The Acts & Proceedings of the 174th Regular Session of the GENERAL SYNOD

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Convened at

Union College

Schenectady, New York

June 16-20, 1980

Vol. LX

Beginning on page v of this volume is an INDEX to both the ACTS and PROCEEDINGS, and to the DIRECTORY and FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Appendix 1).

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1979-1980

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Vice-President . . . . . The Rev. Harry Buis

General Secretary . . . . . The Rev. Arie R. Brouwer

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1979-1980

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The Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod

Appendix 1 — Directory and Financial Reports

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DICKINSON BROS., INC.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.
1980

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ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA CONVENED IN ITS ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY FOURTH REGULAR SESSION AT UNION COLLEGE, SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK, ON MONDAY, THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF JUNE, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY A.D., AT ONE P.M., EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME, AND ADJOURNED ON FRIDAY, THE TWENTIETH DAY OF JUNE, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY A.D., AT 9:15 P.M., EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME.

I. FORMATION OF THE SYNOD

OPENING OF SYNOD

The Synod opened with a Service of Worship led by Robert A. De Young, liturgist, Donner B. Atwood, preacher, and Carol De Young, organist.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday Evening
A Service of Praise and Commitment was held at the Memorial Chapel on the campus of Union College, Schenectady, New York, led by the Reverends Herman E. Luben and Edwin G. Mulder.

Monday Afternoon
Opening Worship Service—Rev. Robert De Young, liturgist, Rev. Donner Atwood, preacher, Carol De Young, organist
Closing Prayer—Rev. Harold Colenbrander

Tuesday Morning
Opening Worship Service—Rev. Robert De Young, liturgist, Rev. Donner Atwood, preacher, Carol De Young, organist
Closing Prayer—Elder Ray Van Slageren

Tuesday Evening
A special worship service was led by the Rev. J. Dean Dykstra at the First Reformed Church in Schenectady, New York, in celebration of the church's 300th Anniversary.

Wednesday Morning
Opening Worship Service—Rev. Robert De Young, liturgist, Rev. Donner Atwood, preacher, Carol De Young, organist
Closing Prayer—Rev. Karl Overbeek

Wednesday Afternoon
Opening Prayer—Elder Edgar Dillard
Closing Prayer—Rev. James Dunham

Wednesday Evening
Opening Prayer—Rev. Ronald Lokhorst
Closing Prayer—Elder Clair Coddington

Thursday Morning
Opening Worship Service—Rev. Robert De Young, liturgist, Rev. Donner Atwood, preacher, Carol De Young, organist
Closing Prayer—Elder Preston Brandsen

Thursday Afternoon
Opening Prayer—Rev. Melvin De Vries
Closing Prayer—Rev. Klaire Miller

Friday Morning
Opening Worship Service—Rev. Robert De Young, liturgist, Rev. Donner Atwood, preacher, Carol De Young, organist
Closing Prayer—Rev. Harvey Staal

Friday Afternoon
Opening Prayer—Elder Rheutelia Andrews
Closing Prayer—Rev. Calvin J. Rynbrandt

Friday Evening
A communion service, led by the officers of General Synod, was held at the First Reformed Church in Schenectady, New York.

ROLL OF GENERAL SYNOD

President: Edwin G. Mulder, 595 Graafschap Road, Holland, MI 49423
Vice President: Harry Buis, 3409 Van Buren Street, Hudsonville, MI 49426
General Secretary: Arie R. Brouwer, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

PARTICULAR SYNOD OF ALBANY

CLASSIS OF ALBANY

Ministers

Roger Krutz, Box 70, Westerlo, NY 12193
Norman Tellier, 701 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY 12205
Stephen Wing, Box F, Clarksville, NY 12041

Elders

Henry Williams, Jr., 46 Hiawatha Drive, Guilderland, NY 12084
Richard Williams, 8 Ahl Avenue, Albany, NY 12205
Claudette Schubert, Selkirk, NY 12158

CLASSIS OF COLUMBIA-GREENE

Ministers

Eric Blahut, The Ghent Reformed Church, R.D. #1, Ghent, NY 12075
David C. Corlett, The Reformed Dutch Church of Claverack, Drawer K, Claverack, NY 12513

Elders

Harold Leggett, R.D. 1, Ghent, N.Y. 12075

CLASSIS OF MONTGOMERY

Ministers

Ronald Sanford, Box 36, Owasco, NY 13130
Sam Vander Schaaf, Sharpe's Lane, RR#1, Brockville, Ontario, Canada KGV 5T1

Elders

John B. Blake, P.O. Box 160, Palatine Bridge, NY 13428
June Wright, 325 Otsego, Ilion, NY 13357

CLASSIS OF ROCHESTER

Ministers

John Jenner, R.D. #1, Clymer, NY 14724
John Kotun, R D #3, Trumansburg, NY 14886
Harvey Staal, c/o Mrs. John Staal, 2113 Denwood Avenue, S.W., Wyoming, MI 49502

Elders

Arthur Ameele, 7647 Hamilton Street, Williamson, NY 14589
Arthur Fagner, 1889 Welcher Road, Newark, NY 14513

CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY

Ministers

William H. de Forest, 3700 Carman Road, Schenectady, NY 12303
Roger E. Eernisse, Star Route, Rotterdam Junction, NY 12150
John F. Egy, R. D. 5, Amsterdam, NY 12010
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Elders

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David Risseeuw

WORSHIP LEADERS
Robert De Young
Donner B. Atwood
Carol De Young

MINUTES AND JOURNAL

The Acts and Proceedings of the 174th regular session of the General Synod were read by title.

The General Secretary noted the following correction to the *Minutes* of the 1979 General Synod:

In response to several overtures to withdraw from the World Council of Churches, the Advisory Committee on Christian Unity recommended to the 1979 General Synod "that the RCA retain its membership in the WCC . . ." That recommendation was amended on the floor of Synod by changing the word "retain" to "affirm." That amendment is not reflected in the printed Minutes of the General Synod.

R-10 on p. 162 should read as follows:

> **That the RCA affirm its membership in the World Council of Churches and review its mode of participation following the study report of the Commission on Christian Unity to the General Synod of 1980.**

During the Friday morning session, the General Synod approved the journal of actions for the sessions held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and authorized its officers to approve the journal of actions for the sessions held on Thursday and Friday.

RULES OF ORDER

The present Rules of Order were read by title, and copies were placed on the secretary's table. The general secretary also called attention to the proposed Rules of Order, approved in first reading by the 1979 General Synod and before this synod for approval. (See *MGS,* 1979, pp. 181-195, 200-1, 205.)

TELLERS

Roger E. Eernisse
David Henion
Roger Huitink
Gregg A. Mast
John Paarlberg
Robert Perless
Curry M. Pikkaart
Perry Raak
Jack Ritsema
Raymond Tilstra
Ronald Ver Wys
David R. Vos

AGENDA AND SCHEDULE

The General Synod approved and followed a schedule based on the agenda of General Synod prescribed in the *Special Rules of Order,* Article 1 (*MGS,* 1979, p. 192f).

In addition to the prescribed agenda, the schedule provided for the following forums:

Delegates' Forum—Tuesday morning meeting

An opportunity was given to all delegates to speak on any issue(s) before this General Synod. Subjects raised by the delegates included: proportional representation of particular synods on General Synod boards, agencies and commissions, RCA Historical Society membership, youth ministry, WCC membership, the nuclear arms race, South Africa, allocation of the Quick Memorial Fund income, the Church Growth Program, draft registration, restructure for program, Asian American ministries, the value of open forums, and the Canadian site of the 1981 General Synod.

Open Forum on GPC Structure and Funding—Tuesday lunch hour

The forum was led by Thomas Harris, chair of the General Program Council, who, with the assistance of several resource persons, offered information and responded to questions of those delegates and visitors who chose to attend.

Open Forum on Churches Under the Cross (South Africa and Taiwan)—Wednesday lunch hour

The forum was led by Warren J. Henseler, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Nonviolent Liberation of South Africa, and Harry E. De Bruyn, who recently represented the General Program Council in meetings with the leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, who offered information and responded to questions of those delegates and visitors who chose to attend.

The schedule also provided for the following special program and reception:

General Program Council Program

The General Program Council Program, which took place on Thursday evening, explored the question of whether the RCA presence in mission fields "really makes a difference." The question was answered in the affirmative by a group of Middle East missionaries and through the media of film and tape, by several retired missionaries. Presentations were made to the Rev. Thomas Harris, retiring chairperson of the GPC, and to Dr. John Walchenbach, former RCA Executive Secretary for Program. The program also featured a new filmstrip on the Arabian mission and musical selections by the choirs of Christ Community Church, Clifton Park, New York.

Reception for Missionaries

All RCA missionaries at General Synod, both active and retired, were honored at a reception following the GPC program. Special music and a tribute to the missionaries from Secretary for World Ministries John Buteyn were features of the evening.

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Vice Moderator: James E. Vincent (Orange)

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Case Koolhaas (West Central)
Earl Kragt (North Grand Rapids)
John Magee (Newark)
John D. Paarlberg (Holland)
Herman Van Galen (West Sioux)
Arnold van Lummel (New Brunswick)

Elders

H. Mortimer Broackway (Mid-Hudson)
Robert A. Brown (North Grand Rapids)
Donald DeWynia (Dakota)
Edgar Dillard (New York)
Robert Hoyt (Pella)
Richard Johnson (Muskegon)
Oswald H. Laubenstein (Rockland-Westchester)
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Elders

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Marien Lo Preto (Brooklyn)
Allen Monsma (Lake Erie)
Everett P. Van Malsen
(South Grand Rapids)

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James W. Dunham (New Brunswick)
John Ettema (Lake Erie)
Forrest Harms (Minnesota)
William M. Hoffman (Minnesota)
Duane Laman (Rockland-Westchester)
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Elders

George Busch (Pleasant Prairie)
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Maynard M. Dykstra (East Sioux)
James D. Exum (Philadelphia)
Leonard F. Griesing (Bergen)
Harold Havenga (Chicago)
David L. Leich (Paramus)
Robert London (South Grand Rapids)
John Schripsema (Holland)
Edward Ver Hoeven (Zeeland)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EVANGELIZATION AND CHURCH GROWTH

Moderator: Harold Korver (California)
Vice Moderator: Stanley J. Vandersall (Pella)

Ministers

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Melvin DeVries (California)
Herber DuMont (Florida)
David Henion (Bergen)
Bruce J. Hoffman (Paramus)
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John Jenner (Rochester)
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Elders

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Preston Brandsen (Holland)
Agnew R. Eckert (Illiana)
Jennie Elenbaas (California)
Arthur W. Fagner (Rochester)
G. Roger Holt (Philadelphia)
Theodore W. Jessup, Jr. (Rockland-Westchester)
Gary Koerselman (West Sioux)
John W. Rynberk (Ontario)
Gus Slotman (Kalamazoo)
Clarence Van Steenis (Pella)
William Van't Hul (West Sioux)
Tom Van Vossen (West Sioux)
Kenneth B. Vosler, Jr. (Schenectady)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT

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Vice Moderator: Donald Lenderink (East Sioux)

Ministers

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Robert Bender (Paramus)
Jack Doorlag (Muskegon)
Larry Grooters (Muskegon)
Daniel Hakken (Pella)
Roderick Jackson (Lake Erie)
Robert Krutz (Albany)
Duane Tellinghuisen (California)

Elders

John Barton Blake (Montgomery)
Clair Coddington (Mid-Hudson)
Henry Cornelius (Illinois)
Peter Koopmans (Illiana)
Dwight K. Norian (New Brunswick)
William C. Perkins (Chicago)
Arlyn Ross (Kalamazoo)
Richard H. Ver Beck (California)
William L. Wiederhold (Rockland-Westchester)
Jacob Wildman (Wisconsin)
Ernest H. Wood (Schoharie)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WORLD MISSION

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Vice Moderator: Harold A. Colenbrander (West Central)

Ministers

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Harvey B. Hoffman (New York)
Vernon L. Hoffs (California)
Russell J. Horton (Illiana)
William Kroon (Pleasant Prairie)
Jack D. Ritsema (Dakota)
Harvey Van Farowe (Dakota)
Donald Van Hoeven (Kalamazoo)
Vared Van Wagenen (Schoharie)
Dick W. Vriesman (Cascades)

Elders

Henry Dik (Chicago)
Kay Dutcher (Mid-Hudson)
Charles Jansma (Wisconsin)
Gilbert W. Kelley (Schenectady)
Joseph Overkamp (Passaic)
Jacob Schipper (Zeeland)
Marvin Swank (Pella)
Jac H. Tigelaar (South Grand Rapids)
Harold E. Van Dyke (Kalamazoo)

II AGENDA OF GENERAL SYNOD

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The general secretary noted that communications received by the General Synod were referred to appropriate committees.

PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF NEW BUSINESS

The following items of new business were presented and referred to the Committee of Reference for further referral or disposition as appropriate:

A Resolution on South Africa
A Resolution on American Hostages in Iran
A Commendation for Senator Hatfield

Upon recommendation of the Committee of Reference, the resolution on American hostages was not accepted as new business, the resolution on South Africa was referred to the Advisory Committee on World Mission (see p. 309), and the commendation for Senator Hatfield was referred to the Advisory Committee on Christian Action (see p. 81).

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Introduction

On a flight from Grand Rapids to New York, I found myself sitting alongside a young man in his late twenties. He was pleasant . . . intelligent . . . articulate. "Here is my chance to find out what the 'average' young adult is thinking," I thought to myself. Consequently I took the initiative in asking a lot of questions. If he realized that I was a clergyman, I feared that he might not be so talkative. "What do you think of the Church?", I asked. His reply was instant. "The Church . . . especially preachers . . . should try using their ears rather than their mouths." I had asked for it. A bit more cautious now, I asked, "What do you mean by that?" His point was that there is a lot that we can learn from assuming a listening posture.

As the president of the General Synod, I have been trying hard to listen attentively. But now the time has come to share. There is no way in which I could possibly share all the things which I have seen and heard this past year. I have heard hard questions being asked. I have heard excitement and frustration being expressed. I have sat through countless meetings. I have participated in anniversary celebrations, dedicatory services, missionary conferences, and many one-on-one conversations. Out of a year filled with many rich experiences, allow me to share with you some of the things which I have heard, some of the concerns which I feel, and some directions which I believe we need to take.

Church Growth

In 1978 the Reformed Church in America launched a program emphasizing church growth. Across the denomination, congregations have expressed their desire to grow numerically, in the quality of their faith, and in responsiveness to human need. Some 53 new ministries have been started since then, with many more being envisioned. PRAISE THE LORD! An important component of the church growth program has been leadership development. Laypersons as well as pastors have benefited by this aspect of the program. "Genesis and Beyond" events have received high praise from participants. If the church growth emphasis is to be substantive and sustained, it must emerge out of a strong congregational base. Not only must our congregations be caring communities of believers who accept persons where they are, but we must nurture them in the faith, enabling them to participate in God's mission. My concern is that church growth will be a sustained emphasis in our churches, and not a passing fad. Let us share our learnings and resource each other as we seek to be a growing church with a growing ministry.

The response to the Church Growth Fund has been most gratifying. However, we must not think that we have completed our task. It has only begun. We have encouraged the beginnings of new ministries. These ministries need funding. We need a development plan which will fund ministries yet to be launched. The estimated cost of projects identified for which loans must be provided exceeds 17 million dollars. A capital loan fund for new church development is urgently needed.

While numerical growth will come primarily through the planting of new churches, we ought to be deeply concerned about the neglect of urban ministries. While these ministries are frequently costly, they are often located in areas of great need. I would urge the Division of Church Planning and Development to make ur-

ban ministry a high priority in the decade of the 80s. One of the most exciting ministries which I visited this year was the ministry of the First Hispanic Reformed Church in Brooklyn. What makes this ministry so exciting is its holistic approach. In the name of Jesus Christ, the needs of people are being met.

World Mission

There is a renewed interest among us in world mission. The whole world is a mission field. North America, as well as the other continents, is in need of being evangelized. We are in a great partnership as we seek to respond to this challenge.

In most instances this means working through church-to-church relationships. The church in every land faces unique opportunities. For this unfinished task there is always an urgent need for career missionaries.

I would urge the expansion of the Associates in Mission program to include overseas experiences. Seminarians should be encouraged, for at least a term, to attend a seminary in areas where we are in mission. Travel-with-a-purpose tours could be designed to expose clergy and lay persons to seminars in lands where we are in mission. We need to build bridges of understanding which will enable an increasing number of our members to become informed about the world mission of the church.

"Crossing Cultural Barriers in Christ: Reaching and Receiving," has surfaced as the single most significant concern for the church as it seeks to be in mission. To this concern we will need to give a great deal of thought. It cannot—should not—be ignored!

We can rejoice that the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico has adopted a new policy which enables us to continue our partnership in mission with them. 1986 had been set as the date for the withdrawal of our missionaries from Mexico. Many of our opportunities for mission in the years to come will come through working in partnership with churches abroad. The mission of the church is one, whether here at home or abroad.

1979 marked the ninetieth anniversary of Reformed Church mission involvement in the Middle East. It was my privilege to visit our missions there. I was impressed with the work which has been done and with the persons now on the scene. I realized as never before how very complex the world mission enterprise has become, and how little I knew about the context within which our missionaries are asked to serve. The General Program Council has appointed an *ad hoc* committee on Power in World Mission. As a church we need to be educated as to what it means to be in mission in our day. I want to recommend to every congregation for study, Dr. Eugene Heideman's new book, *A People in Mission*. Here is a book which is informative, provocative, and clarifying.

We need to do more than send missionaries and fund programs. We need to encourage exchange programs, travel seminars, short term volunteerism, and the yoking of our congregations here with congregations abroad, if cross-cultural barriers are to be broken down and there is to be a giving and receiving of each other's gifts.

