box 38, High Falls, NY 12440
James A. Neevel, RD#3, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
Donald C. Healy, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533
Nickolas M. Miles, P.O. Box 206, Bloomington, NY 12411

Elders

Alfred Marks, 10 Bruce Avenue, New Paltz, NY 12561
Joseph L. Petz, P.O. Box 3380, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
William McElveen, 10 Stephanie Lane, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
Harrison Cornish, 242 Broadway, Port Ewen, NY 12466

CLASSIS OF NASSAU-SUFFOLK

Ministers

Gerald L. Vermilyea, 158 Phelps Lane, North Babylon, NY 11703
Peter Markey, 99 Campbell Avenue, Williston Park, NY 11596

Elders

William Van der Haas, 37 Muholland Drive, North Babylon, NY 11703
Robert Small, 317 Foch Boulevard, Mineola, NY 11501

CLASSIS OF NEW YORK

Ministers

Wilfredo Laboy, P.O. Box G, Knickerbocker Station, New York, NY 10002
Roland Ratmeyer, 320 St. Mark's Place, Staten Island, NY 10301
Jack White, 47 Dronningens Gade, Kings Quarter, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, V.I. 00801

Elders

Robert Robinson, 43-25 54th Street, Woodside, NY 11377
Ann Graham, 1599 Haigh Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461
Manuel Traverzo, 750 E. 163rd Street, Bronx, NY 10456

CLASSIS OF ORANGE

Ministers

H. Paul Morehouse, 149 Fletcher Drive North, Newburgh, NY 12550
John Englehard, 190 Canal Street, Ellenville, NY 12428

Elders

John Whittaker, Woodbourne, NY 12788
Judith Johnson, Laurel Terrace, Ellenville, NY 12428

CLASSIS OF QUEENS

Ministers

John Meyer, 39-50 Douglaston Parkway, Douglaston, NY 11363
Leroy Nixon, 56-20 136th Street, Flushing, NY 11355

Elders

Eugene Saylar, 56-34 Bell Boulevard, Bayside, NY 11364
John Tsai, 85-62 66 Road, Rego Park, NY 11374

CLASSIS OF ROCKLAND-WESTCHESTER

Ministers

Robert A. Jones, Chaplain Service, F.D.R. Veterans' Hospital, Montrose, NY 10548
Duane W. Laman, 63 Sherman Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10705
Alan M. Koller, 46 Crescent Place, Yonkers, NY 10704

Elders

William Waldron, 120 North Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960
Edward T. Milligan, 55 Sherman Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10705
Virginia Bowman, North Dogwood Lane, Pomona, NY 10970

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF THE WEST

CLASSIS OF CALIFORNIA

Ministers

Ronald Smith, 30 Falcon Lane, Redlands, CA 92373
Donald L. Weemhoff, 1733 Circle Drive, Redlands, CA 92373
James Beltman, 3520 Mt. Acadia Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92111
Edward Fikse, 3330 E. Prosperity Avenue, Tulare, CA 93274
Vernon Van Der Werff, 3741 Hendrix, Irvine, CA 92714
Richard Huls, 777 West Felicita Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025
Cornelius W. Muyskens, 1827 East Concordia Drive, Tempe, AZ 85281

Elders

Frank Barr, Rt. 8, Box 313D, Tucson, AZ 85730
Peter Karssen, 5923 Woodruff Avenue, Lakewood, CA 90713
Delbert Holden, 4610 Whistler, El Monte, CA 91732
Elisabeth Chadwick, 5321 North 43rd Place, Phoenix, AZ 85018
Gene A. Kooiman, 15413 Elmcroft Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650
Henry Miernsma, 11446 Artesia Boulevard, Artesia, CA 90701
Silas Koopal, 16050 Mountain, Chino, CA 91710

CLASSIS OF CASCADES

Ministers

Julius Brandt, P.O. Box 628, Lynden, WA 98264
Arthur Zeilstra, 6103 148th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5A 1V1

Elders

Lee Kiel, North Park Street, Lynden, WA 98264
Rose Rauch, 3417 2nd Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59404

CLASSIS OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Ministers

Dennis Foemmel, 8152 Twin Oaks Avenue, Citrus Heights, CA 95610
Roger E. Kleinheksel, 3655 Mulholland Way, Sacramento, CA 95821

Elders

Wilbur Wink, 5307 Ronnie Lane, Fair Oaks, CA 95628
Bob Houghtaling, 2441 Tyrolean Way, Sacramento, CA 95821

CLASSIS OF DAKOTA

Ministers

Eugene De Hoogh, 800 Annway Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
William Fennema, Box 64, Harrison, SD 57344
David Hensley, 422 8th Street, Brookings, SD 57006

Elders

John Westra, Centerville, SD 57014
Harvey Kluvers, Litchville, ND 58461
Harold Hamaker, 1325 Palmer Place, Mitchell, SD 57301

CLASSIS OF EAST SIOUX

Ministers

Louis Benes, Jr., 615 Washington Avenue, Sheldon, IA 51201
Sylvio J. Scorza, 520 Second Street S.W., Orange City, IA 51041
Henry Vermeer, Hospers, IA 51238

Elders

Howard Hop, 607 Albany Avenue, N.E., Orange City, IA 51041
Gerard Kalsbeek, 313 4th Street, Orange City, IA 51041
Paul Muyskens, 519 Concord Avenue, N.E., Orange City, IA 51041

CLASSIS OF MINNESOTA

Ministers

Leon Draayer, Box 54, Woodstock, MN 56186
Donald Baker, Box 171, Chandler, MN 56122
Cornie Keunen, 10313 Nicollet Avenue, S., Bloomington, MN 55420
Harvey Hoekstra, 17436 Caminito Siega, San Diego, CA 92127

Elders

Clarence Schut, 7536 Douglas Drive, Brooklyn Park, MN 55433
Kenneth Koenen, Maynard, MN 56260
Roy Vos, Rte. 2, Box 65, Slayton, MN 56172

CLASSIS OF PELLA

Ministers

James W. Van Hoeven, 406 Main Street, Pella, IA 50219
John C. Frey, 815 Second Avenue, East, Oskaloosa, IA 52577
Wayne M. Hall, 500 Franklin Street, Pella, IA 50219

Elders

David Jabaai, RR#1, Prairie City, IA 50228
Lloyd Van Zante, RR#4, Pella, IA 50219
Virgil Grandia, RR#2, Oskaloosa, IA 52577

CLASSIS OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE

Ministers

James E. Rozendaal, Aplington, IA 50604
Edward Jurgens, Allison, IA 50602
Ralph G. Ten Clay, 640 Homeacres, Evansdale, IA 50707

Elders

Wubbo Viet, Dumont, IA 50625
Ray Vander Wiel, 6040 Crestridge Drive S.W., Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
Junior Barkema, Meservey, IA 50457

CLASSIS OF WEST CENTRAL

Ministers

Kenneth Hartgerink, Box 295, Firth, NE 68358
Luther Ratmeyer, 12320 Oak Street, Omaha, NE 68144

Elders

Roland Beach, Box 158, Firth, NE 68358
Phillip Narcomey, Box 103, Rte. 1, Elgin, OK 73538

CLASSIS OF WEST SIOUX

Ministers

Harold Kammeraad, Little Rock, IA 51243
John Ekema, RR1, Orange City, IA 51041
Raymond Denekas, Inwood, IA 51240
Roger Voskuil, 1505 16th Street, Rock Valley, IA 51247

Elders

Henry Van Aalsburg, 811 Pleasant Street, Boyden, IA 51234
Marvin Hoogeveen, Larchwood, IA 51241
Pierce Jansma, Maurice, IA 51036
Kenneth Mallory, Winnebago, NE 68071

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Hugh A. Koops
Vernon H. Kooy

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Richard C. Oudersluys
M. Eugene Osterhaven

CORRESPONDING DELEGATES

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL
Bruce Neckers
Henrietta Van Wyhe

CENTRAL COLLEGE
Kenneth Weller

HOPE COLLEGE
Gordon Van Wylen

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

THE CHURCH HERALD
John Stapert

CHAPLAINS' COMMISSION
Carl Benes
Derrick Bluschke

REFORMED CHURCH WOMEN
Sebia Gunnink
Nancy Phillips

CENTRAL COLLEGE
(students)
Cheryl Riphagen
Kieth Meendering

HOPE COLLEGE
(students)
Gary Voshol
Stephen Hoogerwerf

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE
(students)
Barbara Weiss
David W. Clover

NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
(students)
Jan Hoffman
Connie Longhurst

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
(students)
Paul Bach
Cleo Ludwick

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF ALBANY

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF CHICAGO
William J. Bouwer

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF MICHIGAN
Paul Vande Hoef

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW JERSEY
William Jewett

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF NEW YORK
Milton R. Ortquist

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF THE WEST
Samuel Williams

BLACK COUNCIL
Sara Smith

AMERICAN INDIAN COUNCIL
Robert Chaat

HISPANIC COUNCIL
Hector Seda

DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES
Dr. John Bratt
Rev. B. J. Haan
Christian Reformed Church, United States

Bishop Sundar Clarke
Miss Christy Rajabai John
Church of South India, Diocese of Madras

Rev. Dick Karres
Netherlands Reformed Church, The Netherlands

Rev. Exeario Sosa
Union Evangelica Pentecostal Venezolana, Venezuela

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL MISSIONARIES

Joyce Dunham
Mary Flaherty
Theodore Flaherty
Carolyn Folmsbee
Glenn Folmsbee
Alfred Pennings
Margaret Pennings
Arlene Schuiteman
Laverne Sikkema
Lorraine Sikkema

HOST COMMITTEE

Elmer H. Vermeer
Wesley Kiel
Thurman Rynbrandt
Darrel Rensink
Charles Irwin
Werna Ver Mulm
Donna Vonk
Donna Boone
Ross K. Vernon
Robert Vermeer
Gary Te Stroete
Gerald Den Herder

WORSHIP LEADERS

Kenneth Weller
Virgil Rowenhorst
Gordon Van Wylen
Howard Hageman
I. John Hesselink

ARTICLE 3

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Reverend Albertus G. Bossenbroek, Executive Secretary of the Particular Synod of New York, was elected President. Reverend Harvey T. Hoekstra, missionary to Ethiopia, was elected Vice President.

The President appointed as Tellers:

James Beltman	Dennis Foemmel
James Beukelman	David Hensley
Thomas Bos	Charles Morris
Warren Bovenkerk	Dennis Mulder
Leon Draayer	Barry Traver

The Tellers were Elected as Temporary Clerks.

ARTICLE 4

READING OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the Sessions of 1976 were read by title.

II. ACTS OF THE SYNOD

ARTICLE 1

RULES OF ORDER

The Rules of Order were read by title, and copies were placed on the President's Table.

The schedule, as printed in the Workbook for the sessions of the General Synod, was approved.

The hours of meeting and adjournment were fixed.

The limits of the house were designated.

The list of Review Committees as printed in the Workbook was approved.

ARTICLE 2

REVIEW COMMITTEES

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

Chairperson: Larry G. Suntken (Newark)
Vice Chairperson: Mark C. Hesselink (Bergen)

Ministers	*Elders*
Stuart J. Blauw (Illiana)	Roland F. Beach (West Central)
Robert deForest (Schenectady)	Orval Davis (Illinois)
Eugene R. DeHoogh (Dakota)	Mildred Dyrsten (Raritan)
James DeWitt (South Grand Rapids)	Peter Elgersma (Chicago)
Arnold E. Dykhuizen (Wisconsin)	William Gilmour (Palisades)
Bernard Ekema (Kalamazoo)	James C. Hockley (Newark)
Folkert Faber (Zeeland)	David Jabaai (Pella)
Edward Fikse (California)	Gerard Kalsbeek (East Sioux)
Kenneth Hartgerink (West Central)	Bert Kloet (South Grand Rapids)
Donald C. Healy (Mid-Hudson)	Kenneth F. Koenen (Minnesota)
Cornie D. Keunen (Minnesota)	Wesley Lorenz, Jr. (Columbia-Greene)
Wayne Kiel (South Grand Rapids)	Lonzy McCarey, Sr. (Newark)
Roger E. Kleinheksel (Central California)	Henry Miersma (California)
Duane W. Laman (Rockland-Westchester)	Walter N. Pruiksma (Passaic)
Nickolas M. Miles (Mid-Hudson)	Rose Rauch (Cascades)
Rodwell Morgan (Brooklyn)	Roger E. Sherman (Saratoga)
Peter Muyskens (South Grand Rapids)	Lawrence Timmer (Zeeland)
Roland Ratmeyer (New York)	Manuel Traverzo (New York)
Howard Schipper (North Grand Rapids)	Henry Van Aalsburg (West Sioux)
John Staal (Lake Erie)	Lloyd Van Zante (Pella)
Victor Valdes (Palisades)	Roy W. Vos (Minnesota)
Jack Van Heest (Zeeland)	Richard B. Worden (Rochester)
Gary Van Koevering (Muskegon)	Betty Young (Paramus)
Robert J. Van Zyl (Muskegon)	Doris Zell (Philadelphia)
Arthur Zeilstra (Cascades)	

BOARD OF PENSIONS

Chairperson: Christian H. Walvoord (Albany)
Vice Chairperson: Gerard Koster (Raritan)

Ministers

Gordon Alderink (Zeeland)
Paul Babich (Passaic)
James E. Beltman (California)
Leon D. Draayer (Minnesota)
John Ekema (West Sioux)
Henry C. Elgersma (Chicago)
Warren Fullerton (Columbia-Greene)
Ray Olthof (Passaic)
James E. Rozendaal (Pleasant Prairie)

Elders

Harmon Bosch (North Grand Rapids)
Kenneth R. Deater (Muskegon)
Dorothy Geyer (Albany)
Delbert E. Holden (California)
William Howarth (New Brunswick)
Eli Kolste (Wisconsin)
Gene A. Kooiman (California)
Silas Koopal (California)
Buryle Marvin (Rochester)
Clarence B. Schut (Minnesota)
William Teetsel (Columbia-Greene)
Ray Vander Wiel (Pleasant Prairie)
Egbert Van Haaften (Paramus)
Carlton Van Schaick (Schenectady)
Robert Veenstra (North Grand Rapids)
John G. Whittaker (Orange)

HIGHER EDUCATION

Chairperson: John Meyer (Queens)
Vice Chairperson: John Buteyn, Jr. (Rochester)

Ministers

Louis Benes, Jr. (East Sioux)
Harvey Hoekstra (Minnesota)
Edward Jurgens (Pleasant Prairie)
Vernon Kooy (New Brunswick)
Frederick H. Musson (Albany)
Armand Renskers (Muskegon)
David Phillips (Illinois)
Ronald Smith (California)
Elton Van Pernis (South Grand Rapids)

Elders

Ralph Angstadt (Philadelphia)
Robert Baugh (Passaic)
Virginia Bowman (Rockland-Westchester)
Elisabeth Chadwick (California)
Marvin Hoogeveen (West Sioux)
Peter M. Karssen (California)
Alfred Marks (Mid-Hudson)
Herbert Schaible (Schenectady)
Dale R. Schoon (Illiana)
Gordon Tenpas (Wisconsin)
Wubbo Viet (Pleasant Prairie)
Willard C. Wichers (Holland)

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Chairperson: Herman J. Ridder (North Grand Rapids)
Vice Chairperson: James Van Hoeven (Pella)

Ministers

Derrick W. Bluschke (Palisades)
David Chen (Paramus)
James Dunham (New Brunswick)
William Fennema (Dakota)

Elders

Harry Allan (Palisades)
Gordon Berkompas (Holland)
Robert Bont (South Grand Rapids)
Earl Breuklander (North Grand Rapids)

Harold Hesselink (Wisconsin)
Wilfredo Laboy (New York)
Arthur W. Landon (New Brunswick)
Sanford B. Morgan (Kalamazoo)
Andrew Mouw, Jr. (Bergen)
John Muilenberg (New Brunswick)
Dennis L. Mulder (Holland)
Robert Ondra (Rochester)
Leroy Nixon (Queens)
M. Eugene Osterhaven (Western Seminary)
Barry Traver (Philadelphia)
Richard Vander Borgh (Montgomery)
Donald Weemhoff (California)
Howard Broadway (Wisconsin)
Donald DeGlopper (Zeeland)
Edward Folkersma (Kalamazoo)
Ellen Frifeldt (Muskegon)
Howard Hamaker (Dakota)
Lawrence E. Hess (Chicago)
Robert V. Houghtaling (Central California)
Pierce Jansma (West Sioux)
Richard B. Lagerveld (Paramus)
William C. MacElveen (Mid-Hudson)
Lewis J. Mayeu (Rochester)
Robert S. Megow (Florida)
Willie Nevills (Illiana)
Joseph L. Petz (Mid-Hudson)
H. Harold Poort (Muskegon)
Arch E. Sayler (Queens)
Robert C. Small (Nassau-Suffolk)
Donald B. Snyder (Schoharie)
John A. Spoolstra (Florida)
William J. van der Haas (Nassau-Suffolk)
Fetze Venema (Montgomery)
Loxie L. Wood (Montgomery)

OVERTURES

Chairperson: Leonard Weessies (South Grand Rapids)
Vice Chairperson: John J. Faas (Muskegon)

Paul E. Ammerman (Saratoga)
Warren Bovenkerk (Illinois)
Julius Brandt (Cascades)
Richard L. Brihn (Mid-Hudson)
Raymond D. Denekas (West Sioux)
Robert Engel (Raritan)
John C. Engelhard (Orange)
Ronald Geschwendt (Zeeland)
Wayne M. Hall (Pella)
Thomas Harris (Raritan)
Robert Hoffman (Schoharie)
William H. Jewett (New Brunswick)
Robert A. Jones (Rockland-Westchester)
Norman J. Kansfield (Chicago)
Hugh A. Koops (New Brunswick Seminary)
Charles D. Morris (Newark)
Donald Nienhuis (Florida)
Gordon L. Robinson (Passaic)
Arthur Scheid (Wisconsin)
Gerald E. Shibley (Montgomery)
Arvin Ten Brink (Paramus)
Ralph G. Ten Clay (Pleasant Prairie)
Paul Bach (Western Theological Seminary Student)
Jerold Brown (Kalamazoo)
Nathaniel D. Burgess (Paramus)
John P. Dewitt (Zeeland)
Margaret Dickson (Schenectady)
Clara J. Higgins (Raritan)
Fred Horsfall (New Brunswick)
Gilbert A. Hunt (Bergen)
Judith M. Johnson (Orange)
Bert Joldersma (South Grand Rapids)
Harvey Kluvers (Dakota)
Marien Lo Preto (Brooklyn)
Cleo Ludwick (Western Theological Seminary Student)
Phillip Narcomey (West Central)
William Oosterink (Ontario)
Walter E. Parker (Lake Erie)
Hazel Rindone (New Brunswick)
Clarence Roersma (North Grand Rapids)
William E. Rollins (Schenectady)
Richard Scheffers (Illiana)
Ralph W. Thompson (Raritan)

Richard Vander Kolk (Holland)
Vernon R. Van Der Werff (California)
Glenn Van Oort (Saratoga)
George B. Van Pelt, Jr. (Montgomery)
Henry Vermeer (East Sioux)
Jack White (New York)
Peter Yff (Ontario)
Fred Wormmeester (South Grand Rapids)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chairperson: James A. Neevel (Mid-Hudson)
Vice Chairperson: Melchor H. Van Hattem (Paramus)

Ministers

Thomas Bos (Philadelphia)
William Cameron (Albany)
Rodger H. Dalman (Illiana)
John C. Frey (Pella)
David M. Hensley (Dakota)
John F. Padgett (Kalamazoo)
Kenneth E. Reynen (Holland)
Donald P. Troost (Schenectady)
Roger Voskuil (West Sioux)

Elders

Frank T. Barr (California)
Harold Bauer (Albany)
Milton Boersma (Chicago)
Pete Chester (Kalamazoo)
Howard Hop (East Sioux)
Fred Hunt (Passaic)
Lambert Idema (South Grand Rapids)
William S. Waldron (Rockland-Westchester)
William White (Brooklyn)

BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Chairperson: H. Paul Morehouse (Orange)
Vice Chairperson: Russell F. Pater (Rochester)

Ministers

Larry Arends (Muskegon)
Donald Baker (Minnesota)
Imre G. Bertalan (New Brunswick)
James Beukelman (Schenectady)
George Brown, Jr. (North Grand Rapids)
Dennis P. Foemmel (Central California)
Richard Huls (California)
Larry Izenbart (Wisconsin)
Alan Koller (Rockland-Westchester)
Will Kroon (Ontario)
Donald Lohman (Florida)
Robert Marsh (Paramus)
Cornelius W. Muyskens (California)
Richard C. Oudersluys (Western Seminary)
Chester Postma (Holland)
Charles Vander Beek (Brooklyn)
Richard M. Vander Voet (Chicago)
Albert Van Dyke (Chicago)
Richard D. Veenstra (Illiana)
Gerald Vermilyea (Nassau-Suffolk)
Moody B. W. Yap (Lake Erie)

Elders

Junior Barkema (Pleasant Prairie)
John Haverhals (Illinois)
Gilbert Hoefakker (Muskegon)
Cornelius Kammenga (Zeeland)
Kenneth Mallory (West Sioux)
Clarence Meeusen (Wisconsin)
Edward T. Milligan (Rockland-Westchester)
Paul Muyskens (East Sioux)
Robert W. Robinson (New York)
Jeannette Schuyler (Albany)
Jacob Vander Meer (Passaic)
William H. Wakefield (Saratoga)
Harold Wiessner (Kalamazoo)

RESOLUTIONS

Chairperson: Richard H. Koerselman (Bergen)
Vice Chairperson: Donald T. Van Hoeven (Kalamazoo)

Ministers

Johannes Bekkering (Schenectady)
Charles B. Bigelow (Passaic)
Peter Markey (Nassau-Suffolk)
Adrian Newhouse (North Grand Rapids)
Luther Ratmeyer (West Central)
Sylvio Scorza (East Sioux)
Donald Van Hoeven (Kalamazoo)

Elders

Harrison Cornish (Mid-Hudson)
Marvin Dobben (Holland)
Ann Graham (New York)
Virgil Grandia (Pella)
Lee Kiel (Cascades)
Walter Miller (Bergen)
Vernon Mustard (Muskegon)
Niel Stam (Illiana)
John Westra (Dakota)

NOMINATIONS

Ministers

Kenneth Christman (Palisades)
Harold Kammeraad (West Sioux)
M. Earl Van Leeuwen (Columbia-Greene)

Elders

Elsie Lamb (Holland)
John Tsai (Queens)
Robert Venema (Illinois)
Wilbur Wink (Central California)

ARTICLE 3

COMMUNICATIONS

All communications received by the General Secretary for General Synod were referred to appropriate Review Committees for action.

ARTICLE 4

STATE OF RELIGION

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 1977

It is a very high privilege to serve as the president of the General Synod, and I am grateful and want to express my appreciation for the opportunities of this rewarding experience. I have, during the year, visited in a number of areas in our denomination and have made a special point of attending the meetings of many of the boards and committees of the church, to gain insights into how these come to affect the life and work of the church.

Heading the list of these visits, because of the many contacts made in them, are attendance at the Furloughing Missionary Conference at Slippery Rock, PA; the Men's Convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; the Church Growth workshops in Somerville, New Jersey; and in Greenville and Warwick in New York; and the Women's Triennial in Minneapolis. Through a number of other contacts, and my visits and travels and preaching throughout this denomination, first as a pastor for 15 years, and then as editor of the *Church Herald* for almost 30 years, I have kept aware of the life and pulse, the joys and heartbreaks in this church. I speak as one who loves his church and who believes in a future of growth and witness for her, in the providence of God. I believe that God has provided us with some unique distinctives for meeting the needs of our world today.

An Opportunity To Grow

This is a day of great opportunity for the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not remember a time in my ministry when there was such an evident thirst for meaning in life, for inner peace, for relief from the superficialities and turmoil of a frantic existence, for salvation from the sins that beset us, and even for the discipline that the Christian life calls for. I cannot believe that ours is, as some have described it, a "post-Christian era." The true "Christian era" has never been. No, today is the day of salvation, the acceptable time. Millions of people, groping in their lostness and confusion, are open to the Gospel.

A goodly proportion of our citizens have experienced the grace of God, and are witnessing to Christ's life-changing power. George Gallup tells us that one person in three in the United States, some 34 per cent, claim to have had a "born again" experience. This same emphasis is apparently felt in Canada as well. The United States has elected a president who has openly declared his spiritual rebirth and his continuing commitment to the Scriptures and to the opportunities for service in his own church. The popularity of the sects and isms, and the search for answers in the oriental religions reveal that ours is a time of spiritual hunger and that people are groping for the truth that will give them peace and meaning. Is it possible that they have missed the Good News, the

supernatural message and the supernatural quality of life that Christ brings into being, in our main line churches, and even in our own Reformed Church?

The Reformed Church in America has been on this continent since 1628. God willing, we will next year celebrate our 350th anniversary, and special plans are being made to designate Sunday, April 9, to celebrate this anniversary. Our roots are here. No other church on this continent has had as long and continuous a ministry here as we have. We are not always happy that we have remained so few in numbers, but we have an opportunity now, in our Church Growth program, to give ourselves in a new obedience to the Great Commission of our Lord, beginning in our own Jerusalem, right where each of us lives.

I believe our church has much to offer the people living around us. We claim to be a church reformed according to the Word of God. Our creeds, based on Scripture, are rooted in Christian history and deal with fundamental doctrines of the faith. They avoid, I believe, some of the theological hobbies and peculiarities which are the focus of some more recent church groups, and which detract from the centralities of the Gospel. If we remember who we are, and what our faith is, we may see more clearly what we are to do, and how to do it.

With all this high emphasis upon the centralities of the Christian faith, we have remained free from the hierarchism of some other denominations. Our church is not controlled from the top down, but has considerable freedom at the local congregational level. Some consider this characteristic a limitation. It has also its strengths, if we can maintain a unity in the doctrines we profess. New people coming into our denomination do not feel that they are being forced into a strait jacket or peculiar pattern of church life. Our congregations, living in a pluralistic society have, within the structure of our creeds and our *Book of Church Order*, great freedom to be themselves and to express their faith and life in their own situations. We do have the answer for the awful disillusionment of millions of people looking for a church which unequivocally and unashamedly proclaims the centralities of the Christian faith, and where they, at the same time, will be accepted, loved and cared for in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. We need to let our light shine.

As I have visited through the church in this and previous years, I have become aware of the multitudes of able and committed lay people—men and women—with many gifts of the Spirit serving often unnoticed but I trust not unrewarded, using their gifts to serve their church and their community. Their competence, dedication and enthusiasm was particularly evident to me at the Men's Convention in Sioux Falls and the Women's Triennial in Minneapolis. God has blessed us with thousands of lay people who love our Reformed Church and are loyal to it, and sacrificially so. At these gatherings, and in other meetings, I have noted a growing unity in our church, and I pray that this may increase.

I shall not deal at length with the work of the various councils, boards and agencies of our church, because these will be coming to you either directly or through the several review committees. I do want, however, to comment on what I consider the high level of excellence of those who serve our denomination. I am thankful to God for the leadership in our seminaries and our colleges and I believe the church needs to recognize and support such leadership. The presidents of these institutions will lead our worship services this week. I want to express appreciation for the sixteen years of dedicated leadership given by Dr. Marion de Velder as the general secretary of our denomination, and to rejoice in the choice of the Reverend Arie Brouwer as the nominee to succeed

him. This General Synod will share in a special time of remembrance and thanks to God for Dr. de Velder's service to the Reformed Church. We thank God for competent and consecrated leadership in many areas of our denominational life.

The statistical report for this year tells the story of our continuing problem the last few years, with the exception of last year. This year's loss in membership is quite small, but it is not the gain we would like to see. It does not help much to say that many of the other main line denominations have suffered much greater losses in recent years. We need to deal with our own situation, and to ask why we have not been more effective evangelists, people who attract the unconverted to Christ and the church, people who welcome the stranger to our hearts and homes. In spite of all our talk about evangelism, many of us have not broken out of our comfortable shell, we have not yet understood what it means for us personally to reach out to win the lost for Christ. We stand on the threshold of a new Church Growth opportunity in every congregation. Are we ready to pay the price, not only in dollars, but first of all in the vision, in attitudes, and in the will to grow? Or are we content to lose members, year after year? The question will be decided, as most questions are, not here but back home in your own congregations.

It is, of course, not enough to desire church growth just for ourselves, for our own self-preservation, our own survival. We must have a holy passion to "make disciples," to lift people out of the non-Christian world and into a living relationship with Jesus Chirst in order that they may become responsible members of the family of God. It is, of course, much easier to stay turned inwards on ourselves, to minister to the nice people already inside; easier, less hazardous, and more comfortable. For every congregation to become strongly evangelistic, as some congregations on this continent are, will call for some dynamic changes in priorities and attitudes.

"God wills His church to grow" is the reiterated motto of the Church Growth movement. A look at the Book of Acts reminds us that a Spirit-filled church, nurtured with faithfulness to the apostles' doctrine, in a living fellowship, and participating in the sacrament and a dynamic prayer life, did grow; from 120 to 3,000, and then to 5,000, with multitudes in addition. In Acts 6:7 we read that "the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem." They were linked together, the Word of God and the multiplication of disciples. I would not plead for any particular school of thought or philosophy with regard to church growth, since one or another can be faulted here or there. But I am reminded of Dwight L. Moody who, when criticized by someone for his method of evangelism, asked the critic what his method was. And when the critic replied that he didn't do it at all, Moody answered, "I like my way of doing it better than your way of not doing it." Let me, in addition, comment that I believe we could do much more than we are presently doing to follow up on our church members who move to new communities, and encourage them to join Reformed churches in those communities, or other churches if no Reformed churches are located there. We do have a responsibility to our mobile members, to other churches within our fellowship, and to our Lord, to fulfill this pastoral responsibility.

I, therefore, recommend that this General Synod, remembering our Lord's command to "go and make disciples," urge every congregation to enlist actively in this task of evangelism to the end that the Church of Jesus Christ may grow among us also.

Church Growth Fund Drive

The Reformed Church Growth Fund, officially launched on March 27, is the logical sequel and counterpart to Church Growth. If we are really concerned for church growth in our own congregations, we will be equally concerned for church growth beyond our congregations, in new communities, and around the world. We reach our own communities through personal evangelism, and those a distance away through our stewardship. The General Program Council has therefore set before us the goal of $5,000,000 for a Church Growth Fund Drive, for strengthening some of our congregations in their witness, for enabling others to reach out, and for establishing new congregations where none presently exist.

A very helpful brochure published by the General Program Council reminds us that "at several points throughout its long history, the Reformed Church has stood poised for growth–but each time, for a variety of reasons, the opportunity has been lost. We are living with the results of those lost opportunities today. There are many who feel that God is now giving us another chance . . . there is no question that we have the resources. Even the poorest among us is rich beyond the dreams of the majority of people in the world. What do we know of hunger, of insufficient clothing, of starvation wages? So we are talking not of resources, but of priorities. Where will we place the future of the Reformed Church in our personal priority lists?" Most of us–let me say almost all of us–have money for other causes, especially for our own comforts and luxuries. Let me not even begin to count them up. Who among us can really talk of "sacrifice," or of carrying a cross after our Lord and for his sake?

Henry Steele Commanger, noted American historian, commenting last year on the galaxy of statesmen at the birth of our nation, men of unusual qualities not alone, but who were willing to lay down their lives on the line for their country, and who verily did so, asks why today, with 200 million people, we have nothing to show that is comparable to this record. Then he answers, in a sentence that should speak to our consciences as church people as well as our consciences as citizens: "The generation of our founding fathers exalted public enterprise and devoted their lives and their fortunes and their sacred wealth to a common good; we tend to exalt private enterprise and devote our lives to private gain." Does our private wealth sometimes–or most often–take precedence over the common good?

> I, therefore, recommend that this General Synod call upon all of our congregations, and upon our total membership, to contribute seriously and sacrificially to the Church Growth Fund Drive, in order that God's will for His church may be more fully realized.

More Overseas Missions

I would also like to call our Reformed Church to a renewed and enlarged commitment to our overseas Christian witness. We have a very unique and significant heritage in missionary endeavor. We ought not to forget, not for the sake of pride, but for the sake of the future, that our missionaries were among the first to go out in what may be called the modern missionary era. Dr. John Scudder went out to India in 1819, and David Abeel founded the Amoy mission in China in 1842. Missionaries Brown and Berbeck began work in Japan in 1859. Zwemer and Cantine went out to Arabia in 1889, and Swart and Hoekstra to the Sudan in 1948. But something seems to be happening to that earlier missionary enthusiasm. Our light overseas is growing dimmer. Our missionary personnel

overseas and in Mexico has been reduced from 160 in 1952 to 87 today. Thirteen positions are presently vacant. It is true, of course, that inflationary costs of overseas witness have spiraled through these years, from $982,918 to $1,707,910, but so have our incomes at home. How shall we explain this almost 50 per cent reduction in missionary personnel in 25 years? Have we lost our former missionary passion, our zeal for the extension of Christ's kingdom abroad? Have we lost our nerve and our willingness to engage in new enterprises? Shall we say that the task is finished? Surely, it is not.

Other main line denominations have also reduced their missionary forces, trimming their missionary work, but the total number of North American Protestant missionaries abroad, according to World Vision's latest handbook, stands at 36,950, an all-time high, some 3,000 more than three years ago. The truth is that a number of our own Reformed Church young people are serving under other missionary boards, and being partially, if not largely, supported by the congregations from which they come. We have as a denomination failed to enlist them in our own work.

How has this all happened? One reason for this, I believe, is that we have lost the specific structures that gave priority to overseas mission. Most missionary organizations were initiated, not by denominational decisions, but by the stimulation of a core of committed people convinced of the need for greater obedience to the Great Commission of our Lord. These later, in our and other denominations, became part of the denominational structure, with a separate identity. This happened, in our own church, in the case of the Arabian Mission which was originated independently by a group of Christians believing in that cause. Then, later, it was merged with our own Board of Foreign Missions. In time, budgets were unified, and through restructuring the Foreign Mission Board was restructured out of existence. It lost its separate identity, its opportunity to make any special appeal, and became just one small part of the whole denominational program. The same thing happened in a number of other main line denominations. It happened, also, on the ecumenical scene, when the International Missionary Council was merged into the World Council of Churches, and lost its separate identity. The result, in the World Council of Churches, has been a declining interest in evangelism and world missions there, an interest that gives some hope of returning at the present time. What we need, everywhere in the churches, are powerful committees or clusters of persons who will take it upon themselves to promote overseas transcultural missions today.

The world mission of the church, given us by our Lord, is still largely unfinished. Millions of people are still without the knowledge of or the experience of salvation in Jesus Christ. Bishop Stephen Neill, in his recent book *Salvation Tomorrow*, writes of the unreached peoples of the world. He tells of a careful investigation in West Africa "which brought to light a people a million strong in the former French colony of Dahomey, and an even larger people in the Upper Volta region among whom (though there were some Christian centers) the great majority of the population were without any opportunity of hearing the name of Christ." A rapid survey of the available data suggests, he says, "that there may be in Africa, south of the Sahara, about a hundred areas (varying in population from 10,000 to 2,000,000 people) in which, so far, no continuous witness for Christ has ever been undertaken." He then asks, "Are the resources of the Christian world inadequate for the work of entering into all these areas in the course of the next twenty years?" I firmly believe that nothing, and I include the national churches in some countries only partly evangelized, nothing

should stand in the way of our obedience to the Great Commission, until the Gospel has been preached to every man and woman in the world. We may need to find new ways to carry forward this task, but all people everywhere must have an opportunity to hear the Gospel, to believe in Christ, and to become his disciples.

> I, therefore, urge this General Synod to take steps to reverse our decline in overseas missionary witness, and to encourage the General Program Council to begin a transcultural evangelistic witness, in addition to the proposed new fields in the Growth Fund Drive, in at least two other unevangelized or inadequately evangelized areas overseas or in Mexico.

Ordination of Women

One of the overtures before this Synod calls for making such changes in the *Book of Church Order* as will open the door to the ordination of women to the ministry. This has been before the church for five successive years now. The last two years the vote of the classes stood at 29 classes for, 15 opposed, and one tie. Thirty classis votes are necessary for passage. That is, 64.4 per cent of the classes voted for the change in the *Book of Church Order* to permit such ordination; only 35.6 per cent were opposed. Yet the constitutional requirement of a two-thirds vote was not achieved.

This issue, as we all know, has been a point of tension within our denomination. This tension, we were reminded by last year's president Bert Van Soest, "comes from sincere differences in interpretation of the Scriptures. Biblical scholarship can be proposed for or against the right of women to be ministers of the Word. How are we to be guided in such a situation?" The only way, as I see it, is by continuing to search out all that the Scriptures have to say on this subject, and to pray sincerely for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us, even though we have differing interpretations, continue to accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, believing that our unity in Him supersedes our differences in the understanding of his Word. And let us resolve as churches and as classes "to cooperate with the majority decision and await the test of time."

The overture before us calls for resubmitting this proposed change to the classes again this year. The Overtures Committee will wrestle with this proposal, and come with a recommendation. My hope would be that we could wait a year before resubmission. I want, just now, to quote from a letter from the officers of this year's General Synod, of which I happened to be the author, and a co-signer. I believe that it still speaks to our present situation. "Some people will say that it (this proposed change) is unnecessary, because the present wording of 'persons' (in the *Book of Church Order*) clearly included women. The General Synod has, however, by its repeated recommendation of this proposed change in wording to the classes for their adoption indicated that it recognized that the traditional interpretation of this wording included men only, and that, for the sake of clarity and good order, the orderly process of amendment to the *Book of Church Order* should be followed in this matter. The General Synod also, at the same time, recognized by its action (submitting the matter to the classes for a vote on at least five successive years) the very unusual situation existing in the *Book of Church Order* at the present time, in which, for instance, while the office of minister of the Word is closed to women, the offices of elder and deacon are open to them, and in which women may now, as ordained elders, administer the sacraments. This appears to be a very illogical and inconsistent position, and one that calls for resolution in one way or another." I, and I hope

all of us, are greatly concerned for good order and due process in the life of our church. I believe that if changes are to be made in the life and practice of our church, these should be made according to long accepted procedures spelled out in the *Book of Church Order.* God has placed us together in the life of this church, and we need to do our work for him carefully, honorably, prayerfully, and in accordance with His revealed Word. We need to meet this issue with proper consideration for one another, as members together in the part of the body of Christ. We owe one another, and above all, our Lord, the sincere consideration of one another's viewpoints, and the orderly solution of our differences, without compromising our own convictions. Let us, above all, seek to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Let us pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we deal with this issue.

San Dimas Notes

Overtures before this General Synod from the Classis of Illinois and the Synod of Michigan call our attention to the plight of the Valley Community Church of San Dimas, California, which finds itself unable to repay its present indebtedness in full. I can understand the loss and frustration and pain experienced by the noteholders who are calling for full repayment, many of whom have invested large sums of money in this church. I am burdened by the fact that some of these noteholders, particularly those older in years, could not afford to lose the funds they had saved for their declining years, and my heart goes out in sympathy and concern for them. We are concerned for all people in financial need, but feel this concern especially when such need is due to the inability of a Christian congregation to repay the debts it has incurred.

It is my opinion, as well as that of others, that all responsibility, both legal and moral, for repayment to the noteholders rests with the Valley Community Church of San Dimas and/or the Association for Inspirational Living. This opinion is based upon previous legal opinions and rulings given to the Reformed Church in America (see *Minutes of General Synod*, 1965, pages 162-165). As a General Synod we cannot control nor do we have responsibility for the financial obligations of a local congregation. In short, this is a matter between a local congregation and its creditors; there is no legal or moral responsibility of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America regarding the repayment of these notes to the noteholders. The General Synod was not responsible for creating this problem. It is not a debt of the church at large.

The Church of Jesus Christ does, however, have a responsibility to assist all those who are in need, and especially those within its own membership, and who have been hurt by the actions of a local congregation of Christians. You will remember how the Apostle Paul spent many hours and made substantial efforts to collect "contributions for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem," and how there are repeated admonitions in Scripture to give assistance to the poor. The New Testament Church early distributed their goods to any who had need, and the first deacons were chosen to see that the Hellenist widows were not neglected in the daily distribution (Romans 15:26, Galatians 2:10, Acts 6:1-7).

I am, therefore, proposing that the General Synod set up a special Christian relief program to assist those noteholders who near to or in their retirement years find themselves in desperate financial straits. We have assisted many other people in economic distress, whether in Guatemala or Bangladesh or Honduras or elsewhere. Why not also in Kalamazoo or Albany, South Holland or Pella? The Reformed Church last year collected and distributed generous funds to

relief and reconstruction projects in various countries around the world. I believe that we could and would extend ourselves generously also, if called upon to relieve the distress of the needy among our membership. A structure would be necessary, perhaps based on the local diaconate, and coordinated through the classes, particular synods and the General Synod, in order to discover, screen and assist those who are in genuine need. Factors which should be taken into consideration would include, among other things, the total resources of the investor, the percentage of total assets invested, the proven physical need, the earning power of the family and its ability to recover, and the resources available for assistance. Congregations should first provide assistance to their own members in need, and then contribute to this Christian relief program for those in other congregations unable to give adequate aid to all of their members in this need.

In all of this, I want to emphasize that this proposal is an expression of our pastoral and benevolent concern, and that this concern should in no way be allowed to be exploited to subvert or to harmfully affect our primary missionary task in the Church Growth Fund or our ongoing evangelistic and missionary program. Lost investments in one place are no excuse for failing to meet the challenge for growth with donated money elsewhere. The investment in sound church building and expansion efforts and well-managed enterprises like the Reformed Church Extension Foundation are to be encouraged. The failures of a few should not blind us to the success of the several. A great many of our congregations have borrowed large sums to expand their ministries and are faithfully repaying their loans. The existing policies of the denomination regarding borrowing by local churches have been revised to reduce the potential for further failures. Well-managed and carefully planned projects deserve our wholehearted support. Growth takes resources, including financial resources. We have them, and we must use them to meet the current challenge of missions and church growth. Nevertheless, the need of those in financial difficulty calls for a response on our part.

> I, therefore, recommend that the General Synod develop a program, possibly through the appointment of an ad hoc committee, to supervise some means, through our local diaconates, for determining the identity of those in need, the extent of their need, and the extent to which that need exceeds the capacity of the local congregation to give adequate assistance; and then, if necessary, to set up a Christian assistance program, make arrangements for a denomination-wide gathering of the necessary money, and then distributing that money to those in greatest need, and in the fairest possible manner.

"Professionalization" of Ministry

I have, in recent years, noted a trend toward what we might describe as the "professionalization" of the ministry, the tendency for a minister to look upon his work as a "job" instead of a "calling." I occasionally hear some ministers talking about their unwillingness to work more than so many hours, or their having a right to so many or more days off, or not wanting to be always available or "on call." Now I do not mean that the minister should be burdened or overloaded. And some of them are. The minister also needs his days off, his times of physical and intellectual refreshment and renewal. The ministry, as seen in the New Testament perspective, is surely a "calling" rather than a "job." Some of us have seen the passing of the day of the family doctor who was a friend of the family and always available for house calls. We know what he

meant to his patients. We wonder whether this "professionalization" is now taking place in the ministry also.

Many consistories are apparently sensing this same tendency to "professionalization" and responding with a trend of their own. A number of them have in recent years, especially in seeking an associate or assistant minister, negotiated a contract, or what some have called a "call-contract" rather than the traditional "call" as described in the *Book of Church Order*. This "call-contract" is usually for a two or three year term, and renewable if both parties approve. If this procedure is acceptable for associate or assistant ministers, even though there is no provision for it in the *Book of Church Order*, is it not acceptable for all ministers? And is this a desirable direction, and for the good order of the church?

I, therefore, recommend that the Committee on Church Government study this trend, and report on its evaluation of these newer procedures, with or without any recommended changes in the *Book of Church Order*, to the Synod of 1978.

What a Church Expects

What is the average church looking for in its minister? Is it sufficient today that he must be a "man of God" who can "preach well" and who is "interested in serving people"? The Association of Theological Schools released in 1975 a document on "Readiness for Ministry," part of a project funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., at a cost of approximately $500,000. This three-year project sought to develop ways of assessing readiness for the pastoral ministry, dealing with the questions and qualities a congregation is concerned with when they are considering a potential minister. The study showed that congregations are not so much concerned about the number of courses completed in seminary as about the kind of person a minister is. This survey, which covered a number of denominations, provides what is probably also a fairly accurate picture of what Reformed Church congregations look for when they are seeking a minister. And now I am going to quote from this report, lifting up the importance of these characteristics for the attention of our theological seminaries, for our ministers, for our laymen, for all of us, in order that we may ask ourselves whether we are giving adequate attention to providing and preparing this kind of person for ministerial leadership in our congregations.

"Ranking at the very top (of these 'significant characteristics') is a construct or dimension whose items point to the label 'service without regard for acclaim.' This cluster of items describes an individual who is able to accept personal limitations and, believing the Gospel, is able to serve without concern for public recognition. This is reinforced by the second highest factor, namely, that of personal integrity; this describes one who is able to honor commitments by carrying out promises despite all pressures to compromise. Ranking third is a factor that has to do with Christian example. This cluster describes one whose personal belief in the Gospel manifests itself in generosity, and in general, a Christian example that people in the community can respect. Only in fourth place do we find the first description of particular pastoral skills. This factor describes the responsible functioning of one who shows competence and responsibility by completing tasks, by being able to handle differences of opinions and who senses the need to continue to grow in pastoral skills. Ranking fifth is a cluster that has to do with the minister as a leader in community building. The items in this cluster focus on actions that will build a strong sense of community within a congregation. It includes taking time to know parishioners well and developing a sense of truth and confidence between pastor and parish." The sixth and seventh clusters focus on

the minister's ability as a perceptive counselor who reaches out to people with sensitivity and warmth, and as a theologian whose basic intelligence is demonstrated in communication. The last two in the top-ranked nine "return to the minister as a person and to a commitment of faith, namely, one who possesses a positive approach."

Let us give thanks to God that we have many such ministers. All of us who are ministers should, as we listened to these high standards of ministry, have been doing a little self-examination. We cannot fault the desire for ministers with these "significant characteristics." But whose responsibility is it to produce them? Who will help the minister be this kind of person? Are the seminaries as concerned for character as for scholarship, for spiritual leadership as for academic excellence? Should the laity who want this kind of ministry more frequently express their concern for and appreciation of such spiritual leadership? I personally believe these characteristics are developed only through the mighty working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the minister. The Spirit alone, through the Word that comes from God, who moulds and fashions us all, as we are surrendered to His will, into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

I am lifting this up for the consideration and the concern of all of us, not only to speak to the ministers, but to the whole church. We desire and expect these qualities in our spiritual leaders, but how is this possible, apart from some miracle, unless we as congregations are this kind of people? The ministers come out of the life and the homes of our congregations. Can the church expect a more spiritually qualified, more Spirit-filled ministry than she herself can show? The old phrase, "like priest, like people" is true, but in the long run, it is almost equally true when reversed, "like people, like priest." All of which calls upon every congregation to be in some manner a seedbed where such ministers are grown.

A Revitalized Church

We are thankful to God for the evidences of dynamic spiritual life and growth in a great many of our congregations. We long for a whole denomination of congregations revitalized, set afire for God, filled with the Spirit, overflowing with radiant enthusiasm and a self-giving ministry to others in the name of Jesus. We long for congregations of people who are concerned for one another, and who reach out into their communities to minister to the total needs of the people around them. Such a spiritual renewal cannot be bought or manufactured or artificially produced. It is a gift of God to those who like the early disciples, wait in Jerusalem for the promised enduement of the Holy Spirit. It calls for "continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." It calls for a faithful study of the Scriptures as the authentic and authoritative Word of God to us. It calls for a renewal of family worship, the "church in the home." It calls for a new emphasis on expository preaching, explaining the meaning of the Word in terms of our life and need today. It calls for confession of sin, of indifference and neglect and partyism and speaking ill of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It calls for a deeper experience of the power of the Gospel, and of the meaning of Christ's forgiveness and our forgiveness of one another. It calls for the realization of the experience of indwelling Holy Spirit, who gives a variety of gifts to everyone of us and who unites us in one body to carry on Christ's will and work in the world until He returns in power and glory.

I believe that the spiritual renewal which the New Testament writers describe as possible for the New Testament people is as available to us as to their

generation. Even as a Reformed church is to be constantly reforming itself according to the Word of God, so a New Testament church will be constantly renewed by the Holy Spirit. From whom shall we look for such renewal? It has seldom in history originated with the hierarchies, the bishops, the administrators. Here and there a lowly pastor or a layman: Monica and her son Augustine; Susanna and then John Wesley; a German monk named Luther; a shoemaker named William Carey; the Moravians in Germany or the Pilgrims in England and America–filled with the Holy Spirit they brought about transformation in the church of their times. Life germinates in the seedbed of our congregations, sometimes where one or two are born again or find that Jesus Christ is more real than they had known before; and where, because they love Christ and His Word, they overflow with love and compassion toward others. But who is sufficient for these things, for the tasks of our day and generation? Let us recognize that, with all our education and skills and affluence and methods, we are as impotent today against the forces of this present evil world as the apostles were before the pagan world of the first century. Our help is alone in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Maurice Maeterlinck tells of a lighthouse that stood in a village by the sea. Around it dwelt a number of humble fisherfolk. One winter the season's catch of fish was poor, and their cottages were dark because they lacked money to buy oil for their lamps. The keeper of the lighthouse, loving them, gave them oil intended for the great lantern in the lighthouse tower. Thus used, the supply failed, the lighthouse was dark, and great ships were shattered upon the rocks. That is the tragedy of using life's oil for secondary needs and purposes. In this hour, when we hear so many cries for using our money and our time and our energies for a variety of pleasures and comforts and what men consider needs, when many people put self before others and both before God. It is our task, yea, our high privilege, to use the oil we have to keep the great lantern of the Gospel light burning, so that all those tossed about in the lostness and confusion and hopelessness of life's storms may be saved from shipwreck and make their way home to the eternal haven in safety. God help us to seek and to know our priorities in this General Synod, and in the life of the church in the years ahead.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The report of the President of General Synod speaks in a very positive way to the needs of the Church and the great possibilities that lie open to us as the people of God, as well as the tremendous need for the Gospel in today's world.

Out of his years of experience and love for the church, Dr. Benes has identified and speaks directly to the tough issues that face our Reformed Church and the Church at large.

We RECOMMEND:

R-1. **THAT this General Synod, remembering our Lord's command to "Go and make disciples," urge every congregation to enlist actively in this task of evangelism to the end that the Church of Jesus Christ may grow among us also.** (ADOPTED)

R-2. **THAT this General Synod call upon all of our congregations, and upon our total membership, to contribute seriously and sacrificially to the Church Growth Fund Drive, in order that God's will for His Church may be more fully realized.** (ADOPTED)

R-3. **THAT this General Synod take steps to reverse our decline in missionary witness by encouraging the General Program Council to explore a transcultural evangelistic witness, in addition to the proposed new fields in the Church Growth Fund Drive, in at least two other unevangelized or inadequately evangelized areas overseas or in Mexico.** (ADOPTED)

R-4. **THAT the General Program Council develop and implement ways to raise the consciousness of the local church (for World Mission)** to the global imperatives that confront the Christian community in our present age: to raise our consciousness to the categorical imperative to preach and be the gospel of Jesus Christ in the whole world; to the Christian imperative to seek a simpler lifestyle and to support programs that aim to share and redistribute our wealth and resources for the sake of "The Common Good": and to the spiritual imperative to work for justice and peace in our global village. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED*)

By motion from the floor, Synod

VOTED: **To grant the privilege of the floor to Melvin De Vries pastor of the Valley Community Church of San Dimas.**

Melvin De Vries addressed the Synod in support of the adoption of R-5.

R-5. **Accepting the premise of the President in his report "that all responsibility, both legal and moral, for repayment to the noteholders rest with the Valley Community Church of San Dimas and/or the Association for Inspirational Living," the Review Committee on the President's Report commends the President for the Christian love and concern shown in his report concerning San Dimas.**

*Deletions in parentheses
Amendments in light face type

We RECOMMEND that the GSEC appoint an ad hoc committee of five to investigate the possible ways for emergency benevolent assistance to be given in hardship cases, that a method for raising these benevolent funds be developed by this committee, that the committee report to the November, 1977, meeting of the GSEC and that the GSEC be instructed and empowered to act. (ADOPTED)

R-6. Recognizing the concern of the President toward the increasing tendency of "Call-Contracts" to ministers, we recommend that the Theological Commission study the implications of "Call-Contracts" in relation to

a. the calling to the ministry

b. a call to a particular church

in discussion with the office of Human Resources and that they report to the Synod of 1978. (ADOPTED)

We thank President Benes for his perceptive insights, for raising stimulating questions and for his pastoral concern for our beloved Reformed Church.

May his challenges to proclaim the Gospel and grow as Christ's people enable us to move into and beyond our 350th anniversary year with a clearer vision of our calling. "For where there is no vision, the people perish."

ARTICLE 5

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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The General Synod Executive Committee has served the Reformed Church in America since 1961 and was ". . . established by, and is responsible to the General Synod. Its responsibility is to implement decisions and policies of the General Synod through proper channels and agencies; to support and correlate the work of the several boards, institutions and agencies of the Reformed Church in America, thus seeking to increase the effectiveness of the mission and witness of the Church." (*The Government*, RCA, Part IV, Article 7, Section 1)

In this connection, the General Synod Executive Committee met on November 16, 17, 1976; February 2, 3, 1977; April 13, 14, 1977, and is scheduled to meet during the sessions of the 1977 General Synod. The 1971 General Synod adopted a recommendation that the General Synod Executive Committee serve as a Committee of Reference during future sessions of General Synod. (*MGS*, 1971, p. 128)

A. REFERRALS FROM GENERAL SYNOD 1976

1. Long Range Plan for RCA Life and Mission (*MGS*, 1976, p. 33)

The 1976 General Synod adopted the following recommendation of the Review Committee on the President's Report:

> "We RECOMMEND that this Synod assign to the General Synod Executive Committee in consultation with the General Program Council *and other interested parties such as colleges, seminaries, Reformed Church Women, etc.*, the responsibility for developing a long range plan for our Reformed Church life and mission to be presented to the 1978 session of the General Synod." (Amended portion in italics.)

At its November 16, 17, 1976, meeting the GSEC took the following action: "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the General Synod assignment to 'develop a long range plan for our Reformed Church life and mission to be presented to the 1978 session of the General Synod' be referred to the Permanent Committee on GSEC Role and Function; and further, that the Committee provide progress reports to the April, 1978, GSEC for referral to the 1978 General Synod."

The Permanent Committee on GSEC Role and Function met on January 6, 1977, to consider this referral as well as the following statement which had been prepared by the Staff Consulting Group and referred to the Committee by the GSEC at its April, 1976, meeting:

> ". . . A by-product of our discussion (probably of greater significance than the immediate problem) was a gradual but striking realization that the church could be strengthened in many areas by the provision of specific long-range planning for the denomination as a whole.
>
> Our existing structures seem well adapted to responding to particular problems, but there is a need for a group, sensitive to the broad interests of the church, which can determine its needs and the goals of the church in the future and is familiar with the various resources and institutions available for the realization of goals.
>
> We believe it would be wise for the GSEC to consider the provision of the long-range planning function either through the expansion of its own role or through the establishment of new structures."

The following proposal was adopted by the GSEC at its February 2, 3, 1977, meeting:

PLANNING FOR REFORMED CHURCH LIFE AND MISSION

"After reviewing several examples of denominational planning already underway, the Committee (on Role and Function) agreed that the Reformed Church could benefit from a strengthening and integration of these efforts. It then moved to the consideration of several important planning issues:

- –Expectations for Planning
- –Scope and Structure for Planning
- –Involvement in Planning
- –Process and Timeline for Planning

Expectations for Planning

It was agreed that a fruitful planning effort would need to concentrate on what the Reformed Church is to be and do, and that this can be done best by focusing on significant problems and opportunities in a three to five-year time frame rather than a detailed blueprint which seeks to cover everything.

Scope and Structure for Planning

It was agreed that the scope for planning includes the whole life and mission of the Reformed Church in America. In order to emphasize our common responsibilities in the church rather than our separate structures, it was further agreed that planning would be structured around issues and/or goals and goal areas rather than church structures, such as the General Program Council, the seminaries, the colleges, the particular synods.

Involvement in Planning

It was agreed that the General Synod Executive Committee would be the core group with responsibility to initiate and develop specific planning projects. (This responsibility is already assigned to it in the Bylaws of General Synod, Article III, Section 4, Subsections i and j.)

The General Synod Executive Committee would create planning groups to deal with selected issues. In each case these planning groups would include participation from:

–people most directly affected by that area of the church's life and mission;

–people responsible for implementing any programs which might result from the planning;

–people with special skills in the area under consideration;

–representatives from the general membership of the church.

These groups would be convened strictly for planning purposes and would not be expected to meet more than once or twice.

Process and Timeline for Planning

The following timeline is proposed for beginning the planning process and preparing the report to the 1978 General Synod:

1977		
FEB.	GSEC	Tentative approval of report on planning
MAR.	Staff Consulting Group	Test report on planning. Submit issue suggestions.
APR.	GSEC Particular Synods Colleges/Seminaries	Review report on planning. Submit issue suggestions.
JUNE	General Synod	Submit issue suggestions.
JULY	Committee on Role and Function	Develop issue suggestions for recommendation to GSEC.
SEPT.	GSEC	Select issues. Appoint groups.
1978		
FEB.	GSEC	Progress reports from planning groups
APR.	GSEC	Report for referral to General Synod
JUNE	General Synod	Report and Action"

2. Inclusion of Colleges in total program of RCA (*MGS*, 1976, p. 163)

The following recommendation presented by the Review Committee on Higher Education was adopted by the 1976 General Synod:

"We RECOMMEND that the resources of the colleges, in terms of devising evaluation tools, programming and implementation be used in any long range planning efforts by the RCA."

The GSEC took the following action at its November 16, 17, 1976, meeting:

"It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the Permanent

Committee on Role and Function design ways to utilize the resources of the colleges in a long range planning process for the RCA."

It is believed that by the adopting of the report as cited above, "Planning for Reformed Church Life and Mission," the colleges will be active participants in the planning by the RCA.

3. Resolution on Ben Chavis (*MGS*, 1976, p. 256)

Through the distribution of two United Church of Christ pamphlets, "Struggle for Justice" and the April, 1976, issue of "Criminal Justice Issues," the delegates to the 1976 General Synod became aware of the case, conviction and imprisonment of the Reverend Benjamin Chavis. The following action was adopted by the General Synod:

> "To express concern over the alleged abuse of police power and misuse of the law courts in the conviction of the Rev. Benjamin Chavis and refer the matter to the General Synod Executive Committee for study and appropriate action."

Communication was made with the Chairman of the Christian Action Commission for any suggestions the Commission might have in this matter.

The GSEC took the following action at its February 2, 3, 1977, meeting:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED to express to the UCC Commission on Racial Justice our fellowship, prayers and support in their efforts to secure justice for Benjamin Chavis and the Wilmington 10 and assure them of our support in ways which may be helpful; and further,
>
> that we would engage in other ways that might possibly be of help in this cause."

In follow-up of this action, letters have been written to North Carolina officials including Governor James Hunt, Attorney General Rufus Edmisten and Magistrate Logan Howell, the National Wilmington 10 Defense Committee and to each of the Wilmington 10 defendants still in prison. Information regarding these actions have been shared with John Stapert, Editor of the *Church Herald,* for an appropriate news story and an invitation for readers to write to officials and persons involved.

4. Definition of Askings and Assessments (*MGS*, 1976, p. 62)

The General Synod of 1976, based on the recommendation of the GSEC, authorized "the GSEC to initiate a study relating to the definition of askings and assessments and that provision be made for including these definitions in the *Book of Church Order.*"

At its February 2, 3, 1977, meeting, the GSEC reviewed the following possibility regarding definitions of assessments and askings:

"1. A definition based on the purpose of the monies, like that proposed to the 1968 General Synod and the guidelines adopted in 1973 (Assessable funds are those which are levied by a judicatory for expenses of maintenance and operation, such as salaries, office expenses, meeting, expenses, travel, and costs for the supervision and promotion of its total work, and for a judicatory's proportionate share of similar expenses of maintenance and operation of

interdenominational councils and agencies of which it is a constituent member); and

2. A definition based on the level of obligation, like those adopted in 1973:

   a. Assessment—A specific dollar amount levied by a judicatory, payment of which is mandatory.

   b. Asking—A specific dollar amount that is approved by a judicatory as an assigned share.

   c. Offering—A voluntary gift in response to a specific appeal or need.)"

After a careful investigation of all the various possibilities, it was determined that the definitions developed at the Consultation on Funding in January, 1973, and adopted by the 1973 General Synod (*MGS*, 1973, p. 124, 125) should remain in effect. Therefore, the GSEC proposes no changes.

B. GSEC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENERAL SYNOD ACTION

1. Amendments to BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

a. *Amendments to THE GOVERNMENT*

The General Synod of 1976 approved four proposed amendments to *The Government* which were referred to the classes for approval. These are specified in the *Minutes of General Synod*, 1976, ps. 106, 109, 113, 147, 249.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT	YES	NO
1. Ordination of Women as Ministers of the Word (Chap. 1, Part I, Art. 1, Sec. 3)	29	16
2. Membership Referral and Conservation (Chap. 1, Part I, Art. 2, Sec. 13)	38	6
3. Retirement Age for Professors of Theology (Chap. 1, Part IV, Art. 8, Sec. 10)	33	11
4. Professional Development in Form of the Call to a Minister (Appendix - *The Formularies of the RCA* - No. 5 - The Form of the Call to a Minister)	39	5

Since the two-thirds requirement (30) votes was met on amendments 2, 3 and 4:

R-1. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod now pass the declarative act incorporating the classes approved amendments in *The Government of the RCA*. (ADOPTED)

Since the two-thirds requirement was not met on proposed amendment 1, this proposal fails.

2. Ad Interim Appointments

To the General Synod Executive Committee:

Mr. David Alford, Class of 1977, as a representative from the Particular Synod of Albany, to fill the unexpired term of *Mr. Clarence Linder.*

Mr. Donald Van Der Weide, Class of 1978, as a representative at large, to fill the unexpired term of *Mr. Maurice Te Paske.*

To the General Program Council:

Mr. John M. Van Sloten, Class of 1977, as a representative from the Classis of Dakota, to fill the unexpired term of *Mr. Jerry Dirksen.*

Rev. Lloyd Menning, Class of 1979, as a representative from the Classis of Central California, to fill the unexpired term of *Rev. Robert Otto.*

Rev. Thomas L. Bos, Class of 1977, as a representative from the Classis of Philadelphia, to fill the unexpired term of *Rev. Donald Baird.*

R-2. We RECOMMEND that General Synod approve the ad interim appointments of the GSEC. (ADOPTED)

3. Proposed Amendment to By-Laws of Northwestern College

The Board of Trustees of Northwestern College amended its By-Laws and presented them to the GSEC for its review and referral to the 1977 General Synod. The GSEC endorsed the proposed amendment and hereby presents it to the General Synod for its consideration.

R-3. We RECOMMEND that General Synod approve the following amendment to Article I, paragraph C, section 1 of the By-Laws of Northwestern College as follows:

Deletion of the following:

"Synod of New York — 1 trustee
Synod of New Jersey — 1 trustee
Synod of Albany — 1 trustee"

and substitution of the following:

"General Synod of the Reformed Church in America . . . 3 trustees with residency of one of each such trustees to be within the geographical confines of the Synod of New York, one within the geographical confines of the Synod of New Jersey, and one within the geographical confines of the Synod of Albany." (ADOPTED)

4. Constitution of the Board of Theological Education

The 1968 General Synod approved the By-Laws of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary and the Western Theological Seminary when it was envisioned that there would be one President for the two seminaries. (*MGS*, 1968, p. 145, 158-164)

The Board of Theological Education has submitted to the GSEC for its consideration at its April 13-14, 1977, meeting a revised document entitled "The Constitution of the Board of Theological Education." The GSEC hereby submits the Constitution to the General Synod for approval.

R-4. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod approve the Constitution of the Board of Theological Education as attached in Appendix 3. (ADOPTED)

5. Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal

At its February, 1976, meeting, the General Program Council Executive Committee extended the life of the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal through 1977 (Action EX-76-3). This action was taken with the understanding that evaluation of the work of the Task Force and determination of its relationship to an ongoing evangelism program would be dealt with at the January, 1977, GPC Executive Committee meeting.

The 1976 General Synod also took several actions related to the Task Force. In response to the President's report, the Synod voted: "that the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal be continued for the purpose of study and implementation of a program by which evangelism may be emphasized, made more effective, and continued as a lively concern in the RCA" (*MGS*, p. 33). A similar action was taken in response to the report of the Review Committee on the General Program Council: "to request the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal to study the means by which evangelism can be a permanent major concern of the RCA and present recommendations to the Synod of 1977" (*MGS*, p. 132). The Synod further voted to take no action on an overture to form a commission on evangelism and church growth on the grounds that it would unnecessarily duplicate the work of evangelism already in process (*MGS*, p. 108). The Task Force therefore spent much of its November meeting reviewing its past and developing plans for the future.

The Task Force was formed in 1973 by action of the GPC, and with the approval of the General Synod Executive Committee, in response to overtures to General Synod calling for the establishment of a commission on evangelism. Because of the widespread concern in the church that evangelism and renewal be developed by people actively engaged in it on a day-to-day basis, the majority of Task Force members are pastors who meet that criterion. Also included in the membership are the two evangelism secretaries and representatives of the two seminaries. The Task Force was authorized to develop and implement programs within the scope of the GPC goals for evangelism and church growth and its evangelism budget.

The first meeting of the Task Force was held in May of 1974. Initially, the Task Force focused major attention on church renewal, committing itself to discovering where renewal is happening, encouraging and nurturing it and developing various models which would aid the sharing and spreading of renewal throughout the RCA. Specifically, the Task Force has worked with "renewal communities," groupings of congregations involving a covenant or contract with mutual responsibilities and commitments. Encouraging reports about individuals, congregations and classes working in "renewal communities" have been received by the Task Force from various sections of the church. The Task Force continues to monitor these renewal communities with the intention of stimulating the formation of others throughout the denomination.

Another aspect of the work of the Task Force is theological reflection. An occasional paper on church renewal, entitled *Theological Reflections*, is

now being published. Each paper consists of a lead article and responses from three to four persons asked to reflect on the piece. Four issues have been produced: (1) "Christian Discipline," raising the question of whether the RCA's practice of discipline in the past has been too formal and too narrow, (2) "Can the Dominie be Saved?," raising the question of whether, and, if so, to what extent the image of the pastor in the world today is influencing the way RCA ministers are serving their churches, (3) "America, the Beautiful," focusing on what it means to be a Christian patriot in today's society, and (4) "Church Growth: First Fruits and Second Thoughs," both affirming the need for church growth and raising some critical questions about the practices of church growth. The first issue was distributed widely throughout the church with a notice that future issues would be distributed to only those requesting to be put on the mailing list. That list has now reached over six hundred names. It is clear from the responses received that *Theological Reflections* has become a much appreciated network of communication on the subject of parish renewal.

The Task Force also studied the *Evangelism Manifesto* and recommended its publication and distribution throughout the denomination, which was done by the General Program Council.

The Secretaries for Evangelism have both expressed appreciation for the valuable support, feedback and encouragement they have received from the Task Force in their continuing development of the denomination-wide evangelism program, Good News People, and other evangelism efforts.

In considering the future, the Task Force developed the following objectives:

1. To articulate the implications of the biblical message of the Kingdom of God for evangelism programs.
2. To evaluate and resource RCA evangelism programs.
   a. GPC Programs
   b. Particular Synod Programs
3. To review and critique other evangelism programs currently involving the Reformed Church constituency.
4. To evaluate and support seminary instruction in evangelism and church renewal.
5. To stimulate theological reflection on evangelism and renewal (the publication of *Theological Reflections*).
6. To prepare presentations for General Synod to highlight evangelism and church renewal.
7. To identify and promote activities which enable evangelism and renewal, e.g., spiritual disciplines for clergy and laity, renewal communities.

To work towards the achievement of these objectives, the Task Force would divide itself into three groups with the following tasks and timelines:

PROGRAM REVIEW (Objectives 2, 3, 4)
Evaluate RCA programs - 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981

Review other programs - 1978
Seminary instruction - 1977

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION (Objectives 1, 5)
Articulation of Kingdom of God Theme - 1977, 1978
Theological Reflections - 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981

COMMUNICATION (Objectives 6, 7)
General Synod Presentation - 1977, 1979, 1981
Highlight Concerns - 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981

There has been much discussion in the church concerning the establishment of a permanent commission on evangelism, which would be accountable to the General Synod. Overtures to this effect have most often been referred to the General Synod Executive Committee, which has been reluctant to appoint a permanent commission with responsibilities overlapping those of the General Program Council. The Council, Task Force and Evangelism Secretaries agree that a commission on evangelism should not be established. Some of the reasons follow:

- The General Program Council is responsible for denominational program, of which evangelism is an essential element and top priority.
- The Task Force has authority to implement as well as develop programs; commissions tend to be less action-oriented.
- Commissions tend to become institutionalized; a GPC task force would be reviewed every three years in accordance with the budget process.
- Relating to two bodies, a General Synod commission and the General Program Council, would be confusing for the Evangelism Secretaries.
- The Task Force has been working together in the area of evangelism and renewal for three years and has a clear understanding of what its task should be in the future.

RECOMMENDATION:

R-5. **WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod continue the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal for a four-year period, 1978 through 1981, with the following objectives:**

1. **To articulate the implications of the biblical message of the Kingdom of God for evangelism programs.**
2. **To evaluate and resource RCA evangelism programs.**
   a. **GPC Programs**
   b. **Particular Synod Programs**
3. **To review and critique other evangelism programs currently involving the Reformed Church constituency.**
4. **To evaluate and support seminary instruction in evangelism and church renewal.**
5. **To stimulate theological reflection on evangelism and renewal (the publication of *Theological Reflections*).**
6. **To prepare presentations for General Synod to highlight evangelism and church renewal.**

7. **To identify and promote activities which enable evangelism and renewal, e.g., spiritual disciplines for clergy and laity, renewal communities.** (ADOPTED)

6. **Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies**

The Joint Committee report to the 1977 General Synod (see Appendix 4) was considered by the GSEC at its April 13-14, 1977, meeting. After extended study and discussion the GSEC took an action:

> "That a special committee, consisting of Louis H. Benes, chairperson, Bert E. Van Soest and Arie R. Brouwer, review and negotiate the critical areas, in consultation with the specific council or board, relating to R-1 (Statement of Purpose), R-2 (Theological Basis), R-3 (Minority Representation) R-4 (Financial Reports), R-5 (Director for American Indian Council) and R-6 (Annual General Synod Review), and report to the November 1977 GSEC meeting."

Also under consideration will be the review of the constitutions of the minority councils by the GSEC, to be referred to the 1978 General Synod for approval.

a. *Affirmative Action*

At its November 16, 17, 1976, meeting the GSEC took action to "present an affirmative action plan to the 1977 General Synod."

The GSEC has carefully studied the "REVISION OF THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE RELATING TO AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN" (see Appendix 4a), and presents the following:

PREAMBLE

> In joy we recognize all the gifts which God has given to all his people. Each person has been endowed with several gifts. Within the family of God every encouragement and opportunity should be provided for all persons to develop and share their gifts to the fullest potential.
>
> "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you are called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift . . . And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ . . . speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love."
>
> Ephesians 4:4-16

R-6. **WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt the following policy statement concerning Affirmative Action:**

POLICY STATEMENT

The General Synod of 1977 urges each judicatory, institution, agency, board, committee, and commission of the Reformed Church in America to affirm its responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity to all employees and those engaged in providing additional consultant and facilitator services, regardless of racial, ethnic, cultural, or sexual differences;

and further urges that to fulfill this responsibility each unit noted above affirm its intention to establish a program to review and modify as may be necessary, its present policies and practices related to the above.

and further, that the General Synod Executive Committee, pending approval by General Synod, refer the program proposed (R-8) by the Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies to the Office of Human Resources, with instructions to begin implementation of an Affirmative Action Program and to report its progress and plans to the November 1977 meeting at GSEC. (ADOPTED)

"Each judicatory" in the above POLICY STATEMENT is understood to include consistory, classis and particular synod. In the implementation of the policy statement it should be understood that each particular synod exercises its "general superintendence" role over each classis within its bounds (see *Book of Church Order,* Part III, Article 2, Section 1, p. 41) and that each classis exercises its "general superintendence" role over each church consistory within its bounds (see *BCO,* Part II, Article 2, Section 1, p. 24)

7. Report of the Task Force on the 350th Anniversary of the Reformed Church in America

Plans for the observance of the 350th Anniversary of the Reformed Church in America are taking shape. A Task Force consisting of representatives of the General Synod Executive Committee, the General Program Council, the Classis of New York, the Collegiate Consistory, the Commission on History, and the *Church Herald* has formulated the following proposals.

Sunday, April 9, 1978, is to be designated as a day of special observances across the denomination commemorating the organization of the first Reformed congregation on this continent. It was April 10 in 1628 that Domine Jonas Michaelius, in a loft over a mill, celebrated the Lord's Supper and organized the first congregation in New Amsterdam. A packet, containing suggested liturgies and various other resources for use in local congregations, is being prepared and will be sent to every congregation during the first week of 1978.

The meeting of the General Synod, to be held in Manhattan, June 12-16, 1978, will be another high point during this anniversary year. A commemorative service of worship will be held at Marble Collegiate Church and it is anticipated that representatives from other Christian communions in this country and abroad will participate in that historic occasion.

A number of "birthday parties" will be held during that same week in New York City and in other various locations across the denomination. It is hoped that these gatherings, which will be arranged by local committees and in many cases will take the form of dinners, can be linked together by telephone hook-up for part of the evening. In that way, an exchange of greetings and messages can

take place, uniting Reformed Church members across the land in a common experience of celebration.

A number of publications are being prepared in connection with the anniversary. A revised edition of the *Historical Directory* will appear. The commission on History will publish an important study by Professor Gerald F. De Jong, entitled *The Reformed Church in The American Colonies.* A book, *Reformed Church Roots: Thirty-five Formative Events*, by Arie Brouwer, will come out in the Fall of 1977. The *Church Herald* is planning a special anniversary edition, and the first resource packet in the "Heritage and Hope" series of educational materials will be ready in the Spring of 1978. Other publications will be announced as they are brought to the attention of the task force.

The beginnings of the Reformed Church in America are to be found in Manhattan, the Hudson Valley, and the Raritan Valley in New Jersey. In a very real sense the story of those beginnings is part of our common spiritual heritage. It is the hope of the task force, however, that members in every section of the church will search out the history and heritage of the Reformed Church as it has taken shape in their particular situation. Thus, the whole church will be enriched by a deepened historical consciousness and a renewed appreciation for the tradition in which we stand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-7. **THAT April 9, 1978, be designated as a day of special observances across the denomination commemorating the organization of the first Reformed congregation on this continent in 1628.** (ADOPTED)

R-8. **THAT General Synod adopt the following "Resolution on the Occasion of the 350th Anniversary of the Reformed Church in America."** (ADOPTED)

RESOLUTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE 350th ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

WHEREAS

Whereas the Reformed Church in America began through a congregation organized in New Amsterdam on April 10, 1628, and by the grace of a merciful providence has ministered through three and a half centuries, has numbered in its membership several millions of people, and has in no small measure advanced the quality of Christian faith and obedience in the United States of America, Canada, and throughout the world; and

Whereas today we stand at the midpoint of our fourth century of history in an era of unique challenge and opportunity

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

That we hereby proclaim the year of our Lord's grace, Nineteen Hundred Seventy-Eight, as the Three Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary Year of the Reformed Church in America to be marked by suitable observances in which we:

- salute our many predecessors who have guided this community through times of prosperity and adversity
- commend the faith, wisdom and courage of those who have

ministered in the name of Christ through the congregations, judicatories, boards and agencies of the Reformed Church in America

– express our gratitude to all who have throughout the centuries supported the ministries of the Reformed Church in America by their personal and financial resources;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

That on this historic occasion we invite all members and friends to join in rededication to the goals for which the Reformed Church in America was founded:

– to offer worship and praise to Almighty God

– to make known the presence of Jesus Christ in the world

– to invite all peoples into the fellowship of the Spirit.

– Done at the 171st Regular Session of the General Synod, RCA, Convened at the Community Center, Sioux Center, Iowa, June 16th, 1977.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Role and Function of GSEC *(MGS,* 1975, p. 108, 109; *MGS,* 1976, p. 49, 50)

The Permanent GSEC Role and Function Committee has met once since its organization; namely, on January 6, 1977, to consider referrals which have been made to it. (See Section A of this report.)

Members presently serving the Committee are: Marion de Velder (General Secretary); Arie R. Brouwer (Executive Secretary); Marvin D. Hoff (Secretary for Operations); Bert Van Soest (Chairman, GSEC) and Raymond Rewerts and Donald De Young (Past Presidents of General Synod). At the February 2, 3, 1977, GSEC meeting, action was taken to appoint Louis H. Benes, as incumbent President of General Synod, to be a member of this Committee inasmuch as "one of the functions of the President is to hear and reflect the concerns of RCA members."

As outlined in the document adopted by the GSEC "Planning for Reformed Church Life and Mission," the Permanent GSEC Role and Function Committee will be meeting in July to "develop issue suggestions for recommendation to GSEC" (See "Process and Timeline for Planning").

2. Staff Consulting Group *(MGS,* 1975, p. 125, *MGS,* 1974, p. 127, *MGS,* 1975, p. 190, 110; *MGS,* 1976, p. 50)

The Staff Consulting Group, which organization was authorized by the 1973 General Synod, has continued to have constructive interchange among its members.

Subjects discussed at the November 18, 1976, and March 11, 1977, meetings include: Special Appeals Schedule; Planning for Reformed Church Life and Mission; 350th Anniversary of RCA; Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies; Study boundaries of Particular Synods and the Church Growth Fund.

The following action relating to special appeals, taken at the November 16, 17, 1976, GSEC meeting was referred to the Staff Consulting Group for its consideration:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED to instruct the General Secretary to review with the Staff Consulting Group at its November 18, 1976, meeting, the policy on special appeals and the purpose of the Staff Consulting Group as it relates to fund drives; and further,
>
> To inform the Staff Consulting Group that the General Synod Executive Committee, at its April, 1976, meeting (Action 76-41, p. 7) gave approval to the General Program Council to conduct a church growth fund drive, that this action was affirmed at the November meeting of the GSEC and that, in light of the General Synod actions of 1975 and 1976 (*MGS*, 1975, p. 250; *MGS*, 1976, p. 132), the GSEC believes that church growth is a top priority for the Reformed Church in America and, therefore, intends to defer all other special appeals until after December 31, 1977."

In follow-up of action taken at the November 18, 1976, meeting of the Staff Consulting Group, GSEC took the following action at its February 2, 3, 1977, meeting:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED to approve the agreement reached at the Staff Consulting Group on November 18, 1976, as follows:
>
> > That the GPC stop its solicitations for its drive at the end of 1977; Northwestern College and Western Seminary not to begin their campaigns until January 1, 1978; Northwestern's campaign to continue throughout 1979 and Western's campaign to continue until mid-1979; New Brunswick's drive to begin in 1981. The executives of these bodies will make it clear in their correspondence and applications just what is meant by 'begin' and 'stop';
>
> and further, that GSEC, in consultation with the particular synods, expand the policy on "Special Appeals" to include special appeals of the particular synods;
>
> and further, that GSEC approve the action of the GPCEC on the Church Fund Drive as follows:
>
> > "The Reformed Church Growth Fund Drive, being conducted by the General Program Council, will terminate its solicitation on December 31, 1977. Following this date, no new solicitation will be started. Churches which have not been contacted prior to December 31, 1977, will not be contacted afterward. In some cases the solicitation within specific congregations may make decisions about their participation at congregational meetings early in 1978. The General Synod Executive Committee will be given a list of such churches at its February, 1978, meeting";
>
> and further, that GSEC approve the proposal of Western Theological Seminary, adopted by the BTE Executive Committee on January 17, and urge Northwestern College and New Brunswick Theological

Seminary to submit their proposals for consideration at the April 13-14, 1977, GSEC meeting."

The GSEC will review these proposals when submitted.

D. LIAISON COMMITTEE

The Liaison Committee is made up of two members from the GSEC and two members from the GPC, named according to the bylaws of the respective units. One of the two GSEC members is elected by the committee to serve as its chairperson. Presently the members are: Raymond H. Rewerts, Chairperson; Lorraine Dreyman, GSEC representative; Bruce Neckers and Thomas Harris, GPC representatives.