Restructuring

One of the ways in which our renewed interest in world mission expresses itself is through the new structure of the General Program Council. The need for restructuring was recognized by both the General Program Council and the 1979 General Synod. The concept of the one mission of the church will continue to be affirmed. There will however be three divisions under the umbrella of the General Program Council: Division of World Mission, Division of Christian Discipleship, and a Division of Church Planning and Development. The church is to be commended for her willingness to reorder herself in the accomplishment of her assigned task. We can be thankful that the design and schedule for implementation have been done with dispatch. The question of assessments for the funding of the Christian Discipleship and Church Planning and Development divisions is before the church for deliberation. It is one of those questions we need to live with for a time before making a decision.

Signs of Aliveness and Vitality

I was impressed during the course of this year at the ways in which the Spirit is at work. To be sure, there are frustrations and disappointments, but over all there are so many exciting things which are happening. Time and time again, I would say to myself, "I wish the whole church could see this . . . hear this . . . feel this." I wish that you could have been there the night the Black Council celebrated its tenth anniversary. I wish that you could have participated in the Ecumenical Consultation. As the consultation wrestled with the implications of our oneness in Jesus Christ, I was proud to be a part of the Church of Jesus Christ. I wish that you could have been an observer at the Women's Triennial. It truly was a renewing . . . remolding experience. I wish that you could have attended the Consultation on Asian-American ministries. You too would have rejoiced in the richness of our diversity in Jesus Christ. I wish that you could have attended the meeting of the Council of Reformed Churches in Canada. Some 30 congregations have been established in Canada over the past three decades. Many of these congregations have significant ministries and desire to become more vitally involved in church growth. These churches are looking forward to the calling of a Field Secretary and the establishment at some future date of a Particular Synod of Canada.

We have reason to rejoice and give thanks that the receipts of the General Program Council exceeded askings by $250,000. In response to the Cambodian crisis, the Reformed Church family gave over $250,000. These figures are significant because they reflect the responsiveness of God's people to the opportunities for witness and service. The Vision in Mission visitation has been appreciatively received, with significant results. Some 185 consistories have been contacted, asking for an annual 10 percent increased giving for benevolent causes. The plan calls for every consistory to be visited.

We can rejoice in the vitality of our seminaries and colleges. The quality of their services has been recognized by independent research agencies. To theses institutions we look for our leaders as well as acknowledging the strategic mission which they perform in the total life of the church.

Gifts For Ministry

During this past year I heard a great deal about the recognition and utilization of gifts. Ministry is being seen as a shared ministry. Emphasis is being given to an enabling ministry.

Increasingly the church is recognizing the gifts of all her members, especially women. In 1973, approval by the General Synod was given to ordain women to the offices of elder and deacon. The 1977 Consistorial Report indicates that 481 women have been ordained as elders and 805 have been ordained as deacons.

The 1979 General Synod upheld a ruling of the Committee on Judicial Business which permitted the interpretation of the word "persons" in the *Book of Church Order* to include women as well as men. To date 15 women have been ordained to the office of the minister of the Word. Subsequently the church has been sharply divided over this action. The question with which we live is: How can we live with such differences? In such a context there is for me the prior question of the meaning of our oneness in Jesus Christ. Are we willing to allow this issue so to divide us that we dissipate our energies, or can we accept our differences, channeling our efforts in the direction of being the servant people whom God calls us to be? There is something in most of us which longs for clear cut decisions. But life is not always that simple. We live in a time when many "traditional" answers are being questioned. There is something about living with questions which is inevitable. I would hope that the unquestionableness of our oneness in Jesus Christ would enable us to live in unity with the questions which arise out of our differing opinions.

South Africa

During the past year the Reverend Warren Henseler and I visited South Africa. We went as the representatives of the Task Force on South Africa, in response to an invitation extended to us by the Broederkring (a fraternity of Black ministers and lay persons in the Black, Colored, and Indian Reformed Churches of South Africa). These churches represent 1,640,000 Christians. We spent two packed weeks meeting with Blacks and Whites alike. We visited seminaries, universities, churches, homelands, townships and schools. We met with educators, diplomats, students, church officials, authors, business people, persons banned by the government, and young people. We lived for several days in the home of a Black family (which is against the law). For two weeks we experienced South Africa, not as tourists, but for a time at least in part, as our Black brothers and sisters experience it. What we experienced was pain! We left South Africa feeling both anguish and anger. The government of South Africa is built on the premise of apartheid. In the name of God, justification is given to a demonic system of separate development. While the outside world is given the impression that things are getting better, the condition under which Blacks live is to say the least, dehumanizing. The Group Areas Act, the passbook, the labor laws, the social restrictions, the system itself—all of them are intolerable. South Africa is a rich country, but Blacks are being exploited to enrich the privileged Whites.

I have been asked, "Why do you concern yourself with South Africa?" I take seriously both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. ("If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar . . . This Commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God, should love his brother also." I John 4:20, 21) Our faith calls us to be concerned about justice as well as evangelization. We must speak the word of truth in love to our White brothers and sisters. We must be

in solidarity with our Black brothers and sisters in their struggle to be free. They need the support of the international community. They need our encouragement. The Black Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa has formally requested our help in underwriting the cost of an administrative secretary for their denomination (a denomination consisting of one million members). The Black church wants to appoint its own administrator, a post now held and subsidized by the White church. The White Reformed Church refuses to subsidize the appointment of a Black pastor. For the Black Reformed Church in South Africa, this is an important appointment. Our support would be of great encouragement to them. This is a vital church which, although poor financially, needs to be affirmed, as it seeks to stand on its own feet.

R-1.
To request the General Program Council to provide $12,500 annually, for five years, to underwrite the position of administrative secretary in the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Africa.*

The Decade of the 80s

During the past year I have been reviewing the Minutes of the General Synod of the 70s. I was reminded that we began the decade of the 70s faced with the possibility of an orderly dissolution of the Reformed Church in America. Those were dark days! Out of that darkness, light has broken forth. Some exciting things have begun to happen. To God be the glory! Now a new decade stretches out ahead of us. What will the world be like in 1989? What can we expect? What is God calling us to be and do?

There are those who say that the outlook for the 80s is somber. Most of us would agree. Ours is a violent world. The thought of a nuclear war is enough to send chills up one's back, and yet we continue to participate in the armament race. The gap between rich and poor seems to be widening. Many people—no less than one billion—do not get enough daily food to eat. Our resources are diminishing. Inflation continues to soar.

Although the outlook is somber, we are a people of hope, who affirm the future in faith. As a church we must address ourselves to issues of our day. We must be the advocates of peace . . . of justice . . . of reconciliation. We must call for a life-style of simplicity in a world of scarcity. We must find ways of being better stewards of the goods which God has entrusted to us. We must find ways to make the gospel relevant to a "ME" generation.

The local congregation has a strategic role to fulfill. In every community there are persons who need to be reached with the gospel. In every congregation there ought to be experiences which will meet the needs of its members in such a way that society is penetrated with the leaven of the gospel. In a demanding age the spiritual revitalization of the membership of the local congregation is primary, if that membership is to engage the world redemptively.

Many of our congregations are small in size. More than half of our congregations have fewer than 200 members per congregation. The challenge of the future is to make these small congregations viable. The needs for intimacy and fellowship in

*Upon recommendation of the Committee of Reference, this recommendation was referred to the Advisory Committee on World Mission (see p. 310).

this world are basic to humanity. The small church is uniquely equipped to meet these needs. The small church has the capabilities of assimilating new members and of identifying and utilizing the gifts of its members.

For all congregations . . . large and small . . . the challenge is great. We have the assurance that the divine resources are sufficient for all our needs. It is only as we undertake the task of being God's People in the world that we receive the empowerment which has been promised.

Conclusion

I used to see signs around New Jersey saying, "George Washington slept here." During this past year I have wondered if George Washington had ever been a president of a General Synod. For the opportunity to participate in the many facets of our denomination's life, I thank you. Ours is a great church. I never realized before this year how extensive our involvements are. I am proud to be a minister of the Reformed Church in America, and to have had the honor of serving as your president.

It is my conclusion that we must pray for the things we care about, because inevitably, we give ourselves to that for which we pray. I ask you to join with me in praying: THY KINGDOM COME. This is, after all is said and done, what we care about, and to which we ought to give ourselves.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The General Synod Executive Committee (GSEC) has served the Reformed Church in America since 1961. The *Book of Church Order* states that:

> The General Synod Executive Committee is established by and responsible to the General Synod. Its responsibility is to implement decisions and policies of the General Synod through proper channels and agencies; to support, strengthen 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,* Part IV, Article 7, Section 1)

Several specific responsibilities are defined in the *Bylaws of the General Synod* (Part I, Article 3, Section 4). To carry out these responsibilities, the GSEC held stated meetings on October 11-12, 1979; January 30-31, 1980; April 9-10, 1980; and is scheduled to meet during General Synod; thus, fulfilling the requirement of four stated meetings prescribed in the *Bylaws*.

The report which follows is organized around the major responsibilities assigned to the GSEC in the *BCO*. Matters of a general nature to be heard and acted upon directly by the General Synod are reported here. They are identified by †† in the outline below. Other matters are reported through appropriate advisory committees as indicated by the word or phrase in parentheses following the title of the section in the outline. Referrals from the General Synod of 1979 are dealt with throughout the report.

AD INTERIM ADMINISTRATION

†† Particular Synod Minutes

†† Ad Interim Appointments

†† Ecumenical Delegates

†† Debt Reporting

†† Referrals to Church Government Committee

GENERAL SYNOD MEETING

†† Referral of Business

†† Dates and Sites

POLICY AND PLANNING

†† Amendments to the *Book of Church Order*

The Government

Bylaws and Rules of Order

†† General Synod Agency/Commission Term of Office

Amendments to Constitutions and Bylaws (Church Order)

General Program Council

WTS/NBTS Bylaws

Corporate Bylaws of the General Synod (Church Order)

Historical Society Constitution (Christian Heritage)

Policy and Purposes of the Archives (Christian Heritage)

†† Denominational Priority

Asian American Consultation (Church Order)

BUDGET

General Synod Mission Budget—Offerings (Financial Support)

†† General Synod Operational Budget—Assessments

Special Appeals (Financial Support)

General Program Council

Western Theological Seminary

Northwestern College

†† Martha Antoinette Quick Memorial Fund

SUPERVISION

†† Liaison Committee

Office of Human Resources (Church Vocations)

Office of Promotion and Communication (Communications)

Office of Finance (Financial Support)

†† Staff Consulting Group

†† New Brunswick Classis Inquiry Concerning a Professor of Theology

OTHER

†† 1979 Statistical Report of the Reformed Church in America

Relationship of Kirkside to the Denomination (Church Vocations)

The Small Church (Evangelization and Church Growth)

†† Ad Hoc Committee on Emergency Benevolent Assistance

†† Ad Hoc Committee on Women

Ad Hoc Committee on Nonviolent Liberation of South Africa (World Mission)

Ad Hoc Committee to Study Cultism (Christian Faith)

Ordination of Women (Church Order)

Publication of RCA Periodicals (Communications)

National/Regional Competition (Financial Support)

†† Election of Board of Direction President

AD INTERIM ADMINISTRATION

Particular Synod Minutes

The General Synod Executive Committee reported to the 1979 General Synod that it had reviewed the 1979 minutes of the Particular Synods of the West, Albany, and Chicago and found them to be in good order. The GSEC has subsequently reviewed the 1979 minutes of the Particular Synods of New Jersey, New York and Michigan, which were also found to be in good order.

The 1980 Minutes of the Particular Synods of Albany, New Jersey and Chicago have been received and found to be in good order. The 1980 Minutes of the Particular Synods of New York, Michigan and the West, not yet available, will be reviewed by the GSEC in the fall.

Ad Interim Appointments

Cecil Martens, representing the Particular Synod of Michigan, to fill the vacancy in the Class of 1981, on the GSEC.

Cecil Martens to fill the vacancy in the Class of 1981 on the Board of Direction.

Cecil Martens to fill the vacancy in the Class of 1981 on the Trustees of the General Program Council.

Ruth Kranzler, representing Queens Classis, to fill the unexpired term of Arlene Tenckinck, Class of 1980, on the General Program Council.

Robert Bast, representing South Grand Rapids Classis, to fill the unexpired term of Harris Verkaik, Class of 1981, on the General Program Council.

Tom Schwanda to fill the unexpired term of Harold Leestma, Class of 1981, on the Commission on Worship.

Norman Kansield, to fill the vacancy on the Subcommittee on Hymnbooks.

Norman Schouten, representing the Classis of West Central, to fill the unexpired term of Luther Ratmeyer, Class of 1981, on the General Program Council.

Dorothy Tomah, representing the American Indian Council, to fill the position vacated by Mildred Cleghorn, Class of 1982, on the General Program Council.

R-1.
To approve the ad interim appointments. (ADOPTED)

Ecumenical Delegates

The Reformed Church in America received an invitation from the Christian Reformed Church to send two delegates to its June 10-20, 1980, meeting to be held at Calvin College/Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Upon recommendation of the Committee on Christian Unity, the GSEC appointed:

Harry Buis, pastor of the Hudsonville Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan, and vice-president of the General Synod

Richard Hine, pastor of the Rosewood Reformed Church, Jenison, Michigan, and a member of the Joint Committee on Christian Reformed Church/ Reformed Church in America Relationships

Debt Reporting

A Special Committee on Church Funding recommended to the 1976 General Synod that procedures be developed for an annual review of the debt situation in each local church. The General Synod adopted a procedure which called for review of local church debt by the classis, the particular synod, and the General Synod.

Local church debt reports were received from 34 classes. A review of these reports indicates that: the classes have created effective procedures and committee structures for reviewing the debt of their local churches; the vast majority of local churches are properly repaying the principal and interest on their indebtedness; and, in the very few instances where churches have had to defer principal and interest payments, the classes have become involved and have established effective procedures for returning these churches to a sound financial base.

The GSEC has encouraged staff to urge the remaining ten classes to complete and submit their reports for review in the fall.

Referrals to the Committee on Church Government

The following matters were dealt with by the General Synod Executive Committee and subsequently referred to the Committee on Church Government, since each required an amendment to the *BCO:*

Commission on Evangelization

Pastoral Care of Ministers and Their Families

Eligibility for Commission/Agency Membership

Corresponding Delegates to General Synod

Particular Synod

Board of Theological Education

RCA Seminaries

Background information and recommendations concerning these matters are included in the report of the Committee on Church Government.

GENERAL SYNOD MEETING

Referral of Business

The business of General Synod has been assigned to the appropriate advisory committees as presented in the *Workbook*.

R-2.
To approve the assignment of the General Synod's business as presented in the General Synod *Workbook*. (ADOPTED)

Dates and Sites

Upon recommendation of the GSEC, the 1979 General Synod approved York University, Downs View, Ontario, Canada, as the site for the 1981 General Synod meeting. Since then, a group of persons gathered at Camp Shalom (Cambridge, Ontario, Canada) to consider the possibilities for community involvement for the 1981 General Synod. As potential plans were discussed, the group concluded that community involvement would be greatly facilitated if General Synod were to meet instead at MacMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario) since it is located in the vicinity of a much larger number of RCA congregations.

The facilities at MacMaster University would adequately provide for the needs of the General Synod, and the cost would be comparable to the costs at York University.

R-3.
To move the site of the 1981 General Synod from York University, Downs View, Ontario, Canada to MacMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. (ADOPTED)

Three invitations have been received for future General Synods. Northwestern College has invited the 1982 General Synod to participate in its centennial celebration. New Brunswick Theological Seminary has invited the 1984 General Synod to participate in its bicentennial celebration. Central College has invited the General Synod to meet on its campus upon the next opportunity for a midwestern meeting.

R-4.
To hold the 1982 General Synod at Northwestern College; the 1983 General Synod at Central College; the 1984 General Synod at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. (ADOPTED)

POLICY AND PLANNING

Amendments to the *Book of Church Order:*

1. *The Government*

The General Synod of 1979 adopted and referred to the classes for approval seven proposed amendments to *The Government.* These amendments are recorded in the 1979 *Minutes of General Synod,* pp. 172-178, 205. A tabulation of classis voting follows:

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS	YES	NO
1. *Local Church Debt* Part I, Article 2, Section 8 (*BCO*, p. 15)	42	2
2. *Responsibilities for Families Who Have Moved* Part I, Article 2, Section 13 (*BCO*, p. 17)	44	0
3. *Dispensation Process* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8 (*BCO*, p. 35-6)	42	2
4. *Examination of Non-RCA Candidates and Ministers* Part II, Article 10, Section 6 (*BCO*, p. 38)	44	0
5. *Exercising Christian Discipline* Part II, Articles 9, 10, and 11 (*BCO*, p. 40)	41	3
*6. *Corresponding Delegates* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 3 (*BCO*, p. 45)	41	3
*7. *The General Synod Defined* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 1 (*BCO*, p. 44)	42	2

In reviewing the proposed amendment to Part II, Article 10, Section 6 (#4 above), the Committee on Church Government noted that the word "Reformed" appeared with a small "r" in the initial overture but appeared with a capital "R" in the proposed amendment. The committee asked the GSEC to call this transposition to the attention of the 1980 General Synod and recommend that the declarative act adopt the amendment with the understanding that the *Book of Church Order* will read "reformed theology" and a "reformed view of the sacraments."

R-5.
To declare amendments 1 through 7 above to have been approved by the classes for incorporation into the *Government.*
(ADOPTED)

2. *Bylaws and Special Rules of Order*

The General Synod of 1979 approved the first reading of a revision of the *Bylaws and Special Rules of Order of the General Synod* (*MGS,* 1979, pp. 181-195, 199, 200-1, 205).

*South Grand Rapids Classis overtured the General Synod not to adopt the declatory act on Amendments 6 and 7, which would transfer the sections referring to corresponding delegates from the *Government* to the *Bylaws* of General Synod. Action on these amendments was therefore taken after the General Synod acted on that overture (p. 277)

R-6.
To declare the revision of the *Bylaws and Special Rules of Order of the General Synod* approved by the 1979 General Synod in first reading (*MGS*, 1979, pp. 181-195, 199, 200-1, 205) to be incorporated into the *Book of Church Order*. (ADOPTED)

General Synod Agency/Commission Term of Office

The General Synod *Bylaws,* adopted for incorporation into the *Book of Church Order* at this Synod, contain the following statement on the term of office for General Synod agencies and commissions:

> The terms of office for members of all General Synod agencies and commissions shall be three years. Members may be elected to two consecutive terms. All terms shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30. A partial term of more than one year shall be considered a full term in determining eligibility.

At its meeting this week, the GSEC received from the Committee on Nominations a proposed amendment to this section in order to allow adherence to the Articles of Incorporation of each of the three college boards, all of which provide for terms other than three years in duration and at least one of which provides for an unlimited number of terms.

R-7.
To approve the following revision of Section 1 of Article IV of the *Bylaws of General Synod* for referral to the Editorial Committee:

Sec. 1 Term of Office

The following shall apply to all General Synod agencies and commissions, except as otherwise provided in the constitution or other enabling document of the agency or commission:

a. The term of office for members shall be three years.
b. Members may be elected to two consecutive terms.
c. All terms shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.
d. A partial term of more than one year shall be considered a full term in determining eligibility. (ADOPTED)

Denominational Priority

In accordance with the process for selecting a denominational priority reported to the General Synod of 1979 (*MGS*, p. 52f), General Synod commissions, agencies, and assemblies were asked to identify the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the Reformed Church in America over the next several years. The responses received were examined against the background of the ongoing urgency of church growth and the call to new efforts in the world mission.

At its October meeting the GSEC tentatively approved "Inter-Cultural Mission," with emphasis on evangelism, as the denominational priority subject to further testing. Thirty RCA congregations were sent an introductory article explaining the pro-

posed priority and a study guide which explored the proposed priority in the light of Ephesians. More than half of these churches returned their reponses. About a fifth of the churches reporting did not feel that inter-cultural mission was particularly important. All the rest thought that such an emphasis would be rather important, and a few were emphatic about this. On a scale of 1 to 10 (unimportant to very important), inter-cultural mission averaged a score of 7, which could be translated "quite important."

In response to suggestions received in this study, the GSEC approved "Crossing Cultural Barriers in Christ: Reaching and Receiving" as the theme for continuing study and discussion of a proposed denominational priority.

The pastors' forums conducted across the denomination by the general secretary provided further opportunity for continuing discussion. Many pastors asked for more time and tools for discussion prior to a decision. A further report will be presented to the Synod of 1981.

BUDGET

General Synod Operational Budget (Assessments)

The General Synod Operational Budget provides funds for the expenses of the General Synod meeting, General Synod officers and staff, General Synod committees and commissions, minority councils, maintaining ecumenical relationships, and such other work as the Synod directs.

The General Synod Operational Budget is raised by a per-member assessment on the classes. In recent years the per-member figures have been:

1976	$2.00
1977	$2.12
1978	$2.25
1979	$2.50
1980	$2.75

Several factors have caused the per-member assessment to increase. First, the membership of the Reformed Church in America dropped 12,500 active communicant members from 1971 through 1978. At $2.75 per member, this loss has amounted to $34,375. Second, inflation has caused all the expenses within the operational budget to increase. Third, additional items have been included in the budget, such as the Board of Theological Education, minority councils, *RCAgenda,* the RCA archival program, legal expenses related to San Dimas, and various ad hoc committees.

As it developed the 1980 General Synod Operational Budget, the GSEC used a "zero-based budget process." Through this process the GSEC conducted a thorough review of each item in the budget before making its recommendations. Because this in-depth review took place last year, this year participants in the budget were asked to provide detailed rationale for only requested increases.

At its April 1980 meeting, the GSEC reviewed requests for the 1981 Operational Budget totalling $691,020, which would require a per-member assessment of approximately $3.02. Seeking to hold down the increase in the assessment, the GSEC fixed a goal of $3.00 as the maximum per-member assessment for 1981. In order to achieve this goal, the recommendations of the GSEC differ at some points from the requests received. The most significant changes are:

Hispanic Council. The GSEC felt that a 100 percent increase in budget in one year was too large and therefore reduced the request of $10,000 to $7,500.

Asian American Council. The GSEC felt that a budget of $7,500 in its first year of existence should be sufficient.

Since the General Synod at this session approved in first reading an amendment to its *Bylaws* providing for a Commission on Evangelization and Church Growth (p. 258), the GSEC added to the proposed operational budget an amount of $6,000 for that commission.

The budget requests with the recommended changes appear below.

R-8.
To approve a 1981 Operational Budget of $683,500, and further, to fix the per-member assessment for 1981 at $3.00.
(ADOPTED)

1981 GENERAL SYNOD OPERATIONAL BUDGET

INCOME

	Actual 1978	*Actual 1979*	*Budget 1980*	*Proposed Budget 1981*
Classical Assessments	$484,125	$535,063	$592,306	$643,500
Investment Income	5,876	12,303	6,500	16,500
Staff Services	12,500	12,500	13,500	13,500
GPC for Archival Program	5,874	5,000	--- (1)	---
Income for Ecumenical Agencies	---	---	---	10,000
Other Income	1,654	26,886	---	---
	$510,029	$591,752	$612,306	$683,500

EXPENSES

I. General Synod Meeting	*Actual 1978*	*Actual 1979*	*Budget 1980*	*Requested 1981*	Recommended for 1981
General Synod meeting	$93,082	96,253	100,000	$110,000	110,000
Other Meeting Expenses	127	---	---	---	---
Printing Minutes	31,775	35,774	35,000	38,000	38,000
	$124,984	132,027	135,000	$148,000	148,000

(1) Monies for the archival program have been transferred to the Historical Society beginning January 1, 1980

EXPENSES

	Actual 1978	*Actual 1979*	*Budget 1980*	*Requested 1981*	*Recommended for 1981*
II. General Synod Office					
Salaries (6 staff)	115,286	124,556	130,000	145,000	145,000
Employee Benefits	20,117	22,897	25,000	29,600	29,600
Staff Travel	10,538	12,055	11,000	12,500	12,500
Rent & Maintenance—Office	22,000	15,548	19,500	19,500	19,500
Office Equip. & Repairs	1,453	546	1,000	1,000	1,000
Office Supplies	2,951	1,634	1,000	1,800	1,800
Office Mimeo & Printing	2,685	3,345	4,000	4,000	4,000
Postage & Mailing	5,313	2,974	5,500	5,500	5,500
Telephone	6,360	6,882	6,500	7,000	7,000
Audit	3,900	4,000	2,000	4,000	4,000
Legal	12,114	14,925	20,000	20,000	20,000
Insurance	1,059	383	1,500	1,500	1,500
Contingency	603	1,813	2,000	2,500	2,500
	$204,379	211,558	229,000	253,900	253,900
III. General Synod Officers, Committees & Commissions					
President's Expenses	3,565	9,548	5,000	7,000	7,000
GSEC Meetings	13,258	14,995	15,000	17,500	17,500
Stated Clerks Meeting	---	3,060	4,000	---	---
Christian Action Comm. Meetings	7,814	6,444	6,200	6,800	6,800
Other Meetings	1,270	722	1,500	1,500	1,500
Literature	315	534	1,200	1,200	1,200
Commission on Women	---	3,558	4,000	4,000	4,000
**Chaplains Commission Meetings	4,209	3,157	4,600	---	---
Literature, Printing	138	170	---	---	---
Conferences	2,019	2,979	---	---	---
General Commission Dues	1,495	1,900	---	---	---
Secretarial Work	1,200	---	---	---	---
Church Order Meetings	2,302	2,228	2,500	2,800	2,800
BCO Printing	1,335	1,415	3,000	3,000	3,000
History Commission Meetings	3,995	3,567	6,000	6,000	6,000
Archival Program	1,623	23,585	13,840	9,800	9,800
Secretarial Work	1,076	---	---	---	---
Historical Directory	5,000	5,000	---	---	---
Office Supplies	291	653	---	---	---
Judicial Business Meeting	---	2,521	1,000	2,500	2,500
Worship Meeting	3,004	2,935	3,950	4,350	4,350
Nominations Meeting	1,321	658	1,500	1,500	1,500
Theological Commission Meeting	2,837	3,028	3,500	4,000	4,000
Christian Unity Meeting	4,696	6,280	4,500	5,000	5,000
Ecumenical Consultation	---	638	10,000	---	---
Evangelization and Church Growth	---	---	---	---	6,000
	$62,763	96,017	87,290	73,720	82,950

EXPENSES

	Actual 1978	*Actual 1979*	*Budget 1980*	*Requested 1981*	*Recommended for 1981*
IV. Other General Synod Agencies					
Board of Theological Education	12,496	13,651	15,000	15,000	15,000
Staff Consulting Group	2,874	3,101	3,000	4,000	4,000
Task Force on Women	5,562	---	---	---	---
Study on Licensing DCE	1,070	391	---	---	---
Hymnbook Committee	---	---	---	7,500	7,500
Women in Ministry Meeting	---	5,047	---	---	---
Committee on Cults	---	---	---	2,000	2,000
Contingent Fund	1,089	1,460	2,000	2,000	2,000
Black Council	14,445	16,604	16,500	18,500	18,500
American Indian Council	5,000	---	7,500	7,500	7,500
Hispanic Council	5,665	4,509	5,000	10,000	7,500
Asian American Council	---	---	---	16,000	7,500
	$48,201	48,321	53,000	86,500	71,500
V. Publications					
Church Herald	35,000	42,000	42,000	48,000	48,000
Church Herald Evaluation	---	---	---	6,500	6,500
RCAgenda	---	15,425	15,000	17,000	17,000
	35,000	57,425	57,000	73,400	71,500
VI. Ecumenical Delegations					
NCC Governing Board	1,144	2,764	2,000	3,500	3,500
UCC US Conference	426	---	500	500	500
Christian Reformed Church	---	265	1,500	1,500	1,500
Travel Contingency	2,143	3,027	---	3,000	3,000
	3,713	6,056	4,000	8,500	8,500
VII. Ecumenical Agencies					
World Alliance Reformed Churches	5,000	6,000	6,500	7,000	7,000
*NCC	13,750	15,000	16,500	20,000	20,000
*WCC	7,920	10,000	12,500	20,000	20,000
**Project Equality	2,000	2,000	---	---	---
**Corporate Information Center	1,500	1,500	---	---	---
**Religion in American Life	1,815	2,000	---	---	---
	$32,485	36,500	35,500	47,000	47,000
Church Herald—Special Grant	---	12,000	---	---	---
	$511,525	599,904	600,790	691,000	683,350

*Not paid from assessments **Transferred to GPC

Martha Antoinette Quick Memorial Fund

This fund was established under the will of the Rev. Abraham Messler Quick. Receipt of the fund was reported to the General Synod by the Board of Direction in 1934 (pp. 601 ff). The will directs that the fund be held "IN TRUST, and safely invested and the income only arising therefrom to be used and applied for the purposes of benevolence and church extension as may be specified from time to time by the said General Synod or its duly authorized and appointed authorities." For many years the funds were distributed to the boards of the church "in accordance with the schedule of percentages recommended to the churches for distribution of benevolent contributions" (*MGS,* 1934, p. 629)

The General Synod of 1958 took note of the testator's "special interest and concern . . . for church extension" (*MGS,* 1958, p. 21) and allocated 50 percent of the income for the work of church extension. It was further noted that "the reasonable use of the income from this fund might well serve to relieve the Boards or Institutions of the Church from the pressure of the demands of special projects" (*MGS,* 1958, p. 21). Since in that year there were special appeals for enlarged support from the colleges, the other 50 percent was allocated for that purpose.

Since 1958, these two general principles (a special interest in church extension and allocation of the balance for special projects) have usually been followed. In recent years a portion of the Quick Fund has sometimes been reserved for matters arising out of the General Synod itself.

The 1979 General Synod allocated the 1980 income from the Quick Fund as follows:

50% for the work of church planning and development
20% to Hope, Central and Northwestern Colleges for scholarship funds (60% to be divided equally among the three colleges and 40% to be divided on the basis of student enrollment)
20% for student aid grants at New Brunswick and Western Theological Seminaries.
10% for the RCA Archival Program.

R-9.
To allocate the 1981 income from the Quick Memorial Fund as follows:

50% for the work of church planning and development;
20% to Hope, Central and Northwestern Colleges for scholarship funds (60% to be divided equally among the three colleges and 40% to be divided on the basis of student enrollment);
20% for student aid grants at New Brunswick and Western Theological Seminaries;
10% for the RCA Archival Program. (ADOPTED)

SUPERVISION

Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committe is made up of two members from the GSEC and two from the GPC, named according to the bylaws of the respective units. One of the two

GSEC members is elected to the chair by the committee. The present members are: Carl E. Ver Beek, Chair (GSEC); Albertus G. Bossenbroek (GSEC); John Meyer (GPC) and Thomas Harris (GPC).

The committee has four principal responsibilities:

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 personnel policies, including salary ranges and benefits for denominational staff.

4. Recommendation of the general secretary's salary to the GSEC, approval of salaries for staff reporting directly to the general secretary, and review of all other executive salaries. Salaries of administrative, secretarial and clerical staff are received by the committee for information.

The Liaison Committee functions within the policies approved by the General Synod Executive Committee. Among these policies are salary classifications which reflect the degree of responsibility carried by staff members filling the respective positions. Information concerning the classification of specific positions is available from the office of the general secretary. A broad sketch of the classifications with salary ranges (including housing allowances) in effect in April of the current year appears below:

		SALARY RANGES		
CLASSIFICATION		**LOW (80%)**	**MID-POINT (100%)**	**HIGH (120%)**
Executive Staff	I	24,700	30,900	37,100
	II	20,150	25,200	30,250
	III	16,800	21,000	25,200
		(85%)	(100%)	(115%)
Professional Associates	IV	13,800	16,200	18,650
Administrative Staff	V	12,600	14,800	17,000
Secretarial and Office Staff	VIA	11,300	13,300	15,300
	VIB	9,500	11,200	12,900

NOTE: Special circumstances may warrant hiring below the sixth range.

Among the matters considered by the Liaison Committee this year was a communication to the GSEC from the Classis of Wisconsin, requesting the annual publication of individual salaries and allowances for Reformed Church staff. The Liaison Committee reported on its review of this matter at the April 1980 GSEC meeting.

The GSEC noted that since 1969 the policy of the General Synod has been to publish annually the staff salary ranges in the *Minutes of General Synod*. Following a review of the 1969 *Minutes of General Synod* (reprinted below) and the present system for staff performance review, the GSEC reponded to Wisconsin Classis, reaffirming the action of the 1969 General Synod and indicating that the present system of performance review is a valuable management tool, that it is working, and that it probably would not work at all if individual salaries were published.

Procedure for Publicizing Salaries and/or Salary Ranges

The following proposal sets forth the reasons why it is no longer desirable to make public the salaries of executives in the new structure. Our conclusion is that publicity should be given to salary ranges only in appropriate media of the denomination as to Executive Staff and that other procedures should be followed for the Administrative and Office Staff.

1. *Publicity of Executive Salary Ranges*

Under former salary administration policies, the Executive position determined the salary level and adjustments thereto were made as the result of cost-of-living changes, general wage levels, etc., more than on the basis of individual merit. There was not provision or machinery for the evaluation of qualifications, background, experience and performance such as we now have formulated, and to our mind the publication of salaries had no personal flavor. In such circumstances it seems to us no valid objection could be raised to the practice of making executives salaries public.

With the adoption of the new salary administration methods and procedures developed by our management consultants, salary ranges have been established for each executive and administrative staff position provided under the reorganized structure. Starting salary and rate and frequency of salary increases of a particular employee depend upon many evaluations made prior to and during his employment, concerning education, background and experience, aptitudes, job performance and any other material relevant factors. The quality of individual performance is a key factor in the measurement of the rate and frequency of salary increases, in the salary increase guide which has been formulated. Because the new procedures evaluate people rather than positions and provide incentives for superior abilities and job performance, their successful operation hinges on holding salary arrangements in the strictest confidence as between the employee and his employer. The primary reason for this is that grave morale problems result from the knowledge that for several executives in like levels of management and of seemingly equal ability and of equal length of service, the compensation received by one and the periodic raises granted are less than the other. We have seen this result occur in the private sector over the years, and since human nature is what it is, the risk inherent in Executive salary publicity in our case should be avoided at all costs.

A reasonable alternative to the publication of Executive Staff salaries should be developed in order to put to rest misinformation that comes to us on handsome compensation paid at "475."

WE RECOMMEND to the GSEC that Executive Staff Salary Ranges be reported annually by the GSEC to General Synod and published in the General Synod Minutes or some appendix thereto.

(Adopted by GSEC, March 1969, Action 69-33, and confirmed by action of General Synod (*MGS,* 1969, p. 199).

Staff Consulting Group

The Staff Consulting Group was organized at the Consultation on Funding in 1973 and approved by the General Synod in that same year. The membership consists of the general secretary (Chair), the executive secretary for program, the secretary for operations, the director of promotion and communication, the coordinator of human resources, the regional secretaries, particular synod executives, seminary

and college presidents, the executive director of Reformed Church Women, and the editor of the *Church Herald.* The president of General Synod participates as an observer.

The meetings are devoted largely to sharing information concerning major program activities of the several agencies and judicatories and discussing matters of mutual concern.

The Staff Consulting Group met on October 5, 1979, and on March 13, 1980, in Chicago. Among the major items discussed were Reformed Church Growth, the denominational priority, the proposed new structure for the GPC, assessing for congregational services, and various other funding concerns.

New Brunswick Classis Inquiry Concerning a Professor of Theology

At its January meeting, the GSEC dealt with a communication from the Classis of New Brunswick reporting on various conversations held among the Classis of New Brunswick, its executive committee, the president of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and Dr. E. Earle Ellis (General Synod Professor of Theology) concerning the refusal of Dr. Ellis to administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism to an infant.