The Committee has four principal accountabilities:

1. Negotiation as required between the GSEC and the GPC.
2. Oversight and evaluation of the General Secretary.
3. Review and recommendation to the GSEC of salary ranges and benefits for denominational staff.
4. Approval of salaries in Classification I, review of salaries in Classifications II and III, and review for information on salaries in Classifications IV and V.

In 1972 the GSEC, upon recommendation of the Liaison Committee, adopted a revised "Salary Administration Handbook." The procedures and policies are being kept current, and have become a part (Section III) of the GSEC HANDBOOK, adopted February, 1974 (Action 74-12). See Appendix 1, Salary Administration, for general information on procedure for administration of salaries, GSEC approved salary ranges, and General Synod action on procedure for publicity of Executive salary ranges.

General Secretary Committee

In follow-up of an initial study by the General Secretary Committee relating to the office of General Secretary, the development of criteria for the person and leadership of General Secretary, and the current position description, communication was made to stated clerks of classes, Particular Synod presidents, college and seminary presidents, minority council chairmen, Field Secretaries, the Editor of the *Church Herald*, and the President of Reformed Church Women, to solicit names of persons to consider as a successor to Marion de Velder as General Secretary. Several candidates were considered by the Committee.

Harry De Bruyn, Chairperson, presented to the GSEC at its February 2, 3, 1977, meeting a proposal regarding the following actions:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED to approve the position description of the General Secretary as follows:

Position Description

Summary of Position:

The person holding this position is responsible for planning, organizing, implementing and measuring the work of the Reformed Church in America and its General Synod in order to ensure the development of the Reformed Church

in America and its effective participation in the whole Church and its mission to the world.

Nature and Scope:

The General Synod has responsibility for the care and supervision of the whole Church and its mission. Since it meets once annually, it delegates its ad interim responsibility to the General Synod Executive Committee. The General Secretary is the chief executive officer of the General Synod and its Executive Committee. As the Chief Executive, he is responsible for the work and performance of the Reformed Church staff.

The General Secretary must be familiar with the Reformed Church as a whole, sensitive to its spirit, well acquainted with the work of its several boards, agencies and judicatories, and knowledgeable concerning the life and ministries of Reformed Church congregations and institutions. Information is kept current through regular perusal of official proceedings, special reports and personal contacts and attendance at meetings. The General Secretary must be able to integrate this knowledge with the hopes and aspirations of Reformed Church members and articulate and coordinate goals which will challenge and inspire the entire church to carry out its mission.

The General Secretary is responsible for the effective functioning of General Synod, its Executive Committee, commissions, committees, General Program Council, Board of Pensions and service offices and for maintaining liaison with the particular synods, classes, Board of Theological Education, the *Church Herald*, and the colleges. He is entitled to attend the meeting of any of these entities as an ex officio function, but not as a voting member.

The General Secretary is the official representative of the Reformed Church in America to other denominations and ecumenical and interfaith organizations, except as the General Synod Executive Committee shall otherwise provide, e.g., fraternal delegates. He may delegate some of the representation to other staff or persons in leadership positions within the church.

The staff persons primarily responsible for Human Resources, Operations and Finance, Program, and Interpretation shall report directly to the General Secretary. Others may also report directly to him as determined from time to time by the General Synod Executive Committee in consultation with the Liaison Committee.

Principal Accountabilities:

1. Effective plans and strategies to grasp the opportunities and meet the needs before the denomination.
2. Personal, organizational and programmatic relationships which provide an effective working environment.
3. Effective functioning and continuity of motivated and developed professional and administrative personnel capable of achieving approved objectives.
4. Effective organization, integration, guidance and measurement of the work of General Synod's committees, commissions, boards, councils and agencies to ensure effective implementation of approved goals, objectives and policies.

5. Accurate and timely reports to the General Synod Executive Committee and General Synod in order that they may be aware of problems and opportunities and informed concerning administrative effectiveness.
6. Participation in ecumenical and other cooperative agencies to ensure the appropriate representation of the Reformed Church in America, in accordance with the general guidelines determined by the General Synod Executive Committee.
7. Proper administration, interpretation and adherence to the *Book of Church Order.*
8. To provide the Constituency and Judicatories with the opportunity of having direct and personal contact with the General Secretary to express their interests and concerns about General Synod and its organizations.

"It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the General Synod Executive Committee employ Arie R. Brouwer as General Secretary effective September 1, 1977, subject to the approval of the 1977 General Synod."

R-9. WE RECOMMEND that the 1977 General Synod approve the employment of Arie R. Brouwer as General Secretary. (ADOPTED)

An election by ballot took place for Arie R. Brouwer as General Secretary. There were a total of 260 votes cast. Mr. Brouwer received 225 votes.

Arie Brouwer was invited to the podium and addressed the Synod briefly.

E. SERVICE OFFICES

In addition to its other responsibilities, the GSEC is responsible for the functioning of the Service Offices. Separate reports of these offices are found in the Appendices, as follows:

Appendix 5 - Report of Promotion and Communications

Appendix 6 - Report of Committee on Finance

Appendix 7 - Report of Office of Human Resources

F. FRATERNAL RELATIONS

1. Delegates

The Committee on Christian Unity recommended and the GSEC appointed the following as fraternal delegates and alternate to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, June 13 to 24, 1977, at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Fraternal Delegates:
Rev. William C. Brownson, Jr., Th.D
WORDS OF HOPE, INC.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501

Rev. Charles J. Wissink, Ph.D.
New Brunswick Theological Seminary
17 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Alternate:
Rev. Raymond H. Rewerts, D.D.
Minister, Fifth Reformed Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

2. *Joint Committee RCA/CRC for the Study of a Theology of Evangelism*

I. Background

The appointment of a Joint Committee of the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church to study the theology of evangelism originated from an address to the 1973 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church by Dr. Herman Ridder, representative of the RCA to the synod that year. Dr. Ridder extended a number of invitations to the CRC on behalf of the RCA, one of which was that our two denominations appoint a joint committee whose mandate would be the study of the theology of evangelism. Five representatives were subsequently appointed to represent each church. The Joint Committee consisted of the following members. From the RCA: Dr. Edwin G. Mulder (co-chairman), Dr. William C. Brownson, Jr., Dr. Paul R. Fries, Dr. Jerome De Jong (1973-75), Rev. Donald Jansma (1975-), Rev. Richard Rhem. From the CRC: Dr. Richard S. Wierenga (co-chairman), Dr. Richard R. De Ridder, Dr. Roger S. Greenway, Dr. Carl G. Kromminga, Rev. Wesley Smedes.

This Joint Committee submitted its report to the respective synods of the churches in 1975 in the form of an Evangelism Manifesto. This Manifesto was referred to the churches and denominational boards and agencies for study and reflection. The Joint Committee was also reappointed for an additional two years in order to receive and review responses to the Manifesto and to prepare a report defining the practical implications of this Manifesto for the evangelistic outreach of the churches.

II. Subsequent Developments

Approximately one hundred responses were received from individuals, churches, boards and agencies of both denominations. These responses were helpful to the Committee even though they represented a wide range of emphases and suggestions. One of the frequent responses called for the addition of Scripture references to the Manifesto, a proposal to which our Committee gave immediate endorsement. The revised and final copy of the Manifesto which follows in a later part of this report includes these Scriptural references. We believe that the addition of this material demonstrates the basic biblical grounding of the Manifesto and can serve the purpose of using the Manifesto for a study of evangelism.

The 1976 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church did not give the requested authorization to the Joint Committee to prepare and distribute a study guide based on the Manifesto (whereas the General Synod of the RCA did give this authorization). However, the RCA published the Manifesto in an attractive pamphlet format which has had wide distribution and elicited much favorable comment both within and outside our respective communions. The Joint Committee appointed Dr. Carl Kromminga and Dr. William Brownson to prepare a series of five articles based on the Manifesto to appear biweekly and simultaneously in the *Church Herald* and *The Banner*. We thank the editors of our church papers for their splendid cooperation in making possible the publication of this material. Many appreciative, unsolicited commendations have been received to these articles. The

Committee is happy to make these articles available to a publisher or organization interested in reprinting them with questions added for use as a study booklet. Rev. Wesley Smedes and Rev. Donald Jansma have been appointed to make arrangements with those who may be interested in using the Manifesto and the articles in this way.

III. The Manifesto

We submit the following draft of the Evangelism Manifesto with accompanying Scripture references to our synods and churches:

AN EVANGELISM MANIFESTO

As Christians in the Reformed tradition, holding to the Scriptures as the Word of God, we joyfully confess our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and our unity with all Christians in the world mission of His Church. We share the newly expressed concern of believers everywhere to understand the nature of evangelism and its place in our total task. We deplore our own tendencies in thought and action to separate gospel proclamation from compassionate ministry. We believe that both are rightly understood only in the light of the Bible's pervasive theme—the Kingdom of God.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM

We affirm that to evangelize is to proclaim the good news of God's reign. The sense of public proclamation is always dominant in the biblical use of the term. Evangelists are "bringers of the gospel." The direct object of the verb "to evangelize" is rarely the hearers or recipients of the message. That is, the apostles are not usually said to "evangelize" people. They "evangelize" a word, a content, *to* people (Acts 8:4, 15:35; Rom. 1:15). What they "evangelize" is variously described as "the gospel" (Rom. 1:15), "the word of the Lord" (I Peter 1:25), "the faith" (Rom. 10:8; Gal. 1:23), "Jesus" (Acts 5:42; 17:18), "Christ" (Phil. 1:18), or, comprehensively, "the kingdom of God" (Acts 8:12; 20:25; 28:23; 31).

The proclamation is "good news" (I Peter 1:25). The note of gladness is an essential part of it. To evangelize is to bring "good tidings of great joy" (Isa. 52:7, 8; Luke 2:10) at which believing hearers "break forth into singing" (Isa. 54:1; 55:12; Acts 2:41-46; 8:5-8, 35, 39; 16:30-]4). The "kingdom of God is like a treasure . . . " (Mat. 13:44).

In both Testament, to "evangelize" is to proclaim a victory, to *herald* a new reign (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18, 19). At heart, it is to testify that "the kingdom of God has drawn near!" (Matt. 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:15-15)

This "kingdom," in biblical usage, refers not primarily to the divine sovereignty in a general sense, but to the active, saving reign of the Triune God in history. The coming kingdom is not static but dynamic, not so much a concept as a ruling power. To proclaim "the kingdom of God has drawn near" is to herald those mighty events in which God's royal rule has invaded the earth in the coming of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is to bring the thrilling news of God's victory in the death and resurrection of His Son over all the powers of darkness that have enslaved mankind and made His good creation subject to bondage (Rom. 8:19-25; Col. 1:13, 14). It is to tell of what God has done to bring forgiveness to the guilty, help to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, deliverance to the oppressed. It is to announce to the whole creation a divine reign of justice and peace (Luke 2:14; Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:17).

Together with this grand announcement, the proclamation of the kingdom brings a summons. Hearers are called to renounce all sin, each false lord, every rival sovereignty, and to submit through repentance and faith to God's saving reign in Christ (Mark 6:12; Acts 17:30; 26:20). The proclamation demands commitment to God's lordship and obedience to His will in the world (Matt. 7:21). Although the decisive victory over the

forces of evil has been won, the conflict still rages (Eph. 6:11, 12). Christ is risen; the Spirit has been poured out upon the church; the powers of the coming age are at work in the world, but the end is not yet. Hosts of darkness resist God's sovereignty; rampant evils oppose His will. To repent and believe is to side with God's purpose in this conflict—assured of ultimate victory, while contending God's righteousness in every sphere of life (I Cor. 15:54-57; Acts 26:16-18).

We affirm, accordingly, that all "evangelizing" in the New Testament sense of the term includes the joyous proclamation of God's saving rule, together with the call to repent and believe the gospel (Acts 20:21).

THE SIGNS OF THE KINGDOM

The proclamation of God's kingly rule brings with it the reality proclaimed. "Evangelizing" is never seen in the New Testament as a merely human activity or as a word which stands alone. "The kingdom of God does not consist in talk, but in power" (I Cor. 4:20). The gospel of the kingdom comes "not only in word, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and with full conviction" (I Thess. 1:5). In our Lord's ministry, evangelizing always occurs in connection with other signs that the kingdom has drawn near. "Preaching good news to the poor," for example, is closely linked with "setting at liberty those who are oppressed." As evidence that the kingdom of God has come in His ministry Jesus gives the following: "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them" (Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18, 19). The acts of healing and restoration are clearly distinguished from "evangelizing," yet they are not isolated from it. In like manner the life of the church itself, as a loving, serving community, bears witness to the proclaimed kingdom. Her works of mercy and power are among the signs of its presence (Acts 1:8).

We affirm, then, that all evangelizing in the New Testament sense of the term is accompanied by the signs of God's kingdom among his people and springs from their active concern for the full deliverance and restoration of all to whom the gospel is addressed. Only in this way is the church's message an authentic heralding of God's saving rule. The caring ministry of the Christian fellowship and her redemptive action in the world form the indispensable context for faithful proclamation. We must show ourselves "ready to share not only the gospel of God but also ourselves . . ." (I Thess. 2:8)

THE IMPERATIVE OF THE KINGDOM

Christ sends His church to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19, 20). The gospel of the kingdom brings the only hope of salvation for lost mankind (Acts 4:12). All stand under the judgment of which it warns; all need the forgiveness and new life it offers; all are summoned to the commitment it demands (John 3:16-21).

The same good news preached to the world must be constantly heard afresh in the church, for the call to repent and believe, to submit to God's gracious reign, is a call to growth as well as to conversion. The church lives by the gospel it proclaims (II Cor. 5:15).

The Spirit calls God's people to live in genuine community and to pursue love and justice in the world (I John 1:3, 4; I John 3:16-18; I Tim. 6:17-19; Titus 2:11-14). Thus the church by its life and work points to the ruling power of the risen Lord.

We affirm, therefore, our responsibility to proclaim, to manifest and to serve the kingdom of God. We confess our dependence on the Holy Spirit for power to fulfill our calling until Christ comes in glory. In gratitude for the grace given us, and in confidence

that our labor is not in vain, we commit ourselves anew to this mission, praying as we go, "Thy kingdom come!" (Matt. 6:10).

IV. Implications

The Committee calls the attention of the churches to the resources available to them in working out in their specific circumstances the implications of the Manifesto. We believe that the Manifesto with the accompanying Scripture references is an invaluable tool to come to an understanding of the basic kingdom perspective that ought to mark the church in mission. The Kromminga-Brownson articles elaborate upon the contents of each of the sections of the Manifesto and can easily be adapted for use in a group study on evangelism.

A. We are also concerned that our churches do actually evaluate their evangelism programs in the light of the Manifesto. Our Committee can only suggest a few areas on which the Manifesto touches such as the following:

1. *Preaching.* Does our preaching take account of the full kingdom proclamation and have a kingdom perspective? Are the congregations also evangelized as described in the New Testament? Does the church address in a meaningful, relevant way the issues raised in our day? Does our preaching reflect a keen awareness of the need to be alert to what is happening in the world around us? In our preaching and worship do we project the joy and peace that is consistent with the character of the gospel as "good news"?
2. *Congregational life.* Is the life of our congregations and Christian communities a model of kingdom life? In how far are we actively participating in presenting to our society what it means to be a kingdom community? Do we know how to live as kingdom citizens?
3. *Community outreach.* What are our goals in mission? Why are we engaged in mission? Where are our priorities? How have we determined them? Do we present by our outreach what the liberation Christ brings means for us and others? Does the gospel message take on "flesh" in our communities?
4. *Cooperation.* What perspectives govern our relationships with other Christians, churches and organizations? Have we allowed barriers to separate us from other Christians? Do we join hands together to accomplish what needs to be done and what can best be done jointly instead of individually and competitively?
5. *Community involvement.* Are we as kingdom citizens alert to the need to be prophets to our society? Do we encourage and support our fellow Christians to be involved in our communities in order to demonstrate the kingdom perspective?

These are but a few suggestions by which we can measure ourselves, not in terms of a Manifesto but in the light of what

Scripture requires of us and what is our stewardship as God's children.

B. We also direct the attention of our churches to specific areas to which attention could profitably be given both on the local and the interdenominational levels.

1. *Joint RCA/CRC endeavors already underway.* We note with gratitude that in a number of ways our churches are already fruitfully engaged in cooperative endeavors. A coordinated evangelistic program is being carried on in the inner city of Detroit. On the classis level campus ministries are mutually supported in Muskegon, Michigan, and at Grand Valley State Colleges in Allendale, Michigan, for examples. For many years our churches have cooperated in the support of institutions such as Bethesda, Pine Rest, Bethany Christian Home, etc., all of which are manifestations of the kingdom and fruits of our mutual Reformed vision.

2. *Possible areas where we might work together in evangelism.* The Committee makes the following suggestions to our churches, assemblies and agencies.

a. *Hispanic work.* As far as cross-cultural evangelism is concerned, the Committee felt that the Hispanic and Jewish populations in America provide important target communities for Reformed evangelism. As regards Hispanic work, the goal of a joint evangelistic effort among Hispanic people would be to form a Hispanic Reformed Church in America, planted and supported by both our denominations but free to choose an organizational structure independent of both and expressing the basic concepts of the Reformed heritage in terms of the Hispanic language and culture.

b. *Jewish evangelism.* We suggest that the General Program Council of the RCA and the Board of Home Missions of the CRC discuss ways of developing new approaches to Jewish evangelism, especially in the light of recent religious developments among the Jewish people and their importance in current world history.

c. *Overseas work.* We suggest that the General Program Council of the RCA and the CR Board for World Missions discuss ways of assisting each other overseas, especially in the sharing of personnel. The Middle East and South America are mentioned in this connection.

C. We also recommend that our respective synods encourage the sharing of information and studies between various agencies of our denominations. Cross-fertilization of ideas, the enlargement of each other's vision, sharing the benefits of special studies, etc., are some of the dividends which can be realized from such mutual sharing of information and resources. An example of this from recent experiences is found in the church growth studies carried on by both denominations.

The Committee expresses its sincere thanks for the privilege of working and studying together. It is gratified with the reception our efforts have produced thus far. This joint report and recommendations are being sent to the synods of our respective churches with the prayer that what we have done may bear much fruit to God's glory.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R-10. That General Synod accept the Evangelism Manifesto as a guideline for further study and action by the churches, classes and denominational agencies. (ADOPTED)

R-11. That General Synod refer the recommendations under section IV to the appropriate agencies and to the churches for implementation wherever and whenever circumstances permit. (ADOPTED)

R-12. That General Synod declare that the Joint Committee has completed its assignment and is therefore discontinued. (ADOPTED)

G. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Quick Memorial Fund

The GSEC has the responsibility for reviewing the requests for the allocation of the Quick Memorial Fund. For background information regarding the Quick Fund, see the Board of Direction Report found on page 99.

Two guidelines in the review of these requests have been followed: (a) Allocation should be made to the boards and agencies of the RCA. It should not be involved in intensive program review; (b) A portion of the Quick Fund should be reserved for those programs/issues/studies which arise out of the General Synod itself.

After careful consideration by the GSEC of requests which have been received for the Quick Fund

R-13. We RECOMMEND that the budget allocation for the Quick Memorial Fund for 1978 be as follows:

50% - for Church Planning and Development;

25% - for Student Aid Grants at New Brunswick and Western;

25% - to Hope, Central and Northwestern Colleges for scholarship funds (60% to be divided equally among the three colleges; 40% to be divided on the basis of student enrollment) (ADOPTED)

2. Review of Synodical Minutes

It was reported for information that the 1977 Minutes of the Particular Synods of The West, Chicago and New Jersey have been received, examined and found to be in good order. The Minutes of Albany, Michigan and New York could not be submitted in time for examination at General Synod. These will be reviewed upon receipt by the GSEC.

3. President of Board of Direction

In accordance with the *Book of Church Order, RCA,* the General Synod is responsible for electing the President of the Board of Direction.

R-14. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod elect Harry E. De Bruyn to serve as President of the Board of Direction for one year. (ADOPTED)

4. Tribute to Marion de Velder

In honor of Marion de Velder, General Secretary, who retires on August 31, 1977, a special banquet and program was held on Thursday, June 16, 1977, in the Junior-Senior High School, Sioux Center, Iowa.

Bert E. Van Soest, Chairperson of the General Synod Executive Committee, was emcee of the special ceremonies. A film presentation prepared by Peter M. Paulsen, Media Coordinator, depicting highlights of Dr. de Velder's life was shown.

Louis Benes, President of General Synod, spoke the following words in tribute to Marion de Velder:

MARION DE VELDER

I have been asked to speak a few words to you at this significant moment in your life. They are to be words of appreciation and of thanks in the name of the General Synod, and of the Reformed Church in America. I am glad to have this peculiar privilege, and especially because we have known one another for many years, and have worked together in the life of this denomination, but I feel quite inadequate to the task. How can I say in a few minutes what you have done for and meant to the life of this denomination, especially through these last sixteen years, seven as the Stated Clerk and then nine in the still more prestigious and influential position as the General Secretary of the church?

You came to this office providentially prepared for it, I believe, in various ways. Your pilgrimage has taken you to many areas of our church, so that you were well acquainted with much of the church before you came to your present position. Born in and growing up in Boyden, Iowa, you graduated from Central College in Pella, and then from the New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Your pastorates led you to still other parts of our denomination: Griggstown, New Jersey; Churchville, Pennsylvania; Holland, Michigan; Albany, New York; and Grand Rapids, Michigan. Effective as a minister of the Gospel, and loved as a pastor, you gave evidence of such leadership qualities that fitted you uniquely for denominational service. Through all these years, and those that followed, you have been wondrously loved, assisted and supported by a very unusual helpmeet, Edith Wandscheer de Velder.

It was while you were pastor of the Hope Reformed Church in Holland, in 1946, that you began three years of special service as the director of the United Advance Fund. Twelve years later, in 1958, you were elected president of the General Synod. You have served on the Board of Education of our church, the Board of Trustees of Central College, the Stewardship Council, and other agencies, previous to your becoming Stated Clerk, and since that time your official position has called for your involvement in a host of agencies, boards and programs too numerous to mention.

I well remember the day you were elected to the position of Stated Clerk of the Reformed Church in America, and how this information was first transmitted to you by way of the telephone in my hotel room in Buck Hill Falls. I was glad to see you thus honored and chosen. You filled that office with excellence, and when our denominational offices were reorganized you were the logical choice for the new position of General Secretary. God had provided you with a variety of most useful gifts for this high office. You have been a strong and able leader these sixteen years. You have served your church faithfully and with distinction. The excellence of your integrity and sincerity, visible throughout these years, has been a boon to our fellowship of faith and

strengthened our unity in the common task. Your contribution to our life has been recognized time and again by new and added responsibilities laid on you by your church, and by additional ones conferred on you by various ecumenical organizations.

You have shared your wisdom and counsel, on scores of occasions, in some of the most significant decisions made in the life of our church, in the choice of administrators for our colleges, and other personnel for other positions. You were a key member on the Joint Committee on Merger with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and have served on numerous occasions as an official delegate in consultations with sister Christian churches overseas. You have through all these sixteen years been the official delegate representative at the National and World Councils of Churches, speaking for the Reformed Church all over the United States and in many parts of the world, and have since 1975 been a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. I do not know of anyone in the Reformed Church in America who has, these last sixteen years, even approached the involvement and influence you have had in the Reformed Church, and beyond. You have been, within our membership and in the larger church of Christ, Mr. Reformed Church in America. As such you have served your church and generation with excellence and distinction.

I would like to mention that I especially have appreciated the way in which I have seen you operate, again and again, in ecumenical circles, expressing your concern for the evangelical faith dear to you and your church. I have seen you rise to your feet once and again to express the faith in Christ that was important to you, and, as you knew, to your church. And your voice and convictions were respected and listened to, in those wider circles as well as within our own fellowship.

Your name has been found in *Who's Who in America* since 1960, and in *Who's Who in the World* since 1976, but we honor you tonight for who you have been as "Who's Who in the Reformed Church." We, the members of your own church family, want to tell you that we love you and are grateful for the years of leadership you have given to the life of our church. We applaud you for the style in which you have led us, with graciousness and charm, with openness and good humor, with wisdom and courage, with the ability to communicate and to convince, and with an undoubted commitment to your task in unseen and intangible ways none of us may have personally witnessed. For all this we express our thanks to God. These words are but a feeble attempt to sum up something of the quality of ministry and the energy of soul with which you have discharged your task among us. Above all, we are here tonight as your friends and brothers and sisters in Christ, to say, not farewell, but God be with you, for we hope and expect to see you still working among us, in one fashion or another.

It will seem strange to think of 475 Riverside Drive without Mert de Velder. We trust that Arie Brouwer will fill the place you have occupied so long, and fill it well, as your successor. You will be watching from the sidelines, to see how another carries on your former responsibilities. You will be praying for him, and for all your other former co-workers, as we will all be, that God may continue to bless and guide those who hold these positions of influence and leadership in our church. For you we pray yet many years of health and strength, of usefulness and involvement, for the sharing of your life with others in the name of Jesus Christ. We pray that God will bless your golden sunset years with your gracious

and lovely wife Edith, who has been such a wise counselor and supporter to you through all these years.

Marion de Velder, the Reformed Church in America salutes you, gives you thanks, and bids you, with your dear wife Edith, God-speed through the years ahead, until you join the Church Triumphant.

R-15. We RECOMMEND that General Synod adopt the following resolution in tribute to Marion de Velder:

A Tribute to the Rev. Dr. Marion de Velder
For sixteen years of faithful service
as the General Secretary
of the Reformed Church in America.

Gifted leader and communicator,
who conveyed the Spirit of Christ
and provided guidance to the entire church
through both calm and stormy years.

A courageous man of God with a
love for life and people,
a continuing sense of optimism and humor
and a strong commitment to
service, progress and church unity.

Presented with deep appreciation and warm affection
by the General Synod, June, 1977. (ADOPTED)

5. General Secretary Emeritus

R-16. We RECOMMEND that General Synod declare Marion de Velder as General Secretary Emeritus upon his retirement on August 31, 1977. (ADOPTED)

6. Professor Emeritus

The GSEC has noted the retirement of Richard Oudersluys as Professor of Theology at Western Theological Seminary after 35 years of faithful service. Under the provision of the *Book of Church Order,* Part IV, Article 8, Section 10, p. 50: "Upon reaching the age of seventy years the professor of theology shall elect to be declared professor emeritus, or to be dismissed to the classis or other ecclesiastical body he chooses." Dr. Oudersluys has requested that General Synod declare him to be "Professor Emeritus."

R-17. We RECOMMEND that General Synod declare the Reverend Doctor Richard C. Oudersluys professor emeritus of General Synod. (ADOPTED)

7. Complaint of Harry J. Hager

The GSEC reviewed the complaint of Harry J. Hager against actions of the Particular Synod of Chicago as set forth in communications from Harry J. Hager and the Particular Synod of Chicago.

In considering the complaint, the GSEC reviewed the papers and evidence submitted relating to the Particular Synod of Chicago "in the exercise of its administrative, or non-judicial functions," in accordance with the requirements of the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 2, The Disciplinary Procedures, Part III, V. *Complaints,* Section 1, p. 60.

The GSEC did not consider the substance of the matters upon which the

complaint was submitted, but reviewed whether the Particular Synod of Chicago, in its handling of the complaint against the procedures of the Classis of Chicago, followed the correct administrative procedures and functions in accordance with the requirements of *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, The Government, Part III, *The Particular Synod*, Sections 1 and 2, page 41 and of Article 6, The Transaction of Business, pages 42 and 43.

After careful consideration, the GSEC* concluded that the Particular Synod of Chicago in its actions on April 27, 1977, followed procedures consistent with the *Book of Church Order* of the RCA, and therefore, RECOMMENDS:

R-18. That General Synod confirms the actions of the Particular Synod of Chicago relating to the complaint of Harry J. Hager and dismisses the complaint. (ADOPTED)

*(NOTE: *Members of the General Synod Executive Committee and delegates of the General Synod who are members of the Particular Synod of Chicago and the Classis of Chicago, respectively, did not vote due to conflict of interest.)*

8. Ordination of Women

R-19. We RECOMMEND that General Synod request all classes to refrain from the ordination of women to the ministry of the Word until such time as the *Book of Church Order* is amended. (ADOPTED)

The Synod, upon receiving a motion from the floor

VOTED: To request the General Synod Executive Committee to study the scheduling of events at General Synod meetings.

9. Kirkside Consultation

As recommended at the April meeting of the GSEC, the Pensions Sub-Committee met with the Board of Directors of Kirkside to learn their views of the Report of the Kirkside Study Committee. The meeting was held on May 23 at Newark, N.J. All members of the GSEC Sub-Committee were present, as were twelve members of the Kirkside Board. The Rev. Christian Walvoord, Chairman of the Pensions Review Committee, General Synod 1977, attended as an observer.

During two hours of constructive discussion, it became clear that the Kirkside Board desired more time to develop alternative courses of action to that recommended by the Study Committee in its report to GSEC. Members of the Board did not dispute the content of the committee's report, but expressed the belief that there are still available options which have not been explored.

It was reported that at a meeting of the Kirkside Board held on May 3, 1977, the following actions were taken:

"That inasmuch as we have studied the report and find that additional proposals can and should be considered, we respectfully request that the GSEC take no further action until suitable and more adequate alternatives to the Feasibility Study Committee's recommendations can be prepared."

Further,

"That we request the GSEC to rescind its action previously taken to reject any applications and return of checks until a determination is made."

Following the discussion with the Kirkside Board, the GSEC sub-committee agreed to present the following recommendations to the GSEC:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R-20. THAT the General Synod instruct its Executive Committee to terminate the financial support of General Synod in the operation of the Kirkside home. (ADOPTED)

R-21. THAT the Board of Directors of Kirkside, Inc., be invited to present to the General Synod Executive Committee prior to (October 15, 1977) April 15, 1978, **alternative proposals to continue the home.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED*)

R-22. THAT if an acceptable alternative is not presented, the GSEC proceed with implementation of the termination of Kirkside according to the guidelines recommended by the Kirkside Study Committee. (ADOPTED)

The report of the Kirkside Study Committee follows.

*Deletions in parentheses
Additions in light face type

REPORT OF KIRKSIDE STUDY COMMITTEE

The General Synod of 1975 directed that a feasibility study concerning maintaining Kirkside as a denominational home be carried out by an objective group determined by the General Synod Executive Committee and Kirkside Board of Directors. This committee has been composed of Mr. Henry Norman, a nursing home administrator and member of the Reformed Church in Fulton, Illinois; The Rev. Gordon Curtis, administrator of a senior citizen apartment complex in Penn Yan, New York; The Rev. Arnold Van Lummel, pastor of the Grand Avenue Reformed Church of Asbury Park, New Jersey; Mr. Howard Geyer, an architect and member of the Delmar Reformed Church, Delmar, New York; and The Rev. Cornelius Van Heest, pastor of the Central Park Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan. The Rev. A. J. Poppen, Coordinator of Human Resources, met with the committee as a staff representative of The Board of Pensions.

The committee met three times in person and once by conference telephone call between July, 1976, and March, 1977. These meetings included an on-site visit to Kirkside. During this visit the committee was impressed by the atmosphere of the home, the obvious satisfaction of those in residence, and the helpfulness of the Kirkside staff. The committee was also impressed by the way the Kirkside Board has conscientiously sought to carry out its responsibilities.

The committee examined carefully the matter of Kirkside's purpose, both as it was originally intended in being established as a home for aged ministers, their spouses, missionaries, and full-time professional lay workers in the church and its present usage as an adult proprietary home, in which shelter, meals, housekeeping, and supervised medication is being provided to lay members from Reformed churches in some proximity to the home. It was noted that there is at present only one retired RCA minister in residence, and that all other residents fall outside of the original intent of the home when it was established.

There have, of course, been many societal changes in the years since Kirkside was established. Some which may have most directly affected the appeal of Kirkside to the professional church worker include an extended life expectancy, extended mobility, a relatively greater affluence among religious professionals which has made other housing options possible, and the increased awareness among older people that they do not want to be segregated from other age groups. The desire to maintain independence as long as possible is perhaps not new but has become a genuine possibility for many more elderly

religious professionals than it was twenty-five years ago.

It was determined that the change from professional church workers to the present occupancy of the home took place during recent years when it was not possible to get the required number of professional church workers to live there and for income purposes the attendance of others was solicited. The committee was not persuaded that the maintenance of a small local home for members of the Reformed Church in America who have not been professional church workers during their active careers is a proper business for the General Synod and The Board of Pensions. It believes rather that homes for retired lay members are properly the responsibility of more local judicatories such as churches, classes, and particular synods.

In order to determine retirement housing needs for professional church workers of the Reformed Church in America, a questionnaire was devised and mailed to 600 RCA ministers and their wives age 60 and older. The questionnaire addressed issues of preference as to residential lifestyle, location for retirement living, and the relative importance of 23 factors related to retirement living. More than 70% of the questionnaires were returned. There was little significance in differences of the responses when sorted according to preference of retirement area. Between the ages of 65 and 74, 76.4% of those who responded indicated a preference to life in a single-family detached house which they themselves owned. A second choice by a substantial margin was to live independently in an apartment. Although the percentages were smaller, the same preferences prevailed for the years after age 75. A Kirkside-type facility, described in the questionnaire as a "home for adults with supervision of meals and medication" became a third choice only for those age 75 and older. The reality of this judgement was confirmed by a review of all present and former residents of Kirkside and their age at time of entry. The average entry age of all present and former residents of Kirkside was 80.3 years of age. Only four of the 68 persons who have lived there during the life of the institution entered before the age of 70, and two of those did not remain.

Perhaps of even greater significance as far as Kirkside is concerned were the questionnaire results relating to factors which were regarded as most important and least important when selecting a place to live in retirement. The four most important considerations were as follows:

1. A place which permits me to remain independent as long as possible.
2. Availability of health care facilities.
3. Nearness to family and/or friends.
4. Convenience of shopping facilities.

In contrast, the four least important considerations were as follows: (least important listed first)

1. Daily contact with adults only.
2. The availability of non-ministerial work.
3. A sense that lots of life is everywhere around me, the vitality of the city.
4. Access to planned activities for senior citizens.

A study of these results indicates that Kirkside does not measure up well on at least three of the first four major considerations and that its location makes it undesirable for most from the standpoint of having family and friends nearby. The factor of "adults only" and "planned activities," both genuine attributes of

Kirkside life, rank as very unimportant. Other factors characteristic of Kirkside, such as "beautiful surroundings, quiet, peaceful scenery," "possible to attend a Reformed Church," and "the experience of all four seasons" all received fairly low importance ratings.

Study of questionnaire results led the committee to a consensus that Kirkside is not now meeting its original intent of providing a retirement home for ministers, missionaries, and other professional church workers, and that it is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future. Various options were explored, but the committee determined that the best use of the Kirkside assets would be to cease its operation as a denominational home for the elderly, sell the property, and use the assets to form the basis of the Helen Gould Shepard Foundation, the purpose of which shall be to enable retired ministers, missionaries, other professional church workers and their spouses to obtain housing where they may "remain independent as long as possible." (For example, such a foundation might offer down payments for the purchase of homes, either at normal or favorable interest rates or at no-interest if there were an agreement that upon the death of the retiree the property would revert to the foundation.) The intent would be to make housing available while at the same time maintaining the assets of the foundation for continued use in the future.

It was determined that General Synod does have legal control over Kirkside and its assets and therefore has the power to act. Further, it was the committee's belief that establishment of a foundation to assist with retirement housing needs of professional church workers of the Reformed Church in America would keep faith with the intent of the original purpose of Kirkside.

An issue which loomed very large in the thinking of the committee and received much attention during its deliberations was the matter of resettlement of present Kirkside residents, each of whom had entered the home with the expectation that they would be able to live there until such time as they needed nursing home care. It may be noted that seventh on the list of most important factors in the questionnaire mentioned above was this one: "A place from which I wouldn't have to move." The committee believed that the Reformed Church has both a moral and a legal responsibility to provide for the housing needs of those whom it has accepted into Kirkside. The committee is under no illusions that this transition will be an easy one. However, investigation of available facilities indicates that the residents presently at Kirkside will be able to be relocated. Because the monthly fee at Kirkside is only $250, it is not likely that housing can be found which will be satisfactory without some financial supplement over and above the $250 monthly fee. It is estimated that housing comparable to that now being provided by Kirkside can be obtained for approximately $400 per month, and a conservative actuarial estimate indicates that were the foundation to assume the obligation of the additional $150 per month per Kirkside resident the total expenditure would approximate $110,000.

Against this substantial cost of meeting an obligation to present residents, it should be recognized that the present assets of Kirkside are approximately $200,000. This does not include the value of the property itself, for which an appraisal has not yet been obtained but which is believed to be worth in excess of $100,000. It should also be understood that Kirkside deficits in recent years have been eroding the assets at the rate of approximately $10,000 per year, and that an additional $20,000 per year is contributed by churches and individuals in the RCA. Thus, compared with a lifetime subsidy of $110,000 to present Kirkside residents, there is an annual real cost of maintaining Kirkside of approximately $30,000 per year.

NOTES

GSEC-Appendix 1

SALARY ADMINISTRATION

Procedure for Administration of Salaries

Introduction

The General Synod Executive Committee (Sept. 1968, action 68-173) approved the functioning of a Liaison Committee (composed of two members appointed from the GSEC and two members appointed from the General Program Council), together with its other responsibilities, as the Executive Salary Committee with the understanding that it is accountable to the GSEC (not to the GPC) when it functions in this capacity.

Those employed by the General Synod and the General Program Council are classified according to degree of responsibility. There are six classifications, and the Liaison Committee has different responsibilities in the salary administration of each classification. These responsibilities are as follows:

Salary for Classification IA (General Secretary) is determined by the Liaison Committee for approval by the General Synod Executive Committee.

Salary for Classification IB (Executive Secretary) is determined by the General Secretary for approval by the General Secretary and are reviewed by the Liaison Committee.

Salary for Classification II (Executive Staff) Salaries are determined by the General Secretary for approval by the General Secretary and are reviewed by the Liaison Committee.

Classification III (Executive Staff) Salaries are determined by the Executive to whom the staff member is accountable for approval by the Executive Secretary and are reviewed by the Liaison Committee.

Classification IV, V, and VI (Professional Associates, Administrative, Secretarial, and Clerical Staff) Salaries are determined by the Executive to whom the staff member is accountable for approval by the Coordinator of Human Resrouces and the information is shared with the Liaison Committee.

As noted above, salary ranges have been established for six classifications, and "a" and "b" ranges in classifications I and VI. It is important to understand that in each case it is the *position* which has been classified and not the person who fills it. For each classification a midpoint has been set first and the low and high points in the range are then determined by multiplying the midpoint by 80% (or 85% in classifications IV, V, and VI) for the low, and 120% (or 115% in classifications IV, V, and VI) for the high. It is normal procedure for a new employee to be hired at or near the lowpoint in his or her range. Advancement in salary through the range then takes place through an annual merit increase based on a performance review. In addition to merit increases, cost of living adjustments are made to both salary and salary ranges as necessary.

Current GSEC approved salary ranges (April, 1977) are listed below. It should be noted that these figures include housing allowances. While staff members who travel have their costs covered by travel budgets which vary according to assignments, RCA staff members do not receive automobile allowances.

GSEC Approved Salary Midpoints and Ranges – April, 1977
(Includes Housing Allowance)

Executive Staff

CLASSIFICATION	POSITIONS	LOW (80%)	MID-POINT (100%)	HIGH (120%)
I A	General Secretary	22,980	28,725	34,470
I B	Executive Secretary	20,330	25,425	30,490
II	Operations, Secretary Program Interpretation, Secretary Human Resources, Coordinator Regional Services, Secretaries (4) World Ministries, Secretary Church Planning and Development, Secretary Executive Director, Reformed Church Women, Adult Voluntary Services	17,630	22,050	26,470
III	Information Services, Secretary Treasurer Assistant Treasurer Development, Secretaries (3) American Indian Ministries, Mexico and Adult Life, Secretary Evangelism and Renewal, Secretary Black Council, Executive Director Social Ministries, Secretary Asian Ministries, Secretary Media Coordinator; Director of TRAVARCA New Life and Evangelism, Secretary Production Coordinator Young Adult Ministries and Christian Nurture, Secretary	15,080	18,850	22,620
		(85%)	(100%)	(115%)
IV	Assistant Treasurer of Board of Pensions Associate for Leadership Development Associate for Urban Education	11,945	14,050	16,195
V	Administrative Staff	10,770	12,675	14,620
VIa	Secretarial Staff	9,470	11,150	12,870
VIb	Clerical Staff	7,695	9,050	10,445

GSEC-Appendix 2

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON WOMEN

Pursuing its assignment, namely:

1. to make a study of the extent to which women are involved in program and policy-making at all levels of the Reformed Church in America;

2. to review the language of the *Book of Church Order* (including the *Liturgy*) in the light of the issue of the role of women in the denomination;

3. to develop awareness of the issues of the involvement of women in the life of the denomination, the factors contributing to the present situation, and the changes which are needed;

4. to formulate some recommendations to the Reformed Church in America and its constituent parts to enable and facilitate the involvement of women in the life and work of the church;

the Task Force once again directed communications to denominational agencies, boards, and commissions requesting appointment of women members. Response to earlier letters was only moderately satisfying, and the Task Force recognized a continuing mandate for monitoring appointments.

Following an in-depth presentation by Dr. Barbara Fassler of Central College on Affirmative Action, action was taken to request the General Synod Executive Committee to prepare and submit a plan for the Reformed Church at the 1977 meeting of the General Synod. Representatives were appointed to consult with counterparts in the Black Council, so that the proposal presented to General Synod would be a combined effort, acceptable to both agencies.

Other significant actions during the year were: development of a Talent Bank to be implemented by Edith de Velder, which will serve as a resource for nominees for denominational appointments; requests to ministers to study and preach a sermon on the gifts of women and/or the role of women in the church.

Task Force members Lorraine Dreyman, Chairperson, Betty Boerman, Shirley Borgman, Donald De Young, Ruth Dickson, Rosa Felix, Lois Hector, Richard Lake, Sidney Mauldin, Sara Smith, Helen Taylor, Henrietta Van Wyke, Betsy Wolfe, and staff (ex-officio) Marion de Velder, Arie Brouwer, and Beth Marcus, are involved in study/reflection groups dealing with (a) organizational involvement of women; (b) language and concepts; (c) attitudes, roles, values. Eloise Van Heest, Albany Synod Reformed Church Women Consultant, serves as facilitator for the group.

The Task Force has requested $5,000 for the 1978 budget for meeting expenses.

GSEC-Appendix 3

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Article I

Name

Sec. 1 The name of this agency is The Board of Theological Education, The Reformed Church in America.

Article II

Purpose

Sec. 1 The members of The Board of Theological Education shall be the trustees of the corporation, "New Brunswick Theological Seminary" and of the corporation, "The Western Theological Seminary."

Sec. 2 The Board of Theological Education shall act in behalf of the General Synod for those cooperative efforts in theological education which are appropriate for the preparation of adequate professional leadership for the church.

Sec. 3 It shall keep the church informed about theological education and leadership.

Article III

Function

Sec. 1 The Board of Theological Education is the agency of the General Synod which shall exercise supervision over the theological seminaries.

Sec. 2 The Board of Theological Education shall exercise all of the powers granted to the Board of Trustees by the laws of the State of New Jersey for the corporation, "The New Brunswick Theological Seminary" and by the laws of the State of Michigan for the corporation, "Western Theological Seminary," except as otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation or the Constitution of the Board of Theological Education.

Sec. 3 It shall serve as the instrument for cooperation between the seminaries.

Sec. 4 It shall act as the agent of the General Synod in processing applications for dispensation from the professorial certificate.

Sec. 5 It shall conduct studies on the needs of theological education.

Sec. 6 It shall act as a resource group for the General Synod in determining credentials for those in the professional ministry of the church.

Sec. 7 It shall prepare and recommend to the General Synod a budget for the operation of the Board of Theological Education and appropriate division of that budget among the seminaries and/or General Synod and its agencies.

Sec. 8 It shall assist the administration of the seminaries in the preparation of their budgets and shall be responsible for the approval of an annual budget for each seminary.

Article IV

Membership

Sec. 1 The Board of Theological Education shall consist of twenty-seven members who shall be elected for a term of three years beginning the first day of July following their election by the General Synod and continuing until their successors shall be elected and qualified.

Sec. 2 Members shall be either ministers or laypersons of the Reformed Church in America.

Sec. 3 No member who has served two full terms (appointment or election to fill a vacancy of more than one half of a term shall constitute a full term for this purpose) shall be eligible for re-election until at least one year has elapsed.

Sec. 4 The Presidents of the seminaries shall be ex-officio members, without vote, of the Board.

Sec. 5 The General Secretary, R.C.A., or a representative appointed by the General Secretary, shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Board.

Article V

Nomination and Election

Sec. 1 All members shall be elected by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America at its annual meeting or at any special meeting.

Sec. 2 Two ministers and two laypersons shall be elected as members from nominees submitted by each Particular Synod of The Reformed Church in America. Each Particular Synod shall nominate one layperson or minister, as the case may be, for each office to be filled by election of the General Synod.

Sec. 3 Three members at large (either ministers or laypersons) shall be elected from nominees submitted by The General Synod's Committee on Nominations.

Sec. 4 The death, resignation or incompetence of a member (determined conclusively by the remaining members) shall create a vacancy. The transfer of the membership of a minister or layperson to a classis or church outside the Particular Synod which nominated the member shall create a vacancy. The disciplinary suspension or termination of the membership of a Board member in his/her church or classis shall create a vacancy. Vacancies shall be filled for the remaining portion of the term by General Synod at any regular or special meeting (whether called for that purpose or not) on nomination by the proper Particular Synod or by General Synod's Nominating Committee.

Article VI

Meetings

Sec. 1 The Board shall meet at least twice a year. The annual meeting shall be in the spring. The date, time and place of meetings shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Written notice of each stated meeting shall be by mail thirty days prior to the date of the meeting.

Sec. 2 Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Board or by the Executive Committee and shall be called by the Chairperson (and failing to act within ten days) then by the Secretary on written request of any five members of the Board. Written notice of special meetings, stating the nature of the business to be considered, shall be given to the members not less than ten days prior to each such meeting. No other business shall be considered at such special meetings except by two thirds vote of those present at the meeting.

Sec. 3 A majority of the membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 4 The agenda shall be mailed to the members at least ten days prior to the meeting of the Board.

Sec. 5 Every meeting of the Board shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Sec. 6 The Board may elect to meet in Executive session for a portion of its business meeting at which time only voting members shall be present unless the Board, while in Executive session, shall vote to invite other persons to be present.

Article VII

Officers

Sec. 1 The elected officers of the Board shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer, all of whom shall be members of the Board.

Sec. 2 The Presidents of the Seminaries shall serve as the Chief Executive officer of their respective Seminary Corporation.

Sec. 3 The Board of Theological Education may remove any officer at any time with or without cause, including the Presidents of the Seminaries subject however to any contractual rights.

Article VIII

Election of Officers

Sec. 1 In the election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, a written nominating ballot shall be considered in nomination. The Board shall then proceed to a written electing ballot. A majority of the total votes cast shall be necessary for election. If there is no majority on the first electing ballot, the voting shall be confined to the two receiving the greatest number of votes. If a person receives a majority of votes on the nominating ballot, the Board may vote to declare the nominating ballot an electing ballot.

Sec. 2 Each of the officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Board for a term of one year and, with the exception of the Treasurer, may not serve more than three terms.

Sec. 3 The term of each office shall begin July 1 and the person shall serve until his successor has been elected and has qualified for the office. A vacancy in any office shall be filled at the next regular or special meeting of the Board.

Sec. 4 The Presidents of the Seminaries shall be elected by a majority of the Board's members by secret ballot for a term not to exceed five years. A person may be re-elected as President of the Seminary.

Article IX

Duties of Officers

Sec. 1 The Chairperson shall call and preside at all regular and special meetings of the Board and Executive Committee, shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Board and shall perform such other duties and exercise such other powers as usually pertain to the office. The Chairperson shall be entitled to vote on all matters coming before the Board for decision. In consultation with the Presidents, shall prepare the agenda for the meetings of the Board. At the beginning of each academic year shall meet with the Presidents of the Seminaries to evaluate their work and the administration of the school and discuss with them both long and short term goals of their schools. The Chairperson shall also appoint a committee to evaluate the work of the President not less than one year prior to the expiration of the President's contract.

Sec. 2 The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in the performance of the duties of the office of Chairperson and in the absence of the Chairperson shall perform all the duties and exercise all the powers of that office and shall be responsible for worship and devotional services at the meetings of the Board.

Sec. 3 The Secretary shall prepare and mail notices of the meetings of the Board and of the Executive Committee. The Secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all proceedings of the Board and the Executive Committee, a separate minute book for all actions taken in Executive session, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to the office.

Sec. 4 The Treasurer shall be the fiscal officer of the Corporation and shall be responsible for the proper custody of all corporate funds and securities. The Treasurer shall be responsible for making certain that proper books of account setting forth all corporate receipts, disbursements and assets are kept and shall be responsible for making certain that all corporate funds are deposited in such banks and other depositories as the Board shall designate. The Treasurer shall be bonded with the premium being paid by the Board. The Treasurer shall be responsible for paying the expenses of the Board from the Board's account maintained for this purpose. The Treasurer shall also perform such other duties as may be directed by the Board or by the Executive Committee.

Sec. 5 The Presidents of the Seminaries shall be the chief Executive Officer of their respective corporation whose duties shall include those defined in the Articles of Incorporation, the position description as prepared by the Board of Theological Education and the provisions of the contract at the time of employment. The Presidents work shall be reviewed annually by the Chairperson of the Board. Prior to the renewal of their contracts their work shall be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. The Presidents shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Theological Education subject to any contractual rights.

Article X

The Executive Committee

Sec. 1 The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chairperson of the Board, the Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and three other members of the Board who shall be elected at the annual meeting according to the same method used for the election of officers. The General Secretary, R.C.A., or a representative appointed by the General Secretary, shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Executive Committee.

Sec. 2 The Executive Committee shall have and may exercise all of the authority of the Board. It shall not have authority to fill vacancies in its own membership or in the membership of the Board, authority to change rank of a member of the faculty or authority to approve the appointment of any person to the faculty for a period exceeding one full academic year. It shall have power to suspend but not remove any officer. The designation of this Executive Committee shall not operate to relieve any member of the Board of any responsibility imposed by law as trustees of the two Seminary corporations.

Sec. 3 Each member of the Executive Committee shall hold office beginning the first day of July following the annual meeting of the Board and until his successor is elected and qualified.

Sec. 4 The Presidents of the Seminaries shall attend all meetings of the Executive Committee unless otherwise requested.

Sec. 5 Regular meetings of the Executive Committee may be held without notice at such time and place as the Executive Committee may fix from

time to time by resolution. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chairman and shall be called by him on written request of any two members of the Committee upon one day's oral or five days' written notice stating the place, date and hour of the meeting. Any member of the Executive Committee may waive in writing notice of any meeting and no notice of any meeting need be given to any member thereof who attends in person. The notice of a meeting of the Executive Committee need not state the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting.

Sec. 6 A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting thereof and an action of the Executive Committee must be authorized by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present.

Sec. 7 Any action that may be taken by the Executive Committee at a meeting may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so to be taken, shall be signed before such action by all of the members of the Executive Committee.

Sec. 8 Any member of the Executive Committee may be removed at any time with or without cause by resolution adopted by a majority of the full membership of the Board. Any member of the Executive Committee may resign from the Executive Committee at any time by giving written notice to the Chairperson or Secretary of the Board, and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Sec. 9 Any vacancy in the Executive Committee may be filled by an election according to the usual manner at the next regular or special meeting of the Board.

Sec. 10 The Executive Committee may fix its own rules of procedure which shall not be inconsistent with the Constitution of the Board of Theological Education. It shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report same to the Board of Trustees for its approval at the meeting thereof held next after the proceedings shall have been taken. The Board may revoke or alter any action taken by the Executive Committee subject to the contract rights of third parties.

Article XI

Committees

Sec. 1 The Board shall establish such committees as it deems necessary to carry on its work.

Sec. 2 The establishment of such committees, their duties and responsibilities, shall be described in the By-Laws of the Board and shall be consistent with this Constitution.

Article XII

Adoption of The Constitution

Sec. 1 This Constitution, when adopted by the Board of Theological Education and the General Synod of The Reformed Church in America, shall supersede all previous documents controlling the affairs of The New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary.

Article XIII

Amendment of The Constitution

Sec. 1 This Constitution may be amended by the General Synod of The Reformed Church in America or by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Theological Education at any regular or special meeting provided that the Board shall not make or amend any section pertaining to the number, qualification, classification, term of office, manner of election, or removal of members. Written notice of the proposed amendment must be given at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting. **Amendments become effective upon approval by the General Synod. (*BCO, RCA*, Part IV, Article 7, Section 3).***

*Amendments in bold face type

GSEC-Appendix 4

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINORITY COUNCILS AND DENOMINATIONAL POLICY BODIES

A Brief History

Three significant events occurred within the Reformed Church in America in the years 1969, 1972 and 1974; in these years were formed three minority councils: the Black Council, the American Indian Council, and the Hispanic Council. During the seventies, the church has dealt with several issues concerning the responsibilities and relationships of the minority councils and various denominational policy bodies such as the General Program Council, the General Synod Executive Committee, and the Board of Theological Education. The church discovered a need for some clear definitions for the relationships and responsibilities of the councils and policy bodies within our denomination.

Formation of the Joint Committee

The General Synod Executive Committee, at its meeting of February 5 and 6, 1975, formed a joint committee composed of representatives and executives of the minority councils and General Synod's major policy bodies. GSEC's action 75-6 follows in its entirety:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the GSEC approve, and send to each of the participating bodies for their approval, the appointment of a joint committee on responsibilities and relationships of minority councils and denominational policy bodies; and further,
>
> that this committee be composed of the executive, where applicable, and one or two members of the GSEC, GPC, Board of Theological Education, Black Council, American Indian Council and Hispanic Council, appointed by the respective bodies; and further,
>
> that this committee present progress reports to the October, 1975, and January, 1976, meetings of the GSEC and a final report to the April, 1976, meeting of the GSEC, including recommendations for GSEC's referral to the other participating bodies; and further,
>
> that each participating unit bear the costs of its representatives' expenses at meetings of the joint committee."

Because the Joint Committee began its work later than anticipated, GSEC at its meeting in April, 1976, extended the working life of the Joint Committee with the following action:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the Joint Committee . . . be authorized to continue its assigned task for the maximum period of one year; and further,
>
> that it present progress reports to the GSEC with a final report to be made NOT LATER THAN the April, 1977, meeting of the GSEC, including recommendations for GSEC's referral to the other participating bodies; and further,
>
> that the present progress report be included in the GSEC Annual Report to the 1976 General Synod."

Overtures Referred to the Joint Committee

GSEC, at its meeting in October, 1975, responded to two overtures adopted by the 1975 General Synod; two referrals were made to the Joint Committee (GSEC's actions 75-59 and 75-64) and they follow in their entirety:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies be asked to study representations for the Black Council and other minority groups on the GSEC."
>
> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED that the Chairman of the GSEC convey to the Chairman of the Nominations Committee the intention to provide for minority representation on the GSEC and request him to encourage the consideration of minorities by the Particular Synods; and further,

> that the Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies be asked to study this issue."

Both of these referrals were dealt with by the committee; see the Joint Committee's RECOMMENDATION No. 3 later in this report.

The General Synod, at its meeting in June of 1976, adopted a recommendation from the Overtures Committee dealing with Overture 31. General Synod's action (*MGS*, 1976, p. 115) follows in its entirety:

> "that the matter of the uniformity of accountability be referred to the Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies for study and recommendation."

The substance of this referral was treated by the committee; see the Joint Committee's RECOMMENDATIONS No. 4 and No. 6, and see also the several parts of this report dealing with relationships and accountability.

Joint Committee Membership

Original appointees to serve on the Joint Committee are listed:

> Bert E. Van Soest, Marion de Velder (GSEC); Nida Thomas, George W. Crumley, Jr., Arie R. Brouwer (GPC); Howard G. Hageman, Raymond Weiss (BTE); Alberto Espada-Matta, Efrain Felix, Raymond Rivera (Hispanic Council); David Beale, Clyde Watts, M. William Howard (Black Council); Leeds Soatikee, Harold Brown (American Indian Council); Carol Hageman (Observer from Reformed Church Women).

Substitutes, replacements and additions include the following persons:

> (GSEC) Isaac Rottenberg; (American Indian Council) Berle Kanseah; (Black Council) Sarah Smith; and (Observer from the *Church Herald*) Leroy Koopman.

Other matters of membership on the Joint Committee were treated as follows:

A. The committee received a communication from the Reformed Church Women, requesting representation on the committee. The communication was referred to the GSEC for its consideration as to how the Reformed Church Women can or should be related to the Joint Committee. GSEC, at its February, 1976, meeting, took action "to authorize the Reformed Church Women to be invited to send an observer to the meetings of the Joint Committee." Accordingly, the Reformed Church Women representative was received as a non-voting participant by the Joint Committee.

B. During one of its sessions, the committee became concerned that there should be participation of representative members from the Editorial Council of *The Church Herald*. Accordingly, the committee requested GSEC to invite the Editorial Council to name up to three full participating members to serve on the Joint Committee. GSEC, at its June, 1976, meeting, took action to invite the President of the Editorial Council of the *Church Herald* to name up to three full participating members to the Joint Committee. The Publication

Committee of the *Church Herald*, at its October, 1976, meeting, took action to name *one observer* instead of three full members, in accord with an extant *Church Herald* policy concerning official representation to RCA agencies. Accordingly, the *Church Herald* observer was received as a non-voting participant by the Joint Committee.

Joint Committee Functioning Style

The matter of selecting a chairperson for the Joint Committee was dealt with at the committee's first meeting. Rather than have a permanent chairman or chairwoman, it was voted that "the chairperson for each subsequent meeting be determined at the end of that meeting." Listed below are the names of the several chairmen, together with the dates and places of the committee's meetings:

December 16, 1975	New York City	Bert Van Soest
February 26, 27, 1976	New York City	M. William Howard
June 8-10, 1976	Warwick Conf. Center	George W. Crumley, Jr.
November 30, 1976	New York City	Harold Brown
March 11, 1977	New York City	Raymond Rivera

Data-gathering was a major part of the committee's early life; conjointly, a general review of each group's history, organization, relationships and responsibilities was undertaken. Each group constituting the Joint Committee shared its constitution and by-laws; membership lists and composition by relevant categories; goals and objectives; the history and current nature of its relationship to the other groups, at both policy and staff levels; and any issues which ought to be part of the committee's agenda.

It was agreed that the General Secretary would inform the judicatories of the church, especially the Particular Synods, through correspondence and news releases, etc., of the work of the committee, to provide an opportunity for them to raise their concerns. Letters and news releases were prepared and distributed and a half-dozen responses were brought to the attention of the committee.

An inquiry was made of several other denominations, seeking information regarding their structuring of minority concerns and their experience in working relationships with minority groups. Some responses were received and studied.

The committee, in discussing the issues before it, categorized them and listed them:

Purpose of Minority Councils	Minority Staff
Delegation	Affirmative Action
Relationships	Funding
Liaison	Editorial Policy

Under each of the above eight categories were placed the various issues relating thereto, in the form of questions, statements and aspirations. This lengthy collection of material, augmented from time to time during the life of the Joint Committee, constituted the major agenda.

Purpose and Basis for Minority Councils

The Joint Committee prepared the following two statements treating the

subject of minority councils' purposes and dealing with the theological basis therefor. Both documents are hereby recommended to the General Synod for adoption as statements of General Synod.

R-1. **The General Synod of 1977 adopts the following:**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Minority councils serve many noteworthy purposes in the life of our denomination.

We recognize the desire and need to maintain the identity of the various racial groups within the RCA constituency, for the enrichment of all. There is legitimacy and necessity for the expression by Christian cultural groups of their unique understandings and positions in the church and in the world. Further, we value the sharing of theological perspectives and liturgical traditions; these are among the diverse gifts which the church has been given by God to be enjoyed by all in various degrees.

Minority councils encourage self-determination among the young and old of their special constituencies, and they promote self-reliance as minority peoples struggle for liberation from various yokes of oppression. Further, each minority council is inherently equipped to recruit and develop leadership from within its own cultural group.

Minority councils—through meetings, caucuses and consultations—are able to discern the needs of minority groups in the church and in secular society and to share and interpret these needs with the wider denomination. Through membership on denominational policy bodies and through participation in RCA programs, minority brothers and sisters enrich and implement Christ's mission along with the membership and participation of the fellow-Christian white majority. Further, with the special insights possessed primarily by those who stand *within* a minority group, minority councils hold special endowment and responsibility to advocate, monitor and coordinate programs by and for minority groups.

We must confess the need of the church and the world for the prophetic word which minority councils are called upon by God to utter in his behalf. Injustices of the past and present must be compensated for, and the war on disease of racism must be waged until our oneness in the family of God's children is accomplished in fact as well as in principle. Further, minority councils are in a favored position to stimulate the church and the world to protect and preserve the rights, responsibilities and privileges of minority groups.

In this interim between reality and the accomplishment of the ideal, minority councils fulfill a vital role in the world's history and in the building of the Kingdom of God.

R-2. **The General Synod of 1977 adopts the following:**

THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We believe that God has created from one, every people on the earth and that in the church there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

We confess that our sin has led us to erect religious, cultural, economic and political barriers along ethnic and racial lines and that these barriers have separated us from one another and deprived many of us of the right to develop our personal and corporate identities.

We believe that God in Christ has broken down the dividing walls of partition and that the differences which have divided us have become the diversities which enrich us.

We believe that God will accomplish His purpose of gathering together in the new world people of every tongue and tribe and nation and that the glory of human diversity will enrich the new Heaven and the new earth.

We believe that the Body of Christ will grow and be built up in love only when each organ is in good health and able to function freely and that the parts which have been deprived of their full membership in the Body need an opportunity to discover themselves as members of the Body each in its own way.

We believe that this unity of the Body with its diversity of members is given to the church as a witness to the world and that we must use our unique gifts and special insights to equip one another for the continual renewal of the church and its ministry in a divided and broken world.

Council Constitutions

Concerning constitutions and by-laws, the committee noted a provision of the RCA *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 7, Section 3 (on page 48): "The constitution or enabling document of every agency, board, and institution officially related to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, with its amendments, shall be approved by the general synod." Recognizing that none of the enabling documents, by-laws or constitutions of the minority councils has been approved by the General Synod, the Joint Committee requested GSEC to take steps to have the three minority councils submit their constitutions through GSEC to the 1978 General Synod.

Council Representation and Policy Body Representation

The Joint Committee studied the history of participation and non-participation, by minority groups in denomination policy bodies, and found that some, if not most, of our major RCA policy bodies have not had and/or do not now have representation from the minority councils. The committee believes that it is important to the RCA that we have continuing participation by racial minorities on its policy bodies; further, it is important that some extraordinary means be found to insure minority council participation. We endorse the concept of having each minority council nominate at least one delegate to serve as a full member of each policy body which the councils regard as important to their concerns; these delegates would serve in addition to those minority group members who may be elected under the customary procedures.

R-3. The General Synod of 1977 requests its General Synod Executive Committee, its General Program Council, its Board of Theological

Education, and all of its General Synod committees and commissions, to take such steps as are necessary to change their constitutions and enabling documents to allow representation of at least one person from each of the RCA's minority councils, with nominations originating from the councils themselves.

The question arose concerning the desirability and feasibility of providing for a reciprocal relationship concerning membership; i.e., delegates from denominational policy bodies serving on the minority councils. Respecting and agreeing with the need for minority councils to be composed only of members of minorities, this matter was decided by the conclusion of "No."

Funding and Finances

Funding and finances comprised an area of study. The Joint Committee wishes to share some information with the church, in hopes that a better understanding of financial matters relating to the minority councils and the policy bodies will resolve some questions in the minds and hearts of RCA constituents.

A. The salary and prerequisites of the Executive Director of the Black Council and the National Secretary of the Hispanic Council are paid from the General Synod Mission Budget. (At present, there is no salaried executive officer for the American Indian Council.)

B. Operational expenses of the minority councils (primarily meetings of the councils) are paid for from the General Synod Assessment Budget—which budget funds similar expenses of other General Synod agencies, commissions, and committees.

C. Most of the program activities of the minority councils are programs of the General Program Council and/or particular synods or classes which are being carried out with the cooperation of the monority councils, and thus these programs are funded by the GPC, the synod or classis involved, or by the RCA agency which has adopted the program. Funding for such programs comes from the General Synod Mission Budget or from the benevolence budgets of other RCA bodies. For example: Minority scholarships are funded by the Office of Human Resources and the General Program Council; Black Leadership Development is funded by GPC, some synods and some classes .

R-4. The General Synod of 1977 requests each minority council to submit to each General Synod its income and expenditure report for the prior calendar year, with special emphasis on the correlation of income and expenditures vis-a-vis programs and their funding sources;

General Synod shall review the reports and share the information with the church at large through the usual publication of its *Acts and Proceedings.*

Accountability and Relationships of Staff

Many questions have arisen in the church about the accountability relationships of minority council executive officers to (a) the minority councils, and (b) to the General Synod and the General Program Council. The Joint Committee has taken the matter under advisement and study, and herewith shares some information which we trust will clarify and extend our

understanding of these relationships.

A. The Executive Director of the Black Council, and the National Secretary of the Hispanic Council are generally accountable to the minority council for which each works. However, there is an element of split accountability;

   1. In the carrying out of specific programs, such as those programs approved and funded by the General Program Council, the minority council executive officer is fully accountable to the appropriate executive of the GPC.

   2. In the advocacy role on behalf of the minority council and its membership, the minority council executive officer is fully accountable to his/her minority council.

B. The American Indian Council does not presently enjoy the services of a full time executive officer. Our denomination's Secretary for Parish Life and American Indian Ministries has been relating to the American Indian Council, but is unable to give it the attention that it needs and deserves.

R-5. The General Synod of 1977 requests the General Program Council to establish a full-time or part-time position of Executive Director for the American Indian Council.

C. Because there are such wide differences between and among the minority councils and their memberships, there is much variety in the functioning of the minority councils and their executive officers. It would be unwise to attempt to have the minority councils function with identical styles and structures. Each minority council has to function in a manner appropriate to its own goals and objectives, suitable to its distinctive programs and activities.

Accountability and Relationships of Councils

There are questions and discussions within the church at large treating of the accountability relationships of the minority councils to the General Synod. The constituency is aware of the fact that there is an annual review by the General Synod of the programs and activities of the General Program Council; the Board of Theological Education; the seminaries and the colleges; and other boards, agencies, commissions and committees reporting directly to the General Synod and/or its General Synod Executive Committee. While it is true that each of the minority councils presents its annual report to General Synod, it is true also that there is no provision for review of these reports by an established General Synod Review Committee. The Joint Committee deems it wise to establish such a procedure for the minority councils, which are also creations of the General Synod either directly by General Synod or indirectly through its General Program Council.

R-6. The General Synod of 1977 requests its Executive Committee to study the advisability of amending the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 6, Sections 1 and 2, in such manner that there shall be an annual review by General Synod of the activities of the minority councils, with provision for a summary report which may include recommendations relating to the work and activity of the minority councils;

The recommendations of GSEC relating to this request shall be reported to the General Synod of 1978.

The Joint Committee understands and wishes to share the understanding with the church at large that the minority councils are not accountable to the Particular Synods or to the Classes or to a local Congregation; conversely, a minority council has no authority to intervene in the jurisdictional affairs of any of the judicatories of the RCA.

The Joint Committee further understands and desires to have the church at large understand that in the relationship between minority councils and denominational policy bodies:

A. No minority council has authority over the proposed actions or activities of any denominational policy body;

B. No denominational policy body save the General Synod and its Executive Committee has authority over the proposed actions or activities of any minority council.

C. Only the RCA organization or executive which has authority over a specific program may exercise "veto power" over that particular program and administrators of that program.

D. It is conducive to good order, harmonious relationships and fruitfulness of effort when denominational policy bodies, judicatories, and minority councils consult each other, work together, and cooperate in programs and activities of mutual interest and concern.

E. In the interests of mutual respect, justice and orderly government of our church, it behooves each person and organization to use every legitimate established mechanism of the Reformed Church in America at all levels and in every judicatory, observing the spirit and the letter of the *Book of Church Order.*

F. In those instances in which there is misunderstanding between or among denominational policy bodies and minority councils, and when an impasse is realized, the General Secretary of the RCA may be called upon to act as "ombudsman" and thus help to resolve the matter.

Closing Word

In the days of the early Church, Paul wrote to Titus an epistle which is part of the Holy Scriptures. Paul reminded Titus why he had left him in Crete: "that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting." (Titus 1:5) The task of Titus was to help the Church meet its needs in order that the work of Christ be furthered in that place. In another letter, this to the Corinthian Christians, Paul exhorted them to "Let all things be done decently and in order." (I Corinthians 14:40) It is the continuous task of the Church to examine itself and to re-form itself in the light of the will of God for a particular time and circumstance.

The Joint Committee trusts that its studies, report and recommendations concerning the relationships and responsibilities of minority councils and denominational policy bodies will have contributed to the harmonious effectiveness of the Reformed Church in America. Grace and Peace to you!

GSEC-Appendix 4a

REVISION OF THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINORITY COUNCILS AND DENOMINATIONAL POLICY BODIES RELATING TO AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

A sub-committee on Affirmative Action was appointed in June 1976 to prepare a proposed plan of affirmative action for consideration by the 1977 General Synod. At its November 16, 17, 1976, meeting, the General Synod Executive Committee took the following action:

> "It was moved, seconded and CARRIED to present an Affirmative Action plan to the 1977 General Synod."

Representatives from the Task Force on Women were invited to meet with the sub-committee appointed by the Joint Committee in coordinating this plan. The sub-committee presented a proposed plan to the Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies at its March 11, 1977, meeting and the Joint Committee approved it.

The Task Force on Women on March 22 to 24 reviewed the Report of the Joint Committee relating to an Affirmative Action Plan and after careful study and suggested revisions, took an action:

> "That we agree with the plan in principle but convey to the GSEC for its consideration the specific suggestions made during the discussion."

These suggestions were incorporated in this report and were submitted to the GSEC at its April 13-14 meeting:

PREAMBLE

In joy we recognize all the gifts which God has given to all his people. Each person has been endowed with several gifts. Within the family of God every encouragement and opportunity should be provided for all persons to develop and share their gifts to the fullest potential.

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you are called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift . . . And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ . . . speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love." Ephesians 4:4-16

R-7. Therefore, the following affirmation is RECOMMENDED:

POLICY STATEMENT

The General Synod of 1977 recommends that each judicatory, institution, agency, board, committee, and commission of the Reformed Church in America affirms its responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity to all employees and those engaged in providing additional consultant and facilitator services, regardless of racial, ethnic, cultural, age, or sexual differences:

And to fullfill this responsibility the (name of organization) affirms its intention to establish a program to review and modify as may be necessary, its present policies and practices related to the above.

"Each judicatory" in the above "Policy Statement" is understood to include consistory, classis and particular synod. In the implementation of R-8 following, it should be understood that each particular synod exercises its "general superintendence" role over each classis within its bounds (see *Book of Church Order,* Part III, Article 2, Section 1, p. 41) and that each classis exercises its "general superintendence" role over each church consistory within its bounds (see *BCO,* Part II, Article 2, Section 1, p. 24).

R-8. WE RECOMMEND that General Synod adopt the following:

BASIC STEPS TO DEVELOP AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM

BY SEPTEMBER, 1977 - **An Affirmative Action Coordinator should be designated to whom each particular synod, college, seminary, agency, board, committee and commission, minority council, the Editorial Council, and Reformed Church Women, will report its activities. This person shall coordinate RCA's affirmative action efforts.**

BY NOVEMBER, 1977 - **A meeting should be held to acquaint representative(s) designated by each particular synod, college, seminary, minority council, the Editorial Council and Reformed Church Women, with the resolution approved by General Synod and the necessary requirements for implementation.**

BY MARCH, 1978 - **In affirmation of the policy recommended by the General Synod of 1977, each particular synod, institution, agency, board, committee, commission, minority council, the Editorial Council and Reformed Church Women should have developed and approved an appropriate non-discrimination resolution or statement which includes specific goals and objectives.**

Each of the above bodies should identify an Affirmative Action Coordinator who serves as a liaison with the RCA Affirmative Action Coordinator. This person is given the authority and assigned the responsibility for the coordination and implementation of the adopted affirmative action program.

BY MAY, 1978 - **Each of the above bodies should have revised the application for employment and application for committee membership, etc., to delete sex bias language.**

Each of the above bodies should have developed a grievance procedure.

BY JUNE, 1978 - **A progress report should be prepared for presentation at General Synod.**

BY JULY, 1978 - **Each of the above bodies should have completed a review of the entire employment system to identify barriers to equal**

employment opportunity and completed a work force analysis by age, sex and race and determined the extent of underutilization.

BY SEPTEMBER, 1978 - Each of the above bodies having employment responsibilities should have developed where appropriate specific, measurable, and attainable hiring and promotion goals with target dates in each area where underutilization of minorities, age, and sexual groups has been identified. The following need review and action:

1. Recruitment
2. Selective process
3. Upward mobility
4. Wage and salary structure
5. Benefits and conditions of employment
6. Layoffs; recall; terminations; demotions; discharge; disciplinary action

BY JUNE, 1979 - All judicatories, institutions, agencies, boards, committees and commissions should have completed a review and modified its practices according to the policy statement.

Immediate needs suggested for the initiation of a plan for Affirmative Action include:

1. A designated office for the Affirmative Action *Coordinator* (suggested Human Resources)
2. Talent *files* created by Reformed Church Women and minority councils.
3. A procedure and process for keeping up-to-date information.

R-9. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod of 1977 adopt the following:

ANNUAL BUDGET

I. PERSONNEL (based on RCA 1976-77 salary ranges with Low, Midpoint, and High salaries given)

	Low	Midpoint	High
Director (Classification III)	$15,080	$18,850	$22,620
Secretary (Class VIa)	9,470	11,150	12,870

II. OTHER

Telephone (purchase/installation for 2 phones)	200
General Supplies	500
Office Equipment (newly purchased)	
1 typewriter	625
1 dictaphone machine	400
1 transcriber	400
1 executive desk	250
1 executive chair	150
1 secretary desk	175
1 secretary chair	95
1 credenza	200
1 4-drawer file cabinet	165

PERSONNEL (USING MIDPOINT SCALE)	$30,000
OTHER	3,160
TOTAL	$33,160

GSEC-Appendix 5

PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION REPORT

Once again during 1976 the Promotion and Communication staff has been involved in a wide variety of projects. The writing and designing of brochures, ads, and *Mission of the Month* materials is an ongoing task. Packets, dais signs, and banners were produced for major RCA events, such as the meeting of General Synod and *Jubilee/76.* The play *Heritage and Horizon,* written and directed by Lois Joice, was first performed at General Synod and then taken on tour to eighteen centers of Reformed Church membership.

Other productions included the drawing and printing of several new maps of RCA mission areas, the writing of a dozen acquaintance sheets on recently appointed or re-assigned missionaries, and the design of a church growth logo which is being widely used on printed materials.

As much as time permits, PAC staff make their services available to other groups and agencies within the denomination. For instance, three folders were prepared for Reformed Church Women to help them in their fund raising efforts for GPC programs. Several items were also produced for the Hispanic Council. Editorial services are provided for other staff members and a number of communication workshops were conducted in various sections of the church. The Communication Office also assumes responsibility for the printing and distribution of *Theological Reflections,* which is published by the GPC Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal.

Two PAC productions enjoyed particularly wide circulation during 1976. The booklet *REFORMED CHURCH GROWTH: PERSPECTIVES AND PROPOSALS* became the basis of numerous discussions and consultations across the church as the groundwork was being laid for a major denominational thrust in the area of church growth. The *Mission Projects* booklet, which for the first time included historical information on all fields, was used in many places for mission education as well as promotional purposes.

HOTLINE has a new look. It also has a larger readership. Constant efforts are being made to upgrade the *HOTLINE* content and improve the delivery system. It is now being printed and mailed from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

It is encouraging to observe that the number of churches participating in the Mission of the Month program has increased. Benevolence income from this program has also increased. Contributions through the Link of Love appeal were less in 1976 than during the previous year. Income through Partnership in Mission (PIM) shares was up in 1976, but, as we also noted in last year's report, it has proven to be quite difficult to develop an equally enthusiastic support for the project budget. It should be stressed once again that the Secretaries for Development welcome opportunities to discuss with consistories and other groups in local congregations the exciting possibilities for partnership in mission through projects.

TRAVARCA continued its membership plan program during the past year with the pleasant result that more than 300 films per month were processed. Statistics tend to be cold, but it is important to realize that 3600 film bookings in a year mean that local churches received much needed resources in the areas of worship, outreach, education, and stewardship. The TRAVARCA membership plan has also proven to be sound from an economic

point of view. The plan yields enough income to cover a variety of TRAVARCA costs, so that denominational benevolence funds do not need to be used for those purposes.

The weekly radio news program *Hotline of the Air* is currently heard in the mid-West and the East, and thus is regularly available to more than one half of the Reformed Church's constituency. During the past year the Media Coordinator has also worked with the Hispanic Council in the inter-denominational production of Spanish language radio spots. He also has assisted in the marketing of a Bicentennial radio series called *Women of Faith,* and produced NBC's radio preaching program *Art of Living* during the summer of 1976, which featured Dr. Herman J. Ridder of Central Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

There has been a shift in work responsibilities for most PAC staff members. Some of these are due to budget considerations. In order to compensate for the rapidly rising costs of printing, PAC staff are doing a substantial part of the art and design work themselves. Mrs. Margaret Schiffert and Ms. Miriam Acevedo, who have joined our staff during the past year, both have skills in those areas.

The Reformed Church Growth Fund Drive called for some changes as well. Mrs. Lois Joice and Mr. Peter Paulsen have assumed major responsibilities in this drive as director and associate director. This has necessitated a shift in their responsibilties and priorities during this year. It has also involved the transfer of some of their previous responsibilities to other staff members.

The overarching interest of the Office of Promotion and Communication lies in communicating the exciting story of RCA ministries and in securing the support of the whole church for the total GPC program at home and abroad. We deeply appreciate the wonderful assistance we have received from GPC representatives who report regularly to classes and local congregations. We invite any RCA members to communicate their ideas and concerns to us as well. Good communication tends to build community, and a deeper sense of community will strengthen our common commitment to support the work that the church is doing in the service of Christ's Kingdom.

GSEC-Appendix 6

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance serves the General Synod, the Board of Direction, the General Program Council and the Board of Pensions. In addition, special financial services are provided by its staff to Reformed Church Women, the seminaries and the colleges. This report will cover the major areas of the committee's work in 1976.

Investments

The Committee on Finance monitors the investment counsellors engaged for the Board of Direction, the General Program Council and the Board of Pensions. Several years ago, the committee moved from one investment counsellor to four. During 1975, based on a careful review of performance, one firm was discharged. During 1976, another firm resigned because the RCA account was too small for their criteria. Thus, the investment portfolios are now managed by the Old Kent Bank and Trust Co., of Grand Rapids,

Michigan, and the United States Trust Co., of New York. At its November meeting, the committee set in motion a careful and thorough study on investment performance and investment guidelines. The results of these studies will be implemented in 1977.

Expense Ceiling for the General Program Council

The Committee on Finance annually reviews the proposed expense ceiling for the General Program Council. The committee conducts its review to determine the validity of the income projections and the potential effect of the expense ceiling on the reserves. The General Program Council recommends an expense ceiling to the Trustees of the General Program Council, and the Committee on Finance reviews it for endorsement.

Supplementing the Church Building Fund Through General Reserves

The Special Committee on Church Funding, which conducted an intensive review of borrowing practices for local church needs, recommended studying the feasibility of using the general reserves for supplementing the Church Building Fund. The General Program Council Executive Committee reviewed this, and asked the Committee on Finance to study it. At its November, 1976 meeting, the Committee on Finance recommended using the General Reserves for supplementing the Church Building Fund. A restriction of 25% has been placed on the amount of general reserves available for Church Building Fund loans. The General Fund will provide a cushion for unusual cash needs or loan needs in the Church Building Fund. In this way, the Church Building Fund can be used to the maximum but still retain the necessary financial flexibility.

Auditing

Coopers & Lybrand were retained as auditors in 1974. After conducting the 1975 audit, representatives of the firm met with the Auditing Subcommittee. This annual meeting between the committee and the auditors focuses on the previous year's audit and the adequacy of the financial system and controls. Each year the auditors present recommended changes, and the committee reviews them for their possible implementation.