Upon recommendation of its executive committee, the Classis of New Brunswick voted:

> To refer to the General Synod the refusal of Dr. E. Earle Ellis to administer the sacrament of Holy Baptism to an infant and request that the General Synod take clarifying action in regard to "conscience" as over against church order.

Inasmuch as professors of theology are amenable to the General Synod and therefore ad interim to the GSEC (*BCO*, I-IV-8-6), and inasmuch as the Board of Theological Education is the agent of the General Synod for supervision of the seminaries (*BCO*, I-IV-7-6), the GSEC constituted an ad hoc committee of four members of the GSEC named by the chair of the GSEC and four members of the BTE named by the chair of the BTE.

The committee appointed was:

From GSEC—	**From BTE—**
David Alford	Louis Benes, Jr.
Harry Buis	Ronald Geschwendt
Jack Hascup (Chair)	Jonathan Hinkamp
Edwin Mulder	Everett Zabriskie

On January 31, 1980, the committee met with the following respresentatives of Classis New Brunswick: James Esther, classis president; Frederick Mold, stated clerk; and John Hart, supervisor of the church in which the incident occurred.

It also met with Howard Hageman, president of New Brunswick Seminary and Dr. Ellis. Dr. Ellis clarified his position that he does indeed assent to the validity of infant baptism but declines to perform the sacrament himself.

The committee reported to the GSEC that it had heard the facts related by the representatives of Classis New Brunswick and Dr. Hageman and Dr. Ellis and reviewed the report of the Theological Commission to the 1976 Synod titled

"Authority and Conscience in the Church." The committee found that Dr. Ellis declined an invitation to preach and administer the sacrament of infant baptism, which was his prerogative under Article 8, Sec. 7, of the *Book of Church Order:*

> The professor of theology shall not be the installed pastor or stated supply of any congregation. He may preach and administer or assist in administering the sacraments in any church as a minister of the Word upon request of the pastor or consistory of that church.

Upon hearing this report the GSEC voted:

> To direct the Board of Theological Education to counsel Dr. E. Earle Ellis that when he functions as a minister of the Word in a local parish, he is bound by the *BCO*, Article 1, Sec. 4, which reads in part:
>
> The office of the minister of the Word in the local parish is to serve as pastor, teacher, and enabler of the Christians among whom he works, to build up and equip the whole church for her ministry in the world. As pastor and teacher he preaches and teaches the Word of God, administers the sacraments . . .

It was suggested from the floor that this matter involves several residual issues which merit the attention and deliberation of the General Synod (e.g., authority and truth, conscience and order, the relationship of the office of professor of theology to parish ministry).

VOTED: To refer the section of the GSEC's report on the report on the New Brunswick Classis inquiry with respect to a General Synod professor of theology to the Advisory Committee on Church Vocations for its consideration and reflection on the residual issues.

1979 Statistical Report of the Reformed Church in America

Following is a summary of the 1979 Statistical Report of the RCA.

Some general observations:

Churches: The number of churches has increased for the second consecutive year. Eleven new churches were organized, but five were disbanded, thus producing a net increase of six.

Membership: Total membership increased by 535. Although the number of families and active communicants both increased last year, this year families decreased by 238 and communicants by 889. Adherents increased by 6,790.

Funding: In 1978, the total funds disbursed by Reformed Church congregations surpassed $70,000,000; in 1979, they surpassed $80,000,000. Giving for congregational purposes increased 5%; for other mission 16%; for particular synod and classical mission 3.4%; and for General Synod mission 8.3%.

SUMMARY OF THE STATISTICAL REPORT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA
For the Year 1979

	1977	*1978*	*1979*	*78-79 Increase (Decrease)*
1. Churches	915	917	923	6
2. Church Families	134,466	135,692	135,385	(307)
3. Active Communicants	214,635	215,384	214,389	(995)
4. Inactive Communicants	44,335	43,889	43,912	23
5. Baptized Non-Communicants	95,585	94,348	95,667	1,319
6. Total Baptized Membership	354,555	353,621	353,968	347
7. Adherents	21,988	25,287	32,081	6,794
8. Received on Confession	8,840	8,693	9,138	445
9. Received on Certificate	6,715	6,201	6,761	560
10. Transferred	5,703	5,482	5,701	219
11. Deceased	2,823	2,930	2,938	8
12. Other Removals from Roll	6,166	4,641	6,090	1,449
13. Infants Baptized	5,220	5,102	5,466	364
14. Adults Baptized	1,210	1,072	1,262	190
15. Sunday Church School	113,633	109,792	107,099	(2,693)
16. Attended Communicants Class	10,247	9,481	10,625	1,144
17. Received Catechetical Instr.	32,206	28,582	27,839	(743)
17a. Received Other Instruction	34,539	35,129	38,267	3,138
18. Church Herald Subscription	73,474	72,414	71,475	(939)
19. General Synod Mission	$6,473,842	$6,728,400	$7,282,289	$553,889
20. Denomination Capital Fund	701,495	1,346,867	1,485,149	138,282
21. Particular Synod and Classical Mission	3,669,697	3,801,575	3,927,466	125,891
22. Other Mission	3,529,194	3,817,573	4,427,486	609,913
23. Congregational Purposes	54,870,037	61,251,525	64,308,641	3,057,116
	$69,244,265	$76,945,940	$81,431,031	$4,485,091

New Churches

Ft. Lauderdale, FL, New Life Community
Canton, MI, People's
Zeeland, MI, Peace
Tom's River, NJ, Pinelands
Cary, NC, First
Long Island City, NY, Korean Philippo
Hemet, CA, Hemet Valley
Santa Ana, CA, Anaheim Hills
Bunaby, BC, Can., New Life Community
Altoona, IA, Adventure Life
Aurora, CO, New Hope Community

Disbanded Churches

Hammond, IN, Woodmar
Indianapolis, IN, Keystone
Kalamazoo, MI, North Community
Long Island City, NY, First
San Diego, CA, Clairmont Family

Ad Hoc Committee on Emergency Benevolence Assistance

In response to the report of its president, the 1977 General Synod authorized the appointment of an ad hoc committee to develop a program of emergency benevolent assistance to those persons suffering hardship as a result of loss of income through San Dimas-related investments (*MGS,* 1977, p. 35). The GSEC then appointed Harry De Bruyn (Chair), Raymond Rewerts, Arthur Bridgeman, Nelson Hymans, and Terry Nagelvoort to serve on this committee.

No applications have been received since the close of the 1978 General Synod.

Ad Hoc Committee on Women

The Ad Hoc Committee on Women met twice since the last meeting of the General Synod. The concerns of the committee have been focused on four areas: 1.) insuring women's involvement in denominational boards, committees and commissions; 2.) insuring that all RCA women in professional church ministries receive the support, care and practical help necessary; 3.) evaluating and clarifying relationships to other RCA and ecumenical committees or bodies; and 4.) Identifying areas where an advocacy role is important in order to effect change of the role of women in the church.

Area 1—Representation on National Boards and Agencies. The Committee on Women will be offering to classes, particular synods and the General Synod Nominating Committee the names of qualified people to fill vacancies on the various denominational boards and agencies and commissions.

Area 2—Women in Ministry. Discussion revealed a deep need for ongoing support and career counselling for women in ministry. Through the use of $1700 available from Women in Vocations special budget and $1300 toward travel from the Committee on Women budget an event for theologically trained women was held in Holland, MI. January 6-8, 1980. A total of 51 women registered for the conference. The theme was "Roads Less Travelled." The committee is studying possible responses to the needs and concerns expressed at this event.

Area 3—Relationships, RCA and Ecumenical. Joining in the March 17 meeting were Claire Wolterstorff and Dorothy Van Hamersveld from the Committee for Women of the Christian Reformed Church. The exchange of information was fruitful and will be continued. The committee heard with interest the report of Ann Guild on the March meeting of the Commission on Women in Ministry of the National Council of Churches and decided to ask Reformed Church Women if they would be willing to continue to fund one representative to these meetings and to request the General Synod to fund one representative also as a part of the committee's regular budget allocation. Clara Woodson will continue to keep the ad hoc committee in touch with the work of the National Council's Justice for Women Working Group.

The Christian Action Commission felt that their present agenda did not permit them to take on a study of the Nestle Boycott per se but indicated they were looking into the boycott in general as a tool for protest. It was agreed to ask Joseph Muyskens to attend the next meeting to brief the ad hoc committee on the work of the Christian Action Commission. The office of Family Life Ministries also was receptive to the idea of working in areas of mutual concern.

Area 4—Identifying Areas of Advocacy. While advocacy of ERA and other items remain important and will be pursued, it was felt that there is what was called a "pastoral need" i.e. the preparation of local congregations to help men and women relate in Christian ministry. The Ad Hoc Committee on Women voted to request Reformed Church Women to assist in the funding and organization of training events for facilitators who will then work within classes and synods using "All: God's Children" and the World Council of Churches study "The Community of Women and Men in the Church."

As the person chairing this committee I note with joy the *Minutes of General Synod* of 1974, which include a report on *Feminism and the Church.* A recommendation calling for "the church to reaffirm the equality of all men and women (persons) in Christ" was adopted. Adopted also was the request that appropriate agencies develop immediate plans to correct discrimination against women in such areas as Christian education publications with particular reference to biblical role models and sex stereotyping; political structures of the denomination to insure adequate representation at all governing levels; seminary education to insure equal enrollment, field experiences, and placement; Reformed Church liturgy to examine for sexual bias; and communication of the issues of feminism by encouragement of lay and clergy education and interpretation. I rejoice that the Synod took this action in 1974. We hope that we are on the way to a mutual ministry and true maturity as persons in Christ.

Election of the President of the Board of Direction

In accordance with its corporate bylaws, adopted at this session, the General Synod must annually elect a president of the Board of Direction.

R-10.
To elect Harry E. De Bruyn president of the Board of Direction for one year. (ADOPTED)

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTION

Invested Funds

The Board of Direction has responsibility for the New York Funds, the New Jersey Funds, the Reformed Church Investment Program, and the General Synod Operating Budget reserves.

The New York funds are monies given to the General Synod in trust for various programs in the RCA, including New Brunswick and Western Seminaries; the colleges; and General Program Council; etc. The income from these funds is distributed to the designated beneficiaries. On December 31, 1979, the New York Funds had a balance of $3,216,258. These monies are invested through the Reformed Church Investment Program.

The Reformed Church Investment Program had assets of $6,741,598 at December 31, 1979. The funds are invested as follows: a fixed income security portfolio (with no less than 30 percent in fixed income securities) of $1,298,443 managed by the Bank of New York; mortgage investment on residential and industrial property in Westchester County and New York City with a face amount of $976,722; the ownership of 227,738 shares of Affiliated Mutual Fund with a market value of $1,979,043; second mortgage 4½ % lease-hold bonds on The Interchurch Center of $675,000 and notes receivable from the Reformed Church Extension Foundation of $397,950.

The New Jersey Funds are scholarship monies for ministerial training at Rutgers University and New Brunswick Seminary. First Jersey National Bank is custodian of the funds. The December 31, 1979, balances consisted of stock having a market value of $153,174, a mortgage note of $13,651, and short-term cash of $42,064 for a total of $193,843.

Income Distributed

The income distributed by the board to the beneficiaries of the New York Funds in 1979 was $183,867. The following is a comparison of distributions in prior years.

1978	$179,077
1977	155,819
1976	159,540
1975	146,109

Financial Statements

The 1979 financial statements of the board have been examined and certified by Coopers & Lybrand, Certified Public Accountants, and presented to the General Synod. In addition, these statements are always available for inspection by members of the Reformed Church in America.

Assessments

All 1979 regular assessments of $2.75 per member have been received. In addition, the special assessment for Pensions of $.75 per capita has been received.

Complaint Filed by the San Dimas Noteholders Association

The Board of Direction reported on this complaint to the 1978 and 1979 General Synods. The San Dimas Noteholders Association filed a complaint in Los Angeles Superior Court of the State of California against the Valley Community Drive-In Church, RCA; Association for Inspirational Living, Inc.; Classis of California, RCA, Inc.; the Particular Synod of the West, RCA; the Reformed Church in America; and the *Church Herald*. The Board of Direction has retained the firm of Tuttle and Taylor, Los Angeles, to represent it in this suit. This firm had been previously retained by the Classis of California, the Particular Synod of the West, and the *Church Herald*. The Los Angeles Superior Court has released the *Church Herald* from the suit on the grounds that California is an inappropriate site for suing the *Church Herald*. During 1979, the General Synod decided to join with the Classis of California and the Particular Synod of the West in defense of the suit. Although the original complaint alleged eight claims against the defendants, the court has rejected all but two. The remaining claims are that the "constitution and bylaws" of the General Synod serves as a contract to benefit the noteholders and that the classis, the particular synod and the General Synod were negligent in their supervision of the Valley Community Drive-In Church. Although the General Synod had considered pressing a motion to be relieved from the suit on the same grounds as the *Church Herald*, it decided in 1979 to appear with the Classis of California and the PSW, and defend the suit on the merits.

Transfer of New Brunswick Seminary Property

The 1978 General Synod referred to the Board of Direction responsibility for transferring the title of the property held at New Brunswick Seminary to the New Brunswick Theological Seminary Corporation. The board reported on this matter to the 1979 General Synod (*MGS*, 1979, pps. 62, 63). Since the New Brunswick Seminary Corporation, the Western Seminary Corporation and the Board of Theological Education have revised their constitutions and bylaws to provide General Synod participation in any sale of real property used for the instructional purposes of the seminaries, the officers of the Board of Direction signed the necessary documents for transferring the property from the General Synod to New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

Update on Kirkside

In its report to this General Synod, the General Synod Executive Committee reported on recent developments with respect to the relationship of Kirkside to the denomination (p. 186).

Since the printing of that report, all but two residents of Kirkside have been relocated. Staff members have been notified that their services will not be needed after June 30, 1980, with the exception of the manager, Albert Kime, and Vincent Snyder, maintenance staff.

On May 30, a group of Roxbury, NY, residents instituted against Kirkside, Inc. and the General Synod legal proceedings which would prevent any further action to suspend operation as a retirement home, prevent the dismissal of staff, the "eviction" of the residents, or offering of the property for sale. The plaintiffs also claim that portion of the grounds known locally as "Kirkside Park" as the property of the citizens of Roxbury to enjoy as a public park "forevermore."

The attorneys representing Kirkside, Inc., and the General Synod are working together for dismissal of the claims. A hearing was held on June 10 in Cooperstown, New York. The judge has reserved judgment, indicating that the parties would hear from him in another month.

Pending the ruling of the court, the Board of Direction has authorized the continued employment of Vincent Synder until such time as the property passes from the General Synod's hands; has authorized staff to solicit written offers for the Kirkside property; and authorized the appointment of a subcommittee of the board to review the offers received and accept one within the range of the 1978 appraisals ($75,000-$91,500), with the understanding that if none of the offers is acceptable, the property would be listed with a local realtor for multiple listing.

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL BUSINESS

The Committee on Judicial Business consulted at 10:00 A.M. EDT on May 30, 1980, by telephone conference call to consider the complaint of Dr. Harry J. Hager filed with the general secretary on May 22, 1980. Present at the conference call were all members of the committee consisting of the following: Arthur R. Bridgeman, Cornell DeGrothy, Richard J. Kloote, Richard E. Lake, Leroy A. Suess and Frederic Mold, Jr. General Secretary Arie R. Brouwer arranged the conference call and was also present.

The purpose of the conference call was to determine in accordance with the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 2, Part III, Paragraph V, Subparagraph 5 "whether the complaint and its attendant papers are in good order" and if so to then agree upon a date for a further meeting of the committee to consider the complaint on its merits.

The complaint of Dr. Hager is stated to be "against the April 23-24, 1980 action (inaction) of the Particular Synod of Chicago in their disposition of Dr. Hager's Complaint and Appeal against the May 8, 1979 and December 4, 1979 actions of the Reverend Classis of Chicago."

The cover page submitted by Dr. Hager's counsel, Paul F. DeVries states: "THE ATTACHED MATERIAL HEREWITH SUBMITTED IS, IN OUR OPINION, A COMPLAINT ALLEGING ADMINISTRATIVE DELINQUENCY ON THE PART OF THE SYNOD OF CHICAGO, RCA: IT IS NOT AN APPEAL FROM ANY JUDGMENT HANDED DOWN BY EITHER THE SYNOD OR CLASSIS OF CHICAGO."

According to the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 2, Part III, Paragraph V, Subparagraph 1.a. the right to file a complaint is very specifically set forth and confined to very limited situations, as follows:

> 1.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.

The only possibility for Dr. Hager to qualify as a proper complaining party would be under (2) above as "a member of an assembly against that assembly of which he is a member." The ultimate question therefore is whether Dr. Hager was a member of the Particular Synod of Chicago against whom he complains.

The committee has considered the meaning of what constitutes "a member of an assembly" as set forth in this subparagraph (2) on previous occasions and has concluded that a member is a person who was a voting delegate at the meeting of the assembly which is complained of and was not all inclusive of communicant members of local churches under the supervision of that particular assembly.

Dr. Hager was not a voting delegate at the meeting of the Particular Synod of Chicago on April 23-24, 1980. Accordingly, the committee has concluded that the complaint of Dr. Harry J. Hager against the Particular Synod of Chicago filed with the general secretary on May 22, 1980 is not in good order for the reason that Dr. Hager does not qualify as a person by whom a complaint may be filed under the provisions of the *Book of Church Order*.

CHRISTIAN ACTION

Report of the Christian Action Commission

Introduction

Each of the topics with which the Christian Action Commission deals in the following statements should be of concern to us as Christians. It is important at the outset to recognize that all of these varied topics are indeed interrelated.

We must begin by acknowledging, in the midst of these critical topics, that the God of history is rendering judgment upon us. The message of that judgment is to call into question the ways in which we organize our relationships with one another. We live in a world of inequity. This results in the domination of some people by others. Whether we talk about our obligation to include the handicapped in full church participation or about the most stewardly use of energy resources or about the rights of the Palestinian refugees, we are reminded of the evil which is inherent in our world.

We must acknowledge first that we are experiencing God's judgment on us; second, that God's judgment is fully deserved because of the uncritical way that we have lived in our world of inequity; third, that we must carefully and prayerfully study ways in which our religious, social, economic, and political structures have maintained and increased that inequity; and fourth, that we must take steps through all of our agencies and assemblies to combat that inequity in all of its forms. In this spirit, the Christian Action Commission calls upon the General Synod to consider the following recommendations.

THE ENERGY CRISIS AND RESPONSIBLE CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Many Americans are not convinced that there is an energy crisis. A recent Gallup Poll indicated that 77 percent believe that the oil companies are responsible for the latest energy shortages and subsequent price increases. Have the oil companies deliberately cut production to create a shortage? There are conflicting reports on the cause of our present energy shortages. There are not easy answers, but there are a number of things that can be said with certainty.

The energy sources that we have depended on are being depleted. As the demand for energy increases, we cannot be assured of an adequate supply. Alternate sources of energy will need to be utilized as we make the transition from petroleum to other energy sources. This raises the question of which alternative sources are appropriate. Solar energy, nuclear fission, and coal are the most obvious alternative forms of energy. But both nuclear fission and coal have severe social and environmental implications, and solar energy, even though it may be a long-range solution, does not solve the immediate need for an alternative energy source.

The earth's energy resources are limited. If we do not responsibly manage God's creation, we will deny both present and future generations their rightful heritage. Every person depends on energy to survive. Many of the problems that we are now faced with can be attributed to the way we have misused the limited resources of energy that God has given us. We may be forced to reduce our consumption not only because of increased cost, but the flow of oil from the Middle East may be interrupted. In the long run OPEC may be doing us a favor. Petroleum is an exhaustible resource. We need to decrease our dependence on oil and develop new technology using other energy sources.

The cost of energy will continue to increase. In November of 1978 imported oil was $13.50 per barrel. The cost in January 1980 was $29.20. This is an increase of over 100 percent in 13 months. In the past we have been blessed with cheap energy costs. The availability of inexpensive energy has made us careless. As Americans, we are the world's leading energy consumer. We consume 33 percent of the world's energy with less than 6 percent of the world's population. Estimates are also that we waste 50 percent of the energy we use. If we continue to increase our consumption of energy, we will have to be willing to pay the increased cost.

The use of energy can contribute to injustices in our society. Energy and its distribution relate directly to the welfare of society. We must be concerned that energy resources are equitably distributed. Since we are serious about our commitment to social justice, we must be willing to give a faithful response to the challenge of the energy crisis. The church and individual Christians must become involved in shaping a just society.

We must change our individual and corporate lifestyles. The most significant things that we can do is to begin to conserve energy through more efficient use. We must reduce our energy consumption. We must admit to ourselves and to each other that there is a finite supply of energy resources. We must be willing to conserve these resources and insure equitable distribution to meet the needs of all persons. We must be willing to face the challenge of responsible Christian stewardship.

R-1.

a. To urge each congregation of the RCA to engage in reflection and dialogue on the energy problem and all its implications, and further,

b. To urge the GPC to develop and/or avail itself of existing **resources to assist congregations in responsible energy stewardship and appropriate Christian lifestyles consistent with the mission of the church, and further,**

c. To urge each congregation of the RCA during the next three years to have an energy audit and assess its schedule of programs **to initiate energy saving measures, and further,**

d. (To urge the executives for Church Planning and Development to coordinate all energy conservation related programs both denominationally and interdenominationally, and further,)

The advisory committee presented the following substitute for R-1d:

To urge the executive for church planning and development to coordinate energy conservation related programs, especially in regard to construction and remodeling, and request that the Church Building Fund and Extension Foundation loan guidelines be amended to include requiring energy efficiency standards, and further,

e. To urge congregations to establish energy education programs so that Reformed Church members can (more) responsibly impact public policy. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

GOD'S HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

The designation of 1981 as "International Year of the Handicapped" deserves our attention. What does the Christian community have to do with the concerns of those who are disabled in some way? Our aim should be to make it possible for all of God's children to worship and serve the Lord with love, grace, and self-esteem. The church, the neighborhood, the community, and the world at large should be accessible to all, regardless of their physical well-being. It is time that we take a hard look at the barriers we have put up—in our hearts or in our buildings—that make it impossible for all people to have ready access to the rights and privileges of Christian worship and service. It is time for us to remove those barriers!

When we say "handicapped," most minds picture someone in a wheelchair. Losing one's ability to walk is a visible and terrible deterrent to participation in the most common activities and services, but this is only a small percentage of those handicapped. What of those handicaps that are not quite as visible or as easily recognizable? What of those who have failing sight, or who are completely blind? There are those who have hearing impairment or who are deaf. Others have speech impediments or are dumb. Others of God's children are mentally retarded, are under stress, or have had an emotional breakdown. In many ways and for many people, physical well-being no longer allows normal activity. All are handicapped: all need our Christian love and understanding.

We should do everything we can to encourage the community that surrounds handicapped people, making it possible for them to participate in life's joys and services. Disabled and able-bodied—all want to belong, to be of service to others, to God, and to one's self. Let's make it possible.

Where do we start? First, we can educate ourselves and others to accept all kinds of handicaps and the people who must live with them. We can respectfully assist handicapped people in their participation in various activities—giving such help in a way that is acceptable and supportive of people's dignity and self-respect.

We need to look at our worship service, our programs, our social activities, our challenges to serve. Can all who wish participate? Have we made it possible for everyone to worship with us? Can those with walking aids or wheelchairs enter our sanctuary and be seated with the rest of the congregation? Can those who have a hearing impairment participate because we have provided the necessary individual equipment? Can those who have failing sight read the bulletins? Do we have copies with larger print or, alternately, magnifying glasses available to make small-print materials readable? Do we know how to communicate with those who speak with impediments or cannot speak at all?

Removing these barriers can make it possible for handicapped people to worship with us. But that is just a start. People who are invited to worship must also be invited to serve and to participate in our total program. It is important for handicapped people to be in the sanctuary; can they also enter all the rooms of our buildings? What a terrible waste of God's given talents if we do not make it possible for the handicapped to serve—and they will serve if we have not made it impossible.

What should our course of action be? Each one of our classes can challenge its churches to take a long, hard look at any barriers which are keeping the handicapped from participation in the worship, program, and service opportunities of their congregation. Each classis and particular synod can provide help to local congregations in meeting the needs of handicapped Christians. Our churches need pro-

grams for attitude development, so that all can associate with those handicapped, showing compassion without embarrassing those who need help. In addition to educational programs, our judicatories can help in the search for every possible resource for funding the necessary changes.

R-2.
a. To instruct the congregations and institutions of the Reformed Church in America to give priority attention to the needs of handicapped persons.

b. To instruct each classis under the direction of its Church Planning and Development Committee to require each church within its bounds (a) to make a careful study of the existing architectural and attitudinal barriers that deter the handicapped from full participation in worship and in the total program of that church; and (b) to report back to the spring 1982 classis the results of their findings and the actions which they plan to take or have taken toward the removal of these barriers.

c. To instruct each classis, particular synod, and the staff of the GPC to provide educational assistance to the churches

(a) so that all members can associate with handicapped persons, showing compassion but not doing so in ways that will embarrass or dehumanize them,

(b) enable them to minister to handicapped persons in ways that will help them to accept their handicap, to adjust to the changed lifestyle necessitated by their handicap, and to serve God and others in positive ways within the limitations imposed by their handicap,

(c) to provide resource material as to the legal requirements of facility changes, possible funding through governmental and church sources and suggested procedures to obtain the help needed to meet these requirements, and

(d) to institute specific programs to encourage the handicapped to participate in the community of Christ, assuring them that they are welcome in our churches and are accepted as God's children with equal rights to worship God, to serve others, to enjoy fellowship, to love and to know that love abounds in the house of our Lord. (ADOPTED)

The advisory committee recommended:

R-3.
To encourage adults and especially young people to major in "Special Education" and consider this an opportunity for Christian ministry, and that RCA colleges offer such majors if they do not already do so. (Referred—see below)

On a motion from the floor Synod:
VOTED: To refer R-3 to the Committee of Reference.

On a motion from the floor Synod:

VOTED: To make use, where practical, of the knowledge and experience of our corps of institutional chaplains in ministering to the handicapped.
(ADOPTED)

REGISTRATION FOR THE DRAFT

Inductions of conscripted men into the armed forces of the United States ended in 1972. Registration and classification of draft eligible men by the Selective Service System ended in 1975 through an executive order from President Ford. Since then the United States has relied entirely on all-volunteer armed forces.

The Russian entry into Afghanistan has precipitated a reversal of this process. In his 1980 State of the Union message and follow up clarifications, President Carter called for the registration of all men and women of 19 and 20 years of age. The president can institute registration of men by executive order without the passage of Congress, though the necessary funds will require a congressional vote. Supporters see this as a form of readiness in case a general armed mobilization is required. This registration could also be used if a national service program for all youth of the nation were to be adopted.

This new registration is not to be accompanied by draft status classification at this time. However, registration, classification, and military conscription are not separate programs but rather steps in the same process.

The Reformed Church in America has since 1938 acknowledged the rights of those who in conscience feel they cannot participate in military service. The General Synod of 1940 said:

> We, therefore, recommend that those, who in the exercise of [a Christian's] freedom of conscience are restrained from active participation in the belligerent forms of war, be advised to register their names and convictions with their respective Consistories who in turn shall register their names with the Stated Clerk of General Synod.[1]

In more recent years, General Synod has called upon the church to be active in ministries that raise moral issues, present options and lead to decisions based on the deep religious convictions of members of conscriptive age.[2] Specifically, the 1968 General Synod:

> Requests all churches and pastors to provide counsel to young men who are torn by the dilemma of conscience regarding war, making known to them the alternatives provided within the Selective Service Act both for service within the armed forces and for the provision of choosing conscientious objector status.
>
> Asks the churches to give supportive help to young men who have chosen the unpopular position of conscientious objector, and help in interpreting this decision of conscience to the people in the church and in the community.[3]

R-4.
To remind pastors, youth leaders and consistories of their responsibility to counsel young people and congregations **about**

Christian perspectives toward war and options relating to participation in the military services. (ADOPTED)

ENDNOTES

[1]MGS 1940 pp. 545-6.

[2]c.f. MGS 1965 pp. 84, 86; 1966 pp. 218-20, 234; 1967 p. 207-8; 1968 pp. 204-8; 1969 p. 247; 1971 pp. 227-30; 1976 pp. 231-5; 1979 pp. 71-81, 95-97.

[3]MGS 1968 p. 205.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

R-5.
To support initiatives that would encourage communication between all parties in the Middle East regarding a nonviolent, humane and equitable solution to the problems of the Palestinian refugees. (ADOPTED)

PEACE SUNDAY

Recalling the decision of the 1979 General Synod "to urge our churches in their teaching and preaching programs to emphasize the biblical vision of peace and to stress the devastating social and personal consequences of the arms race";

and in view of increasing international tensions during the past year; aware of the difficulties in discerning what national policies truly make for peace; recognizing that peace is God's blessing and that war may be His judgment; and

in response to Jesus' teaching that "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," the Christian Action Commission calls upon the General Synod

R-6.
To encourage the congregations of the RCA to set aside one Sunday each year to be observed as "PEACE SUNDAY," a time of corporate prayer, of repentent petition for God's mercy, and reflection on our Christian calling to be peacemakers. (ADOPTED)

On a motion from the floor Synod:

VOTED: To instruct the Christian Action Committee to select a date for Peace Sunday for recommendation to GSEC.

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Christian Response to Racial Injustice

CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO RACIAL INJUSTICE

Introduction

The General Synod of 1979 voted:

> "To instruct the Christian Action Commission and the minority councils to present a policy paper on Christian responses to racial injustice to the General Synod of 1980, which may then direct its conclusions to the World Council of Churches' study scheduled for that time." (*MGS* 1979, p. 107)

The following representatives of the Christian Action Commission and the minority councils were appointed to serve as a joint committee:

Donald Luidens (Christian Action Commission)
Kenneth Mallory (American Indian Council)
*Earle Hall (Black Council)
Hector Seda (Hispanic Council)
Moody Yap (Council on Asian American Ministries)
Joseph Muyskens (General Program Council Staff)
B. William Howard (Black Council Staff)
Raymond Rivera (Hispanic Council Staff)

*was unable to attend the meeting

The committee met in January for two days of intense discussion to examine the mandate of last year's Synod, to assess our progress, and to look into the future.

Review of Previous Statements of General Synod
What struck the committee most was not so much the need for new statements, but for action. In 1957 the General Synod adopted the *Credo on Race Relations.* At least half of the Synods in the ensuing 23 years have either made further statements about Christian responses to racial injustice or have reiterated some previous statement.

A brief overview of the stated policy of the General Synod includes the following:

The Church

"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." (*MGS* 1978, p. 59)

Self-Determination

"The central issue in self-determination is the power to make the decisions which affect one's own life. Within the Church decision-making structures are so dominated by the presence, attitudes, values and traditions of the white people that only by a planned restructure can minority groups have the ability to make decisions vital to their own communities, and the congregations to which they belong. (*MGS* 1969, p. 102)

Church and Society

"The General Synod, understanding that *racism is sin,* calls upon all churches to study the causes which made necessary the founding of the Black Council, giving special attention to the role of the churches in historic injustices." (*MGS* 1978, p. 176)

Economic Issues

"The General Synod encourages understanding and support for legislation which would call for full employment through private and public industry of wages sufficient for decent standard of living with accompanying retraining programs, and to provide sufficient guarantees for a decent standard of living for those who are unable to work, or for those whose incomes are below the guarantee." (*MGS* 1969, p. 246)

"[The General Synod] goes on record as supporting Federal programs which insure full employment for all people who want to work." (*MGS* 1979, p. 93)

Equal Education

"The Supreme Court decision of the ordered gradual desegregation of the public schools of our land represents an effective legal expression of the Christian attitudes and convictions at the present time. We believe that we should support and implement the intent and content of that decision." (*MGS* 1957, p. 182)

"The General Synod encourages the churches and membership of our denomination to use their corporate endorsement and human resources in the support of organization, judicial and legislative bodies, state and local school boards which struggle to develop and enact racial balance plans in their effort to achieve quality education for all in their divided communities." (*MGS* 1972, p. 206)

Open Housing

"We believe that racially restricted housing covenants, real or implied, are inconsistent with Christian integrity. We believe that according to the Scripture, the rights of property are subservient to the needs of people." (*MGS* 1957, pp. 183-84)

"The General Synod approves the 'Covenant for Open Occupancy' and urges the Churches to promote its use in their communities." (*MGS* 1961, p. 215)

"We encourage Reformed Church people to take a part in the continuing struggle to end discrimination based on race, color, creed and national origin in housing, in employment and in education." (*MGS* 1964, p. 231)

Capital Punishment

"General Synod goes on record as opposing the retention of capital punishment as an instrument of justice within our several states, encouraging forward looking study in all areas relating to criminology; supporting all efforts to improve our penal institutions, crime prevention agencies and police procedures, and efforts being made to secure provisions of adequate staff and budgets for prisons, parole boards and similar institutions." (*MGS* 1965, p. 219)

South Africa

"We express our dismay over . . . the official policy of apartheid (of the Republic of South Africa). Apartheid is nothing more nor less than legalized segregation designed to keep the non-white African separate but unequal." (*MGS* 1967, p. 205)

"The Reformed Church in America registers its disapproval through the stated clerk of General Synod to the Reformed Churches of South Africa on the policies in South Africa which deny basic rights and freedoms to the vast majority of people in that country." (*MGS* 1967, p. 205)

Refugees and Immigration

"The future of our response to the refugee problem will call for hard thinking, and the solution of problems that are real and baffling. It will also call for the kind of Christian service that is not discouraged by disappointment and by ingratitude, but that constantly seeks to exercise love for the sake of Christ. In doing this, we will need to find new levels of devotion and of humility." (*MGS* 1969, p. 184)

Farm Workers

"The General Synod supports legislation on the state and national level that gives all farm workers their rights to free elections by secret ballot for a union of their choice." (*MGS* 1975, p. 194)

"The General Synod . . . requests that all states extend their minimum wage laws to include all agricultural workers." (*MGS* 1972, p. 216)

These previous statements of the Reformed Church in America must be affirmed. What we call for is a renewal of will to implement our statements and decisons.

Trends That Will Continue into the 1980s

Racism exists in both the church and society. The church must speak to both. Addressing its own racism has a certain priority for the church in order to authenticate its witness. But its prophetic role speaks also to the social environment. To lift up social needs is itself part of our message.

Trends in the next decade relating to racism will likely include the following very brief list:

1. In relative terms, compared to the United States and Europe, poverty for most non-white people of the world may actually increase. The less developed or Third World countries (African, Latin American, Southeast Asian, etc.) will progress very slowly in improving the opportunities and income of their people.

2. Unemployment in the United States disproportionately affects urban Black and Hispanic young adults. The earnings gap of minority people in relation to the U.S. average income will remain high.

3. Racial and ethnic diversity will be increasingly visible. Urbanization is a world-wide phenomenon. As people cluster in urban areas, differing cultures, races, and groups will be forced next to each other.

4. Urban housing problems will seriously impact the life of urban Black and Hispanic congregations. Minority people have often been forced to be mobile or move frequently as housing becomes available and land uses change. Community ministries that help stablize neighborhoods will be vitally important.

5. Migrant, foreign, and undocumented laborers, except for their use as low cost labor, comprise "second class" or unwanted groups in many Western countries. The need for jobs by millions in poor nations and the utility of additional or low cost labor in some industrial nations will provide the impetus for continuing labor migrations.

6. The world refugee problem will continue largely propelled by the expulsion of racial and ethnic minorities such as the Chinese from Vietnam. Refugee settlement in the U.S. and Europe will continue.