Financial Policies

The Committee on Finance develops financial policies for the groups it serves, and refers them to the proper Boards for their adoption. As an example of the policy efforts of the committee, the *Policy on Banking* follows:

POLICY ON BANKING

The Committee on Finance shall provide commercial banking services to the corporations it serves.

Designation

The Committee on Finance shall recommend a commercial bank to the corporations. After appropriate corporate resolutions have been adopted, the Committee shall monitor the banking services provided.

Signatories

The following staff members shall be authorized to sign checks, singly: The Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, the Secretary for Operations, and the Executive Secretary.

Borrowing

The Treasurer shall be authorized to borrow funds for short-term cash needs. The following procedure must be followed:

1. **The note must be cosigned by either the Secretary for Operations or the Executive Secretary;**
2. **The Investment Subcommittee must approve short-term borrowing beyond $300,000.**
3. **The notes must mature prior to 120 days.**

Short-Term Investments

The Treasurer shall be responsible for investing cash on a short-term basis. The funds shall be invested through the commercial banks serving the R.C.A., money management funds previously approved by the Committee on Finance or U.S. Government obligations.

GSEC-Appendix 7

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Based on a conviction that the people of the Reformed Church in America are its greatest asset, the Office of Human Resources provides a broad range of personnel services to the professional church workers, agencies, and institutions of the church. These services are intended to enable the best possible stewardship of the talents, energy, and commitment of those who carry out their mission and witness through employment by the church.

A major effort of the OHR is directed toward helping pastors find appropriate fields of service and assisting churches which are searching for professional leadership. During the past year, the profile system has been completely revised and re-programmed. In spite of well-publicized restrictions in pastoral mobility, recent months have seen a steady flow of churches seeking pastors, directors of religious education, and other staff members. In response to such requests, hundreds of minister's profile forms are sent out throughout the year.

New opportunities for ordained ministers are being sought and shared with interested persons. Among these are positions in English-language congregations overseas, chaplaincies of various kinds, and in non-RCA congregations. Church workers who feel themselves at critical decision points in their careers take advantage of the availability of a nationwide ecumenical network of Church Career Development Centers. Counseling services have been available through the insurance program of the Board of Pensions or, when no illness is involved, through referral and subsidy.

Again during the past year new missionaries have been recruited and screened by the Office of Human Resources. Persons are also provided for the Adventure In Mission program, the Taiwan Summer English Teaching program, and through Adult Voluntary Services, for which OHR has a contract with Dr. Beth Marcus.

The Pastor Relocation Committee has completed two years of life, and has met the needs of a few ministers and churches. In noting a recent decrease in demand for its service, the committee found that a number of departures from the parish ministry had increased the percentage of churches without pastors from 4% in 1975 to 7% in 1976. The committee has eased its requirements for participation in its program and offers a variety of services.

Continuing Education for clergy has come into sharpened focus during the past year. The OHR provides staff services to the Joint Committee on Continuing Education, and has developed a network of continuing education representatives in the 45 classes. Because of the scope of the continuing education field, the OHR role is seen as primarily catalytic, with an initial emphasis on planning for self-directed use of resources already available.

The inclusion of performance review in the list of "constitutional questions" has resulted in many requests for assistance. Raw materials have been shared, and where minister and consistory have jointly developed the program for performance review so that both "own" the process the results have been very positive.

OHR also provides staff services to General Synod's Nominations Committee, and administers the Minority Education Fund, the New Jersey Beneficiary Funds, and the Student Loan Revolving Fund. A major block of staff time is devoted to the Board of Pensions, primarily in the areas of policy, interpretation, and promotion. (For details see the report of the Board of Pensions.)

OHR also provides the internal functions of a personnel office for the General Synod and General Program Council. This involves employment policies, hiring, salary administration, and other routine personnel matters.

Joining OHR during the year as staff replacements were Susan Bishop, Personnel Associate; Dorothy Logan, Insurance Administrator; and Estelle Gibbs, Secretary.

GENERAL SYNOD ASSESSMENT BUDGET

The General Synod Executive Committee, in 1969, was given the responsibility of reviewing the General Synod Assessment Budget. The GSEC began this year's review at its April meeting. This has made it possible for correspondence to be conducted with those committees and/or commissions whose requests have been revised. The General Synod may wish to place additional items in the Assessment Budget. Thus, the budget must be given final approval at the close of Synod. If additions are made to the printed budget, they will be reported on by the Committee of Reference.

The Assessment Budget is for the direct work of the Synod. The items in the budget provide for the expenses of the General Synod meeting, the staff of the Synod, the committees and commissions which function on behalf of the General Synod and ecumenical relationships.

The Assessment Budget is raised by a per member levy. In recent years the per member figures have been: 1970 - $12.6; 1971 - $1.26; 1972 - $1.32; 1973 - $1.35; 1974 - $1.40; 1975 - $1.70; 1976 - $2.00, and 1977 - $2.12. Several factors have caused the per member assessment to increase. First, the membership of the Reformed Church in America dropped 12,527 active communicant members from 1971 through 1974. At $2.00 per member, this loss has amounted to $25,000. Second, inflation has caused all the expenses to increase. Third, new items have been added to the budget. Since 1969 the following new items have been added: Minority Councils, $32,000; Board of Theological Education, $15,000; and the Task Force on Women, $5,000.

Several comments on the preliminary proposed changes in the budget:

1. The majority of changes are small, and due to inflation. A special committee reviewed the entire 1977 budget, and the increases for 1978 are in line with their recommendations.
2. The Black Council and the American Indian Council both requested increases: The GSEC has decided to continue the practice of keeping these budgets at a level figure.
3. Based on the 1975 membership figures, the attached budget would require a per member assessment of $2.20.

The General Synod Executive Committee met as General Synod's Committee of Reference during the meeting of General Synod and considered the following referrals:

General Synod Assessment Budget:

The following revisions are purposed:

ADD:

Item III, Certification of Christian Education Persons $1,500.00
Item III, Ad Hoc Committee on Emergency Benevolent Assistance $2,000.00
Item IV, Board of Theological Education $15,000.00

REDUCE:

Item III, President's Expenses . . . . . from $4,000.00 to $3,500.00
Item VII, Black Council . . . . . from $19,500.00 to $15,000.00

CHANGE OF SUB-TOTALS:

Other General Synod Expenses . . . . . from $72,000.00 to $75,000.00
G.S. Permanent Committees . . . . . from $45,275.00 to $60,275.00
Minority Councils . . . . . from $32,000.00 to $27,500.00

R-1. WE RECOMMEND that the General Synod Assessment Budget for 1978 total $482, 960.00*, and further,

that the per member assessment for 1978 be $2.25; and further,

that the General Synod Assessment Budget be approved. (ADOPTED)

1977 GENERAL SYNOD ASSESSMENT BUDGET

I. General Synod Meeting	Actual 1976	Budget 1977	Budget 1978
General Synod Meeting			
Other Meeting Expenses	$ 78,162.57	$ 80,000.00	$ 87,500.00
Printing Minutes	882.44	1,200.00	1,500.00
	27,042.56	24,000.00	30,000.00
	$106,087.57	$105,200.00	$119,000.00
II. General Synod Office			
Salaries (2 exec., 4 staff)			
Employee Benefits	82,898.23	97,500.00	97,500.00
Staff Travel	12,591.00	16,000.00	16,000.00
Rent-Office & Chapel	8,432.86	8,500.00	9,500.00
Office Equip. & Repairs	18,764.26	20,500.00	22,000.00
Office Supplies	109.00	750.00	750.00
Office Mimeo & Printing	613.15	900.00	900.00
Postage & Mailing	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
Telephone	3,493.30	4,500.00	4,500.00
Audit & Legal	3,444.15	3,800.00	3,800.00
Banking/Accounting	1,500.00	1,750.00	1,750.00
Insurance	8,530.00	8,000.00	8,000.00
Miscellaneous	1,471.55	700.00	1,800.00
Staff Consulting Group	651.89	2,000.00	2,000.00
	2,740.38	2,700.00	3,000.00
	$148,739.77	$171,100.00	$175,000.00
III. Other General Synod Expenses			
G.S.E.C.			
President's Expenses	12,736.34	9,500.00	11,000.00
Church Herald	3,576.36	3,500.00	3,500.00
CAF for Active Chaplains	25,000.00	35,000.00	35,000.00
Ad Hoc South Africa	5,000.00		
Project Equality	59.80	500.00	500.00
Corporate Info. Center	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Task Force on Women	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Study on Licensing DCE	4,537.56	4,000.00	5,000.00
RCA Historical Directory		2,000.00	1,500.00
Ad Hoc Committee on Emergency Benevolent Assistance		5,000.00	5,000.00
			2,000.00
Contingent Fund	356.73	8,000.00	8,000.00
	$ 54,766.79	$ 71,000.00	$ 75,000.00

*Corrected calculation indicated a total of $489,460.00.

IV. G. S. Permanent Committees			
Christian Action Commission	5,785.35	5,650.00	5,800.00
Other Meetings		1,550.00	1,500.00
Literature	1,106.22	800.00	1,200.00
Chaplains Commission	4,850.45	2,200.00	2,200.00
Literature, Print		400.00	400.00
Conferences		3,800.00	3,800.00
General Commission Dues	1,250.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Secretarial Work	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
Church Gov't Committee	1,049.79	2,300.00	2,300.00
Printing		2,000.00	2,000.00
History Commission	2,334.95	2,000.00	2,500.00
Stationary Expenses	787.88	600.00	900.00
Archivist Fee	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,200.00
Secretarial Work	4,096.44	5,275.00	5,275.00
Historical Directory		100.00	
Judicial Business		500.00	500.00
Worship	2,396.65	2,500.00	3,000.00
Nomination	899.16	1,000.00	1,000.00
Theological Commission	3,849.04	2,500.00	3,500.00
Christian Unity	4,380.73	4,000.00	4,500.00
Christian Ref. Church	932.26	1,000.00	1,000.00
Board of Theological Education	13,702.31		15,000.00
	$ 49,621.23	$ 41,875.00	$ 60,275.00
V. Representatives Interchurch Bodies			
N.C.C. General Board	3,513.74	1,800.00	2,000.00
W.C.C. U.S. Conference	591.23	500.00	500.00
W.C.C. General Assembly-Jakarta			
Travel Contingency	1,700.77	1,000.00	1,200.00
	$ 5,805.74	$ 3,300.00	$ 3,700.00
VI. Participating Shares In Interchurch Bodies			
Alliance Ref. Churches	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,500.00
*N.C.C.	12,500.00	12,500.00	13,750.00
*W.C.C.	7,200.00	7,200.00	7,920.00
Religion in Amer. Life	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,815.00
	$ 26,350.00	$ 26,350.00	$ 28,985.00
VII. Minority Councils			
Black Council	16,071.53	15,000.00	15,000.00
American Indian Council	7,030.30	5,000.00	7,500.00
Hispanic Council	5,030.86	5,000.00	5,000.00
	$ 29,032.69	$ 25,000.00	$ 27,500.00
Grand Total:	**$420,403.79**	**$443,825.00**	**$482,960.00**

**Not paid from assessments.*

1978 BUDGET FOR GENERAL SYNOD MISSION

The G.S.E.C. has the responsibility of recommending a Mission Budget for 1978 to the 1977 General Synod. The G.S. Mission Budget includes: the Trustees of the General Program Council; the Board of Pensions and Kirkside; New Brunswick and Western Seminaries; and Central, Hope and Northwestern Colleges.

The General Synod Mission Budget seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

1. establish the General Synod's priorities for the various national mission programs of the R.C.A.;
2. provide guidance for local churches as they review their giving to the programs of the General Synod;
3. coordinate the fund raising planning of the participants in the General Synod Mission budget;
4. provide mission income expectations for the participants in the General Synod Mission budget.

Budget projections begin with a review of previous experience. Actual General Synod Mission giving from 1968 through 1976 has been:

	TOTAL	INCREASE (DECREASE)
1968	4,616,581	
1969	4,413,757	(202,824)
1970	4,271,896	(141,861)
1971	4,211,080	(60,816)
1972	4,313,999	102,919
1973	4,796,475	482,476
1974	5,481,430	684,955
1975	5,467,660	(13,770)
1976	5,836,015	368,355

This schedule shows a reducing dollar decline from 1969 through 1971. Beginning with the 1972 increase there has been a continued acceleration of the increase.

By comparing both operating and capital designated giving with undesignated giving, the nature of the decline becomes more clear.

	TOTAL	DESIGNATED	UNDESIGNATED
1968	4,616,581	3,916,727	699,854
1969	4,413,757	3,849,504	564,253
1970	4,271,896	3,812,316	459,580
1971	4,211,080	3,739,375	471,705
1972	4,313,999	4,012,333	301,666
1973	4,796,475	4,585,213	211,262
1974	5,481,430	5,304,837	176,593
1975	5,467,660	5,320,969	146,691
1976	5,836,015	5,703,002	133,013

If this schedule had gone back to 1965, it would show an undesignated total of $853,041. Thus, undesignated giving declined $676,448 between 1965 and 1974. Because the major factor in this extended decline has been the radical drop in undesignated giving, and because undesignated monies have become a minor part of the budget, it seems feasible to project a continued increase in the G.S. Mission budget.

Appendix 1 gives a third schedule. This schedule shows the designated giving received by each of the units between 1971 and 1976, and the approved budget for 1977. A column has been added for the 1978 requests. Because the radical decline in undesignated giving has been absorbed by increases in designated giving the General Synod Mission budget for 1978 is recommended for $6,780,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM G.S.E.C. TO GENERAL SYNOD:

R-1. **THAT the General Synod approve a 1978 General Synod Mission Budget of $6,780,000, and further** (ADOPTED)

R-2. **THAT the General Synod approve the proposed allocations of the 1978 General Synod Mission Budget.** (ADOPTED)

DESIGNATED GIVING (OPERATING AND CAPITAL) TO GENERAL SYNOD MISSION BUDGET

	ACTUAL						Budget	Requested
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
General Program Council	$2,488,836	$2,730,310	$3,166,875	$3,471,497	$3,468,116	$3,621,615	$4,300,000	$4,500,000
R.C.W.S.	114,054	119,698	178,030	476,129	437,293	516,001	400,000	400,000
Total GPC	2,602,890	2,850,008	3,344,905	3,947,626	3,905,409	4,137,616	4,700,000	4,900,000
Board of Pensions	121,691	83,618	71,988	91,422	86,209	97,151	140,000	140,000
Kirkside	(1)	(1)	20,828	18,488	18,367	19,090	25,000	25,000
Board of Theological Education	333,249							
New Brunswick		93,960	111,967	133,636	137,097	161,947	160,600	171,000
Western		226,123	251,067	264,196	312,251	358,581	329,000	368,000
Colleges								
Central	142,540	152,000	166,696	208,720	154,337	164,843	210,000	250,000
Hope	263,643	316,700	379,840	341,263	384,348	415,267	395,000	425,000
Northwestern	212,760	228,033	247,922	307,486	322,951	348,507	347,000	410,000
Total - Designated	3,676,773	3,950,442	4,595,213	5,312,837	5,320,969	5,703,002	6,306,600	6,689,000
- Undesignated	471,705	301,666	211,262	176,593	146,691	133,013	93,400	91,000
TOTAL	$4,148,478	$4,252,108	$4,896,475	$5,489,430	$5,467,660	$5,836,015	$6,400,000	$6,780,000

(1) Kirkside was included with the Board of Pensions for 1971 and 1972.

ARTICLE 6

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTION OF THE CORPORATION

The Board of Direction presents its annual report for the calendar year 1976. This is the 157th year since the incorporation of General Synod by a Special Act of the Legislature of the State of New York in 1819.

Overall View of Investments

All of the investments under the control of the Board were carefully and continuously reviewed throughout the year. Members of the Board met as needed to consider the portfolio and to make changes when appropriate. On December 31, 1976, the market value of principal funds on hand was:

NEW YORK FUNDS		
Bonds	$ 632,149	
Stocks, common and preferred	1,210,731	
Mortgages	1,083,162	
Investment in Interchurch Center	281,676	
Cash and short term investments	40,485	$3,248,203
NEW JERSEY FUNDS		
Bonds and stocks	$ 190,208	
Mortgage Note	18,413	
Cash and short term investments	12,957	221,578
UNDESIGNATED FUNDS		
Extension Foundation Notes	$ 10,000	
Cash and short term investments	4,992	14,992
Total		$3,484,773

NEW YORK FUNDS

On December 31, 1976, the mortgage investments were on residential and industrial property in Westchester County, New York City, New York, and Bergen County, New Jersey. The mortgage investments were in the face amount of $1,083,225, with an unamortized discount of $63 which place endowment funds invested in mortgages at $1,083,162.

There were 26 mortgage investments on December 31, 1975. Two mortgages were paid off during 1976. One mortgage loan for $105,000 was made with interest at 9½% per annum, and another in the amount of $50,000 was made with interest at 9½% per annum.

There is also held in the investment account the Interchurch Center Second Mortgage 5½% leasehold bonds due January 1, 1998, in the amount of $270,000. The Leasehold ownership participation in the Interchurch Center is carried at $11,676 bringing the total investment in the Interchurch Center leasehold to $281,676.

DISCRETIONARY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH U.S. TRUST COMPANY

On September 12, 1968, the General Synod entered into a discretionary Investment Management Agreement with the United States Trust Company of New York. In the following months, the marketable securities held in the Endowment Account of the New York Funds were transferred to this account with the United States Trust Company. We understand similar agreements are in force between the United States Trust Company and the Church Boards and Seminaries. By combining the funds of the Church Boards and Institutions, the charge for superior investment management service is less expensive to each unit. The agreement with the United States Trust Company was negotiated and recommended by the Committee on Administration and Finance for the church.

During 1976 there was a further recovery in the value of the investment portfolio. At December 31, 1976, market value exceeded cost by $166,309.65. It should be noted, however, that the security markets did not perform well during January, 1977. There was no withdrawal of cash from the custody account for mortgage investment in 1976.

There is set forth here a summary of the securities and cash held by the United States Trust Company for the account of the General Synod on December 31, 1976.

	Market Value	
	Amount	Percent
Bonds	$ 632,149	34.30%
Common and preferred stocks	1,210,731	65.69%
Principal Cash	227	00.01%
	$1,843,107	100.00%

INCOME DISTRIBUTED

The income distributed by the Board to the Beneficiaries from New York Funds in 1976 was $159,540, another historical high.

The following is a comparison of distributions in prior years:

1976	$159,540
1975	146,109
1974	141,622
1973	130,015
1972	122,289
1971	111,021
1970	113,477
1969	106,609
1968	130,351
1967	127,870
1966	129,750
1965	125,101
1963	120,402
1953	74,094
1943	59,181

As in prior years, quarterly distributions of income were made in 1976 to the participants in the common investment Fund.

THE QUICK MEMORIAL FUND

This Fund was established under the Will of Abraham Messler Quick more than 40 years ago. The Will directs that the income from the fund be used for the benevolences of the church. In 1958 the General Synod directed that 50 per cent of the income from this fund be allotted to church benevolences administered by the Board of North American Missions. There was a modification in this regard by the General Synod in 1965 (*MGS*, 1965, p. 19).

In 1976, the General Synod upon recommendation of the General Synod Executive Committee, allocated the income from the Quick Memorial Fund for the year 1977 as follows: 50% for Church Planning and Development; 20% for student aid grants at New Brunswick and Western Seminaries; 20% to Hope, Central and Northwestern Colleges for scholarship funds (60% to be divided equally among the three colleges; 40% to be divided on the basis of student enrollment); 10% to the General Program Council for evangelism and church growth literature.

A Statement of Income and Expense for the year 1976 of the New York Funds follows:

Income from Securities	$82,797	
Less: Investment counselling fee	4,783	$ 78,014
Income from Mortgages	85,405	
Less: Mortgage Servicing Fee	4,400	81,005
Income from Interchurch Center Bonds		13,850
Miscellaneous Income:		
Savings Bank		3,799
		$176,668
Less: Net Expenses itemized below		8,910
Net Income for the year 1976		$167,758
Carried forward from 1975		2,246
Net Available for Distribution		$170,004
Income Distributed during 1976		159,540
Balance carried to 1977		$ 10,464

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

In the administration of the New York Funds, the expenses were as follows:

Salaries	$11,639	
Benefits	2,589	
Rent	1,165	
Postage	52	
Telephone	472	
Legal & Audit	2,000	
Insurance	23	$17,940

Less:		
Portion charged to General Synodical Funds	$ 8,530	
Portion charged to New Jersey Funds	500	9,030
Net expenses for New York Funds		$ 8,910

NEW JERSEY FUNDS

At the end of 1976, principal funds which are kept in New Jersey pursuant to Court Order of the Superior Court of New Jersey had a market value of $221,578.

All of the bonds and preferred stocks appear to qualify as investments legal for fiduciaries in New Jersey.

On December 31, 1976, the New Jersey Funds were in investments and cash as follows:

Marketable securities at market value	$190,208
Mortgage	18,413
Cash and short term investments	12,957
Grand Total	$221,578

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Administration expenses of the New Jersey Funds were $500. The income and disposition of it in the New Jersey Funds was as follows:

Net Income from securities and mortgages	$ 11,905	
Less: Administration and other expenses	500	
Net Income for the year		11,405
Carried Forward from 1975		21,755
Net Available for Distribution		$ 33,160
Distributed in 1976:		
Scholarships grants		21,162
Carried forward to 1977		$ 11,998

UNDESIGNATED FUNDS

At year end, the General Synod also had undesignated Endowment Funds of $14,992 in Extension Foundation Notes or deposited in banks in savings.

GENERAL SYNOD EXPENSES

Included in the Report to General Synod are statements showing 1976 assessments received and a comparison of 1975 expenses, 1977 Budget, and Askings for 1978.

ASSESSMENTS

All 1976 regular assessments of 2.00 per capita were received prior to year

end 1976 and all 1976 special assessments for pensions of $ .75 per capita were received as of the year end.

Most of the first installment of the 1977 regular assessments were received from the Classes before March 31, 1977. The special assessments for $ .75 per capita for 1977 is scheduled for payment by June 30, 1977, and the earliest possible payment of this assessment would be most helpful also.

BUDGET FOR 1978

The Askings were included with the Reports to General Synod. They are the amounts suggested or requested by the General Secretary's Office, Committees or Commissions of the General Synod and its Executive Committee. The General Synod Executive Committee will place the Askings before the General Synod for its action. Inquiries and comments concerning budget requests should be directed to those who have made them to the General Synod Executive Committee. The regular assessments upon the classes are based on the total budget approved for the General Synod.

AUDITORS

The financial statements of the Board have been examined and certified by Coopers & Lybrand, Certified Public Accountants, and will be presented to the General Synod. These Statements are always available for inspection by members of the Reformed Church. Copies are sent to agencies and churches for whom the Board holds endowment funds. The summaries shown in this report are based on statements in the Certified Accounts of the Auditors.

BOARD MEMBERS

Each year the General Synod elects two members of the Board to serve for a term of three years and it elects a member of the Board to be its President for a term of one year. This year the terms of Cornelius Ausema and Arad Riggs expire. Their successors and replacements for the Class of June, 1980, should be elected.

It was noted that the term of Arad Riggs on the Board of Direction will expire this year. After serving on the Board for thirty-three years, twenty-five of which were as President, Arad Riggs has chosen to retire from the Board. In appreciation for his many years of service to the Reformed Church in America, the Synod

VOTED: To adopt the following resolution:

The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, convened in the 171st regular session, June 13-17, 1977, by special resolution records grateful appreciation and recognition to

Arad M. Riggs

for his life of service and achievement in many capacities of distinguished leadership in the Reformed Church in America as

Member
Officer
Counsellor
Contributor

Friend
Supporter
and in particular for his faithful services to the

Board of Direction - Member, 1944-1977; President, 1952-1977
General Synod Executive Committee - 1961-1969; 1971-1977
Synodical Trustee, Hope College - 1958-1971
Member and Officer, The Reformed Church of Bronxville, New York, since 1936

and other services on committees, special committees and commissions of the RCA too numerous to mention.

In profound recognition of the devotion and grace which have marked the life and services of Arad M. Riggs in commitment to God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by action and order of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America.

CLASSIS ASSESSMENTS - 1976

		Active Communicants	Regular Assess @ $2.00	Received
P.S. of ALBANY				
	Albany	3,554	$ 7,108.00	
	Columbia-Greene	2,721	5,442.00	
	Montgomery	2,663	5,326.00	
	Rochester	3,342	6,684.00	
	Saratoga	2,327	4,654.00	
	Schenectady	6,513	13,026.00	
	Schoharie	2,004	4,008.00	$46,248.00
P.S. of CHICAGO				
	Chicago	4,319	8,638.00	
	Florida	2,581	5,162.00	
	Illiana	6,430	12,860.00	
	Illinois	4,884	9,768.00	
	Wisconsin	7,743	15,486.00	$51,914.00
P.S. of MICHIGAN				
	Holland	8,745	17,490.00	
	Kalamazoo	6,139	12,278.00	
	Lake Erie	2,942	5,884.00	
	Muskegon	8,928	17,856.00	
	N. Grand Rapids	6,348	12,696.00	
	Ontario	2,637	5,274.00	
	S. Grand Rapids	9,668	19,336.00	
	Zeeland	7,317	14,634.00	$105,448.00
P.S. of NEW JERSEY				
	Bergen	4,170	8,340.00	
	Newark	2,343	4,686.00	
	New Brunswick	5,351	10,702.00	
	Palisades	2,321	4,642.00	
	Paramus	6,794	13,588.00	
	Passaic	6,607	13,214.00	
	Philadelphia	3,035	6,070.00	
	Raritan	5,128	10,256.00	$71,498.00
P.S. of NEW YORK				
	Brooklyn	1,567	3,134.00	
	Mid Hudson	6,404	12,808.00	
	Nassau-Suffolk	2,701	5,402.00	
	New York	5,930	11,860.00	
	Orange	2,693	5,386.00	
	Queens	2,897	5,794.00	
	Rockland-Westchester	5,282	10,564.00	$54,948.00

P.S. of WEST				
	California	13,035	26,070.00	
	Cascades	2,757	5,514.00	
	Central California	1,647	3,294.00	
	Dakota	4,005	8,010.00	
	East Sioux	5,181	10,362.00	
	Minnesota	4,536	9,072.00	
	Pella	5,119	10,238.00	
	Pleasant Prairie	4,177	8,354.00	
	West Central	2,798	5,596.00	
	West Sioux	5,975	11,950.00	$98,460.00
		214,258	$428,516.00	$428,516.00

ARTICLE 7

OVERTURES – 1977

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OVERTURES TO GENERAL SYNOD, 1977
REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES

(NOTE: The actions taken on the recommendations of the Review Committee on Overtures have been listed after each overture for easy reference purposes.)

Pastoral Care for Minister and His Family

1. **The Classis of Raritan presents the following Overture to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America:**

   That the *Book of Church Order*, Part II, Article 2, be amended to include a new section which expressly directs the classis to determine annually whether each of its enrolled ministers has entered into an agreement with another minister for the pastoral care of himself and his family.

   Reasons:

   1. In a survey of ministers of five denominations, ministers of the Reformed Church in America ranked highest in their sense of the inadequacy of pastoral care for themselves and their families.
   2. Although proposals for a "pastor to pastors" have been made at various times, the RCA has not as yet found a way to meet the pastoral needs of clergy and clergy families.
   3. The peculiar stresses in the lives of ministers and their families too often take their toll in brokenness and emotional and/or physical illness. There are signs that the spiritual and emotional wholeness which is the need of all is sometimes lacking in ministers and their families, and that the preventative care of a strong pastoral relationship is more often than not missing.
   4. Other professions recognize the impossibility of providing self-care. "He who acts as his own lawyer has a fool for a client." Physicians do not as a rule treat either themselves or their families. Neither do ministers provide themselves or their families with genuine pastoral care. What has been lacking is an expectation that every family will have a pastor, and that an established relationship with a family pastor is fully as important as knowing whom to consult for a fever, a toothache, or a lawsuit.
   5. The proposed amendment provides a simple means for establishing a pattern of expected behavior, offers an annual peer review, and encourages the use of pastoral resources which are readily available.
   6. The proposed amendment would demonstrate the expectation that pastoral care is needed by all, including the minister and his family, and that the responsibility for seeing that such care is obtained is that of the minister himself.
   7. The amendment leaves to the classis the responsibility for handling negative responses to the annual inquiry. In some instances this might be a signal for intervention prior to a serious crisis; in others, the annual question would at least call for the minister who answers "no" to review his reasons.
   8. The proposal would not require the expenditure of funds, but

presumes that professional courtesy would prevail. Neither is there any presumption that ministers who provide pastoral care would necessarily be from the same classis or even from the Reformed Church in America.

Your committee spent considerable time on Overture No. 1 and we find ourselves in basic sympathy with the sentiment expressed. We RECOMMEND that this Overture from the Classis of Raritan be referred to the Office of Human Resources for study and recommendations and be reported through GSEC at the 1978 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **This Overture does not deal with a judicial matter but with a basic human need. We believe the Office of Human Resources is better equipped to implement the content of the Overture.**

Suspend Church Growth Fund Drive Pending Review of Theological Implications

2. **The Classis of Mid-Hudson overtures the General Synod to order the General Program Council to suspend its fund-raising drive for 5 million dollars for the purpose of church growth pending a review of its theological implications by the Theological Commission.**

Reasons:

1. The diversion of this amount of money to ourselves moves against the spirit of servitude exemplified by our Lord and commanded to us when He said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever loses his life for my sake will save it." (Lk. 9:23-24)
2. The assertion that "God desires His church to grow," has been made the logical basis for the claim that *therefore* we are to grow the church, a biblically unsound and logically invalid transition.
3. The church growth movement leans toward the usurpation of the action of God by the action of humans. By making the church itself the subject of growth rather than God, we move contrary to the Reformed doctrine especially as exhibited in the first chapter of the *Canons of the Synod of Dort.*

Your committee has considered this Overture from Mid-Hudson relative to the theological implication of the Reformed Church Growth Fund and RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **Lack of clarity and validity of the reasons submitted.**
2. **The theological implications have been adequately considered in papers, seminars, and discussion groups.**
3. **The GPC based on instructions from the 1975 and 1976 General Synods has been clearly involved in setting up RC Growth Funds (*General Synod Minutes*, 1976, pp. 132).**

Performance Review for Consistory

3. **The Classis of Wisconsin, overtures General Synod to change the present**

question in the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Sec. 1 g. to read as follows:

Does consistory (the Board of Elders and deacons and pastor(s)) have a procedure by which the performance of each of its respective areas of responsibility and methods are annually reviewed?

Reasons:

1. This will clarify the General Synod action 1975, page 251, R-8, which recommends this procedure.
2. The *Liturgy* of the RCA declares that the Reformed Church has maintained these ministries on the offices of the minister of the Word, of the elder, and of the deacon. Since there is a unity of these offices in Christ himself, so also in the church the one office is not to be separated from the others. (Page 109.)
3. This would bring the *Book of Church Order* in concurrence with the above reasons.

The Overture from the Classis of Wisconsin deals with the procedure for performance reviews of elders, deacons, and pastors.

Believing that evaluation is valid for the upbuilding of the church and fulfilling the responsibilities of the officers of the church, we therefore RECOMMEND its ADOPTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **This will clarify the General Synod action of 1975, pg. 251, R-8, which recommends this procedure.**
2. **The churches already involved in performance review have found it constructive in the life of the church.**

Overture 3 was referred to the Editorial Committee of the Church Government Committee.

Study Merits of Ministerial Remuneration Set and Distributed Denominationally

4. **The Classis of Brooklyn overtures General Synod to study the merits of ministerial remuneration being set and distributed by the denomination.**

Reasons:

1. The RCA has always professed the parity of the ministry.
2. Where church growth and mission has been the priority, i.e., the mission fields, the principle of parity and central support has been implemented.
3. It would increase the sense of common and joint ministry within the RCA.
4. There is presently a wide disparity among ministers' salaries.
5. The criterion which often determines salary level is the size and wealth of the church.
6. A national policy would allow other factors to be used in a consistent manner: e.g. family size and needs, cost of living in the community, experience in the ministry, etc. . . .
7. A national assessment for salary would be more equitable since

churches with small financial resources or reserves are being forced to close as salary requirements increase. The national assessment would be based mainly on financial ability and would preserve an ongoing Christian ministry in many viable areas.

We have reviewed the Overture from Classis Brooklyn, relative to ministerial remuneration and RECOMMEND APPROVAL with referral to GSEC. (ADOPTED)

Reason:

Though we have concerns for classical autonomy and acknowledge that existing salary guides provide parity measures, we believe a study in this area would be helpful in view of present and impending crisis in small churches unable to provide support of a minister.

Instruct Theological Commission to Provide for Lay Ministry, and Its Training

5. **The Classis of Rochester overtures General Synod to instruct the Theological Commission to make provision and develop procedures for the implementation of a lay minister within the Reformed Church in America together with a planned program of study, and some means of recognizing such licensed lay ministers within the Reformed Church in America and to report the results of its study at the next General Synod.**

Reasons:

1. There are persons who wish to engage in a fuller ministry in the church, yet, because of age or situation, cannot follow a full course of study at one of the church seminaries. In many cases they seek additional training elsewhere.
2. Smaller churches, unable to have a full-time pastor, could be served by these individuals who would not be fully dependent upon the church for their sustenance.
3. These persons could be of great assistance in churches where there is need of additional pastoral services in addition to that of the installed pastor.
4. We recognize that there are regulatory problems and some difficulties with church polity. We feel, however, that this question must be addressed honestly to deal with many of the dedicated Christian laity who seek to increase their potential for ministry.

Overture No. 5 relates to a program of lay ministry in the R.C.A. The Classis of Rochester requests General Synod to instruct the Theological Commission regarding procedures for implementation. Your committee RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **The Reformed Church and its *BCO* has consistently maintained the necessity for a thoroughly trained ministry. This Overture would appear to alter this commitment.**
2. **The Overture misdirects the request for the development of procedures for implementation to the Theological Commission.**
3. **Theological Commission is already studying the offices and functions of elder and deacon in relation to lay ministry. We await their report.**

New Coat of Arms for the Reformed Church in America

6. **The Classis of Central California overtures General Synod to establish a committee to study and determine the need for the design of a new symbol for the Reformed Church in America to replace our present Coat of Arms and to implement a search for this new design which shall reflect the heritage and ministry of the Reformed Church in America and which shall be easily identifiable and understandable by today's populace as well as future generations. The results of its study and actions should be reported at the next General Synod meeting.**

   Reasons:

   1. The Reformed Church in America is a historical church celebrating 350 years in Christ's ministry in the United States of America.
   2. The Coat of Arms or symbol should reflect that history and ministry around the world.
   3. Our ministry is expanding into newer areas and we experience growth in non-traditional and non-Dutch areas of this continent.
   4. The present Coat of Arms is no longer meaningful to today's populace because Latin and Dutch are no longer taught or familiar to most people.

Your committee has reviewed the Overture from Central California relative to a new coat-of-arms for the R.C.A. We RECOMMEND NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **We believe that the present coat-of-arms, despite its various limitations and peculiarities, is well-established as an identifiable RCA symbol and that it is unlikely that any new symbol would do any better in making such an identification.**
2. **We believe that it would be an unnecessary waste of time, energy, and money to implement this Overture which calls for not only a study of the matter, but also the designing of a new symbol for consideration.**

Increase Elder Representation in Classis

7. **The Classis of Chicago and the Particular Synod of Chicago overture the General Synod to change the *Book of Church Order*, Part II, Article 3, Section 1, to read: "A church with two hundred or fewer active communicants shall have one elder delegate and an elder delegate for each additional one hundred active communicants, or fraction thereof. A church shall not have more than three such elder delegates. A church without an installed minister shall have an elder delegate who shall not be counted as one of the above delegates. A collegiate church shall have at least one elder delegate for each of its constituent congregations."**

   Reasons:

   1. With increases in non-pastoral roles the number of clergy continue to over balance lay representation.
   2. Lowering the categories from three hundred to two hundred communicants distributes lay representation to more churches and not to just a few large ones.

3. To avoid having the voting rights of our ordained men, both active and retired, limited and thus losing their valuable input to classis.
4. To preserve the heritage of allowing those who have served with merit and have been declared Emeritus, to continue to vote and share in the church's mission.

Overture No. 7 comes to us from both the Classis of Chicago and PCS. The substance of the Overture deals with elder representation in Classis. Your committee RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reason:

We recognize the merit of and the principles involved in Overture No. 7; however, we believe more research needs to be done in order to indicate the impact of such a change on the balance of representation of classis (i.e. the increment needs to be studied).

VOTED: To refer Overture 7 to the Church Government Committee for study and report to the General Synod of 1978.

Guidelines for Ministers of the Word Not Installed in Local Church

8. **The Classis of Chicago and the Particular Synod of Chicago overture General Synod to provide guidelines for applying Part II, Article 1, of the *Book of Church Order* concerning the "voting rights shall be limited to . . . those ministers of the Word who are actively serving under the jurisdiction, or with the approval, of the classis."**

Reasons:

1. This potential limitation on ministerial voting rights is new, and lacks an interpretive history;
2. The interpretation should be uniform throughout the RCA (i.e., if retired ministers are deprived of voting rights in some classes, they should be in all);
3. A wide variety of ministries are carried out by ministers without a local church in our classis, including, (a) ministers serving as tent-makers, (b) ministers serving in RCA staff positions, like classical programs, particular synod programs, and General Synod programs, (c) ministers serving in non-RCA positions such as hospital chaplain and other cooperative programs; and (d) retired ministers.
4. The application of this article involves issues beyond the voting rights in the classis, like being delegates to particular and General Synods.

Overture No. 8 also comes from Classis Chicago and PSC and has to do with the voting rights of ministers. We RECOMMEND APPROVAL of the Overture and refer it to the Church Government Committee to provide guidelines as requested by the Overtures. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **This potential limitation on ministerial voting rights is new, and lacks an interpretive history.**
2. **The interpretation should be uniform throughout the RCA (i.e. if retired ministers are deprived of voting rights in some classes, they should be in all).**

3. **A wide variety of ministries are carried out by ministers without a local church in our classis, including, (a) ministers serving as tent-makers, (b) ministers serving in RCA staff positions, like classical programs, particular synod programs, and General Synod programs, (c) ministers serving in non-RCA positions such as hospital chaplain and other cooperative programs; and (d) retired ministers.**

4. **The application of this article involves issues beyond the voting rights in the classis, like being delegates to particular and General Synods.**

Deacons Voting Delegates in Classis

9. **Classis South Grand Rapids respectfully overtures General Synod that the *Book of Church Order* be amended, Part II, The Classis, Article 1, The Classis Defined: Inserting the words, "and deacons" after the word elder in the first sentence; and in the third sentence after the words, "Voting rights shall be limited to the elder 'and deacon' delegates and those ministers of the Word. . . . "**

The purpose of this overture and amendments is to make deacons official and voting delegates to classis.

Reasons:

1. To give the laity of the church the majority vote at the "grass roots level" of our deliberations as a church.
2. To make sure that the deacons of the church are acquainted with the needs and askings of classis.
3. To use the financial expertise and knowledge of the deacons in the deliberations of classis.
4. To allow the deacons who are acquainted with the peculiar financial status of each congregation to have a say as to financial feasibilities of projects.
5. To use the deaconate of the church to help shape our stewardship policies.
6. To utilize the deaconate in the laity's role of building the church.
7. To win their genuine interest in the working of classis since they would have a say and vote.

Overture No. 9 from Classis South Grand Rapids calls for amending the *BCO*, Part II, Article 1, inserting the words, "and deacons." After careful deliberation, the committee RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **The impact of this Overture would be to change drastically the representative equity of lay and clergy membership in classis.**
2. **We believe that reasons 3, 4 and 5, as given in the Overture, can be operative without a change in *BCO*.**

VOTED: To refer Overture 9 to the Theological Commission for study and report to the 1978 General Synod.

10. **We the Classis of Ontario, have for some time wondered about the position of the deacons in the Reformed Church in America. We consider**

it a great privilege to belong to the Reformed Church in America, for more than one reason.

One reason, however, is the fact that the Office of Deacon has been maintained. However, his place is limited only to the Consistory, in which he has the right to vote and the authority to care for the whole benevolence program of the church and to vote on such important matters as the Call to a minister, the provision of Services of Worship and organizations in the church's life for the spiritual benefit and growth of Christ's people.

For the reasons listed below we, the Classis of Ontario, hereby overture General Synod RCA to make the necessary changes in the *Book of Church Order,* that will allow the deacons to be official delegates to classis, particular synod and General Synod.

Reasons:

1. The Scriptures teach the church that true leadership within the Church of Jesus Christ consists of "serving."
2. Jesus Christ used the term "diakonoon" in Luke 22:24-27 as a description of leaders. (see also 1 Peter 5:5, 6).
3. The presence and insights of the deacons are important for the decisions made in classis and synod meetings.
4. The deacons at the present time have already full voting rights in one judicatory, the local consistory.
5. The deacons cannot be official delegates to the other judicatories.

The Overture from Classis Ontario relates to the Office of Deacon in the RCA and requests necessary changes in the *BCO* to allow deacons to be delegates to all judicatories. Your committee RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **The Overture leaves the question of either/or, both/and of representation of elders and deacons unresolved.**
2. **To adopt the Overture would change the whole balance of representation within the judicatories.**
3. **General Synod directed the Theological Commission to do a study of the office of deacon, its nature and function, and this study will be available in the near future.**

Revise Procedure for Amending Book of Church Order

11. **Pella Classis overtures General Synod to instruct the Committee on Church Government to study the following proposed amendment of Chapter I, Part IV, page 51, *Rules and Amendments of the Government of the Reformed Church in America and Disciplinary Procedures,* Section 2, of the *Book of Church Order*; and to present its recommendations to the 1978 General Synod:**

> **Section 2. Amendments to the *Goverment,* the *Disciplinary Procedures,* the *Formularies,* and the *Liturgy* of the Reformed Church in America shall be made according to the following procedures and sequence:**

a. **The General Synod shall approve or adopt amendments only at stated meetings.**

b. **If approving the basic concepts embodied in a proposed amendment, the General Synod shall instruct the Committee on Church Government to study the amendment, make whatever editorial revisions are appropriate, and present recommendations regarding the amendment at the regular session of the General Synod the following year.**

c. **If approving the recommendations of the Committee on Church Government, the General Synod shall recommend the amendment to the classes for approval.**

d. **If at least two-thirds of the classes approve the proposed amendment, the General Synod, at its discretion, may pass a final declarative resolution on the amendment, at which time the amendment shall become effective.**

Reasons:

1. Its loose-leaf format seems to have encouraged too many hasty changes in the *Book of Church Order* in recent years, resulting in a need to make numerous changes in wording. Such need for correction or revision is not only financially costly, but detracts from the value of the document itself and from the esteem that people ought to have for it.
2. Procedures need to be developed which, without unduly hindering the legislative process, will allow changes in the *Book of Church Order* only after due consideration has been given, not only to the content of an amendment, but also to its specific wording.
3. The present custom of seeking the advice of the 3-person Editorial Committee during the General Synod meeting regarding proposed amendments has not always proved to be satisfactory because it has not always given the committee adequate time to perform most efficiently. For example, although supporting its basic concept, Pella Classis has sent a letter to the General Secretary suggesting that two specific editorial corrections or improvements be made regarding Overture 29, pages 113 and 249 of the *Minutes of the General Synod, RCA, 1976,* items which apparently failed to catch the attention of the committee during their relatively short exposure to them.
4. The proposed amendment would provide adequate time for the Committee on Church Government to receive input and feedback from the various classes regarding editorial corrections or revisions and would often result in a better final product.
5. Few changes in the *Book of Church Order* are of such urgent character that the operation of our denomination would be hindered by the more deliberate, careful procedures recommended by the above amendment.

Your committee, after reviewing this Overture from Pella Classis, which centers attention upon amending the *BCO*, Chapter 1, Part IV, pp. 51, RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **The Overture requires an additional year to bring about an amendment in the *BCO* and your committee does not recognize this as necessarily advantageous.**
2. **An additional year could unduly hinder, at crucial times, the legislative process.**
3. **The requiring of two-thirds approval of the classes to bring a change in the *BCO* is a deliberate and careful procedure.**

RCA Accept Moral Responsibility for San Dimas Notes

12. **The Classis of Illinois overtures the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to bring into effect a thorough study of the procedures used to bring about repayment of notes by the Valley Community Drive-in Church of San Dimas, California, and that the General Synod interpret Part 2, Article 2, Section 2 of the *Book of Church Order* in relation to this matter: "The classis shall exercise original and appellate supervisory power over the acts, proceedings, and decisions of the board of elders and consistories, both in temporal matters and in those relating to Christian discipline."**

Reasons:

1. There are more than 1,100 persons holding notes of the Valley Community Drive-in Church of San Dimas, California, who are threatened with a 65% loss of their investment, and even the 35% is to be repaid over a period of twenty-five years without interest. Some of these investors are now in desperate need.
2. That the Classis of California, the Particular Synod of the West, and the Reformed Church in America have a moral obligation, even though it may not be a legal one, toward the noteholders.

   (Example: The Particular Synod of Chicago has recently assumed a similar moral obligation guaranteeing the repayment of notes over a five year period).
3. The Classis of Illinois feels that the Classis of California, the Particular Synod of the West, and the Reformed Church in America should make a more determined effort, formulating some definite plan of action, assuming the moral obligation of making proper restitution for these notes.
4. Refusal to accept this moral responsibility is a black eye for the Reformed Church, and can well stand in the way of the answer to many fervent prayers that God will bless our efforts for church growth both now and in the future.

Two Overtures before us deal with the San Dimas issue:
Overture No. 12, Classis Illinois,
Overture No. 16, Synod of Michigan.

We RECOMMEND NO ACTION in order that we may defer to Overture No. 16. (ADOPTED)

Amend Book of Church Order by Changing "Persons" to "Men and Women"

13. **The Classis of Albany respectfully overtures the General Synod to adopt**

and recommend to the classes for their approval the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter I, Part I, Article I, Section 3 by substituting the words "men and women" for the word "persons" and make all other necessary changes in the *Book of Church Order* to conform to this.

Reasons:

This proposal has come before the Church regularly in recent years. It is of concern and interest. The record shows that it meets with the approval of the majority of classes. It merits continued consideration.

The Classis of Albany overtures General Synod to substitute the words "men and women" for the word "persons" in the *BCO*. The committee RECOMMENDS APPROVAL. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **This Overture is consistent with previous actions in recent years regarding the ordination of women as ministers of the Word.**
2. **It would be unfair to delay an issue which is of such deep concern to a large portion of the church.**

A motion was made and supported to adopt the Committee's recommendation on Overture 13. The Chair ruled the motion CARRIED. A Division of the House was called. The ruling of the Chair was sustained (162 in favor, 93 opposed).

Overture 13 was referred to the Editorial Committee of the Church Government Committee.

Women Under Care of Classis

14. Muskegon Classis overtures General Synod to rule whether or not it is the responsibility of classes to take women under their care with the objective of being granted licensed candidate status in the Reformed Church since at the present time women may not be ordained without an amendment to the *Book of Church Order*.

Reasons:

1. Not all classes treat women the same way.
2. Muskegon Classis and other classes are concerned if they are correct in having women under their care leading up to and granting licensed candidate status.

Overture No. 14 relates to the responsibility of a classis regarding "women under their care with the objective of being granted licensed candidate status in the RCA." Committee RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reason:

Because this Overture is a judicial matter which can be resolved only through the judicial process, the Overture Review Committee finds it has no power to make or recommend a ruling on this issue.

Theological Commission Study Biblical Principles Governing Pension Plans

15. The Classis of Ontario respectfully overtures General Synod to direct its Theological Commission to undertake a biblical study of principles

governing pension plans such as our own, and to set forth guidelines for the administration, and necessary development of such a pension plan.

Reasons:

1. Pensions have become a large part of our lives, and all of us feel a deep concern for the retirement needs of those who have given themselves to the service of their Lord and his Church.
2. Some question both the practical adequacy of our pension plan and its biblical soundness.
3. The Scriptures are our only rule for faith and practice, and therefore all our plans and provisions need to be in harmony with their teaching and direction.

Your committee has reviewed the Overture from the Classis of Ontario relative to a biblical study of principles governing pension plans. We RECOMMEND NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **The pension plan has been developed throughout the years with a consciousness that what is done is in accord with Scripture.**
2. **The Overture is ambivalent in that it speaks to two issues:**
   a. **The biblical principles governing pension plans.**
   b. **The questions of practical adequacy which lies within the province of the Office of Human Resources.**

Judicial Business Study, San Dimas Indebtedness

16. The Particular Synod of Michigan overtures the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to refer the matter of the alleged default of the Valley Community Drive-In Church, San Dimas, California, to the General Synod Committee on Judicial Business for study including the extent of the indebtedness and the responsibility, if any, of the Reformed Church in America to the note holders and for report to the next RCA General Synod.

Reasons:

1. The General Synod of Reformed Church in America is vested with a general superintendence of the interests and concerns of the whole church.
2. A substantial number of members of the RCA claim to have lost their investments in promissory notes issued by the Valley Community Drive-In Church, San Dimas, California.

After lengthy discussion on a very delicate issue before the church, our committee RECOMMENDS NO ACTION. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. **The statement of General Synod's Judicial Committee of 1964 (*General Synod Minutes*, 1964, pp. 148 ff.), and the adoption by the 1965 General Synod of the "Special Study Committee on the Financial Responsibilities of Classes" (*General Synod Minutes*, 1965, pp. 162-165).**

2. **The church has never defined her responsibility as the guaranteeing of investments by her members.**
3. **The present difficulty of relating a ministry of mercy to impoverished noteholders if care for them be misunderstood as admission of liability.**
4. **The church is concerned to care for the poor, which has always been a task of the church, and which can be administered through General Synod's response to the President's Report.**

GSEC to Intercede on Behalf of Hungarian Reformed Churches in Rumania

17. **The Classis of New Brunswick, being deeply concerned with the plight of the earthquake-ravaged Hungarian Reformed churches in Rumania, and being concerned that the avenues of international assistance for these churches have been reported to be blocked by the Rumanian Government, hereby overtures the General Synod to direct the General Synod Executive Committee to intercede with the Department of State on behalf of these ravaged and politically isolated churches, and to urge the World Council of Churches to exercise its good offices to the same end.**

Reasons:

1. The fellow Reformed Christians living in Transylvania of the Socialist Republic of Rumania suffer political and religious disadvantages because they are Christians in a Communist country, Reformed Christians in a predominately Orthodox environment and Hungarians that are a minority are severely hindered in the exercise of their fundamental human rights.
2. The latest illustration can be seen in the way the March 4, 1977, earthquake was handled. While the religious and non-religious news services, upon the information received from the government, reported the heavy damages suffered by the Orthodox, Lutheran, Baptist, and Roman Catholic churches, NOT A WORD WAS SAID on the damages suffered by the Reformed Church (Hungarian) of Rumania. This created the false impression that no support was needed in Transylvania. Permit to visit these areas was denied by the government.
3. As facts slowly came to light, it became clear that only in Kovasna County, 60 of the 75 Reformed Church buildings were damaged. In 15 church buildings, worship services cannot be held any longer; 5 church buildings had to be demolished immediately; 6 bell towers were damaged beyond repair; fortress walls of 6 churches were totally demolished; 2 parsonages suffered heavy damages. It is believed that the amount of damage inflicted on these churches may be as high as $200,000,000.
4. To prove these facts, the Calvin Synod of the United Church of Christ (also the Magyar Reformed Church of New Brunswick, NJ) has in its possession photos recently taken in Pake, Egerpatak, Sepsiszentgyorgy, Rety, Ilyefalva, Tamasfalva, Cofalva, Zohala, Hidveg. Other heavily damaged churches include: Csernaton, Lecfalva, Nagyborosnyo, etc.

Your committee is in sympathy with the expressed sentiments of the overture. We recommend APPROVAL and referral to GSEC for implementation. (ADOPTED)

The Overture Review Committee has one more consideration which is not a response to an Overture but relates to the receipt and process of Overtures coming to General Synod:

The *Manual for Stated Clerks,* adopted by General Synod in 1964, specifies that overtures to General Synod from classes are to be received "not later than ten days after the Stated Spring meeting."

Traditionally most classes held two "stated" meetings, usually in September/October and in March/April. In recent years, many classes hold more than two regular "stated" sessions and there is some ambiguity as to the "Stated Spring" meeting, referred to in the *Manual for Stated Clerks.* It would be helpful if the time limit for overtures from classes were made more definite.

Since overtures from classes to General Synod received as late as the last week in May cannot be properly processed,

R-1. **We RECOMMEND that General Synod take action that overtures from classes to General Synod must be sent to the Office of the General Secretary postmarked no later than April 30, and further**

THAT this revision be made in the *Manual for Stated Clerks.* (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 8

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL REPORT

Introduction

The year 1976 began amidst much speculation as to how Americans would behave during their Bicentennial. Would it be a time of noisy celebration and glorification of the past, or would there also be a new openness to face some hard questions about the values we live by and the future we hope to build?

As far as the General Program Council was concerned, 1976 has been a year of profound probing and venturesome planning. The members and staff of the Council have wrestled with basic questions relating to:

- the theory and practice of church growth
- responsible citizenship and discipleship
- our relationship to people among whom the Reformed Church engages in mission
- evangelism programs that have vitality and integrity
- effective Christian education in local congregations that combines appreciation for the past with a vision of the future and discipleship in the present.

The question of church growth was definitely at the center of GPC concerns, but it has been dealt with in the context of the church's total mission. For example, at the April GPC meeting church growth was a top item on the agenda, while the focus at the November meeting was on our world mission relationships. We have tried to avoid one-theme interests, and thus be true to the spirit of our Reformed Church tradition, which has always had a comprehensiveness about it and not much given to either/or approaches. Rather, it has sought to develop the Church's ministries in accordance with the broad perspectives of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

As our nation enters upon its third century, the Reformed Church in America prepares for its 350th anniversary. The motto we have chosen for these years, *A Heritage of Mission . . . A Mission of Hope,* challenges us to honor the past while obeying the call of Him who has said: "Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

Church Growth

In 1971, the General Program Council bulletin *UPDATE* devoted its whole summer issue to the church growth philosophy, especially as it has been developed at Fuller Theological Seminary. The appreciative but not wholly uncritical presentations in that issue also became part of the preparatory packet for the Mission Consultation and Festival held in October 1971.

For more than half a decade church growth issues were explored among staff, GPC members and interested groups throughout the denomination. All this led in 1976 to the publication of the brochure *REFORMED CHURCH GROWTH: PERSPECTIVES AND PROPOSALS.* This booklet contains a basic position paper, some research findings and a preliminary plan of action. The General Program Council, encouraged by actions at the 1975 and 1976

General Synods, had reached the conclusion that the time had come to translate theory into practice and to launch a major RCA effort in the area of church growth!

The brochure formed the basis for numerous consultations in various sections of the church. These conversations confirmed the feeling that the GPC was responding to a widely shared vision in the denomination. From the very start it had been recognized that church growth would need to be a collaborative effort and would require the enthusiasm and cooperation from people throughout the denomination.

In order to facilitate an open exchange between national staff members and local leaders, it was decided to take on tour the historical drama *Heritage and Horizon,* which had been presented with great success at General Synod. Nearly every performance of the play was preceded by a dinner meeting during which the proposed plan of action was discussed, questions were answered and suggested changes were recorded. Local committees performed yeoman services to make the tour a success. It was an experiment in communication that the participants will not soon forget. The moments of exhaustion were there, but they were far outnumbered by the times of exhilaration experienced by those who were working and dreaming together.

The preliminary plan mentioned earlier stressed the need for new churches in new areas, but also the importance of strengthening existing congregations. It recognized the need for building adequate facilities, but also the possibility of using facilities that may be available in the community and the importance of adequate staff. The plan contained provisions for the expansion of minority ministries in this country and for RCA mission involvement in a new area of the world.

As modifications in the proposals continued to be made, and criteria were being developed (see Appendix 1), the groundwork was also being laid for a $5,000,000 Reformed Church Growth Fund Drive (see Appendix 2). The need for professional help in such a drive was felt, but there was also a strong conviction that the key functions should be performed by RCA people themselves. A satisfactory arrangement was negotiated with Community Counselling Services, Inc., who are now serving as consultants to the drive. Lois Joice has agreed to serve as director of the drive, while Russell Redeker and Peter Paulsen serve as associate directors. It is envisioned that by the end of 1977 every person in the Reformed Church in America will have been presented with the challenge of Reformed Church growth and will have been given an opportunity to respond with an individual or family commitment. It is hoped that our rejoicing at the 350th anniversary Synod in 1978 will be greatly enhanced by the results of a successful Reformed Church Growth Fund Drive and the knowledge that we shall be approaching the future with a growing ministry for a growing church.

In the meantime, the fact that exciting opportunities for ministry are indeed open to us is demonstrated by developments in several new RCA fields. The work in Whiting, New Jersey, in a community consisting predominantly of retired people, and the ministry of Faith Community Center in a vast shopping center in the Denver, Colorado area, are two examples of congregations that are not entirely traditional but that carry on the great Christian tradition of serving the needs of all people everywhere.

A final word must be said in this section about urban ministries. Some

people have expressed a concern that the church growth emphasis will be turned into a grand suburban strategy at the neglect of the urban scene. That is certainly not the intention! As a matter of fact, in recent months, while the church growth plans were being developed, Executive Secretary Arie Brouwer and several other staff members have established a close working relationship with urban pastors and have been laying the groundwork for a major urban ministry emphasis in 1977. It will be the key item on the agenda of the GPC meeting next November.

Good News People

Apparently the Reformed Church was ready for an evangelism program like *Good News People* (GNP). Our Secretaries for Evangelism, Herman Luben and Donald Jansma, have been overjoyed by the volume of responses they have received from congregations across the church. One out of every seven congregations is participating in the program.

The emphasis of Good News People is on evangelism as the task of the *whole church.* The first phase of the program is designed to help believers in their personal witness. *A Story to Tell,* a six session manual for congregational use, became available early in 1976 and has already been widely used. It seeks to guide believers in searching out their own story, in seeing the relationship between their life story and the story of God's grace in the scriptures, and to share the good news with others.

Phase II is called *Equipping the Evangelist* and is aimed at those people in each congregation who have received special gifts to do evangelism. It is clear from the New Testament witness that we do not all receive the same gifts. It is, therefore, important that we discover and help each other discover the gifts that the Holy Spirit has bestowed on us, so that each person may use "for the good of others the special gift he/she has received from God." (I Peter 4:10) The goal is "to provide training for this group of Good News People so that as good managers of their particular gift they can joyfully and competently use it in the service of their Lord." Phase III is called *Meeting Human Need,* and will deal with the biblical imperative that the practice of godliness include compassion for the poor and for all who suffer from the injustices that prevail in human societies.

One of the stated purposes of this program is "a grounding of evangelism in Kingdom theology and Reformed tradition." This emphasis fits in well with the *Evangelism Manifesto,* produced by a joint Reformed-Christian Reformed working group, which was recommended to the churches for study by the 1975 General Synod. The fact that this document has already gone through a second printing indicates the interest the statement has evoked in our churches.

Theological Reflections

There is strong evidence that theological interest is alive and well in the Reformed Church in America. We noted in the previous section a desire to develop an evangelism program that would be true to the spirit of the Reformed tradition. A number of reactions to the brochure *REFORMED CHURCH GROWTH: PERSPECTIVES AND PROPOSALS* have also shown a strong desire within our fellowship that theories on church growth be tested

as to whether they accurately reflect the biblical message and the major tenets of Reformed theology.

In order to facilitate exchange of theological views among RCA members, the General Program Council's Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal initiated the publication of *Theological Reflections,* a series of occasional papers dealing with matters of theological interest. Almost 700 people have requested to be put on the mailing list of this little journal! Its editorial committee brings together theological professors, pastors, and national administrative staff. A considerable number of the subscribers are lay people. The focus of the papers is on biblical theology as *practical* theology, i.e., the participants reflect theologically on the experiences of the Christian Community today with the intent of relating church practice more closely to the gospel proclamation.

Jubilee/76

The Reformed Church's bicentennial celebration took its theme and the basic context of its thinking from the Jubilee message in Leviticus 25. The hope was that we, as Reformed people who are ready to be reformed anew, would let ourselves be addressed by the biblical message concerning the meaning of citizenship and discipleship, and that we would let our views on social issues be informed by the vision of the Scriptures. A Bible Study booklet, authored by Dr. Hugh A. Koops, was provided as an aid to local groups who were interested in exploring these issues.

In August 1976, more than eleven hundred people came to Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, to participate in this bicentennial event. In-depth study, joyful celebration, small group interaction, music, worship, media, dialogue, recreation, drama, thoughtful reflection–all were part of *Jubilee/76.*

And what has been the result? "It is reported," we read in the Task Force report to the November GPC meeting, "that some people testified that, for themselves, Jubilee was a time of hearing new ideas, of feeling oneself opening to different viewpoints, of catching a clearer vision of the reality of the Kingdom in our time and place. Yet the church will have to wait three years, or seven or more, to see whether there is a harvest out of that which was sown this past August in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania." These are modest claims, but put forth in a hopeful mood!

In the meantime, it is of the greatest importance that the seedlings that have grown as a result of *Jubilee/76* be nourished and cared for during the coming years. There has been much talk lately about a resurgence of evangelical social concern. However, a mere recognition that the Scriptures manifest a passionate concern for issues of social justice is not enough. Nor should such issues be placed in a separate compartment and then be left to certain interested parties. Rather, they should be seen as an integral part of the total life and mission of the Christian Church.

Such was the challenge of *Jubilee/76* to the Reformed Church for the years that lie ahead. It is an exciting challenge. It calls for a biblically integrated approach to Christian ministries at home and abroad–ministries that seek to apply the message of the whole Bible to the needs of the whole world in order that signs of God's *Shalom* (wholeness) may be established upon the earth.

World Mission

In November 1975, the General Program Council tentatively approved a new policy statement on world mission relationships. This statement was subsequently shared with all RCA missionaries and partner churches for their review and comment prior to final consideration of the document by the Council. After careful study, the GPC approved the new policy statement at its November 1976 meeting (see Appendix 3).

Why such a review at this time? It should be pointed out that discussions of the nature of our mission relationships abroad go back to the earliest days of RCA mission involvement. In recent years, however, such questions have presented themselves with ever greater urgency. The rapid and radical changes through which whole continents have been passing since World War II have had an inevitable impact on the Church's mission work. In several countries where the Reformed Church is involved in mission, local church leaders have been raising questions about the shape of our future cooperation. Some fundamental decisions must be made during the next few years. In other countries changing government policies demand constant review of mission relationships.

It was, therefore, felt that the time had come for the GPC to once again clarify its assumptions and to state its stance on these important matters. Thus, GPC members will be able to deliberate and act on the basis of agreed upon policy directives.

Five overseas church leaders participated in the discussions during the November GPC meeting. They helped Council members understand the peculiar dynamics that are at work in their particular countries and parts of the world. The Council sessions were greatly enriched by their gracious presence, their Christian witness, and their candid advice. The overseas participants were: the Rev. Takehide Hirayama, of the Kyodan (Japan) Executive Committee; the Right Rev. Solomon Doraisawmy, vice-moderator of the Church of South India; the Rev. C.M. Kao, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan; the Rev. Salatiel Palomino Lopez, Moderator of the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico; and the Rev. Yusef Abdul Noor, President of the Common Council of the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait.

The new policy statement also provides a frame of reference for the study on new areas of world mission that has been conducted during the past year. With whom should we consult in the countries that were being considered for possible future RCA mission involvement? What would be our relationship to the indigenous churches and to other foreign churches and mission agencies already involved? The updated policy statement provides guidance in such matters.

As of this writing, the final decision as to new mission involvements has not been made. A number of areas of the world have been studied and discussed. Guidelines for the selection of new areas have been developed. Strong interest has been expressed in South America. Indonesia is also still under serious consideration. The GPC will make a decision at its April 1977 meeting.

The office of Human Resources reports encouraging news in the missionary recruitment area. New overseas appointments include John and

Marilyn Koedyker to Japan, John and Caryl Busman to the Omo River Post in Ethiopia, Nancy Rouwhorst as a teacher in Oman, and Harold and Yvette Vande Berg to Bahrain. Two additional appointments in Taiwan are now in process. A re-assignment has been accepted by Lillian Huisken, who moves from Oman to Ethiopia to continue her nursing ministry.

Our American Indian Ministries have been fortunate in securing the services of the following couples: Rob and Dorothea Kampman in Dulce, New Mexico; Steven and Kay Farmer to Macy, Nebraska; and Dirk and Linda Kramer to Winnebago, Nebraska.

Recruitment for the AIM (Adventure in Mission) Program and the Taiwan Summer English Tutoring Experience has been successful. Eight full-time AIM workers and one AIM Associate began their one-year assignments in June. Fifteen young adults participated in the Taiwan Summer Program. Three of those stayed on as interns for the academic year.

We should also mention the wonderful work RCA volunteers are doing. A total of 29 persons served in nine different countries and U.S. communities during 1976. Assignments ranged from teaching to working in an office, a bookstore, a library, on a farm, in maintenance and electrical work, and in the area of research and publication (see Appendix 4 for a complete report on World Mission Personnel).

1976 GPC Income

Once again our churches have given their generous support to General Synod programs. We report with gratitude that contributions to the work of the General Program Council in 1976 exceeded the 1975 figure by $225,000.

Reformed Church World Service received $78,000 more in 1976. The impressive sum of $170,000 was received for Guatamala Relief alone. This is another indication that Reformed Church people are ready to respond to the needs of the hungry and the victims of disasters.

Partnership-in-Mission received $140,000 more and Generally Designated receipts increased by $71,000. The Mission of the Month program also showed an increase of $48,000.

Yet, these increases—encouraging as they are—did not cover the continually increasing costs of mission. Therefore, the General Program Council, for the first time since 1972, incurred a $60,000 deficit in 1976. While this deficit is not of alarming proportions, it does pose a strong challenge to us all for 1977.

Conclusion

We are the oldest denomination with a continuous ministry in the United States of America. But, thank God, we are a denomination that still manifests spiritual vitality and the ability to dream dreams. A study of our history gives cause for humble confession. We have not always been faithful to the high calling to which the Lord has summoned us. But our history also contains reasons for heartfelt thanksgiving. The Lord has been faithful to his promises; he has not forsaken the work of his hands. God has blessed many of our efforts; therefore, we face the future with confidence and joy.

This report is dedicated
to
Dr. Marion de Velder
General Secretary
Reformed Church in America
1961-1977
in recognition of
his faithful service.

GPC-Appendix 1

CHURCH GROWTH CRITERIA

COMMUNITY AWARENESS—Ministries should be developed in response to needs and interests that are characteristic of persons in that particular community. They should be designed to draw such persons into the ministry.

1. Is there sufficient available population present or likely to be present in the immediate future?
2. Is this a community in which the Reformed Church can minister effectively?
3. Is the current population trend stable, or likely to become more or less favorable?
4. Are any community, neighborhood changes envisioned in the next ten years? How will these affect the church growth effort?
5. Is there a demonstrable lack of churches likely to meet the needs of those present or likely to be present?
6. Will the ministry complement and not compete with other ministries in the area?

CONGREGATIONAL LIFESTYLE—A congregation's lifestyle should develop out of the interaction of the Word of God and the Reformed tradition with the persons in that community. This lifestyle should be expressed in the nurture and worship of the congregation as well as in its witness and service.

1. Has the congregation made church growth a top priority?
2. Is the congregation's program oriented as much toward outsiders as it is toward members?
3. Is the attitude that prevails in the congregation warm, accepting and openly inclusive of newcomers? Is the congregation organized to include newcomers?
4. Is the congregation's program attractive and nuturing to those upon whom it must depend for growth?
5. Has the congregation been able to present an adequate plan for self-evaluation?
6. Is the congregation's life style compatible with RCA doctrine, worship, and government?
7. Are adequate facilities available or can they be made available at a suitable location for ministry?

LEADERSHIP RESOURCES–The Spirit calls and equips certain people for certain tasks. Therefore, persons who have the gifts, personal qualities and skills best suited to particular church growth situations should be identified and trained for such ministries.

1. Have leaders demonstrated skills that facilitate church growth?
2. Are leaders openly sympathetic and aware of the peculiar needs of the unchurched persons the church needs to reach?
3. Do leaders have the will and the ability to develop whatever skills are required to facilitate church growth?
4. Are leaders willing and able to work as a mutually supportive team?
5. Are leaders open and willing to work in partnership with judicatory and/or national staff?
6. Are leaders comfortable, growing, open, self-disciplined and articulate in their Christian faith?
7. Do leaders (especially pastoral) have clearly defined and appropriate church growth objectives?
8. Are the leaders (especially pastoral) willing to commit themselves to continued involvement in the church growth plan to the time of completion?
9. Do leaders have the skills necessary to present the gospel to those specific groups available to the congregation?

DENOMINATIONAL SUPPORT–Church growth ministries should be supported by policies, procedures, structures and resources designed to meet their particular needs.

1. Do the classis and synod have the will and the resources to establish the project?
2. Are there sufficient resources to continue the project?
3. Are there support structures other than classis available to this church and would it participate in them?
4. What local leadership will plan and monitor local finances insuring fiscal responsibility?

GPC-Appendix 2

REFORMED CHURCH GROWTH FUND: A GROWING CHURCH FOR A GROWING MINISTRY

Church Growth, as defined by RCA Executive Secretary Arie Brouwer in his booklet, *Reformed Church Growth: Perspectives and Proposals,* is the "development, expansion and extension of Christ's community in the world. Its critical components are the proclamation of Christ to the world, the incorporation of new members into the teaching, fellowship and worship of the community, and the offering of the community's life in the service of the poor and needy."

The church growth movement in the Reformed Church in America came sweeping out of local congregations troubled by statistics that kept revealing a serious decline in most areas of our denominational life. New members, it was widely agreed, must be actively sought if we were to continue and expand our

mission in the world. At the same time, the RCA was challenged by statistics that revealed the distressingly large number of adult Americans untouched by the Christian Church. These people offered a glorious opportunity to reach out again and again with the Gospel and its assurance of God's love.

In a climate of growing receptivity to church growth theory and emphasis, the General Program Council, in cooperation with the Particular Synods, designed a plan to get the Reformed Church growing in several significant ways.

The blueprint, which has been called one of the best thought-out plans developed by any denomination today, called for:

1. the establishment of several Reformed Churches in geographical areas where the RCA had never witnessed before;
2. new churches in unchurched areas contiguous to other Reformed Church communities,
3. new congregations using existing facilities such as schools, shopping centers and homes rather than new buildings,
4. training and assistance for congregations signifying their intention to grow by 50% in the next five years, and
5. a new area of world mission.

The Reformed Church Growth Fund is the special campaign being conducted throughout the church during the year 1977 to provide the money for the church growth plan. It will be an important tool in helping the RCA grow.

The goal of the campaign is five million dollars, which is the minimum amount necessary to launch the approved growth programs. A survey conducted among RCA people indicates we can reach that goal, providing individual members of the Reformed Church are given the opportunity to make their own decisions about their contributions. Discussions are being held with consistories concerning this approach to RCA members.

The fund drive is being conducted by the General Program Council. Leadership has been drawn from existing GPC staff. Mrs. Lois M. Joice, Editor of *Hotline* and Coordinator of the Mission of the Month program, is National Director. Regional Directors are the Rev. Russell J. Redeker, Secretary for Church Planning and Development, and the Rev. Peter M. Paulsen, Media Coordinator. Phillip Kranin of Community Counselling Service, Inc., is providing professional counsel and administrative services. Some sixty RCA pastors and lay persons are serving as Area Coordinators.

All RCA consistories are being asked to participate in the Reformed Church Growth Fund by setting up congregational organizations whose purpose it will be to seek immediate gifts and three-year pledges from church members. Consistories are also being asked to select a dollar goal to be achieved through this special congregational campaign.

It is anticipated that most churches will conduct their campaign in October or November. The months leading up to that commitment phase will be spent informing our people of the challenges and opportunities of church growth and of the exact programs to be underwritten through the Reformed Church Growth Fund.

Let us pray that our church family will respond to this urgent need, using

the occasion of our 350th Anniversary to express our gratitude to God in a practical and forward-looking manner!

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R-1. THAT the 1977 General Synod carry forward the actions and urgings of the General Synods of 1975 and 1976 by affirming the action of the General Synod Executive Committee, endorsing a Reformed Church Growth Fund Drive goal of $5,000,000, and further,

R-2. THAT the General Synod urge particular synods, classes and congregations to cooperate with this fund drive in every way possible.

GPC-Appendix 3

WORLD MISSION RELATIONSHIPS

Historically, much of the mission of the Reformed Church has been carried out in partnership with other Christian churches. This has been particularly true of overseas missions, but joint action has been common in every area of program.

The first missionaries of the Reformed Church went out under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a united effort of several denominations. When the Reformed Church began organized missionary effort, it joined this body and continued in that relationship from 1832 to 1857. In 1857, Synod took action to organize an independent board, feeling that the denomination would have a greater sense of responsibility for the work and increase its offerings.

A controversy immediately developed between Reformed Church missionaries in Amoy and the General Synod. The Synod directed the missionaries in Amoy to apply for organization of a classis that would be part of the church in America. The missionaries argued for an indigenous church with which the RCA would work in partnership. After long discussion and some struggle, the missionary position prevailed at the Synod of 1864.

Since that time many Reformed Church missionaries have played significant roles in fostering various partnerships in mission, particularly in the formation of the Church of South India and the continuation and development of the United Church of Christ in Japan. All of the ministries in which we are presently engaged are carried out in partnerships with one or more indigenous church bodies.

Yet, the tension between partnership and unilateral action, revealed in the controversy about the Church in Amoy, has never disappeared. Developments in the last decade have noticeably increased the tension and promise to increase it still more. It is an appropriate time to examine our assumptions and test our strategies.

Assumptions

THEOLOGICAL

Christian unity is integrally related to Christian mission. God's mission is to unite all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:9f). The unity of the church is a sign of the time to come when God shall have accomplished his mission.

ENVIRONMENTAL

World mission relationships are under increasing tension. The recent striking growth in the number of mission agencies (over 170 in North

America alone from 1946 to 1969—many of them rigorously independent with sectarian tendencies), a general disenchantment with ecumenical agencies, a resurgence of interest in denominational programming, the growing liability of "foreignness" in most of the world, and the moratorium declarations and discussion all contribute to the growing tension.

World mission relationships will develop across a widening theological spectrum. The so-called "evangelical" and "ecumenical" emphasis in the Christian Church are converging. Significant elements of the reports of the "evangelical" conference at Lausanne and the "ecumenical" conference at Bangkok are interchangeable.

DENOMINATIONAL

The Reformed Church in America will maintain its official commitment to Christian unity. General Synod's policy statement on this subject reads in part, "We, of the Reformed Church in America, resolve to manifest the God-given unity of the Church." There is little likelihood that this policy statement will be set aside.

The growing difficulty of maintaining world mission relationships will lead to increased frustration and confusion among those committed to doing the mission. Some Reformed Church members will increase their support for mission agencies which do not demonstrate a commitment to partnership and enjoy a consequent freedom from denominational accountability and relationships with their colleagues in other agencies.

OPERATIONAL

The GPC will cooperate with other churches and agencies across a widening range of theological views. The GPC program reflects the urge to mission of the Reformed Church and, as such, is highly diversified and compatible with many groups.

The GPC will be faced with several important issues concerning world mission relationships in the next five years. They are significant enough to warrant a review of our current policy statements.

The Presbyterian Church in Mexico several years ago approved a plan calling for withdrawal of our missionaries from Mexico by 1980. This plan is under continuing review and discussion.

In recent years we have not replaced missionaries to Japan who have retired or resigned. Other partner churches of the United Church of Christ in Japan have actually withdrawn missionaries from Japan. The church in Japan has expressed deep concern about what it perceives as a weakened relationship and has requested more missionaries. This year we have responded to one such request. What should be our future pattern?

The Church of South India has only a few RCA missionaries in its ministry today. Government restrictions severely limit possibilities for new longterm appointments. Historically, the establishment of alternative relationships have not only set up channels of communication, but channels of corruption as well through which individuals in the CSI have personal access to American wealth, thus aggravating serious problems in the CSI and RCA and violating the integrity of our partnership with our partner church.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has appealed to the world Church

for support in its relationships with the government of the Republic of China. In 1972 its Executive Committee issued "A Statement on Our National Fate" and appealed to churches throughout the world for support. The General Program Council expressed its support of their statement. The Chairman was instructed to contact the US government officials to affirm the GPC's solidarity with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. The GPC may be increasingly called upon to express unity in mission through supporting Christian colleagues in their aspirations for human dignity.

Relationships with private Christian institutions in Bahrain (hospital and school), at Annville (school) and at Brewton (school) will be tested in the next few years as these institutions pass through periods of change in financing, program and personnel in their continuing movement toward independence. This time of testing will also apply to our relationship with the government of Oman.

During the next months we will be exploring new areas of mission. We need a frame of reference in which to conduct that exploration: with whom and how shall we consult? What will be our relationship to the indigenous churches and to the other foreign churches and mission agencies already involved?

Goal

The tension obvious in some and implicit in all of the foregoing assumptions, combined with the concrete decisions which will shortly be required of the General Program Council, underscore the urgency of clear statement of our goal in the area of world mission relationships. The following is proposed:

To develop world mission relationships throughout the whole Christian Church which strengthen the mission and enrich the life of all partners.

Optional Strategies

Unilateral Action—Action by a single church or mission agency

This approach provides for the most involvement and ownership on the part of the sending body. It is usually the fastest and most efficient. However, it does tend to find its ultimate justification in the sending body's urge to mission, thus increasing the likelihood for programs which are unacceptable to the intended recipient.

Joint Action—Coordinated or cooperative action between two or more churches or mission agencies

This action usually takes place through consortia or cooperative agencies.

A consortium is usually described as a "multi-lateral contractual arrangement." The distinctive feature of a consortium is that the mission action is carried out by the denominational or other member unit rather than by the consortium itself. The consortium serves as a communication center for evaluating requests for resources, sharing perspectives and coordinating planning and program. The Joint Strategy and Action Committee is an example of this style of operation and serves as a prototype for many others. Consortia provide for valuable sharing of information and some mutual criticism

across the broad range of membership. However, they do not call for a full commitment and therefore tend to be short-term and of limited effectiveness.

A cooperative agency is created to act on behalf of the churches or their member units. It carried out programs in its own name and on behalf of its members, as well as facilitates the separate action of its member units. Most of the program units of the World Council of Churches and National Council of Churches fall into this category. Such organizations do provide a visible united front for the Church's mission. They can mobilize and maximize use of resources. However, because of their broad inclusiveness, they frequently find it hard to achieve consensus and operate efficiently.

United Mission—A relationship between two or more churches for the purpose of a common mission

Historically, many such relationships have been between a "sending" and "receiving" church. Such relationships can broaden the perspective, enrich the life and strengthen the mission of both churches. However, they tend to drift toward paternalism and dependency with consequent loss of value and effectiveness. Experience has shown that the strengths of such relationships are maximized and the weaknesses minimized if at least one other church with a different ecclesiastical tradition and/or racial, ethnic or national background is involved in the relationship.

The following recommendation proposes adoption of a goal and strategies as a replacement for the present GPC policy statement on mission and ecumenical relations. The revisions seek to differentiate between mutual relationships with partner churches which involve a shared life as well as common task and the more task-oriented joint-action type of relationship. It also puts the GPC under heavier obligation to seek a broad range of world mission relationships. In addition, it takes note of the moratorium discussions by recognizing the possibility of a "temporary discontinuation of some forms of united mission."

Policy Statement

Goal: In obedience to Jesus Christ and in the spirit of mutual responsibility, the GPC commits itself to the development of sending and receiving relationships throughout the whole Christian church which strengthen the mission and enrich the life of all partners.

Strategies: The General Program Council will use several strategies to achieve the above goal. Selection of the appropriate strategy, and consequently, the term, function and form of the relationship, will depend on the situation.

Joint Action—Coordinated or cooperative action between two or more churches or mission agencies

Situation—GPC mission shall ordinarly be inititated through joint action.

Term—Joint action relationships shall be continued for the duration

of the action agreed upon or in accordance with denominational policy where applicable (e.g., NCC and WCC units). All such relationships shall be regularly examined in the budget process.

Function—Joint action shall be undertaken for purposes of communication and coordination of separate programs and for purposes of cooperative action.

Form—Joint action may be undertaken through consortia or cooperative agencies. The former serves as a center for communication and coordination. the latter is an agency created to act on behalf of its member units. The GPC shall employ both means in its effort to develop world mission relationships throughout the whole Christian Church.

United Mission—A mutual relationship between two or more churches for the purpose of a common mission

Situation—United mission shall be the usual form of GPC mission.

Term—United mission shall continue as long as the GPC is related to other bodies in mission.

Function—United mission shall be undertaken for the purpose of strengthening the mission and enriching the life of all partners.

Form—United mission requires a mutual relationship which includes a shared life as well as a common task. Whenever possible, such a relationship shall include more than two churches of different ecclesiastical traditions and different racial, ethnic or national backgrounds. Responsible Christian witness may sometimes require a temporary discontinuation of some forms of united mission in order to permit independent development.

Individual Action—Action by a single church or mission agency

Situation—Individual action shall be undertaken by the GPC only in exceptional circumstances and only for programs which the Council believes it must undertake even though it can secure no partners.

Term—An individual action undertaken by the GPC shall be continued in that form for the shortest possible period. The Council shall make an intensive effort to secure other denominations, agencies, or judicatories as partners in that program.

Function—An individual action shall be undertaken to bear a particular witness only when we are compelled by conscience. We shall seek to hear that witness as well as bear it.

Form—An individual action shall be undertaken by the GPC only after thorough consultation with our traditional partners in mission and other church bodies directly affected by our action.

GPC-Appendix 4

MISSIONARY PERSONNEL

Furlough Missionary Conference

In August 1976, approximately 55 furloughed missionaries and staff members met at Slippery Rock College, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania for a

two-day conference. The objectives of the conference were to build better missionary-staff relationships, to share information and discuss current developments concerning the RCA and its mission program, to share and discuss mission theology, and to review policies and procedures.

General Program Council Appointments

Appointed to the staff of the Annville Institute, Annville, Kentucky, for the school year 1976-77 were:

Elaine Burns—Social Studies and Dormitory

Jane Dalton—Home Economics teacher

Rick Hakken—Physical Education and Dormitory

Julie Hakken—Kindergarten and Dormitory

Carol Haadsma—Business Education teacher

Joe Krajnak—Art teacher

Sue Poppink—English teacher

Betty Thelige—Bible teacher

For the 1976-77 school year at the Southern Normal School, Brewton, Alabama, no new staff appointments were made.

Robert and Dorothea Kampman—assigned to the Dulce congregation to work in the New Mexico Indian field.

Steven and Kay Farmer—called to serve First Reformed Church of the Omaha Mission in Macy, Nebraska.

Dirk and Linda Kramer—called by the Winnebago Reformed Church in Winnebago, Nebraska, serving in American Indian Ministries.

Christian and Hendrika Plateel—appointed as missionaries to Chiapas, Mexico.

Nancy Rouwhorst—appointed to teach at the Peter Zwemer Elementary School in Oman.

John and Marilyn Koedyker—appointed to serve in Japan.

John and Caryl Busman—appointed to serve in Ethiopia under RCWS in the "Food From Wind" agricultural project.

Harold and Yvette Vande Berg—appointed to serve the English Language Congregation in Bahrain.

Willis and Tanya Pfaff—appointed as World Mission Associates to Australia where they work in an agricultural veterinary assistance and community development program among Aborigines.

William and Eleanor Wilbur—appointed as World Mission Associates to the Gamboa Union Church in Panama, the Canal Zone.

The following persons are serving as Interns with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan as English teachers:

David Alexander—New Hope Community Church, Canoga, California.

Mary Jane Branch—University Reformed Church, East Lansing, Michigan.

Elaine Van Wyk—Calvary Reformed Church, Ripon, California.

Reassignments

Lillian Huiskens–from Oman to Ethiopia to continue her ministry in nursing.

Resignations

Staff members at Annville Institute, Annville, Kentucky, who left at the close of the 1975-76 school year were:

Barbara Sue Gabbard–now doing graduate study and teaching in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Jerry Hacker–retired after 32 years on the Institute staff.

Dean and Nancy Huisman–relocated in Pella, Iowa, with Dean working with the local newspaper as a printer.

Dianne Moore–teaching private music students in Jackson County.

Theresa Phillips–relocated in California.

James Potts–after 6 years on the staff resigned as Principal to accept a position in Carrollton, Kentucky.

David and Dianne Reck–relocated in Holland, Michigan, where Mr. Reck is in a paramedic training program.

Kathleen Sprik–returned to Michigan for graduate study.

David and Marsha Vander Broek–living in Atlantic City, Minnesota, where Mr. Vander Broek accepted a teaching position.

Roger and Charlotte Vander Schaaf–moved to Lake Wilson, Minnesota, where they have purchased a farm.

Staff members at the Southern Normal School, Brewton, Alabama, who left at the close of the 1975-76 school year were:

Augusta Montgomery

Wilma Quarker

Harry and Patricia Miersma resigned following service in Ethiopia.

Deaths

Cornelia W. Jongewaard died on August 26, 1976, at the age of 80, former missionary in India for 40 years, from 1925 to 1965.

GPC-Appendix 5

SUMMARY REPORT ON AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE, WORLD HOME BIBLE LEAGUE, AND RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE

American Bible Society

The purpose of the American Bible Society has remained unchanged throughout the years–the translation, publication, and distribution of Scriptures without doctrinal note or comment and without profit. Since 1816

the American Bible Society has been making God's Word available to spiritually hungry people everywhere. At least one book of the Bible has been translated into more than 1,000 languages as of December 31, 1976.

In the fall of our Bicentennial year, the American Bible Society completed and published the *Good News Bible* in Today's English version. This is the culmination of years of precise, painstaking translation work.

Just over three years ago, *Good News For New Readers* was launched in Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia. The goal of the Bible Societies was to provide Scripture portions and selections on graded levels for new readers in 100 languages. By the end of 1976 work has been undertaken in 286 languages.

In 1976 the American Bible Society released a new filmstrip entitled *Lives Filled With His Love.* This color filmstrip was shot on location in Brazil, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico. It shows the progress the *Good News For New Readers* program is making in the lives of new readers in South America and around the world. There were 611 bookings for the filmstrip in 1976, making this one of the most popular of all the American Bible Society filmstrips.

Scripture distribution in the United States during 1976 reached a total of 114,769,046 copies, an increase of 5,299,265 over 1975. ABS officials expect distribution of the *Good News Bible* alone to soar to a record 10 million copies within the first year.

The work on the *New Testament in Today's Arabic Version* (TAV) is progressing. This translation of the New Testament into common language Abrabic will supplement the translation of the Bible completed by Reformed Church missionary Cornelius Van Dyke and published by the American Bible Society in 1865.

Income from churches was greater than in previous years. A total of $1,739,194 was received in 1976, of which $27,926.49 came from the Reformed Church in America. Included within this total is a special gift of $7,349 presented for the translation of the New Testament in Tzeltal: Oxchuc, the language of the people in Chiapas, Mexico. The Reformed Church in America is also making substantial contributions to the work on the *New Testament in Today's Arabic Version.* The initial composition and printing of 10,000 copies of this work will cost $10,500. The General Program Council, RCA, is seeking to raise $10,000 toward this goal. This gift is over and above any regular commitment from the Reformed Church in America.

Lord's Day Alliance

The year 1976 was one of the best in the 88-year history of the Lord's Day Alliance. This Alliance is probably the only national organization the sole purpose of which is the maintenance and cultivation of the Lord's Day as a day of rest, worship, Christian education, and spiritual renewal.

The Alliance's quarterly magazine *SUNDAY* has been enlarged and made more attractive, now being printed in two colors. Between 8,500 and 9,500 copies of this magazine are distributed each quarter.

Over 50,000 copies of two beautiful new pamphlets have been printed, telling what the Lord's Day Alliance is and does and of its contribution to our nation's Bicentennial. A large number of other pamphlets, posters and

materials are available as well. Furthermore, 200 tapes by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale were produced for distribution to radio stations during the year.

The Lord's Day Alliance is supported by denominations, local churches, individuals, foundations, and bequests. Gifts received from Reformed Church contributors amounted to $1,552 during 1976, which represents an increase over the previous year.

World Home Bible League

Mr. William Ackerman, Director of the World Home Bible League, has expressed gratitude for the loyal support which the League has received for many years from the Reformed Church in America. Many of the Scriptures produced by the World Home Bible League are being used by RCA congregations, radio ministries, and missionaries abroad.

One of the major projects in which the League is involved is the printing of the Chol Bible which is going to be distributed within the Chiapas area. Reformed Church personnel have cooperated with Wycliffe Bible translators in the production of this Bible.

The total 1976 income of the World Home Bible League amounted to $4,296,430. Of this amount 7% or about $267,000 was received from RCA ccontributors.

Religion In American Life

Religion In American Life launched a program in 1975 which carried through 1976 its religious emphasis on the celebration of our nation's Bicentennial. While looking back to the 200 years of religious freedom which were engraved on the founding documents of our country, the RIAL message sought to evoke a dedication to these principles which would help America meet the challenges which lie ahead. It's theme was "Let's keep it growing for 200 more years. Welcome God to America's Bicentennial. Practice what you pray."

Religion In American Life was founded in 1949 to help our national religious groups coordinate an annual public service message through the communications media. These have grown to include use of various media, such as television and radio, newspapers and magazines, outdoor and transit advertising whose contributions of space and time run each year well over $20 million in dollar value.

The RIAL message is determined in consultation with its 43 cooperating religious groups (Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, and Protestant) who prepare a statement of media objectives as a guideline for its volunteer agency, Compton Advertising, Inc. The agency puts the message into advertising form without charging for the millions of dollars it would bill a commercial client for comparable time and talent. The completed materials are reproduced and distributed by The Advertising Council among a wide spectrum of the media across the country.

One Reformed Church pastor played a particularly significant role in the Bicentennial campaign. Dr. Robert H. Schuller, senior pastor of Garden Grove Community Church shows his commitment to Religion In American Life by serving on its Board of Directors and as chairman of its Religious Sponsors Appeal. In addition, he pledged that he would raise the large costs involved in

reproducing the Bicentennial theme art in full color and distributing them to outdoor poster companies across the nation. Appealing to the large audience he has built for his nationally televised "Hour of Power," Dr. Schuller raised the funds he had pledged to display RIAL's large outdoor poster in prominent locations across the nation during the month of July.

The Reformed Church in America continues its active support and involvement in Religion In American Life since its founding in 1949. RCA General Secretary, Dr. Marion de Velder, began his membership on RIAL's Board of Directors with his election as stated clerk of the General Synod in 1961, serving as chairman of RIAL's Board from 1963 to 1965 (during which time RIAL responded to its denominations' request that it adopt a message placing more emphasis on their social concerns.) Dr. Blaise Levai and Dr. James Z. Nettinga are Reformed Church clergy serving respectively as members of RIAL's Media Objectives and Program Promotion Committees.

GPC-Appendix 6

1976 GENERAL SYNOD REFERRALS

The General Synod of 1976 referred a number of items to the General Program Council for action or further report to the Synod of 1977.

1. *The production of a guide for the training of elders and deacons.* This project was assigned to Harold Brown who, as Secretary for Parish Life, bears major responsibility for programs of adult education. A preliminary outline for a proposed study guide has been circulated among interested parties, including the Reverend Bert Van Soest who proposed the project in his presidential report to last year's Synod. Critiques and suggestions received are now being incorporated as the project is further developed by a small project team. It is expected that a draft copy will be available for trial use during the last quarter of 1977.

2. *Concern was expressed by the Review Committee on Overtures that urban ministries remain a high priority in the RCA.* Executive Secretary Arie Brouwer and several other staff members have been in close consultation with urban pastors on this matter. Urban ministries will be the major emphasis at the November 1977 GPC meeting. Several new educational and promotional resources on urban ministries are being prepared. A number of urban ministry proposals are being submitted in conjunction with the Reformed Church Growth effort.

3. *The Review Committee on the President's report recommended the production of a Manual on Infant Baptism.* Such a resource is being planned as part of the *Heritage and Hope* series. This series, which is being produced under the supervision of Arthur O. Van Eck, will provide educational resources specifically focusing on Reformed Church doctrine, worship, history, and mission.

4. *The GPC Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal was asked to explore "means by which evangelism can be a permanent major concern of the RCA."* The work of the Task Force came under review at the January 1977 meeting of the General Program Council

Executive Committee. The GPC, through the General Synod Executive Committee, is recommending to this General Synod that the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal be continued for a four year period, 1978 through 1981, with the following objectives:

(1) To articulate the implications of the biblical message of the Kingdom of God for evangelism programs.

(2) To evaluate and resource RCA evangelism progams.

(1) GPC Programs

(2) Particular Synod Programs

(3) To review and critique other evangelism programs currently available to Reformed Church congregations.

(4) To evaluate and support seminary instruction in evangelism and church renewal.

(5) To stimulate theological reflection on evangelism and renewal (the publication of *THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS).*

(6) To prepare presentations for General Synod to highlight evangelism and church renewal.

(7) To identify and promote activities which enable evangelism and renewal, e.g., spiritual disciplines for clergy and laity, renewal communities.

It should also be stated that the Secretaries for Evangelism are formulating plans and strategies whereby evangelism will be an ongoing process in our church through the Good News People program.

5. *The Review Committee on Overtures raised the question of Youth Ministries in our denomination.* A proposal recommending the appointment of a Secretary for Youth Ministries will come to the July 1977 meeting of the General Program Council Executive Committee. For several years, youth ministries have been administered regionally through contracted personnel. This arrangement no longer seems adequate. It is felt that the youth of the RCA are ready for a stronger denominational youth ministries program that will contribute to a sense of identity and will encourage the continued participation of these young people in the life of the denomination.

6. A question was raised about *outreach to students from Arab countries in the U.S. and* opportunities for *witness in Arab countries through the presence of the growing number of Christians employed there.*

A church growth proposal is under consideration for special ministries to Arab students and expatriates in the U.S.

As to employment opportunities overseas, it is felt that the initiative on this should largely come from persons interested in such service. Because of sensitive issues involved in advocating Christian outreach in the Middle East, it is deemed unwise to engage in a major promotional effort for such a project. Local pastors and consistories are encouraged, however, to counsel with church members who are

preparing to accept employment in Middle East countries. GPC staff will also be glad to answer inquiries from people who have accepted such employment, and who wish to know more about local conditions with respect to a Christian presence.

At the same time, the GPC is focusing on ministry to expatriates already in the Middle East through support of four "padres" who have this as their primary assignment. Also, there is ecumenical consideration of a resource center to be established in the Middle East that would provide special assistance to expatriates so that they can enter more effectively into the culture of the area and be a more effective Christian presence in their daily contacts.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

The responsibility of reviewing the work of the General Program Council in any given year is enormous. We, as a Review Committee, are deeply indebted to the members of the General Program Council for their generosity in devoting time and talent and for their careful diligence in the decision-making process. The experience of review has, more than ever, made the members of this Committee deeply aware of the excellence of the Council and its comprehensive, compassionate globe-encompassing concern to fulfill the divine imperative of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In truth, "1976 was a year of profound probing and venturesome planning." The Council did indeed wrestle with the basic questions relating to:

- the theory and practice of church growth
- responsible citizenship and discipleship
- the relationship of people among whom the Reformed Church engages in mission
- evangelism programs having vitality and integrity
- effective Christian education in local congregations.

Such deliberation well might prompt a concentration or overemphasis upon one, or even several areas. However, the Council has demonstrated its avoidance of one-theme interests, thus being true to the spirit of our Reformed tradition, and, in a comprehensive way, has "sought to develop the Church's ministries in accordance with the broad perspectives of the Gospel of the Kingdom."

It is the excitement and challenge of such perception and diligence now being actualized that we present to you this evening.

World Mission Relationships

We take note of the General Program Council action, approving a new policy statement on world mission relationships, adopted in November, 1976 (cf. Appendix 3, pg. 131). We commend it to the Synod and to the Church.

We note the pages, "Missionary Personnel" (pp. 135-137), and we appreciated the presence and contribution of several missionaries who met with our Committee. So we are reminded that mission involves and includes people. Those listed on these pages are representative of a larger list, but they serve to direct our attention to the need for the Church to remember—by prayer, correspondence, and financial means—all our missionaries, and to support them in their needs and concerns.

When we become concerned with people, we must also be aware of those people who have responded to Christ in those fields where our missionaries serve. Many find their lives and well-being are now in danger.

We commend them to the Church as brothers and sisters in Christ who need the support and the oneness of Christ's church.

> At this time, all missionaries present at the meeting were requested to stand and were thereby recognized by the Synod.

We call special attention to the current situation in Ethiopia, and call the

Church to prayer for the Ethiopian Christians, praying that they may receive strength for their needs. We call the Church to prayer also for the mission personnel who have served in that country, and to their needs as they face a time of uncertainty regarding their own future.

We ask the Synod to pause at this moment for prayer on behalf of these concerns.

> The Synod stood in silent prayer for Christians living in areas of the world where their lives and well-being are now in danger and especially for the Ethiopian Christians and the missionaries who served in that country. Cornie Keunen, a member of the Review Committee, closed the prayer.

We observe with joy the new direction begun in the Reformed Church in America as indicated in the Church Growth Program. We wish here to highlight that step and express anticipation as we look to future relationships with, and involvement in programs in Venezuela and Indonesia, as well as other possible fields.

R-1. THAT the General Synod instruct the General Program Council to evaluate and actively pursue continually improved methods of relating the denomination's missionary program to the local church, thereby enlisting the increasing support of the churches and their members. (ADOPTED)

We have taken note of the generous support of the Reformed Church to the Reformed Church World Service programs, and call the denomination to renewed response to the needs of the hungry and the victims of disaster around the world.

As we consider world mission, we are mindful of the long and distinguished history of the Reformed Church in India. We are delighted to present the Right Reverend Sundar Clarke, Bishop in Madras, the Church of South India, who will be introduced by the Reverend Arie Brouwer.

> Sundar Clarke, Bishop in Madras, Church of South India, addressed the Synod, bringing greetings from his church and expressing the hope that the relationship between the Church of South India and the RCA will be one of true partnership.

R-2. THAT the General Synod express its gratitude to the Church of South India for sending Bishop Sundar Clarke to be with us, and to convey our best wishes and prayers to the Church of South India as we rejoice in the continuing relationship between our churches. (ADOPTED)

Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal

At its February, 1976, meeting, the General Program Council Executive Committee extended the life of the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal through 1977. This action was taken with the understanding that evaluation of the work of the Task Force and determination of its relationship to an ongoing evangelism program would be dealt with at the January 1, 1977, General Program Council Executive Committee meeting.

In considering the future, the Task Force developed the following objectives:

1. To articulate the implications of the biblical message of the Kingdom of God for evangelical programs.
2. To evaluate and resource RCA evengelism programs.
   a. General Program Council Programs
   b. Particular Synod Programs
3. To review and critique other evangelism programs currently involving the Reformed Church constituency.
4. To evaluate and support seminary instruction in evangelism and church renewal.
5. To stimulate theological reflection on evangelism and church renewal (the publication of "Theological Reflections").
6. To prepare presentations for General Synod to highlight evangelism and church renewal.
7. To identify and promote activities which enable evangelism and renewal, e.g., spiritual disciplines for clergy and laity, renewal communities.

The subcommittee of the General Program Council Review Committee has reviewed the operations of the Task Force from its inception, and has studied the proposal channeled through the General Program Council to the General Synod Executive Committee and to the General Synod for the continuance of the Task Force for a four-year period. We are highly enthusiastic concerning programs and plans, both past and prospective, and we heartily endorse the General Program Council's recommendations to the General Synod Executive Committee and to the General Synod.

In the course of our conversations, it became abundantly clear that the laity was not being apprized of denominational plans and programs in the way we had imagined. We are hopeful that all materials and publicity regarding current and projected programs be thoroughly disseminated to the entire Church. It is important that the individual or individuals receiving such materials and responsible for the dissemination of the same, be diligent in their responsibility.

Recognition was given the impact made by the "Evangelism Manifesto," and we encourage its further study and exposure. Also, the success of the Good News People program is most encouraging and even more churches are urged to become part of the program. The increasing request for copies of "Theological Reflections" is indicative of its general excellence and the tremendous interest in church renewal. Those responsible for its publication are to be commended.

Finally, the Review Committee wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the members of the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal and to both the Reverends Herman Luben and Donald Jansma for their untiring efforts in the Kingdom's advance.

Church Growth

Believing that God has called us to be his witness in the world, to seek out the lost and gather them into his church in order that it may be strengthened to better serve his purposes in the world, the Reformed Church in America has set itself the task of growing significantly and across a broad front in the next five years.

During the 1975 General Synod meeting, several developments took place:

1. President Raymond H. Rewerts called the denomination to an aggressive program of outreach, evangelism, and growth.

   Stressing that our goal as a denomination "ought to be to bring people into the Kingdom of God," President Rewerts explained:

   > "If there is anything that makes the Reformed contribution unique among the denominations of the Christian Church, it is this emphasis that (Kingdom growth) is *God's doing* and *God has invited* and *compelled men* (emphasis President Rewerts') by the power of his spirit to be available to be witnesses to that Gospel and to rescue men from human tragedy."

   President Rewerts further emphasized that the strategy demanded by the goal to bring people into the Kingdom of God is that of the Great Commission as outlined in Matthew 28:19 and 20.

   See "President's Report," *The Acts and Proceedings of the 169th Regular Session of the General Synod* (Vol. LV: June 9-13, 1975), pp. 244-249.

2. Church Growth as a concept and the possibility of structuring a program to implement Church Growth in the RCA was discussed in Exchange Groups.

3. The Review Committee on the President's Report, "desiring that the President's (concerns for evangelism and church growth) be implemented for action," made the following recommendations:

"R-1. We RECOMMEND that the President's mandate on evangelism and church growth be directed to the Classes as an urgent priority to be communicated individually and personally to their various congregations. We want them to know of the crisis in growth, and of the plans and resources both presently available and forthcoming from denominational task forces through their regional centers. In presenting this challenge we further RECOMMEND that the Synods and Classes be asked to specifically urge their congregations

- to adopt evangelism and church growth as a goal of the highest priority,
- to set clear objectives for evangelism and growth; for example, a 5-10% increase in membership,
- to develop specific strategies for equipping both pastor and laity to carry out the task of evangelism in their area,
- to review the priority on evangelism reflected in their budget,
- and to seek God's counsel and support in prayer as the foundation on which their efforts must be based. (ADOPTED)

"R-2. We RECOMMEND that the appropriate staff persons be urged to consult with the Synods and Classes on their progress in church growth and evangelism, and to report to GSEC and to the 1976 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

"R-3. We RECOMMEND that the Board of Theological Education be requested to consult with the seminaries and to give consideration to the priority now being given to the training of seminarians in leading people to faith in Jesus Christ. (ADOPTED)

"R-4. We RECOMMEND that GPC be requested to make a report to General Synod 1976 reflecting our financial priorities in evangelism. (ADOPTED)"

See "President's Report," *The Acts and Proceedings of the 169th Regular Session of the General Synod* (Vol. LV: June 9-13, 1975), pp. 250-251.

During the June 14-18, 1976, meeting of General Synod, several activities occurred:

1. The General Program Council presented a report on the preliminary plan for Reformed Church Growth, a plan based on the findings of the Joint Task Force on Denominational Church Growth and shaped by the paper, *Reformed Church Growth: Perspectives and Proposals.* Both the preliminary plan and the need for a special fund drive to implement the plan are spelled out in this report.

   See "Reformed Church Growth–Preliminary Plan," *The Acts and Proceedings of the 170th Regular Session of the General Synod* (Vol. LVI: June 14-18, 1976), pp. 125-127.

2. The Review Committee on the General Program Council reported that "church growth has become the high priority item of the church today" and recommended:

   "That the General Synod recommend and endorse for serious study by the church the brochure, "Reformed Church Growth–Perspectives and Proposals," which contains an excellent plan of action. (ADOPTED)"

   "That the General Synod instruct the General Program Council to pursue an aggressive and challenging program for church growth. (ADOPTED)"

   See "Report of the Review Committee on the General Program Council," *The Acts and Proceedings of the 170th Regular Session of the General Synod* (Vol. LVI: June 14-18, 1976), p. 132.

3. The Special Committee on Church Funding encouraged:

   "That the General Program Council take steps to enlarge the Church Building Fund through the regular benevolence budget and consideration be given to a possible special fund drive possibly in connection with the historical celebrations which will be experienced by RCA in 1976 through 1978."

   See "Report of the Special Committee on Church Funding," *The Acts and Proceedings of the 170th Regular Session of the General Synod* (Vol. LVI: June 14-18, 1976), p. 71.

Church Growth Criteria

Our review of the Church Growth Criteria (Appendix I, pp. 128-129) includes the following positive impressions:

1. The criteria are useful for stimulating us now to take seriously church growth.
2. The criteria are oriented around the needs of people.
3. The criteria present a challenge to the church.

The Church Growth Criteria cover four major areas:

I. **Community Awareness**

Ministries should be developed in response to needs and interests that are characteristic of persons in that particular community. They should be designed to draw such persons into the ministry.

II. **Congregational Lifestyle**

A congregation's lifestyle should develop out of the interaction of the Word of God and the Reformed tradition with the persons in that community. This lifestyle should be expressed in the nurture and worship of the congregation as well as in its witness and service.

III. **Leadership Resources**

The Spirit calls and equips certain people for certain tasks. Therefore, persons who have the gifts, personal qualities and skills best suited to particular church growth situations should be identified and trained for such ministries.

IV. **Denominational Support**

Church growth ministries should be supported by policies, procedures, structures and resources designed to meet their particular needs.

R-3. **THAT the 1977 General Synod affirm the General Program Council's Church Growth Criteria.** (ADOPTED)

R-4. **THAT the 1977 General Synod request the Regional Offices to distribute copies of the Church Growth Criteria to every pastor and consistory in the Reformed Church in America, and that the General Synod request the *Church Herald* to publish the Church Growth Criteria.** (ADOPTED)

R-5. **THAT the 1977 General Synod encourage each congregation to implement the Church Growth Criteria.** (ADOPTED)

Reformed Church Growth Fund and Program

We affirm the General Program Council as it has aggressively carried out the mandate beginning in 1975 from General Synod for church growth. Our affirmation gives support to the primary emphasis on church growth as a ministry of proclamation and renewal and endorses the raising of the Church Growth Fund of $5,000,000 to implement these ministry initiatives in program and personnel.

In reviewing the program, the Committee concluded that:

1. the goal of the Church Growth Fund is attainable,
2. the program itself merits it as outlined in the brochure "A Time to Plant,"
3. there is a realization that all churches within the denomination will benefit by learning from these growth experiences.

On the basis of these findings, the Committee presents the recommendations printed on page 131.

R-6. **THAT the 1977 General Synod carry forward the actions and urgings of the General Synods of 1975 and 1976 by affirming the action of the General Synod Executive Committee, endorsing a Reformed Church Growth Fund Drive goal of $5,000,000.** (ADOPTED)

R-7. **THAT the General Synod urge particular synods, classes, and**

congregations to cooperate with this fund drive in every way possible. (ADOPTED)

We further RECOMMEND:

R-8. **THAT the General Synod instruct the General Program Council to follow up on its commitment to the Church Growth Fund Drive by exploring and implementing a means by which all churches within the denomination may share and benefit educationally from those ministries being supported by the Church Growth Fund Drive.** (ADOPTED)

R-9. **THAT in the process of realizing the goal of church growth both financially and in growth of Christ's Kingdom, adequate communication be promoted by representatives at every level of the constituency of the RCA.** (ADOPTED)

Church Growth Proposals

IA. A Cluster of New Churches in a New Geographical Area. $800,000
Three new churches will be established in the greater Dallas, Texas, area, a fast-growing section of the country where the RCA has not previously worked. The mobility of contemporary society offers an excellent opportunity for the RCA to move beyond its traditional regional bounds and become a truly national denomination.

IB. New Congregations in Rapidly-Growing Areas Contiguous to Present RCA Ministries. $1,420,900
Twelve locations within general areas where we are presently at work have been selected for new congregations to reach out to exceptionally high proportions of unchurched people.

IIA. New Congregations Without Buildings, Using Existing Facilities, Such as Schools, Shopping Centers, Drive-ins, Homes, Etc., (Minority Ministries) $280,000
Four new minority ministries of this type will be initiated.

IIB. New Congregations Without Buildings, Using Existing Facilities, Such as Schools, Shopping Centers, Drive-ins, Homes, Etc., (Mainstream Ministries) $295,000
An additional four new congregations without buildings will be started among "mainstream" people. This method has proven effective with minority groups, and this is an effort to expand its usage to other population groups.

IIIA. Transitional Congregations $364,520
Fourteen churches and clusters of churches, located in communities that are changing ethnically, economically, or sociologically, will be assisted as they strive to retain their size while drawing an increasing percentage of their members from the new community population. These congregations will use their grants for growth through new outreach staff, literature, advertising for community awareness, and church growth workshops.

IIIB. Expanding Congregations $890,220
These thirty churches and clusters of churches have declared their intention to grow by at least fifty percent in the next five years. They have offered evidence that such growth is attainable, and have presented a clear plan for achieving it. Funds will be used for evangelism, resources,

church growth skills development for pastors, church growth consulting services, public relations skills to reach community, seed funding for buildings, and staff support.

IVB. New Areas of World Mission $450,000
A comprehensive church growth program should include a world mission outreach component. Funds will be used to begin work in two new overseas fields, Venezuela and Indonesia.

V. Leadership Development $250,000
It is vitally important that RCA pastors charged with the responsibility for church growth receive specialized training to enable them to take full advantage of the unique opportunities for growth in their individual situations, and to help them develop more fully the particular gifts each brings to their ministry. The funds will be used for extensive leadership education and training, both regionally and nationally. It is felt that this is one of the most critically important aspects of the entire church growth program!

We wish it were possible to have someone speak to each of these exciting areas. We are pleased to have with us a distinguished clergyman from one of the new areas of world mission. The Reverend Arie Brouwer, Executive Secretary, will introduce the Reverend Exeario Sosa of the Union of Evangelical Pentecostal Churches in Venezuela. Interpreting will be the Reverend Raymond Rivera.

Exeario Sosa, President of the Union of Evangelical Pentecostal Churches in Venezuela, addressed the Synod, bringing greetings from the Union Churches in Venezuela.

R-10. **THAT the General Synod express its appreciation to the Union of Evangelical Pentecostal Churches in Venezuela for sending the Reverend Exeario Sosa to be with us.** (ADOPTED)

R-11. **THAT the General Synod commend the Union of Evangelical Pentecostal Churches in Venezuela for their spirit of cooperation with the prayer that this new relationship will be richly blessed by Almighty God.** (ADOPTED)

Further, we are pleased to present to the General Synod the Reverend Samuel Solivan, who with his wife has been appointed as the first missionary couple to Venezuela, working in the area of pastoral and lay leadership development.

Samuel Solivan, who with his wife and family will be going to Venezuela as the first RCA missionaries to that country, addressed the Synod, expressing appreciation for this opportunity to serve as a missionary in Venezuela.

R-12. **THAT the General Synod assure the Solivans of our fervent prayers as they begin their work.** (ADOPTED)

To visually highlight the excitement of the Reformed Church Growth Fund Drive, the Reverend Peter Paulsen, Media Coordinator and Director of TRAVARCA, has planned and executed a new film to be used throughout the Church. We are pleased to present it to you at this time.

R-13. **THAT the General Synod express to the Reverend Peter Paulsen our appreciation for the continuing excellence of his work and, in particular, "A Growing Church for a Growing Ministry."** (ADOPTED)

R-14. **THAT the General Synod commend to all our churches the use of this excellent audio-visual in the presentation of the Church Growth story and subsequent campaign.** (ADOPTED)

Recognitions

In conclusion, your Review Committee wishes to pay tribute to Russell J. Redeker, Secretary for Church Planning and Development, who has served as a member of the Reformed Church staff for nineteen years and is retiring on June 30, 1977. "Russ," as he is affectionately known throughout our Church, has served as Executive Secretary of the Board of North American Missions (1958-1968), Executive Secretary of the Extension Foundation (1958-1977), Secretary for Church Planning and Development (1968-1977), and Area Secretary for Mexico (1972-1976). Throughout the years he has served zealously and we, the heirs, are deeply indebted and sincerely grateful. Our prayer is that we may always be cognizant of his invaluable contribution to our beloved church and that his retirement may be suffused with God's blessing.

Therefore, we RECOMMEND

R-15. **THAT the General Synod evidence its profound gratitude by rising in ovation and that a minute of this action be conveyed to the Reverend Dr. Russell J. Redeker.** (ADOPTED)

Russell Redeker addressed the Synod, expressing appreciation for the Synod's recognition of his service to the denomination.

As well, the General Synod Executive Committee, at its meeting of February 2-3, 1977, approved the employment of the Reverend Arie R. Brouwer, currently serving as Executive Secretary, as General Secretary, pending approval of the 1977 General Synod. During his term as Executive Secretary, Arie has proved to be a giant in both thought and deed; his ability in discerning need and responding to the same equal to his stature.

Therefore, we RECOMMEND

R-16. **THAT the General Synod rise in ovation, thereby expressing our common appreciation for Arie's work with the General Program Council and our best wishes and prayers as he assumes his new responsibilities.** (ADOPTED)

Arie Brouwer addressed the Synod, expressing appreciation for the Synod's best wishes and prayers as he assumes his new responsibilities.

ARTICLE 9

PENSIONS

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

"The purpose of the Board of Pensions is to provide annuities, supplemental pensions, assistance grants and insurance benefits for all ordained ministers and their families, and for lay workers of the Reformed Church. . . ." (*Constitution*, Board of Pensions, p. 2)

Rarely dramatic, the work of the Board of Pensions has profound significance for the financial and emotional security of those it serves. The scope of the Board's activity may be sensed by the following numbers:

Members of the Reformed Church Annuity Fund	1,515
Number of retired who receive annuities	464
Total number of beneficiaries (including Annuitants)	521
Number enrolled in RCA Insurance plans	1,230
Number of insurance claims processed during 1976	1,524

Total premiums for RCA insurance programs now exceed $800,000 per year. The value of the Annuity Fund at year's end was $23,533,152.

But far more significant than total sums is the support which is received in time of individual or family need. We are able to report that for those who retired after 1971, annuity checks, when combined with Social Security benefits, are generally able to sustain a moderately comfortable standard of living. However, those who retired prior to 1972 may still receive from both sources as little as $5,000 per couple or $3,300 if single. Supplementary assistance grants are given in cases of need, but benevolence monies are still essential if this older group of retirees is to be adequately cared for in these times of persistent inflation. Unfortunately, giving to benefit older retirees declined from $79,797 in 1975 to $78,947 in 1976.

Knowledge of need, as well as the human touch of pastoral care, is provided through visits to the Board's beneficiaries on at least an annual basis by the Senior Pastors of the Reformed Church. Martin Punt, Frederick R. Bosch, Robert Geddes, Marion Klaaren, Peter DeJong, and John De Maagd have faithfully visited and kept contact in other ways with those within their areas of responsibility. Prior to this meeting of Synod, Rev. Bosch found it necessary to retire and was replaced by Dr. Franklin Hinkamp. However, Mr. Bosch continued to assist him with visits in New York State.

Each Christmas, an appeal is made for the Children's Christmas Fund. Each child of a deceased Reformed Church minister who is classified as a dependent received $750 from this fund. In addition, $450 was paid as a special benefit at the time of the father's death. While giving for this purpose increased from $16,901 in 1975 to $18,204 in 1976, the cost of the benefits increased to $23,075.

Last year the Board reported that it had established a program of "Homes for Retired Ministers and Missionaries," through an openness to receive bequests of homes which might be suitable as residences for retired persons. The intent is that such homes will be made available on a cost basis for as long as retirees are able to use them. The first of those homes has now been

received as part of the estate of Elting C. Stillwell, and is a gracious two-bedroom condominium located in Leisure Village, a retirement community near Lakewood, New Jersey. Guidelines for its use have been developed and it has been occupied as intended. It is hoped that other suitable residences will be received in other sections of the Reformed Church. In each instance, the occupants will be encouraged to regard the home as their own to use as long as they are able, with the Board responsible only for exterior maintenance. A contribution equal to the cost of that maintenance and taxes is paid by the resident to the Board. Voluntary liaison is provided by a local classis or congregation to represent the Board in looking after any concerns which may arise.

The 1976 General Synod asked the Board to consider an increase in the parsonage valuation used to calculate Annuity Fund dues "in order to arrive at a more equitable percentage of base salary for the parsonage than presently allowed." (*Minutes of The General Synod,* Vol. LVI, p. 140)

The Board carefully considered this matter, and suggests that the Review Committee submit to this Synod the following recommendation: "That the basis for the value of a parsonage be changed from 20% to 30%, however, the maximum which shall be added for valuing the free use of a parsonage when calculating Annuity Fund dues shall not exceed 30% of the current year's EBPH figure."

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

The Review Committee considered at length the activities and policies of the Board of Pensions, with the able help of the Coordinator of Human Resources, Rev. Alvin Poppen. Before us was the printed report which every delegate received in the workbook, the financial statements of the Board, minutes of Board meetings, plus information of various kinds supplied by one or another of the committee.

Several commendations are in order on what we saw and heard, the first of which has to do with literature which has been sent to the various churches and ministers. During the year, several letters were sent explaining the various parts of the Board's program—life insurance, major medical, disability, as well as the annuity program. All of it is clear and concise and to the point. Most informative of all is a piece called "Thirty Questions and Answers About the Reformed Church Annuity Fund." We commend it for everyone's reading. With all this literature floating around the denomination, we were amazed at our own high level of ignorance. We suspect that such ignorance about the program of the Board is widespread, and we urge each person to remedy that for himself.

The Senior Pastor Program, in which a designated pastor in each area of the Church makes contact with each pensioner, goes a long way toward meeting the needs of retirees for personal pastoral care. We commend the Board and the staff for implementing this program fully, and for the spritely letters which go with the pension checks each month.

Very few questions were raised in the Committee concerning the broad insurance program with the Board administers. This indicates to us a general satisfaction with the basic insurance policies and with the way in which they

have been administered during the past year. Delays and errors, such as there were, could often be traced to computer inadequacy. Thus we commend the staff for efficient and faithful service to the church.

Those of us who remember the anxious, and sometimes stormy, sessions of a few years ago are grateful for a few wise and timely decisions which were made then, and which stand us in good stead today. Because of those wise and necessary moves, we can report to you that we have reviewed the financial statements of the Board and read the opinion of the auditors, and arrived at the conclusion that our pension funds appear to be in safe and sound condition. Thanks be to God. Not every fund can say that.

Two years ago the review committee on Pensions recommended that Synod make a feasibility study of Kirkside, our retirement home for ministers and missionaries at Roxbury, N.Y. This Spring the results of that study were released to G.S.E.C., which, in turn, shared the finding with the Kirkside Board. For our information this study was also shared with us, along with a report of pending actions, some of which will be reported to this body by the Executive Committee. The Review Committee was impressed by the carefulness of the evaluation and the logic of the conclusions which were reached.

In three areas we have specific recommendations to this Synod. The first has to do with what has been called the "Thanks" program, begun a few years ago when rising costs put such a pinch on the income of some of our older retirees. The response of the Church has been barely adequate.

R-1. **THAT the Board, through its staff, keep the genuine needs of the "Thanks" Program before the church, and that the churches respond generously to the special needs of those men and women who have served them in the past.** (ADOPTED)

Last year an overture from the Classis of New Brunswick sought to raise the parsonage allowance to 40% of base salary. This met with a "No Action" sign. However, the Board of Pensions was instructed to give further consideration to this matter in hopes of arriving at a more equitable percentage of base salary than the present 20% for parsonage allowance. The Board's response to this is found in the report on page 153. Your committee is in thorough agreement with this recommendation.

R-2. **THAT the basis for the value of a parsonage be changed from 20% to 30%, however, the maximum which shall be added for valuing the free use of a parsonage when calculating annuity fund dues shall not exceed 30% of the current year's EBPH figure.** (ADOPTED)

During the year the Board experienced the first fruits of a program begun a year ago and entitled "Homes for Retired Ministers and Missionaries." The first such home, received as part of the estate of Elting C. Stillwell, has already been put to very good use. The plan is that the occupants of such gift homes will be encouraged to regard the home as their own to use as long as they are able, with the Board responsible only for exterior maintenance. A contribution equal to the cost of that maintenance and taxes is paid by the resident to the Board. Voluntary liaison is provided by a local classis or congregation to represent the Board in looking after any concerns which may arise. Your committee approves this program.

R-3. **THAT this opportunity for substantial giving through the gift of homes for this purpose be publicized through the most effective channels.** (ADOPTED)

KIRKSIDE – 1976

KIRKSIDE, the name has become familiar to much of our denomination during the period of its operation, since its inception as an incorporation in the State of New York, on 18 July 1949. The Certificate of Incorporation lists the purpose of the corporation as the following:

"A. To solicit funds and contributions and to receive by gift, deed, bequest, or devise and otherwise to acquire money and property of every kind and description and to administer, expend, contribute, use and otherwise dispose of the principal and income of the same exclusively in furnishing charitable aid and assistance to aged ministers, their wives, their widows and other fultime professional church workers of the Reformed Church in America and its affiliated groups and rendering any and all services in connection therewith.

"B. To acquire by purchase, lease, gift or otherwise property or properties to be used in connection with the establishment and maintenance of a home for the aged ministers, their wives, their widows, etc. . . .

"C. To establish, maintain and operate a home for the aged ministers . . . etc.

"D. To have all powers that may be conferred upon charitable corporations formed under the Membership Corporation Law of the State of New York.

"E. To operate as a non-profit charitable corporation, none of the income of which shall accrue to any member, and to hold, mortgage, lease, sell or otherwise dispose of such real or personal property as may be necessary or desirable to the purposes of the corporation.

"F. To do any and all things deemed necessary, suitable, convenient or appropriate in connection with or incidental to the accomplishment of the purposes of the corporation to the same extent and as fully as any natural person could or might do and as are not forbidden by law or by this certificate of incorporation or by the by-laws of the corporation."

The above excerpt from the articles of incorporation of the Kirkside Corporation followed a series of actions by the General Synod, and the committee set up by the same in the preceding year. On page 119 of the minutes of the 1948 General Synod are recorded the minutes of a "Recommendation of the Committee on the Minister's Fund," to the effect that there seemed to be a possibility in the offing of the acquisition of, "properties suitable for use as homes for aged people, either by gift or by purchase," with the recommendation that a special committee be formed to begin careful consideration to such proposals, and to make "thorough inquiry in regard to the finances needed for the purchase and maintenance of such properties, also to investigate the possibility of securing required funds." The committee was empowered to take such action as they felt was appropriate, with the proviso that they must in no way involve themselves in financial liabilities without first obtaining approval of the Board of Direction (of the General Synod). The recommendation was discussed at length, and ultimately approved by the Synod.

Minutes of the Special Committee, dated 8 November 1948, reveal action to purchase the former home of Helen Gould Shepard at Roxbury, N.Y., in the following statement:

> **"After full discussion, the following actions were taken by unanimous vote of the Committee:**
>
> **1. The Committee recommends the acquisition of Kirkside** as the first of a number of such homes for our denomination. **(Emphasis added)**

2. **The Committee recommends the establishment at Kirkside of a home for the aged ministers, their wives and widows and other church workers of our denomination.**
3. **The Committee recommends the formation of a separate corporation to maintain and operate such home.** The formation of this corporation **should be conducted under the direction of the Ministers' Fund and the Committee respectfully recommends to the Board of such Fund that it proceed with the formation of such corporation." (Emphasis added)**

The records of the special Committee, and of the Synod indicate that the purchase of the Roxbury property was made possible by the generous gift of $36,000 from Frank J. Gould, and that the purchase was made, the Corporation set up, and the Kirkside Corporation "be commended to the generosity of the churches," with the proviso that, "The Stated Clerk of General Synod shall remind subsequent Synods of the desirability of securing other similar homes." (Minutes of the 1949 General Synod - Page 127). This action was followed by the ensuing organization, the Organizing Committee (on July 26, 1949) voting to accept the General Synod's action, and the responsibilities connected with it, and to see that Kirkside, "shall be considered to function under the supervision of the General Synod through the Ministers' Fund, and whereby Kirkside shall be expected to report annually to the General Synod through the Ministers' Fund concerning its operations, with the definite understanding that this relationship shall in no way involve Ministers' Fund in financial responsibility."

From the above facts grew the Kirkside, Inc., which functions in Roxbury, New York, today. Its ministry has been a rich and blessed one, having provided the serene surroundings, and quiet security that are so characteristic of its beautiful setting in the northern Catskill Mountain town of Roxbury, New York. Its ministry has been a vitally needed one, providing a shelter for the residents, but also a place in which to spend their golden years in tranquillity with a beautiful balance of creative activity, social involvement, and spiritual strength. In an atmosphere of freedom, residents have been able to cane chairs, paint, write books, garden, or just take a walk in the beautiful grounds, or down the quiet village street. Well balanced meals have been provided in an appetizing manner by the excellent cook, because of the helpfulness of the members of our denomination, the generosity of our churches, and the provision of the Lord through the Mobil Corporation, which provided a very much appreciated gift of food and other supplies to the home. Games have been enjoyed, as have the visits of various church groups, and the programs that have been put on by them from time to time. An occasional trip to Oneonta for shopping also brightens the schedule. The proximity of several hospitals in the adjoining area has proved a real boon in times of sickness, but the family has really stayed very well for the most part, and the nurse who visits the home every day has been more of a blessing because of her sunny disposition, than because of the medical expertise which she so ably dispenses!

It would be less than considerate in the extreme to fail to note the faithfulness of churches and individuals who have contributed to the ongoing ministry to our residents at Kirkside, both of money, and in other ways. It is, perhaps, easy to forget the original charter that Kirkside received from the General Synod in 1949, that the Kirkside Corporation, "be commended to the generosity of the churches," and further that, "The Stated Clerk of General

Synod shall remind subsequent Synods of the desirability of securing other similar homes." That there is a need for such homes seems evident from the steady trickle of applications that find their way to the Admissions Committee of the Board of Directors of Kirkside, Inc. That there should be others like this first expression of our church's concern for its older Senior Citizens, professional, and non-professional alike, would seem to be evident from the fact that there is no other such denominationally operated home within the geographical boundaries of our country. Our prayer, as a Board of Directors is that we, as a church, may grasp the unique value of providing a place to which our people may go retaining their freedoms, while at the same time finding some of the onerous responsibilities of ripening maturity lifted in an atmosphere of mutual, and Christian concern. Kirkside is a symbol, erected by men with a vision, to remind us of the faithfulness of generations now retired from full time service to the Lord of the Church. It is also a reminder of the place, and contribution of those same people to the ongoing wellbeing of our denomination.

Your Board of Directors takes this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, gifts, and visits during the past year, and to express to you our sincere desire to be of service to you and yours in the coming years, both as an ongoing residence, and further, as a reminder of the original intention of our charter to move forward in the vanguard of those who creatively provide for their retired servants in the church.

ARTICLE 10

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND SEMINARIES

BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Board of Theological Education is an agency appointed by the General Synod for the purpose of exercising supervision over the theological seminaries and developing policy regarding theological education. Its membership consists of twenty-seven persons from all parts of the church with diverse backgrounds, occupations, abilities, skills, and attitude.

The concept of one Board for our two seminaries has become fully operational and there is a good spirit within the Board which is very much committed to this approach. Members of the Board during the past decade laid the foundation which has made this arrangement workable, the cooperation of our two Presidents has increased the spirit of good will and the present Board is refining this structure to make it more effective.

Students

The students in both seminaries represent the whole church in student body distribution. Both student bodies are ecumenical with New Brunswick having students from 15 different denominations and Western 13. Western's fall enrollment was 130 which is a slight decrease from the previous year. New Brunswick's fall enrollment was 95 which means, with the exception of the first year of the BLMS program, it is enjoying the largest enrollment in its history. In addition there are 31 students in the Urban Extension program in New York City. There were 25 members of the Junior Class at New Brunswick of which 13 are RCA M. Div. candidates while Western's Junior class had 30 students.

The Professorial Certificate was granted to Henry Otterness of Western and Ronald Sanford of New Brunswick, both of whom completed their work during the academic year. At the May meeting the Board will approve the granting of degrees and Professorial Certificates for those completing their work at the close of the academic year. Their names will appear in a supplementary report.

Close contact with the students is maintained by the Board, especially through its committee on Faculty and Student Concerns. Members of this committee visit each campus once a year and meet separately with the students, with the faculty and with the administration.

Faculty

Robert Nykamp of Western, who was elected as a Professor by the General Synod last year, accepted a Call to the pastorate in Florida prior to being installed as a General Synod Professor of Theology. Drs. Eugene Osterhaven and James I. Cook of Western are on Sabbatical leave during 1976-77 as is Dr. Vernon Kooy of New Brunswick. Dr. Eugene Heideman and Dr. Stanley Rock joined Western's faculty this year.

There have been some faculty changes at Western with the resignation of Dr. Elton Eeningenburg as the dean. Dr. James I. Cook was named as the Anton Biemolt Professor of New Testament, the Chair occupied by Dr. Richard Oudersluys who is retiring after 35 years of faithful Service. The Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature office occupied by Dr. Cook is unfilled. The Board has approved the appointment of Dr. Christopher Kaiser for a three year term in the field of Historical and Systematic Theology.

At New Brunswick Dr. A. Angus Austen of Rutgers University is teaching speech to the seniors. Dr. Marc Scheinman of Douglass College is the Livingston Lecturer and Dr. Henry Bowden of Douglass College is the Demarest Lecturer. Dr. Ronald Westrate of the Rutgers Mental Health Center is conducting an evening seminar for all women on campus while Dr. Erik Routley of Westminister Choir College in Princeton teaches a course in hymnology.

The establishment of an Endowment Fund was started at Western about two years ago for the purpose of endowing a new Chair, to be known as the John R. Mulder Chair. Monies pledged and given to date are encouraging, but a person will not be appointed to this position until total pledges are about $315,000.

There has been a good spirit between the Board and the Faculty of both seminaries. However, the three page attack made by the League of Christian Laymen (R.C.A.), Inc., upon the Faculty at Western Seminary, and the particular attacks on Dr. Eugene Heideman are to be deplored both as to substance and the manner in which the accusations have been made.

Staff

Mr. Henry Kleinheksel, Assistant to the President at Western and Miss Stella Karsten, Accountant are both retiring in early Summer each after 17 years of service. Mr. Kleinheksel will be replaced by Willard Rink of Grand Rapids, whose title will be Business Manager. At New Brunswick, Mrs. Kris Mann who had served as Administrative Secretary for a number of years, resigned to move to Rhode Island. She was replaced by Mrs. Irene Thomas.

Presidents

It was in 1973 that the Board of Theological Education, having concluded that the administration of two institutions required a President at each, engaged Dr. Howard G. Hageman of Newark, N.J., as President for New Brunswick and Dr. I. John Hesselink of Japan, as President for Western for a term of five years each. During this time we have concluded that we have had the right man at the right school at the right time in the seminaries' history.

As part of the five year agreement, the performance of each President is to be evaluated. An evaluation committee, consisting of Board members, an alumnus, a recent alumnus, non-alumnus in RCA ministry and a faculty member is being appointed. This committee will report to the Executive Committee of the Board in January, 1978.

Our congratulations go to Dr. Hageman, who received an honorary D.D. degree in May, from Knox College, Toronto, Canada. This is the fourth time he has been so honored.

Programs

While the responsibility of the Board often centers upon preparation of persons for the Ministry of the Church at our two seminaries, the Board has been assigned broader responsibilities by the General Synod regarding continuing education of persons already in the Ministry. About two years ago, recognizing the need to consolidate resources, the Board entered into a joint venture with the Office of Human Resources and formed what is now known as the Joint Committee on Continuing Education, R.C.A. The Committee has made a survey of needs and expectations of R.C.A. ministers and in November, held a meeting of the classical representatives on continuing education at Camp Manitoqua.

New Brunswick continues its Lay School program with considerable success and large enrollments. This year they have been held in Hackensack, N.J.; Wappingers Falls, N.Y.; St. Johnsville, N.Y.; Clifton, N.J.; Wyckoff, N.J., and Feasterville, Pennsylvania

Western is presently making a study of major curriculum changes since it questions the wisdom of requiring five courses per term and is considering a redistribution of faculty loads, in the light of continuing education expectations. At the present time it is preparing for the Board a proposal to grant the Doctor of Ministry degree. The Board is requesting that the prospectus for this program meets the very highest standards of the American Theological Schools.

Facilities

New Brunswick has acquired the property formerly owned by Dr. and Mrs. John W. Beardslee, Jr., at 93 College Avenue. Renovations have been made this past Summer in Zwemer Hall in order to provide more office space, a new Board Room and Seminar Room. In an agreement made by the Board with the Particular Synod of New Jersey, the office of the New Jersey Synod Coordinator is located in Zwemer Hall.

Western Seminary has studied its facility needs and concluded that it needs additional office and library space. An architect has been engaged to draw up plans. The Garner Sage Library at New Brunswick is also in need of more space for theological volumes and since it houses the archives of the R.C.A., a study is being made by the Board and the RCA Commission on History for possible expansion.

Finances

Committed to the concept of theological education for the whole church, the Board encourages contributions by the whole church to both seminaries. Western Seminary ended the last fiscal year in the black and New Brunswick's financial condition was greatly improved. However, the need for continued support of both schools is essential if quality education is to be maintained.

The expenses for the Board of Theological Education was underwritten last year by the General Synod but by action of the Synod in 1976, both seminaries must now underwrite the Board's expenses.

Referral

The General Synod directed the B.T.E. to continue the study on Licensing of Ministers of Christian Education and to present a final report to the 1977 General Synod. The special committee under the chairpersonship of Ruth Dickson has met on several occasions and made a preliminary report to the Board at its November meeting. The Board was unable to agree on the proposal and it has been referred back to the Committee for further study with the hope that at its May meeting, the Board will be able to adopt a recommendation for the General Synod.

Constitution

The 1968 General Synod created the instrument whereby the Board of Theological Education could function as a single Board for both seminaries. Since that time, there have been changes which ought to be incorporated in this document. For the past year the officers of the Board have been studying this and have developed a new Constitution which has been approved by the Executive Committee. The proposed Constitution has been submitted to the full Board and GSEC for approval and will be submitted to the General Synod.

The proposed Constitution will allow the B.T.E. to operate through standing committees. Upon the approval of the Constitution, committee responsibilities will be drafted and through this refinement enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Board.

Recognizing the need for Board members to be involved in local decisions, the Board has authorized the appointment of Management Committees for each Seminary which serves in an advisory capacity to the Presidents of each Institution on matters of property and financial administration.

Dispensation Procedure

The time factor involved in making application for dispensation from the Professorial Certificate is fifteen months. Paul C. Ferenczy, Chairman of the Committee on Student and Faculty Concerns has sent two important documents to all Stated Clerks of each classis. The first concerns itself with the needs of a student while in Seminary to have a continuing relationship with classis so that he is truly under the "care" of the classis. The other document is a check list to be followed when presenting a person for dispensation. Since all applicants must be examined by one of our seminaries, an application fee of $200 is to be paid to cover the cost of the time of the professors in administering these examinations.

While the B.T.E. processes the application, assigns the applicant to one of the seminaries for examination and makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval, it does so as the agent of the General Synod. The Board has asked that when an applicant is denied a dispensation, the classis be given the reason for denial.

The Board will act on request for dispensations at its May meeting for the following persons whose classis made such request:

1. Stephen Robert Brooks, Omaha, Nebraska, age 25. Requested by the Classis of Holland on October 3, 1975. Member of the Hope Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan. B.A., Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, 1973; Fuller Theological Seminary, 1976.
2. John Thomas Camp, Jr., Shokan, New York, age 33. Requested by the Classis of Mid-Hudson on January 27, 1976. Member of the Shokan Reformed Church, Shokan, New York. B.A., University of Texas, 1965; M.Div., Austin Presbyterian Seminary, 1969.
3. Valerie Marie DeMarinis, Brooklyn, New York, age 23. Requested by the Classis of Brooklyn on February 17, 1976. Member of Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Flatbush, Brooklyn. B.A., Brooklyn College, 1974; Princeton Theological Seminary, 1977.
4. Stephen C. Frederick, Port Jervis, New York, age 34. Requested by the Classis of Orange on February 18, 1976. Member of the Montague Reformed Church, Montague, New York. B.A., Hamilton College, 1964; Ph.D., Duke University, 1974; Princeton Theological Seminary, 1967.
5. John Rottenberg, Berkeley, California. Requested by the Classis of Central California on March 18, 1976. Member of the Oakland Community (Reformed) Church, Oakland, California. B.A., Haverford College, 1971; San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1977.
6. James P. Rozeboom, Indianapolis, Indiana. Requested by the Classis of Philadelphia on March 13, 1976. Member of Faith Reformed Church, Levittown, Pennsylvania. B.A. Hope College, 1961; Crozer Theological Seminary, 1969.
7. Theodore Kenneth Vande Berg, Jr., Rock Rapids, Iowa, age 25. Requested by the Classis of Wisconsin on March 12, 1976. Member of the Grace Reformed Church, Fond DuLac, Wisconsin. B.A., Central College, 1973; Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky, 1976.

Conclusion

The supplementary report will include actions taken by the Board at its May meeting.

We give thanks,
to Almighty God for the work of theological education in our denomination,
to the Church for its continued support by its prayers and gifts for this cause,
to the General Synod for having appointed us to this responsibility.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

A summary of the actions taken at the annual meeting of the Board on May 3 & 4, 1977, at Holland, Michigan.

Referrals from General Synod 1976

The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America has been struggling

with the subject of accreditation of Directors of Christian Education at least since 1962. In 1976 the General Synod referred this question to the Board of Theological Education.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CREDENTIALS

There should be three categories of certification for professional church educators in the Reformed Church in America:

1. Certified Director of Christian Education (CDCE)
2. Certified Minister of Christian Education (CMCE)
3. Certified Associate of Christian Education (CACE)

The Meaning of Certification

Certification is a process which recognizes, endorses, and reaffirms the educational competence, the personal maturity, the professional growth, and the denominational accountability of Reformed Church in America educators.

Reasons for Certification

1. a means of setting standards for the preparation and performance of Christian Educators;
2. a means of stressing the denominational relationship and professional status of Christian Educators;
3. a means of fostering support for the professional nurture and development of Christian Educators;
4. a means of enhancing team ministries in staff relationships.

Supervision of Christian Educators

The Classes of Christian Educators

1. Certified Director of Christian Education:
   a. A Master's degree in Christian Education or its equivalent and one year's effective performance as a professional Christian Educator; or
   b. Certification as an Associate in Christian Education plus four years' effective performance as a professional Christian Educator, plus at least 12 semester hours (or their equivalent) of graduate work in fields related to Christian Education, as approved by the Christian Educators' Credentials Committee.
2. Certified Minister of Christian Education:

   Ordained minister in good standing in the Reformed Church in America, with twelve (12) semester hours of graduate professional training in Christian Education (or their equivalent) as approved by the Christian Educators' Credentials Committee, and one year's effective performance as a professional Christian Educator.
3. Certified Associate of Christian Education:
   a. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college with a major in Christian Education, plus one year's effective performance as a professional Christian Educator in Church employ; or

b. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college plus six (6) semester hours of graduate professional training in Christian Education (or their equivalent) as approved by the Christian Educators' Credentials Committee, plus one year's effective performance as a professional Christian Educator in Church employ; or

c. Under extraordinary circumstances some persons may exhibit qualifications gained from successful experience as Christian Educators although it may be impossible for them to meet the formal education requirements. If in the judgment of the Credentials Committee the experience and successful work history of such persons are deemed a proper equivalent, the certification as an Associate can be recommended.

Process of Certification

Any person seeking certification in any of the three categories for Christian Educators as above defined shall proceed as follows:

1. Make application to the Christian Educators' Credentials Committee through the office of Human Resources. The application shall be initially supported by a letter of recommendation from the church in which the applicant is employed confirming also that the applicant is a member of that congregation and a letter of recommendation from the classis of which the church the applicant is serving is a member. Such classis shall give testimony to the applicant's qualifications for this certification as it applies to personal faith and piety.
2. The Office of Human Resources, when satisfied that the application is in order, shall submit the file, with the necessary supportive materials, to the Christian Educators' Credentials Committee.
3. The Christian Educators' Credentials Committee shall, when satisfied that all criteria have been met, recommend the candidate for certification by the Board of Theological Education and for inclusion on the roster.

The Board has adopted the above Director of Christian Education Credentials. Therefore, the Board of Theological Education RECOMMENDS:

R-1. The three classes of Christian Educators for certification in the Reformed Church in America as delineated in Sections I, II and III of the document, "Director of Christian Education Credentials" and the process of certification be adopted and be referred to the proper General Synod committee to begin the process of being added to the *Book of Church Order, R.C.A.*, Part IV, Article 9.

R-2. The creation of a continuing committee on credentials by the General Synod consisting of two professors of Christian Education, one from each of our seminaries, and three persons with competence in this field to be appointed by the Board of Theological Education to prepare and supervise the program of certification according to the process of certification as outlined in the document, "Director of Christian Education Credentials."

R-3. The present Committee on Director of Christian Education Credentials be continued by the General Synod for a period of one year to prepare for the transfer of responsibilities to the Christian Educators Credentials

Committee and that the sum of $1,500 for the preparation of materials and travel be allocated for the work of the present committee.

In other matters of continuing education, the Board has approved a meeting of the Classical Representatives on Continuing Education at Western Theological Seminary on October 18-20, 1977. This conference will be sponsored jointly with the Office of Human Resources.

The Board has also given approval for the establishment of a D. Min. program at Western Theological Seminary to begin in the fall of 1977. The Board has directed that preference for this degree program be given to applicants who have had at least five years experience in the ministry.

Both Seminaries have been authorized by the Board to grant Continuing Education Units according to the criteria and guidelines proposed by the National Task Force on Continuing Education.

Faculty

The Board has approved the following faculty appointments or changes in faculty rank:

Richard J. Bennink was given a three-year appointment as Director of Field Education and Assistant Professor of Christian Ministry at Western Seminary.

Dr. David Waanders was given a three-year appointment as Associate Professor of Pastoral Care at New Brunswick Seminary.

Dr. Charles Wissink was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in charge of Vocational Development for the second year of his two-year appointment at New Brunswick Seminary.

Norman J. Kansfield was reappointed for a three-year term as librarian at Western.

Dr. Robert A. Coughenour was reappointed to a three-year term as Associate Professor of Old Testament beginning in 1978 at Western.

Dr. Garret A. Wilterdink was appointed as Professor of Preaching at Western beginning at the 1977-78 academic year.

Dr. Christopher Kaiser was appointed to a three-year term as Assistant Professor of Theology at Western.

General Synod Professor of Theology

The Board respectfully requests that the General Synod nominate and elect to the General Synod Office of Professor of Theology two members of our theological faculties. Therefore, the Board of Theological Education RECOMMENDS:

R-4. **The election of Dr. E. Earle Ellis of New Brunswick Seminary and Dr. Garret A. Wilterdink of Western Seminary to the General Synod Office of Professor of Theology.**

Minority Representation

The Board of Theological Education is fully cognizant of the value and importance of having members of minority groups within the R.C.A. be part of the decision making process in our church. Since the minority councils are not judicatories of our church, the Board believes that the process of obtaining

minority representation should be through the normal channels of nomination and election by the church's judicatories. It therefore urges that the present method of nomination and election be retained and further urges each judicatory to be sensitive to the need for minority representation when it makes its nomination.

Dispensations

The seminaries have examined those who have made application for dispensation in time for that application to be considered for approval by the 1977 General Synod. The BTE has considered each application and taken the following action:

R-5. It is RECOMMENDED that the General Synod grant a dispensation from the professorial certificate to:

Stephen Robert Brooks
Valerie Marie De Marinis
John Rottenberg
James P. Rozeboom
Theodore Kenneth Vande Berg, Jr.

John Thomas Camp, Jr., whose name is listed among those making application in the BTE's earlier report, has requested that the Board not act on his application at this time.

Constitution

The proposed constitution of the BTE, which was also submitted to the General Synod Executive Committee, was approved by the Board. The Board requests that General Synod adopt the Constitution as submitted.

Finance

Of further concern to the Board is the fact that it is dependent upon the two seminaries for funds to carry on its work. In 1975 the General Synod approved overtures from at least two classes for the purpose of assessing the church for the work of the BTE. The 1976 Synod reversed that procedure placing the Board once again in the position of asking the seminaries to raise the money so it can function. The Board regrets the action of the 1976 Synod in this matter.

Officers of the Board

The following persons were elected as officers of the Board for 1977-1978:

Chairman	Rev. Leonard V. Kalkwarf	Executive Committee Members
Vice Chairman	Rev. Chester Postma	Rev. Paul Colenbraner
Secretary	Rev. Ronald Geschwendt	Rev. Paul Ferenczy
Treasurer	Mr. Jerrald Redeker (pending his election to the Board by the General Synod)	Mr. Gordon Paulsen

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The task of this committee is to review the work of the seminaries over the past year and the activities of the Board of Theological Education as presented in its report to Synod.

Dr. Howard G. Hageman and Dr. I. John Hesselink, President of New Brunswick and Western Theological Seminaries respectively, reported directly to your committee, highlighting the achievements and particular concerns of their schools. The report submitted by the BTE to General Synod gives a glimpse of the life of the seminaries, and touches upon related matters in the field of theological education for which it is responsible.

Your committee found these reports informative and encouraging. We commend the Presidents of our seminaries, the Board of Theological Education and its Chairman, Rev. Leonard Kalkwarf, for their faithful stewardship in the ministry of theological education on behalf of General Synod.

Our seminary leadership shows high competence for the multi-faceted roles they must assume as well as keen sensitivity to the continually changing needs and circumstances of the day. The Board of Theological Education takes very seriously its commitment to the development of highly trained persons for the professional ministry of the church.

I. Director of Christian Education Credentials

In response to action of General Synod 1976 referring to the subject of accreditation of Directors of Christian Education in the church, the Board of Theological Education has proposed a comprehensive statement giving the rationale of such certification, categories of certification for professional church educators in the RCA and the process of certification.

Your committee has considered the Board's recommendation related to this subject, and RECOMMENDS that Synod adopt them as follows:

R-1. **The three classes of Christian Educators for certification in the Reformed Church in America as delineated in Sections I, II and III of the document, "Director of Christian Education Credentials" and the process of certification be adopted and be referred to the Church Government Committee to begin the process of being added to the *Book of Church Order, RCA*, Part IV, Article 9.** (ADOPTED)

R-2. **The creation of a continuing committee on credentials by the General Synod consisting of two professors of Christian Education, one from each of our seminaries, and three persons with competence in this field to be appointed by the Board of Theological Education to prepare and supervise the program of certification according to the process of certification as outlined in the document, "Director of Christian Education Credentials."** (ADOPTED)

R-3. **The present Committee on Director of Christian Education Credentials be continued by the General Synod for a period of one year to prepare for the transfer of responsibilities to the Christian Educators Credentials Committee and that the sum of $1,500 for the preparation of materials and travel be allocated from the General Synod Assessment Budget for the work of the present committee.** (ADOPTED)

II. Election of Professors of Theology

Your committee supports Recommendation 4 of the BTE Supplementary Report pertaining to the election of Dr. E. Earle Ellis of New Brunswick Seminary and Dr. Garret A. Wilterdink of Western Theological Seminary to the

General Synod Office of Professor of Theology. These names were placed in nomination by the BTE.

VOTED: **To elect E. Earle Ellis as Professor of Theology of New Brunswick Theological Seminary. (248 votes cast; 191 received by Ellis)**

VOTED: **To elect Garret Wilterdink as Professor of Theology of Western Theological Seminary. (246 votes cast; 231 received by Wilterdink)**

VOTED: **To instruct the General Secretary to send congratulations to E. Earle Ellis and Garret Wilterdink for their elections as Professors of Theology of New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary, respectively.**

III. Dispensations

R-4. **We RECOMMEND that Stephen Robert Brooks be granted a dispensation from the professorial certificate.** (ADOPTED)

R-5. **We RECOMMEND that Valerie Marie De Marinis be granted a dispensation from the professorial certificate.** (ADOPTED)

R-6. **We RECOMMEND that John Rottenberg be granted a dispensation from the professorial certificate.** (ADOPTED)

R-7. **We RECOMMEND that James P. Rozeboom be granted a dispensation from the professorial certificate.** (ADOPTED)

R-8. **We RECOMMEND that Theodore Kenneth Vande Berg, Jr., be granted a dispensation from the professorial certificate.** (ADOPTED)

IV. Referrals by General Synod 1977 from the Office of the General Secretary

Your committee received a request from the Classis of Holland prepared May 27, 1977, asking that a dispensation from the professorial certificate be granted to Dr. Christopher Kaiser, Assistant Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Western Theological Seminary, in accordance with Part II, Article 8, Sec. 7 of the *Book of Church Order, RCA.*

Dr. Kaiser has an imposing record of academic credentials. His theological training was received at Gordon Conwell from which he received the M.Div. degree in 1971, and at the University of Edinburgh which granted him a Ph.D. in Divinity in 1974. Having begun his academic career in a scientific field, he had already received a Ph.D. in astro-geophysics from the University of Colorado. His A.B. was awarded by Harvard University in 1963.

Until this past month when he became a member of Hope Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, Dr. Kaiser had been a member of the Church of Scotland. He served as Visiting Professor in Systematic Theology at Western Theological Seminary during the 1976-77 school year.

The Classis of Holland points out that Dr. Kaiser was examined on May 2 and 4 by the BTE to determine his qualifications as a teacher of theology, and was approved.

Considerable time was given to discussion of this request, particularly with respect to the question of its admissability because it had not first been received and acted upon by the Board of Theological Education. Also it was not clear that the Classis could properly claim that his particular situation fit the requirements of Sec. 7 rather than Sec. 8 of Part II, Article 8 of the *Book of Church Order, RCA.*

Although this action of the Committee did not receive unanimous support, your committee RECOMMENDS that:

R-9. General Synod grant the request of the Classis of Holland for a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Dr. Christopher Kaiser. (NOT ADOPTED)

A second request for dispensation from the professorial certificate was referred by General Synod 1977 from the Classis of Lake Erie on behalf of Mr. Eldridge Hurks, 49, an elder of the Nardin Park Reformed Church of Detroit, who for the past 16 years has had a lay ministry to that congregation.

Mr. Hurks has had the equivalent of two years of college education and has served as a principal of an elementary school in Louisiana for several years before coming to Detroit. The factors of age and his obligation to support a large family make impractical his completion of college training and seminary studies.

Because of his obvious usefulness to the church and his apparent gifts for the ministry though lacking formal training, the Classis submitted the request for dispensation with the expectation that some study program would be arranged by Western Seminary to equip Mr. Hurks more adequately for the role of pastor in the RCA.

After discussion and consultation with the President of Western Seminary, your committee RECOMMENDS that:

R-10. The request of the Classis of Lake Erie for dispensation from the professorial certificate for Elder Eldridge Hurks be referred to the Board of Theological Education for its consideration and action. (ADOPTED)

V. The Retirement of Dr. Richard Oudersluys

Your committee noted with pride mingled with regret the retirement of Dr. Richard Oudersluys from the Anton Biemold Chair of New Testament Studies at Western Theological Seminary after 35 years of faithful service. In recognition of this long and fruitful ministry to the church, your committee offers the following resolution honoring Dr. Oudersluys, and RECOMMENDS its adoption:

R-11. When, in the providence of God, one of His servants reaches the age of retirement after many years of competent ministry in a theological school of the church, that event is met with mixed emotions. There is gratitude and joy at the remembrance of the faithful service given and sorrow that those years have come to an end. For thirty-five years Richard C. Oudersluys has graced the faculty of Western Theological Seminary as its professor of New Testament language and literature. Those who have worked with him as colleagues on the faculty or as students rejoice over his rich years as a teacher and find it difficult to contemplate the school without him. Regret over his retirement is tempered with the promise that, the Lord willing, his talents will still be used at the seminary for part-time teaching.

Scholar, churchman, master teacher, Professor Oudersluys is primarily a minister of the Word of God. His fundamental commitment is to Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate and the mediator of the revelation and redemption that have come from above. That commitment has motivated and sustained him over the years and has given his life its distinctive Christian quality. Like the first disciples, he had radiated God's grace so that others have been able to see that he has been with Jesus (Acts 2:13).

Counsellor, preacher, friend, in his work inside and outside the classroom, our professor has pointed many to the Lord and the Word of His grace.

While Dr. Oudersluys will be remembered mainly for his teaching of the message of the New Testament, his labor with the pen, in the pulpit, and on the boards and commissions of the church cannot be forgotten. Blessed with a dear family and a host of friends, and the continued use of his ample gifts, the years of retirement give promise of continued usefulness. We salute him at this significant moment in his life and give thanks to God who through His servant has so bountifully blessed the church. (ADOPTED)

VI. Finances

Special attention was directed to the section of the BTE Supplementary Report on the subject of Finances. The action of General Synod 1976 cutting off budget requests for direct financial support of a number of agencies of the church adversely affected the seminaries by reversing an action of General Synod 1975 which had specifically authorized the assessment of the church for the work of the BTE.

Your committee RECOMMENDS that:

R-12. **General Synod again authorize the financial support of the work of the BTE through an assessment upon the church, and that this recommendation be referred to the GSEC for inclusion in the 1978 budget.** (ADOPTED)

(It is estimated that the BTE budget for 1978 will be $15,000 which would mean a *per capita* assessment of approximately 7¢)

This action is recommended for the following reasons:

1. **The RCA presently assumes *no* direct financial support of its seminaries.**
2. **About one third of the churches contribute nothing to the support of our seminaries.**
3. **Unless such action is taken, funds contributed for the operation of the seminaries and their programs are siphoned off to cover the inevitable expenses incurred by the function of the BTE.**
4. **The BTE was created by the General Synod and made responsible to General Synod when it established one administrative board to supervise the operation of the two seminaries, with the intention that the BTE would receive direct financial support from the church.**
5. **The function of the BTE as defined in the new "Constitution of the Board of Theological Education" presented to this Synod clearly establishes the BTE as the servant of General Synod, implying that its operation should be at Synod's expense.**

It was with surprise and unbelief that your committee came face to face with the reality that General Synod assumes no direct financial support of its seminaries. Only one other major denomination follows this practice, whereas others provide financial support at varying levels up to as much as the 85% provided by the Southern Baptist denomination.

In a church in which a tradition of highly trained ministers has been a mark of pride from the very beginning, and in which the *Book of Church Order* specifies that General Synod is the "calling" agent who engages qualified persons to assume the Office of Professor of Theology (BCO, Part IV, Art. 8), it indeed seems a strange inconsistency that no provision for direct financial support of seminary education from General Synod is assured.

Your committee, therefore, RECOMMENDS that:

R-13. **Whereas the General Synod assumes no direct financial support of Western Theological or New Brunswick Seminary, General Synod instructs the BTE to reexamine the basis of funding the operation of its seminaries, and develop plans for their expanded support, such plans to include direct financial support from General Synod.** (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 11

REFORMED CHURCH WOMEN

REFORMED CHURCH WOMEN

As a prelude to the work of the Reformed Church Women for 1976 the National Executive Committee spent time in November, 1975, discussing ways to serve *all* women in the Reformed Church. A significant Mission Statement resulted from these discussions, namely: "We see a need to help *all* Reformed Church women reach their highest potential as children of Jesus Christ." This now has become the guideline and focus for all Reformed Church Women programming.

In these changing and confusing times there is a need for better communication and creative Christian approaches to the problems that are present in our lives. Women in the Reformed Church have a wide variety of backgrounds, experience, needs, and goals within their common allegiance to Christ and his church. It was decided to carry out a number of Pilot Projects in each Synod to try to find approaches and methods that could be used to meet our goal. Planned experiments have been developed in the areas of Communication, the Assessment of Needs, Meeting Specific Life Situations (widow, dicorcee, etc.), Caring and Sharing, and Deeper Personal Commitment to Jesus Christ. Each Synodical Region chose three top priority categories. A General Action Plan for each category was carefully worked out and individual Guilds within each Region contracted to undertake a project. Resource Persons were made available for each Pilot Project. The experiments ranged in length from eight to fourteen months. Reports on each are to be submitted upon completion and further evaluation will take place after twenty-four months. In the Spring of '77 the Pilot Projects will be evaluated by the National Board. Learnings on the most effective ways of reaching and serving women of the church will be shared with all RCW groups.

In an attempt to help all Reformed Church women "to reach their highest potential as children of Jesus Christ" strong emphasis has been placed on Bible Study and Christian Fellowship. Rev. Donald DeYoung wrote the 1977 Bible Study, "Reveal Christ Anew, Through a Biblical Life Style." The Bible study and discussion groups are usually led by women which contributes in a major way to personal Christian growth and leadership skills.

Substantial contributions to the benevolence budget of the denomination have been made throughout the years by Reformed Church Women. Realizing the truth of the saying, "To be unknown is to be unloved," programs are produced and materials distributed which will be helpful to Guilds in designing meetings that relate to the missionary outreach of the denomination. Thus women know what needs are being met through the dollars they give. Materials on social issues and personal problems are also provided.

Reformed Church Women has raised its dues considerably in order to provide more adequately for its administrative mission. Membership dues or pledges underwrite salaries, office costs, Synodical and National Board meetings, the services of the Synodical Consultants, leadership training, program and committee materials and travel. Why do we pay our own administrative mission costs? Reformed Church Women is the major (in some cases only) organization in the church where women participate in decision

making. RCW has been and continues to be *the* leadership training agency for women. Not all women desire, nor are all women qualified to serve in a leadership role. However, one of our major functions is "to help *all* Reformed Church women to reach their highest potential as children of Jesus Christ." The representative from the General Program Council at a recent RCW Executive Committee meeting stated that most of the women who are serving now on the GPC received their leadership training in RCW.

High on the priorities of concerns for Reformed Church Women is the work being done by the RCA Task Force on Women (organized at the recommendation of RCW). Gratifying reports have been received on requests to denominational agencies for appointment of women members: development of a Talent Bank of women available for leadership assignments; and, affirmative action proposals.

Beth Marcus, Eloise VanHeest, and Pat Stere have worked together to produce and lead Women in Leadership seminars. The response has been overwhelming and plans have been made to train additional facilitators so that seminars may be held throughout the denomination.

As RCW approaches the end of the first Triennium under revised organizational structure it's apparent that its work has been strengthened by having seven synodical Consultants. The Synodical regions have benefitted by having materials and methods tailored to their specific needs. The most deeply felt and most often expressed lack in the present plan is that a full National Board meeting is held only once in three years. Even though the Synodical Board meetings have grown in their effectiveness, the opportunity for cross-fertilization of ideas, discussion and fellowship which accompanies a National meeting is sorely missed. It is hoped that resources will be found to make such a meeting possible.

As this report is being prepared, over 2,000 members of the Reformed Church are preparing for a spiritually renewing, educationally challenging, missionally inspiring experience at the Triennial Assembly of Reformed Church Women. Excitement and anticipation is high as registrants await new insights, understandings, and relationships resulting from study and discussion of the theme of the new Triennium, "If you have the faith, God gives the power."

Betty Boerman, President of Reformed Church Women, presented to Edith de Velder a certificate in recognition of her inspiring leadership, wise counsel, loving concern, and faithful and dedicated service.

Edith de Velder was invited to the platform, where she briefly addressed the Synod.

ARTICLE 12

HIGHER EDUCATION
1. Central College
2. Hope College
3. Northwestern College

CENTRAL COLLEGE

Our relationship with the Reformed Church in America is vital. It is significant in all we do and a crucial factor in the excellence and success that has been ours. We are pleased to present this annual report, an historical record of this relationship during the past school year as a basis for discussion by the Higher Education Review Committee.

"YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE." This scripture passage is well known but especially for Central students as it is an ever-present, visible reminder which appears on the new outdoor worship center which was completed this year. The imaginatively designed and aesthetically pleasing structure is a gift of Peter and Lucille Kuyper given in the bicentennial year to serve as a constant reminder of the role of the church in our heritage. Located next to the main traffic corridor of the campus with a beautifully lighted cross, it attracts the attention of all. Its design provides not only a visual reminder but a private spot for quiet meditation and small group worship. The structure shaped as an ascending and narrowing spiral displays the following inscription:

> THIS SCULPTURE STANDS AS A SYMBOL OF THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE HERITAGE AND THE DREAMS OF CENTRAL COLLEGE.
>
> DESIGNED AS A PLACE FOR CONTEMPLATION AND COMMUNION, IT DEPICTS THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING NATURE OF THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND ITS ULTIMATE FOCUS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

This is an era when students are actively seeking for truth and for meaning and purpose in life. The campus is alive and active with Bible study groups, fellowship of Christian athletes, and inter-varsity fellowship. Our basketball team which won our first undisputed league championship in over thirty years and participated in the national playoffs is also distinguished by its organization of a long-term Bible study program in the early morning hours under the leadership of Reverend David Schut of Otley Reformed Church.

The fall faculty workshop centered on the role of values in education and methods for including them in course work. This area is of primary concern to our faculty and great attention is given to it. Three major speakers in the areas of Natural Sciences, Behavioral Sciences and the Humanities worked with us for two days. The concerns of our faculty were clearly demonstrated and an impact on teaching seems certain to follow.