The Christian Community

Here is what the church must look like in order to meet these issues. These are signs toward which we may point in order that we may know we have made progress against our own racism.

A sign of progress will be seen when congregations (especially in urban neighborhoods) routinely reflect their communities in identity, leadership, and program support. Hispanic and Black congregations are not "White churches in the making," but are in the process of developing identities and ministries unique to their communities.

A sign of progress will be seen when we can all celebrate our diverse heritages without letting them be points of division. We will both affirm our individual identities and be together in the body of Christ.

A sign of progress will be seen when we find a predominantly Black congregation in a predominantly White denomination no longer viewed as the object of denominational mission, but as a church that participates equitably in the opportunities and responsibilities of a normal congregation.

A sign of progress will be seen when giving to fellow Christians is no longer viewed as a benevolent handout to be carefully watched over by those who represent its sources. Giving and receiving will occur together as we all contribute to and celebrate being part of the mission of Christ in the world.

A sign of progress will be seen when White congregations confess that, by the very fact that they flourish in a society dominated by White people, they are sinful racists and are subject to the judgment of the Lord.

Continuing Priorities

We affirm the following discoveries through our journey of the past 23 years, and general direction for the decade of the 1980s:

1. Institutional racism or the structural manifestation of racism has been and must continue to be the central focus in racial concerns. Shared decision making, access to resources, and ministries for and by minorities must continue to be primary. These values ought to appear in society as justice and participation.

2. Communication between groups within the RCA has given us the information on which has been based whatever growth we have experienced in responding to racism. If the church is to expand its horizons to fully grasp the worldwide nature of racism, we need to hear from South Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East as well as minorities within our immediate membership. The message of liberation these people bring is such that to fail to listen is to not hear what God is doing in the world.

3. A growing maturity in intergroup relationships must be fostered. Dependency and paternalism are opposite sides of the same coin. Our interdependence calls for us to reach across cultural barriers.

4. Our statements through the years have mentioned many specific manifestations of racism. The scale of these issues is such that we may feel insignificant in their solution, or the allies that action brings may include some we fear would corrupt our motives. However, on economic development, educational opportunites, improved housing, and all the other dimensions of racism, our words far surpass our deeds. As mission agencies and ecclesiastical assemblies continue to raise these needs among us, let us be reminded that our commitments are not new although their implementation may be.

5. White racism, we acknowledge, is not always the conscious belief system which manifests itself in discriminatory practices. Racism must be understood to include the vile practices of discrimination that are participated in often unwittingly by the vast majority of white RCA members. As such, it is especially pernicious for we are not always aware of its presences in our lives.

6. Violence is endemic to the racist institutions of our society. While often characterized as "covert" forms of violence, these forces are fully as devastating as those involving the weapons of war.

R-7.
To call on *all eligible congregations* to send delegates to the annual minority caucuses and request feedback from those delegates about the programs and policies which are advocated in those meetings. (NOT ADOPTED)

Reason:
This is redundant and can possibly confuse the existing communication system.

R-8.
To request all classes to plan, during the next two years, to hold classis-wide conferences (dialogue sessions) which will be addressed primarily to White parishoners. The conferences should deal with the topic: "Being White Americans in the 1980s: Coming to Terms with Our Racial Identity as White Americans". Resources for these conferences can be obtained through the offices of the minority councils and the Office of Social Ministries. The classes are to present reports and suggestions from these conferences at the June 1982 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

R-9.
(To call upon ***minority councils and their staffs*** **to communicate their activities to the Reformed Church in America.**

a) Publications from the councils should be sent to every minister in the denomination.

b) The councils shall report bi-annually to each of the particular synods at their regular meetings.)

The advisory committee presented the following substitute for R-9:

To call upon minority councils and their staff to explore with the particular synods possible methods of mutual communication. (ADOPTED AS SUBSTITUTED)

Reasons:
1. The minority councils are accountable to General Synod.
2. The particular synods have various methods for setting their agendas.

R-10.
To instruct the *(particular synods)* classes **to utilize the Black Council's operational statement of self-reliance (reprinted below) when supervising "dying" and membership-dropping churches.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Additions in light type face.
Deletions in parentheses.

SELF-RELIANCE

A church's financial obligations may be placed in three basic categories:

1. Core Budget
   a. staff costs
   b. internal congregational needs, eg. worship
   c. maintenance

2. Program (for congregation or larger community)

3. Building mortgages and major capital improvements.

It was agreed by the Clergy Conference that all churches that are capable of paying all of the above expenses should be encouraged to do so. However, the first priority expense should be the CORE budget. This is the budget on which the very existence of the institutional church depends, and every congregation which regards itself as a self-reliant church should pay (at least) those expenses listed in category one. When these expenses are paid, any additional resources could be directed toward category 2—program. That is to say, a church may regard itself a self-reliant church if, when all means of financial support from outside the congregation ceases to be available, the survival of the worshipping community itself is not in immediate jeopardy.

From the "Report of the RCA Black Clergy Conference," May 4-5, 1978

Report of the Black Council

In 1979 the Black Council celebrated its tenth anniversary year. Throughout its first ten years the Black Council has devoted itself to one of the important goals articulated by the General Synod at its founding. That is the goal of insuring full participation of Black people in the denomination's program and policy bodies.

In 1979 the General Synod approved a plan which had been developed and proposed by a General Synod Joint Committee, which now guarantees the participation of racial minority groups in key denominational decision-making processes. In the process of coming to this important landmark in the denomination's life, a lot has been learned about the aspirations of the denomination's Black members. In the ten years during which Black RCA members have had an opportunity to interact intensively with one another, and to reflect on their local situations as well as their national denominational life, Black leadership development and self-reliance in the local congregation have emerged as the clearest top priorities of the Black constituency. The General Program Council, in its program and policy, have made impressive strides toward responding to this heartfelt need in the Black community. For several years the GPC has had functioning a program designed specifically to meet the lay and clerical leadership needs of Black congregations. This spring the GPC adopted a policy statement on urban ministry which clearly reflects the need to enable the local congregation to take initiative to meet needs in its own communities. That policy statement reflects the urgency of an approach to these congregations that will lead them to become viable in every possible way.

The Black Council believes that in light of these important advances the organization is entering an important new phase. In the next decade, the Black Council will, no doubt, continue the yet unfinished business of enabling local congregations in leadership development, and in campaigns and programs for self-reliance. But, it will also work, for example, to find capable Black persons to serve in those policy bodies of the denomination on which membership is now guaranteed. This is important since the basic purpose of having Black people serve on these bodies of the church is to make their talents available to the church in a way that has not been known before. Having racial minorities on the strategic boards of the church will equip the church to respond with a much fuller understanding to the challenges of the 1980s.

In 1979, the Black Council planned its annual caucus around an issue which is of special concern to the Black community today, "The Black Family." For three days, representatives of the Black constituency from throughout the Reformed Church came together and discussed with nationally acclaimed experts, the unique

impact of modern life on the treasured tradition of Black familyhood. There are unique aspects to the challenges which Black families face. And, it is our duty as Black Christians to meet these challenges head on in the future. We hope to use this annual forum in the fall to continue to lift up additional matters of urgent concern.

Where the Black Council has devoted most of its energy in the past to matters of intra-church affairs, it now feels amply developed as an organization to begin to tackle some of the basic problems of its constituency. The October, 1980, caucus will address either additional aspects of the Black family or an entirely different theme. Among the themes under consideration are energy and the economy. These issues affect all Americans adversely in our time, but they affect Black people more harshly than they do the general population. It is quite likely that in future meetings of the Black Caucus, attempts will be made to address these matters from a Black Christian perspective. Ideally, it will be the duty of the caucus to determine if the whole church might respond to these issues in some substantive way.

In 1979 at the recommendation of the Black Council, the RCA went on record as affirming government policy that would guarantee 100 percent employment. This position is an important one for the Black community which suffers disproportionately from the high and growing rate of unemployment in American society. The Black community is also deeply affected by the spiraling rate of inflation. If the church is to be an effective witness against racist oppression in our society in the coming decades, it will have to look less and less at the overt signs of racist bigotry, and concentrate more and more on the more sophisticated institutional forms of racist conduct. The impact of a declining economy on the Black community and the poor in general, is a good index to what people are already calling the "New Racism." Sociologists tell us that Black people have made gains in this society only when the economy was relatively healthy. The Black Council is interested in the church leading the way to a solution to this problem, so that Black people will not be the disproportionate victims of an ailing economy because of their race.

The 1980s will bring a special challenge to the United States as far as relations to other nations is concerned. The Black community is therefore giving serious thought to what parallels there might be between the oppressed classes of other societies and their own experience in America. The learnings from this examination can be helpful to the RCA, especially as it seeks to give a relevant response to the emerging situation in South Africa. The Black Council has had its own representatives travel to South Africa to spend a month with the Black Dutch Reformed Church in that country. And, the council was pleased to play some small part in arranging the recent visit to South Africa of General Synod president, Edwin Mulder and Warren Henseler, chairperson of the General Synod's Task Force on South Africa.

In this election year, the Black Council would encourage the church to take special note of those matters emerging in the campaign which uniquely effect racial minorities. In the current drive to have a balanced budget in 1981, for example, it seems apparent now, that the poor will suffer more and the rich will suffer less. As you read this report, we will be facing a summer of growing youth unemployment in racial minority communities because the government has chosen to eliminate the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) jobs program from the federal budget. When will the time come when we can sacrifice a few dollars from our already-bloated defense budget, in order to save jobs for unemployed youth? The Black Council calls on the church to support those candidates for public office who will be sensitive to the needs of racial minorities and poor people in general, and will advocate programs that will lighten the burden of their poverty and powerlessness.

Further, the church is urged to give more vigorous support and affirmation to its decision to urge the United States government to set aside a national holiday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King, perhaps more than any other American in this century, is an exemplary Christian man who gave his life in the service of Christ, in a ministry to the sick, the imprisoned, the blind, and the lame.

Report of the Hispanic Council

The Hispanic Council celebrated its Seventh Annual Assembly on February 22-24, 1980, at Star Lake Lodge, Bloomingdale, New Jersey. We saw healthy signs of continual growth and organizational maturity in our midst. We rejoice in the Lord for our growth from a regional organization to a truly national one.

We participated this year as a council in the discussions going on in the church related to racism and how to most effectively combat it; whether violence or non-violence is compatible with the biblical Christian faith. Our particular perspective and voice regarding this matter was that the most compatible means in relationship to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is that we advocate non-violence to combat racism. We feel that the so-called developed nations of the world, who are most uncomfortable when oppressed people use armed struggles to liberate themselves, should apply the same principle of non-violence when they are threatened with war or similar situations of oppression.

The Hispanic Council continues to flourish. Its Youth Committee and its Women's Union provide leadership development events during the year including retreats, conferences, and one-day seminars, resourcing local youth and women's guilds presidents. The council's Executive Committee this year took responsibility for the Family Life Conference which was attended by over 150 people. We also celebrated our first Pastoral Conference. Subjects at the Pastoral Conference included church administration, pastoral counseling, and liberation theology. All of these programmatic aspects have helped to strengthen the collective life of Hispanic churches and produce incentives for the continued development of lay leadership.

New areas of program assistance being developed by the council include: (1) a newly organized Children's Committee which will be sponsoring a children's event for our churches; (2) in cooperation with the Office of Human Resources, contracting a clinical team, Dr. Alejandro LaFontaine and his wife, Edith, to provide upon request services to Hispanic clergy families; (3) in cooperation with the GPC, to develop and design a Hispanic Christian education program to meet the needs of our churches. All of these developments we hope will continue to facilitate holistic growth within our churches and produce the leadership that will bring many to the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ and further his lordship and kingdom in the world.

Another area which was cause for great excitement at the Seventh Plenary Assembly was the area of new ministries and church growth. We praise God for the new Hispanic ministries that have been developed in Paterson's Riverside Church and People's Park Church and in Hackensack's Second Reformed Church in New Jersey; and in the new Hispanic ministry in Paramount, California. We rejoice in how these ministries are touching people's lives and have organized Bible fellowship groups in such a relatively short time. Reports from Holland, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; and Rochester, New York are encouraging. All of these ministries, which are under two years old, have laid solid foundations and have shown growth. This really challenges us to continue to advocate for beginning new ministries in Hispanic communities throughout the United States.

The Hispanic Council's social ministry, RAP Foundation Services, Inc., its pilot project at the First Hispanic Reformed Church, has been completed. The program operates a Family Service Center, a residential facility for delinquent children, an Out-of-School Program for high school dropouts, a tutorial and recreational program for elementary school children, and a program for truants and delinquents. These five programs are now under the total leadership of the First Hispanic Reformed Church and a local board is administering these programs. This model is now hopefully ready to be duplicated and is being considered now by our ministries in Holland, Michigan, and Chicago, Illinois. We hope to take the learnings from there and apply them in other situations.

The theme of our Seventh Plenary Assembly was "The Church in the 80's, Called to Serve." This is our prayer for the council and for the whole Reformed Church—that in the decade of the 80s we may serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as he establishes his kingdom in the world.

Undocumented Persons

The presence of undocumented persons within our borders is disturbing.

> "To justify our fear of them we exaggerate their numbers, and predict that unless they leave us, the very fabric of our society will be irreparably undermined. At a recent colloquium, Garret Hardin, of life-boat-ethics fame, quotes a 1977 Roper poll in which 91% of the sample agreed that we should make an all out effort to stop the illegal entry of approximately 1.5 million foreigners each year. That same Roper poll showed that 75% of us agree that even the legal allowance of some 400,000 immigrants per year is too high."
>
> "Perhaps the antagonism reflected in the Roper poll would have been minimized if the respondents had known a bit more about these illegal immigrants. For instance, a comprehensive Department of Labor study has shown that 73% had taxes withheld from salaries, and 77% had social security deductions. Only .5% received welfare and only 1.5% received food stamps. The antagonism might have been further minimized if the Roper respondents had known that the vast majority of undocumented immigrants originate from Mexico, a country where income disparities are among the most extreme in the world. . . ."[1]

It is interesting to note a quote from a *Wall Street Journal* editorial (June 21, 1977) which concluded that "illegals provide manpower for jobs that citizens won't take. . . . In a city like New York, which has been driving away businesses through high costs, the illegals may well be providing the margin for survival for entire sectors of the economy. . . . The easiest, cheapest and fairest way to protect the labor market will be to legalize the immigrants. . . ."

Christians, of course, are not only content with facts but also the truths of faith. We are exhorted in Old Testament Scripture to welcome the sojourner for we were sojourners (Leviticus 25:23). The New Testament reminds us that by welcoming strangers in our midst we have entertained angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2). Jesus himself stated in his parable on the final judgment he takes on the very embodiment of the stranger when he proclaims, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me not."

R-11.
To communicate to President Carter the General Synod's support for total amnesty for all undocumented persons living in the United States. (NOT ADOPTED)

Withdrawal of U.S. Forces from the Island of Vieques

We seek the immediate withdrawal of United States naval forces from the Island of Vieques. In the original Taino language "Vieques" means "small land." The native Indians were then referring to an island which is indeed small: 29 kilometers long and 6 kilometers at its widest point. What the peace-loving Indians never suspected was that its inhabitants, who lovingly call her Isla Nena (Child or Baby Island), would be forced to live cramped together in a tiny area comprising merely one-quarter of the island's territory, suffering due to a continuous state of war—their lives affected, controlled and determined by a much bigger and more powerful land: the United States of America and its navy.

The island of Vieques lies only six miles southeast of Puerto Rico and is a municipality of that larger island. It is bathed in the north by the Atlantic Ocean and in the south by the Caribbean Sea. Its territory comprises 52 square miles which are equivalent to 33,000 acres. Of these 33,000 acres 26,000 were abruptly and forcibly taken away from the people by the armed forces of the United States (the navy) during World War II to establish military bases. At first it was only the navy; later it was joined by the Marine Corps unit.

To this day the people of Vieques—nearly 8,000 inhabitants at the present time—live on a crowded, narrow belt of land which is surrounded by wire fences decorated with signs which say: "Keep Out", "Warning—Restricted Area" and "No Trespassing." Behind those wire fences lie not only some of the most beautiful beaches of the island and the best land for agriculture and grazing, but the dreams, hopes, and aspirations of a people and their potential for achieving progress and development and living normal lives. For them the nightmare that was World War II has not ended.

Their land is still occupied by war units. Their freedom is restricted by the needs of war planes and war ships of the United States as well as from other countries. Their lives are threatened by mines and live ammunition. The bombings, instead of ceasing, have increased.

The only and natural means of livelihood for a significant number of Viequenses—fishing—is denied to them by the demands of the navy. The island's potential for development has been stifled. The people have to emigrate to nearby islands in search of employment. Recreation is practically non-existent due to the lack of space available and the undesirable and belligerent presence of the "marinos" (navy and marines) who come into the town to get drunk, fight, and insist on finding "senoritas." All activities, including church services, classroom instruction, family life, and sleep, are interrupted by the noise created by the explosions.