The Reverend Wilbur Washington served the College as interim chaplain this year. He is ably assisted by seminary intern Marlene Wagenaar. We have an active campus church with excellent attendance and student involvement.

Central continues to provide scholarship grants to all Reformed Church students attending Central. This $1,600, four-year grant is funded with gifts

received from churches. The scholarship has been a key factor in a significantly increased Reformed Church enrollment.

Faculty and students from the College drama department were pleased to be asked to develop a program for the Women's Triennial. Their appearance was not only a significant part of the program but was a valuable experience for our students.

Our a cappella choir made an extensive tour to churches in Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Canada bringing a message in music to many churches. A student-originated group called PTL (Praise The Lord) brought the joyful "good news" to a number of churches in Iowa and Wisconsin through the openness, enthusiasm, and joy of the informal youth idiom. This group of ten dedicated young Christians has been especially well received and represents the college and the church well.

Central faculty and staff continue to serve the church in many ways. A case in point: Dr. James Van Hoeven served as editor of "Piety and Patriotism," the RCA study volume for the bicentennial. Significant contributions to the work were made by Dr. John De Jong, Dr. Barbara Fassler, Dr. Eugene Heideman and Van Hoeven himself. All were members of CUI faculty at the time of authorship. Many others have served on denominational and classis committees. It is interesting to note that there are eight ordained ministers on our staff and thirty-four staff members serve their congregations as elders, deacons or trustees. All six members of the top administrative staff are sons of the Reformed Church and graduates of its colleges.

Although Central's budget analysis and projection often show a potential deficit at the beginning of the school year, efficient operation and campus-wide economies have permitted us to have balanced budgets every year. School year 1975-76, consistent with the trend, was closed with a slight surplus for which we are most thankful.

Challenge II, a three-year fund drive was begun in the Fall of 1975. This $2 million program is well received and has current cash and pledges of $1,680,000. These funds cover our needs in capital and operating for the three-year period.

Our program to substantially increase Endowment is gaining real momentum. In September of 1977, a Committee for Endowment Growth was established. This committee is comprised of twenty-nine business and community leaders from Pella and the surrounding area. As a part of Challenge II a goal of a $500,000 increase in Endowment was adopted. Over $480,000 has already been realized. Plans are being made to recognize all those persons who contribute to Endowment through our Heritage Roll of Honor and a Heritage Day on campus in May.

A campus master plan developed in 1970 is now in its second phase. The first phase was the building of the new library and remodeling of the old library and other campus facilities. The second phase includes a new science building and development of an outdoor recreation center which includes intramural areas, women's softball field, a baseball field of our own (a first), a new all-weather track and a new football field. The track was used this spring with the remainder of the facilities scheduled for use during school year 1977-78.

Construction has begun on a long sought and much needed new science building. The two-floor, 28,000 square foot facility will help make an already strong department even stronger. It includes the latest concepts in science education. Completion is expected in the fall of 1977.

Occasionally things happen for which expressions such as "accidental," "coincidental" or simply "good fortune" seem clearly inadequate. We would like to relate one such experience.

Noel Cover, a Nebraska rancher who died in 1973, created by will a scholarship trust. The scholarships were to be awarded to Protestant young men from Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming for study in the sciences. About one year ago Central, along with 87 other midwest four-year Protestant institutions, received a mimeographed announcement asking if we were interested in being considered for these scholarships. Obviously we answered affirmatively and then "the coincidence." A member of our staff had a trip scheduled to Nebraska and decided to drop in on the trustees. The ultimate result: Central was chosen as the only Iowa participating college and will receive one-fourth of the earnings of the trust each year for the next 50 years. The trust earns $40,000 to $60,000 per year, which has made possible the establishment of a speicla Noel Cover Scholarship program funded at $10,000 to $15,000 per year. Scores of young people attending Central will be benefited over the years as a result of the concern of a committed Protestant Nebraska rancher and a casual "coincidential" visit that seems more appropriately called "providential."

Pastors have been welcome visitors to our campus. In the fall a group of pastors representing several different classes were invited to visit the campus to meet students and faculty and to learn of current developments and future plans. In January a special conference was held for all home pastors of Central students. The conference had a threefold purpose: (a) Development of stronger relations between home pastors and the office of the College Chaplain, (b) meetings between students and their pastors, and (c) professional development of pastors in the area of outreach to church dropouts.

Students continue to share interest in the deep social problems of our day. The Student Church sponsored two trips for students during the spring break to the inner city of Chicago and the rural poverty areas of Mississippi. Their objective is to see and analyze the role of the church in ministering to a variety of areas of need in our society.

The foregoing items highlight the activities of the year past. It is our hope that they provide evidence of the College's serious attempt to live up to the Covenant of Mutual Responsibility between the church and the college. We hope it will stimulate a review of the underlying philosophy of this agreement. It deals directly with the health and effectiveness of the college but also the future of the church itself.

HOPE COLLEGE

The preparation of this annual report to the General Synod provides my first opportunity to formally review the 111th academic year of Hope College. Since the College was chartered in 1866, each year has had its unique challenges, opportunities, and blessings. There has been war and peace, periods of expansion, recession and depression, and internal and external changes of great consequence. Yet throughout all of these, Hope has sought to fulfill its mission: excellence in liberal arts education in the context of the Christian faith. The principal result of these efforts is found in the lives of our alumni, now numbering more than 12,000. Hope alumni have taken positions of leadership, responsibility and service in nearly every facet of life in our nation, as well as in many parts of the world. Just recently I ran across an interesting statistic: 555 of the active RCA ministers and missionaries are graduates of Hope College. We count it a privilege to have made this contribution to the life of the Church, and we do not overlook the part which thousands of our alumni are playing as lay persons in the life and mission of our churches.

As I reflect on this past academic year, there are three themes of gratitude which I would share with the Church. The first relates to the wonderful group of students we are privileged to have on campus. Their enthusiasm, dedication, and purpose is demonstrated in every facet of the life of Hope. Many find opportunities for service in the various programs sponsored by the RCA. For example, nine Hope students spent their Christmas vacation on a work project in Chiapas, Mexico; many spend their summers in one of our Church camps or in Taiwan; some spend one or two years abroad in Church service after graduation. These are enriching experiences for our students and provide unique opportunities for enlarged vision and personal growth.

Over the years Hope College has developed a reputation of excellence. Many of our students are able to attend the finest graduate and professional schools. In these days of a changing job market, however, many students are taking positions in business, industry, and education immediately after graduation. We are confident that many of these students will in time assume important positions of leadership and responsibility, as has been true of earlier student generations. Each year there continues to be a number of students who enter seminary; many choose one of the RCA seminaries, although a number enter other seminaries.

Each year a number of RCA families have the opportunity to meet Hope students during the Chapel Choir and the Symphonette tours to various regions of the country. I wish that many others would have this opportunity to sense the character, faith and vision of our students, and thus share more fully in the strategic role of the College in the world today.

My second theme of gratitude relates to our faculty. We are privileged to have faculty members who not only have distinguished academic credentials, but who are also dedicated to serving our students. In the past few months, four of our faculty members have published textbooks, a real mark of their dedication to teaching and their standing in the academic community. Many of our faculty members take active roles in their local congregations and also serve the classes and the denomination in a variety of ways.

The most important decision we make is who we add to our faculty. Ultimately, it is the faculty that determines the College's academic excellence

and the vitality of its Christian commitment. We are grateful that we have been able to add a number of persons to our faculty who bring many strengths in both of these areas.

The third theme of gratitude relates to the support from churches. This support enabled us to operate with a balanced budget in 1976-77, the tenth successive year we have done so. The generous gifts we have received from our churches and many other sources enabled us to proceed with the construction of our new Physical Education Center, an important addition to our campus facilities. Completion is scheduled for the late summer of 1978. We look forward to hosting the General Synod in this facility in 1979.

A concern which we as a college share with many parents and students is the ever-increasing cost of attending college, particularly a private college such as Hope. In response, we reaffirm our commitment to provide financial assistance as equitably as possible so that every qualified student who so desires will be able to attend Hope College. This year our financial-aid budget from all sources is $2,400,000. Seventy per cent of our students receive financial aid, the average amount being $1,634. Each of the RCA colleges has such a financial-aid program. We ask that this information be shared as effectively as possible with prospective students and their parents, so that high school graduates from the RCA may seriously consider attending one of our colleges.

We are grateful for the excellent response of pastors to the joint effort of the three RCA colleges to identify prospective students. This has been of great help to us. We ask that this program be continued again next year.

These continue to be complex and uncertain days in which we live. We believe this is a very strategic time for our Church to vigorously support Christian higher education, not only through material gifts, but also through encouragement, counsel, and prayer so that God's great purposes will be accomplished in the lives of young people, and through them, in the Church and the world.

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

So much has happened at Northwestern College in the year 1976-77 that it is difficult for me to pick out the information of the most interest to the delegates of General Synod. We are grateful that we can say with confidence that Northwestern has made substantial progress through the year in many ways. We look forward to continued success as we pursue the mission of Christian liberal arts education at Northwestern.

To emphasize the quality education that is presently being offered by Northwestern College, I am pleased to report that in the course of the past twelve months Northwestern has had an on-campus evaluation by both the North Central Association and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. In both of these instances, Northwestern received reaccreditation for ten years, the maximum period of time granted any institution. We appreciated the very careful evaluation that was made, the constructive criticism that came to us in the report, and the confirmation by the evaluators that Northwestern truly was a quality institution.

Because of resignations, retirements, and additional people needed for program development, it became necessary to hire ten new faculty personnel needed in various areas of the curricular program. We spent much time interviewing and selecting people whom we felt would best meet the requirements of Northwestern College. I am pleased to report that we were able to attract highly trained people dedicated to the cause of Christian liberal arts education. They have added much to an already excellent staff. We feel that our faculty would be difficult to match or replace in any other place.

In addition to new faculty personnel, Rev. Robert Wallinga formerly of the Morningside Reformed Church in Sioux City, Iowa, accepted the position of Director of Development. We are excited about the expertise that Bob brings to us in the areas of organization and imagination. He already has demonstrated much vision and enthusiasm for the tasks that lie ahead not only in the solicitation of funds for the annual and endowment funds, but also in the area of building a strong public relations effort. We hope this will more adequately present a positive image of Northwestern College to our constituents, prospective students and donors.

Recently Dr. Edward E. Ericson, Jr., who has served as Dean of Academic Affairs at Northwestern College for four years, presented his resignation effective in August, 1977. We have accepted, with regret, this resignation so that he can pursue his career as Professor of English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since the announcement of his resignation, we have appointed a faculty Academic Dean Search Committee to find the most capable replacement. We look forward to a time within the near future when we can announce a new Dean of Academic Affairs. This is a very important position in any academic institution and, because of our curricular development at this point in history, it is extremely important that the right man be attracted to Northwestern.

In last year's report I mentioned that we had begun extensive work on a program, under the direction of our Academic Dean, Dr. Ericson, which we have entitled our career concentration curricular development program. The basic concept of this program is to develop curricular offerings that will adequately prepare students for job entry vocational skills but at the same

time give them the advantage of a well-developed liberal arts education.

Through the year we have developed twenty-five career concentration offerings with several more yet to be developed and offered for the year 1977-78. We are excited about this approach to Christian liberal arts education and are confident that it will be received with great enthusiasm by prospective students.

In addition Mr. Roland Simmelink has been pursuing special education in the area of Christian Education at the North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The prospects of this program have sparked a lot of inquiry and interest. We look forward to developing a very strong program in Christian Education under his leadership.

We are grateful that we were able to conclude the fiscal year 1976 with a substantial surplus in the operating budget. These funds are used primarily to liquidate very small, previously experienced indebtedness. At this point in fiscal 1977, we would anticipate that we will again be able to meet all of our obligations for this year with an additional small surplus. We know that we are fortunate in this respect because so many small liberal arts colleges are operating on a deficit level year after year. For the careful management and supervision of these funds, we are indebted to Mr. Paul Muyskens, our Business Manager. He has dedicated his service to Northwestern College in maintaining a strong financial position.

To assist us in meeting some of these obligations, we were fortunate to be able to be included in two major grants during 1976-77. We received a $50,000 grant for curricular development from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). In addition, we were chosen as one of fifty-six colleges to participate in a Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges grant which amounted to approximately $25,000 for Northwestern.

Much time has been spent in the last several months with architects and committees developing plans for new physical facilities. Our primary needs are for improved chapel/fine arts facilities and for a large physical fitness/student center complex. At the April 25-26 Board of Trustees meeting, the trustees will be required to make some major decisions about these new facilities. In the interest of good stewardship and conservation of funds, several alternatives are being carefully reviewed. We trust that God will direct us as we look forward to a time when we can have more adequate facilities for both chapel/fine arts and our physical fitness and intramural programs.

In the spring of 1976 we conducted our annual Minister's Conference. Our guest speaker was the Rev. Robert Schuller from Garden Grove, California. We were pleased with the reception and the response of the day for those in attendance. More recently we sponsored a Minister's Colloquium for Reformed Church ministers within the immediate area. The intent of this project was to discuss seriously the concept of Christian liberal arts and the place it should play and has played within the Reformed Church colleges. This was a most enjoyable and informative day and was well received by those in attendance. In the spring of 1977 we are looking forward to our annual Minister's Conference when our guest for two days will be Dr. Charlie Shedd, a well-known evangelist, author, and religious leader within our country. These kinds of conferences help to emphasize the importance that Northwestern places on the religious development, not only of its students, but also people in the entire area.

We are pleased that our admissions continue to show an increase. We had the largest enrollment ever in the fall of 1976 with a total of 762 students. We are not as positive about admissions for the coming school year as we were last year. Our records indicate that we have a few less applicants at this point than a year ago. We are hopeful that as time goes on, we will be able to show an increase once again in student population.

For the fourth year in a row, Northwestern received a Staley Foundation grant for a week-long lecture series. We were fortunate to have Dr. Christopher Kaiser from Western Theological Seminary as our speaker. His insights of science and theology were carefully coordinated and well received by the students and the faculty. It was indeed stimulating to have this kind of presentation on campus for the Staley Lecture series.

As a relatively new college president, I am impressed with the dedication and loyalty that our faculty and administrators have to the stated mission of Northwestern College. Everything we do is related in some way to that basic mission of Christian liberal arts education. It is our hope that we will always be able to improve upon the integration of our Christian faith and our learning process and to offer a dynamic learning and living experience that will present a value system that will enable our students to experience a full, meaningful Christian life.

We continue to be grateful to the Reformed Church in America for the very outstanding support you give to us as you share financially and with your students in our program. We recognize, from this support, that you consider Christian liberal arts as a very strategic mission of the church. It is our hope that we will always be able to meet your standards and expectations as we continue to develop this institution in the building of God's kingdom.

I thank God for the opportunity that He has given me to serve at Northwestern College. It is exciting to be involved in the development of lives that will play an important role in developing the events of tomorrow. I am impressed with the quality of young people that come to this institution for their higher education. It will be our hope and effort not to disappoint them or short-change them as we present to them the values of a Christian liberal arts approach. I thank God for the Reformed Church in America, and the educational institutions that serve, and for the future that lies ahead for all of us that will be true to His mission.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The Review Committee on Higher Education is charged with reviewing annual reports, documents and accomplishments of Northwestern, Central and Hope Colleges. The committee sees its role as providing a unique opportunity for dialogue between representatives of the schools, and representatives of the denomination.

Upon completing this review, and after a productive discussion, meeting with President Gordon Van Wylen of Hope, President H. Virgil Rowenhorst of Northwestern and Vice President of Development Gary Timmer of Central, the committee wishes to commend with confidence the competent leadership of these three excellent educational institutions.

The committee and college representatives also reviewed the "Covenant of Mutual Responsibilities," in effect for a number of years (see *MGS*, 1976, pp. 161-162), discussed its relevance to the lives of the colleges and the church, and commends its continued use.

We commend not only the administrations, but also the faculties and student bodies for maintaining a high level of academic excellence in an atmosphere of Christian freedom. We further commend these schools for operating within the budget in an atmosphere of radical cost increases.

Our shared concerns focus on maintaining the levels of enrollment in the face of projected decreases in the number of college-bound students, on RCA congregations encouraging students of their churches and communities to attend our colleges, and encouraging the building up of endowment funds from churches, individual bequests, and other sources.

The Committee chooses to make only one recommendation as a further affirmation of the distinctive contribution, the outstanding educational character, and the fiscal accomplishments of the three colleges.

R-1. **We RECOMMEND that in order to implement a heightened awareness of the unique educational quality of the RCA colleges, an RCA "College Day" be included in the planning and preparation of the church calendar beginning in 1978. The specific purpose would be to educate RCA congregations about the program of these schools, to create a more fully aware and stable support system for these institutions and to provide information for prospective RCA students. The plans for this "RCA College Day" are to be implemented jointly by Hope, Central and Northwestern.** (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 13

PUBLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH HERALD

The *Church Herald* has passed through its 150th anniversary year and is continuing to exercise a vigorous ministry of Christian journalism. We can be grateful as a denomination that, when many religious publications have ceased to operate, or are struggling to survive, the *Church Herald* continues to have a bright future.

The General Synod should be aware that this has been a busy year for the staff of the *Church Herald* in the production of the magazine. As the contract with the magazine's printer came to an end, competitive bids were received and favorable terms were negotiated with a new printer, which in turn necessitated a relocation of the magazine's offices in another part of Grand Rapids. The change was made from Addressograph to computerized mailing labels, and the staff has begun to handle directly all advertising from outside the Reformed Church in America, instead of working through an ad agency, with its rather high commission. All these changes have meant extra work for the staff, but the long term results should be a more efficient and economical publication program.

The Synod should also be aware of causes for satisfaction in the state of the magazine. First, it is significant that the *Church Herald* is holding its own in subscribers when the current uneasy state of religious journalism has meant a large drop-off in subscriptions for many other magazines. Second, the *Church Herald* has had a successful year financially and, in spite of the usual increases in costs of production, the Editorial Council is requesting no increase in 1978 in the current $35,000 annual subsidy which is received from the General Synod. While some denominational publications receive much larger subsidies, we can be grateful that the *Church Herald* has been operated so efficiently that it is able to continue for another year without any increase in its direct denominational support. Third, readers may have noticed that there has been a continuing development of in-depth reporting of denominational issues. The *Church Herald* is not merely a "house organ" of the sort which is typically afraid to handle controversial questions which are of importance to God's people, nor to promote discussion of issues being raised within the denomination. Such "house organ" journalism can be pleasant and positive, but misleading, if it avoids exposing and challenging its readers. The fact is that there are questions to which Christian solutions are being sought, and about which there are continued struggles and disagreements among Christians. Fourth, we can be thankful that the *Church Herald* continues to undertake a seemingly impossible task—seeking to minister to the needs of young and old, married and single, widowed, divorced, and those from a wide range of educational, vocational, and geographic backgrounds. The readership and its needs is far more diverse than any single congregation would contain, so that the *Church Herald* is seeking to meet a sweeping range of needs through the ministry of its printed page. We need to be thankful that the staff is willing to undertake such a broad ministry, and that it is constantly seeking material which will minister to the diverse backgrounds of the people of our denomination.

We would like the Synod to know some of the things which are hoped for in the future ministry of the *Church Herald.* First, the staff will be developing a special issue of the *Church Herald* commemorating the 350th anniversary of the Reformed Church in America in 1978. They expect that issue to be of such a nature that it will have lasting significance in the life of the Reformed Church for years to come. Second, discussions are underway with the Council of the Reformed Church in Canada concerning the possibility of a joint publishing effort with their monthly magazine, the *Pioneer.* Third, the staff is working on a number of efforts to expand the ministry and service of the *Church Herald* in the life of our denomination.

The Editorial Council has been pleased with the staff of the *Church Herald,* and its editor, Dr. John Stapert. At the annual meeting of the council in February of this year, Dr. Stapert's contract as editor was renewed for four more years. It is the hope of the council that he will continue to be blessed and strengthened by God in a ministry which we believe has had wide impact for the ministry in Christ through the Reformed Church in America. We would urge you to pray for the editor and his staff, and for the spiritual wisdom and balance which are so necessary in serving a diverse denomination, and in being close to many of the cross currents and tensions that are part of the life of any denomination.

The Editorial Council presents the following recommendations to the General Synod:

R-1. **That because the purpose of the *Church Herald* is to publicize and to promote the total witness and mission of the Reformed Church in America, and because through its articles and features it tries to show the relevance of the Gospel to everyday life, and to encourage readers to greater faith and more complete obedience to Jesus Christ, the General Synod urge every congregation to subscribe to the *Church Herald* on the Every Family Plan, making use of the special one-year introductory offer.** (ADOPTED)

R-2. **That the General Synod, through its various boards and agencies, continue to use the *Church Herald* as its primary means of communication with the constituency of the Reformed Church in America.** (ADOPTED)

R-3. **That the General Synod urge all of its congregations to encourage the reading and discussion of articles appearing in the *Church Herald* and use the paper as an evangelistic instrument by sending it to students, military personnel, prospective members, business and professional offices, hospitals and other institutions.** (ADOPTED)

R-4. **That the expiration of the first terms of LaVerne Boss, Max DePree, Herman Rosenberg and Howard Schipper and the second terms of Carl Kleis and Eugene Stallworth be referred to the Nominations Committee.** (ADOPTED)

R-5. **That the Editor and the Staff of the *Church Herald* be commended by the Synod for their high level of competence and dedication as evidenced by the very high quality of the magazine and its very favorable reception by the membership of the church.** (ADOPTED)

R-6. **That pending the adoption of these recommendations, the Editor be heard.** (ADOPTED)

Dr. John Stapert, Editor, addressed General Synod.

ARTICLE 14

MINORITY COUNCILS

BLACK COUNCIL REPORT

With this General Synod, the Black Council begins its ninth year as a body of our denomination.

Since this time one year ago, the Black Council has met in four regular sessions, with its annual Caucus taking place in October in Newark, New Jersey. On that occasion, we were fortunate to have General Synod President, Dr. Louis Benes, present. Prior to bringing us greetings, he had an opportunity to hear the burning concern for self-reliance among Caucus delegates, as expressed in our opening worship. For indeed, self-reliance continues to be a primary goal of the Black constituency, whose churches are largely subsidized even for primary operating expenses.

Black Council meetings and related events were attended by over 300 people in 1976, and this growing participation is indicative of the Council's efforts to embrace as broad a representation of the Black Constituency as possible. Ten new churches, in the Western Region alone, are likely to become actively involved in Black Council activities in the coming year, because of the work done in regional areas by Black Council members to acquaint new people with our important work.

Some highlights of the year included the Black Clergy Conference, the Minority Scholarship Fund Grants and the Colloquium on Black Religion.

Again this year, as in the two previous years, the Black pastors met to continue their discussion on the common concerns of Black pastors.

The Colloquium on Black Religion featured the well-known professor, theologian and author, Dr. James Cone. His two lectures have been published and are available for distribution to all members of the RCA upon request.

1977 is the first year that recipients of the Minority Scholarship Fund, who received support from the Fund in their first year of college, have graduated. The young people in whom the denomination has invested through this Scholarship Fund show tremendous promise for future church service, and we can be pleased about our support of them when they needed us most.

A highlight of special importance to the Black Council during the previous year has been its participation on the General Synod's "Joint Committee on Relationships and Responsibilities of Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies." Because of the frank and challenging dialogue which took place in the context of that committee, it can be said that an important step has been taken toward enhancing our understanding of one another. The report of that Committee will be presented at this meeting, and the work which went into its preparation will be evident.

The theme under which the Council has worked for the past year is "The Unique Challenge to Blacks in the RCA: A Reassessment." This theme was inspired by lectures delivered by Dr. Gayraud S. Wilmore. These lectures were entitled "Identity Crisis: Blacks in Predominantly White Institutions," and they pointed to some of the history and shared problems of Black Christians who worship and serve in communions where they are a minority. Among the

shared problems are a neglect of the development of Black leadership, the virtual abandonment of cultural patterns of religious expression, and the constant encounter with White racism. In the RCA, these problems are compounded by a seeming stagnation of numerical growth of some congregations in Black communities and the accompanying financial hardships that they experience. What can be done about these situations is a perpetual question in Black Council business sessions. But there are no simple answers.

One part of the solution seems to be in making pastoral ministry attractive to young Black people who have grown up in the church. As has been so often stated, our seminaries may be capable of doing more to encourage such students to enroll, but the real work must occur in the local church.

This is where the question of role-models becomes extremely pertinent. Few Black youth choose professional ministry without the inspiration and encouragement of a local pastor; and few Black students are likely to be so inspired by a White pastor. This is true, not because there is necessarily a lack of interest and diligence on the White pastor's part, but because the Black youth of today, who has the essential qualities for ministerial service, is not readily inclined to accept White leadership in making their vocational choices. No doubt, this view will have its disquieting effect upon those who believe that Christian leadership is without respect of race. Our experience teaches us otherwise.

Meeting in May, 1976, Black Clergy of the RCA observed that RCA congregations being pastored by Black clergy, in most cases, realize measurable growth and increased giving unmatched by their immediate White predecessors. With this in mind, they called upon the Black Council to assist in determining, in light of the denomination's concern for Church Growth, if there is a direct relationship between the presence of a Black pastor in a predominantly Black church and that church's growth in numbers, stewardship and mission.

An affirmative answer to this question would have a decisive impact upon the RCA's history of White leadership in emerging Black congregations. It will cause controversy and apprehension, even bitterness among church members–Black and White. The reasons for this are not always as simple as they might appear.

For one thing, to make a conscious effort to attract more Black clergy into the denomination is to compound the fact that there are already more persons trained for the clergy in the RCA than there are places to serve. For some time to come, the recruited Black pastor will be targeted to churches in Black communities. This necessarily means that White pastors, who are committed to their ministries in Black communities, feel threatened, not only by the prospect of being replaced by a Black minister, but with the prospect of not receiving another call from the limited number of pastorates in predominantly White churches.

Also, if we are to train Black candidates for ministry in our theological seminaries, these schools will have to alter their curricula, in some cases, to meet the special needs of persons intending to minister to Black Communities. Should it not prove feasible for Western and New Brunswick Seminaries to meet all the training requirements of Black students, opportunities for study

might be arranged with institutions in the United States which have developed comprehensive Black Church Studies departments.

This is a glimpse at some of the issues we will encounter, if it is determined that Black clergy are an asset to church growth in Black communities. But should we reach this conclusion, there is no choice for us but to take the necessary actions to help usher the Black RCA members into a more "normal" church life than they now generally enjoy. Most, if not all, Black members of the RCA worship in churches that are barely "hobbling along." This, at a time when Black churches in urban centers are experiencing phenomenal vitality, must make us wonder why our experience is so different. Our finding the answer to this question, and taking even the most unpleasant action to rectify this reality, is the challenge we now face. Refusing to accept it is to guarantee that the Black Christian experience in the RCA will be eternally shy of what our Lord intends.

HISPANIC COUNCIL REPORT

It is with great pleasure the Hispanic Council greets the 1977 General Synod. We rejoice and celebrate the way in which God has been blessing the Hispanic Council's work. We would like to share the following programs that were developed during 1976 and early 1977.

The Hispanic Council held its Second Annual Youth Conference at the Suydam Street Reformed Church. Close to 140 youth participated in this event. There were delegations from all of our churches in the Eastern United States. The theme of the Conference was, "Christian Courtship in the Kingdom." Our guest speaker was the Reverend Efraín Felix. The young people divided into groups to discuss the implications of 2 Samuel 13 for young people in today's world.

The Women's Union of the Hispanic Council celebrated its Second Annual Conference at the Elmendorf Reformed Church. About 75 persons were present at this event. The theme of the Conference was, "A Christian Perspective on the Women's Liberation Movement." We were stimulated by a powerful presentation by Savia Sauchez, attorney-at-law, from Mexico.

The Council had the opportunity to celebrate its first Family Retreat. This event was held during the Memorial Day Weekend at the Warwick Conference Center. Well over 75 people attended. There were simultaneous activities for children, young people, and married couples. All worship was done collectively. The theme of the Retreat was, "Marriage and Child Rearing–A Biblical View." There was also a panel discussion held on the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

The men of the Hispanic Council came together for their Second Annual Dinner held at the Melrose Reformed Church. About 40 men were in attendance. Our guest speaker was the Reverend José Caraballo, who has been a chaplain in city prisons and is now Dean of Hispanic Students' Affairs at the New York Theological Seminary. He spoke to us on the responsibilities of being a prophet and priest to our families. A special offering was taken up to help take Bibles into the prisons.

The children of our Hispanic churches participated in the Intercultural Event at the Warwick Conference Center. It was decided by the Council that this would be the last time we would participate being that the needs of the children, as we see them, were not being met. Plans are now underway to implement our own bilingual-bicultural Children's Week.

Two of our biggest youth activities were the Concert on the High Seas around Manhattan Island and our Labor Day Weekend Retreat. We had the pleasure of having two converted Latin American singing stars, Ricardo Ray and Bobby Cruz at the concert. This activity was attended by close to 400 young people. It culminated with many young people making professions of faith to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of their lives. We also had Ricardo Ray and Bobby Cruz at our Labor Day Weekend Retreat where over 100 people attended.

The Secretary for Hispanic Ministries visited the developing Hispanic congregations in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Denver, Colorado. There was an exploratory trip taken to Artesia, California, on the possibility of developing an Hispanic congregation there.

Seminars and rallies on evangelism and social ministry were held at our Hispanic churches. Different classes and synods were confronted with the challenge of Hispanic Ministries.

During this year the Hispanic Council established CLADEC - Latin American Center for Christian Studies which is functioning as the Council's lay institute. Discipleship Training Seminars have been held in Brooklyn, Manhattan, New Brunswick, and Newark. Close to 40 people received certificates after completing different training programs ranging from three months to one year.

The Hispanic Council has recruited four students who are now enrolled in our seminaries. Three are at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, one is at Western Theological Seminary. We are also challenging the seminaries to alter their traditional programming to provide for the special needs of Hispanic students. This will mean Hispanic faculty and curriculum that will be relevant to the Latin American experience. Discussions are now being entertained regarding these matters.

The Hispanic Council was asked to participate in the Joint Committee on Minority Councils and Denominational Policy Bodies. We enjoyed the opportunity to articulate the problems and the possibilities that we think the Hispanic Council has within the Reformed Church. The conversations were direct, honest, and frank. The document that the Committee produced, we think, is a good beginning on which to build greater understanding between minority people and the larger Church.

The Hispanic wing of the Church welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Church Growth program. We expect new congregations to develop in the Synods of Albany and Chicago, and the Particular Synod of the West.

We also expect to actively participate in the new mission field, especially in Latin America. We feel the need to advocate for the rejection of traditional missionary models and seek creative new ways to develop relationships with indigenous national churches. In this regard the Council welcomed the opportunity to visit Chiapas, Mexico, in the person of its Secretary, Reverend Raymond Rivera, who was invited to be the speaker at the annual meeting of the Presbytery. We would like to build and strengthen fraternal ties with Hispanic members of the Reformed Church in this country and the national church in Mexico.

The maximum expression of the Council this year was our first missionary conference held at the Suydam Street Reformed Church. Approximately 200 people were in attendance. Our guest speaker was Dr. Santiago Soto-Fontanez, Executive Secretary for the Hispanic American Baptist Eastern Convention. The theme was "The Vision is Mission."

In conclusion, the Hispanic Council sees itself continuing to develop and mature in the reasons for which it was organized: To be the collective expression of Hispanics in the Reformed Church, to coordinate and advocate for Hispanic programs, and, to be a prophetic voice to the Church.

We see ourselves involved in the process of sorting out for ourselves and the Church a ministry which no longer confuses the Kingdom of God with their nation's destiny, the way of the Cross with the Western, Anglo-Saxon way of life, the Church of Christ with a culturally-bound model of the Church.

We seek to distinguish between faith and ideology, the Gospel and its cultural wrappings, the Body of Christ and the Institutional Church, and conversion from a privatistic, paternalistic, ahistorical, superficial religious commitment.

AMERICAN INDIAN COUNCIL REPORT

Greetings to the members and friends of General Synod, Reformed Church in America, 1977, from the members and friends of the American Indian Council and congregations of the RCA.

The following information is shared in the hope that it will help in your understanding and appreciation for the ministry of the six Indian congregations of the RCA, located in Nebraska, Oklahoma and New Mexico. In addition to membership in local classes, representing our participation in the total life and work of the RCA, our churches are linked also in the American Indian Council of the RCA. Therefore, we feel privileged to be able to identify with Christian friends throughout our country in common efforts such as Church Growth and in particular with our association through the AIC.

During this past year and up to the present time, the following events have occurred which indicate something of our life and ministry in the AIC:

1. American Indian Council representatives, ministers and staff persons (including those from schools in Arizona) met in Denver in February, 1977. This was a time for special sharing and fellowship which created a wonderful atmosphere for growth and understanding among the people and leaders of Indian ministries. Presentations by representatives were highlighted by displays of crafts and artifacts expressive of the culture and life of Indian peoples. This gathering occurred as a result of the planning of the AIC and The Rev. Harold E. Brown, Secretary for Indian Ministries, for whom all continue to hold respect and appreciation.
2. At the present time we are pleased to report that all churches are served by pastors with some having additional staff persons, either as volunteers or paid staff. For this we are grateful.
3. With Church Growth being the major focus of the denomination, we are pleased to report that at least two of our congregations are attempting a new program, T.E.E. (Theological Education by Extension), with a third contemplating its use. Developed by Cook School of Arizona, it is designed to help in the training of Indian people for leadership by providing credit courses in biblical studies which people may take in their own communities. We believe that this holds great promise for the future GROWTH of our congregations, although it is not possible to know just what its effect will be at this early date.
4. During the absence of pastors at vacation times or whenever it is necessary for them to be away, our churches are increasingly able to provide their own pulpit supply, either by exchange of lay persons among congregations or from their own community. This sharing of faith and life is inspiring for all.
5. Our greatest need continues to be that of developing Indian leaders; pastors and teachers. At the present time only ONE of our congregations is served by an Indian person and there are none who are in schools, colleges or seminaries, who are specifically training for ministry.
6. We are pleased and grateful for the continued support for American Indian ministries. Our congregations are assuming a large proportion of responsibility—that is thrilling to all of us—yet we do need your continuing help; we covet your prayers and support. Thanks to all of you from all of us.

We wish God's blessing to each of you during this gathering of people, and for your life and ministry in the churches and communities of which you are a part.

ARTICLE 15

COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES
OF GENERAL SYNOD

COMMISSION ON CHAPLAINS REPORT

In response to requests by commission members, institutional chaplains and provision of authorized funding by the 1976 General Synod, the first conclave for RCA institutional chaplains was held on February 22-24, 1977, in Norfolk, Va., at the U.S. Naval Air Station. Hosted by RCA Chaplain Robert W. Bedingfield, Senior Chaplain of the recently commissioned USS NIMITZ, the conclave was held concurrently with the annual meeting of the Chaplains' Commission. In addition to the eleven clergy in specialized ministry related to institutional chaplaincies, the joint sessions were also attended by the Rev. Alvin J. Poppen, RCA Coordinator of Human Resources, and the Rev. Harold Bode, Executive Secretary of the Chaplains' Committee of the Christian Reformed Church. Both of these men contributed much appreciated valuable information and advice in areas of the Commission's concern and also served as program leaders for the conclave.

Fifteen chaplains are currently on active duty with the armed forces. Three additional chaplains requiring indorsement and supervision by the Commission are serving as Veterans' Administration, Federal Prison, and State of New York hospital chaplains respectively. During the past year the Rev. William J. Bischoff, pastor at Sodus, N.Y., entered the Air Force active duty chaplaincy to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Chaplain, Brigadier General, Thomas M. Groome. During the next twelve months Chaplains George Murray and Jack Van Dyken will have retired from active duty in the military services. RCA ordained clergy or seminarians interested in active duty, reserve or institutional chaplaincies are encouraged to write to the Commission Secretary, the Rev. Johan Mulder, 535 12th Avenue N.E., St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

During the past decade continued attention has been given by the Commission to the relationship of institutional chaplains and other related specialized ministries to both the denomination and the Commission. At present at least 14 known institutional chaplains, most of whom are serving full time and are being paid by non-denominational sources, do not require endorsement by the Commission and their relationship to other denominational agencies or judicatories is a matter of mutual concern. At the conclave and Commission meeting these problems were discussed at length and in depth, both in joint and separate sessions. The Commission was directed by the 1976 General Synod to ". . . study various ways of keeping and strengthening close ties with all RCA Chaplains: further that . . . a feasibility study of RCA Annuity support for its chaplains, partial or full, administered through the Chaplains' Commission, for part or the whole of the chaplain's career (be made); and . . . reports its findings and conclusions to the General Synod of 1977" (p. 99, APGS).

The area of annuities was explored by both Chaplain Earl Jabay, one of the RCA's senior institutional chaplains whose position does not require endorsement by the Commission, but who has been a long-time member of the Commission, and the Commission's chairman (who has spent 25 years as

an "endorsed" chaplain and more than ten years in other forms of specialized ministries, including institutional chaplaincy). Due to the complexities involved and limited time and available guidelines, this specific area was recommended for further study of practices in other denominations.

Also among the active conclave participants was the Rev. William L. Hiemstra, Ph.D., Chaplain at Pine Rest Christian Hospital, and for many years chairman of the former Institutional Chaplains' Commission and co-chairman of the successor Chaplains' Commission. Rather than duplicate much of the history and problem areas involved, we invite attention to the comprehensive coverage given in the 1976 report to General Synod (pp. 175-180, *Acts & Proceedings of the 170th Regular Session of the General Synod*) and to the recommendations voted by the 1976 Synod.

The reports and discussions of the more general problem of the two-way relationship between the chaplains and the church resulted in the following unanimously approved consensus statement:

"First, that the military and institutional chaplaincies are in fact a vital part of the mission outreach of the Reformed Church in America, and representatives of the RCA who serve in these special ministries should be seen as part of the RCA's mission program.

Second, that although these chaplaincies may require ecclesiastical endorsement and/or highly specialized training, the fact that major financial support is provided by sources other than the RCA has tended to reduce the church's sense of involvement in this area of its mission and has resulted in a less than desirable sense of accountability on the part of the chaplain toward the RCA.

Third, there are many ways in which chaplains, both military and institutional, deeply need a strong and continuous relationship with the church if they are to be effective as its missionary representatives in the service branches, hospitals, prisons, on secular college and university campuses, and in other world-directed expressions of the RCA's obedience to the Great Commission. Among these are

a. a program of regular pastoral care and visitation;
b. maintaining close ties with their Reformed Church family including classes and local churches;
c. opportunities for training and professional development;
d. regular opportunities for fellowship and sharing with others from the RCA who are similarly engaged (such as have been provided by conclaves for military chaplains in 1976 and for institutional chaplains in 1977);
e. assistance with endorsement, maintenance of positions, and occasional need for the pressure of an organization which is larger than the individual;
f. resourcing of those who seek to enter these specialized ministries with necessary information regarding requirements and opportunities;
g. recruitment and selection of those who have gifts suitable to these special ministries, with due attention to appropriate means of testing these gifts;
h. when necessary, attention to the temporal welfare of its chaplain representatives in mission, such as ensuring adequate retirement benefits.

Fourth, the closer relationship which would result from attention to the previous needs would also offer some significant benefits to the Reformed Church. Among these are

a. chaplains with highly specialized training would be more readily available as resource persons to clergy in transition or in crisis, as well as to members of Reformed Churches within reach of their care;
b. the unique ministries of chaplains would become a more focused concern of the church, with consequent educational impact on attitudes toward military service, prisons, the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners and substance abusers, mental health and the pastoral care of the sick, and the mission of the Reformed Church toward those in institutions;
c. chaplains, again by virtue of special training and unique experience, could be better utilized to share in the continuing education of their clergy colleagues in areas of special interest, and by our seminaries in the preparation of those who will enter the professional ministry."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R-1. **In order to effect the closer relationship the above will require, it is the judgement of this Commission that the mission of military and institutional chaplains should be integrated into the mainstream of the mission program of the RCA. It knows of no better way to accomplish this than to recommend that this Synod disband the Chaplains' Commission and assign responsibility for military and institutional chaplaincies to the General Program Council, to be an integral part of its missional concern for all mankind.**

Further, so that appropriate and necessary arrangements may be made for adequate staff services for this additional area of mission and the inclusion in the GPC budget for attention to the program implications of such additional responsibilities, the Commission recommends that the transition to GPC responsibility take place on January 1, 1979, with the understanding that the Commission will continue to function until that time.

Further, the Commission humbly offers the opinion that its accumulated experience is too valuable to be wasted and recommends that the General Program Council invite three members of the present Commission to be present in an advisory capacity when it deliberates matters relating to chaplains and their mission during the years 1979, 1980, and 1981.

The Commission recommends that the representatives of the present Commission who serve as advisors during the aforementioned years of transition be requested to present an independent report to the General Synod of 1982 during the report to the General Program Council which will evaluate the transfer of responsibility from their perspective, recommend corrections, improvements, or, if need be, a return to a separate Chaplains' Commission. (ADOPTED)

R-2. **That Chaplain Carl Benes (or alternate, Chaplain Paul W. Zoschke) and**

a selected military chaplain be permitted to address Synod as representatives of the Chaplains' Commission. (ADOPTED)

R-3. **That all active duty and reserve component military chaplains and other full-time institutional chaplains attending Synod be recognized.** (ADOPTED)

CHAPLAIN ROSTER

Military Chaplains On Active Duty

Air Force

Maj. Derrick W. Bluschke - 3700 Air Base Group, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas 78236
Maj. Michael Romano - 416 CMBT SPT GP (HC), Griffiss AFB, New York 13441
Capt. Wm. J. Bischoff - 3201 Air Base Group - Eglin AFB, Florida 32542

Army

LTC Jack Van Dyken - Sharpe Army Depot, Lathrop, California 95330
LTC John C. Zwiers - Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Denver, Colorado 80240
Maj. Douglas J. Groen - STU DET USACHCS, Fort Wadsworth, N.Y. 10305
Maj. E. Don Teusink - HHC 2nd Bde., 1st Armored Division, APO New York 09066
Maj. Don J. Jansen - 324 B. Lasher Road, Staten Island, N.Y. 10305
Capt. Richard J. Bates - Fort Hood, Texas 76545

Navy

CDR Robert W. Bedingfield - Dept. of the Navy, USS Nimitz (CVN 68), FPO New York 09501
CDR Gordon S. Cook - Submarine Medical Center, Box 600, Code A-70, Groton, Connecticut 06340
CDR George P. Murray - 1895 Enterprise Ave., Halsey Village, Great Lakes, Ill. 60088
CDR David E. White - 2406 North Vermont St., Arlington, Va. 22207
CDR R. Alan Plishker - Naval Air Station, Alameda, Ca. 94501
LCDR Thomas C. Marsden - MCB 74, Chaplain's Office, FPO New York 09501

Veterans Administration

Robert A. Jones, Franklin D. Roosevelt Hospital, Montrose, N.Y. 10548

Institutional Chaplains

Robert G. Anderson, Jr. - Yale-New Haven Hospital, 789 Howard Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut 06504
John H. Austin - 2820 Cedar Street, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
Carl J. Benes - 4850 Fleetwood, Jackson, Michigan 49201
Richard J. Bennink - Bethesda Hospital, Denver, Colorado 80222
John de Velder - 53 Elizabeth Street, Box 231, Barstow No. 6, Hartford, Connecticut 06105
George Fitchett - 5705 S. Blackstone Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60637
John E. Hibma - 58 100th Street, No. 3, Byron Center, Michigan 49315
William L. Hiemstra - Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508
Earl Jabay - New Jersey Neuro-Psychiatric Institute, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Donald D. Jiskoot - Kennedy Youth Center, Morgantown, West Virginia 26505
Rudolph Katerberg - Brandon General Hospital, Chaplaincy Dept., 150 McTavish Avenue E., Brandon, Manitoba R 7 A 2 B 3
Walter J. Kline - Oak Forest Hospital, 15900 S. Cicero Avenue, Oak Forest, Ill. 60452
John Kotun - New York Psychiatric Institute, Willard, N.Y. 14586
Warren G. Martins - State Hospital, Rockland, N.Y. (West Nyack, N.Y. 10994)
Harlan E. Ratmeyer - Kings View Mental Health Center, Reedley, CA
John Staal
Donald L. Weemhoff - 1733 Circle Drive, Redlands, Ca. 92373
Paul W. Zoschke - Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 31, Plymouth, Wis. 53073

Non-Active Military Reserves

CDR Charles T. Botkin, USNR
Lt. George Fiencke, USAR
Capt. Henry Haga, USNG
Maj. Roger P. Hendricks, USAF - NG
CDR Herman T. J. Hilbrands, USNG
CDR Richard Huls, USNR
LCDR Stanley A. Rock, USNR
LCDR Donald R. Lenderink, USNR
Lt. Dean D. Wolbrink, USNR
Lt. Ronald Zartman, USAR
Lt. David John Back, USNR
Lt. William Glenn DeYoung, USAR

Civil Air Patrol

Lt. Victor William Ebert
Lt. Thomas A. Kendall

CHRISTIAN ACTION

CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION REPORT

The Christian Action Commission of the Reformed Church in America met in regularly scheduled sessions on October 11 and 12, 1976, and February 21 and 22, 1977, in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, to deal with issues which were brought to its attention and those which were raised in its corporate consciousness. The results of the Commission's studies, discussions and decisions are presented for the delegate information and Synod's action.

The Commission speaks as a body to Synod from a studied, Christian position. Its intent is to enable the Synod and thereby the church to act out its faith in the arena of the world. The Commission is aware of its fallibility but it has refused to be inhibited from doing or encouraging those actions which appear to be in accord with God's will.

The following reports are presented to inform and motivate Synod to chart a course of action. While the Commission is aware of the politics of passing a work through Synod it has sought to voice God's purpose even when it appears to be out of tune with the current practice/understanding of the church. In a brief word, the Commission seeks to join the prophets in our midst.

(The Commission has been requested by General Synod to designate the authors of the various papers which are being presented. The Commission has instructed the Chairperson to inform Synod that the process of the Commission foregoes the possibility of assigning most papers to any one contributor. The members of the Commission discuss thoroughly, and at times radically alter the foundational work thereby making it its very own.)

Middle East

The Christian Action Commission has submitted for your consideration and illumination two study papers relative to Jewish-Christian-Moslem relations in the Middle East. As one ponders the violence and agony generated by the tensions amongst peoples in that region, it becomes clear that the Western Church has not played a significant role as a peacemaker. Rather than being Christ's instrument of reconciliation the church has, either by commission or omission, countenanced and aggravated the indignities inflicted upon Jews, Moslems and Eastern Christians. In light of these realities and in response to Christ's call to be agents of reconciliation, the church must confess her sin and ask her Lord and the injured parties for forgiveness. To that end, the Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that General Synod:

R-1. Instruct the institutions of higher education of the Reformed Church in America to take special pains to provide courses on Middle East and to develop resources on the subject and to make them accessible to the Church and the general public; and

Instruct the staff of the General Synod and the General Program Council to make available materials for study in the Churches. (ADOPTED)

That we might foster Christian-Jewish relationships of integrity, the Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that General Synod:

R-2. Urge the Reformed Church in America to explore and confess the real

sources of its bigotry and enmity which is expressed toward Arabs, Muslims, Jewish communities **and the Eastern Christian communities and that initiatives for understanding dialogue should be based upon a readiness to repent, a willingness to study, and a desire to know and to be known.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED*)

In view of the strong commitment to both the unity of Holy Scripture and the unity of God's People expressed in the Confessional standards and the historic witness of the Reformed Churches; and because of our desire to see justice equally distributed in the Middle East, the Christian Action Commission, therefore, RECOMMENDS to the General Synod:

R-3. **That the Theological Commission be instructed to prepare and circulate a study which gives theological perspective in general and parish guidelines in particular to the churches, as we increase our contacts with our Jewish neighbors.** (ADOPTED)

R-4. **That the delegates to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches be instructed to urge the promotion of conversations on the subject of the Unity of the Scripture and the Unity of God's People within the Reformed Tradition, and with appropriate counterparts in the World Jewish Community.** (ADOPTED)

R-5. **That the delegates to the World Council of Churches be instructed to urge the intensification of serious theological conversation with world Jewry as partners.** (ADOPTED)

R-6. **That caution be urged on comments made, jokes told or fears fanned which might contribute to racial, cultural or religious antagonism in our public or private speech.** (ADOPTED)

R-7. **Encourage, at the congregational level, contacts for public worship, for educational experience, or for community service with the Jewish religious community, thus promoting opportunities for our people to gain exposure to the great fund of biblical and cultural background common to us both.** (ADOPTED)

R-8. **Affirm our support for the existence and the survival of the state of Israel. While Israel is not without its faults, it is unacceptable to require of it a greater nobility than is finally required of any nation. At the same time, we acknowledge the existence of a refugee Palestinian people and their need for an adequate national expression. We will never rest content with less than the prophet's vision by which we all stand judged or acquitted, ". . . neither shall they learn war any more."** (NOT ADOPTED)

R-9. **Protest the restrictions on human and civil rights imposed on the Muslim and Christian populations of the State of Israel and abridgement of human and civil rights of the Jewish and Christian population of other Middle East countries and that the church be an advocate for the rights of these oppressed people.** (ADOPTED)
(See Appendices 2, 3 and 4.)

The United Nations' Resolution Equating Zionism With Racism

Through many centuries Jews have been harassed, persecuted and driven from nation to nation. Even in our own time some six million people, with no

*Amendments in light face type.

country of their own to which to flee, were murdered solely because they were Jews.

The church bears a special responsibility in these matters since in the past it was not an innocent bystander, and in this century it failed to give a sufficient, timely, and forceful word that might have helped to avert the massacre.

The state of Israel, a fulfillment of the dream of the Zionist movement, now provides a refuge for harassed and persecuted Jews. Israel's own responsibilities toward its minorities and toward the Palestinian refugees is a legitimate concern. But it should not deter us, in the face of a new anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, from a forthright affirmation of the right of Israel to exist.

THEREFORE, the Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that General Synod:

R-10. Urge the Reformed Church in America to deplore and condemn the United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism as a resurfacing of anti-Semitic racism that has been responsible for so much evil in the past; and

It further RECOMMENDS that General Synod convey this resolution to the appropriate leaders of the Jewish community, the United Nations and the United States Congress. (ADOPTED)

Gun Control

In 1969 the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America passed a resolution to: "Request the Congress of the United States to require federal registration or licensing of all firearms." Today, although polls indicate that 73% of the American population favors some type of gun control, national legislation has yet to be passed. (*CSM 10/29/75)

Gun control is a highly-charged emotional issue. Many people believe that guns are a protection to the home and to the safety of its residents. They fear that strict controls will only restrict possession of guns for people who want to protect themselves. Several statistics argue in the other direction:

A handgun in the home is more likely to result in death or injury to family members than it is to burglars. Only 2% of burglars are shot every year on the average, but for every burglar who is stopped, four family members or acquaintances are shot. Nearly three-fourths of all murders occur between family members, friends, or lovers. (*CSM 2/26/76) One-fourth of those accidentally killed are less than 14 years of age. (National Gun Control Material)

Those who resist burglary with a weapon are just as likely to suffer injury as those who do not, but they are five times more likely to receive serious injuries leading to prolonged hospitalization than those who do not. (*CSM 9/20/76)

A burglar will more often steal a home defense weapon than be repelled by it. (*CSM 9/20/76)

Private ownership of firearms in the South is nearly twice the ownership in the Northeast. Gun homicide is highest in the South, lowest in the Northeast; accidental gun deaths occur four times more frequently in the South than in the Northeast. (*CSM 3/17/76)

The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence estimates that there are 90 million privately owned guns in the U.S. Of these, 40 million are handguns, and 2.5 million handguns are added each year. (*CSM 9/26/75) According to a University of Chicago study, in the past seven years homicides with handguns have increased more than three times as much as homicides by all other means.

In light of statistics such as these, police chiefs of some of the largest U.S. cities testified to a Senate committee in 1975 recommending a bill that would prohibit the manufacture, sale, and possession of handguns. In 1976, the U.S. Conference of Mayors recommended a ban on sale and private ownership of handguns.

Christianity affirms God-given life and calls for faithful stewardship of lives and possessions. (P. 242, *General Synod Minutes,* 1969)

THEREFORE, the Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that the General Synod:

R-11. Reiterate its 1969 resolution (P. 242, *General Synod Minutes*, 1969) to the Congress of the United States to require federal registration or licensing of all firearms; (ADOPTED)

R-12. Request the Congress of the United States to ban the manufacture and sale of handguns for civilian ownership; (ADOPTED)

R-13. Urge the members of the Reformed Church in America to render the handguns in their homes inoperable and/or enact stringent safety precautions for all weapons; AND (ADOPTED)

R-14. Urge the constituency of the Reformed Church in America to seek refinement and strict enforcement of present laws regulating gun ownership and use. (ADOPTED)

"The United States now averages the highest per capita gun ownership in the world (twice as high as the next nation, Canada)." In 1973, the FBI reported 13,072 homicides, 10,000 suicides and 3,000 accidents. Of the homicides, 10,340 involved handguns. (*CSM 11/12/75)

Energy Prospectus

The bitterly cold weather conditions that have gripped the midwestern and eastern sections of our nation this winter have served to dramatize once again the energy crisis that we are facing. The pains and fears emitted from this most recent crisis seem to be echoed in louder tones. This, no doubt, is because the shortages of energy fuels are touching the industrial production and heating needs of the nation, which affect our "body-life" responses and not simply our convenience and luxury needs as the fuel crisis of a few years ago which saw lines of cars at service stations and threats of gasoline rationing.

Again, the question is raised, "Is the fuel shortage real, or is it the result of holdback by the fuel industry with a design to raise the prices of the product?" For some, I suppose, the question will never be satisfactorily answered. But the fact is, that all the agencies (both within the industry and outside of it) that would have the knowledge to answer this question are reporting that the energy fuel shortage is real. Their reporting indicates that

*Christian Science Monitor

the known fuel reserves for the fossil fuels of natural gas and oil will begin to come to an end between thirty and forty years from now.

At least three factors are relevant to this judgment. The first is the projected fuel consumption rate over the next number of years. This is conditioned by several factors including weather variations over the years which may require greater or lesser fuel consumption needs, –increases in industrial production and thus greater demands for fuel supplies, –and, the amount of conscientiousness with which the public in general put conservation methods into practice to reduce wasted fuel levels. All the graphs show that the projected demands into the next century will be far greater than the supplies available.

The second factor is the rate of available known fuel reserves. How long these will last is, of course, dependent to a large degree upon the above mentioned factor. The graphs indicate here, that at the present rate of consumption the supply and demand line will run generally parallel with a gradually widening difference for about ten to fifteen years. At that point the known reserves take a dramatic plunge for the next fifteen to twenty years.

The third factor is the unknown fossil fuel reserves that might be available. This is dependent upon industrial research and development that is engaged whereby discovery of new fuel sources can be found. But, where these discoveries might be made, and how much will be available is still a matter of assumption and speculation. How much of this research and development of new reserves may well depend upon such incentives provided to the industry in terms of price regulation, national energy policy and encouragement by society in general.

What, then, will be the answer to the energy crisis? To try and give an answer, I suppose, would be to play the part of a prophet in the midst of a situation so complex, even those professionally involved in the field do not know the answers.

A few things we do know, and some directions we might be able to recommend.

We do know, for instance, that there are vast amounts of coal reserves which are available only for the mining. To be sure, the use of this energy fuel will require some very extensive conversions in some instances, but the fact remains, coal is available. To get it is the present problem.

We also know that the availability of uranium for production as a nuclear fuel is limited.

These two fuel sources seem to offer the greatest potential for the widest possible usage, at least with the application of present technology. But there are also a number of other alternate forms of energy which are being explored. For example, there is *synthetic gas* (syngas) which is produced from coal and could produce the equivalent of 500,000 barrels of oil a day by 1985. There is *shale* from which could be produced as much as 500,000 barrels of oil per day by 1985. There is *synthetic crude oil*, which appears only to be a very long range and rather scarcely feasible possibility.

Geothermal energy, or the use of natural heat and steam reserves in the crust of the earth, is a very limited source of energy as well as very geographically restricted. But it is an alternate where it would be available. The same would be true for the use of *solar energy*, although this form may

not have quite the geographical limitations as the former. It is certainly a more feasible and more applicable source, but total effectiveness is still conditioned by the amount of sunlight available, and is dependent upon a backup system of some kind. Its application, however, is already in use in a variety of ways in many places, and more extensive development is to be encouraged if future solar and renewable sources of energy needs are to be met.

Other suggestions have been *hydrogen* conversion for an energy fuel because of its unlimited availability and cleanliness. *Tar sands* as a source of oil salvation is another. And *municipal trash* and *wind* are still others.

The basic problems with research and development of any of these alternate forms of energy fuels are cost of production, –massive dimensions of the production operation, –limited applications in relationship to cost and other factors, –and not the least vocal problem, the effect on the environment.

Perhaps it is time we need to take a good look at the hard facts that our fuel sources are rapidly diminishing, and therefore something must be done if there are to be sufficient, if any, energy supplies fifty years from now. This may obviously involve some re-evaluation of our priorities with regard to the environment and ecology. Although with careful planning and implementation of energy research and production programs to find new means of energy sources, even this environmental consideration need not necessarily be upset.

Perhaps two concerted efforts need to be made. First, an aggressive program needs to be engaged by the whole energy industry to discover more efficient methods of conservative use of our present fuel supplies in addition to research and development of alternate fuel sources.

The second is aggressive energy conservation efforts by the public. There needs to be the exercise of responsibility on the part of people with an eye toward taking whatever measures are necessary to reduce the amount of energy consumed. This should be especially true for Christians who should be aware of the need for responsible living in all areas of life. We are our brothers' keeper and this becomes very pertinent to the exercise of energy conservation.

Christian citizens must be aware that the Gross National Product (GNP), which is the accepted measure of national economic health, is directly related to the availability and use of energy. Therefore, we must discontinue emphasis on the growth of the Gross National Product, because of the depletion of the earth's resources.

THEREFORE, the Christian Action Commission RECOMMENDS that General Synod:

R-15. Urge the constituency of the Reformed Church in America to exercise responsible stewardship with regard to the use of energy in the light of the crisis that exists, by putting conservation methods into practice in whatever ways possible; (ADOPTED)

R-16. Urge churches to make buildings which are vacant during mid-week days available for use by other community organizations and programs as needed, thus reducing the volume of heated space that is available but unused and that the need for new buildings and the type of construction thereof by carefully examined in the light of present and

future use and energy costs and availability; (ADOPTED)

R-17. Urge the constituency of the Reformed Church in America to encourage governmental representatives to enact federal and state policies which are structured to encourage industries and the general public to utilize auxiliary sources, such as solar energy, and that governmental representatives be encouraged to provide tax incentives and financial resources to accomplish these purposes; (ADOPTED)

R-18. Encourage its constituency to support the establishment or enforcement of legislative prohibitions against the generation of excessive profits for those who control the sources of energy. (ADOPTED)

Appreciation was expressed to the Commission for its study of the implications relating to our Jewish-Christian relations. It was noted that many Christians and Jews have come together to remember and memorialize the execution of the six million Jews. This great tragedy in human history is marked by what is now known as "Holocaust Day." In the belief that the RCA should enable its churches in the sharing of this concern and in the remembering of this Day, the General Synod

VOTED: To instruct the Christian Action Commission to report back to the 1978 General Synod on the meaning and possible participation of our churches in "Holocaust Day."

In light of General Synod approval of R-2. of the Christian Action Commission report, a motion was made and supported **to instruct the Christian Action Commission to develop means for increased understanding of Arabs, Muslims, and Eastern Christian communities as a parallel action to those adopted toward the Jewish community and specifically to encourage at the congregational level contacts for (public worship)** dialogue with, **educational experience, and community service with the Arabic community—Christian and Muslim—in our midst.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED*)

VOTED: To amend the above motion by substituting the words "dialogue with" for the words "public worship."

VOTED: To adopt the above motion as amended.

In light of the revision of "public worship" to "dialogue with" in the above motion, a motion was made and supported to reconsider R-7. of the Christian Action Commission in order to make a similar revision. The motion to reconsider was LOST.

On a motion from the floor, Synod

VOTED: To affirm the rights of both the Israelis and Palestinian Arabs for nationhood.

A concern was raised about the movement within the evangelical Christian Church favoring greater oppression of homosexuals and lesbians, as exemplified in the recent political decision in Dade County, Florida. A motion was made and supported that the 1977 General Synod go on record affirming the human and civil rights of homosexuals and lesbians. In response to this motion, the Synod

*Amendment in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

VOTED: To refer the above motion to the Theological Commission for study and recommendation to the General Synod of 1978.

Christian Action Commission-Appendix 1

ESSAY TO THE CHURCH: PRISONERS AND AGAPE ACTION

To the Church of Jesus Christ comes this command from the Lord: "Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves are in the body also." Hebrews 13:3.

This passage of Scripture has become to me a symbolic burning bush in which I hear the call of God urging me to serve an oppressed people. As a member of Christ's body, and also of His Church, the command to "remember the prisoner" as though in prison myself is a call of commitment and love. In order to obey this call we, the Church, must seek out the answers to several questions. "What can I do to remember the prisoner? How can I understand who a prisoner is? What kind of place is a real prison?

The discovery for me began nearly two years ago when I responded to an address in the Inter-Varsity newspaper called *The Branch*, of an inmate from the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. I simply wrote one brief letter to this prisoner, and from that point on my vision of the world greatly deepened. I saw that two worlds really exist right here in our own country. One world is called "the outside" or "the streets." This is my world, the institution called "society." The other world is separated from normal society, and is referred to as the "inside." This is the institution called "prison."

When I entered the prison world by way of letter exchange, I caught glimpses of things that the newspapers and cop shows did not discuss. For it is not often remembered that behind those impersonal prison walls are persons that Christ died for. And even less known is that inside those prison cells are men and women who are children of God and belong to the Church of Jesus Christ.

I never suspected that when I began writing to a prisoner I would find a spiritual brother and a teacher of the Word. What I thought would be a lop-sided giving, heavy on my part, turned into a lop-sided receiving. And I was receiving. I quickly learned that freedom is indeed a spiritual state of being, and there are many souls behind bars that have claimed the inheritance of being truly free. But unfortunately, there is an awareness gap within the Church. We have forgotten that in the transformation process of our reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. (II Corinthians 5:18.)

How can the separation between the Church on the "streets" and the Church on the "inside" be reconciled? Obviously society holds the key. Consider the following example. A husband and a wife have a quarrel. The husband is at fault and the wife gives him five years to make up the wrong which he has done. At the end of the five-year period the husband returns to the wife. He has paid his debt and now awaits forgiveness. But what happens when the wife says, "I'm sorry, but I don't want you back"?

This kind of treatment is common between society and the ex-offender. Out of indifference, ignorance, or plain neglect, many churchmen are saying to Jesus, "When did we see you in prison and come to you?" And Jesus is still answering, "To the extent that you do it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you do it to me." Matthew 25:40.

It is the Church which is responsible for the moral life of our nation. The prison, then, should be a symbol of failure. There is a real sense in which the committers of crime are the citizens who put the criminal out of sight and mind, disclaiming any duty or responsibility while crying, "*They* ought to do something about it."[1]

The Church can remember the prisoners as though in prison with them when individual members allow themselves to be motivated to a commitment to the ministry of reconciliation and love. During the year that I wrote letters to the "inside," something was being done about the involvement of the Church. Today it is called the Agape Prison Ministry, a ministry of love, founded by my pen-pal prisoner Clinton S. Wright. Last fall the Agape Prison Ministry was officially recognized by the North Carolina Department of Corrections and is now available for service to the state's 77 prison units. The following is a brief outline of what the Agape Ministry will provide:

1. Books for mini religious libraries. Special reading material and Bibles will be annually provided for both staff, residents, and their families.
2. Christian film series to be shown once a month. Group discussions led by capable leaders will follow each film.
3. Holiday cards so that every resident and staff will have 10-15 cards for their personal use.
4. Ministers of music will be allowed inside the walls to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. This effort has several dimensions, including:
    a. Bracelets. Personal one-to-one contact will be encouraged through love and friendship. A friend in the free world will have a bracelet with the name of an inmate to which he will write and pray for daily.
    b. Bible courses. The availability of biblical instruction is an attempt of Scriptural value internalization, which will hopefully become a reference point in Christian value development and daily living.
    c. Through mail and the Chaplain's Office, the Agape Ministry will seek to obtain all available help to the inmates in post-release circumstances. Teams will be provided for the residents whose sole concern is job placement, living arrangements, Social Service referrals and inter-agency services at all levels of the residents' concern, religious and social aid and growth, post-release counseling, and referral.

To each of these areas any church layman can become actively involved. The Agape Prison Ministry has its pilot program in North Carolina, where there are presently three full-time chaplains to serve the state's 15,000 inmates. And let us remember, these are 15,000 souls with a redemptive value, created in the image of God. The Agape Ministry seeks nationwide involvement and is already being introduced to the Midwest.

If you should hear the call to "remember the prisoner" and would like to know how to respond in your community, you may either contact the Social Services Department in your area or your local jail for specific information of involvement.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Agape Prison Ministry, you can write to the following address:

Agape Prison Ministry
P.O. Box 6899
Greensboro, North Carolina 27405

Perhaps you first desire the motivation that will move you to such a ministry. I would like to share with you the motivation that I found at the bottom of every letter I received from prison:

I Corinthians 13

". . . if I have not love, I am nothing . . ."

Kay Schroder,
Student
Central College
Pella, Iowa

[1] *Who Are the Criminals?*, William S. Garmon: Broadman Press, 1968.

Christian Action Commission-Appendix 2

SON OF ABRAHAM – SON OF MAN = SONS OF GOD

Revelation 1.

The plane began its descent over the airport in Beirut, Lebanon. The man seated next to me had been sleeping most of the flight, but as he awoke he became very garrulous. He was an Australian journalist, a self-proclaimed "good christian" and assigned to cover the debates of the 2nd Vatican Council in Rome concerning the report on Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. With inflammatory eloquence he raged against Jews, those "Christ Killers" and while Hitler was, perhaps a bit extreme, he had the right idea. Such breathings of hatred and venom I hadn't encountered since leaving the South! Unknown to the journalist, there was a quiet gentleman seated behind us who had engaged me in conversation while the Australian slept. The gentleman was a young Jew from America, who had sold all that he had and gambled his life to make his way to Israel. He was in search of an ancient dream that seemed at last within his grasp, haunted by idealism, and driven by an obsession, to return to the land born vith his name. It was with embarrassment, anger, and acute discomfort, I endured the journalist's insensitivities. The Jewish dreamer said nothing! As we deplaned in Beirut I waited to see if he would manage to get through customs and passport control, and he did. I lost sight of him in the crowd. As I stood outside the Airport reflecting as I waited for a taxi, a gentle arm reached out and embraced me, with an anguished smile reflecting centuries of the same kind of treatment, the Jewish gentleman graciously said, "I think it was a friend of yours who once said, Father forgive, for they do not know . . ." The presence of the Christ that day came through to me in the pain of one I was intended to help convert, and the agony of that day came through in the question *Where do I find the Lord in such a mire of disobedience and sin?* The man vanished from sight, but not from memory, for it was on that day that the Jewish features of Jesus took shape in my awareness.

Revelation 2.

While attending a luncheon of the Anti-Defammation League of Bnai Brith in New York City, the director, Rabbi Solomon Bernardo came up to me and said, "Willis, you come from the Dutch Reformed Church don't you?" I replied, and he said, "Did you know that the Reformed Church is anti-Semitic?" I was irritated, "the super-sensitive Jew always finding an anti-Semite behind every furrowed brow." I thought. Solomon laughed and said, "Don't get hot, but read your *Church Herald* with an eye to Jewish/Christian concerns and see for yourself." Clearly the Rabbi knew more about the *Church Herald* than I did and had cut numerous articles that at least, if not anti-Jewish, reflected a remarkable one-sidedness. The Rabbi reasoned that it was likely bound with our mission work, in the Arabian peninsula and understandably we would make see the situation from the other side.

Revelation 3.

In teaching a confirmation class in the Reformed Church of Hastings-on-Hudson, the confirmands were hard put to point out any ties that bind God's people in Israel, to his people of the church. Finally, one

youngster stuttered, ". . . well, Jesus was a Jew . . . wasn't he?" "Oh yeah, they use our Old Testament, don't they?" chorused another scholar. The quiet desperation caused by the middle wall of hostility that divides us all!

Revelation 4.

Our General Synod meeting at Fairleigh Dickinson University in the summer of 1976 permitted itself to be seduced into voting for what was described as "A Declaration on the Middle East, authored by those whom this denomination has sent forth to minister in Arabia." In a mass of over simplifications and obvious anti-Israel bias, this statement was passed as amended. I cannot believe that this Declaration expresses the mind and conscience of the church and it hardly conveys to the Church the dimension of the problem we need to discuss and lift up before the Church. The Declaration is valuable in that it launches the debate, and while the sincerity of the framers of the Declaration is certainly not the issue, the conclusions extracted from the Declaration certainly are the issue. With that as a backdrop let the debate be joined.

Declaration on the Middle East

On behalf of those whom this denomination has sent forth to minister in Arabia, Lewis Scudder, Jr., presented "A Declaration on the Middle East."

A DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST

On behalf of those whom this denomination has sent forth to minister in Arabia, the following declaration is being placed before General Synod of 1976 for its consideration:

> Speaking to those who affirm Christ's death as being for them, the Reformed Church in America exhorts all Christians to stand firm in witness to their Lord who reconciles men by giving of himself and who proclaims one Holy City in which all nations shall gather for life's celebration in communion under the light of God. We seek the healing of the nations; in the blood of Christ alone, *which courses through his Body the Church, that healing shall be achieved.*
>
> *The Christian Church is not called to justify by biblical texts or any other means the establishment of (Israel or) any (other) national state sovereignty in the Middle East or anywhere else. Neither must it empower a state or nation to gain access to or to develop means whereby the human being may be destroyed, be they social, economic, political or military.*
>
> Political realities and propaganda are most prominently presented to our awareness, but it is with human suffering and the distortion of the human spirit that we as Christians must be concerned. The Church, resting solely in the sovereignty of God and approving only the cross of Christ as the symbol for just human relationships, may not adopt any ideology which alienates human beings from the soil of their livelihood nor condone the building of dividing walls of enmity between individuals and groups.
>
> To be pro-Arab or pro-Israeli are challenges without integrity for the Church. The Church, in Christ, is for people, and we must discover how the Church can offer (her) effective prophetic presence in the Middle East to alleviate the suffering of all people.

Preamble

When Christian meets Jew there surfaces an amalgam of mystery, myth and mission. The Christian has never quite known what to do with the faithful son or daughter of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the days when the Church was young, it appeared that possibly the Church might become a "denomination" of Judaism. That possibility collapsed very early. Increasingly *hostility* began to separate the two groups of largely Jewish believers, and as the Church expanded and missionized, the two systems developed quite independently, with the Jews addressing themselves to the Jews of the Diaspera and the Christians universallizing their mission. While there were occasional attempts at rapprochement, they were undertaken haltingly and sporadically by scholars and it rarely touched either Jew or Christian, where they lived. When Christians became powerful, not only in Church, but in State they found it possible to impose their will upon the Jews who lived among them and even when they did not baptize them with water, they often culturally baptized them, largely viewing the Jewish experience on an anachronism to be outgrown with the coming of Jesus. But *mostly* there has been an *icy silence* between us as centuries have separated our points of departure and blurred our common antecedents. Several modern events have coalesced to revive the entire subject in the mind and conscience of the Church. The systematic extermination of one third of the Jewish race by civilized, "Christian" and western people has been an element of the demonic which we have hardly begun to plumb; the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 by the United Nations and its attendant problems; the persistent cancer of unsettled refugees, unbridled terrorism, and repeated claims of Arab nationalists, and the ramification of oil cartels have all lent an air of immediacy to raising this and its related issues before the Church.

St. John, hardly a Jewish Apologist, declares, ". . . for salvation is from the Jews" and intrudes us at once into that unique *mystery* which has pursued the Jewish experience through the centuries. Our first point of contact with the Jew is not only as another political entity far removed from us, or as a concern of humanitarian interests; rather our initial point of rendezvous must be firmly established in the shared awareness that we are both people of the Covenant, enjoying a remarkable amount of identical data before God; acknowledging that we Christians are all Semites spiritually, to deny it is to undermine the very basis of our proclamation of the Gospel. Our common biblical and theological Exodus is where we meet God's Beloved first Son and stand on the holy ground of our shared perceivings of God's Revelation.

Having established the unique thread which binds us together, in our common walk in the past, we examine the myths which clothe the modern Jewish existence in its national life in Israel and its idealogical expression, Zionism. These myths seem to feed upon anti-Semitism and keep this ancient people constantly before the world as either a testimony to the faithfulness of God; or as an obituary to the God who never was, or as a road map to the mission which is yet to be. The place of Eretz, Israel, the city of Jerusalem and the Holy Places, the Refugees, the boundaries, these are hardly the musings of the mystic, but rather the hard blend of fact and confession which make up that seething cauldron of discontent.

If this be at least part of the story of Israel as whe was, and is what about and "ever shall be?" Dare we dream about the mission of God's people

both Jew and Gentile? Can we seek to penetrate the mists to see that time when with St. Paul we might say,

> Gentiles and Jews, he has made the two one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them, for he annulled the law with its rules and regulations, so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in himself, thereby making peace.
> Ephesians 2:14-15

1. THE MYSTERY

The experience and indeed the existence of the Jew, in itself, poses a mystery to many a Christian. To a mystery there is no ready made solution, or it would cease to be a mystery. The Christian has been ambivalent to say the least about how he should position himself in regard to his elder brother, the Jew. Two broad sketches are possible as we see the Christian seeking to understand the Jew:

A. The Jew as Dis-continuity:

The promise of the old is fulfilled in the new, the imperfections of Torah are completed in the Christ; the Old Israel, represented by the Jews has been superseded by the New Israel, represented by the Church. The Jew stands under judgment for rejecting the Messiah, this in some mysterious way accounts for the strangeness and discomfort the world feels at the presence of the Jew. The Christian hope for the Jew is exactly as it is for every human being; that he should come to knowledge of the truth through Jesus the Christ, alone, who is the way, THE TRUTH and the life. (John 14:6) "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4, v. 12). This conviction is not maintained out of anti-Jewish feeling, but out of fidelity to the finality of the Revelation of God in Jesus the Jew of Nazareth. To declare anything that weakens the Lordship of Christ and his unique Sonship is simply inadmissible. The stand this view maintains toward the Jew is basically conversionist. There is no unanimity in Holy Scripture about the position of the Jew but there is a significant block of material which lends support to this view of dis-continuity. (The Evangelist Matthew, II Corinthians 3, Romans 9-10)

B. The Jew as Continuity:

The Israel of yesterday is the Jew of today. The eretz Israel of biblical definition has striking parallels with the modern state of Israel. What Israel was, Israel is, i.e. they are still God's elect people. The "Jew is the other half of the people of God," to quote Rev. Prof. Hendrikus Berkhof, the outstanding Reformed contributor to this debate. Christ is the one who separates the people of God into B.C. and A.D. The one part welcomes Christ and accepts him as Messiah; the other part Israel, outside of the church, rejects him, but even in their rejection, they have not forfeited their relation to the God who keeps to his Covenant faithfulness. This view finds its starting point not so much in the finality of God's self disclosure in Jesus, but rather in the dependability of God's faithfulness, or as St. Paul words in it Romans:

> . . . but God's choice stand, and they are his friends for the sake of the patriarchs. For the gracious gifts of God and his calling are *irrevocable.* 11:28-29 (N.E.B.)

The stance this view maintains toward the Jew is essentially collaborationist. There are portions of Scripture which point in this direction such as Ephesians 2, portions of the Book of Acts and Romans 11.

These are wide caricatures, and clearly there must be some room for maneuvering within these broad descriptions, for they are more descriptive than definitive. Two New Testament motifs are consistently employed in describing Israel, and by it is meant not the "New Israel," the Church, but the Old Israel in time and space. These motifs were first a *NUCLEUS* around which the new people of God would be formed; and secondly a *STUMBLINGBLOCK*, whereby the rejection of Jesus made them stumble thus making them an offense and a scandal. Both of these have legitimate emphasis in the New Testament. They are not as mutually exclusive as it might at first appear.

The Nucleus of the People of God: (the bridges that bring us together)

1. From the biblical scholars of the evangelical school to those of the more liberal persuasion, the increased interest in biblical studies have evidenced a new awareness: to seeing the interrelatedness of God's Revelation. It is the Bible which is the starting point for both Jewish and Christian re-definition of our relationships. In the Reformed Church, we have consistently rejected the butchered Bible of a Marcion, no matter what guise he wears. Reformed Bibles are not New Testament! The canon of Holy Scripture consists of sixty-six books, in two Testaments, each exercising authority over the Church, without qualitative distinction. The same God presides over both, and the New does not rescind the Old. We need to look again at our theological assumptions about the relation of the Old Testament to the New Testament. For in Christ it was not so much a new Covenant being instituted as a decisive renewal of the Covenant God had made at the first.

2. As we return to the sources of our biblical and Confessional Faith we are repeatedly driven to open up again such concepts as election, covenant, and irrevocability of God's promises, for *Law and Kingdom of God*, and piety, all of these so rich in associations for Reformed faith. These are the very concepts which are for us the ties that bind. We should be prepared to enter the biblical and ecumenical debate from a very solid position with an openness born of a conviction in the irrevocability of God's promises. The more we examine that which we see of Israel in her complex relationship to God, based on his mercy, not his justice, so we learn from each other that God has a continuing purpose for his people Israel above and beyond simply gifting Jesus to us. God still has a future for the very people whom he has never abandoned and never ceased to love. To examine Judaism in her faith and practice is to be made aware of the echoes of the Gospel we legitimately hear there:

   A. The Jews have lived with the *hiddenness of God* and were never led into bitterness on the one hand or triumphalism on the other. They warn us that the world has yet to be redeemed.

   B. The Jews have remained *faithful to the earth* and even amid persecution, have not sought refuge in other worldliness, and flights of fancy.

C. The Jews have maintained *a witness to justice,* liberty and equality IN the public sector.

The Stumblingblock to the People of God: (the walls that keep us apart)

1. With the best of will, integrity on both sides prevents us from suggesting that the two halves of the people of God are one and the same thing. For the issues which divide are at least as deep as the issues which unite. Among the issues where we still remain distant are: relation between God and Man, relation between reconciliation and redemption, relation between promise and fulfillment, relation between Old and New Testaments, relation between Sin, Suffering and Salvation.

2. The greatest single dogmatic question for the Christian is, how may I express my faith in the absolute disclosure of God in Christ and that his saving life, death and resurrection are effectual for myself and all others without denying the validity of the Jewish experience? If I must look appreciatively at the Jew as a Child of the Father without a Son, the Jew must look appreciatively at the Christian as a Child of the Father with a Son. We are not there, yet!

   An extract from a report entitled, *The Church and the Jewish People,* produced in 1967 by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches says in part:

> We are convinced that the Jewish people still have a significance of their own for the Church. It is not merely that by God's grace they have preserved in their faith truth and insights which we have tended to forget . . . But it also seems to us that by their very existence in spite of all attempts to destroy them, they make it manifest that God has not abandoned them.

2. THE MYTH

A. The Holocaust (World without end. Amen!)

People and their societies live by the myths they perpetrate and perpetrate. One of the most universal myths concerned the misty figure called Cartaphilus. Legend has it that Cartaphilus jeered and ridiculed Jesus as he hoisted his cross to Calvary. Retribution was swift for Cartaphilus was sentenced to wander homelessly about the earth until the parousia. Research reveals that it is phenomenal the number of countries where in the day's of old, the Wandering Jew was purported to have been seen. What was personalized upon the individual Cartaphilus, has also been universalized upon the race called Jews. Because the mystery was viewed amiss, untold horrors have resulted, and Christians have had to shoulder a major portion of the blame. Inquisition, pogroms, ghettos, gas ovens have been realities which have been taught to Jews at the hands of the nominally Christian West and if Christians haven't cast the first stone they were all too willing to hold the coats of the tormentors.

The malignant blight of anti-semitism has taken its toll consciously and unconsciously. The exhaustive Glock and Stark study entitled "Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism" inconvertibly determines that in our Christian attitudes, our teaching, our preaching, our Church Schools, and our worship we have contributed to the rootlessness of Jews, both ancient and modern. One is shocked by the porportion of people who believe that the atrocities visited

upon the Jews are related to "Jewish rejection to Jesus," for example. It does seem that while the best teachings in our educational efforts often seem to miss the mark, our worst ones frequently are right on target!

Theological and Biblical considerations quite apart, international justice and simple humanness require that we examine the myth which we have fashioned for the Jew and have used so skillfully to keep him on the run, forever homeless.

B. The Exodus and Exile (Wilderness and Wandering)

Jerusalem was razed to the ground in 70 A.D. by the Romans, bringing an end to the second independent Jewish commonwealth. Jews were dispersed throughout the world, with some remaining in Palestine. In the 19th century the pogroms in eastern Europe caused Jews to seek sanctuary from persecution in their ancestral homeland. Many made their way to the United States, but some, particularly Russian Jews called, "Lovers of Zion," began to dream about restoring Jewish Independence in the Holy Land. Theodor Herzl, a well educated and well assimilated French Jew, in the wake of the Dreyfus affair, became convinced that there never would be a respite for Jews anywhere while they were a homeless minority everywhere. The First Zionist Congress convened in 1897 and declared "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by Public law." A great boost assisted the Zionist movement when in 1917 the British Cabinet adopted what was called the Balfour Declaration committing the United Kingdom to aiding in the establishment of a national home for Jewish people in Palestine.

C. The Return (Promised Land II)

In 1948 a new epoch began for Israel where the ravaged Jew would have a home to go to where things Jewish would be the norm rather than the exception. The State of Israel was born amid all the familiar strife and dissension. Arabs, resisted, some Jews were not convinced about the new State, and refugees from Hitler's insanity looked for refuge. The mythical wandering Jew and his next of kin in the diaspora began the long trek home, while some Christians saw in Israel the clear indication that the Messianic age was near, others saw the emergence of Israel as but another secular state in the family of nations.

The Netherlands Reformed Church was one of the first of the Christian Communions to break ground in the debate about the continuing place of Israel in God's ongoing purpose. In 1970 the General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church endorsed a position paper, the title, *Israel: People, Land and State.* This noteworthy paper was not the last word but it was a first word. The paper begins:

> The Israel of which the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament speaks has not disappeared. The Jewish people, as it appears in our time, is its continuation . . . Today the State of Israel *is one of the forms in which the Jewish people appear.* We would be talking in a void and closing our eyes to reality if today we were to think about the Jewish people without taking the State of Israel into consideration.

Among the other points are these:

1. the Jewish people of today are a direct continuation of the Israel of Old and New Testament times.
2. the Jewish people continue to be the "elected people," through whom God reveals himself to faith, and they have never lost this vocation.
3. that an essential element in that elected status is the gift of the land.
4. that the New Testament does not abrogate the validity of the gift of the land.
5. that the only way in which the gift of the land can be ensured for the Jewish people at this time is through the vehicle of a free State.
6. that the State of Israel is one of the valid forms in which the Jewish people exist, and thus in order to have an adequate relationship with that people Christians must have an adequate relationship with the State of Israel.
7. that the State's right to exist may not be questioned by others on the basis that a higher degree of political morality should be required of Israel than of other nations.
8. that the existence of the State should be for Christians a challenge to commitment.

It would appear that from theological and biblical considerations, from humane and just considerations, the Church must declare its unswerving support for a particular people called Jews who live in a particular land called Israel. Rejecting forever the constant temptation to support a spiritualized Israel peopled with mythical Jews living in a boundaryless land. This is not to be committed to an uncritical and indiscriminate approval of all things Jewish, but it is to affirm that we Christians have seen in Israel a sign, a sign of God's faithfulness to his promises. We see this sign because Israel has maintained her identity despite all attempts at genocide, precisely because Israel is the object of God's love. We believe Israel has the right to exist and this conviction can be supported by historical, theological and humanitarian reasons.

The Question:

Many questions must yet be pursued, such as the relation of the land to the promises given to Israel as contained in the Bible. For while the eretz Israel is not without geographical dimensions, it certainly is not identical with her geographical dimensions. It is not without significance that in the Old Testament the same word is used for the land (eretz) as is used for the whole earth. Israel is the nucleus and the mirror of human kind in both its estrangement and its acceptance, so that the land has to reflect a meaning for the earth as a whole.

The persistent problem of the relation of the Sons of Jacob (Jews) with the Sons of Ismael (Arabs) plagues every attempt at resolution of Middle Eastern problems. From Jerusalem, to refugee compounds, from hi-jacking to stockpiles of armaments, these semitic cousins so close, and yet so distant, glare at each other with righteous hatred and dig in for survival. No Cavalier moralizing by Christians on the sidelines will be very helpful, for we have hardly known the pain or the passion of either side as regards this piece of real estate called the Holy Land.

The Reformed theologican Karl Barth saw Israel both as a negative and a positive sign, but primarily he saw Israel as an "eschatological sign" reminding the world that what we have seen since 1948 is a second edition of the biblical entry to the Promised Land. As Barth writes: "Now we can read in the papers: God keeps his promises and helps his people."

3. THE MISSION

All in the Family

Israel, the Church, the two halves of God's people, elder brother and younger brother, God's first beloved Son and his adopted son, this family has lived east of Eden for quite a while and revolving angels with swords aflame, or something, has prevented re-entry. Israel waits for a Messianic era, (at least some do), which has not come; though some see faint beginnings in the modern State of Israel. Christians wait for the arrival of the Kingdom of God (at least some do!) which has proleptically drawn near in the Jewish features of Jesus of Nazareth, but Israel is not the only one who lives in the "Promised Land," for we Christians live in the land bathed in promise. We both wait! We both peer into the future having tasted but not digested the meaning of redemption. We have been reconciled but we await our redemption. Paul, alone of the New Testament authors paints his eschstological pictures with a broad enough sweep to include Israel. In the 11th chapter of Romans, Paul carefully and cautiously anticipates the time, not yet visible, when the Family will be reunited.

> "For if their rejection has meant the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean? Nothing less than life from the dead! 11:14
>
> "For there is a deep truth here . . . this partial blindness has come upon Israel only until the Gentiles have been admitted in full strength, when that has happened, the whole of Israel will be saved . . . 11:25-26.

The Family was made for each other, so dreams the ecumenical vision, for centuries we have walked our separate ways, separated, perhaps, but divorced, never! St. Paul even chances to hope that in God's time chart, we will be reconciled even through the efforts of the One who has, on the surface, kept us apart, the Jew of Nazareth.

> . . . then comes the end, when he (Jesus) delivers up the Kingdom to the Father after abolishing every kind of domination, authority and power. For he is destined to reign . . . I Corinthians 15:24

Christians too much point to the particularism of Israel's hope and the universality of Christian hope. It would be far truer to say both contain elements of particularism and universality. Neither stops with concern only for its own redemption, but sees the final victory when," . . . the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14) or, "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name is One" (Zech. 14:9). The biblical pattern indicates that God singles out the particular in order to be as a sign to the universal. The Bible never permits us to dissolve our high resolves in some universal vacuum, but always points us to *this* people, *this* man, *this* land, *this*

Church. Both traditions have anchored their perceptions in the concrete disclosure of God in particular times and places. The state of Israel is particular, but its mission is also to be a "light to the Gentiles," and to move toward that prophetic moment, "in that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Asayria, even a blessing in the midst of the land." (Isaiah 19:24). The Church of Jesus Christ is particular, but its mission is to "go into all the world . . ." And as you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brothers, you have done it unto me." (Mt. 25) Can both Christian and Jew see past today sufficiently to catch what the prophet Micah strained to see?

> It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains . . . and people shall flow to it, and many nations shall say, "Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord . . . that he may teach us his ways, and that we may walk in his path! For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem . . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall sit, every man under his vine and fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken. Micah 4:1-4

We have dreamed our dreams, and now what are we to do in our particularity with dreams that hold promise, but whose fulfillment yet lies in the future? We can begin by a shift in attitude that sees the Jew not as the prodigal son, but as God's first son, not so much needing to be saved by us as to be served by us, not so much needing to be spoken to, for our credibility is highly suspect within Jewery, but let our silences serve as vehicles so that Jesus may yet be heard among his own people.

We can support the Jew in his right to live in Israel, to have breathing space and a place to be. We can crave his pardon for wrongs committed and seriously seek to banish careless talk and insensitive feelings about Jewish experience.

We can begin to study our common origins founded in biblical sources. Studying together when possible, permitting our Christian understanding of the Old Testament to be tested by Jewish insights. We can unite in promoting the kind of biblical justice (to which we both subscribe) in both public and private sectors of our common life.

Most of all we can attempt to be our best selves in our own traditions which will be the most fruitful guarantee of a future punctuated with understanding. We can refuse to let go of the dream which God has given to man:

> Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel
> who alone does wondrous things.
> Blessed be his glorious name forever;
> may his glory fill the whole earth!
> Amen and Amen! Psalm 72:18-19

Willis Jones

Christian Action Commission-Appendix 3

THE CHURCH, THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

I. A CONSIDERATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ZIONIST POSITION PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION BY REV. WILLIS JONES:

The argument to which the following is a response contends that the Christian's proper concern in the Middle East situation should not begin with a focus upon the human condition of violence there, but rather with the theological imperative for a reconciled relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, the Jewish people that actually exists and not some spiritualized abstraction. 'Normative' Judaism is defined by Zionism and embodied in the State of Israel. Israel is a paradigm of redemption, restoring the right and proper relationship between the Land of Israel and the People of Israel, and, for those who would have it so, it may also stand as a messianic or apocalyptic sign. Christians must embrace and affirm it if they are to recover their authentic enrootment in the covenant. Their proper attitude, therefore, is inevitably and necessarily partisan to Israel, and the Church must stand in moral support (at least!) of the Jewish State in the Middle East conflict.

The above is a sketch of the familiar Christian Zionist case as argued in the liberal or orthodox protestant stream. It varies slightly from writer to writer. While purporting to deal as strictly as possible in faith language, it concludes with the call to every authentic Christian to make a political commitment to one side (and only to one side) in the Middle East polarity of violence.

Entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation in an enmity-riddled world, any argument is suspect which would draw the Church in as a partisan in violence or in war, particularly for the sake of allegedly defending the very integrity and essence of the faith against infedile compromise and threat. The power to do violence cannot accomplish that. The Church has fought her 'holy wars,' and has been the sponsor of 'sanctified violence' in the past, and much to her shame. That day, hopefully, is over.

What elements within the argument determine this outcome?

1. It is creedal for Christian Zionism that the sin of anti-Semitism has rendered the Christian and his community morally incompetent to make judgments with regard to Judaism, and particularly Jewish expressions of political self-assertion. Ally this argument for moral nihilism with the proper conviction that the Church must affirm her covenant identity with the Jews, and you find the Church relieved of responsibility to be a free moral agent in deciding upon the propriety of the Zionist program. It is enough to say that Zionism is proper because the Jews want it.

2. This is supported by a peculiarly contra-biblical view of what constitutes social integrity and political validity: The integrity of a community's self-expression is defined by its 'norm'; the 'norm' is to be found validly expressed in the 'in power' position of that community. The primary reality governing integrity and validity in relationships is evident power. To see it otherwise is to indulge in

cheap spiritualizations. This is a peculiarly appealing myth in the American context–Machiavelli in a middle class key, the totalitarianism of those who direct or represent the majority. The application of this view precludes genuine dialogue, expressing a distinct preference for the more decorous and politically more useful exercise of bi-lateral diplomatic relations. The application of this view, furthermore, serves to mobilize the Church as a power factor in repressing Jewish voices of dissent. What ostensibly serves as an objective means for assuring impartiality in judgment turns out, in practice to be a vehicle carrying the Church into being a very definite repressive factor upon the internal processes of the Jewish community itself.

3. The Christian Zionist position, fascinated as it is with power, is content with the 'normative' practice of the Christian faith except in the area of Christian Jewish relations. The corrective to this blemish is to be found in a healthy dash of Hebrew thought. Christian Hebraism will restore the Jew to his proper proportions in Christian perspective. The idea that anti-Semitism grows in the context of a thorough going radical distortion of the Gospel which is much more a visceral urge than a formal thought, and that it correlates directly with all aspects of the Church's fifteen centuries of apostasy may be vaguely glimpsed but never pursued. The Church is far too comfortable in her seat of privilege and patronage as the priest of vested political authority to permit a radical disruptive review.

4. Most disturbing of all is Zionism's tacit agreement with classical anti-Semitism that Jewish presence within cosmopolitan society is a retrograde phenomenon, 'dehumanizing' the Jew into a caricature of true manhood. Two millenia of Jewish existence, the whole rich heritage of the Diaspora experience, is thus depreciated and its continued expression made suspect. The myth of the 'Wandering Jew' is replaced by the political reality of the 'fixed' Jew. Specifically, the ability of the American Jew to function and exercise his citizen's franchise, not because he is a Jew, but because he *is* an American, is an ability Zionism intentionally seeks to limit and compromise. This is an ominous development which most Christian Zionists either ignore or 'baptize' under the rubric of respecting the strong Jewish urge toward communal distinctiveness.

These are among the factors of pre-conditioned distortion which draw the Christian Zionist inevitably into a false position.

Having said this, however, two aspects of the argument must be accepted: First, that the Church must predicate her actions upon an articulate understanding of the imperatives of her faith (theology), and second, that the Church's need for a true and right relationship with the Jews and the world *is* urgent.

II. CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS: THE PAULINE THESIS:

Paul's understanding of the Church's relationship to the Jews (Romans 8 through 11, and Ephesians 2 and 3) begins with the wide embracing confidence that God's steadfast intention has ever been to redeem all creation, and that he has expressed and implemented this intent from the very

beginning of time by leading the 'sons of God' into an ever more articulate awareness of their covenant vocation: Their experience of salvation. God's will permeates the will of his people, directing even their misdirections toward the genuine fulfillment of his purpose for all that he has made.

In his calling of a 'household of faith,' God does not play 'musical people,' adopting here and discarding there; he is not a shrewd poker player dealing from a stacked deck. The Jews *are* integral to this full household of faith—have been, are, and (most importantly) shall be. Any interpretation which views them as utterly cut off tends inevitably toward a denial of Christ himself and hence of the integrity of God's will and of God himself.

The Church is the covenant kin of the Jews in the flesh and blood of Christ, and is entrusted with the leavening task of arrousing the Jews to emulate the covenant vocation with which, by Christ's virtue, the faithful Church is commissioned. The reconciliation of the household will herald the full awakening (revelation) of covenant consciousness in the one kindred of God and, hence, the fulfillment of creation's expectation of redemption: Resurrection from the dead.

III. THE CHURCH'S RECORD OF STEWARDSHIP: AN ANTITHESIS:

We may begin with the following understandings: That the covenant is God's single covenant having diverse and rich possibilities but one ultimate inclusive end; that, from the human side, its record of stewardship is halting, clumsy, self-willed and frequently apostate; and that its members represent various levels of being aware of their calling at various points during their trusteeship. Now we may look at the history of the Church's stewardship of her portion of the gifts of the Spirit, not least of all her intra-covenantal ministry.

The Church has been constantly tempted to emphasize the discontinuity between the Old Creation and the New Creation, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and, by unavoidable implication, the Old God (*YHVH*) and the New God (*en Christo*). The intent in this dualism was to devise a formal means for justifying the intense desire to escape the present sufferings and find a relaxed, comfortable and secure environment for the practice of religion.

From the exhortations of both Paul and John the Prophet in 'Revelation,' it would seem that, early on, the Church sought to lay aside the Cross. If bearing that instrument of man's life-denying crudity has been decreed by Christ to be consistent with the very inner nature of God, then the Church must ever carry it in the midst of the world, contradicting thereby the self-glorifying aspirations which constantly invade the autonomous political structures of man. Desiring relief from the discomforts, distress, uncertainties and dangers of such a vocation, it is not surprising that the Church should seek to commend herself to the ascendant political power.

In accepting Constantine's invitation to the political priesthood of the Roman Empire, the Church could gratefully lay aside her martyr vocation. By conversion, the empire was absolved and sanctified. To be fit for the adoration of an emperor, God had had to be rehabilitated. No longer could he be the God for whom it was quite consistent that he should be humiliated upon the Cross, now He would be a god of pure glory upon whom the humiliation of the Cross was forced by the recalcitrance of the Jews but

whose character, subsequently, was revealed to be sublimely radiant and majestic. Recalling that unnecessary but fortuitous humiliation, the Church could properly express her passionate indignation particularly toward the Jews for their sin of deicide. Their continued existence, furthermore, compromised the Church's self-image, and threatened her monopoly upon the political priesthood. The need to discover an arch-typal enemy to be the foil for her claim to spiritual sovereignty entered into the Church's motives early on. The Jew was permitted existence so long as he played the role of him who suffers and is beaten down. That this role fit to a tee the role of the Christians under the persecuting emperors is a point to ponder.

The Church's power urge was applied to eschatology and defined the formal aspects of her outward thrust. God's new creation at the end of time, prefigured in the now-holy empire, would see the elect alone ransomed from the cosmic holocaust and the Machiavellian idol of Christ reigning. Robed in the vestments of political priesthood, the Church could now sanctify the uses of power and violence in 'defending the faith' and promoting it. All who rejected the holy empire's reign rejected the Church; all who rejected the Church rejected her gospel; all who rejected her gospel rejected her god; all who rejected her god were but fuel for the holocaust and hence not significantly human; all insignificant humanity could be subjected to the same inconsideration applied by man to animals. When these ideas were amplified by association with the race theories of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the concept of 'nation,' the results were absolutely demonic. And so, throughout the intervening centuries, with few and brief exceptions, the Church has sallied forth upon the world, bearing the Cross on the hilts of the sword.

This habit of thought and aspiration has led the Church inevitably into triumphalism, success religion, and creation-denying doctrines of exclusive redemption in all areas of her faith and practice. This habit of thought and aspiration continues to characterize the 'normative' Church.

This, then, is also the theological and historical context of the Church's anti-Semitism. Her cultivation of enmity toward the Jews is but one particularly vicious expression of her desire to remain comfortably unchallenged in her 'Babylonian Captivity.' Heinrich Heine's observation that true Jewish emancipation will pend the emancipation of the Christians is very apt.

The Babylonian Captivity of the Church has been her historically 'normative' expression; the Zionist 'norm' for Judaism is a kindred expression which the Church will approve for the sake of complicity. But the 'norm' is not self-authenticating moral and theological truth just because it is able to mobilize massive power. It may be fact; it is not thereby right.

IV. THE POLITICAL RECORD OF APPLIED ZIONISM:

A. The Idea Takes on Substance:

Zionism is a late-blooming phenomenon of 19th century European nationalism. Its program was to establish a Jewish State as the ideal context in which Jews could escape from the alienating terrors visited upon them within Christendom, and, more importantly, rediscover their manhood and destiny as a nation.

The first stirrings of Zionism in the 1880's grew out of Jewish suffering and struggle for survival in intellectually, culturally and politically backward Eastern Europe. From being a sub-ethnic reaction to the circumstances of Eastern Europe into being a movement of world Jewry, Zionism needed to discover for itself a 'universal principle.'

In 1895 an Alsacian Jewish officer in the French army was court-martialed for selling military secrets to the Germans. The anti-Semitic reaction of the ostensibly liberal people of France to Captain Alfred Dreyfus' unjust disgrace and discharge from the army was the specific stimulus for the Austro-Hungarian 'assimilated' Jew, Theodore Herzl (1860-1904), to write his pamphlet. *The Jewish State* (1897).

In the Dreyfus Affair, Herzl believed he had discovered the universal principle of meaningful Jewish existence. Anti-Semitism, a principle endemic and ubiquitous in world history, was driving Jews inevitably toward their manifest destiny: Zionism.

B. The Substantial Idea is Set in Motion:

Zionism did not criticize Europe's idealogical framework. Far from it. It assumed it as a norm of existence. Anti-Semitism was a natural function of Europe's idealogies of nationalism. European Jews suffered from it because they were not normal citizens, but rather expatriates and displaced persons. Accordingly Jews should strive to repatriate themselves into their own homeland.

The full repatriation of all Jews into the Jewish commonwealth would be the full and final solution to the 'Jewish Problem.' In that haven, the Jew alone would be responsible for his own defense and maintenance, and there he could earn his bread in normal ways; there he could be a vital member of the body politic, have his franchise in the community of nations, and become a man like other men. In that context of political and economic self-reliance, the Jew could once again carry out his religious practices and obey his dietary laws without the feeling of being odd and misanthropic.

From the above, it is easy to see the degree to which Zionism accepted the anti-Semitic European's caricature of the Jew and applied it to the real Jew, and the extent to which it disdained and disparaged 2,000 years of Jewish existence as a demeaning interlude between heroic epochs.

In search of the haven for the Jews, after some serious consideration of Argentinia, Uganda and even a portion of Australia, the lot fell upon Palestine as the only 'homeland' to which Jews would even consider returning in any substantial numbers.

C. The Coincidental Character:

One of the several ironies which marinate the present circumstances with their special flavor of bitter has been the role in which the Arab world was almost accidentally cast as a result of the advent of Zionism and nationalism. The dream of Zionism required Palestine; Palestine happened to be settled, filled with Arabs. But almost to demonstrate how the magic of language can create a reality other than that which exists, Israel Zangwill's cute phrase describing Palestine as "a land without a people for a people without a land," caught the imaginations of westerners.

As most Europeans of the times, the fathers of Zionism were of the mind that Arabs were not inhabitants of Palestine but a blight upon it; that they

did not settle but rather contaminated the land. Palestine, to all intents and purposes, was vacant for human colonization. The blooming of Palestine's 'desert' through its irrigation by European Jewish capital, labor, initiative, and sovereign control would authenticate the Zionist claim to occupancy.

But what of the Palestinians? Chaim Weizmann's metaphor was applauded by the British Royal Commission of Inquiry which heard it: "To make an omelette you must first break a few eggs." For a Zionist omelette, Arab eggs. And when the Palestinians and other Arabs rose up in opposition, the Zionists were not surprised. To them it was self-evidently anti-Semitism.

D. The Christian Ambition:

Zionism was not the only force to cast covetous eyes upon Palestine. As early as the late 19th century, Britain had entertained the possibility of sponsoring a colony of Jews in Palestine, loyally bound to her empire, to serve as a strategic political divider in the midst of a potentially powerful and undoubtedly strategic part of the world. France, Germany and Russia also had their dreams of empire.

In its mythology, Europe as a whole still harbored a kind of dread of Muslims as militant adversaries. But as the fortunes of imperialism improved dramatically and the structures of the ancient Muslim state showed signs of disintegration, the West descended like a wolf on the prey. The West had never ceased to entertain crusader dreams and, as the 19th century faded into the 20th, it seemed that these would be realized beyond the most wild imaginings. The Ottoman Empire atrophied into senility. The Holy Land and its hinterlands were laid bare to 'reconquest' by Christian arms. So Jerusalem during World War I was specifically off limits to the Amir Feisal's Arab Army. The Arabs could have Damascus . . . for a time. General Allenby, at the head of British troops, rode into the gates of Zion with the conscious pomp of a latter day Richard the Lion Hearted.

E. A Key to the Door:

As a ward of the British by virtue of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the Zionist Movement felt temporarily constrained to serve British imperial interests. But it was never a secret that the Zionist idea envisioned a future other than that of being Britain's surrogate in the Middle East. It was a bitter waiting for the Movement before its day of opportunity dawned.

Herzl's thesis that anti-Semitic governments made for Zionism's best allies seemed to be demonstrated in all its crudity by Hitler's rise to power. In a perverse kind of way, the horrors Auschwitz, Bachau and Belsen visited upon the Jews and the blood shock which subsequently overwhelmed Christian Europe, lent the fuel necessary to dispense with the war-enfeebled British mandatory authority.

F. The Brokering Out of a Debt:

The War left the West in a state of moral and ideological collapse. Despair covered the people and cynicism mixed strangely with idealism. Much that had been could not be recovered in the post-war salvage efforts.

In a massive wave of melodramatic contrition, Europe determined that now was the day to expeditiously, fully and finally recompense the Jews for the blood it had wantonly shed for nearly two millenia, and, incidentally, to solve the 'Jewish Problem' in a civilized and permanent way. To implement

this decision, the powers of Europe discovered themselves in the remarkably fortunate position of being able to force the Arab world to pay the whole 'bargain' price of Palestine. The World Zionist Organization and the infant State of Israel stood ready to accept payment.

The West was quick to accept these terms. Being accepted the West found itself paying off the wrong debt to the wrong creditor with the wrong currency. Not only did the debt remain undiminished, drawing interest year after year at an ever increasing rate, but also a second debt was contracted and began to draw interest as well. The net result has been a demonstration of the moral impoverishment of the West to deal with the fundamental issues, the increasing alienation of western Jews into a sinister situation of caricature and compromise, and a bland acceptance that the fate of Palestine is 'righteous hatred,' violence, and the mock-heroism of militarism and terrorism in which discompassionate third parties such as ourselves can exercise no judgment or discretion.

G. Faces of the Present:

1. The Threatened Species: The Diaspora Jew:

In ordering our world for Zionism, we approve more fervently than ever before that, with regard to Jews in particular, a pecular political and social identity is incumbent. For a Jew to be indifferent with regard to this his special identity, or for him to actively stand against that duty and advocate that Jews repudiate it is in every respect tantamount to apostasy. Such a Jew is no Jew; he is a mental, moral and spiritual abberation; he is a self-hater; with such an inauthentic Jew Christian dialogue would not be legitimate. As a Jew he is unrecognizable. Is it any wonder that large scale and vocal Jewish opposition to Zionism, so strong prior to the 1940's, has all but died out in western culture.

From a Zionist point of view, the persistence of diaspora Jewry has always been problematic. The classic debate between Nahum Goldmann, chief executive of the World Zionist Organization, and David Ben-Gurion, erstwhile prime-minister of Israel, over whether Jewish patriation in Israel is an option or an imperative for diaspore Jews is yet unresolved. Its irresolution bespeaks the tension between Israeli and non-Israeli Jews over the centrality of applied Zionism for Jewish existence, and the fact that Zionism is something against which many Jews heavily hedge their bets.

2. The Face that Persists: The 'Arab Problem':

Apart from the problematic persistence of diaspora Jewry, the issue of Zionism has always been the Palestinians. That is those who belong to Palestine but to whom Palestine no longer belongs. As Chaim Weizmann recognized publically in 1930, the Palestinian Arabs are "as good Zionists as we are; they also love their country . . ." But as Achad Ha'am remarked in 1914, such an observation only aroused the avid Zionist to anger—it was an unacceptable reality and hence had no business intruding itself upon the Zionist consciousness.

The post-World War I proposition of Vladimir Jabotinsky that a Jewish majority be forthrightly imposed upon a backward Palestine and that the Arabs of Palestine be expelled *en masse*, passed on to the activist, David Ben-Gurion, whose influence in the 1930's overshadowed that of the titular leader, Chaim Weismann. The leadership shift also meant a shift in the base of

support from Great Britain to the United States. The 'activist' position was first openly accepted as official Zionism in the 'Biltmore Program' (May 1942), confirmed in Atlantic City in 1944, and reconfirmed in London in 1945.

From David Ben-Gurion to the present, with minor shadings and brief exceptions, the leadership has remained the same in Israel. What is even more disquieting, the majority of Jews in Israel, with the exception of stray individuals and a strident but largely ineffectual radical left, maintain the propriety of that overall policy. As Zionism had accepted the inevitability of a 'Jewish Problem' in western (and world) society (i.e. anti-Semitism), so Israel, when she had come into her 'inheritance,' found herself with a full blown 'Arab Problem.' The solution for such 'demographic problems' in the Zionist scheme of things is emigration of the nonassimilable element, and this the Palestinians 'unrealistically' refused to do in spite of all the incentives which economic and social pressure, terrorism, accident and design could bring to bear. The 'Arab Problem' in Israel remains and grows.

3. Instruments of the Final Solution:

Symbolically and functionally, the Law of the Return *(Alivah)* stands as the classic vehicle for excluding particularly those Palestinians who might seek repatriation. It is a definitive charter, the first law passed in Israel, which governs citizenship status and immigration, qualification under which is dependent upon a religious test. Those Palestinian Arabs excluded from Palestine through the operation of this law constitute the bulk of the 'Refugee Problem' or 'Terrorism,' as we have come lately to call it.

Within Israel, from 1950 to 1966, the Palestinians came under the Military Government and article 125 of the Defense Regulations (ironically they were the old Emergency Regulations which the British mandate had enacted primarily to curb Zionist terrorist activities). After 1966, the duties of the Military Government were entrusted to the 'Special Duties Department' of the police whose portfolio includes counterespionage, oversight of aliens, and Arabs. Strict limitations on freedom of movement, educational and professional opportunities (particularly in the fields of the pure and applied sciences and in industry), political self-expression, community organization and leadership development were imposed upon the Palestinian community.

With regard to properties owned by Palestinians (in 1947, 93.4% of the land), the Absentee's Property Law 1950 was enacted as the first step in a 'legal' digestive process whereby Palestinian land titles could be laundered through the Development (Transfer of Property) Law 1950 so as to establish the fiction of free and clear ownership by the Jewish National Fund and thence back to the Israeli government for distribution. The Law, when applied to Islamic charitable endowments, had the curious implication that God (as well as Palestinians) was considered an 'absentee.' Other regulations covered other instances of Palestinian ownership of desirable real estate, be they resident in Israel or refugees without: Emergency (Security Zones) Regulations 1949, Law for the Requisitioning of Property in Time of Emergency 1949, Emergency Regulations (Cultivation of Waste Lands) Ordinance 1949, Prescription Law 1958, topped off by the Land Acquisition (Validation of Acts and Compensation) Law 1953.

Any land that had passed into Jewish ownership could not, thereafter, be sold to any other than a Jew. By law, therefore, the Palestinians were faced with the prospect of seeing their holdings gradually cut out from under them without the prospect of replacement.

These were 'legal' instruments. Social pressures, military 'incidents,' security requirements, political and economic limitations, national egotism, militarism and the attitudes of bigotry and violent reaction typical of a repressive society all conspire to deeply brand the Palestinian Israeli community with the status of second class citizenship with a limited and insecure franchise in Israel.

4. The Ministry of Those Who Warned:

Voices of warning and opposition within Zionism, beginning with Asher Ginsberg (Achad Ha'Am) and continuing in his disciples, Moshe Smilansky, Judah Magnes, Aaron David Gordon, and Martin Buber, rose up to declare that if Zionism neglected the Jewish moral ministry of dispensing justice and mercy with particular reference to the Arabs of Palestine, then Zionism shall have dispensed with Judaism and would have become an abomination.

These men knew themselves to be powerless. That was the source of their individual strength but also of their general ineffectiveness. As far as they were concerned, they stayed within Zionism as lonely and loving voices in the increasingly loveless crowd, fulfilling the compassionate sacrifice of the prophet. As far as the power establishment was concerned, they were good for public relations, showing the world a liberal face in Zionism. Buber, because he outlived the rest and because the trauma of the Nazi Holocaust personally and spiritually overwhelmed him, could never speak as clearly toward the end of his life as he did at his vital peak during the first two decades of this century. His warnings at the beginning were strong and specific; at the end they were clouded in allusion and vague, filled with a spirit of weariness and hopeless hope. To understand him then requires knowing what Buber saw but could not name without confessing despair, the despair of the prophet seeing his prophecies come to pass.

The agony of an Achad Ha'Am or a Martin Buber is a Jewish agony for which few if any Christian advocates of Zionism have had the courage to feel compassion. On the contrary, there seems to be no way for any man—be he Christian, Muslim or Jew; eastern or western; saint or sinner—to stand up as a warning against Zionism and the idea of the pure Jewish State without being branded an anti-Semite. On the other hand, there seems to be no release for any non-Jew from the almost physiological trait of latent anti-Semitism, a genetic condition kept with bounds of civility through controlled steadily increasing expressions of unquestioning political economic, social and military support for the Jewish State.

5. The Face of the Interested 'Bystander':

As far as the West is concerned, Israel has ceased to serve merely as the refuge for Jews living in situations of overt or covert persecution. Israel has become a far more positive force in the mundane requirements of both Jewish and Christian escapism.

It is not just anti-Semitism that eats at the spiritual integrity of the western Church's witness in the world. Anti-Semitism is but one manifestation of the presumptions of bigotry, exclusivism and triumphalism in our practiced

faith. If, through an analysis of anti-Semitism, we are led into a fuller repentance for the whole gamut of distortion and corruption infesting our faith and negating the Church's witness, then we would have done well. This, as we pointed out, is an exercise which the Church fears and earnestly seeks to avoid. The simplistic solution of Zionism is much more convivial.

As we apply ourselves to support Zionism, we more or less intentionally distinguish our Jewish compatriots from amongst our body (politic and communal) through looking them unwaveringly into a special orbit of political loyalty and social identity which we cannot share, but toward which we must feel somehow obliged to be charitable, even concessionary. Judaism, as a component and contributory dimension in western countries and cosmopolitan societies, is being dangerously pedastaled, a process of Jewish distinction and abstraction with ominous overtones and implications.

Aside from aiding Christians to avoid a radical accounting for spiritual distortion, and isolating the Jewish community apart from our own in a new mode, our Christian Zionism has found a harmonious correlation with western Christendom's ancient enmity toward the orient in both its Islamic and Orthodox Christian expressions, a complex of religious myths and bigotries little articulated but deeply seated in western culture.

Finally, Zionism serves to maintain our interaction with Judaism on the superficial objective level of bi-lateral diplomacy. There is a sense of abstraction and self-interest pervading almost all Christian-Jewish encounters. This increasing 'diastasis' is not unintentional. In the Zionist motif, only bipartisan negotiations are seemly, exchanges of *quid pro quo*, transactions of words with private meanings and no meanings at all, and unending reams of mealy diplomacy and self-deceiving idealistic niceties.

There is no certain future for these sorts of dealings save the eventual confrontation and clash of vested interests on the political and economic plane, and the flare up of unshareable, unrepented and too-long-repressed enmities, suspicions, fears and resentments on the religious and social plane.

V. IN SEARCH OF MINISTRY:

Where have we come as Christians with regard to Palestine-Israel, with regard to the Jews, with regard to the world? Do we sit in judgment from positions of comfortable immunity and power? Do we judge, by blandly disregarding the facts, that 'Israel is a democratic institution toward which we feel a deep affinity as both Americans and Christians'? Do we blind ourselves to realities which we find unacceptable in order to maintain the acceptability of our own state of spiritual delusion?

Contrariwise, do we condemn Israel and all Jews for leading us astray and repent of our past polite gestures of conciliation between the members of the household of faith, expressing our own brand of 'righteous hatred'? Do we glorify Palestinian violence and terrorism as the understandable expression of a people denied the right of self-determination, cluck our tongues and say, 'How can we know the passions of their righteous hatred'?

In the Middle East a situation of violence has crystalized in which western society—church and state—has been enmeshed from its genesis. As Christians in such a society we have never been innocent bystanders. We have sanctioned and continue to sanction the use of power; we have provided and continue to augment the sources of that power to maintain lines of enmity and tension and even increase their intensity.

The crystal grows more rigid every day; its principal bonding factors are fear and greed and pain and pride. The day will surely come when it will shatter into millions of lost lives. If the spectre of a holocaust absorbing the whole of the Middle East and perhaps the whole of the world is to be dispelled, the crystaline bond of rigidity have to be weakened and a more fluid environment nurtured where men might once again consider the alternatives to death dealt out and death received.

May the Church not look at a situation of violence without first defining her partisan bias? Does not the Church have an imperative for ministry in the midst of violent enmity—whoever the antagonists might be—in order to loosen the death-dealing tensions, and to absorb the energies of fear and greed, pain and pride, neutralizing them in her body which does not need to retaliate but rather to reconcile. Is there not such a position to be occupied? Is there not a position that is truly conciliatory, where a body might stand upright to break the vicious cycle of strike and counter-strike which so consumes the passions and inflicts the agonies and twists the humanities of those who dwell in the Holy Land?

It does not matter who is shooting at whom, so long as death is intended. A bullet manufactured in the United States is no more virtuous than one cast in the Soviet Union when it kills a man. The body that stands between to absorb the violence—the intent to deal out death—will be the body broken for peace. For this purpose the Church was elected, from this purpose she has long fled, and her flight through the grisly momentos of her apostasy has brought her to this day. And it is once more hers to choose: life and good; death and evil.

No nation has a special theological commission, a divine sanction to exist as a nation state unique amongst the nations. Such is the privilege only of non-nations, of covenant people the unlikelies in a likely world. And then it is the privilege not to security but to suffering, not to self-assertion but to self sacrifice, not to getting but to giving, not to privilege but to obedience. Every nation state is under God and under God they may be equally judged. Israel is no exception, although she deems herself exceptional, granted a supra-national charter yet immune from the tests of integrity to which all other nation states must submit.

Israel must open her doors to those whom Palestine claims, Jew or Gentile, and learn that without this she will surely fail in devastating disaster. The Palestinians, who fled into exile as meekly as six million Jews went to the ovens, must learn that vengeance is not justice, nor is justice the restoration of the conditions pertaining at some arbitrary time in the past; they must learn that justice is the affirmative response of one man to the life of another beginning in the present and pledged to endure. And because the requirements are such, there is a need for the powerless body . . . the persistently present and powerless mediator who will lay down his life that others might have it. And because Christ died for us and for the whole world, that task lies before us.

The resolution of violence in the Middle East as well as of the alienation between Christian and Jew at home depends upon the Church's being able to cast aside her power fixation. She has been called in Christ to stand between power in the place where no power is and without the trappings of power so that the power of God to make right might be revealed, the power of the

Cross. The purpose of the Declaration on the Middle East adopted by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America in 1976 was a halting endeavor to provide the working principles for such a ministry.

Lewis R. Scudder, Jr.
RCA Missionary to Arabia

Christian Action Commission-Appendix 4

THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

The Hebrew Context

The glory of God has been manifested in Israel, The Bible makes the astounding claim that the historically acting God, in his sovereign and inscrutable grace, has chosen *this* people to make himself known to the world. He made his Name to dwell in their midst. To them, says the apostle Paul, to his "natural kinfolk," belong not only the glory, but also the sonship, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises (Romans 9:3-5).

The Scriptures show very little inclination to speculate about the glory which God has "in himself." Rather, they witness to the glory of his *presence.*

All this is beautifully expressed in the story of Moses' call (Exodus 3). Who is calling him to venture forth? The answer: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (vs. 6), the One who sees afflictions, who hears cries, and who comes down to deliver (vss. 7-8).

But what shall Moses say to the skeptics who insist on seeking further clarification of the Name? Most translations render the divine response as "I AM WHO I AM" or "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE." Martin Buber, however, claimed that we come closest to the Hebrew connotation if we translate these words: "I WILL BE THERE, AS I WILL BE THERE."[1]

Here is the heart of the matter, the essence of the Name. The focus is not on BEING, that perennial preoccupation of the philosophers, but on BEING THERE. Yahweh is revealed as the One who comes, who calls forth and creates, who confronts and establishes communion, who liberates from bondage and who in mercy and faithfulness commits himself to the destiny of the whole creation.

The biblical witness to the glory of God can be understood in its full meaning only when read in the context of the message about election, covenant, the law, and the Kingdom of God. The apostle Paul indicates these interrelationships in the passage from Romans, quoted above. The same basic perspective is found throughout the Old and New Testaments. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob reveals himself as the living Lord through his mighty deeds, and thus establishes his glory and his signs upon the earth (Numbers 14:22). These are the signs of the Kingdom, manifestations of the power of the future of the Lord which breaks forth into human history.

Our theme puts us face to face with the question of historical revelation. In the encounter with Israel we are confronted with the offensiveness of the biblical witness that we must meet God in a certain context, must let

ourselves be addressed by him with a "strange" message. We confess these things with our mouths, but we often find it difficult to believe them in our hearts and to draw the consequences for our lives. It is, therefore, not surprising at all that the Christian Church usually has had problems in coming to terms with a theology of Israel.

That kind of thinking isn't in our blood. When we get right down into our pagan souls, we tend to feel more at home with a "gospel" that gushes straight out of our insides. In a confrontation with the God of the Bible, however, our hearts are searched, the stirrings of our souls are tested, and the imaginings of our minds are questioned. When that happens, the Hebrew context of our faith is bound to become a disturbing factor in our lives. Detours have often been tried and have usually been defended as necessary for a better communication of the faith. But, there is a serious danger in the Church trying to be relevant before it has learned the ABC's of biblical revelation.

Take, for instance, the concept of "contextualization" that is enjoying such popularity in theological circles right now. I see this as an emphasis that is both necessary and dangerous. It is necessary, because the message of the Kingdom must always be translated and incarnated in a particular culture. I see it as dangerous, because so many people seem devoted to a form of theologizing which has failed to first come to terms with the primary context of the biblical revelation in the Judaic tradition. In that case, contextualization is bound to lead the Church into ever new ideologies which, in the end, turn out to be the same old idolatries.

The idea of historical revelation in general, and historical revelation in a Hebrew context in particular, gives us problems. After all since the Lord God has chosen to reveal the glory of his Name in the midst of that people, it means that we must turn to that story and enter into that history in order to learn to spell the Name. True, the heavens too declare the glory of God—in a fashion. They certainly speak to us about the divine power and majesty. But, to those who seek to spell the Name and to sanctify the Name through service in the world, the story of God's way with Israel is absolutely indispensable.

Why this people? What is the logic? Where is a convincing rationale for their election? Divine election seems to have its own logic. The Bible has a way of deglamorizing our notions of glory. Nowhere is this revealed more poignantly than in Jesus Christ. The stable and the cross were the main settings for his glorification! But the same truth was already revealed in God's dealings with Israel.

In this end we are left with God's love and faithfulness: "It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all people; but it is because the Lord loves you, and in keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the hand of Pharoah, king of Egypt" (Deut. 7:6-8).

The same theme returns in the New Testament: "For consider your call . . . not many of you were wise according to worldly standards . . . powerful . . . of noble birth . . . God chose what is foolish in the world . . . what is low and despised . . . so that no human being might boast in the presence of God" (I Cor. 1:26-29).

There is no room for boasting. Israel was not chosen because of itself or for its own sake; it was chosen by sovereign grace and for the sake of the world. The glory does not belong to Israel. "I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other" (Isa. 42:8). Israel's language, thought forms, and cultural expressions are not revelations. They are worldly realities, elected to be the instruments through which the Lord reveals his Name.

The only way Israel can be God's glory (Isa. 46:13) is by not calling attention to itself, but by serving as a sign of salvation. Glory is like grace; the moment we think we possess it, we lose it. This makes the whole redemptive enterprise very precarious—unless one believes that God's promises are irrevocable.

The New Testament proclaims to us that God is indeed faithful, and that in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit he has brought about fulfillment. We are not offered a *de novo* revelation of the Name, but rather a decisive renewal of the covenant in line with God's historical-redemptive dealings with Israel and the world declared to us in the Old Testament.

Fulfillment means that all that was spoken by Moses and the prophets is established more firmly than ever before. All that was said about divine presence and the embodiment of redemption in human existence, the whole Old Testament witness about the establishment of God's glory in the flesh, happens in the incarnation.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (John 1:14). Once again the glory has been manifested in the midst of Israel, this time in the power of Jesus' messianic presence. We receive "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (II Cor. 4:6). In him the reality of the Kingdom is embodied, and it has Jewish features. Thus, the gospel message that "salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22) becomes a continual reminder of the mystery of sovereign grace.

The Basic Schism

When the apostle Paul reflected on this mystery of Israel (Romans 11:25) and sought to grasp its implications in terms of God's historical-eschatological dealings with the world, he broke forth into a hymn of ecstatic jubilation:

> "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable are his ways! . . .
> For from him and through him and to him are all things, To him be glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:33ff)

This joyful confession is in sharp contrast with the embarrassed silence with which the question of Israel is so often greeted in mainline churches. Paul himself was profoundly aware of the type of reasoning that tends to obscure the glorious story of divine grace and faithfulness offered us in the biblical witness about Israel.

We noticed already that divine election leaves no room for self-glorification or boasting. Yet, as the apostle Paul points out with his powerful imagery, Christians are often all too quickly inclined to boast about their position vis a vis Israel. Forgetting that as gentiles they became part of the covenant people of God by their incorporation into Israel, that they—one

might say—are the original proselytes (the ones who are added), they proudly claim a position which severs them from the very roots that support them. (Rom. 11:17ff).

Thus, in a few brief sentences, we receive a precise description of one of the most tragic developments in the history of the Christian Church. Here we touch the root of the most basic schism among God's people: the alienation between Jews and Christians.[2] This issue ought to be a most urgent item on the ecumenical agenda. In spite of some strong voices that have been crying in the wilderness (K. Barth, K. H. Miskotte, H. Berkhof, K. Stendahl and others), this has unfortunately not been the case thus far.

Much research has been done during the past century on the question of the hellenization of Christian theology. This involved, as was stated so clearly in a message on "The Church and the Synagogue," issued by the U.S. Catholic bishops in November, 1975, an early process of de-Judaization in the life of the Christian Church. Let me mention briefly three elements that contributed to this tragic development.

A. The Church soon abandoned the evangelical concept of glory. Power and pomp became the very visible marks of the Church. As the Christian fellowship became de-Judaized, and lost contact with its roots in the prophetic tradition, its notion of "glory" became increasingly secularized. Forsaking the stature of a servant, the Church was inclined to adopt the splendor and style of the empire as its model. It is said of Jesus (Matthew 4) that Satan sought to tempt him by showing him "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." Our Lord resisted, but his people have all too often succumbed to that very seduction.

   With the *ecclesia gloriae* came a *theologia gloriae.* The connection between glory and cross became obscured. Eventually the Church became identified with the Kingdom, a short-circuiting of the eschatological tension which usually has led to catastrophic consequences for both the Church and the world.

   In such a spiritual climate, the idea that the Church is the "new Israel," having superseded and replaced the old people of the promise, took hold easily. This notion, the product of extremely dubious exegesis, has been used till this day to spread the belief that Israel no longer plays a role in God's dealings with the world, that Christians are now exclusively the people of God, and that somehow they are doing much better than the Jews in maintaining a faithful obedience to Him.

B. The Church has always had difficulty in overcoming its ambiguity about the doctrine of sovereign grace. We confess the centrality of this truth for our Christian faith and life; we rejoice in the fact that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), but in the last analysis, we tend to resist the idea of sovereign grace, especially when dealing with the question of Israel. "Do you begrudge my generosity?" asks the master in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1ff). The answer is "yes"; we frequently do indeed begrudge others the grace that is bestowed upon them. No matter how much we emphasize that we have been saved by grace and grace alone, we find it difficult to rid ourselves of the notion that people should get what they deserve. And in the case of the Jewish people there is always that demonic notion lurking in the Church that they deserve the unspeakable suffering that has been inflicted

upon them (often by Christian hands!) because of the crucifixion of Christ.

The apostle Paul is so convinced of the irrevocability of God's covenant promises to Israel that he has no trouble writing in the present tense: to them belongs the glory. But throughout history Christians have been scandalized by this affirmation of sovereign grace, and they have protested that this just cannot be so, because the Jews simply do not deserve it.

A colleague who knew that I was working on this paper requested a copy for his daughter who, he said, had great difficulty believing in God's continued covenant with the people of Israel, because she was working for Jewish people whom she did not particularly like. One could, of course, smile at such an incident and brush it off as an example of youthful ignorance, if there were not such overwhelming evidence of the sad truth that all the Sunday schools in Christendom have apparently not been able to communicate one of the most basic teachings of the gospel, namely that, in order to experience divine grace, one must acknowledge that one has not deserved it.

How can the glory still belong to Israel, a people that has obviously fallen short of the glory of God? As Karl Barth used to say, Christians who are scandalized by such a message saw off the very branch on which they are sitting.

C. By and large, the Christian Church must still come to terms with the question of the unity of the Old and New Testament. The very usage of these terms—Old Testament and New Testament—is unfortunate and should be questioned on biblical grounds, as H. F. Kohlbrugge already did more than a century ago in his booklet, *Wozu das alte Testament?*

We referred earlier to that very key New Testament concept of *pleroma* (fulness, fulfillment). A. A. van Ruler's research has shown what a pervasive role the witness to *pleroma* plays in the New Testament. It is not easy to summarize its meaning in a simple formula, but the gospel makes quite clear what it does *not* mean. "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets (i.e. what we today call the Old Testament); I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17).

Fulfillment, then, does not mean "to set aside" or "to make inoperative." That is, however, precisely what Marcion tried to do in the second century with his proposal that the law and the prophets be rejected as a source of revelation for the Christian Church. Somehow it seemed to him that the gospel could be made more relevant to the gnosticism and syncretism prevalent in that day if the Church would limit itself to certain books in the New Testament.

Marcion's position was officially condemned by the Church, but the underlying ideas which inspired his efforts have remained strong as a subversive force through Christian history. It is not difficult to perceive why those who seek to spiritualize and individualize the gospel of the Kingdom should wish to neglect the Old Testament. The enthusiasm with which people sing "O, that will be glory, glory to me!" is a pretty accurate indication of the degree to which tact has been lost with the biblical witness to the glory of God, with its emphasis on the divine

presence with the community and its vision of redemption being embodied in culture.

The Christian Church has paid a high price for its neglect of the Old Testament. Not only has it further accentuated the tragic estrangement between the Church and the Jewish people, but it has prevented the Church from being a truly catholic community with a truly catholic ministry to the world.

The relation between the Old and the New Testament remains an ecumenical concern of the first order. How, for instance, can the confession concerning the finality of Jesus Christ be reconciled with the notion of a continued theological relevance of the Jewish people? Some significant work has been done on this issue, both in Protestant and Roman Catholic circles. Churches in Holland and Germany, for instance, have issued important study documents on this matter. In addition to the U.S. Catholic bishops' statement referred to earlier, I call your attention to the remarkable declaration on Israel issued by the French bishops in 1973.

The questions that are discussed in these documents have also been introduced in the World and National Council of Churches, but for various and sundry reasons they have not really been addressed.[3]

Here, it seems to me, lies a great challenge for you, the members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. You are entering upon your second century of service. What shall be the future role of this ecumenical body within the larger ecumenical movement? I submit to you that we, who belong to the Reformed tradition, bear a special responsibility to present to the Christian community the issues of the unity of the biblical message and the continued relevance of the old covenant. H. Berkhof has reminded us that since Irenaeus, who in his battle with Marcion gave such a noble defense of the unity of the Old and New Testament, this issue was neglected for centuries until it was taken up once again by John Calvin and Reformed theologians who followed in his steps.[4]

From time to time I hear questions raised about the future of confessional ecumenical bodies and about the unique contribution they have to make to the wider ecumenical world. As I look at the theological situation today and at the challenges that face the Church as it seeks to minister to the world, I can hardly think of more worthy concerns to which we might commit our future efforts. After all, let us not forget that the future of our ecclesiastical structures is rather irrelevant; the issue is whether the One, Holy, Catholic Church is faithful to the vision of God's future.

Israel, the Church, and the Eschaton

When the future breaks into our present, signs of the Kingdom are established upon the earth; we experience the power of the new age and taste the first fruits of the harvest, which will be the new heaven and the new earth. Thus glory is manifested in our midst; we receive a foretaste of the future and are called to pursue the promise.

The glory of God, like the rule of his Kingdom, is present in the flesh, and therefore *hidden*. Christ rules among his enemies. The power of the Kingdom confronts the principalities and powers of this age.

We, who have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, are partakers of a glory that is to be *revealed* (I Peter 1:3; 5:1). As a matter of fact, the whole creation is waiting with eager longing for the revelation of that glory (Romans 8:18ff). What is now hidden will then be uncovered. Revelation (*apokalypsis*, unveiling) is the eschatological category *par excellence*. Then every age shall see, and we will know as we are known.

In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself (II Cor. 5:19). That has been done. But we are still awaiting the redemption of all things. The Synagogue is incessantly asking the Church to show her the signs of the messianic Kingdom. The more we ourselves have lost the dream, and the eagerness of longing which it evokes, the more we will resent the questions which Israel poses to the Church. But how we need that confrontation!

Our overall theme, "the glory of God and the future of men," raises the question of hope for humankind. My subject leads us to the same question because, in the biblical vision, the relation between the Church and Israel is portrayed as crucial for the future of humanity.

The apostle Paul envisioned a *pleroma* of Israel (Romans 11:12), which, as he saw it will be of immense significance to the future of humanity. In the same connection, he also speaks of a *pleroma* of the gentiles (Romans 11:25). These two realities are seen as closely interrelated, and together they will foreshadow the inauguration of a new era.

The Revised Standard Version gives a basically numerical interpretation of these texts: "Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! . . . Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in . . ." The New English Bible renders them a bit more vaguely. *Pleroma* is not seen merely as the teaching of the full number, but coming to "full strength." The Jerusalem Bible introduces the idea of "conversion" in the case of the *pleroma* of Israel and leaves a numerical connotation in the case of gentiles.

History is moving to its divine goal, which involves both the future of the ancient people of the covenant and the destiny of the people of God gathered from the gentiles. The fact that the apostle Paul uses the imagery of resurrection to describe the impact of what will eventually happen in Israel (Romans 11:15), and sees what will happen among the gentiles as evoking jealously among the Jews (Romans 11:11, 14), would indicate that the vision encompasses more than numerical realities. Both communities will undergo a basic transformation, and in their unity, they will become a great blessing to humankind. That is truly a vision worthy of our attention!

If we in mainline ecumenical circles are really serious about speaking a word of hope to the world, we ought to give these matters much deeper study than they have received thus far and not leave them to the speculative imagination of sectarian groups. In the ecumenical vision set forth in the Bible, the people of Israel and the Church of Christ belong together. Any ecumenical establishment that ignores this vision will, it seems to me, have a very hard time holding on to any other vision.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
Blessed be his glorious name forever;
May his glory fill the whole earth!
Amen and Amen! (Psalm 72:18-19)

This we pray, and this we believe. In the end God will be all in all. No longer will there be a people of Israel, or a Church of Christ. The messianic ministry comes to an end as the Son himself delivers the Kingdom to the Father (I Cor. 15:24ff). "And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, 'Holy to the Lord.'" (Zechariah 14:20). *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Isaac C. Rottenberg

FOOTNOTES:

[1] *The Prophetic Faith* (Harper Torchbooks Edition, 1960), p. 28 ff

[2] For the use of the word "schism" in this context, see Eva Fleischner, *Judaism in German Christian Theology since 1945* (ATLA monograph No. 8, Metuchen, 1975), p. 80 ff.

[3] For a discussion on this topic, see my article, "A Dialogue that almost Died," in *Worldview*, September 1976, p. 35-38.

[4] Cf. H. Berkhof, *Christelijk Geloof* (Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1973), p. 234 ff. This book is of major significance for the questions that concern us in this paper, because no theologian since Karl Barth has shown more clearly than Berkhof does here how to incorporate these issues into the overall development of a Christian dogmatics. The publication of an English translation of this work is scheduled for the fall of 1977.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON HISTORY

Publications

Plan now, this summer, to incorporate the publications of the Commission on History of the Reformed Church in America into the educational program of your church.

Our most recent publication, *Piety and Patriotism*, for which a study guide is provided at no extra cost, is a historical challenge to reconsider some important topics in our own day. For example, John W. Beardslee's article on "The Reformed Church and the American Revolution" details the deep divisions within our church between Tories and Patriots during the Revolutionary War as well as the ability of our forebears to live together in Christian forgiveness once the war had ended. Chapters on "The American Frontier" by James W. Van Hoeven, "Immigration" by Elton J. Bruins, "World Mission" by Herman Harmelink III, "Theology" by Eugene P. Heideman, "Social Concerns" by John A. De Jong, and "Education" by Norman J. Kansfield are concluded by Barbara Fassler's article on "The Role of Women in the India Mission, 1819-1880," which shows how through the acceptance of the American perception of sexual roles the mission failed to seize the opportunity for women's medical work during its first half century and failed as well in the direct evangelization of women. This article should stimulate us to ask what price the church pays today in lost opportunities because of its stereotyped sex roles.

Earlier volumes of the series should not be overlooked for educational purposes. If missions are your concern and you wish to stimulate excitement about their possibilities, then the autobiographical story by Dorothy F. Van Ess, *Pioneers in the Arab World,* is absolutely must reading. With all of the excitement, and ingredients, of a novel, it forcefully presents the versatility and commitment of a half century of ministry by Dorothy and John Van Ess.

For congregations in the Midwest and West which are progressively finding themselves less and less Dutch, a study of *The Americanization of a Congregation* by Elton J. Bruins could prove to be a helpful experience.

For a history of the RCA from Colonial times until the present, perhaps the most exciting history in print is *Ecumenism and the Reformed Church* by Herman Harmelink III, a sure discussion starter anywhere in the church.

All books can be obtained from our RCA Distribution Center, 18525 Torrence Avenue, Lansing, Illinois 60438, and substantial savings are available from already low prices when ordered in quantity for class study.

Celebrating our 350th Anniversary

Dr. Gerald De Jong has completed his manuscript on *The Reformed Church in the American Colonies* which will be published in early 1978. A professional historian with a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin, Dr. De Jong has served as Academic Dean at Northwestern College, and is presently Professor of History at the University of South Dakota. His volume, *The Dutch in America, 1609-1974,* has already gone through two printings. He is also known for his articles in the *Reformed Review, North Dakota History, South Dakota History, New York Historical Quarterly, The Journal*

of Long Island History, New Jersey History, and *Church History.*

His newest volume, written especially for the Historical Commission, will take the story of the Reformed Church from its situation in the Netherlands to New Netherlands, its years of expansion just prior to English rule, the trials and difficulties under that foreign rule, the periods of expansion prior to the War of Independence, sources of internal discord and controversy, its position and practices in relation to the Indians, to slavery, and to the Americanization of the church.

Congregations should plan now to use the volume in study courses to commemorate the year of our 350th anniversary. The volume will be available from the Reformed Church Distribution Center on January 1, 1978.

The Historical Directory

The Commission continues to work toward a new edition of the Historical Directory to be published in the year of our 350th anniversary. The Rev. Mr. Peter Vanden Berge, the editor of the 1966 volume, has generously agreed to use his sabbatical leave to work on this revised edition to be published in 1978. This directory of all ministers, missionaries and churches of our three and a half century sojourn on this continent will represent yet another fitting tribute to this celebration year.

Index of Synodical Legislation

Miss Mildred Schuppert is now shouldering the major responsibility for indexing synodical legislation spanning the years 1958-1977. The Commission wishes to express its appreciation to Dr. Marion de Velder and Miss Barbara Mahannah for their preparatory work, as well as to Miss Schuppert for the exacting task which she has undertaken. Publication is intended for 1978 as further tribute to the celebration of our 350 years of existence in North America.

Register of Reformed Church Buildings

In preparation for the 350th anniversary of our church, many congregations will be gathering materials, including pictures, to celebrate their own histories. The Historical Commission requests that both written materials and pictures–especially those of church buildings–be sent to Dr. John W. Beardslee III, Archivist, Gardner Sage Library, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901.

The Commission began its program three years ago to register and preserve information, including dates of organization, important events, historical and anniversary monographs, and photographs, of every church in our denomination. The commission is grateful for the many churches which have responded and encourages every church in the denomination to send such material to the archival depository as soon as possible.

Other Archive Efforts

The commission encourages and supports archival work related to the denomination at other places. Each of our institutions is presently carrying on an archival program: Western Seminary under the direction of the Reverend Norman Kansfield and Dr. Elton J. Bruins; Hope College under Mr. Andrew

Vander Zee; Central College under Miss Alice Lammers; and Northwestern College under Mr. Nelson Nieuwenhuis.

Much of the day-to-day work of the denomination's archives office is spent in cataloging and microfilming manuscripts and documents of our churches and judicatories. The commission continues to urge each church, synod, and agency to send its documents to the archives office so that these may be processed and filed. Clerks of consistories and synods are especially encouraged to send their closed minutes to the archives for photocopying. There is no charge for this service and, when requested, the documents will be returned after the photo process has been completed.

To Collect and Preserve

To fulfill the responsibilities charged to it by the General Synod, as well as to keep faith with all future generations who will ask questions of this era and all previous eras, the Commission on History submitted to the General Synod Executive Committee in January the following program proposal which, as this report was being written, was awaiting consideration by the full General Synod Executive Committee and General Program Council for possible recommendation to this Synod:

I. *The Necessary Components of an Adequate Archives*

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it by the General Synod of 1966 and qualify as an active, responsible program of historic preservation, an archives for the Reformed Church should have at least the following characteristics:

- **A. There should be a safe and spacious deposit and storage facility.**
- **B. There should be responsible servicing of archival materials. This should include at least the following persons:**
  - **1. Archivist—this person should, on a full-time basis:**
    - **a. Be trained in the most recent theory and skills.**
    - **b. Be responsible for a complete program of records management/archival preservation.**
      - **i. Search out and collect relevant materials.**
      - **ii. Select materials for preservation.**
      - **iii. Organize, process and preserve materials.**
      - **iv. Oversee reference and research use of materials.**
  - **2. Secretarial and servicing assistance.**
- **C. There should be a regular, ongoing program of active procuring/collecting of historical materials relevant to the life and work of the Reformed Church.**
- **D. There should be a systematic program of microfilming all documents of continuing historical significance where the loss of the original would limit or impair future understanding of Reformed Church history.**
- **E. There should be a systematic program of oral history by means of which denominational leaders could record for posterity their own reflections on their careers, influence and experience.**
- **F. There should be a regular program for the publication of significant studies which explore the history of the Reformed Church (especially those studies which make use of the denominational archives).**
- **G. There should be firm direction and control of the program. The Commission on History would seem best equipped to oversee program development. The personnel suggested in this proposal should be related to the denominational staff in a means appropriate to their responsibilities and consistent with current denominational practice. The exact details of these relationships are left to the**

discretion of the General Synod Executive Committee.

II. *The Present Situation*

As a denomination, we now have ten years of experience with the present organizational format for the Commission on History. We have made certain advances and experienced considerable success. Our archives has gained world-wide reputation and has served as the data-base for a significant amount of research. An honest appraisal of our present situation would indicate:

A. The denomination does have a deposit facility for its archives. Since 1841, when a single case was installed in the consistory rooms of the Collegiate Church, through 1876, when the archives was first moved to the Gardner A. Sage Library and down to the present time, a physical place, with some permanence, has been assigned to the archives. The present facility is, however, of extremely limited capacity.
   1. It now provides no room for storage of additional materials.
   2. It has no provision for protecting fragile paper materials from:
      a. Fire
      b. Water damage
      c. Acidification
      d. Theft
   3. It has almost no space for material preparation, technical processing or research use of materials.

B. The denomination does have an extremely dedicated staff of three persons working diligently, but caught in the impossible task of attempting to carry out a very diverse program on a part-time basis.
   1. Integration of a dynamic archival program is impossible.
   2. Oversight of research and control of materials must be carried on at a level far below what would be recognized as a professional minimum.

C. As a denomination we have been able to carry on NO regular, active, program of searching out and collecting additional historical materials. No program of records management has ever been instituted, so there is little direct control over which materials ought to be/are preserved and which can be destroyed.

D. Our denominational program of microfilming, which began in the late 1960's with budgets of more than $1,000 and which saw vast amounts of irreplaceable records microfilmed, has now slowed to a mere trickle of production.

E. A program for recording oral history has been funded (at $2,800 per year by the General Program Council), but to this point no person has been in a position to give the program direction or impetus.

F. During the last eight years the one genuine bright spot in the program of the Commission on History has been its publishing record. Four significant works on the life and work of the RCA are now available to church members and to others interested in our history.

G. The Commission has sought to give responsible oversight to the varied aspects of the present program. We have, however, found ourselves increasingly frustrated by the fragmentary nature of our present program—a program which is, at best, the result of organizational evolution, circumstance and the vagaries of part-time attention. Perhaps it should be here recognized that our present stipend for our archivist would entitle us to about 1/20 of a person's time and abilities. On this slim basis much has been accomplished, but there still remains at least 19/20 to be done.

III. *Proposed Program*

In order to correct the shortcomings of our present program (for which no individual nor the Commission can or should be held responsible) and in order to

provide the kind of records management/archival preservation program that the past, the present and the future of our denomination deserve, we have recommended that the General Synod Executive Committee approve and recommend to the General Program Council as well as to the church-at-large the following phased-development toward an archival program of high quality. The GSEC is considering our recommendation at this time.

Phase I

A. Steps should be taken immediately to obtain for the denomination the services of a highly-skilled, professionally experienced archivist ON A FULL-TIME BASIS.
   1. This person should be charged with denominational responsibility for:
      a. A program of records management to assist the General Program Council, the Extension Foundation, the Editorial Council of the CHURCH HERALD, the Board of Pensions and any other board, agency council or commission of the church. A properly designed program of records management effectively administered can improve operational efficiency, reduce reference/research time, assure availability of significant data and document the present for future historians.
      b. The organization, care and general oversight of the archives of the Reformed Church.
      c. An active program of searching out, acquiring, photocopying or microfilming records, documents, etc., which have relevance to the history of the RCA.
   2. This person should have the following qualifications:
      a. Should be trained in the best of current archival methods.
      b. Should be alert to the principles of records management.
      c. Should have some experience in an archives similar to that which we hope ours will become.
      d. Should be sensitive to and knowledgeable in the history and character of the RCA.

B. Steps should be taken immediately to provide an assistant (or assistants equal to one full-time person) who shall facilitate the work of the archivist and assist in the organization and care of the archival materials.

This archival program will provide an efficient records management service both for the materials of General Synod and its churches as well as the General Program Council. It is estimated that presently the General Program Council functions generate approximately 60 percent of our archival materials while General Synod, Particular Synods, Classes and congregations produce the remaining 40 percent. Expenses would be shared accordingly. It should be noted that General Synod is already committed to cover Commission expenses, office expenses, and microfilming costs. In 1976 the General Program Council committed itself to cover expenses of an oral history program up to $2,800 (none of which was spent due to lack of personnel to manage the program). The Commission is also currently funded to cover present part-time salaries. The above financial support would, of course, be integrated with the new archival program.

Phase II

During the second phase of this proposed program, the Commission on History will attempt to establish a Reformed Church Historical Association. This association would have as its purpose:

1. The appointment, in each of our congregations, classes and synods, of one person who would serve as historian/archivist, with the responsibility of documenting the history of that church, classis, etc.
2. The provision of a means by which persons interested in our history can be better informed about that history, exchange information with each other and contribute creatively to our knowledge of our past.
3. The education of our church (primarily through the work of the archivist) in the preservation of historical materials and the means by which they can be used to facilitate the ongoing life and work of congregations, classes and the church-at-large.

Phase III

After phases one and two have stabilized themselves (perhaps by 1981) this proposal envisions an increased commitment of denominational funding for the purpose of enlarged programs of:

1. Records management
2. Microfilming
3. Preservation and restoration of documents.

Phase IV

Finally, we envision a phase four, in which we can begin to formulate plans for enlarged and improved physical facilities to house our archives. There may be advantage in exploring the possibility of some decentralization. Perhaps deposit facilities can be related to the various regional centers. Both New Brunswick Seminary and Western Seminary are in the process of planning new or expanded library buildings. These plans may hold possibilities for our denominational archives which should be examined.

The archival proposal was written at the direction of the Historical Commission by Norman J. Kansfield.

NECROLOGY REPORT

Since the last meeting of the General Synod, the deaths of the following ministers have come to our attention:

Name	Date of Death	Age
Hesser C. Ruhl	April 30, 1975	80
Walter A. Scholten	July 3, 1976	81
Henry Vande Brake	August 11, 1976	59
Rudolph H. Davidson	August 31, 1976	78
William Henry Smith	October 9, 1976	87
Clarence P. Dame	October 22, 1976	92
A. Randal Zendt	November 29, 1976	74
Peter Kuiken	January 24, 1977	81
Arthur C. Johnson	February 21, 1977	56
Harold F. Schadewald	March 4, 1977	71
William A. Downs	March 22, 1977	54
John G. Gebhard, Jr.	March 27, 1977	82
Cornelius Van Tol	March 31, 1977	79
Henry C. Jacobs	May 5, 1977	87
Edward B. Irish	May 18, 1977	91

HESSER C. RUHL

Hesser Ruhl was born at Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania, on January 23, 1895. He studied at Franklin and Marshall College for three years, but graduated from Park College in 1918; and graduated from Hartford Theological Seminary in 1922. He was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Philadelphia of the Reformed Church in the United States in 1922.

After his ordination Mr. Ruhl went, with his wife, as a missionary to China, under the auspices of the RCUS. Among other things, he taught history at Huping Christian College in Hunan Province. After a Communist uprising, Americans were evacuated from the vicinity; which led to the termination of Mr. Ruhl's work in China, and his return to America in 1927.

He then served the RCUS congregation in Pillow, Pennsylvania, for a short time. Entering the Reformed Church in America, he served the Clarkstown Reformed Church of West Nyack, New York, from 1928 to 1933. In 1933 he retired from the active ministry, and moved to a farm in Northfield, Massachusetts.

Mr. Ruhl died on April 30, 1975, in Northfield, Massachusetts. Private funeral services were conducted on May 3 by the Rev. Harold C. Tallman. Burial was in Winchester, New Hampshire.

He is survived by his widow, Sophie; two sons, Foster G. of Summit, New Jersey, and H. Kenneth of Scotia, New York; and two daughters, Ruth of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Phyllis of Northfield, Massachusetts.

WALTER AUGUSTUS SCHOLTEN

Walter A. Scholten was born at Muscatine, Iowa, on February 24, 1895, the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Dirk Scholten. He graduated from Hope College in 1918 and from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1921. He was

licensed by the Classis of New Brunswick, and ordained by the Classis of Westchester in 1921.

Mr. Scholten served the following churches: The First Reformed Church of North Tarrytown, New York, 1921 to 1930; the Community Church of Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, from 1930 to 1940; the Reformed Church of Mellenville, New York, 1941 to 1945; the Arlington Church of Poughkeepsie, 1945 to 1952; and the Reformed Church of Greenwich, New York, 1952 to 1966. From 1952 until 1958, he was also Pastor of the Buskirk Reformed Church.

From 1966 to 1967 he served as Stated Supply of the United Church of Greenwich. This congregation was the result of a merger of the Reformed Church and the United Presbyterian Church in that village; a union which Mr. Scholten was largely instrumental in bringing about. After 1967, he engaged in occasional supply preaching.

Mr. Scholten died at his home in Greenwich, New York, on July 3, 1976, after an illness of several months, at the age of 81. The funeral service was held in the United Church of Greenwich on July 6. The Rev. Donald R. McLeod, pastor, officiated, assisted by the Rev. Carl Lazzaro. Burial was in Greenwich Cemetery.

Mr. Scholten is survived by his widow, the former Frances Thoms, of Greenwich; two sons, Dr. Walter A., Jr., of Beloit, Wisconsin, and the Rev. Sharon T. of Keyport, New Jersey; four daughters, Mrs. LaVerne (Constance) Bawinkel of Fort Myers, Florida; Mrs. Marion Kopen of Kalamazoo, Michigan; Mrs. Douglas (Dorothy) Cochran of Belleair Shores, Florida; and Mrs. Donald (Frances) Rinkus of Grandville, Michigan; two brothers, the Rev. George B. Scholten of Wayne, New Jersey, and Alfred C. Scholten of Hendersonville, North Carolina; two sisters, Mrs. George C. Muyskens of Holland, Michigan, and Mrs. Raymond Van Zoeren of Scotia, New York; twenty-three grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

HENRY VANDE BRAKE

Henry Vande Brake was born at Sioux Center, Iowa, on November 5, 1916. He graduated from Northwestern Junior College; from Hope College in 1938; and from Western Theological Seminary in 1941. The same year, he was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux and ordained by the Classis of Germania.

His record of service is as follows: Pastor, Bethel Reformed Church, Davis, South Dakota, 1941 to 1944; Director of Church Relations at Northwestern Junior College and Academy, 1944 to 1947; Pastor, Union Reformed Church, Paterson, New Jersey, 1947 to 1952; Pastor, Grace Reformed Church, Corsica, South Dakota, 1952 to 1956. In the latter year he retired from the ministry altogether because of illness.

Mr. Vande Brake died on August 11, 1976, in Holland, Michigan. The funeral service was held at Cutlerville, Michigan, on August 18, conducted by the Rev. Henry A. Mouw. Burial was also in Cutlerville.

He is survived by his widow, Ida; two sons, Lynn and Mark; and four daughters, Cynthia, Lorna, Mary, and Joy.

RUDOLPH H. DAVIDSON

Rudolph H. Davidson was born at Renovo, Pennsylvania, on February 10, 1898. Prior to his ministry in the Reformed Church, he served Congregational churches in Renovo, Pennsylvania, Vineland, New Jersey, and Jersey City, New Jersey.

Mr. Davidson was received into the Reformed Church in America in 1933, and served the Grace Reformed Church of Brooklyn from 1933 to 1962, when he retired. After retirement, he engaged in occasional supply work, and made his home in Stony Brook, New York.

He died on August 31, 1976, at Stony Brook, New York. The funeral was conducted by the Rev. John Wason, a replacement pastor at the Three Village Church (interdenominational) of East Setauket, New York. Burial was at Pine Lawn Garden Mausoleum, Farmingdale, New York.

Mr. Davidson is survived by his widow; one son, Rudolph; and three daughters, Mrs. Lura Baas, Mrs. Marion Perry and Miss Maureen Davidson.

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH

William Henry Smith was born at Toowoomba, Australia, on August 10, 1889. He graduated from Sydney University in 1911, and from St. Andrew's Theological School in 1914. He also did post-graduate work in psychology at Columbia University in 1924. He was licensed and ordained by the Presbytery of Rockhampton in 1914. While still in Australia, he served as pastor of the Gladstone Presbyterian Church from 1914 to 1920, and the Mayborough Presbyterian Church from 1920 to 1922.

When he came to America, Mr. Smith at first served the Olmstead Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, from 1922 to 1924. He then transferred to our denomination, and served the church at Fultonville, New York, from 1925 to 1936. During this period he also supplied at Currytown, Auriesville, and Randall. From 1936 until his retirement in 1962, he was pastor of the First Reformed Church of Syracuse. He served for a time as President of the Minister's Association in Syracuse.

Mr. Smith died on October 9, 1976, in Syracuse, New York, after a long illness, at the age of 87. Private prayer services were held, and burial was at Oakwood-Morningside Cemetery.

Mr. Smith is survived by his widow, Florence; a daughter, Mrs. Vanessa Farrow; nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Mr. Smith also had two sons, but the older one died two weeks before Mr. Smith's death, and the younger one a few years previously.

CLARENCE P. DAME

Clarence P. Dame was born at Broek, the Netherlands, on October 18, 1885. He came to the United States at the age of nine, settling first in Fulton, Illinois, and later in Chicago. He graduated from Hope College in 1913 and from Western Theological Seminary in 1916. He was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin and ordained by the Classis of Michigan in 1916.

He served the following churches: Calvary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1916 to 1918; Trinity, Holland, Michigan, 1918 to 1930; Unity, Muskegon, Michigan, 1930 to 1936; Bethany, Grand Rapids, 1936 to 1943; and Second,

Kalamazoo, 1943 to 1959. In the latter year, he retired. However, after his retirement he served as Stated Supply of the Reformed Church in Allegan, Michigan, from 1959 to 1963; as Associate Pastor at Second, Kalamazoo from 1963 to 1966; and as Minister of Visitation at First, Kalamazoo from 1968 until the time of his death.

Dr. Dame received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Hope College in 1938. His denominational activities included the Vice Presidency of the General Synod in 1942; member of the Board of Domestic Missions; member of the editorial staff of *The Church Herald*; member of the Board of Trustees of Hope College; and President of the Board of Western Theological Seminary. He was the author of *Fathers of the Bible*, published in 1964. Also, for more than fifty-three years until 1975, he was the author of Sunday School lessons for *The Holland Evening Sentinel.*

He died on October 22, 1976, in Kalamazoo. Memorial services were held on October 25 from the First Reformed Church of Kalamazoo with the Rev. Russell Vande Bunte and the Rev. Jay Weener officiating. Burial was in Kalamazoo.

Dr. Dame's wife, the former Anna Den Herder, predeceased him in 1967. He is survived by a son, Paul, of Kalamazoo; three daughters, Mrs. Nelson (Trudy) Schrier and Mrs. Jack (Marian) Hoekstra of Kalamazoo and Mrs. Russell (Ruth) Hage of Muskegon; ten grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A. RANDAL ZENDT

Abram Randal Zendt was born at Souderton, Pennsylvania, on April 20, 1902. He graduated from Ursinus College in 1922 and from Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1925. He also received a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in 1929. He was licensed and ordained by the Reformed Church in the United States (the former "German" Reformed Church) in 1925.

He served a congregation at Catawissa, Pennsylvania, in that denomination, from 1925 to 1928. He then served as Assistant Chaplain of the American Seamen's Friend Society in New York from 1928 to 1930; and later as Social Secretary of the YMCA in Jersey City, New Jersey, from 1930 until 1938. He became Stated Supply of the Hope Reformed Church in Jersey City in 1938, entering our denomination at about the same time. He continued his service to this congregation until 1951. His next charge was at New Hyde Park, New York, where he served from 1951 to 1954. Subsequently, he was the Protestant Chaplain at Brooklyn State Hospital in Brooklyn.

Mr. Zendt was the recipient of an award from the New York State Council of Churches, for meritorious service while chaplain at the Hospital. He had also achieved a certificate of achievement in clinical pastoral psychiatry from the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene. He retired in 1967.

He died on November 29, 1976, in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. The funeral was held at the Zwingli United Church of Christ in Souderton, with the Rev. John I. Itzen and the Rev. Herbert S. Van Wyk officiating. Burial was at Hillside Cemetery, Souderton.

Mr. Zendt is survived by his wife; two brothers, and a sister.

PETER KUIKEN

Peter Kuiken was born at Lynnville, Iowa, on November 16, 1895. He graduated from Central College in 1924, and from Western Theological Seminary in 1928. He was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1928, and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo in the same year.

From 1928 until 1941, he served as pastor of the Twin Lakes Reformed Church of Kalamazoo. In the latter year, blindness forced him to retire. He later became a member of the First Reformed Church of Kalamazoo; and, upon moving to Corsica, South Dakota, he became a member of the Grace Reformed Church there.

He died at Corsica, South Dakota, on January 24, 1977, at the age of 82. The funeral service was held at the Grace Reformed Church, with the Rev. John E. Brouwer officiating. Burial was at the Graceland Cemetery in Corsica.

Mr. Kuiken was married to Linda Trelk in 1928. She predeceased him in 1947. In 1949 he was married to Marie Breukelman, who survives. Other survivors include four brothers and one sister.

ARTHUR C. JOHNSON

Arthur C. Johnson was born at Grand Rapids, Michigan, on November 15, 1920. He studied at both Calvin College and Hope College, graduating from the latter in 1944. He also attended Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, but graduated from Western Theological Seminary in 1947. He was licensed by the Classis of Grand Rapids in 1947, and ordained by the Classis of East Sioux in the same year.

His record of service is as follows: Pastor, Prairie View, Kansas, 1947 to 1951; Teacher, Grand Rapids Christian High School, 1951 to 1959; Pastor, Faith, Traverse City, Michigan, 1959 to 1961; Teacher, Timothy Christian High School near Chicago; Teacher, Unity Christian High School, Hudsonville, Michigan.

Mr. Johnson died in Grand Rapids on February 21, 1977, at the age of 56. The funeral service was held on February 24 at the Fourth Reformed Church, conducted by the Rev. Jerry Batts. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Henry Kik.

Survivors include his widow, Marian; one son, A. Charles Johnson; and three daughters, Mrs. Roger (Marthann) Bruins, Mrs. Jay (Karin) Decker, and Mrs. Philip (Colleen) Van Stedum.

HAROLD SCHADEWALD

Harold Schadewald was born at Union Hill, New Jersey, on August 21, 1905. He attended Rutgers University, and graduated from Bloomfield College in 1933. He graduated from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1936, and was licensed by the Classis of Palisades and ordained by the Classis of Orange in the same year.

Mr. Schadewald served the following churches: Kerhonkson and Napanoch, New York, 1936 to 1939; Pine Bush, New York, 1939 to 1943; First Church, Bayonne, New Jersey, 1943 to 1951; Fair Lawn, New Jersey, 1951 to 1958; and Hurley, New York, 1958 to 1973, when he retired.

During his ministry he had served as President of both the Synod of New York and the Synod of New Jersey. He had been active in youth work and youth conferences. He was the first pastor of the Fair Lawn Church. While at Hurley, the large and attractive fellowship hall was built, and this has recently been named the "Harold Schadewald Memorial Hall." The last wedding he performed was that of his daughter, Judy, on August 28, 1976.

Mr. Schadewald died at Homestead Run, New Jersey, on March 4, 1977, at the age of 71. A memorial service was held in the Church in Brielle on March 13; conducted by the Rev. William Jewett, the Rev. Stanford Welcker and the Rev. Emmett Waite.

His survivors include his widow, of Toms River, New Jersey; one son, Gary, of Point Pleasant, New Jersey; and two daughters, Mrs. Lewis (Nancy) Kain of Montville, New Jersey, and Mrs. William (Judy) Gordon of Boonton, New Jersey. Another daughter, Carol, predeceased him. Two of Mr. Schadewald's brothers-in-law, the Rev. Irving Decker and the Rev. Charles Unger, are also ministers of the Reformed Church in America.