The navy controls air, land, and water and determines the economy, the society, and the very existence of the people of Vieques.[2]

Based on the foregoing the Hispanic Council presents the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Hispanic Council of the Reformed Church in America has been committed to work for human and civil rights, justice, and redemption of the oppressed; and

WHEREAS, the occupation and control by the U.S. Navy and Marines of over 70 percent of the land and sea of the Island of Vieques prevents the economic development of its people and is the cause of overcrowding of its population in one small area; and

WHEREAS, the shooting and bombing targets from ship-to-shore and air-to-ground by the navy personnel and marines who occupy the Island of Vieques cause serious dangers to the lives of its inhabitants, causing also disruptive noise and the cracking of buildings and houses; and

WHEREAS, several persons and institutions, such as the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church and the Hispanic Caucus of the U.S. Congress, and others, all from the United States, have also called for the cessation of the shooting and bombing and the return of the territory under the U.S. Navy and Marines' control to the People of Vieques; and

WHEREAS, the president of the United States as commander-in-chief is invested with power to stop such operations and withdraw from the island the marines and the navy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

R-12.
a. To (commend) support **President Carter for affirming his decision to give Puerto Rico the status which Puerto Ricans decide they want freely;**

b. To ask President Carter to instruct the Department of Defense:

1) to cease all military exercises and operations on the Island of Vieques;

2) to withdraw from the Island of Vieques all the navy and marine personnel;

3) to appropriately relinquish that portion of the island presently owned by the Department of Defense;

4) to compensate residents of Vieques where damage has been done to their properties, or where deprivation of means of livelihood has or does occur, and to repair physical damage done to the ecology or communities during years of military use;

c. To ask the president of the U.S. to declare a state of emergency in the Island of Vieques and provide funds to rehabilitate the land; and

d. To request the general secretary of the Reformed Church in America to write the president of the United States conveying to him the above message. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

ENDNOTES

[1]*LA LUZ,* 1978 Special Hispanic Heritage Week Edition, Denver, Colorado.
[1]Jorge Lara-Braud, *THE UNDOCUMENTED CHRIST,* New York City, 1978.
[2]*VIEQUES: A PEOPLE FOR WHOM WORLD WAR II HAS NOT ENDED,* Cruzada Pro Rescate de Vieques, Vieques, Puerto Rico, 1979.

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

Report of the American Indian Council

The Reformed Church ministries of the Dulce, Mescalero, Macy, Apache, Lawton, and Winnebago Reformed Churches seem to have entered the 80s on a positive note which began with the first meeting of 1980 in Denver, Colorado. This March meeting gave all six churches the opportunity to express their concerns and hopes for the 80s. As we look to the future, we feel some of the priorities are: (1) Developing and endorsing Christian leadership within the Indian community. Our RCA colleges and seminaries would be used extensively to provide the quality of leadership for our mission fields. (2) To provide quality stewardship for our consistories. This will enable the church pastors and consistories to advance our Lord's cause more effectively in our respective churches. (3) To provide leadership and programs that will be geared to the youth of our churches. The AIC realizes that the amount of young people in our churches is a good picture of the strength of our church in the future, since they are the people who will make up the churches in the future. (4) To become more supportive of the RCA's various ongoing programs where church commitment is involved.

Additional financial support from the General Program Council in 1980 will allow us to pursue these priorities. Various workshops and seminars are being planned for the coming year.

The American Indian Council feels that it can best deal with social, economic, and racial problems of the 80s by enriching our spiritual conditions. Our approach to the RCA may differ in some respects from those of our brother councils. These differences may be because of location, culture, need, and past commitments of the RCA to Indian ministries. This is not to say that we are not supportive of our brother councils and their efforts within the RCA system.

From the Report of the General Synod Program Council:

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

The major focus of the Office of Social Ministries has been World Hunger. It is an issue clearly perceived by the majority of church members as part of the ministry of Christ's people, and can be approached as simply as giving to Cambodia relief through Reformed Church World Service. A much more complex but equally necessary effort is to influence national policies on grain reserves and to do this in coalition with other Christians who are members of Bread for the World or IMPACT.

The analogy is often used that if you give a person a fish, he will be fed for one day, but if you teach him how to fish, he will be fed for a lifetime. The gift of the fish is analogous to relief activity that responds to immediate crises but do not improve food sources. Teaching how to fish or giving fishing supplies is analogous to development efforts in the less developed nations. Carried a step further, sometimes the poor are not allowed near a beach or river to do fishing and then the help must focus on basic justice and human rights. This last is not only most often the root cause, but also the closest to the role to which we are called by the justice or righteousness of God. Justice issues are the common denominator of all program efforts of the Office of Social Ministries.

Peace and disarmament is a second major focus, responding to actions of the 1979 General Synod. Many components overlap with World Hunger. While the mood of the country has become less open and flexible since the invasion of Afghanistan, the need for Christians to see themselves as peacemakers is more necessary than ever. Partisan, easy, or deliberately controversial answers must give way to united prayer for the healing of nations, work that expresses God's sovereignty and lifestyles that embody our vision of *Shalom*.

Concerns of domestic violence were also referred by the 1979 General Synod to the General Program Council. Safe shelters for the abused and law enforcement training in family counseling are only now being widely made available. The church is part of a community complex of resources which can play a vital role in diminishing domestic violence. The church also includes among its members abusive people who need, but are unlikely to seek, help. A set of resources for pastors and congregations is being developed and tested by a local committee working with the Office of Social Ministries. These will be made widely available in the near future.

At the time of this writing, registration of young people as part of a possible conscription program seems certain. The situation is not at all like the Vietnam era, but what was learned from that period is that it is impossible for young people to avoid making a personal decision about military service. To answer the call of the government is itself a decision that will be tested by experience. Young people deserve the best information available in order to make decisions about participation in the armed forces or alternate service. Whenever classification is made, a person has the pressure of only ten days time in which to accept or appeal that classification. The future of a person, the role of Christians in a world of conflict and paths of discipleship are being decided.

Overtures

Take Position Against Abortion

1. **The Classis of Wisconsin overtures the General Synod to take a definite stand against abortion, except when it involves danger to the health of the mother as determined by the expert prognosis of the medical personnel involved in the case, in consultation with responsible members of the family.**

Reasons:

1. The Scriptures stress the sacredness of life, and are unquestionably opposed to infanticide, either before or after birth.

2. The Bible opposes adultery and fornication, and warns against the moral and spiritual consequences of such acts, which abortion only encourages.

3. Of all the institutions, the Church of Jesus Christ and God's redeemed people should take a definite stand in expressing a strong voice against such practices, rather than encouraging them.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-13.
To deny the overture and to reaffirm and print in the minutes the action of the Synods of 1973, 1974 and 1975. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

Reason:

This overture would change the present position of the Reformed Church which we feel was appropriate and adequately stated in the Synod of 1975.

*Addition in light face type.

Statements on abortion from 1973, 1974, and 1975 Minutes of General Synod reprinted per R-13:

1973

In response to an overture concerning abortion, the General Synod adopted the following statement:

> We believe the Bible teaches the sanctity of human life. Men are given the precious gift of life from God and are created in the image of God. Therefore, we believe, in principle, that abortion ought not to be practiced at all. However, in this complex society, where many times one form of evil is pitted against another form of evil, there could be exceptions. It is our Christian conviction that abortion performed for personal reasons to insure individual convenience ought not to be permitted.
>
> We call on all who counsel those with problem pregnancies, especially youth workers, campus pastors and staff members of our church colleges, to uphold the Christian alternatives to abortion.
>
> We call on our churches to expand their efforts to support agencies providing a ministry of mercy to those seeking alternatives to abortion.
>
> We call on our members to support efforts for constitutional changes to provide legal protection for the unborn.
>
> Recognizing the complexity of the issues, we await the further judgment of the Christian Action Commission and the Theological Commission and the added wisdom which its joint report may give us. However, the gravity of the situation today precludes the possibility of silence at this synod." (p. 106f)

1974

The General Synod received the following statement on abortion from the Theological Commission:

> "The Synod recommended that the Theological Commission and the Christian Action Commission prepare a joint report on the matter of abortion. The Commission prepared two papers on the subject but could not arrive at any consensus. However, the Commission has prepared a paper setting forth some of the biblical data regarding abortion. We feel that this biblical framework will be helpful to the church.
>
> While the Reformed Church in America holds God's will and word to be the ultimate context of all ethical decision-making, the difficulty which emerges in the present instance is that the Scripture does not speak directly to the abortion issue. In the face of this difficulty, we believe the church should reject such alternatives as dismissing forthwith all further recourse to the Scriptures or giving a prejudiced exegesis of passages and texts which are sufficiently ambiguous to permit differing interpretations even within our Reformed tradition.
>
> The more arduous but commendable solution is that of making an instrumental use of the Scripture or developing the Old and New Testament context for the discussion of the issue and for all determinations with respect to it. We suggest that the Scripture contributes as pertinent to the issue under discussion the following data:

1. God is the creator of man, the author of human life (Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7; Psalm 8), active in the conception and birth of human life (Gen. 20:18; 30:2; Ruth 4:13; Luke 1:23-26, 36-37), constant in his care for life before birth (Job 31:15; Psalm 22:8, 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; 49:1, 5, 15; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:23-25; 36-45).

2. Because man is the bearer of God's image, his life comes under the protection of the divine commandment, "You shall not kill" (Gen. 9:6; Exod. 20:13; 21:12-14; Matt. 5:21), and his sexual relationships are assigned serious value (1 Cor. 6:16), even a sanctifying value (1 Cor. 7:1ff; 1 Thess. 4:3-6), which, in turn, involves the rejection of illegitimate sexual relationships (Matt. 5:32ff; Mark 10:11, 19ff, I Cor. 6:9ff). Although Scripture alludes to eunuchs (Acts 8:27ff; Matt. 19:10-12), the New Testament nowhere commands physical sterilization. Only once does the term ektroma appear (I Cor. 15:8) meaning "abortion, abortive, or untimely birth," but the exegesis of the passage is disputed, and in no case bears importantly on the issue at hand. Nowhere does Scripture intimate that human life be arbitrarily destroyed (Exod. 21:12-16; Romans 13:4).

3. In unwanted pregnancies as in other human relationships, Scripture requires that we honor the law of love which cares for the neighbor, and which requires that we promote not our own interests but the interest of others (Matt. 22:39; Rom. 12:14-21; Phil. 2:3f). In so doing, Scripture also requires that we keep in view the unique destiny of every human life (Matt. 10:28; 25:41; John 3:36; 5:28, 29).

4. Scriptural passages often cited as determining the status of a human fetus as fully human, upon careful exegetical examination prove to be indecisive and not clearly supportive of an absolutist position, either affirmative or negative (Exod. 21:22-25; Job 3:3, 10:8f; Psalm 51:5; 139:13-15; Isaiah 49:1, 5; Luke 1:41ff; Gal. 1:15; Heb. 7:9, 10), and since the above passages are receiving differing interpretations from equallly faithful interpreters within the Reformed community, we believe it is not advisable to make the passages bear the weight of an absolute "yes" or "no" position. Although this may be disappointing to those seeking a specific biblical instruction for the permission or prohibition of abortion, we do affirm that the above passages provide important biblical principles by which every Christian must measure all counsel and practice in this difficult matter. We further affirm that every Christian seeking to be obedient to the whole counsel of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, will exercise great care to act both in freedom and responsibility in Jesus Christ (Gal. 5:1, 13-15), and will be slow to criticize or condemn those who act in good conscience before their Maker and Redeemer." (p. 207f)

In response to an overture concerning abortion, the General Synod reaffirmed the statement of 1973 except for the deletion of the last paragraph, because the Theological Commission had given the Synod biblical guidelines on the subject of abortion. The Synod also added:

1. We support the adoption of "conscience clauses" to free medical personnel and agencies from any legal penalties, or limitations of employment, due to unwillingness to be involved in performing abortions.

2. We direct the GSEC to review ways in which RCA programs, personnel, and agencies can assist in publicizing, encouraging, and if possible, assisting financially in providing alternatives to abortion. (p. 100f)

The General Synod adopted the following recommendations of the Christian Action Commission:

1. To use, or not to use, legal abortion should be a carefully considered decision of all the persons involved, made prayerfully in the love of Jesus Christ.

2. No person should be forced or encouraged to undergo or to participate in an abortion when it is against the person's moral beliefs.

3. Churches are called upon to make known alternatives to those contemplating abortion.

4. Christians and the Christian community should play a supportive role for persons making a decision about or utilizing abortion. (p. 192f)

The General Synod also again reaffirmed the statement on abortion adopted at the 1973 General Synod as amended by the Synod of 1974.

Prepare Statement on Gambling

2. **The Classis of Albany overtures the General Synod to instruct the Christian Action Commission to prepare a statement on the issue of gambling in society, specifically the legalizing of various forms of gambling, to be presented to the 1981 General Synod.**

Reasons:

1. At least three particular synods (viz., New York, New Jersey, and Albany) are faced with the phenomenon of casino gambling either in fact or in proposed legislation.

2. While there may be general agreement as to the ethics of gambling, there has been no recent and cogent statement of the church relating to this issue. It would be helpful to those who are faced with possible legislation in this area to have a stated position of the church from which to operate.

R-14.
To adopt the overture. (ADOPTED)

New Business

The following item of new business presented by Vernon Hoffman, representing the Classis of South Grand Rapids, was referred to the advisory committee:

Commendation for Senator Hatfield

Last week the U.S. Senate debated and voted approval of President Carter's draft registration proposal. Senator Mark Hatfield was the leader of the anti-registration forces. Although the Administration's Registration Proposal passed, a total of 34 Senators voted against its approval.

I believe Senator Hatfield has served our country well in raising to a high level of visibility many of the difficulties inherent in the Administration's decision to call for a national registration.

THEREFORE, I move that we commend Senator Hatfield for his leadership in opposing the reinstatement of registration.

An action of the General Synod of 1969 may be cited in support of this resolution:

Pledge its support to all constitutional efforts to bring about a repeal of the Military Selective Service Act of 1967 and to substitute a system of voluntary enlistment.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-15.
To commend Senator Hatfield for raising to a high level of visibility many of the difficulties inherent in the administration's decision to call for a national registration. (ADOPTED)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Report of Central College

Often we are asked, "How are things going at Central College?" This report seeks to answer that question with facts and figures for the General Synod, other interested persons and future generations for whom it will serve as an historical record of the college year 1979-80.

1. Facts and Figures

a. In 1968 our board of trustees, in a study of how big Central College should be, set a figure that has now been reached. Our enrollment this year is the biggest ever and test scores of incoming freshman are also the highest. Central College seeks to remain a small Christian college and does not seek unlimited growth. We see this as an exciting opportunity to grow in quality and fervor.

b. A budget of over $8,000,000 represents a significant challenge. Its balanced position is due greatly to the generosity of the Reformed Church, many of its members, and hundreds of other alumni, businesses, and friends.

c. Total 1979 giving by the Reformed Church was approximately 11 percent over 1978 to a level of $219,000. We are grateful to the congregations who support us.

d. Our three-year BRIDGE TO TOMORROW fund-raising program was launched in the fall of 1978. The cash and pledges toward the $2,000,000 original goal of this program have now reached $1,860,000. Because of general inflationary pressures on operations and construction costs we have increased the goal to $2,300,000.

e. Heritage Day—Four years ago Central College launched a new program called the Heritage Roll of Honor. To become a member persons include Central College in their estate plans and make that action known to us. The first year we had slightly over 100 people who made that commitment, and now we have over 200. While there is no way to identify the dollar potential of these commitments, we do know that as they mature Central College's endowment will be greatly enhanced. At our annual Heritage Day held in May, recognition is given to new members and special gifts. At our Heritage Day in May, 1980, several very significant gifts will be acknowledged. (1) A major bequest from the estate of the late Marion Wormhoudt, former trustee, establishes a pre-law scholarship enabling us to award a four-year scholarship each year to meritorious students in pre-law. (2) Mrs. Alice Pearson has given her family home to the college to establish a scholarship for students entering Christian service. (3) Joe and Jean Petz will announce the establishment of a major scholarship to be given to students in business administration. These are outstanding examples of the concern and commitment that people feel toward young people preparing for careers through study at a Christian college.

2. Personnel

a. The college community was saddened by the sudden death of John Allen, member of our English faculty and a Central College graduate.

b. This fall was significant as 12 new faculty members joined us. While several of these fill new positions, most are replacements. The new faculty members are an extremely able group who already have made a significant impact on our campus.

c. Dr. James Van Hoeven who served the college as well for many years, first as chaplain and later as a professor in Bible and history, resigned his position during the summer to accept a pastorate at First Reformed Church in Albany, New York. Dr. Van Hoeven is well known in the Reformed Church, especially for his interest in Reformed Church history. His impact on our campus during his 12 years was great and his influence will continue as an important part of the heritage of Central.

d. Barbara Walvoord Fassler, member of our English faculty, resigned during the summer to take a new position in Maryland. Barbara is well know to Reformed Church people for her work with women in the church, as a contributor to numerous publications, and member of various committees.

3. Academic Areas

a. Many Central College graduates have entered the law profession and have done it very successfully. In response to the growing number of students interested in law as a profession, we have developed a very innovative and creative new pre-law program under the leadership of Dr. William Julian. This program includes recommended course work as well as law intern and law seminar experiences. Twenty area attorneys have agreed to serve on a pre-law advisory board and as advisors to individual students. This exciting program is enhanced by the Wormhoudt Scholarships.

b. Humanities and mathematics departments are anxiously awaiting the completion of Central Hall remodeling. Included in the project are a number of very practical and functional classrooms on the third floor. Completion of this is one more step in attempting to locate offices of faculty near the classrooms in which they teach to promote easy and natural student/faculty relationships. The building is scheduled for completion in time for the next school year.

c. The college has owned its own computer for over ten years. A new computer now in its second year serves the entire campus with over 40 terminals located in all academic and administrative areas. There are majors in both computer science and systems management. Central is one of the few schools in Iowa to have these majors and it has become one of our larger departments.

4. College/Church

a. Gene Sutton, a student at Western Seminary, is serving as our chaplain intern for 1979-80. Gene and his wife, Barb, also serve as dorm directors in Scholte Hall. Gene brings a warm and inspiring personality to his task of counselling and leading young people in worship and spiritual growth. He enhances an already active and exciting program.

b. Central enjoyed the opportunity to interact with Reformed churches on RCA College Sunday in November. A considerable number of our students and faculty participated. The interchange was a clear benefit for both college and church.

Central College continues to assure each Central student who is a member of the Reformed Church that he/she will receive grants of at least $500 per year. Most receive substantially more. We consider this an excellent investment in young people and in the future of the denomination.

d. This fall we launched a new program called Scholarship Opportunity Shares. Under this program individual congregations are afforded an opportunity

to provide a Reformed Church Scholarship for a specific student. It is fascinating to see the relationship that develops between the congregation and the student being supported. It is an excellent means of relating college students and church members.