WILLIAM A. DOWNS

William A. Downs was born in Herkimer County, New York, on June 5, 1922. He graduated from Central College in 1953, and received his B.D. degree from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1957. He was licensed by the Classis of Schenectady in 1956, and ordained by the Classis of New Brunswick in 1957.

Mr. Downs played a very prominent part in organizing the only two churches he served as pastor. During his seminary years he served the Grace Chapel at Bonhamtown. The chapel had been a praching point and a mission Sunday School for decades, but under Mr. Downs' leadership it was organized into the Grace Reformed Church of Edison, New Jersey, in 1955. After his ordination he continued to serve the church as pastor, from 1957 to 1958. He then served as the first pastor of the Reformed Church at Willingboro, New Jersey, from 1958 until his death.

Prior to studying for the ministry, he had been active in the labor movement for some years. While at Willingboro, he occupied every major office in the Classis of Philadelphia. He was also very active in community affairs. He formed the first Senior Citizens group in Willingboro.

Mr. Downs died at Willingboro on March 22, 1977, at the age of 54. His body was laid to rest in Glenville, New York. A Service of Thanksgiving and Victory was held on April 3 in the Willingboro Reformed Church.

He is survived by his widow, Elizabeth, and by one son, Paul, as well as his parents.

JOHN G. GEBHARD, JR.

John G. Gebhard, Jr., was born at Herkimer, New York, on September 23, 1894. He graduated from Hope College in 1916 and from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1919. He was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Westchester on July 2, 1919.

His record of service is as follows: Arcot Mission, India, 1919 to 1923; Pastor, Pine Bush, New York, 1923 to 1926; Franklin Park, New Jersey, Six Mile Run, 1926 to 1927; Harrington Park, New Jersey, 1927 to 1947; Red Bank, New Jersey, 1947 to 1949; Germantown and Linlithgo, New York, Livingston Memorial, 1949 to 1959. From 1960 to 1966 he was Stated Supply of the Reformed Church at Stuyvesant, New York.

Mr. Gebhard died on March 27, 1977, at Fort Myers, Florida, at the age of 82. He is survived by two sons, David F. of Northport, Long Island, and John G., III, of Manhattan Beach, California; and five grandchildren.

Funeral services were held in the Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, New York.

CORNELIUS VAN TOL

Cornelius Van Tol was born on August 25, 1897, at Paterson, New Jersey. He graduated from Hope College, and from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1925. He was licensed by the Classis of Passaic and ordained by the Classis of Ulster in 1925.

He served the following churches: Marbletown, Stone Ridge, New York, 1925 to 1935; Beacon, New York, 1935 to 1949; and Faith-Van Vorst, Jersey City, New Jersey, 1949 to 1962. He retired in 1962. At the time of his death he was a member of the Union Reformed Church of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

Mr. Van Tol died at his home in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, on March 31, 1977, at the age of 79. The funeral was held at the Union Reformed Church, and was conducted by the Rev. Peter Nordstrom. Burial was in the Fair Lawn Memorial Cemetery.

He is survived by his widow, the former Mary Criswell, of Fair Lawn; a brother, John, of Hawthorne, New Jersey; and four sisters, Mrs. Lena Warnet of Paterson, Mrs. Cornelia Van Dine and Mrs. Mary Steenstra, both of Prospect Park, New Jersey, and Mrs. Alberta Senno of Hawthorne.

HENRY C. JACOBS

Henry C. Jacobs was born at Newkirk, Iowa, on July 13, 1889. He graduated from Hope College in 1914, and from Western Theological Seminary in 1917. He was licensed by the Classis of Iowa in 1917, and ordained by the Classis of Albany in the same year.

His record of service is as follows: Fifth, Albany, N.Y., 1917 to 1919; Brighton, Rochester, N.Y., 1919 to 1927; Second, Pella, Iowa, 1927 to 1932; Fremont, Michigan, 1932 to 1944; Educational Secretary, Michigan Temperance Foundation, 1944 to 1955.

Mr. Jacobs died on May 5, 1977, at the age of 87. The memorial service was conducted by the Rev. Peter J. Breen at the Calvary Reformed Church of Grand Rapids; and burial was at Pilgrim Home Cemetery in Holland, Michigan.

His survivors include two sons, Paul of California and Wilbur of Ohio; and two daughters, Mrs. Randall Bosch of Kingston, N.Y., and Mrs. Harold Hakken of Anaheim, California.

EDWARD B. IRISH

The Rev. Edward B. Irish, age 91, passed away on May 18 at St. Petersburg, Florida.

Born at Vischer's Ferry, New York, in 1886, Mr. Irish graduated from New Brunswick Seminary in 1913. He served Reformed Churches in Fultonville, New York; New York City; Port Jervis, New York; and Harlingen, New Jersey. In addition, he served as a chaplain in the United States Army during World Wars I and II. He served as president of the Synod of New York 1935-36.

Mr. Irish is survived by his wife, Alice; a son, Sumner; a daughter, Mrs. David Watt; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

It is with pleasure that the Committee on Christian Unity submits its second report to the General Synod. In order for the review committee to do its work properly, it is necessary, first of all, to set the context of the report by means of a brief excursion into history.

After ten years of service to the Reformed Church in America, the Interchurch Relations Committee recommended to the General Synod of 1974, that its work be brought to a conclusion and that in its place there be established a new kind of committee. The result was the establishment of the Committee on Christian Unity. Instead of "at-large" representation, membership in this committee represented the synods of the R.C.A. More than that, the CCU made every attempt to restructure radically the task it sought to perform. Much of the work in the past had been reporting on meetings of an ecumenical nature. The World and National Councils, the Reformed Alliance, the Consultation on Church Union and others were monitored and the work of these agencies was reported by the old Interchurch Relations Committee. Now we are trying to take more initiative and stress creativity in what we do. We still monitor ecumenical endeavors; we appoint representatives; we make suggestions to our constituency; we observe discussions of mergers; and we try to make alive and vital the God-given unity we have and make it manifest wherever and whenever it is possible.

The Committee on Christian Unity divides its work into three broad areas of concern: Church-to-church matters, ecumenical agencies, and new developments in the Christian Church. There is a subcommittee with responsibilities in each of these areas and this report will follow those headings.

Church-to-Church

Christian Reformed Church

Last year's Synod approved a new relationship with the Christian Reformed Church and that recommendation was adopted by the synods of both denominations. Since the location of interest in this matter centers in the Midwest, your CCU appointed a working committee in Michigan to work with a similar committee of the CRC. At the suggestion of this working committee many congregations of both denominations joined together for public worship on Reformation Sunday. Already many activities, such as worship, education, youth work, and some missions, are done jointly and cooperatively when possible and the dialogue is nicely begun. There is no talk of merger and there will not be any for some time. Our goal is to begin cooperation and conversation with openness so we may begin to heal the division between us. We may be grateful such discussion has begun. Our next meeting will be in Grand Rapids and we hope representatives from the CRC can be present to help us get to know each other. Drs. Brownson and Wissink have been appointed fraternal delegates to the CRC General Synod next summer and delegates from the CRC will be present at our Synod.

R-1. We RECOMMEND the dialogue between the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church be continued and encouraged and that new areas of common concern be explored.

Perhaps the most significant manifestation of your committee's work with the CRC was the publication of the *Evangelism Manifesto* for it represents a style of working that is new. It was the CCU which initiated such discussions on evangelism and recommended the establishment of a working group which jointly published the manifesto.

R-2. We RECOMMEND that during this time in our denomination when evangelism and church growth are being emphasized, every congregation be urged to make use of the Evangelism Manifesto and the related study guides.

Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika

In 1976 the General Synod also approved entering into a special relationship with this Black church in South Africa. Representatives from that church addressed Synod while at that very moment violence was breaking out in their country. Since that time the whole world has been watching with dismay as human rights are suppressed among those who belong to Reformed and other churches in that unhappy land. Your committee has found it difficult to communicate with our fellow Christians in South Africa and we fear such attempts on our part may endanger the very ones we wish to help and assist. We can only say we shall continue to watch the situation and are making attempts to find a way to communicate and help members of the NGK in Africa.

R-3. We RECOMMEND that the Committee on Christian Unity be encouraged to explore all ways and means to communicate with the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, in order to help, assist and support them during these difficult days in conflict.

Ecumenical Agencies

It is not possible in the space of this report to mention all of the various matters of concern in the World and National Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Those events which are of particular interest to the RCA have been selected.

The NCC and Archbishop Trifa

The Governing Board of the National Council of Churches meeting in New York in November, 1976, was interrupted by Jewish groups protesting the membership on that board of Archbishop Trifa. It was alleged that Trifa had participated in war crimes as a Nazi Sympathizer during World War II. At the fall meeting of the CCU a strong statement was adopted in which it was questioned whether or not member denominations of the NCC had a right to challenge individual denomination's delegates to the NCC Governing Board and urging some action on the Trifa matter. This statement was widely distributed and helped bring the matter to a crisis. At this writing Trifa's own denomination has removed him from the governing board and the other issue is being discussed by the NCC. This is one example of the voice of the RCA being heard in this national body.

Reformed Ecumenical Synod

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod is a small group of conservative Reformed Churches throughout the world who have banded together for fellowship and mutual support. With one possible exception none of the

denominations belong to the World Council of Churches. Through the agency of Dr. John Piet, the question has been raised about possible membership in the organization for the Reformed Church in America. The reason for such involvement is the Reformed Churches of South Africa (as well as the Christian Reformed Church in America) are members of the RES. Could it be that through this agency the RCA could find a contact with the Black churches in South Africa? The answer is not clear at this time. The CCU, therefore, has authorized its chairman to contact the Rev. Elia Tema and the Rev. Sam Buti in order to determine whether such membership in the RES would be helpful. When such information is obtained, the CCU will make its recommendations known to the General Synod next year.

R-4. We RECOMMEND that the Committee on Christian Unity, through the office of its chairman, explore the question of RCA membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and report to the Synod of 1978.

Consultation on Church Union

The RCA is not a member of COCU, but is represented at its meetings by an observer. In November, 1976, the chairman of the CCU attended the 13th Plenary session of the COCU and reported his impressions at the February meeting of your committee. Although COCU has received little attention in the last few years, the plenary sessions represent some of the most vital and significant ecumenical dialogue anywhere in the United States. At the moment it is the theological part of their documents which are under discussion and the care and concern, the dedication and quality, the openness and the Spirit of Christian brotherhood, which characterized these conversations is something to behold and from which much is to be learned.

Part of the General Synod's instruction to the CCU is to monitor those areas of local ecumenity which may be shared with RCA constituency. In spin-offs from COCU discussions there are two items which may be mentioned. The first is the concept of Generating Communities which were brought to the attention of the Synod of 1975. The second is the more modest proposal of the Interim Eucharistic Fellowship in which congregations in a given area covenant to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper together a few times each year. The idea is that through worship an ecumenical vision may be caught for no where should the unity of the Church be more evident than in the intimacy of Holy Communion. More information may be secured about this new venture by writing to COCU, 228 Alexander Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

R-5. We RECOMMEND that the General Synod encourage pastors and congregations in the RCA to explore and investigate the Interim Eucharistic Fellowship and to take initiative in establishing such ecumenical fellowships in their communities.

New Developments

As was mentioned earlier, our new structure attempts to place priority on the innovative. Some older ecumenical structures are breaking down; others are taking their place. The National Council is having more than its share of problems; the Joint Educational Development represents a new style of ecumenicity. We are also witnessing emerging ecumenism among conservative evangelicals. Although we have nothing to report at this time, we wish the

Synod to know that we are trying to find out the ways and means your committee can keep abreast of these new developments (hence the name of the sub-committee).

In keeping with this new policy the Rev. John Opmeer has been designated an RCA observer to the National Charismatic Conference to be held in Kansas City in the summer of 1977. Mr. Opmeer also attended the meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals in Arlington Park, Illinois, in February of this year.

Since many of these kinds of meetings do not have officially appointed delegates, your committee would welcome notification of such events and would be glad to receive reports from any Reformed Church people who have attended such meetings, or would like the CCU to know of their endeavors.

Ecumenical Consultation

In the short life of the Committee on Christian Unity the most ambitious project to date is just underway. The secretary of the committee, the Rev. David Risseeuw, reported on a meeting in the Southern Presbyterian Church in which delegates from within and without the denomination were brought together for the sole purpose of discussion the ecumenical stance of the PCUS. Learning from them and adapting according to our needs, the CCU proposed to the General Synod of 1976 that the RCA do something similar. Such plans are now in the making with much work still to be done. Instead of having one meeting nationwide, the tentative proposal is that we have regional meetings and inviting representative people to participate in such discussions about ecumenism, their involvement, and new directions for the RCA. Our target date is not firm, but 1978 is being suggested and we are asking $2,000.00 for expenses of the design committee. According to the minutes of the February, 1977, meeting the objective is "to determine ecumenical attitude of a cross-section of RCA constituents, and to cope experientially with feelings and myths which hinder ecumenical involvement to encourage lasting effects toward positive ecumenism in participants and their constituencies." If these plans can be carried out, it would be the first time in history that a large number of RCA members has ever been involved in ecumenical discussions.

R-6. We RECOMMEND to approve in principle the idea of the Ecumenical Counsultation and to instruct the Committee on Christian Unity to continue to work on the design and to present the completed design to the Synod of 1978.

Evangelism

Your committee is aware that in the past some criticism has been leveled against the World and National Council of Churches because of an apparent one-sided emphasis on social issues. We take this opportunity again to remind the RCA that both WCC and NCC have produced reports which reaffirm the importance of outreach as a necessary part of the life of the church and the life of the councils. These reports have been distributed by the CCU to every minister in the RCA. It is our hope that these documents, along with the Evangelism Manifesto, will be used and studied in all the congregations.

Faith and Order

The Reformed Church in America may be proud that one of its members, the Rev. Herman Harmelink, III, has been elected as Vice Chairman of the

Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches. Since the chairperson was on sabbatical, Mr. Harmelink has been acting chairman for the past year. In his report he refers to a book used as a resource entitled *The Liberating Word* which is available from Westminster Press and could be used in congregations as study material.

Death of Archbishop Janani Luwum

Your CCU, along with the rest of the Christian world, was grieved and dismayed by the tragic death of Archbishop Luwum of Uganda. A resolution was drafted and sent to several people and agencies, including the family of Rev. Luwum, the All Africa Council of Churches, the World Council, and the United Nations. We thus joined countless voices to protest this senseless killing and to make our plea for justice in that unhappy land in Africa.

Maurice Te Paske

We would take this opportunity also to express thanksgiving for the life and memory of Maurice Te Paske. When he died, he was a member of the governing board of the National Council of Churches and was long a leader in ecumenical affairs, faithfully representing the Reformed Church in America. He will be sorely missed.

Retiring Committee Member

For six years Dr. Robert Visscher has served on the CCU and has made a most valuable contribution to our work. Particularly has he been helpful in the discussions with the Christian Reformed Church. We will miss him and wish to thank him publicly for a job that was faithfully done.

Dr. Marion de Velder

It is difficult to express the gratitude of our Committee to Dr. de Velder. For sixteen years he has been the guiding force in ecumenical activities in the RCA as our "ecumenical ambassador." Few in our denomination know of the contributions he has made in the various councils of churches, both nationally and internationally. He has represented the Reformed Church with honor and integrity to the councils and agencies, as well as representing them honestly to us. He has the respect of church leaders all over the world and the admiration of his own constituency. Although his work as General Secretary involved several areas of activity, the Committee on Christian Unity, and the Interchurch Relations Committee before, has been uniquely and specially related to him. For us he has been our major source of information and insight as we listened not only to his reports, but also to his personal and more intimate glimpses into the complicated workings of complex organizations. He could inspire and encourage, criticize and condemn, but always remains faithful to his church, The Church, and our God. He has represented a continuity in our task which has been exceedingly helpful and has provided a model for those who will follow. The February session was the last meeting of the CCU in which Dr. de Velder served as member and counselor and friend. We ask the Synod to join us in expressing our deepest gratitude for his faithful service to the cause of ecumenicity and in his retirement we pray for God's continued blessing upon him.

Other Reports

Following the custom of other years, appended to this report are the reports of ecumenical councils.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The World Council of Churches has become, in both program and membership, the most comprehensive of all ecumenical agencies. Founded in 1948, its membership has now grown to include 288 Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant bodies from nearly 100 countries. Policy is determined by an Assembly, composed of delegates from the member churches, which meets every six or seven years, and by a Central Committee of 130 persons elected by the Assembly. The Central Committee usually meets for a two week period each summer. A multinational staff of 120 persons directs a varied program from the World Council headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, under the leadership of the General Secretary, Dr. Philip Potter.

In 1976 the operational budget for all units of the Council amounted to $10,346,203. Approximately 45% of this amount was contributed by American churches, mission boards and relief agencies, much of it designated for particular programs or projects. Of the larger figure, approximately $2,393,562 came in the form of general contributions to the work of the Council from the central treasuries of member churches, of which $8,743.20 was contributed by the Reformed Church in America.

1976 was marked by extensive reorganization of the Council, based on the recommendations and insights gained from the Fifth Assembly which was held in Nairobi at the end of 1975, and the reporting of the experience of that Assembly to the churches at home. In USA many delegates not only gave reports to congregations and agencies of their own churches, but joined with representatives of other churches in a series of regional meetings sponsored in cooperation with state councils of churches. A popular report and study guide by James W. Kennedy, *Nairobi 1975*, was widely distributed and was followed later in the year by the official report of the Assembly, *Breaking Barriers*, edited by David Paton and published by Eerdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan. In addition, the WCC made available tapes, records, film strips and an award winning color film on the Assembly, "To Be United and Free."

The major event of the year was the first full meeting of the newly elected Central Committee, following months of preliminary work by the small groups concerned with particular program units, and by a specially appointed Review Committee charged with identifying priorities for the WCC in the years ahead. The responsibility for the leadership of Central Committee has shifted again to persons based in North America. The new moderator is Archbishop Edward Scott, Anglican Primate of Canada. The vice moderators are Miss Jean Skuse of Australia and Archbishop Sarkissian of the Armenian Orthodox Apostolate in New York. Dr. Robert Marshall, President of the Lutheran Church in America was named moderator of the important Finance Committee and Dr. Cynthia Wedel, an Episcopalian of Alexandria, Virginia was named one of six presidents of the WCC. The Reformed Church in America is represented on the Central Committee by Dr. Marion de Velder.

Faced with mounting costs and far more requests for programs and services than can possibly be met from available income, Central Committee agreed to focus the work of the World Council of Churches under four headings:

1. The expression and communication of our faith in the Triune God;
2. The search for a just, participatory and sustainable society;
3. The unity of the church and its relation to the unity of humanity;
4. Education and renewal in search of true community.

Much attention was given also to streamlining accounting procedures and financial administration and to creating opportunities for more cooperation between the different units of the Council around central program themes. It was agreed to authorize only one major conference per year in order to concentrate the work of the Council on issues of concern to all. Preliminary planning has begun for such events under the sponsorship of Faith and Order in 1978, Church and Society in 1979 and World Mission and Evangelism in 1980.

The Nairobi Assembly's concern for religious liberty in the framework of the Helsinki Declaration and for human rights in every part of the world has been reflected in various ways. The Central Committee authorized the setting up of an Advisory Group on Human Rights under the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, to monitor violations as they occur and to share information among the churches about how Christian witness can be effective under various political circumstances. The tragic events in Southern Africa have been at the center of the Council's concern, including support for the victims of the Soweto massacre, close cooperation with the various delegations in Geneva trying to seek a peaceful solution to the Rhodesia question, and continued pressure upon banks and international corporations to withhold loans and investments in South Africa which have the effect of strengthening the policy of apartheid. The cause of human rights in other countries has not been forgotten. A delegation went to South Korea, for instance, to demonstrate solidarity with Christians struggling for freedom there, and more than $1,700,000 was raised for the human rights program in Latin America, much of it spent in support of political prisoners and their families in Chile.

The World Council continues to be the chief channel for coordinating and administering international Christian relief and development efforts. 1976 saw, for example, the continuing of reconstruction in Indochina, new relief efforts in Lebanon, and the beginning of operations of the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society.

The Program to Combat Racism was reaffirmed overwhelmingly by the Assembly despite continuing false charges in the Western press that churches were supplying "weapons" to "terrorists." Contributions to the Special Fund of PCR have continued to increase each year, particularly from churches and government agencies in Europe. In 1976 grants totalling $500,000 were made to help victims of racial oppression and to organizations supporting them in their struggle for justice and self-determination. All grants are for non-military, humanitarian purposes–refugee relief, education, legal expenses, etc.–but the moral support of the world Christian community has indeed proved to be a powerful "weapon" against the forces of racism and exploitation.

The Theological Education Fund is another valuable program based on funds specially designated for the purpose. In 1976 grants amounting to a further half million dollars were authorized to strengthen the development of indigenous ministry and "contextualized" theology on six continents.

The Christian Medical Commission continued its contribution to the revolution in community health care taking place in developing countries, in many cases building on the pioneering medical missionary work of the past.

The Assembly called for revitalization of the WCC programs centered on the concerns of women and youth and for new studies on the universal problems of Militarism and Disarmament. Central Committee began to give these programs a more concrete form and authorized the appointment of new staff to get them started.

Finally, the Assembly urged that more attention be given to the local congregations and to finding ways to deepen the involvement of member churches in the work of the WCC as a whole.

In Geneva, a new program subunit on Local Congregational Life and Renewal has been set up, with the twin tasks of seeing that WCC programs reflect the concerns and needs of the local church and helping the denominations strengthen ecumenical awareness at the local level.

In the U.S. relationships to the WCC are facilitated through the U.S. Conference for the WCC, composed of representatives of the member churches in this country. The U.S. Conference assists with interpretation, fund raising and distribution of WCC publications and studies. In 1976, the Conference sponsored a reunion of Assembly delegates and other ecumenists at St. Simon's Island, Georgia and began negotiations with churches in Canada and the Caribbean to see if participation in WCC programs and better communication on a North American regional basis may be developed in the future.

Charles H. Long, Jr.
Executive Secretary
New York Office

Christian Unity-Appendix 2

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

The start of a new triennium is a good time to assess what has been accomplished, before moving hopefully into what is ahead. To facilitate this transition, representatives of NCCC member communions who comprise the Governing Board adopted a broad framework for the 1976-78 triennium around "the need to work for a just and sustainable global society." Centering on issues of survival and quality of human life, the framework requires a greater interrelationship of NCCC program units, looks to the Governing Board to engage the total council in ways consonant with the theme and calls for greater participation by member-church constituency, particularly the laity.

Throughout this triennium, the NCCC will re-examine its constitutional purposes, initially written more than 25 years ago, and how they relate to current program. An important first step in this direction was taken through an audit of NCCC programs prepared by the Office of Research, Evaluation and Planning, an instrument enabling Governing Board and staff to review what is being done, and how it conforms to the purposes stated in the constitution. This process could open up new purposes to be added to the constitution and point up others no longer operative that may need revision or deletion.

Overseas Ministries: Beyond Food

Church World Service, which engages in relief and development toward a quality of life beyond the right to food, observed its 30th anniversary in a year that was unprecedented in terms of emergencies and special needs. The Guatamala earthquake cut across a 125-mile zone, leaving hundreds of villages devastated and 1.6 million persons homeless. Some 30,000 homes were reconstructed with CWS help.

Civil strife in Lebanon brought the need for food, clothing and medicines for that stricken area. Assistance was given to returnees to Portugal from former colonies. In Africa, civil unrest, along with natural disasters such as drought, particularly affected areas such as Angola and Guinea Bissau. Large shipments of clothing, vitamins, blankets and baby foods were provided, along with low-cost housing assistance. In Turkey, the devastating earthquake of 1976 will require large inputs of housing reconstruction and resettlement across a wide area well into 1977.

CWS continued moving beyond relief work into development projects. Negotiations were started toward a contractual agreement between CWS and the Comoro Government for long-term rural development and education on the Comoro Islands, a former French territory in the Indian Ocean. These negotiations grew out of the exploratory work of a CWS team of experts.

In 1976, CWS shipped 46,923,580 net pounds of material aid valued at $16,359,366 to 56 countries, and resettled 6,309 persons in the U.S. By year end, total overseas shipments since CWS was founded in 1946 topped five billion pounds of food, clothing, medical supplies and other aid valued at more than $600 million with the number of displaced persons resettled reaching 235,527.

The Division of Overseas Ministries concentrated on relationships across a wide spectrum, including relationships to:

–*areas of conflict* such as Ireland, Lebanon, Southern Africa–particularly South Africa;

–*areas where the Church is not present or has had very little contact,* i.e. China, which the associate general secretary for overseas ministries visited in the fall;

–*areas of deep human suffering* brought on by natural and man-made disasters, displacement of persons and human rights violations;

–*Christian communities overseas.* Out of explorations made in 1976, DOM established an Indonesia desk to handle the growing need for ecumenical relationships with the nation that has one of the strongest councils of churches in the world, along with a burgeoning human rights problem.

Fourteen U.S. church leaders went to Panama in the spring, mandated by the NCCC's Governing Board. The delegation met with a wide variety of church groups in Panama, with representatives of U.S. and Panamanian governments and with U.S. citizens in the Zone before drafting a statement summarizing these conversations, outlining current objections to the original treaty and supporting a new treaty with Panama.

Considerable negotiation took place in 1976 that resulted in the International Affairs Interunit Working Group, a new style of inter-unit cooperation that got underway early in 1977. A staff team was formed with

persons lodged in the various NCCC units and related agencies that engage in international affairs. Managing the staff team is the Division of Church and Society's executive for international affairs, who also is staff advisor to the working group.

Special attention was given to the education and interaction of young persons in world affairs. Denominations were contacted concerning their needs and interests in such a venture. The Church and Society study was developed into a proposal that led to the establishment of a new office for international affairs education early in 1977.

The Right to A Job

In a time of soaring joblessness, full employment was seen as a quality of life issue and was approached in a variety of ways. Mrs. Coretta Scott King addressed the Atlanta Governing Board on the subject; the Division of Church and Society set up seminars, consultations and strategic meetings in six U.S. cities, out of which grew on-going projects for full employment; the right to a job was lifted up as the first of three key election issues suggested by the NCCC for debate by the presidential candidates. Energy and international human rights were the other two issues raised.

On nuclear concerns, the NCCC broadened its position to include a call to halt the exporting of nuclear technology that could be channeled into nuclear arms. Plutonium extracted from spent nuclear reactor fuel can be used to produce nuclear weapons. Earlier in the year, the NCCC called on the U.S. Government to declare a moratorium on production of additional fast breeder reactors as a source of energy until their safety is established. Staff responsibility for nuclear concerns is lodged in the Division of Church and Society, which launched a wide-ranging study on the moral implications of energy use and production, with matching foundation funds.

Human Rights A Grave Concern

Declining human rights, particularly in Asia and Latin America, prompted continuous NCCC efforts to keep these grave concerns before the U.S. Government and general public. The fall Governing Board called on the U.S. President to set up an international conference aimed at lessening the threat of war in Korea and restoring human rights there. NCCC President William P. Thompson was authorized to represent the council at the Consultation of the National Council of Churches of Korea in Seoul, in late November. The Governing Board also heard an open letter of 13 church leaders in seven Latin American countries that asked U.S. Christians to work at changing U.S. policies that support repressive regimes in their countries instead of sending missionaries and economic aid.

Toward Freedom From Hunger

The right to food is a basic quality of life issue and the NCCC's coordinated hunger efforts made significant gains in 1976. The Working Group on Domestic Hunger hit its stride by selecting 15 target areas in poor counties where U.S. federal food programs are underutilized and helping groups in these areas to get more use out of the federal programs.

WHEAT, a consortium of 13 denominations designed to mobilize persons from within the churches into major involvement in hunger issues, trained 1800 hunger action enablers in 26 regions to serve at judicatory levels as resource persons and advocates on worldwide hunger concerns. Eventually WHEAT will have 3,000 trained enablers in 46 regions.

An experiment to coordinate funding of U.S. hunger projects also got underway in 1976. Some of the projects that could be funded include an agricultural farmers cooperative, hunger education programs, agribusiness research programs and projects to maximize the use of federal food programs.

Two important books on hunger were developed in 1976, with 1977 publication dates. Scheduled for mass distribution in the spring is "Who Really Starves? Women and World Hunger" describing how women are major producers of the world's food, but are more likely than men to face starvation for a variety of economic, social and cultural reasons. Written by Lisa Leghorn and Mary Rodkowsky, the book grew out of the brainstorming of an ad hoc committee of women brought together by Church World Service, which also initially funded its publication by Friendship Press.

"Beyond Survival; Bread and Justice in a Christian Perspective" probes the theological/ethical aspects of hunger. Each chapter was developed by a different study team in one of nine seminaries and agencies. Dr. Dieter Hessel edited the book due in July for laity, clergy, college and seminary courses and leadership training. The NCCC's Faith and Order Commission assisted the denominational consortium with the study team approach and the commission's director gave staff services to the highly-specialized project.

The Faith and Order Commission also developed a pioneering working paper on the theology of the Unification Church and its questionable claim to being a Christian body; circulated to its constituents a study on the tension between confessional positions and ecumenical commitments; and made significant contributions to a World Council of Churches' study on The Community of Women and Men in the Church through a summary statement centering around language, biblical interpretation, symbol and imagery, and relationships.

Freeing Up Language

Biblical language was lifted up in yet another way through "The Liberating Word: A Guide to Non-Sexist Interpretation of the Bible," published by the Division of Education and Ministry's Task Force on Sexism in the Bible.

DE&M completed two years of work on school desegregation. Findings from 13 consultations involving church leaders from 22 cities resulted in a comprehensive guide, "School Desegregation: Community Preparation and the Role of the Churches," scheduled for early 1977 publication.

Widely used were "A Resource Guide for Women in Seminary" and "A Resource Packet on Gay Issues and Ministry," compiled by the Council on Women in Ministry of DE&M.

Southern Africa was the mission study theme of DE&M's Friendship Press which produced materials used by an estimated 50,000 church groups across the U.S. and Canada.

Responsible Investments

U.S. corporate investments in South Africa were of major concern to the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, an NCCC-related coalition of Protestant and Roman Catholic agencies committed to social responsibility with investments. More than 50 ICCR members sponsored almost 60 shareholder resolutions to some 40 U.S. companies in 1976.

The Communication Commission studied the shareholder resolution route as a way to end gratuitous violence on television. The commission asked the NCCC's finance office to purchase stock in some of the advertising companies that heavily sponsor violent TV programs. The NCCC's communication arm plans to coordinate the filing of a shareholder resolution by its member denominations and the NCCC aimed at moving the "violence buyers" away from such TV fare toward more suitable programming.

Creative Use of Resources

The Commission on Stewardship produced "Christians Doing Financial Planning," a 40-page booklet to help individuals and families plan the use of their financial resources. The booklet was created in cooperation with representatives of 18 denominations in the U.S. and Canada.

The Commission on Stewardship also explored the Third World implications of stewardship with 180 U.S. and Canadian church stewardship leaders. Speakers developed the theological and ethical aspects of an inclusive stewardship that makes good use not only of money, but of all resources. The commission set up the meeting "to integrate the idea of Christian stewardship with contemporary understandings of creation, justice, redemption and hope."

Third World concerns were raised and monitored at all levels of NCCC life, particularly its overseas efforts, by the Commission on Justice, Liberation and Human Fulfillment. The commission also mounted a presentation to the Governing Board on Puerto Rico's self-determination.

The Cutting Edge of Ecumenism

Two years of work by the Commission on Regional and Local Ecumenism culminated in an evaluation to the Governing Board of five experimental regional projects in Washington, D.C., Appalachia, Los Angeles, Houston and the Upper Rio Grande. Results drawn from these experiences will help determine the way national and local resources relate to each other in the future and could also become a basis for a restatement of NCCC's organizational purpose.

By running a tight operation and paring down, the NCCC closed in the black for the second year in a row. Total income was $27,472,957, or $1.1 million more than expenses of $26,352,450. These figures are minus ocean freight, which was $3.7 million in 1976. Ocean freight is reimbursement from the U.S. Government for material aid shipments overseas. Once again there was an increase in undesignated general income from denominations, this year by $8,305 over the budgeted $605,850.

Controversy Over Board Membership

For the first time in NCCC history, a Governing Board membership was challenged. Jewish organizations called for the removal of Archbishop Valerian (Trifa) an Orthodox Church in America (OCA) delegate to the Governing Board who heads the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. Archbishop Valerian is accused of committing anti-Jewish atrocities in the 1940's while an alleged member of the Iron Guard, a pro-Nazi group in Romania. The Archbishop, a U.S. citizen since 1957, has denied the charges. He was indicted in 1975 by immigration officials and his case is in process.

The NCCC Executive Committee requested the OCA to refer to its episcopal commission, specially appointed to study the Archbishop's case, a request that he refrain from executing his duties as a Governing Board member until his case is resolved in court and by the Holy Synod of his church. Early in 1977 the OCA informed the NCCC's Executive Committee that the Archbishop "will not function as a member of the Governing Board" during church and civil proceedings now underway. In a related move, the NCCC's President William P. Thompson appointed a committee to review the constitution and consider setting qualifications to Governing Board membership that will "insure the moral integrity of the council."

Out of this crisis has come appreciation on at least three levels: that the matter could be handled in a way that would not prejudice the Archbishop's case in court; that dialogue has developed in depth between the Jewish community and the NCCC through its Office on Christian-Jewish Relations; and that the possibility has opened up for renewed discussion and deeper probing with member communions about the ecumenical commitments that bind them and the NCCC together.

Claire Randall,
General Secretary

Christian Unity-Appendix 3

WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL)

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) continues the first world family of non-Roman Churches to be organized. In 1975 the Centennial of the Alliance was celebrated in London, and the Centennial of the first General Council, which was held in 1877 in Scotland, will be observed in a Centennial Consultation, to be held in St. Andrews, Scotland, in August, 1977.

The membership of the World Alliance includes more than 150 Churches in over 80 different countries, and the aggregate membership is in excess of 55 million. The Alliance has grown significantly since the close of World War II, and now some two-thirds of the Member Churches are located in the Third World.

The North American and Caribbean Area is one of the two organized Areas of the World Alliance, meets annually, and consists of delegates, ministers and members, either men or women, appointed by the Member Churches of the Area. The North American Area was established in 1954 "to include the United States and Canada, and any other adjacent regions which

might be agreed upon in the future," (continuing and revising the American [Western] Section formed originally in 1884). Six Member Churches are located in the Caribbean Area, including three in Guyana, and the current title includes the entire geographical area.

Constituent Members of the Alliance in the North American and Caribbean Area on February 1, 1977, are:

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Second Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Guyana Congregational Union
Guyana Presbyterian Church
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Grenada
Presbyterian Church in the United States
Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba
Presbytery of Guyana
Reformed Church in America
United Church of Canada
United Church of Christ
United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman
United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

Officers of the Area are:

Chairman: The Reverend R. Stanley Wood
Past Chairman: The Reverend Arthur R. McKay
Vice Chairman: Dr. James Oldshue
Secretary: The Reverend James I. McCord - until August, 1977
Secretary: The Reverend James E. Andrews - from August, 1977
Treasurer: The Reverend James E. Andrews - until August, 1977
Treasurer: Dr. Donald C. MacDonald - from August, 1977
Recording Clerk: The Reverend W.J. Klempa
Director of Information: The Reverend Frank H. Heinze

The North American and Caribbean Area Secretary is elected by the General Council of the World Alliance and reports annually to its Executive Committee, to the Area Council, and to the judicatories of the sixteen member communions of the Area.

The North American and Caribbean Area Council meets annually, except in the year of a General Council, and it will not meet during the year of the Centennial Consultation in 1977. In order to avoid a two-year hiatus between Area Council meetings, the 1975 meeting in Châteauguay was followed by an Area Council on September 1-3, 1976, in Princeton, New Jersey, and the next Area Council will be held on January 3-6, 1978, in Princeton.

One meeting of the Administrative Committee has been held since the report to the Member Churches in February of 1976, on September 1-3, 1976. Reports were presented on visits of Fraternal Delegates to judicatories of Member Churches: to the Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church; Cumberland Presbyterian Church; the Presbyterian Church in Canada; Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church; United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.; Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

The Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church has made formal application to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to be received into membership, and this church has been invited to participate in the activities of the Area Council, pending the action of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance.

In February, 1976, at the invitation of the English-speaking churches in the Caribbean, a Visitation to the Caribbean was made by the President of the World Alliance, Dr. William P. Thompson, representing the North American and Caribbean Area, and by the Reverend Professor David W. Hay, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. They were joined by the Reverend Joseph Williams, Clerk of the Caribbean Assembly of Reformed Churches, traveled to Jamaica, Trinidad, and Guyana, and met with the officers of the highest judicatories and with pastors and members of the Caribbean Churches. The purpose of the visitation was to express the solidarity of the churches belonging to the Alliance with its Member Churches in the Caribbean Area.

The Committee on the Future Program of the Alliance has agreed that:

1. The Alliance has a continuing theological function to perform, particularly in the area of coordinating studies, sponsoring bilaterals, and publishing. The theological witness of the Alliance is needed more than ever. Moreover, it must assist its Member Churches in recovering from their "theological amnesia."
2. The Alliance is necessary for fellowship, cooperation, and mutual support and witness among the Member Churches. One of the major commitments of the Alliance since its beginnings has been civil and religious liberty. Vigilance is needed in this area because of the erosion of political freedom in most of the world today.
3. The Alliance is necessary to bear witness to an ecclesiology that moves from within to outside. The Reformed tradition has always emphasized that truth is in order to goodness.

The Tenth Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in Cuba was celebrated in January, 1977, and the 350th Anniversary of the Reformed Churches in America will occur in 1978.

Women's work is concentrated under the Committee on Cooperation and Witness, with two main styles: one is highly structured activity and service and the other is more free-style participation in the life of the church.

Continuing priority of the Alliance is placed on relationships with sister Reformed Churches in Latin America, with particular interest in Cuba.

The Theological Committee continues to focus on the upcoming Centennial Consulation at St. Andrews. The Theological Consultation of the WARC, convened in London in February, 1976, produced a document entitled: "The Theological Basis of Human Rights." It has two parts: Theological Guidelines and Some Practical Implications. The Executive Committee resolved to send the complete document to all Member Churches for their written reaction and comment, to be taken into account before the whole statement is submitted for adoption at the Centennial Consultation.

"The Church—God's Glory in His People," "Religio-Political Messianic Movements Arising out of the Promise to Abraham—Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Liberal Humanism, and Marxism," and "The Integrity of the Reformed Tradition" are projected topics for future discussion.

The theme of the Third Round in the Roman Catholic–Presbyterian and Reformed Consultation will be "Ethics and the Search for Christian Unity."

The Area was represented at the 41st Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in 1976.

Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations, 1973-75, have been concluded. The report describes "Our Task," "Our Experience."

United/Presbyterian Conversations in Canada will continue through the coming year.

The Committee to Nominate an Area Secretary presented the name of the Reverend James E. Andrews, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. He was declared elected by acclamation, his appointment to be confirmed by the Executive Committee of the Alliance. Dr. Donald C. MacDonald, Clerk of Assembly, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, was unanimously elected to serve as Area Treasurer, subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee.

A Panel on the Caribbean Churches informed the delegates of church life in the Caribbean and declared that there is renewed interest in the church and a deepening of spiritual life among the members of the churches and that progress is being made in youth work.

The Committee on Civil and Religious Liberty presented Professor Charles C. West of Princeton Theological Seminary in an address on the subject, "The Christian in Business." The address dealt with, first, the character of economic power; second, the basis of this power in the Christian faith; and third, the efforts of the Christian Church today to do something about it.

A Resolution on Civil and Religious Liberties in South Korea, stating strong disapproval of the repression of civil rights and justice by the South Korean government, was communicated to the United States Department of State, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Secretary General of the United Nations, to the presidential candidates of the Democratic and Republican Parties, and to the League of Women Voters. Affirmation of Christian solidarity with them in their struggles and assurance of prayers and concern were communicated to the Korean Churches of the Reformed faith.

Issues relating to Multi-National Corporations were considered. This is a continuing concern of the Area Council.

The main address of the 1976 Area Council was given by Dr. George S. Hendry, emeritus Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology of Princeton Theological Seminary, on the theme of the upcoming Centennial Consultation, "The Glory of God and the Future of Man."

This is my final report as North American and Caribbean Area Secretary. It has been a privilege to serve in the program of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and to be a part of this world-wide fellowship. The theme of the upcoming Centennial Consultation, "The Glory of God and the Future of Man," focuses our attention afresh on our only hope in life and in death. Hope is the precious ingredient that is too often absent in today's world. But

we must echo Alan Paton's statement that "to hope is to desire with expectation." And this expectation has been wondrously confirmed in the Crucified and Risen Christ, who reigns as Lord of life and of death.

Respectfully submitted,
James I. McCord,
North American and Caribbean Area Secretary

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

After ten years of service to the Reformed Church in America, the Interchurch Relations Committee recommended to the General Synod of 1974 that its work be brought to a conclusion and that in its place there be established a new kind of committee. That new committee is the Permanent Committee on Christian Unity. Whereas previously extensive effort was made to report on meetings of an ecumenical nature, the new direction of the committee is to take more initiatory action and stress creativity in what we do as a church. Nonetheless, ecumenical endeavors are still monitored, representatives are appointed and suggestions are made to the membership of the Reformed Church relative to matters of unity.

The review committee reports with enthusiasm the excitement it found in this new direction, reflected both in the new image of the permanent committee and the direction it is currently seeking. The committee found itself caught up in the endeavor of the permanent committee and wishes to confirm the new direction.

The Committee on Christian Unity divides its work into three broad areas of concern; church to church matters, ecumenical agencies, and new developments in the Christian Church.

Church-To-Church

Last year's Synod approved a new relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in which we were said to be "in ecclesiastical fellowship." The permanent committee has structured itself so that it may further clarify the meaning and implications of this new relationship. Already many activities, such as worship, education, youth work, and missions, are done jointly and cooperatively. The dialogue has begun.

R-1. We RECOMMEND that the dialogue and relationship between all levels of the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church be continued and encouraged and that new areas of common concern be explored. (ADOPTED)

Perhaps the most significant manifestation of the permanent committee's work with the Christian Reformed Church was the joint production of the Evangelism Manifesto. The Manifesto has been sent to each of the congregations of the RCA and is currently being included in the materials of the Good News People.

R-2. We RECOMMEND that during this time in our denomination when evangelism and church growth are being emphasized, every congregation be urged to be conscious of and make use of the Evangelism Manifesto and the related study guides. (ADOPTED)

The review committee recognizes that not every area of the Reformed Church has significant numbers of both Reformed and Christian Reformed churches in the same geographical area. However, such areas may seek to do what they can to promote Christian unity in their own area. Therefore,

R-3. **We RECOMMEND that all Reformed Churches on the local level be encouraged to have or to continue dialogue with local Christian churches of other denominations in the area for the purpose of fellowship, witness to our common love for Christ, mutual understanding, and joint action.** (ADOPTED)

In 1976 the General Synod approved entering into a special relationship with the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (the Black Reformed Church) at the very time violence was breaking out in their country. The Permanent Committee has found it difficult to communicate with our fellow Christians in South Africa.

R-4. **We RECOMMEND that the Committee on Christian Unity be encouraged to explore all ways and means to communicate with the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika in order to help, assist, and support them during these difficult days in conflict. In addition, we urge the committee to endeavor to further communicate with other Reformed Churches in South Africa during this time of national crisis.** (ADOPTED)

Ecumenical Agencies

The reports of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches as well as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches are to be found on pages 256-267. We urge their perusal and study in order that the wider ecumenical relationships of the Reformed Church might be understood better.

The Permanent Committee on Christian Unity has been contemplating the exploration of membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod to which a number of other Reformed bodies presently belong. Therefore,

R-5. **We RECOMMEND that the Committee on Christian Unity explore the question of Reformed Church membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and report to the Synod of 1978.** (ADOPTED)

The Permanent Committee, through its chairman, has been monitoring the developments of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) during this past year. One of the items to come to the attention of the Committee was the Interim Eucharistic Fellowship in which the congregations in a given area covenant to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper together several times a year. Information relative to this Fellowship may be obtained by writing to COCU, 228 Alexander St., Princeton, New Jersey, 08540.

R-6. **We RECOMMEND that the General Synod encourage pastors and congregations in the RCA to explore and investigate the Interim Eucharistic Fellowship and to take initiative in establishing such ecumenical fellowships in their communities.** (ADOPTED)

Widespread participation continues to be a problem for ecumenical efforts. Indeed, the review committee laments the growing self-concern and lack of interest in other churches on the part of our own and other denominations, called the "new tribalism" in some quarters, and rejoices in ecumenical relations. Therefore,

R-7. **We RECOMMEND that the permanent Committee on Christian Unity make greater effort to inform and to encourage the whole church to take a deep interest in ecumenical Christian relations.** (ADOPTED)

New Developments

The Committee on Christian Unity has reported on its efforts to place high priority on the innovative. It has sought to keep abreast of emerging ecumenical factors in the life of the larger church. For example, it will send an RCA observer to the National Charismatic Conference this summer. In addition, a member of the committee has attended the meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals this past February.

To facilitate input the Committee proposes the enlistment of others in the task of the monitoring of such ecumenical gatherings, journals, and other events. Therefore,

R-8. **We RECOMMEND that the Committee on Christian Unity enlist the active cooperation of RCA members and organizations in helping it keep abreast of ecumenical events, programs, and journals in the National and World Church and that the committee communicate this information to the Reformed Church membership by every appropriate means.** (ADOPTED)

The Committee has expressed a desire to learn the ecumenical stance of the membership of the RCA. Thus, it suggests that regional meetings be held to which representative people be invited to participate in such a discussion in order that new directions in ecumenism in the RCA may be found. Should such a plan be carried out it might well be the first time in our history that a significant number of RCA members have been involved in ecumenical discussions.

R-9. **We RECOMMEND in principle the idea of the ecumenical consultation and instruct the Committee on Christian Unity to continue to work on the design and to present the completed design to the Synod of 1978.** (ADOPTED)

Especially because of the place of our meeting and the extensive contribution that he has made to ecumenism, your committee notes with sadness the passing of Maurice Te Paske. At the time of his death, Mr. Te Paske was a member of the governing board of the National Council of Churches and was always a strong advocate of local ecumenism as well. He served the church well!

The review committee also calls attention to the role that Dr. Marion de Velder has played as the RCA's "ecumenical ambassador." Few in our church are aware of the role Dr. de Velder has played in the various councils of churches, both nationally and internationally. He has represented the Reformed Church with honor and integrity to the councils and agencies, as well as representing them honestly to us. He has the respect of church leaders all over the world and the admiration of his own constituency. The review committee joins the General Synod in expressing our deepest gratitude for his faithful service to the cause of ecumenicity and the Lordship of Jesus Christ in His church. We wish him a genuine sense of satisfaction and accomplishment for having served such an important cause so nobly.

R-10. We RECOMMEND that, pending the adoption of this report, we hear from the fraternal delegates and that Dr. Charles J. Wissink, chairman of the permanent committee on christian unity, be called upon to introduce them to the General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Charles J. Wissink, Chairperson of the Permanent Committee on Christian Unity, introduced John Bratt, member of the Interchurch Relations Committee of the Christian Reformed Church and Professor of Religion and Theology at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Bernard J. Haan, President of Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa; and Dick Karres, Secretary for Coordination of the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Hague. These fraternal delegates brought greetings to the General Synod.

REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

The Theological Commission met in two regular sessions: October 27-29, 1976, at Western Theological Seminary, and February 16-18, 1977, at New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

The Commission is pleased to submit its report on the following referrals and assignments given to it by the General Synod and on other subjects it has studied.

1. THE *DIVINE PRINCIPLE:* A CRITIQUE OF THE THOUGHT OF SUN MYUNG MOON

Introduction

In light of a growing concern throughout the church prompted by encounters with the followers of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and at the specific request of the Classis of Paramus, the Theological Commission initiates this study of the theology of the Unification Church. Considerable journalistic attention has focused on the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his movement. Articles have singled out the organization's aggressive proselytism, its fund raising tactics, its involvement in national politics, and its professed goal of the unification of all religions. Other accounts have covered the personal experiences of college age youth and distraught parents who struggled to extricate them from the grip of this movement. Biographical accounts of Moon have covered his religious pilgrimage in Korea and his movement's limited success there. Mr. Moon was excommunicated by the Presbyterian Church in Korea as long ago as 1948. The National Council of Churches in Korea also states unequivocally that the Unification Church is not Christian.

Few studies have sought to analyze the teachings of Moon, especially his lengthy *Divine Principle*, supposedly a new revelation that supersedes both the Old and New Testaments. Subsequent speeches and writings of Moon and his followers reecho the content of this writing. A critique of this primary document, we believe, will disclose clearly where Moon has deviated from the Christian faith and has created a cultic religious system which combines Christian ideas with Oriental religion and philosophy. These elements, plus misinterpreted portions of the Bible, are employed to shape an ideology with Moon as the central authority, indeed the messiah of our times. By concentrating on the thought of the *Divine Principle* we intend to warn against its theological errors and to offer a basis for recovering those deceived by the movement.

The *Divine Principle* opens with the assertion that happiness is the primary goal of all men and right desire the means for its attainment (pp. 1f.). Moon proposes that Truth can be known only by the dual use of religion and science. Neither alone is adequate. This is why all religions and sciences to date have failed to find the whole truth. He offers a new scientific religion which can explain the dual dimensions (internal and external) of reality. Christianity has failed especially in its handling of the physical dimension. Thus it has spawned materialism and cannot counter communism. It cannot halt racism or adultery, nor can it perfect persons and keep them pure from sin.

> It may be displeasing to religious believers, especially to Christians, to learn that a new expression of truth must appear. They believe that the Bible, which they now have, is perfect and absolute in itself. Truth, of course, is unique, eternal, unchangeable, and absolute. The Bible, however, is not the truth itself, but a textbook teaching the truth. Naturally, the quality of teaching and the method and extent of giving the truth must vary according to each age, for the truth is given to people of different ages, who are at different spiritual and intellectual levels (p. 9. All quotes are from the *Divine Principle* unless otherwise noted.)

Moon insists that the symbols and mysteries of the Bible need to be deciphered according to the *Divine Principle.*

Claim of a New, Superior Revelation and Authority for Its Mediator

After rejecting the final authority of the Christian scriptures, Moon argues that the progression of history necessitates a new or continuing revelation. The arrival of the "Last Days" and the approaching of "one final war" between democracy and communism make necessary this "new truth."

> Therefore, in order that God's providence of salvation might be completely fulfilled, the new truth must bring all mankind into a new world of absolute goodness by elevating the spiritualism advocated in the democratic world to a new and higher dimension, finally assimilating even materialism. In this manner, the truth should be able to unite into one absolute way all the existing religions as well as all the 'isms' and ideas which have existed since the beginning of human history (p. 11; cf. p. 131).

The oft-repeated phrase, "the new truth" becomes a synonym for the "revelations" given via Moon. The *Divine Principle* is only part of that truth, leaving the door open for the leader to exercise continuing authority over his followers by further disclosures. As cultic leader, Moon not only criticizes Christianity, but portrays himself as the victorious completer of the task at which Jesus failed. First, Christianity is found wanting.

> A vast number of Christians throughout the 2,000 years of Christian history have been confident that they have been completely saved by the blood of Jesus' crucifixion. Yet, in reality, not one individual, home or society has existed free from sin. The Christian spirit has actually been on the path of decline day after day (p. 15).

Then Moon claims to bring a truth that is "new," "ultimate," and "final."

> The new truth, then, should be able to resolve all of the fundamental questions of life. With all these questions clairified, the reality of God as an absolute being who plans and guides history cannot be denied. When the truth is known, all will come to understand that the historical events which man has seen and experienced are the reflections of God's heart, struggling to save fallen man (p. 14).

Like the ancient Gnostics, Moon also claims to know the secrets of God. He asserts that he can resolve all the intellectual problems associated with the trinity, original sin, redemption, second advent, prophecy, etc. The authority of the message and that of the self-styled mediator are equated.

> This truth must appear as a revelation from God Himself. This new truth has already appeared. With the fulness of time, God has sent His messenger to resolve the fundamental questions of life and the universe. His name is Sun Myung Moon. For many decades, he wandered in a vast spiritual world in search of the ultimate truth. On this path, he endured suffering unimagined by anyone in human history. God alone will remember it. Knowing that no one can find the ultimate truth to save mankind without going through the bitterest of trials, he fought alone against myriads of Satanic forces both in the spiritual and physical worlds, and finally triumphed over them all. In this way, he came in contact with many saints in Paradise and with Jesus, and thus brought into light all the heavenly secrets through his communion with God (p. 16).

Moon is an admirer of Emmanual Swedenborg (1688-1772) from whom he may have borrowed some of his ideas about "communication with the spirit world" (p. 463). More than this, Moon credits himself not only with mediating esoteric knowledge, but with vicarious suffering resulting in victory over the satanic hosts. By claiming what the New Testament ascribes solely to Jesus Christ, Moon and his Principle are opposed to the Gospel.

Part I (ch. 1-7, pp. 19-218) focuses on the theme of creation and part II (ch. 1-6, pp. 221-536) on restoration. Of the many phrases coined by Moon, some are derived from Oriental religious philosophy and others from biblical terminology. Christian readers from the East would likely recognize these amalgamations but those in the West, especially those unschooled in world religions and slightly acquainted with the Bible, might easily believe a prophet has arisen. The continuous replay of such jargon (with the overtones of Christianity, but without its content) has an appeal to idealistic adolescents and young adults who are searching for truth and meaning.

The Dualism of All Reality

Moon contends that all creation has "dual characteristics," the positive and the negative, the internal (known via religion) and the external (known via science). There is always a reciprocal relationship between these two poles of reality. Here is a theory much like the Yang-Yin modes of Taoism. Moon tries to find a similar dualism in the Fourth Gospel. Moon's dualistic view of reality leads him to state that even God, who is reflected by his creation, must be both positive and negative, both male and female. He goes on to say that God the heavenly Father is male. Jesus is the second Adam and the Holy Spirit is female, the second Eve (p. 215). To add to the confusion, God relates to creation as male to female.

> Before creating the universe, God existed as the internal masculine subject, and He created the universe as His external feminine object (p. 25).

Authority is vested with the male whether in God–creation or man-woman relations.

In Moon's eclectic system, God the source of all energy, is the reservoir from which every creature can draw through what he calls "give and take" action. In order to advance, all life must move in a spherical or circular fashion around God, its core. It moves through four points in the circle, something he calls the "four position foundation." Within each of these four



positions, there is a process of origin-division-union (O-D-U action), e.g., husband-wife-offspring. Life involves many stages to be attained if one is to progress to perfection (not unlike the elaborate system of advancement found in Buddhism). The symbol embossed on the cover of the *Divine Principle* and elsewhere represents this motion with God at its center.

Moon's explanation of creation has generated its own view of God, man, and salvation. The Principle (like Tao or the Confucian "heaven") runs contrary to the biblical portrait of God and his relation to creation. Once the Principle is created, it largely controls the universe.

> During the period of growth, each being in creation grows autonomously by the Power of the *Divine Principle*. Therefore, God, as the author of the Principle, relates to the creation indirectly, dealing directly only with those results of its growth which are in accordance with the Principle (p. 55).

Responsibility for attaining perfection is thrust back upon man, for only perfected persons are fit for fellowship with God. In spite of frequent efforts at scriptural proof-texting, Moon's conglomeration remains foreign to the Bible.

Man as the Center and End of Creation

The *Divine Principle* has a man-centered or humanistic outlook.

> For what purpose, then, does the universe exist; and what is its center? The answer is none other than man himself. That is why God, after creating man, told him to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28) (p. 37).

Man has perfection within his grasp. The goal is to become a perfect Adam and a perfect Eve (note the significance of marriage for fulfillment) and thus become the nucleus and lord of creation.

> Here, for the first time, the purpose of creation is accomplished. God, our Parent, is able to abide with perfected men as His children, and peacefully rest for eternity. . . . Here God's Word would be physically incarnated for the first time in human history (p. 39).

Man, thus perfected, recovers not only Eden and his "original mind" but becomes an incarnation of truth.

The three-fold purpose of man as stated in the creation mandate of Genesis 1:28 is given several new twists. With a penchant for numbers, Moon constantly finds formulas and codes in creation and history. The first purpose, "to be fruitful" is translated to mean the perfectability of the individual.

> The man whose mind and body have formed a four-position foundation of the original God-centered nature becomes God's temple (I Cor. 3:16) and forms one body with Him (John 14:20). This means that man attains deity. . . . A man with perfected individuality feels all that God feels, as if God's feelings were his own. Consequently, he cannot do anything which would cause God grief. This means that such a man could never fall (p. 43).

The second purpose, "to multiply and fill the earth" makes marriage and a family necessary for salvation. Like Adam and Eve, persons "should become husband and wife, forming one unit" having children and forming a family. Marriage (reportedly involving "purification" through sexual activity) and the begetting of "pure" offspring occupy a large place in the Unification Church. Arranged marriages (by Moon or by his subordinates) and mass weddings are a part of this program. The third purpose, "to subdue the earth and have dominion," is translated into an aggressive plan by which Moon and his followers will dominate the universe ("separating" persons and properties from Satan) and build the kingdom of God on earth.

For a man trained in science, Moon has a simplistic view of creation. It is all modeled after man. Man is the measure of all things. The human body and spirit form a microcosm of the universe (p. 57). This allows man to become the exalted lord of all creation.

> Only man, who consists of both flesh and spirit, which enables him to dominate the visible and invisible worlds, can rule the two worlds. . . . God created man to be the mediator and the center harmony of the universe (p. 59).

It is little wonder that an unabashed confidence permeates Moon's followers in their program to subject all to their master.

Sin and Salvation, or the Fall and Restoration

Moon's fanciful interpretation of the Genesis account of the fall fails to take into account that sin is primarily the rejection of God's rule. The Tree of Life is associated with Adam and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil with Eve, i.e., positivity and negativity. Sin involves forming an illicit sexual relationship with Satan, a fallen angel. It is Eve who brings ill upon mankind. She is seduced by Satan. Thus the fall is a sexual transgression, "an improper act of love" with the angel (p. 73). Eve multiplied children of evil through her "love centered on Satan," especially Cain (a prototype of all evil men and societies). Thus "the root of man's sin stems from adultery" as Lucifer dominates human love. Evil originated when Satan wanted to monopolize God's love and when that failed he tempted Eve to submit (p. 78). Continuing his theory, Moon remarks:

> Adam and Eve should have become husband and wife, eternally centered on God, after their perfection. However, Eve joined with Adam after she had the illicit relationship with the archangel in her period of growth. . . . Adam was Eve's only hope for returning to God. Feeling this, Eve tempted Adam, just as the archangel had tempted her. . . . Adam by becoming one body with Eve, inherited all the elements Eve had received from Lucifer, in the same manner she did (pp. 79f.).

For Moon, sin is not so much a personal rejection of God and his love, as the violating of "the heavenly law" (Principle) and the establishing of a reciprocal relation with Satan (p 88). Through one's biological parents, one inherits sin and an allegiance to Satan (pp. 214-216). This may help explain why parents are deserted by Unification Church members as satanic. Moon's dualistic viewpoint grants Satan the unwarranted distinction of being in charge of most of creation.

Moon's view of salvation is clearly related to sex just as sin is. Marriage is for the purpose of begetting a cleansed lineage. It is through purification by sexual intercourse that new Eves and Adams emerge. Purification is associated with a marriage ceremony blessed by Moon and the movement. Salvation is definitely tied to sexual love.

> Since the power of love is stronger than that of the Principle, Adam and Eve could not have fallen if they had become husband and wife after their perfection, and entered into God's direct dominion through their absolute love. In this case, no man nor any other power could break the power of this absolute conjugal love (p 83).

This appeals to the modern confidence that sexual expression is a cure all. According to Moon all religions have tried an ascetic approach to the problem, but "the Lord of the Second Advent must be able to solve this problem completely" (p. 76). Satisfactory sexual unions are seen as a mark of restoration.

Salvation is spelled out as the perfecting of man through his restoration to God (later we will see this taking place via the Lord of the Second Advent). Persons become "one body with God through spherical movement centering on Him" (p. 39). This involves O-D-U action, the multiplication of "physiological bodies" through procreation and the conversion of others in "give and take action." Salvation is something earned by those going through several cycles of growth. This elaborate scheme for attaining salvation by a process of sacrifice and achievement carries a certain appeal.

> Thus, man reached perfection only after having acquired the ability to rule the rest of creation, including the angels. He accomplishes this by going through the period of indirect dominion, fulfilling his own position of responsibility, and inheriting God's creatorship. . . . Thus he may restore his dominion over all things, including Satan, by accomplishing his portion of responsibility in accordance with the principle of restoration (pp. 55f).

Marriage is one of the more advanced stages, for therein men and women become new Adams and Eves united to God. Such couples are now under God's "direct dominion" and have attained the "four position foundation on the family level" (pp. 56ff.).

This idea of the perfectibility of man results in a new "Christology" (pp. 205-218) which discusses not the person and work of Christ but the perfection of the individual. Each man becomes his own "christ," that is, a perfect person.

> The man who has attained the purpose of creation, whoever he may be, is an existence unique in the whole universe. Buddha's statement, 'I am my own Lord throughout heaven and earth,' is reasonable in light of this principle (p. 207).

Moon's religious system is anthropocentric. All value revolves around man. The perfected man is so "valuable as to even possess deity" (p. 209). Jesus is such a man, but no more so than others who attain the purpose of creation (p. 209).

Moon has devised a system for removing guilt. A member by suffering "the works of evil spirit man" can liquidate a debt of sin, either that of his own or of his ancestors. Thus he can avoid God's judgment and can advance

(pp. 186f.). This may provide a clue as to why members are so ready to endure rebuke and privation for the cause. Another way for "earthly saints" to gain credit is "by believing in the Lord of the Second Advent and ministering to him" (pp. 188f.). Moon assures such devotees that "all the spirit men in Paradise" will descend to work with them (an allusion to his version of reincarnation). This reminds one of the *bodhisattvas* of Buddhism.

Moon's theory of "restoration through indemnity" (to compensate for or insure against loss) is developed in part II of the book. It is a system of "works righteousness" like that opposed by Paul in the New Testament. For Moon, man can meet the requirements of salvation. "Man, who lost the original position or status endowed at the creation, must set up certain necessary conditions in order to restore himself" (p. 224). This has a "do it yourself" appeal. Each member is expected to offer "value" greater than his own worth. This is defined repeatedly by two terms, faith and substance. One must have faith in the "central figure" (formerly Abraham, Moses, Jesus, now the Lord of the Second Advent, i.e., Moon). Secondly, one must produce materials (goods and cash) that can be used by this figure to build the kingdom. The phrase "substantial sacrifice" (p. 247) is echoed a thousand times in the fund-raising rallies of the movement. Sacrificial effort to win converts to the movement is likewise part of this merit system. Elsewhere Moon has said:

> Good people must be able to win others. . . . And if you love anyone at all, you should want to love him with your whole heart, even at the cost of your life (from *Who We Are*, a leaflet of the Unification Church).

Considering that the salvation of his followers hinges upon their sacrificial production, it is little wonder that Moon's empire has grown in terms of assets and membership.

Resurrection, Reincarnation, and Predestination

Moon brings a peculiar twist to several ideas. He rejects the biblical concept of a physical resurrection of the body (Jesus' or ours). Like the Greeks, he argues for an immortal soul which transmigrates to the world of the spirit. Resurrection in the Bible, he says, refers only to rebirth in this lifetime. Moon contends the Bible teaches reincarnation in that Elijah reappeared as John the Baptist. He believes that other "spiritual men" of the Old Testament age descended in New Testament times and moreover the spirits of the New Testament era will return in the final age of perfection to serve the Lord of the Second Advent (p. 183). Spirits and ghosts (p. 185) flutter to and fro in Moon's world. Predestination is used to confirm the authority of the Lord of the Second Advent. All saints (including all true Christians) "are sooner or later destined to attend the Lord of the Second Advent" (p. 189). This inevitability is used to urge members to greater devotion. "God's purpose of creation is to be fulfilled only by man's accomplishment of his responsibility" (p. 197).

History and the Utopian Kingdom

History, says Moon, has as its goal, man's salvation. This he calls "the providence of restoration." Fallen man will be restored to "the original world of goodness" (p. 105) and all religions, all cultures will become "one unified world" (p. 108). "The purpose of human history is to restore the Garden of

Eden in its original form, centered on Christ, who is to come as the Tree of Life" (p. 110). In the final age, it will be the Lord of the Second Advent, not Jesus, who is in command. "The Last Days" will be the age in which "the sinful world under Satanic dominion will be transformed into the world of good sovereignty" (p. 111). Moon insists that we are now entering this "new age" in which the three goals (perfecting of individuals, true parenthood, and comination of the external and internal world) will be accomplished on earth by men.

The utopia of Moon is described by several phrases: Eden, a world of good sovereignty, one unified world, one family, and the kingdom of God on earth. The reference to "on earth" is most important. This new ideal realm will be built within history. It will be physical and material as well as spiritual and ideal. The Unification Church, the growing empire of perfected persons and the properties acquired in the name of God, is equated with the kingdom finally come.

History is divided into three great dispensations or ages of 2,000 years each: Adam to Abraham, Abraham to Christ, and Christ to the "Lord of the Second Advent." In this schematized view of history, each of the three eras is divided into mathematical units (time spans of 400, 210, 120 years, etc.). Not surprisingly, the "Lord of the Second Advent" will arrive 400 years after Luther. Moon was born in 1920 and had his first revelation in 1936. Some of his followers believe the new age began in 1960 when Moon married Hak-Ja Han (his 3rd or 4th wife). This they understand as the Lord taking his bride (cf. Rev. 19) to become the true Parents of mankind. Others add that following 21 years of testing, Moon and his followers will reach their year of destiny, 1981. An elaborate chart (p. 403) gives all of this an apparent simplicity. Each of these three eras has certain parallels as "history progresses in a spiral of repeating identical patterns" (p. 373). Each age had its own revelation and its own "central figure" (Old Testament-Moses, New Testament-Jesus, and finally the "Completed Testament"-Lord of the Second Advent). The first age is one of formation, the second one of growth and the third one of perfection. Salvation history progresses from individual to family to tribe to nation to the world. How does Moon discover this in the Bible? Selected biblical materials are twisted to fit a preconceived scheme. His faulty handling of history produces a faulty eschatology. The final age which begins under the Lord of the Second Advent (meaning Moon not Jesus) will be a time when the new "ideology" of the *Divine Principle* will "swiftly flow into the hearts of all mankind" (p. 424). The enlightened must rapidly spread this new truth within the shortest possible time (p. 424) so that an improved "democratic society," a "reconstruction of the Messianic Kingdom" (p. 441), can appear.

The Place of Jesus

Where does Jesus fit into Moon's revelation? Members of the Unification Church may speak of Jesus as savior and Lord. However, they mean something quite different from the teaching of the New Testament. Jesus is a "central figure" of a past era to be superseded by the Lord of the Second Advent, master of the final age of perfection.

> Jesus came to restore the ideal world in the form intended at the creation. However, due to the disbelief of the faithless people, man's portion of responsibility was left unaccomplished, prolonging the

> fulfillment of God's will until the time of the Lord's Second Advent. Jesus was ultimately crucified, thus accomplishing only spiritual salvation (p. 113).

"Only spiritual salvation" indicates that Jesus' work was inadequate. Jesus did not fulfill his task nor will he return physically as Lord and Judge of the world. Biblical passages referring to the Father (Jn. 16:25) or to the coming of the Holy Spirit or to the second coming of Jesus are converted into promises of the Lord of the Second Advent, referring to a person other than Jesus (see p. 135). In the process, the sufficiency of the atoning work of Christ on the cross is rejected.

> . . . the cross cannot completely liquidate our original sin, and that it leaves man's original nature not yet perfectly restored. Jesus promised the Lord would come, because Jesus knew he could not fulfill the purpose of his advent as the Messiah through redemption by the cross (p. 142).

Moon rejects the idea that Jesus' death on the cross was in the plan of God. The many biblical passages indicating that Jesus came to be a ransom for many (Is. 53:10-12; Mt. 26:39; Mk. 10:45; Lk. 24:25-27, 46; Jn. 3:16) are ignored or allegorized. The cross was caused simply by "the disbelief of the people." John the Baptist is also made out to be an unbeliever whose failure contributed to the crucifixion (pp. 157ff., 346f.). Jesus may have defeated Satan during his temptations (pp. 353f.) but Satan finally killed Jesus (p. 362) allowing Jesus to establish only a partial "spiritual rule" (p. 362). Thus Moon robs the cross of its atoning power and Jesus of his Lordship.

The Second Advent and the New Lord

Where does all this lead? It leaves the completion of full salvation and the establishment of the kingdom up to the Lord of the Second Advent. Fulfillment of salvation history and the begetting of a new lineage will be his. He will bring the "Completed Testament" and he will usher in a "substantial new world" in the final age of perfection.

The *Divine Principle* establishes the time of the second advent, the manner of the "Lord's" coming and the place of his "birth." Moon suggests that the "Last Days" have arrived. Scripture is made to say something quite the opposite of its obvious intent. The Bible indicates that the hour of the second advent is known only by the Father (Mt. 24:36). Moon counters this with a verse wrenched out of context which suggests that God tells his secrets to the prophets (Amos 3:7). By intimating that he is both Father and prophet, Moon claims that he is in a position to know the date. Surely this is contrary to the clear teaching of scripture. This is an example of the manipulation of scripture to fit personal aspirations! Another clue that we are in the time of the second advent, says Moon, is that we are facing a final showdown, a final war (World War III) between democracy (Abel type society) and communism (Cain type). Stalin (to show how quickly such predictions are outdated) was pictured as the opponent of the Lord of the Second Advent (p. 494). Communist advances in China and Korea were seen as signs of the impending last battle in which the Lord will emerge victorious with his kingdom. His followers (i.e., the Unification Church) will act as a "nervous system" transmitting God's commands in the new world to come (pp. 469-71).

Who is the Lord of the Second Advent? Even a casual reading of the *Divine Principle* allows for no other conclusion than that he is Sun Myung Moon. In the training sessions of the Unification Church, no room for speculation as to the Lord's identity is allowed.

> Christians on earth may not know who the Lord of the Second Advent is, and when and where he comes. But spirit men in the spirit world know who the Lord of the Second Advent is, and where and when he comes. Therefore, for their full resurrection, the spirit men must direct their counterparts to come to the Lord of the Second Advent, and to become his disciples, in order for them to get full resurrection (quoted from *The Divine Principle: Study Guide,* Part I, by President Young Whi Kim, Belvedere, Tarrytown, New York, 1973, p. 180).

Almost every imaginable ascription is attributed to Moon in the Unification Church movement, for example, King, Father, and True Parent. He and his wife are often called "True Parents," in contrast to biological parents who transmit sin to their children.

Moon makes no effort to hide the fact that he is the third Adam and that he and his perfect wife form a trinity with God. He invites other perfected couples to become trinities with God in a similar fashion. Early in his teaching, Moon openly acknowledged that he was the Lord of the Second Advent or Messiah. Presently, both he and his followers hedge on the matter, apparently preferring to allow his disciples to absorb the news gradually. Moon's self-serving prophecy continues:

> Consequently, at the Second Advent, he the Lord must realize the Kingdom of God on earth intended at Jesus' coming and become the True Parent of mankind and the King of the Kingdom as well. Naturally, even at the Second Advent, the Lord must be born in the flesh on the earth, as in the First Advent (p. 511).

Since it is a fact that Moon was born in 1920 of human parents, he makes every effort to explain away the New Testament passages that predict that the Lord will "come on clouds of glory" (Dan. 7:13; Mt. 24:30; Acts 1:2-11). In the *Divine Principle* he wears down resistance by tireless repetition of his peculiar point of view.

Having established the time and manner (i.e., natural birth) of the second advent, Moon is anxious to determine the place of the "Lord's" origin. He insists that the Messiah will not simply appear as sun dawns in the East but will be born in a specific Eastern nation. By showing why China and Japan could never qualify and by ignoring other Asian lands, Moon designates Korea as the winner (e.g. pp. 520ff.). He then proceeds to incorporate into his revelation Korean myths about an ideal figure (whom he hopes will satisfy Buddhists, Confucianists, Jews, Muslims, and Christians, p. 189) who will bring in the final age. As a patriotic Korean, he makes Korea "the Third Israel" which must suffer before the messiah appears in her midst. In Moon's ideology, Korea and a Korean (himself) become the center of history and the universe. It is ironic that this new cultic religion which has been rejected as nonsense by most Korean Christians should win adherence in America and the rest of the world.

The errors of Moon might be excused as another case of self glorification had he not attempted to usurp the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to offer a psuedo-kingdom. Because of this, he and his followers will be judged as deceived and deceiving, as offering stones instead of the bread of life, Jesus Christ.

For the Christian church, the task cannot end with a critique of the *Divine Principle*. It must clearly declare that the Unification Church and its founder are apostate. The movement rejects the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and proposes a way of salvation by works and by allegiance to a false messiah. The church must warn every seeker of the truth against the movement's deceptive and deficient teaching. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I Jn. 5:21). Christians must be cautioned against supporting this idolatrous operation in any fashion.

> Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work (II Jn. 9-11).

On the positive side, the church must renew its efforts to bear witness to the new life in Christ among the multitudes in America and the world who are living in a spiritual vacuum, grasping for some truth, someone in whom they can believe. They must be introduced to Jesus as the Truth who makes men free (Jn. 8:32, 36; 14:6).

> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Christians must also reach out to those who have been deluded by the Unification Church with a view to drawing them into the fellowship of Christ and his church.

> My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and some one brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins (Js. 5:19-20).

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RECOMMENDATION:

R-1. The Theological Commission recommends that General Synod adopt the above statement concerning the Unification Church and the teachings of its founder, and that it make the above document available in print to the Church at large. (ADOPTED)

2. THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Introduction

This study of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is being undertaken in response to a number of questions arising from members of the Reformed Church in America. Specifically, it comes in response to a request that was expressed on the floor of the 1975 General Synod that the Theological Commission attempt to provide a biblical and theological perspective for understanding and evaluating experiences of spiritual awakening in the lives of Christians. What is meant by the filling of the Holy Spirit? Have people who have gone through spiritual renewal in their lives experienced the filling of the Spirit in the same sense that the Bible speaks of it? They deserve an answer.

The Fullness in Neo-Pentecostalism

The "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and the "fullness of the Spirit" are closely related, sometimes even identified, in the literature of Neo-Pentecostals. In their book, *The Holy Spirit and You,* Dennis and Rita Bennett, Episcopalian Neo-Pentecostals, say the following. "After Jesus has *baptized* you in the Holy Spirit, your life will begin to have real power. . . . The moment you receive the *fullness* of the Holy Spirit, that is, the minute you begin to allow the power of God to overflow from your spirit into your soul and body, and into the world

around . . ." (pp. 75-76). On the cover of his book *The Overflowing Life* Dr. Robert C. Frost of the Meolodyland School of Theology asks, "What happens after the *baptism* in the Holy Spirit?" The opening words of the book answer the question in this way, "After you are *filled* with the Holy Spirit, you will find a whole new dimension opening up in your Christian life" (p. 17). A Neo-Pentecostal Episcopalian rector, Robert Benjamin Hall, has written *There's More*. He, like Bennett and Frost, moves from baptism to filling as though they are identical. He reports, "Not long after I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I had occasion to call a certain Baptist church. The young lady who answered the telephone was completely unknown to me, and we exchanged only three sentences as I asked for information about some matter. But after these three sentences, I dared to say to her, Have you received the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit? And she said, Yes, I have. How did you know? It was the note of joy in the voice of this unknown secretary that convinced me that she had been *filled* with the Spirit of Christ" (p. 19). It is evident that for these Neo-Pentecostals "being filled with the Spirit" is closely identified with "being baptized in the Spirit."

In a chapter entitled "Temptations of the Spirit-filled Believer," in his book, *Now That You've Been Baptized in the Spirit*, Donald Gee, Assembly of God author, writes, "The Christian is first of all born of the Spirit. Later, exactly like his Master, he receives the *baptism* in the Spirit as a separate experience. . . . Devoted Pentecostal workers will often spend days and nights helping hungry hearts into the blessing of the Spirit-*filled* life" (pp. 17-18). Gee does not describe this life as "Spirit-baptized," but "Spirit-filled." For the Neo-Pentecostal the experience of being baptized in the Spirit is normally equated with being filled with the Spirit. We turn now to examine the biblical evidence.

Old Testament References to Spirit-Filling

Twice in Exodus, Bezalel, the master craftsman who worked on the tabernacle, is described as being filled with the Spirit of God. "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs" (Exodus 31:3). In Exodus 35:31 practically the same words are found. What is before us is what we would call a special gift or talent, an ability in the field of artistic craftsmanship. In keeping with the biblical understanding of such gifts, they are not just natural talents, but they come directly from Yahweh.

The final Old Testament reference to being filled with the Spirit is in Micah. Micah contrasts his ministry and that of the false prophets by describing himself in these words, "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (3:8). He sees himself equipped by Yahweh's Spirit for a specific task, as was Bezalel; but his task is that of proclaiming God's judgment on faithless Israel.

There are numerous references to the Spirit's coming upon people, to the Spirit's being poured out on people, and to the Spirit's being put into people, but the references in Exodus and in Micah are the only ones that speak of being filled with the Spirit. They both appear to speak of being equipped for a specific task. They do not point us in the direction of emotions, but of ministry. And we shall see that the New Testament data point in the same direction.

New Testament References to Spirit-Filling

A. The Filling in Luke - Acts

In the opening chapter of the Gospel of Luke we encounter three references to being filled with the Holy Spirit. All three are in the story of the birth of John the Baptist. The first reference is found in the words of Gabriel to Zachariah describing the kind of child that his son will be, "And he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (Luke 1:15b-17). What we noted in the Old Testament usage continues here in this first New Testament passage. As in Micah 3:8, John the Baptist is to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to equip him to fulfill his ministry of being the forerunner of the Messiah. A weak, frail human could not do the job in his own strength. His whole being must be energized by the Holy Spirit. More than this, the *continuing* nature of this filling is emphasized by the fact that the promise is that "He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb." It is as though Gabriel is making certain that Zachariah understands that this will not be a one time completed act but an on-going, continuous endowment in the life of his son John.

The reference to Elizabeth, the mother of John, is somewhat different. The baby in her womb is just three months from full term when Mary, the mother of Jesus, enters the house of Elizabeth and greets her cousin. The description of what happens next is one of the loveliest in the Bible. "And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! . . . For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord' " (Luke 1:41-45). What seems to be involved in this Spirit-filling is an overpowering sensation of joy at the realization that God is acting on behalf of his longsuffering remnant. The fact that the baby in the womb leaped for joy highlights the supernatural source of this joy, for an unborn child would have no natural way of knowing the meaning of the voice of a stranger. Both Elizabeth and her baby were being filled by a power greater than themselves resulting in joyful words that reveal the meaning of an otherwise ordinary visit of a cousin.

The third and final reference to the filling of the Spirit in the story of the birth of John the Baptist tells of what happened to Zachariah, father of the baby. After he wrote on a tablet that the name to be given the infant is John, his tongue which had been made dumb, was loosed and he spoke, blessing God. The narrative goes on to say, "And his father Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, . . . and you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High' . . ." (Luke 1:67ff). What the Holy Spirit did for Zachariah was he gave him insight into the meaning of the extraordinary event of the birth of this baby. The word used to describe what Zachariah is doing is "prophesied." The Spirit in his filling work enabled Zachariah to grasp in a flash of insight the majestic plan of God to save his people from the grip of their enemies. In addition, the Spirit enabled him to see the part that he and his little family were

playing in this cosmic conflict. Finally, the filling by the Holy Spirit resulted in Zachariah's witnessing to the saving act of God. He must *speak*, for the Spirit has filled him.

From this story of the birth of John the Baptist we can sketch a few more of the lines of a biblical understanding of what it means to be "filled with the Spirit." 1.) The infilling equips the person who is filled to perform the ministry to which he is called. 2.) There is a joy, a thrill, a delight in the wonder of God's grace and power that is overwhelming. 3.) Finally, there is the realization that one single person, or one individual family, fits into God's plan of salvation. For Zachariah, Elizabeth and John to be filled by the Spirit meant to realize that they were a part of the people of God, part of an irresistible army marching not under its own power, but under the power of the almighty God.

B. Jesus – Full of the Spirit

Luke makes reference to Jesus himself immediately after his baptism as being "full of the Holy Spirit." The word for *full* is *pleres*, an adjective, not the verbal for *plesthesis* which was used to describe the actual event when the Holy Spirit took control of the persons of John the Baptist and his parents. Stephen and the others in Acts 6:5 and 7:55 are also described as "full (*pleres*) of the Holy Spirit." And finally, Barnabas, in Acts 11:24 is pictured as "full (*pleres*) of the Holy Spirit and of faith." These are the only references in the New Testament to persons who are "full" of the Spirit. In Kittel's Theological Dictionary we are told, "The word (*pleres*) is used especially in the NT to denote 'rich fulness' " (In loco). The author goes on to say about Stephen's being "full" of the Spirit "The obvious meaning here is that he possesses in abundant measure a special *charis* from God" (In loco). The words "rich indwelling," "wholly filled" or "rich" are used in Kittel to explain the meaning of this term. When discussing the meaning of Jesus' being "full of the Spirit" Kittel says, "The saying in Luke 4:1 means simply that the moving of Jesus to Galilee (v. 14) was 'fully' under the direction of the Holy Spirit" (In loco). Geldenhuys, in his Commentary on Luke describes the meaning of the phrase for Jesus as "fully equipped with all gifts for the execution of his calling as Messiah . . . " (p. 158). "These sayings clearly refer to enduring possession," says Kittel about Stephen and the seven in Acts 6 (In loco).

What we saw in the story of the birth of John the Baptist is reinforced by the meaning of the phrase "full of the Spirit." It speaks of the same concept, that of being equipped for ministry and witness. But rather than pointing to the act of the filling itself it points more in the direction of the result, the "richness," the "enduring quality" of the Spirit's presence.

C. Being Filled with the Spirit in the Book of Acts

There are six passages in the Book of Acts that speak of being "filled with the Holy Spirit." In Acts 2:4, the story of Pentecost, the narrative reads, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." If this were the only New Testament reference to being filled with the Holy Spirit we might look upon it as determinative for describing all experiences of Spirit filling. We would then see tongues-speaking as setting the normal pattern for every person who is filled with the Spirit. But, in addition to speaking in tongues, there is something more to this "filling" experience that we will find repeated in other instances. Those who heard these Spirit-filled Christians were amazed to hear them "telling in our own tongues the

mighty works of God" (v. 11). The Holy Spirit filled the Christians on the Day of Pentecost in a way that highlights not so much the tongues-speaking experience itself as it does the act of witnessing to Jesus Christ. People who otherwise would have been going about their business unconcerned about much more than earning their daily living were suddenly turned into people who extol the mighty acts of God. This we will discover repeatedly, whereas tongues-speaking is mentioned in connection with being filled with the Spirit *only on this occasion.*

Peter had been present on Pentecost, for it was he who stood up to interpret the experience for those who supposed the early Christians were drunk. Later, in the fourth chapter, after the healing of the lame men by Peter and John, the two of them were arrested and brought before the Jewish leaders. The description of Peter as he makes his reply to the charges refers to him a second time as "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:8). This could mean that he was still filled from the experience at Pentecost, thus highlighting the fact that whatever the filling had involved on that occasion, its effect continued down to this event in the fourth chapter. But it seems better to see the author as referring to a new experience of filling in order to enable Peter to witness boldly to Jesus.

The third reference in Acts is at the conclusion of the fourth Chapter, after the Jewish leaders had released Peter and John following the event described above. When they return to their friends the entire group praises God in an expression of joyous gratitude. Verse 31 of the fourth chapter then says, "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness." F. F. Bruce comments on this particular filling, "While this was a fresh filling of the Spirit, it could not be called a fresh baptism" (Commentary on Acts, p. 107). What this particular filling seems to do for these early Christians is remove their timidity and fear. The Spirit, by his filling, enables them to "speak the Word of God fearlessly" (J. B. Phillips). There is a variant reading here in which they are said to have spoken the Word of God with boldness "to everyone who was willing to believe." This variant points in the direction of understanding the "filling" as equipping the early Christians *for their task of witness*. Excited and thrilled they were. But the "filling" is directly related not to the thrills and the excitement. It is joined directly in the text to the witness. To be filled by the Spirit, according to Acts 4:31, is immediately to be turned outward, to be driven into the arena where a bold and fearless witness to Jesus is needed.

The next reference in the Book of Acts is in the ninth chapter, in the story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Ananias, a believer who lived in Damascus, is told by the Lord to go to the Street called Straight and inquire for a man named Saul. His words upon his arrival are, "'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened. . . . And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying 'He is the Son of God'" (vv. 17-20). We are not told exactly what is the meaning of "that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit," but the verses following in which the story is told of Paul's immediately proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God, point us in the same direction in which we have been pointed before. The focus is *not so much on the event itself as on that which the event produces*, namely, the witness to Jesus as the

promised Messiah. Paul's own recollection of his experience with Ananias helps to confirm this understanding of the meaning of "filled with the Spirit." In Acts 22:12-15 we read "And one Ananias came to me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And in that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know His will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from His mouth; for you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Raise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'" Of the two things that Ananias had promised, Paul mentions only the regaining of his sight. Instead of saying, "I was filled with the Spirit," he tells of being appointed as a witness for Jesus "to all men of what you have seen and heard." And this is *followed* by water baptism. It is as though the whole narrative is directing us not toward a self-centered, euphoric experience, but toward a commissioning, an anointing, an empowering act by which Paul is equipped to undertake the great ministry to which the Lord called him. In Paul's defense before King Agrippa in Acts 26 there is again no mention of the words of Ananias about becoming "filled with the Spirit." Instead, it is the same call to "bear witness." "And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you'" (vv. 15b-16). What in the original story of Ananias in Acts 9 was the "filling of the Spirit" is in Paul's own interpretation the call and the endowment with the power to be a witness to Jesus.

In Acts 13:9 there is one last mention of the Apostle Paul's being "filled with the Spirit." There, at the beginning of this first missionary journey, on the island of Cyprus, he and Barnabas came upon a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus, or Elymas. When this man, who was a magician, tried to turn the proconsul Sergius Paulus against them, Paul, "filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, 'You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness . . . behold you shall be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.' Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had happened" (vv. 9-12). The act of judgment is directly linked to Paul's being filled with the Spirit. Calvin seems to have caught the reason for the close connection when he comments, "And in case anyone may think that Paul was far too hot-tempered, Luke expressly states that the Spirit was his guide, driving him on . . . this judgment is brought not by a mortal man, but by the Holy Spirit through the lips of Paul" (*Commentary on Acts,* vol. 1, p. 358). The prophetic words of John the Baptist come to mind, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand . . . the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:11-12). In this story of Paul and Elymas we are not told how Paul felt. But we are told that God's power worked through him. If our only New Testament reference to the filling of the Spirit were Acts 13:9, we would be pointed more in the direction of sternness and judgment than of excitement and religious feeling. We are reminded of that teaching concerning the Holy Spirit found in John 16:8-11 where Jesus says, "And when he (the Holy Spirit) comes he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment; . . . of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged." If we follow the lead of the Apostle Paul in Acts 13 we will see that there is a dimension to being filled with the Holy Spirit that speaks of power, of strength, of the supernatural.

The final use of the term "filled with the Spirit" in the Book of Acts is found in the last verse of the 13th chapter. Here Paul and Barnabas have sailed north from Cyprus and are in Antioch of Pisidia in the heart of Asia Minor. Apparently there has been a turning of a large number to Jesus, for the 49th verse says, "And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region." But when the Jewish religious leaders foment discord and hostility toward the Christian missionaries Paul and Barnabas shake off the dust from their feet against them and depart for another city, Iconium. At this point the reader might expect a certain amount of alarm and apprehension among new converts without the shepherding care of the men who had brought the Gospel to them. But Luke comments, "And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." Since we are not given any further information as to what the results of this filling were we are dependent on the immediate context and on other New Testament passages where joy and the Holy Spirit are joined together to help us understand it. Joy and the Holy Spirit are brought together in the teaching of the Apostel Paul in Romans 14:17 where he describes the Kingdom of God as consisting not in food and drink, but in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." And in Acts 5:41 when the apostles in Jerusalem were being persecuted for their witness they are described as "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name." Once again, we are in the sphere of witnessing. It is more than ordinary joy that marks the life of the Spirit-filled Christians in Antioch. It is the ability to rejoice *in spite of hostility and persecution* that arise when Christians witness to Jesus. Calvin perceives this in his comments on Acts 13:52, "And there is no doubt that if our faith is properly founded on God, and strikes its roots deep in His Word, and, finally, if it is made thoroughly secure by the protection of the Spirit, as it ought to be, it will foster peace and spiritual joy in our minds, even with the whole world in an uproar." Because the Christians at Antioch of Pisidia were filled with the Spirit they could face the future without their spiritual fathers not with fear and apprehension, but with joyful assurance. Only a power greater than human could accomplish such a response. And this was the power of the Holy Spirit filling them.

D. Ephesians 5:18

The final reference to being filled with the Spirit is found in the teaching portion of the New Testament, in contrast to the narrative in Luke and Acts. In Ephesians 5:18 the text reads, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit."

This text is the one around which much discussion turns. It is couched in the imperative, and is clearly a command, a summons to obedience to the gospel message. One of the first things that needs to be said about these words of the Apostle is that the preposition translated "with" in the RSV and the NASB is the Greek word *"en."* More accurately it would be translated by the English word "by." The Holy Spirit is the agent who does the filling, not a substance that is poured into a Christian. Westcott, in his commentary on Ephesians, sees Paul as encouraging the Ephesians to "make sure it is the Spirit who fills you." "Receive the full measure the filling that only the Spirit can give." Also, the verb is in the passive, highlighting the fact that the filling is done by an agent outside of oneself, and that agent is the Holy Spirit.

In addition, the image that first leaps to our minds when we think of filling, is probably not the one that Paul had in his mind. We tend to think of a glass

being filled with some sort of substance. But the word Paul used probably carried for him the idea of a sail filled with wind. The same word is used in the 16th chapter of John's Gospel where Jesus says in verse 6, "Because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts." The meaning is, "Sorrow is taking over–dominating–controlling–your hearts." Paul is saying something similar to the Ephesians. "Let the one who moves you along, the one who fills the sail of your ship, the one who rules in your life, be the Spirit–not wine."

Further, all commentators make the point that the verse does not refer to a once-for-all action, which is the way the baptism in the Holy Spirit is spoken of. It points to a continuous, on-going experience. The present tense of the Greek is used, not the aorist. Whatever content we may find in what Paul is talking about he means for it to be a repeated, continuing experience in the life of the Christian.

So far in Ephesians we have mainly dealt with grammar and the meaning of a preposition. The really important question will deal with the content, the quality of Christian life Paul is talking about. If the ship of our life is to be moved along, controlled, rules, by the Spirit, what does this mean? Should we look for our answer in ethics? Ecstacy? In what we often call "spiritual things" such as prayer, worship, Bible reading, meditation? Or is it in the equipping for ministry that we have seen in the Book of Acts? Paul in the words immediately following the command to "let the Holy Spirit fill you," and in the parallel passage in Colossians 3, tells us what he means. In Colossians 3:16 he says, "Let the *Word of Christ* dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God." It is to Christ that we look as our instructor. It is His word that gives us instruction. To be "filled by the Spirit" will not give us something in addition to Christ, for "in Christ the whole fullness of life in him" (Col. 2:9-10). When the Holy Spirit fills the life of the believer he is not adding something that "ordinary" Christians do not have.

More than this, Paul does not leave us to decide for ourselves which aspects of the earthly walk and ministry of Jesus Christ we will pick and choose as our favorites. In both the Ephesian and Colossian passages the first result when the Spirit fills the sails of our ship is "singing and making melody to the Lord with all our hearts." It is an awakened awareness of the vertical dimension, an awareness of God as the one whom we praise that marks the Spirit-filled, Christ-indwelt Christian. At Pentecost, this is what happened as the Spirit filled the believers. To be sure, those who heard them were astonished to hear their own native tongues spoken, but the content of the speaking was witness to "the wonderful works of God." They were not talking about their experience. They were witnessing to God's mighty act in Jesus. Likewise, much of the Book of Psalms is just this very kind of thing. It is praise to the Lord, and then a recounting of his saving acts. The words of the Psalter spring again and again to the lips of Jesus, he who was "full of the Spirit," during his earthly ministry. And the Spirit-filled Christian is one to whose lips words of praise to God spring easily and naturally.

Next, Paul mentions "always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The ability to recognize the fatherly hand of God behind everything that comes into our lives, the unpleasant as well as the pleasant, is one identifying mark of Spirit-filled Christians. It shows that the Spirit of Jesus has taken control of their lives. We have already seen how the new Spirit-filled Christians at Antioch of Pisidia, facing up to the realization that Paul

and Barnabas were leaving them, could "give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" in spite of the loss of their spiritual fathers, precisely *because* they were filled with the Spirit. The parallel in Colossians 3:17 confirms this interpretation, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

A further characteristic of the Spirit-filled, Christ-indwelt Christian is his likeness to Christ in his servanthood. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). As Christ was among us as one who serves, so the Christian sees his place in the family, in the business world, in the political arena, as one who is working for the well-being of others. In so doing, he is following his Lord who came not to be saved, but to serve, and to offer His life a ransom for many.

Finally, Paul makes it clear to the Spirit-filled Christian that he will come under attack, reminding him that it is to prepare him for conflict that the Spirit has filled him. The well-known verses about the "whole armor of God" describe the fight that the principalities, the powers, the world rulers of this present darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places will wage against him (Eph. 6:12). The "sword of the Spirit" is the "Word of God," the word of witness to the Gospel.

Paul bids us look to Jesus—to give thanks in his name, to be subject to one another out of reverence for him, and finally to be strong in the Lord. The words of Paul to the Galatian Church serve as a fitting conclusion to the New Testament evidence, "My little children, with whom I am again in travail *until Christ be formed in you*, I could wish to be present with you . . ." (Gal. 3:19). Christ formed in us—this is the content of a life filled by the Spirit.

Conclusion

Having examined all the Scriptural references to the filling of the Holy Spirit, both in the Old and New Testaments we return to our main question. What is meant by the filling of the Holy Spirit? The biblical evidence has demonstrated:

1. The filling with the Spirit is not a once-for-all experience, but one that should happen again and again—continuously. Since it is not a once-for-all experience we should avoid phrases like "Since I was filled by the Holy Spirit."
2. The experience is not an end in itself but a means to an end. We would be off target if we rejoiced in having been filled by the Spirit and forgot that this filling was to equip us to witness to Jesus Christ and his saving work.
3. To be filled by the Spirit is basically the same as being indwelt by Christ. There are no ascending stages as in the mystery religions. When a person has Christ he has all that God has to give, for all the fullness of God dwells in Christ. The Holy Spirit, in his baptism and in his infilling, is not an extra, a plus, that raises one person above another person who has "only" Christ. Paul makes it clear in Galatians 3:3-4 that God's gift of the Spirit is not only initially received in faithful obedience, but continues to be received in the same manner.
4. The fullness of the Holy Spirit gives a person the kind of stability that issues in joy no matter what the external conditions that surround him. This points us away from identifying only our spiritual "mountain top"

experiences as evidences of the filling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also present in a special way as Christians pass through trying times.

5. The infilling of the Spirit empowers the believer to withstand evil and to speak God's word of judgment against it (Acts 13:8-12). He who is truly Spirit-filled must be conscious that he is the channel for a power greater than anything human or demonic. The Old Testament reference in Micah 3:8 makes explicit reference to what is implied in all the New Testament references, namely that to be filled with the Spirit is to be profoundly concerned about ethical issues. To bear witness to Jesus Christ is to join the battle against all the powers of evil that hold men in bondage. To revel in my own personal experience of being filled while turning a deaf ear to injustice all around me is to miss the true nature of the biblical doctrine of the filling of the Spirit.

When a Christian is wondering whether the experience through which he has passed has been the filling of the Holy Spirit we would set before him the above conclusions. We would join in his rejoicing if he recognized the New Testament pattern in what he had experienced, but we would caution him against a hasty identifying his experience with the "filling" if the opposite were true.

There is a beautiful story in Numbers 11 about the coming of the Holy Spirit upon certain of the elders of Israel. When a young man comes running to Moses to tell him that two of the elders who had not come apart with the others of the seventy were prophesying in the camp and Joshua says, "My Lord Moses, forbid them," Moses replies, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" In the same spirit we would say, "Would that all the Lord's people were filled with the Spirit, that the Spirit of Christ would fill the sails of their lives!"

RECOMMENDATION:

R-2. We recommend that this study be made available to the churches of the Reformed Church in America for study. (ADOPTED)

3. BAPTIZED NON-COMMUNICANTS AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing interest within the R.C.A. concerning the participation of children in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This interest has surfaced in the local churches and from a variety of locations both east and west. In response, the Synod of 1973 instructed the Theological Commission to prepare a study of the subject (cf *The Acts and Proceedings of the 167th Regular Session of the General Synod, Reformed Church in America,* 1973, p. 201).

The study is herewith submitted to the General Synod, and it addresses itself to the following areas of concern: the place of baptism in the life of the church; the meaning of "baptized non-communicant members"; the place of the Lord's Supper in the life of the church; the place of children at the Lord's Table; the need to provide for an occasion of affirmation and commissioning; a suggested procedure for the local church; and a conclusion with recommendations.

Baptism in the Life of the Church

Our view of baptism derives from the Scriptures, and particularly from the biblical concepts of the covenant and the church. We affirm that baptism is the sign and seal of a continuing life in Christ through the Holy Spirit within the body of Christ. Children of believers as well as individual adult believers are heirs of the kingdom and members of the body of Christ (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:7; Mark 10:13f; Acts 2:39; I Cor. 7:14). The covenant initiated by God with Abraham, maintained with faithfulness to Israel, and envisaged by the prophets to be renewed to include all the families of the earth, provides the key to the understanding of the church as the covenant people of God today (Gen. 12:1-3, 13:15, 15:13, 17:7-14; Jer. 31:31-34; Matt. 26:28; Rom. 11:17-24; Gal. 3:7-14, 26-29; Eph. 2:11-22; Heb. 8:8-13; Heid. Cat. XXVII, Q 74). Baptism, then, introduces us into the church.

The idea that the sacrament is a purely symbolic rite finds no support in the New Testament. On the contrary, baptism is a means of grace whereby God is pleased to incorporate us into his covenant of grace with his people. And to be introduced into the covenant is to be introduced into Christ and the blessing of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:17, 12:13; II Cor. 3:17-18). While baptism signifies incorporation into the salvation already accomplished for us by God in Christ, it also signifies a continuing life in, with, and for Christ, and of adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life. Much of the blessing and content of baptism will be realized by the baptized as the Holy Spirit continues to evidence his presence and power in connection with the nurture of the Word of God and the faithful use of all the means of grace. It is within this continuing life in Christ that the baptized gain a growing sense of identity as children of God, and an increasing awareness of their privileges and responsibilities, a developing life-style compatible with their identity, privileges and responsibilities, and an increasing assurance which will enable them in time of testing and trial to say as did Martin Luther, "*Baptizatus sum,*" "I am baptized."

This understanding of baptism informs the confessional standards, the *Book of Church Order* and the Liturgy of our church. The Order for the Sacrament of Baptism assigns to baptism the following meanings:

> In baptism . . . we confess that we with our children are sinful by nature and under the judgment of God. We cannot enter God's kingdom unless we are born again and seek our cleansing and salvation in him alone. Baptism is a sign and seal of our ingrafting into the body of Christ. We are baptized in the name of the Triune God, who thereby assures us of the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Christ; of our adoption into the household of faith; of our daily renewing and cleansing by his Spirit; and of our resurrection to eternal life.
>
> By this assurance we are called to new obedience: to hold fast to this one God . . . to trust and love him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength; and to forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life. And if we sometimes, through weakness, fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since Baptism is the sign and seal of God's eternal covenant of grace with us (*Liturgy and Psalms,* p. 28).

Congruous with the above doctrine of baptism, after the administration of the sacrament, the Liturgy provides that the following declaration may be made:

> In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his Church, I declare that this child is now received into the visible membership of the Holy Catholic Church. . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 31).

It is readily apparent from the above language that our Liturgy is affirmative with respect to the status of baptized children. They are members of Christ and of his body, the church.

At one time our *Book of Church Order* evidenced this same perspective, but due to several years of continuous amendment this perspective is not as pronounced as before. Although our church order begins with an appropriate conception of the congregation as "a body of baptized Christians meeting regularly in a particular place of worship" (Art. I, sec. 1a), this is shortly amended when the duties of elders are defined and then it is said, "They (the elders) shall receive as members of the church in full communion only those persons who have made a confession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before the board of elders, or who have made a reaffirmation of a previous confession of faith, or who have presented a satisfactory certificate of transfer from an evangelical church" (Art. V, sec. 2b). The perspective of Article I reappears in connection with a declaration that the elders shall be charged with the duty of discipline, and at this point it is provided that, "The board of elders shall exercise Christian discipline with respect to any who continue in sin without repentance. All members of the church, including baptized members, are subject to the church's government and discipline as administered by the board of elders" (Art. V., sec. 3). Despite the lack of definition and the imprecise use of such terms as "voting members," "baptized members," "members in full communion," "communicant and non-communicant members," the lineaments of the historic position on the status of baptized children are still discernible.

In the matter of the meaning of baptism and the status of our baptized children, the doctrinal standards of the church are very explicit:

> Baptism, however, is not only efficacious so long as the water is on us and received by us, but through all the days of our years. That is why we reject the error of the Anabaptists, who are not satisfied with the one only baptism they once received, and who moreover condemn the baptism of children of believers, whom we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the Covenant, as the infants in Israel were circumcized upon the same promises that are made to our children. And surely Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of believers than for adults. They, therefore, ought to receive the sign and Sacrament of that which Christ has done for them; according to what the Lord commanded in the Law, to impart to them the Sacrament of the suffering and death of Christ, shortly after they were born, offering for them a lamb, which was a Sacrament of Jesus Christ. In addition, what circumcision did for the Jewish people, that Baptism does for our children. For this reason St. Paul calls Baptism *the circumcision of Christ* [Col. 2:11] (Belgic Confession, 34).

The *Heidelberg Catechism* makes some equally strong declarations about the nature of the sacrament of baptism:

> Are infants also to be baptized?
>
> Yes, because they, as well as their parents, are included in the covenant and belong to the people of God. Since both redemption from sin

> through the blood of Christ and the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit are promised to these children no less than to their parents, infants are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be incorporated into the Christian church and distinguished from the children of unbelievers. This was done in the Old Covenant by circumcision. In the New Covenant Baptism has been instituted to take its place (Q. 74; cf. also Qs. 69, 70, 73).

We conclude from these biblical and confessional declarations that children are through baptism members of the church because they are included in God's covenant of grace and all its benefits. Inasmuch as they are children, we must keep before us the fact that they are growing persons with their own sets of needs in the venture of covenant life. Under the faithful hearing of the Word, the diligent use of the means of grace, the blessing of the Holy Spirit, and the affection and nurture of the Christian community, we believe they will be led to appropriate to themselves all of God's promises and will affirm the knowledge of his grace in a personal confession of faith. These same declarations press the church to take with utmost seriousness its corporate, covenantal character as the family of God, and the bearing of this upon our decision whether to allow our children to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Before we proceed to the consideration of the place of children at the Lord's Table, we need to examine the meaning of a phrase characteristic of our tradition, "baptized non-communicants."

The Meaning of Baptized Non-Communicant Members

The phrase "baptized non-communicant members" does not appear in our doctrinal standards of Liturgy. It does occur in the *Book of Church Order* (Art. 5, sec. 2c, e.g.) but without definition or exposition; and it may be found as one of the categories in the statistical tables used by the churches in their annual reporting to the General Synod (cf. *Minutes of General Synod*). Corwin presents this definition of the phrase: ". . . those living within the bounds of a congregation, who have been initiated by the ordinance of Baptism in infancy, but who are not members in full communion . . . " (Charles Corwin, *A Digest of Synodical Legislation of the R.C.A.* [1906], p. 80). This definition suggests that baptized non-communicants are presently members who are not in full communion. They have been baptized and are fully members of the covenant community, but they have not as yet publicly confirmed the covenant signified by their baptism, and they do not come to the Lord's Table. As far as origin is concerned, the phrase seems to have emerged as a further implication of the term "full communion." Although the latter does not occur in the articles of Dordt, it does appear subsequently in the rules of Dordt (1792). Irrespective of when and how the phrase gained currency among us, its use illustrates the tension which exists between the view of the baptized in our doctrinal standards and Liturgy, and that of our church policy and practice.

It is well known that Calvin practiced no rite of confirmation and there was no form or order for such a rite in the service book of John Knox at Geneva (cf. W. D. Maxwell, John Knox's Genevan Service Book, 1556, Edinburgh, 1931), although rigorous examination in the faith was required of all who wanted to be received at the Lord's Table, including adults and duly catechized children who had reached the age of discretion. This was usually conducted by the minister and elders before the celebration of the sacrament, and commonly consisted of such requirements as the ability to pray the Lord's Prayer, recite the Apostles'

Creed, and declare the summary of the law of God. The weakening of the above examination practice together with the growth of Pietism contributed to the need for some directive that would apply to those children who had been instructed in the essentials of the faith and had reached the years of discretion. In the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition, this sequel to baptism took the form of an actual rite of admission to the Lord's Table upon the acknowledgement of the meaning of one's bapitsm, the confirmation of the privileges and responsibilities of the covenant, and an open confession of Christ before the church. In earlier days of our own church tradition, this often included an examination in the doctrine and truth of the Heidelberg Catechism. Baptism, however, continued to be understood as a sealing ordinance, the effective sign and seal of God's covenant of grace with us and our children. Since a covenant implies two parties, and on our part we are called upon to respond by affirming and embracing its gifts and obligations, the church approved the use of a form or order for "Admission to the Lord's Table of Those Baptized in Infancy."

In the subsequent history of our church, several other factors contributed to increasing the tension between our church theology and practice. Eighteenth century revivalism, for example, definitely had an eroding effect on the place of the baptized child within the church. In actual practice, covenant children came to be regarded as "quasi members" of the church, while confessionally the church regarded them as fully constituted members of the holy catholic church. Along with revivalism came the idea that the children of the church needed to be converted in the same manner as those outside the church. As a consequence, young people were encouraged to think in terms of "joining the church" as though they had never been members before. The result was that what *they* said and did seemed more important than *God's* gracious action in Christ signified and sealed by their baptism, and the old covenant theology was jeopardized by a new conversionist, individualistic theology. Admission to the Lord's Supper now required in many places a kind of "decision for Christ" act, and this often disassociated from any meaningful connection with a previous baptism.

It is clear that there is considerable confusion in the church regarding the meaning of "baptized non-communicants," and that the currency of this phrase has contributed in no small measure to the present tension between our theology and practice. It appears that there is some disconcerting difference of emphasis in our churches with respect to our baptized children. On the one hand, one may encounter a strong emphasis on individualism and the need of a definite conversion experience which empties infant baptism of all objective, saving grace. On the other hand, one may encounter such an emphasis on the saving benefits credited to the sacrament of the new covenant, that the personal affirmation required by the covenant disappears. In conformity with the testimony of scripture and the witness of our confessions and Liturgy, we will uphold in this paper the integrity and value of both baptism and faith.

The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church

Since the sacrament of the Supper as well as that of baptism is a means of grace, the church throughout the ages has maintained that baptism needs to be followed by the sacrament of the supper, even as birth needs to be followed by care and nurture. The content of both sacraments is Christ and his saving benefits. "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; I Cor. 11:25). While the basic meanings remain the same for both sacraments, each has its own purpose.

Whereas baptism signifies incorporation into Christ and his body, and is used as a means thereto, the Supper nurtures and strengthens us in the same grace which at the first made us members of the church of God. The complimentary relationship of the two sacraments makes clear that it is the will of God that the baptized continued to order their lives within the covenant relationship.

In the present practice of the church, however, this nurturing objective of the Supper is restricted to adults only. It is true, of course, that both children and adults are nurtured and strengthened in the Christian life by means other than the Supper. Nevertheless, the Supper is a divinely commanded means of grace, which should not be viewed primarily as the act of individuals. It is the act of the church in which individuals participate. For it is the covenant community, the family of God, which gathers about the table of the Holy Supper in remembrance, communion and hope.

In obedience to the scriptures, our church has reaffirmed these truths in the obligatory "Order for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." The nurturing intent or purpose of the Supper is expressed in the familiar words:

> We may not doubt that he will perform in our hearts and lives all that these outward signs signify and that he who is the true heavenly bread will nourish and strengthen us to life eternal. For in this Supper we share in the infinite goodness of our Saviour and are made partakers of all his blessings, of life eternal, righteousness, and glory (*Liturgy and Psalms*, p. 64).

The covenantal nature of the Supper emerges in the reminder that "he confirmed with the shedding of his blood the new and eternal covenant of grace and reconciliation when he said, 'It is finished' " (*Liturgy and Psalms,* p. 64).

This nurturing and covenantal view of the sacrament is represented in the Belgic Confession, for example, where we read:

> We believe and confess that our Saviour Jesus Christ has ordained and instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Supper, to nourish and strengthen those whom he has already made alive and members of his family, which is the Church. . . . That Jesus Christ did not enjoin us the use of his Sacrament in vain, he works in us all that through these signs he presents to our eyes . . . Lastly, we receive the holy Sacrament in the gathering of the people of God with humility and reverence, keeping among us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Saviour with thanksgiving, and making there confession of our faith and of the Christian religion. . . . (Art. 35, and see also, Canons of Dordt, V.14)

It is clear from these biblical and confessional considerations that the place of this sacrament in the life of the church is that of nourishing and strengthening the spiritual life of God's people in Christ by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

From these biblical, confessional and liturgical considerations, we see that both Baptism and the Supper are sacraments of God's covenanting grace with his people in Jesus Christ.

The Place of Children at the Lord's Table

When we keep before our minds the above exposition of the place of the sacraments in the life of the church, we must acknowledge that the admission of

children to the Lord's Supper, before public confession of their faith, is congruent with our theological tradition. As a matter of record, a children's catechism approved by the General Synod of 1889 contains the following question and answer:

> What is the duty of a baptized child?
>
> It is the duty of a baptized child to worship God and to come to the Lord's Supper as soon as he is drawn to it by love for the Saviour (*First Lessons in Christian Truth: A Manual of Instruction in the Doctrine of the Church Adapted to Young Children,* authorized by the General Synod, June 1889).

A somewhat later catechism of our church, the *Intermediate Catechism,* uses almost identical language:

> What is expected of baptized children?
>
> It is expected of baptized children that they will think of themselves as dedicated to God and, in early years, confess Jesus Christ and come to the Lord's Supper (*The Intermediate Catechism,* Authorization of General Synod, 1915).

These earlier instructional manuals do not indicate a church practice of inviting children to the Supper before public confession of faith, but they do underscore the expectation of the church that its children at an early age would be drawn to the table by a love for the Saviour. The foreword to the 1889 catechism says, among other things:

> This catechism is designed for young children. . . . The catechumen is considered as within the Church, and therefore not of the world; as within the covenant relation and thus an heir of promise; as one already "planted in the house of the Lord," who "shall flourish in the courts of our God." . . . It is the church's desire . . . to encourage them, when coming to years of discretion, to make intelligent and truthful confession of their faith (Foreword to a 1930 reprint of *First Lessons in Christian Truth,* Board of Publication, New York).

If the church today is to encourage its children at an early age to be drawn to the table because of their love for the Saviour, we need to examine what it means for them to celebrate the Supper with the people of God.

Both baptism and the Supper involve participation in the body of Christ, but each in a somewhat different manner. In baptism, participation on the part of the baptized is passive and we are baptized by another in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the Supper, the participation is active and together we "eat . . . drink . . . proclaim." By so doing we are nourished and strengthened in our faith and trust in Christ, and our obedience to Christ. It is no less true of children than of adults that we learn through active participation as well as formal instruction. One of the ways in which the child learns that he belongs to the covenant community can be by sharing in the covenant meal. The ordinary elements of food and drink used in the Supper and the appeal to the ordinary senses of sight, taste, and smell, are understandable by children as well as by adults.

Are our children, however, able to participate in the sacrament responsibly and meet the qualification posed by the Apostel Paul?

> Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself (I Cor. 11:27-29).

Paul's words are admittedly difficult and may be variously understood. When he speaks of "discerning *the body*" he may be referring to Christ's earthly body which suffered on the cross or the gathered community. When he cautions about "*discerning* the body" he may mean the ability to distinguish, differentiate or recognize. What is indubitably clear is that we may not understand these words to mean the disqualifying of anyone who believes in or loves the Saviour and trusts in him alone for salvation. Any interpretation of Paul's words which would disqualify children from participating in the Supper may easily endanger the right of older "little ones" to come to the table. In his Geneva catechism, Calvin made this point:

> But is it necessary to have perfect faith and charity?
>
> Both should be entire and unfeigned, but to have such a perfection, from which nothing is wanting, will not be found among men. Moreover the Supper would have been instituted in vain if no one could receive it unless he were entirely perfect.
>
> Imperfection, then, does not prevent us from approaching it?
>
> On the contrary, the Supper would be of no use to us, if we were not imperfect. It is an aid and support for our weakness (Calvin's Genevan Catechism, 1541 in the *School of Faith* by T. F. Torrance, London, 1959, p. 63).[1]

What is required of anyone to partake of the Lord's Supper is a faith in and a love for the Saviour, ability to understand the essential meaning of the symbolism of the table, and the knowledge that he belongs to the covenant community. The believing and discerning of the child can be fully as authentic as that of the adult, but the believing and discerning will be at the level appropriate to his age. The words of Jesus, "let the children come to me," suggest that at an early age children can evidence receptivity and trust. They can show the kind of love, trust, and thankfulness which assure them of a place in the family of God. Appropriate to their age level, children can have a real sense of sin. They can forgive and receive forgiveness. They can love Jesus Christ and experience his love as well as love and be loved by parents and friends. They can commit themselves meaningfully to Christ and obey and serve him as their Lord. Biblically and confessionally, therefore, we conclude that the church may rightly consider admitting children to the Lord's Table.

Affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant and Commissioning[2]

We believe that there are important biblical and theological grounds for baptized children, who have been participating in the sacrament of the Supper, to be required to stand before the church and deliberately and publicly affirm in their own persons the reality of God's grace in their lives and to confirm the vows signified in baptism.

The scriptures make clear that the blessings ascribed to baptism are ascribed likewise to faith (Acts 2:38 and I John 1:9; Gal. 3:26 and 27), and this two-fold

ascription is significant. It does not follow that faith completes baptism, but rather that baptism is never without faith. In the case of adults, faith precedes or accompanies baptism, whereas in the case of infants faith follows baptism. In neither instance is faith dispensable or superfluous. For those baptized in infancy, the sacrament opens before them clearly and effectively the call and the way to faith.

The need for this act of responsive affirmation follows in like manner from the scriptural relationship between grace and gratitude. Scripture insists that grace should be followed by gratitude (Eph. 5:8-10, I Pet. 2:9-10), and that the gift of faith should issue in active expression of faith, in confession, obedience, and the service of Christ (Mt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10). Although we are passive in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3; I Pet. 1:23; Js. 1:18), we are encouraged to manifest the fruits of such renewal (John 15:5, 8; Gal. 5:18, 22-24). Therefore, we believe the church should continue to make room in its life and liturgy for a responsive act on the part of children of the covenant who have been baptized in infancy, whereby they may affirm the reality of God's blessings in their own lives. At the same time, such affirmation must be carefully considered and expressed, lest it have the effect of depreciating baptism.

Therefore, it is our judgment that this act of affirmation should not be interpreted as completing something that was only half done in baptism and so perpetuate the reduction of baptism already visible in our church practice. It should be carefully distinguished from such rites as "deciding for Christ," "becoming Christians," "being confirmed," and "joining the church." It should rather look back to baptism and provide an occasion at which the baptized may express their response to God's grace and their personal appropriation of the promises extended to them in baptism. It should emphasize the truth that God, in his grace, has from the beginning laid hold on them and in Christ made a prior decision for them, and that now in a public manner they wish to express their response to him and their commitment to his service. This affirmation of covenantal promises assumes a preceding interim of Christian nurture and instruction which will contribute to the above event. It is our judgment that this interim preparation of catechumens should embrace much more than brief instruction in the doctrine of the sacraments, the history of our Reformed Church, the duties of church membership, etc. The aim and content of this preparation should be directed to the heart as well as the head, and make the baptized conscious of their identification with Christ, and of the goodness of life when lived under the blessing, possession, and protection of Christ. The aim of this period of preparation must be spiritual, in the best sense of that word, a preparation which the Holy Spirit can use to bring to expression a deliberate and whole-hearted commitment to Christ and his service.

Inasmuch as the baptized will already be participating in the sacrament of the Supper, affirmation of the covenant promises may be made at an age somewhat later than that of our present church practice. Therefore, this affirmation could very well be joined to a commissioning for service. Here we do well to remind ourselves that the Christian life consists not only of the confession of Christ's name before men, but also of a commitment to go out to serve him as faithful disciples. Our Lord himself said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (John 15:16); "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). The mission of all Christians was later given in the well-known mandates, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching

them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:19, 20); "And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Affirmation of covenant promises may be appropriately accompanied by Christ's commissioning, and the consequent giving of ourselves to live in his love and to serve him faithfully all our days.

We do not deem it advisable, however, to specify for this affirmation and commissioning an age which will be obligatory in all places and times. In spiritual matters, we do well to remember that the Spirit of Christ does not work at the command of men, and that knowledge of the Bible and the catechism are not necessarily the same as a saving knowledge of Christ and all his benefits. On the other hand, if the church should regard with favor the proposal of a later age for this affirmation of the baptismal covenant and commissioning, it could contribute to the avoidance of immature confessions of faith and such comments as "I didn't know what I was doing at the time," or "I really wasn't ready." This later age would also allow for a more active role in the life of the church as an institution, including the right to vote in congregational meetings, the right to hold office in the church, and an opportunity to assume responsibility for the church's mission and task in the world.

Suggested Procedure for the Local Church

A favorable response by the church to the proposed admission of baptized children to the Lord's Table will involve several procedural considerations to which the church as a whole must give serious attention.

Baptism

Baptism will continue to be for us what it always has been, a sacrament which is the sign and seal of God's work of grace by which he incorporates us into Christ and his body, the community of the new covenant. Baptism means becoming a member of the family of God, and being entitled to all the privileges and responsibilities of covenant life. For this reason, no unbaptized child should be admitted to the Lord's Table. And for the same reason, no child should be admitted to baptism apart from a reasonable assurance that he or she will be reared in the fear and admonition of the Lord. On these matters the church must be an obedient servant of the Word. The church may not baptize where the Gospel is not believed and confessed, and where the church is not prepared or willing to give renewed attention to nurture and discipline. By the same token, the congregation must give greater attention to fulfilling its duties contracted in baptism, so that by its nurture and teaching the baptized will grow in the way of faith, and in the obedience of faith declare their understanding and personal appropriation of the blessings signed and sealed in the sacraments.

The Lord's Supper

The Supper will also continue to be in our church what it always has been, a sacrament of the Gospel, but to which baptized children may now be admitted as members of the covenant family of God. The decision to come to the Table should be arrived at between parent and child in fulfillment of the vows taken at the time of the child's baptism. This would be followed by a request on the part of the parents to the elders to permit the child's participation in the sacrament. On the occasion of this request, the elders should seek assurance from the parents that the child has an essential understanding of the sacrament and is ready for a meaningful participation. The kind of spiritual understanding

appropriate to the child's age level and essential to a worthy participation in the Supper may be conveniently illustrated in the aforementioned children's catechism of our church.

The Lord's Supper

Q. 66 What is the Lord's Supper?
A. The Lord's Supper is eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of the death of Christ for us.

Q. 67 What do the bread and wine represent?
A. The bread and wine in the Lord's Supper represent the body and blood of Christ given for us.

Q. 68 Why do we eat the bread and drink the wine?
A. We eat the bread and drink the wine to show that we receive Christ as our Saviour from sin, and as the life of the soul.

Q. 69 When did Christ appoint the Lord's Supper?
A. Christ appointed the Lord's Supper on the night before he was crucified.

Q. 70 How are believers blessed in the Lord's Supper?
A. The Lord's Supper helps believers to lead a Christian life. (*First Lessons in Christian Truth,* General Synod, June 1889)

It is conceivable that the church might want to provide a brief children's catechism for use in the home in order to foster understanding of the sacraments and a worthy participation in them.

After this request, it would be appropriate for the elders to admit the baptized to the Table when they are satisfied that the family making this request is earnest and diligent in the Christian faith. Moreover, the church as a covenant community should be ready to provide the kind of instruction and pastoral care which will open clearly to the baptized the way of faith. It should be agreed and understood among us that children admitted to the Table will be under the continuing instruction and nurture of their families and the church until such time as they affirm publicly the reality of God's grace in their lives. This arrangement can prevail as long as the children remain under parental jurisdiction, and until the time when they become young adults and normally assume responsibility for their personal affairs.

In situations where a baptized child is participating in the life of the church apart from his or her parents who may or may not be members of the church, provisions should be made for granting this child admission to the Table. In such situations some person or persons in the covenant community such as church school teacher, youth minister, counselor or leader, an elder of consistory, would with the parents' consent take responsibility for the child and determine his or her readiness to come to the Table, make the necessary request, and accompany the child to a meeting with the elders. This person should continue to function as spiritual counselor and guide to the child in question. Such an arrangement would be consistent with the vows of the congregation made at the time of baptism (cf *Liturgy and Psalms,* p. 31).

Affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant and Commissioning

Under the instruction and nature of a community sharing in the life of Christ, the baptized should grow up in a knowledge of Christ, and in the

cultivation of Christian habits and a distinctive life-style. These should lead to an act of self-conscious commitment to Christ, at which time the baptized will ratify in their own persons the reality of God's grace in their lives. They will want to give public testimony to this fact, and be set apart as Christ's servants in the world. Inasmuch as there are two parties in the covenant of grace, this act of affirmation and commissioning is in accord with our covenant theology. At this point, we caution again that this service of affirmation and commissioning must look back to baptism, and not be viewed as a completing of baptism which Calvin regarded both as an "insult" and an "injury" to baptism (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* IV, xix, 6, 7).

Implementation Required

It should be considered whether we need to plan for a new order for the Sacrament of the Supper when baptized children come to the Table for the first time. This new order could conceivably include such elements as the importance of the sacrament for children, their parents and the congregation, remembering that God's promise is to us and our children and to all who are afar off (Acts 2:39). Such a new order would be especially appropriate if the church would regard with favor the designation of Palm Sunday, Pentecost, and the first Sunday in Advent as appropriate times for this initial celebration.

Consideration should be given likewise to the advisability of providing another new order entitled "An Order for the Affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant and Commissioning to Christ's Service," to be used when baptized communicants reach the age and stage when they wish to ratify in their own persons that covenant of grace of which the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper are the signs and seals. Such an order could conceivably include two parts. Part one would provide opportunity for baptized communicants to declare the reality of repentance and faith in their lives and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. A second part would provide an opportunity for them to recognize their special gifts, to be commissioned, and to be admitted to voting privileges and to the adult service responsibilities of the church, marked possibly by the laying on of hands by way of benediction, as favored by Calvin (*Commentary on Hebrews*, vi.2), and with appropriate words of commissioning by the minister. Consideration and evaluation, as well as the implementation of these suggested changes, would be made by the Worship Committee of the General Synod.

The Theological Commission has considered the possibility that this new order of affirmation and commissioning might be so devised as to serve the further function of receiving the lapsed again into communion, or to assist those believers who after an experience of spiritual renewal may wish to affirm their baptism once more. We are not fully persuaded that this new order should be devised to incorporate provisions for meeting the above needs. Since this new order of affirmation and commissioning does encourage a liturgical recalling of baptism and the need for a continuing repentance and faith in order to walk in newness of life and in the faithful service of Christ, we do see the possibility of adapting it to these needs. If so devised, the new form would have the effect of providing a legitimate alternative to the request for rebaptism which sometimes follows upon an experience of spiritual renewal.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Theological Commission is convinced that the proposal to admit baptized children to the Lord's Table is fully consonant with the Reformed doctrine of baptism and that no serious impediments to the proposal emerge either from biblical or theological considerations. At the same time, the Commission cautions the church that the above judgments are not the whole of the matter. The implementing of this proposed change for the spiritual health and well-being of the Reformed Church in America will require that we be both vigilant and vigorous in our commitment to the doctrine of the sacraments common to our Reformed tradition. It will require our consent and resolve to give baptism a larger prominence both in our proclamation and practice. Admission of children to the Table assume that we are ready as a church to give renewed attention to the discipline of baptism, and that we are ready to stand together in our opposition to indiscriminate baptizing and anything that would lead to "cheap grace." Without these assurances, this concentration of emphasis on the sacraments may lead to an unbiblical and un-Reformed sacramentalism. Indeed, at this juncture we do well to bring to mind again those words of the late Karl Barth which startled European Protestantism, *"Alle Europa ist getauft"* ("all of Europe is baptized"). The words should alert us fully to the dangers which accompany an indiscriminate, *pro forma* baptism practice, insufficiently supported by a vigorous discipline and nurture. Moreover, if our church is now to approve admitting baptized children to the Lord's Supper, this will increase the burden of responsibility we must take for being what we are, the household of God, the body of Christ. Furthermore, the church must signal its preparedness for making clear and meaningful to its baptized communicants what is involved in bearing the name and sign of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The proposed change will lay heavier than usual demands upon the church to provide a continuing instruction, nurture, and a pastoral care that will open to the baptized more plainly the way of faith, and make clear also the obedience of faith which their baptism involves. The church must take measures to accompany the proposed change with adequate preaching and teaching with respect both to the privileges and the duties of baptized children. The church must also provide greater encouragement and opportunity for its people to affirm in their own persons the reality of God's grace, of which the sacraments are the signs and seals, and to confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The church must give renewed attention to the theology and practice of a discerning and loving pastoral care.

ENDNOTES

[1]While Calvin did not advocate participation of children in the sacrament apart from instruction in the faith and the response of a confession of faith, he allowed that these responses could be made as early as ten years of age (*The Institutes of the Christian Religion,* IV. xix. 13).

[2]Etymologically the Commission prefers the words "confirm" and "confirmation" to "affirm" and "affirmation," but there are procedures and customs associated with the idea of confirmation which we wish to avoid. Lutherans and Episcopalians are also questioning the term "confirmation" for many of the same reasons. Other possibilities considered by the Commission were "ratification," "public acknowledgement," "renewal" and "declaration."

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-3. We recommend that this paper be approved for distribution to the churches of the Reformed Church in America for consideration and comment. (ADOPTED)

R-4. We recommend that each classis of our denomination be instructed to submit to the chairman of the Commission its evaluation of the theological basis for and suggested implementation of the proposals contained in this study. (ADOPTED)

R-5. We recommend that responses from the congregations and evaluations from the classis be sent to the chairman of the Commission no later than May 1, 1978. (ADOPTED)

4. REFERRALS FROM THE GENERAL SYNOD OF 1976

A. The Membership of Parents Presenting Infants for Baptism

The Classis of Lake Erie and Dakota overtured the General Synod proposing changes in the *Book of Church Order* pertaining to the status of parents seeking baptism for their infants (Overtures 9 & 10, *Acts and Proceedings*, pp. 101-102). These overtures were referred to the Theological Commission.

Since the Commission has presented three studies concerning infant baptism to the General Synod during the last decade (see the *Acts and Proceedings* of 1967 and 1975 as well as "Baptized Non-Communicants and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper" in this report), the Commission believes that yet another study of infant baptism would make no further contribution relevant to the issues raised by the Classis of Lake Erie and Dakota. All three statements affirm the covenantal foundation for the practice of pedo-baptism within the Reformed tradition and view the child eligible for the promises of the covenant as a member of a family belonging to the Christian church. All three state or imply the responsibility of the elders and the congregation for the Christian nurture of the child.

On the basis of this biblical-theological understanding of the covenantal foundation for the baptism of infants, the Commission believes it proper to require that a parent or guardian of a child presented for baptism be a member of the congregation in which the baptism is to take place. Since the amendment to the *Book of Church Order* adopted in 1976 specifies only that the parent or guardian be a member of a Christian Church, the Commission favors the provision in the overtures of the Classis of Lake Erie and Dakota calling for the membership of the parent or guardian in the congregation in which the baptism is to occur. The Commission further finds no fault with the recommendation of the Classis of Dakota holding that when a parent or guardian from another Christian Church requests baptism for their infant, the request may be granted only when the proper judicatory of the parent's own congregation first authorizes it.

On a motion from the floor, Synod

VOTED: To refer this matter to the Church Government Committee for follow-up.

B. God and the Nations

The General Synod of 1976 requested the Theological Commission to prepare a foundation paper on "God and the Nations." The Commission has found itself unable to complete this assignment because of the lack of definition and clarity in the referral and awaits further instruction from the Synod.

C. Elders and Deacons

The Theological Commission was asked by the General Synod to expand its study in preparation of the offices, roles and functions of the elder and deacon ". . . to include the gifts of the laity for the work of the ministry" (*Acts and Proceedings*, 1976, p. 33) and to make suggestions which would clarify and possibly make more inclusive the definition of ministry given in the *Book of Church Order* (Overture of the Particular Synod of New York, *Acts and Proceedings*, 1976, p. 112).

In the judgment of the Commission, its study of the offices of elder and deacon will speak significantly to both of these concerns. This study will be presented to the General Synod of 1978.

D. Minority Councils

The overtures of the Classis of Illinois and Mid-Hudson requesting an examination of the value of Minority Councils in the Reformed Church in America were referred to the Theological Commission (*Acts and Proceedings*, 1976, pp. 104-105). The Commission can appropriately speak only to the question of the *theological validity* of such councils. In response to this question, the Commission finds no biblical or theological impediments to the existence of the Minority Councils in the Reformed Church in America.

E. Elders' Constitutional Question

The overture of the Classis of Brooklyn requesting an examination of Part II, Article 7, Section I of the *Book of Church Order* for possible changes was referred to the Theological Commission (*Acts and Proceedings*, 1976, p. 111). The Commission offers the following as its response to the Reasons offered by the Classis of Brooklyn in support of its overture.

In response to Reasons one and four, *viz.*, that "other questions could be formulated which would be a better indication of the life and problems of the local church," the Commission agrees that the present form of self-examination could well be supplemented by other questions which would help evaluate the total mission and effectiveness of a given congregation.

In regard to Reason two, pertaining to Question one of the Constitutional Questions, the Commission wishes to affirm its conviction that the Standards of Unity are to be tested against the Word of God. However, we do not believe that the Canons of Dort teach determinism as alleged by the Classis. While the form of argumentation is often scholastic, the main concern of the Canons is to present the doctrine of the sovereign grace of God. This doctrine is central not only to any Reformed understanding of faith, but is also a fundamental biblical emphasis.

The Classis of Brooklyn also questioned the wisdom of asking whether the points of doctrine in the Heidelberg Catechism were explained over a four-year period (Reason 3). We call attention to the fact that required here is the preaching of the *points of doctrine* in the Heidelberg Catechism and not the Catechism itself. This is one of the few ways in which a minister in the Reformed Church in America is compelled to proclaim a balanced and comprehensive exposition of the Christian faith from a Reformed perspective. Moreover, since the Heidelberg Catechism is recognized by many church historians as the "jewel of the Reformation," this requirement should be strengthened, not weakened, if we are to maintain distinctiveness as a denomination and realize one of the finest aspects of our heritage.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORSHIP

Last fall the Worship Committee, responding to the information gathered from the questionnaire sent out the previous year, sponsored two workshops, one in the mid-Hudson area and the other in South Holland, Illinois. We are still trying to assess the results; the mid-Hudson workshop was enthusiastically supported by well over one hundred registrants while the South Holland workshop had to be canceled for lack of adequate registrations. We cannot believe that this indicates a lack of interest in the question of worship in the mid-western section of our church, but rather some failure in design or location on our part. Because of the success of the mid-Hudson venture, we are anxious to try the format again at some future date in some other area of the church.

The largest part of our two meetings during the past year has been concerned with future planning for worship in the Reformed Church. Historically speaking, our church has always been committed to the *liturgical principle,* i.e., fully expressed forms, the use of which is mandatory. Given the situation as it is, however, we feel ourselves increasingly questioning the validity of that principle. Is it realistic to assume that in a church as varied as ours, it is possible to draft one or two forms of words which then will be used by all congregations alike? In spite of the fact that the church has traditionally insisted on such a liturgy, there is abundant evidence that both in the past as today, its use has generally been regarded as a model and not as a requirement.

We raise the question, therefore, whether the time has not come for the Reformed Church to consider the *directory principle,* also common in the family of Reformed Churches. Following this principle, an order of worship with an adequate description of its contents is set forth as the standard of the church, while a variety of modes for the liturgical use of the directory is provided. Because of the fixity of the directory, the models can be changed as changes in language, culture, etc., demand without disturbing the liturgical integrity of the church.

We feel that the church should have ample opportunity to discuss this change before the Committee proceeds. Appended to this report is a sample directory for the worship of the Lord's Day morning. This *sample* is in no way offered as a substitute for our present liturgy (which is, in fact, one model that fills out the directory), but for study so that the principle involved can be better understood. The Committee would welcome the reactions of classes and congregations during the coming year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-1. **We recommend that the directory appended to this report be made available in sufficient quantity for study by the ministers and consistories of the Reformed Church during the coming year.** (ADOPTED)

Committee on Worship-Appendix 1

SAMPLE OF A DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

This sample was prepared on the basis of "The Outline of the Order of Worship" found on Page 5 in the *Liturgy*.

The Approach to God

In response to the call of God, the people approach him, acknowledging his power and their willingness to honor him. We come in anticipation that almighty God will work out his power for us, overcoming our inadequacy, and restoring us to life in Christ.

Votum

The service begins with the Votum, a statement of God's supremacy and our dependence upon him as the source of our salvation.

Sentences

In the words of Scripture we recall the mighty acts of God so that we be prepared to meet him in the expectation that what he has done he will do.

Salutation

A greeting is exchanged between minister and congregation and through it God's blessing is conveyed.

Hymn of Praise

Having entered God's presence as a congregation we lift our voices to him in an expression of praise.

Prayer of Confession

We make a personal and corporate acknowledgement, in the presence of God and the worshiping community that our human condition is such that we continually stand in need of God's redemptive grace.

Kyrie Eleison

Through the use of the Kyrie Eleison, or another suitable petition, we participate in calling upon God's mercy in Jesus Christ.

Words of Assurance

The minister proclaims the words of Scripture which convey the fulfillment of God's promise to freely pardon all those who come to him in repentance and faith.

Law and/or Summary

Proclaimed here, the Law of God provides guidance for the life of the redeemed, preparing our hearts for the hearing of the Gospel.

Psalter and Gloria Patri

A selection from the Psalter and/or other suitable hymn or response may be used to express our gratitude to God for preparing us to receive his Word.

The Word of God

In the Word of God the service centers upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the proclamation of this Good News in Scripture and sermon the people are brought face-to-face with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with the great acts of power, love and redemption which God has, is,

and will continue to do for us. God meets us in his Word, revealing his person and works, to move us to respond to him with adoration, humility, obedience and gratitude.

Prayer for Illumination

The proclamation of the Word begins with a petition entreating God to kindle the light of faith which enables his Word to come alive in us.

Scripture Lessons

The Scriptures are our only rule of faith and practice and shall be read and heard in every service of worship. In them the person and work of God are proclaimed with clarity.

It is appropriate that the readings be from both the Old and New Testaments so that the unity and completeness of God's revelation to his people may be set forth in our midst. A lectionary or plan of readings may be used to this end.

Hymn

A hymn setting forth the theme of the Scripture reading(s) or praising God for his revelation may be sung.

Sermon

The minister shall deliver a sermon, unfolding the Scripture of the day and drawing out its meaning so as to reveal the Word of God for the lives of his people today.

Prayer and Blessing on the Word

A prayer shall be offered as a thanksgiving for the truth revealed in the Word and as a supplication that this truth may be further revealed in our lives.

The Response to God

The people, having approached God and encountered him through his Word, are called upon to begin again our response to the Good News. Whether the response takes the form of affirmation, praise, dedication, obedience, intercession, or some other appropriate expression, it is above all a corporate thanksgiving for all God is and all he does for us.

Confession of Faith

We unite in affirming what we believe using a summary statement developed from Scripture and confirmed by history that expresses the faith of the Christian Church. The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are faithful witnesses to this belief.

Offering

The offering is a self-giving of the people in response to God's giving of himself to us. It is an act of joy which has three purposes: to provide a ministry for the congregation; to gather resources for the ministries of others; and, symbolically, to provide the elements for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Doxology (and Prayer)

We bring our offering forward with a loud song of praise and dedicate it and ourselves with prayer.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

NOTE: (When the Sacrament is not to be celebrated, the service shall proceed with:

GENERAL PRAYERS of thanksgiving to God for his acts of creation, preservation and, most especially, reconciliation through Jesus Christ; and of intercession in the name of Christ on behalf of ourselves and the world. The General Prayers shall be concluded with *THE LORD'S PRAYER* offered by all. *A HYMN OF THANKSGIVING* may be sung, and the people shall be dismissed with the Lord's blessing using a scriptural *BENEDICTION.)*

Meaning of the Sacrament

The minister shall make a statement giving the understanding of the Sacrament through which the people may more readily receive the benefits Christ offers. It shall include a recalling of the redemptive acts of Christ; of the communion we have with him as our living Lord; of the hope we share that this meal prefigures the face-to-face communion with God which we shall enjoy when his kingdom is fulfilled. The Church is admonished to demonstrate the communion of saints in Christian love through the indwelling of the life-giving Spirit obtained for us by Christ.

(Invitation)

An invitation to participate in the Sacrament is extended to communicants by the minister in the name of Christ who is the host at his table. It shall be extended also to those communicants who are not members of the particular congregation.

Hymn

As we approach his Table in expectation, we sing a hymn affirming Christ's presence in our midst.

Communion Prayer

A prayer shall be offered, including the following elements:

1. Thanksgiving to God for his creative work, providence, and revelation, especially the full revelation in Jesus Christ. This may be concluded by the singing or saying together of the triumphal hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy . . . Blessed is He. . . ."
2. Thanksgiving to God for his work of redemption, as we recall the birth, life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. The offering of ourselves in Christ as holy and living sacrifices.
4. A petition for the working of the Holy Spirit among us so that the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup will be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ.
5. A petition for the unity of the Church.
6. A thanksgiving for our hope in Christ.
7. The Lord's Prayer, prayed by all the people.

Communion

Following the example of our Lord, the minister shall break the bread and lift the cup before the congregation while the scriptural Words of Institution are proclaimed.

In distributing the elements the minister shall announce to the people that the bread broken is the communion of the body of Christ and the cup blessed, the communion of the blood of Christ.

Communion Thanksgiving

Since the Lord has now fed our soul at his Table, we jointly praise his holy name, uniting in a psalm or hymn such as "Bless the Lord, O my soul. . . ."

Prayers of Intercession

Grateful for God's gifts and mindful of the communion of saints we offer our prayers for the world in the name of Christ.

Hymn

We join in singing a hymn or psalm of thanksgiving, acknowledging our commission to be Christ's disciples in the world.

Benediction

The minister dismisses the people with the Lord's blessing in the words of Scripture.

Special Note on Music

Such anthems or other music as may assist the church in offering praise to God or may be edifying to the worshippers may be used in the service at points where the text and/or music are appropriate. The following points are suggested:

1. After the reading of the Law and/or Summary.
2. Between the Scripture readings.
3. During the Offering.
4. During the distribution of the bread and cup.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES (REVIEW AND PERMANENT) ON NOMINATIONS

R-1. **Your committees submit for your consideration and approval the following names to serve on the listed organizations and delegations.** (ADOPTED)

NOTE: The entire list appears in the 1977 Directory of the General Synod of the RCA, Appendix 1 to these Minutes, under the Sections: "Permanent Committees and Commissions," "Delegations," and "Boards and Agencies."

R-2. **Your committees RECOMMEND that the General Synod elect Rev. William Bouwer as Chairman of the Permanent Committee on Nominations for the coming year.** (ADOPTED)

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Your Committee on Church Government met at the Inter-Church Center on November 15, 1976. We hereby submit to you a report of our recommendations dealing with referrals from the General Synod of 1976.

I. Overture 1b to the 1976 General Synod (p. 98, *MGS*, 1976) from the Particular Synod of Chicago requests General Synod through its Church Government Committee to make a study to determine whether it is possible for one judicatory of the denomination to make a complaint against another when it believes an action by that other judicatory to have been in conflict with the provisions of the *Book of Church Order*.

Your committee has researched the matter and comes to the following conclusion: "The *Book of Church Order* provides opportunity for one judicatory to lodge a complaint against the non-judicial or administrative actions of another judicatory within certain conditions. In order to lodge a complaint the judicatory (or communicant member) must be subject to the immediate administrative authority of the judicatory against which the complaint is to be lodged. This does not allow one classis to complain against the actions of another classis or a Particular Synod to complain against the actions of another Particular Synod."

II. Overture 8 to the General Synod of 1976 (p. 101, *MGS*, 1976) from the Classis of Bergen, Particular Synod of New Jersey requests that in the *Book of Church Order* in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10 a new Section 5 be added as follows: "If a minister of the Reformed Church in America accepts a call from a church of another denomination in another country he may remain a member of the classis in which he has last served until he requests a transfer from the classis. Until that request is made he shall be responsible to the Reformed Church in America, and to the indigenous church in which he served."

R-1. In order to carry out the intent of the Overture your committee recommends that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the classes for their approval the following alternate changes in the *Book of Church Order*:

A. That Section 1 of Article 10 be amended by striking the word "solely" in line 1.

B. That Section 1 be amended by adding a new sentence as follows: "If a minister of the Reformed Church in America accepts a call from a church of another denomination in another country he may remain a member of the classis in which he last served."

C. That Section 3 of Article 10 be amended by adding a new sentence just before the last sentence of that section (p. 38 of the *Book of Church Order* in line 3) as follows: "A minister of the Word remains solely amenable to the classis." (ADOPTED)

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

Article 10. *The Supervision of the Ministers of the Word*

Sec. 1. A minister shall be amenable solely to the classis of which he is a member. If he is serving two or more churches in

different classes, he shall be a member of the classis nearest his place of residence and shall be installed as minister of the church in that classis. His status in the other church or churches shall be that of stated supply.

Sec. 3. The installed pastor shall be ipso facto a member of the church which he serves. A minister of the Word who is not serving a congregation shall become a member of the church of his choice. As a minister of the Word, he shall not represent the consistory of the church of which he is a member in any classis or synod. Should he be elected an elder, he shall be entitled to all the privileges and responsibilities pertaining to that office.

After the recommended change(s) the *Book of Church Order* will read:

The Supervision of the Ministers of the Word

Article 10. *Sec. 1.* **A minister shall be amenable to the classis of which he is a member. If he is serving two or more churches in different classes, he shall be a member of the classis nearest his place of residence and shall be installed as minister of the church in that classis. His status in the other church or churches shall be that of stated supply. If a minister of the Reformed Church in America accepts a call from a church of another denomination in another country he may remain a member of the classis in which he last served.**

Sec. 3. **The installed pastor shall be ipso facto a member of the church which he serves. A minister of the Word who is not serving a congregation shall become a member of the church of his choice. As a minister of the Word, he shall not represent the consistory of the church of which he is a member in any classis or synod. A minister of the Word remains solely amenable to the classis. Should he be elected an elder, he shall be entitled to all the privileges and responsibilities pertaining to that office.**

III. Overture 17 to the 1976 General Synod (p. 105, *MGS*, 1976) from the Classis of Cascades in the Particular Synod of the West overtures the General Synod to amend the *Book of Church Order* to allow an elder to replace a minister of a church as a delegate to classis sessions when the minister of a church as a delegate to classis sessions when the minister cannot attend because of illness, or the critical illness or funeral of one of the members of the congregation. This overture was referred to your committee for further consideration.

Your committee investigated whether or not a minister is a "representative" of the local church. It was concluded that the minister is, in fact, a "member" of the classis and as such is free to exercise his own judgment rather than attempting to represent the church as a delegate. It was further concluded that because the elder is ordained by the congregation and is a representative of a local church and because the minister is ordained by classis and is a member of the classis that, therefore, an elder cannot truly represent a minister at a classis meeting.

IV. Overture 27 to the 1976 General Synod (p. 111, *MGS*, 1976) from the Particular Synod of New York requests the General Synod to instruct the Committee on Church Government to prepare a definition and interpretation

of the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 13a; with the following questions in mind: 1) A clarification of the word "install." 2) A definition of the words "to be demitted." 3) A determination as to whether this is a disciplinary action.

R-2. **Your committee interprets that in the section referred to the word "install" requires a formal liturgical service and that the term "to be demitted" is an inappropriate usage of the word because "to demit" is a voluntary action. Your committee, therefore, recommends that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the classes that the *Book of Church Order* be amended in Part I, Article 10, Section 13a as follows: "The ordination of a minister of the Word may be revoked when he has relinquished the function for which he was installed and has not been installed for a new function appropriate to the office within six months. Such action may be taken only after classis has fulfilled its pastoral responsibility to him. His name shall then be removed from the roll of the classis."** (ADOPTED)

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

Sec. 13.

a. A minister of the Word who has relinquished the function for which he was installed, and has not been installed for a new function appropriate to the office within six months, may be declared by the classis to be demitted from the office of Minister of the Word, and his name shall be removed from the roll of the classis.

After the recommended changes, the *Book of Church Order* will read:

Sec. 13. a. **The ordination of a minister of the Word may be revoked when he has relinquished the function for which he was installed and has not been installed for a new function appropriate to the office within six months. Such action may be taken only after classis has fulfilled its pastoral responsibility to him. His name shall then be removed from the roll of the classis.**

V. The General Synod Executive Committee in Recommendation 5 to the General Synod of 1976 (p. 62, *MGS,* 1976) requests the Committee on Church Government to study the procedural sequence in the process of appeals and complaints in the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 2. Disciplinary Procedures, Part 3. The Process of Discipline, Section V. Complaints, pgs. 60, 61, 62 and report to the General Synod of 1977.

R-3. **Your committee recommends that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the classes for their approval the following amendment to the *BCO*. That Chapter 2, Part 3, Section V be amended by striking the entire sub-section 1 and rewriting it as follows: 1. A complaint is a written statement alleging administrative error. a. A complaint may be filed only by: (1) A communicant member in good and regular standing against the consistory or board of elders having superintendence over** that person **(him). (2) A member of an assembly against that assembly of which** that person **(he) is a member. (3) An assembly against the assembly having immediate superintendence over the complaining assembly. b. Complaints may be filed only with the assembly that has**

immediate superintendence of the assembly against which the complaint in filed. c. No complaint can be taken against any action of the General Synod. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED*)

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

V. *Complaints*

1. A complaint is a written allegation by one or more persons who are subject to the jurisdiction of a lower assembly to the next higher assembly in the exercise of its administrative, or non-judicial functions. Any communicant member in good standing has the right of complaint against any action of a lower assembly to which he is subject, except a decision in a judicial case. No complaint can be taken against any action of the General Synod.

After the recommended change(s) the *Book of Church Order* will read:

V. *Complaints*

1. A complaint is a written statement alleging administrative error.

a. A complaint may be filed only by:

(1) A communicant member in good and regular standing against the consistory or board of elders having superintendence over him.

(2) A member of an assembly against that assembly of which he is a member.

(3) An assembly against the assembly having immediate superintendence over the complaining assembly.

b. Complaints may be filed only with the assembly that has immediate superintendence of the assembly against which the complaint is filed.

c. No complaint can be taken against any action of the General Synod.

The attention of your committee was also drawn to the fact that in Section V. Complaints, in sub-section 5, the Stated Clerk is to notify the Executive Committee of the complaint, while in the case of appeals under sub-section 7 of Appeals this notification is made to the permanent Committee on Judicial Business. The objection that was raised to this procedure for complaints is that the Executive Committee is not selected with this kind of procedure in mind and that, therefore, complaints should also be referred to the Judicial Business Committee.

R-4. Your committee recognizes that the reason for referring complaints to the Executive Committee is that they are administrative in nature and non-judicial and, therefore, the present provision seems more proper. Your committee, however, concludes that though the subject matter is administrative yet the procedure is of the same nature as in judicial matters and, therefore, recommends that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the classes for their approval the following amendment to

*Deletions in parenthesis
Amendments in light face type

the *BCO*: That in Section V. Complaints, sub-section 5, the words "judicial business" be substituted for "Executive Committee" in line 3. (ADOPTED)

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

5. The stated clerk of the classis or particular synod, or the general secretary of the General Synod, shall, upon receiving a complaint with its records addressed to that body, promptly notify its Executive Committee of the complaint. The Executive Committee shall call a meeting at a suitable time and place, and give notice of such meeting to all the parties involved. The committee shall determine whether the complaint and its attendant papers are in good order. The committee shall promptly advise the several parties if it finds irregularities in the complaint. A period of not more than twenty days shall be allowed to correct such irregularities.

After the recommended change(s) the *Book of Church Order* will read:

5. The stated clerk of the classis or particular synod, or the general secretary of the General Synod, shall, upon receiving a complaint with its records addressed to that body, promptly notify its Judicial Business Committee of the complaint. The Judicial Business Committee shall call a meeting at a suitable time and place, and give notice of such meeting to all the parties involved. The committee shall determine whether the complaint and its attendant papers are in good order. The committee shall promptly advise the several parties if it finds irregularities in the complaint. A period of not more than twenty days shall be allowed to correct such irregularities.

R-5. **Objection was also raised to the limitation of "twenty days" in sub-section 2 of Section V. Complaints. Your committee agrees that more time could be needed and, therefore, recommends that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the classes for their approval the following amendment to the *BCO*: That "thirty days" be substituted for "twenty days."** (ADOPTED)

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

2. A written notice of intent to complaint shall be given to the stated clerk of the lower assembly within twenty days after the action in question was taken. In default of this requirement, the complaint falls.

After the recommended change(s), the *Book of Church Order* will read:

2. A written notice of intent to complain shall be given to the stated clerk of the lower assembly within thirty days after the action in question was taken. In default of this requirement, the complaint falls.

Your committee was also instructed to study the matter of procedural sequence in Appeals. Having done so your committee concludes that there is no ambiguity in the process of appeals and, therefore, recommends no change.

VI. In the "Report on the Committee on Church Funding," Recommendation 19 (p. 74, *MGS*, 1976) says "we recommend that since a

note is a valid debt of the borrower, and the failure to pay a debt could result in a court judgment against the borrower, and a judgment encumbers all assets of the borrower, the issuance of a note should be considered an encumberance requiring approval of classis as provided in the RCA *Book of Church Order."* (This refers to the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 8 on page 15.)

R-6. Your committee, therefore, recommends that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the classes for their approval the following amendment to the *BCO*: An additional sentence to section 8 as follows: "Nor shall the consistory incur any indebtedness on behalf of the church without the approval of the classis of which that church is a member." (ADOPTED)

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

Sec. 8. The consistory shall have the care and supervision of the church's property and financial interests. They are the trustees of the church's property, unless the act of incorporation of the church, or the statutes of the state in which the church is incorporated, make other provision. The consistory shall not sell, transfer, lease, mortgage or otherwise alienate or encumber any real property of the church on which there stands a building designed for worship or religious instruction, or as a residence for the minister, unless the approval of the classis of which the church is a member has been secured.

After the recommended change(s) the *Book of Church Order* will read:

Sec. 8. **The consistory shall have the care and supervision of the church's property and financial interests. They are the trustees of the church's property, unless the act of incorporation of the church, or the statutes of the state in which the church is incorporated, make other provision. The consistory shall not sell, transfer, lease, mortgage or otherwise alienate or encumber any real property of the church on which there stands a building designed for worship or religious instruction, or as a residence for the minister, unless the approval of the classis of which the church is a member has been secured. Nor shall the consistory incur any indebtedness on behalf of the church without the approval of the classis of which that church is a member.**

VII. The Classis of Pella has suggested a change in the proposed amendment to Chapter 1, Part 1, Article 2, Sec. 13 (*BCO*, p. 17) on membership referral and conservation. The General Synod recommendation referred to "families." The classis suggested a change to "members." Because this is an editorial change, rather than a change in substance, it will be made without a re-voting.

VIII. During regional meetings of classical and particular synod stated clerks there was discussion on contracts for ministers. These discussions led to a careful review of: the *Book of Church Order,* Part 1, Article 7, Sec. 7 (pp 27, 28). During this review it became clear that several errors have crept into this section. The 1976 edition of the *Book of Church Order* refers to "the call," when in reality the entire section speaks of a contract. After reviewing the intention of the section, several changes have been made to bring it into conformity with the original wording. These corrections will appear in the 1977 edition of the *Book of Church Order.*

REPORT OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The Editorial Committee considered two items which had been referred to it for its review to insure conformity to the format of the *Book of Church Order* and presents the following recommendations for your approval:

RE: PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR CONSISTORY

R-1. **We RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the Classes for their approval the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 1g to read as follows: "Does the Consistory have and regularly use a procedure by which the performance of its elders, deacons and minister(s) is annually reviewed?"**
(ADOPTED)

RE: ORDINATION OF WOMEN AS MINISTERS OF THE WORD

R-2. **We RECOMMEND that the General Synod adopt and recommend to the Classes for their approval the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Section 3, by substituting the words "men and women" for the word "persons" and make all other necessary changes in the *Book of Church Order* to conform to this.**
(ADOPTED)

NOTE: See General Synod action R-19. of the GSEC Report on page 64.

ARTICLE 16

PROGRAM AND DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM AND DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES AT GENERAL SYNOD

Monday Afternoon
Opening Worship Service - Rev. Howard G. Hageman, President, New Brunswick Theological Seminary
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Walter Pruicksma

Tuesday Morning
Opening Worship Service - Dr. Gordon Van Wylen, President, Hope College
Business Session - Vice President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Moody Yap

Wednesday Morning
Opening Worship Service - Dr. H. Virgil Rowenhorst, President, Northwestern College
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Elder Betty Young

Wednesday Afternoon
Opening Prayer - Rev. Sanford Morgan
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Christian Walvoord

Wednesday Evening
Opening Prayer - Elder Loxie Wood
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Howard Schipper

Thursday Morning
Opening Worship Service - Dr. Kenneth Weller, President, Central College
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Imre Bertalan

Thursday Afternoon
Opening Prayer - Rev. Rodger Dalman
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Thomas Harris

Friday Morning
Opening Worship Service - Dr. I. John Hesselink, President, Western Theological Seminary
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Louis Benes, Jr.

Friday Afternoon
Opening Prayer - Elder Elizabeth Chadwick
Business Session - President Presiding
Closing Prayer - Rev. Rodwell Morgan

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Tuesday, June 14
Historical Pageant in commemoration of 100th Anniversary of First Reformed Church, Sioux Center, Iowa

Wednesday, June 15
Tour and Banquet at Northwestern College, Orange City, Iowa

Thursday, June 16
Retirement Banquet in honor of Dr. Marion de Velder, General Secretary, and Edith de Velder.

Friday, June 17
Installation Service of the Rev. Arie R. Brouwer as General Secretary
Closing Communion Service

OFFERING

A sum of $1,219.15 was collected at the Communion Service. The offering was designated for "World Hunger."

ARTICLE 17

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

The 171st regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in Sioux Center, Iowa, June 13-17, 1977, acknowledges with sincere and genuine thanksgiving the gracious guidance of Almighty God and offers the following resolutions:

R-1. **THAT General Synod convey deep gratitude to the City of Sioux Center for the use of city owned facilities to accommodate the sessions of Synod and provide recreational opportunities for delegates, the Chamber of Commerce for its helpfulness to members of Synod and guests; the Central and First Reformed Churches for all their gracious hospitality; the Sioux Center Public Schools for the use of school buildings and efficient transportation and the Women's Club for their kind services and assistance during the meetings of Synod.** (ADOPTED)

R-2. **THAT the General Synod express its sincere appreciation to Mrs. Vera Te Paske, who entertained the delegates at her home, and thereby fulfilled the wishes of both herself and her late husband, Mr. Maurice Te Paske, who invited the 1977 General Synod to meet in Sioux Center, Iowa.** (ADOPTED)

R-3. **THAT General Synod thank Northwestern College and its faculty for hosting the delegates at a banquet and tour of the campus.** (ADOPTED)

R-4. **THAT General Synod in the spirit of unity communicate our pleasure with the generous cooperation and warm hospitality of the administration and staff of Dordt College for making their facilities available to us, thereby demonstrating the growing cooperation between the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America.** (ADOPTED)

R-5. **THAT General Synod offer congratulations and best wishes for the Lord's continuing blessings to the First Reformed Church of Sioux Center, the Rev. Thurman P. Rynbrandt, pastor, on the occasion of their 100th anniversary, organized in 1877 with 27 members and reaching a total membership over 1700 today, with a benevolence budget of $300,000 and 31 sons and 7 daughters serving in the ministry, mission, and nurture of the church.** (ADOPTED)

R-6. **THAT General Synod extend its gratefulness to Rev. Louis Benes, President of the Synod, for his steady and reassuring leadership, and to Rev. Bert Bossenbroek, Vice President, for his faithfulness to the denomination.** (ADOPTED)

R-7. **THAT General Synod give praise to God for the progressive and inspirational leadership of Dr. Marion de Velder in his 16 years of service as General Secretary after fruitful years in the pastorate.** (ADOPTED)

R-8. **THAT General Synod express appreciation for the five presidents of our seminaries and colleges: Dr. Howard Hageman of New Brunswick Theological Seminary; Dr. Gordon Van Wylen of Hope College; Dr. H. Virgil Rowenhorst of Northwestern College; Dr. Kenneth Weller of Central College; and Dr. I. John Hesselink of Western Theological**

Seminary for leading us in worship and for the music under the direction of Dr. Herbert Ritsema. (ADOPTED)

R-9. THAT General Synod express our sincere gratitude to Lois Joice for her efforts in writing and directing the pageant "Heritage and Horizon," an effective and entertaining way of telling the highlights of our Reformed Church history and calling the church to fulfill her mission in bringing the gospel to all of God's creation. (ADOPTED)

R-10. THAT because we, as God's covenant people, are called to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly before our God; (Mic. 6:8) and that, because Christ, the Lord of the Church, calls us to continue His work of preaching the Good News to the poor, proclaiming liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and to announce the year when the Lord will save His people, (Luke 4:18, 19).

Be it resolved, that we as a General Synod affirm the following actions and commitments:

(1) Through the Reformed Church World Service we have increased our giving during the past four years from $175,000 to $550,000 in order to feed the hungry of the world, assist development, and meet human need.

(2) By the agricultural work of the people of the Great Plains and other farmlands of our country, we have produced an abundance of food and thereby increased our potential to live out a commitment to feed the hungry peoples of the world.

(3) In response to the need for dignity and justice, we have applauded the stand of our government in its proclamation of human rights in both domestic and foreign affairs. (ADOPTED)

ARTICLE 18

OTHER MATTERS

NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made and supported that the General Synod of the RCA meet biennially and that the rules of order be changed.

VOTED: To refer the motion to meet biennially to the General Synod Executive Committee for consideration and report back to the 1978 General Synod.

The General Secretary called attention to the following exerpt from the 1976 *General Synod Minutes:*

> In compliance with the 1970 General Synod directive (*MGS*, 1970, p. 208) that a "contemporary confession" be prepared for the Reformed Church in America, Eugene Heideman submitted to the 1974 General Synod the proposed confessional statement entitled "Our Song of Hope" (*MGS*, 1974, p. 165-173). General Synod designated "Our Song of Hope" as a Provisional Standard for a period of four years ending in 1978.

"Our Song of Hope" and a study guide have been distributed throughout the RCA. A study is presently being made and a report with recommendations for approval will be made to the 1978 General Synod. In the interests of further revision and improvement, all suggestions and comments regarding "Our Song of Hope" should be sent to Dr. Eugene Heideman at Western Seminary before December 31, 1977.

ARTICLE 19

CLOSE AND ADJOURNMENT

The 171st General Synod concluded its business and adjourned at 8:45 p.m. CDT, on Friday, June 17, 1977, to meet in New York, New York, between Monday, June 12, and Friday, June 16, 1978.

The Minutes of the 171st Session of the General Synod were read by title by the General Secretary, Marion de Velder.

Harlan Bergman, Chairperson of the Men's Council, in behalf of the Reformed Church Men, presented Albertus G. Bossenbroek, President-Elect, with a bell and gavel.

Albertus G. Bossenbroek, President-Elect, addressed Synod briefly. The 171st session of General Synod was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. CDT.

The installation service of Arie R. Brouwer as General Secretary, effective September 1, 1977, and a closing communion service took place at the First Reformed Church, Sioux Center, Iowa.

Louis H. Benes, President
Albertus G. Bossenbroek, Vice President
Marion de Velder, General Secretary

Temporary Clerks:

James Beltman
James Beukelman
Thomas Bos
Warren Bovenkerk
Leon Draayer
Dennis Foemmel
David Hensley
Charles Morris
Dennis Mulder
Barry Traver

NOTES