5. Long Range Planning

As Central College prepares for the future, we note specific facility needs in theater and chapel. For many years Douwstra Auditorium served as chapel, music performance center, and theater. In 1970, when the new Kuyper Gymnasium was completed with the aid of the Reformed Church Development Fund, the old gymnasium was converted to a theater. This meant that Douwstra functioned as both music performance center and chapel. The present drama workshop, formerly the gymnasium, is a very old building with a wooden roof and offers little possibility for economic sustained use. Our board of trustees has studied the situation and approved planning for a new theater and a new chapel, with Douwstra becoming a music performance center. While we envisioned this as a program to be started in two or three years, we now find that it is possible immediately. As a memorial to Lucille Gaass Kuyper, husband Peter Kuyper and his children, Stuart Kuyper and Joan Farver, are proceeding immediately with the building of a new chapel. This very generous donation helps make long-range dreams an immediate realization. The accomplishment of this key part of the plan enables us to focus our attention more specifically and more effectively on the remaining elements of our plans. The college, the community, and the RCA have benefited greatly through the concern of the Kuyper family for many years. This latest in a long list of generosities will stand as a beautiful and functional symbol of a very special relationship between one particular family, the college, and the church. It is representative, however, of a deeper, more universal Christian mutuality of interest for us all that has existed for over 150 years and remains our best hope in a troubled future. We are indeed blessed and grateful. The challenge of providing the best possible Christian educational opportunities is a major responsibility but also a privilege—an outlet for the imperative to serve which challenges each of us in our own special involvement.

Report of Hope College

Hope College counts it a great privilege to have a strong, enduring affiliation with the Reformed Church in America. The formal way in which this relationship is maintained is through the election by the General Synod of the RCA of 12 members of the Board of Trustees. Further, the *Covenant of Mutual Responsibilities* provides an excellent working relationship between the college and the RCA. The Board of Trustees of the college, as well as the entire college community, strives to make this relationship a vital and active dimension of the life of the college. This report to the General Synod, in which we seek to present an accurate account of the ongoing life and work of the college, is a further expression of this relationship and reflects our commitment to give an account of the college to the RCA churches and members.

The less formal ties between Hope College and the RCA are many. Some 36 percent of the student body at Hope College come from homes that are affiliated with the RCA. In addition, many students are children of alumni whose roots were in the RCA, but are affiliated with other denominations because they live in areas where there are no Reformed churches. Almost half of the ministers in the RCA graduated from Hope College, as well as many of the active missionaries. Faculty and staff members at Hope play an active role in local RCA churches and classical and denominational affairs.

In seeking to give a brief but comprehensive report on the present state of Hope College, the following matters will be commented on: enrollment, finances, facilities, faculty, academic programs, and the mission of the college.

I. ENROLLMENT

Enrollment during this current academic year was 2,355 during the fall semester and 2,300 during the winter/spring semester. The corresponding full-time equivalent enrollments were 2,153 and 2,068. This enrollment is essentially the full capacity of the college. The college residence halls were filled to capacity, with some 1,630 students living in campus housing. In these days of concern about enrollment in colleges, particularly in private colleges, we are deeply grateful for this excellent enrollment.

The academic qualifications of our students continue to be excellent. Median high school grade point average for an entering freshman this year was 3.2; 44 National Merit Scholars were enrolled at Hope. Of greater significance than this is the outstanding personal qualities of these students. One senses a remarkable spirit of dedication, purpose and faith among students today. Being with these students gives one a renewed sense of confidence that God is at work at Hope College in preparing leaders of ability, faith, and purpose for the Church and the world.

This year we have made a renewed commitment to increase the number of minority students at Hope. A special endowed scholarship fund to assist Latino and Hispanic students has recently been established. There have been increased efforts to recruit minority students, as well as increased efforts to insure that these students have a rewarding and personally fulfilling experience at Hope.

II. FINANCES

The college has operated with a balanced budget for the past 12 years, and we expect to do so again this year. (Our fiscal year ends on June 30.) With the pressures of inflation becoming increasingly severe, sound fiscal management of our resources becomes increasingly important.

A brief overview of the current operating budget will help put this matter in perspective:

Total Operating Budget	$13,100,000
Total Amount Paid by Students	7,100,000
Total External Financial Aid	2,840,000
Gift Income from RCA Churches	280,000
Other Gift Income	800,000
Other Sources of Income	2,080,000

The college is deeply grateful for the support it receives from RCA churches. In addition to the $280,000 for operations, the college will receive approximately $125,000 this year in gifts for facilities, bringing the total gifts from RCA churches to $405,000.

It is of concern to us, however, that, relative to inflation and enrollment, gifts from RCA churches have dropped significantly from 1970-71. Following is a brief summary:

	1970-71	1979-80
Operating Budget	$ 6,500,000	$ 13,100,000
Gifts from RCA Churches for Operations	288,500	280,000
% of Operating Budget from RCA	4.4%	2.2%
Gifts for Capital Funds	400,300	125,000

Hope College recognizes the financial pressures on RCA congregations, with many opportunities for ministry in the local community and expanding ministries of the RCA. Nonetheless, this decrease in support, which if measured in constant dollars represents a decline of 60 percent, is of great concern to us. This seems all the more remarkable because the college has initiated many efforts during the past decade to strengthen our ties to the RCA. Many congregations do not fully realize that the only support the RCA colleges receive is that which comes from individual congregations.

Nonetheless, Hope College is committed to insure that financial aid is available so that every student who wishes to attend Hope is able to do so, regardless of the financial resources of his or her family. Countless students can testify that this is indeed the practice at Hope, and that because of this they have been the beneficiaries of the excellence in education that Hope offers.

III. FACILITIES

The decade of the 1970s was a remarkable period for the development of facilities at Hope College. Approximately $10 million was spent in providing the following facilities: DeWitt Student and Cultural Center, Peale Science Center, Lubbers Hall for Humanities and Social Sciences (renovation); and Dow Health and Physical Education Center. The result is that the physical plant of the college is in excellent condition.

Two important renovations were completed during this year. The first was Van Vleck Hall, the original building on the Hope campus. This building was built in 1857 and has been in continuous use since that date. Approximately $400,000 was spent in renovating and restoring this facility. It is good to have the original building on the Hope campus still in use, and now very beautifully restored. This building will house 38 women students and a head resident.

The second project completed this year was the renovation and expansion of the main college dining hall. Hope College serves meals to some 1,700 students and our facilities for doing so were inadequate and obsolete. A very attractive, functional design was developed, and the project was completed at the start of the second semester at a cost of $1,200,000. This represents a very significant addition to the facilities at Hope College, and greatly enhances the quality of dining for our students. We will also be able to more effectively serve groups that use the campus for conferences during the summer months.

IV. FACULTY

Important as finances and facilities are, the faculty is of central importance at Hope. As we seek to identify persons to serve on our faculty, the prime requisites are a thorough knowledge of the discipline, the ability to teach effectively, the potential for further growth, a commitment to the goals of the college and the Christian faith, and evidences that these persons will be models and leaders for our stu-

dents. Diversity within these common purposes is also important, for this promotes mutual growth and a variety of models for students.

In the past few years the contributions that members of our faculty have made to scholarship has been particularly noteworthy. In addition to numerous articles in scholarly journals in the various disciplines, there has been an increasing number of articles and books written from a distinctive Christian perspective that are designed for the interested lay reader. Two books are of particular significance. *The Human Puzzle* by Prof. David Myers, which relates psychology to the Christian faith, has received excellent reviews. *Reading With The Heart: The Way Into Narnia,* a recently-published book by Prof. Peter J. Schakel, gives promise of being a very significant addition to the growing body of literature on C. S. Lewis.

V. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The historic emphasis at Hope College has been on liberal arts education. A rigorous, creative curriculum in the liberal arts has always been excellent preparation for a life of purpose, service, and personal fulfillment. This is still true today. In fact, the need and opportunities for students so educated may be greater today than at any time in the history of the college.

The core curriculum, which is required of every student at Hope, is designed to ensure that every student has a sound introduction to the liberal arts. The most enthusiastic supporters of liberal arts education are often graduates who have gone into the professions, and then come to realize how vital their liberal arts education has been to their personal growth and development.

We realize that an undergraduate education should not only help students prepare for life, but also for their vocation. This objective is accomplished primarily through the selection by a student of a major field of study. Hope seeks to ensure that majors are available in a variety of fields that are of contemporary significance and which build on a liberal arts education. For example, the computer science program, which was introduced several years ago, has achieved considerable distinction, and graduates of this program are already occupying strategic positions in this field. Hope offers some 30 majors, many of which lead to graduate or professional study, while others prepare students for professional work as soon as they complete their baccalaureate studies.

Academic excellence in every facet of our academic programs is an important goal at Hope. There are many evidences that this is being achieved. In a recent independent study of chemistry departments in four-year colleges, Hope's Chemistry Department was ranked first among all four-year liberal arts colleges in the country. Most of the other departments at Hope would also be rated high in similar studies.

VI. OUR MISSION

Important as academic excellence is to us, our basic mission is much more comprehensive. Our goal is to educate the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. The design of our facilities, the formulation of our programs, and the selection of our staff are all designed to accomplish this. Further, our over-arching commitment is to accomplish all of this in the context of the Christian faith. The vital importance of this commitment was eloquently stated by Earl Gladstone Hunt, resident bishop of the United Methodist Church in Nashville, as reported in the February 8, 1980 issue of *Christianity Today.*

> "What we have traditionally referred to as liberal education, or the liberal arts, may be terminally ill in our time.
>
> "This kind of education has always insisted on exposure to great books and concepts of the centuries, including the Bible and ideas of Christianity. It glories in grappling with the hard questions of human existence, the stubborn but intriguing 'why' issues. It deliberately seeks to train the student to think, and it struggles purposefully to develop an ability to make value judgments. Most significantly, it offers the option of God and informed faith, an understanding of the place of the spiritual in a life that is whole.
>
> ". . . I seriously question whether this nation or Western civilization itself can hope to survive the years just ahead unless education recovers the sense of the sacred. By this I mean its ancient obligation to offer content that builds moral sensitivity and value response, and provides exposure to the rich religious legacy of human culture and history. I wonder, too, whether leadership for an awakened church can be supplied from the ranks of young men and women who are victims of this sweeping removal of the sacred from the learning process.
>
> "I urge. . . that Christian scholars, with the rest of us helping as we can, rededicate themselves to the strengthening of Christian liberal education. I do not believe that the merely church-related college has much hope or reason for survival between now and the year 2000. But what of the deliberately Christian institution of higher learning that is honest enough not to be ashamed of the Gospel and bold enough to demand quality performance in the classroom? I believe such a school will find support among thoughtful people in the Christian community—in spite of spiraling inflation and diminishing student enrollment."

This remarkable statement summarizes the essence of the mission of Hope College. This is a vision we continually hold before us, and strive to make a reality in the ongoing life of the college. We urge all young people who seek an education of such breadth, excellence and Christian commitment to join us at Hope College.

This mission is also the basis on which we covet and urge the prayers and financial support of the churches and membership of the RCA.

The Annual Report, which will be completed in September, will include complete financial information on the current fiscal year. This report will be sent to all RCA churches.

Report of Northwestern College

Dr. Harold Heie, currently professor of mathematics at Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts, and the newly elected vice-president for academic affairs at Northwestern College, in his paper on "The Search for Wholeness—A Case for Christian Liberal Arts Education" states:

> For me integration [of faith and learning] speaks essentially of wholeness; a unity of fragments too often compartmentalized. First, a wholeness of knowledge; a seeking for interrelationships between the academic disciplines and the Biblical record. Second, a personal wholeness . . . Christian liberal arts education will seek to wed an emphasis on intellectual understanding with an emphasis on deeply felt religious experience. . . . There ought to be a constant dialectic between theory and practice, wherein each pole informs and enriches the other. If one captures the im-

portance of this dialectic, one realizes that Christian liberal arts education at its best can never be viewed as a detour from living.

In many ways, the Christian dimension of Northwestern College suggests that we demand more of a professor than does the secular college. We expect up-to-date competence in a discipline, but we also expect the ability and the intense desire to bring together faith, knowledge and Christian living, and we look for a demonstration of interrelationships among the three. That does require, on the part of the faculty, a high level of Christian commitment, a deep understanding of faith, and an awareness of how one's academic discipline relates to modern civilization. It requires the college to provide assistance and opportunity for faculty to develop the ability to relate those components for their own spiritual growth and for the benefit of students. Given that challenge, we are particularly pleased that Dr. Heie with his extensive knowledge and experience in faculty development within a Christian college setting has accepted our invitation to become Northwestern's academic dean. We see in that yet another indication of God's blessing.

As the discussion of articulating Northwestern's mission as a college of Christian higher education continues we are experiencing encouraging developments in all areas of the institution's life.

1. *Student Life:* The 1979-80 year shows three highlights, the partial completion of the Rowenhorst Student Center, the arrival of the Rev. Jerry Sittser as the college's new chaplain, and the formal opening of a career development center. The construction of the Student Center was of great interest to the entire campus community. Certain delays did not permit the opening of the elegant and extremely useful center during the first semester. However, since January all of us at Northwestern have enjoyed the new building except the physical fitness facilities. The social and cultural activities areas are enriching greatly the opportunities for our students and challenge us to devise creative co-curricular programming, ranging from art exhibits to film series, from game room activities to snack bar discussions. Within the next two weeks the first parts of the physical fitness center will be available for student use, and the entire center will be open in the fall. The concept of combining under one roof physical fitness and cultural activities, opportunities for spiritual and personal growth, as well as occasion for social relaxation is in keeping with our goal to strive for wholeness in education.

The entire campus is grateful that God sent us in Mr. Sittser a person whose gifts lie where our greatest needs are. We are experiencing positive student response to the challenge for involved discipleship, calling for personal commitment and involvement in the concerns of the world around us. Participation in our daily chapel program (we require attendance three times each week) is most encouraging and activities through Bible study groups are increasing, as is attendance at our fall and spring retreats.

The design of the Rowenhorst Student Center included space for a formal career development center. That much-needed program is in operation and is assisting students in doing life planning and in making professional and career decisions.

2. *The Student Body:* Our fall, 1979, enrollment saw another record student body. Eight hundred sixty students enrolled, up from 802 the previous fall. On the basis of current retention and admissions figures we are expecting a further increase in the size of our student body this fall. We were pleased that the number of RCA students increased from 50.5 percent in 1978-79 to 53.9 percent during the current year. Along with the numerical increases come problems of space, particularly in the area of residence hall facilities and in the seating capacity of our existing chapel.

3. *The Academic Life:* The current year is one of transition and we are looking forward to the arrival of the new academic dean. However, under the able leadership of Professor Wiese we have continued our curriculum development with the initiation of a political science program, expansion of our computer science program, and making plans for a communications program. The appointment last fall of several highly qualified faculty members who support fully the college's mission has been a source of great blessing, for it is the quality and Christian commitment of our faculty and staff that determines the quality of our educational program.

4. *The Development Program:* Colleges depend on gifts from their constituency, both for capital improvements and for the annual operating budget. The new Rowenhorst Student Center would not have been possible without the CALL TO COMMITMENT campaign. Our Phase I revised total goal of $5.75 million (including $2 million for endowment growth) now stands at slightly over $4 million. Before we began the campaign we received permission (General Synod of 1978) to solicit our churches for about half a million toward our goal. So far we have worked with individuals and have not approached churches for support toward the CALL TO COMMITMENT program. This we plan to do early this fall. The actual cash paid so far for the construction of the Student Center amounts to over $1.4 million and the pledges toward the $3.5 million construction cost amount to over $2.8 million.

Northwestern remains competitive through rather low tuition, board and room costs, currently at $3,845. However, substantial increases cannot be avoided in view of current inflation. While we continue to receive increased support from our churches toward our annual budget, that amount constitutes a smaller percentage of our total budget due to the rapid increase in student body size and operating costs.

We are pleased to be closely related to the Reformed Church in America and seek for ways of serving the church. It is our desire that students be prepared for their future careers, but also to serve as God's servants in society and in their churches.

Report of Reformed Church Women

The 1970s brought to women a new awareness of opportunities to show their gifts in home, church, and community. The 1977-1980 Triennium, with the goal to deepen our faith and to draw upon the power God gives us, directed women to strengthen their personal faith before stepping out into action.

Today many women are looking for new ways to relate to work in the church. Reformed Church Women remains flexible, encouraging new methods of study and involvement. It provides the tools for enabling each woman to become not only the woman she wants to become, but the woman Christ expects her to be. We strive for vitality and relevance in order to grow with women in this decade.

The 1979 Bible study on Romans by Herbert and Julia Van Wyk introduced the triennium goal, *True Maturity in Christ.*

RCW continues to emphasize leadership by encouraging women to affirm and use their spiritual gifts. Approximately 2000 women across the country have participated in Women in Leadership Seminars. Evaluation of these seminars has resulted in a decision to design WIL II with an emphasis on Christlike assertiveness, in motivation and self-esteem. Pilot programs will be held in 1980 to set phase II in motion. This will be another RCW effort to continue encouraging both personal and corporate growth among the women of the denomination.

Along with the development of human resources, RCW is concerned with financial resources for mission by providing women an opportunity to learn about needs, to respond by giving, and to know that each gift does make a difference in the name of Jesus Christ. Gifts from women in the Reformed Church for RCA operation and mission totalled over $536,000 in 1979.

Women are not only generous with financial gifts. Beautiful gifts of hospitality have been shared with the National RCW Board in Rock Valley, Iowa, and with the National Executive Committee in Richboro, Pennsylvania. Understanding and friendships span the denomination because of the involvement of women in caring and sharing.

Voluntary contributions to the Beth E. Marcus Scholarship Fund for Women in Seminary have provided assistance to students at New Brunswick and Western.

In May, Phyllis Bruggers and Betty Boerman had the opportunity to share in the tenth anniversary celebration of the Kyodan women (United Church of Christ in Japan) in Tokyo. Two thousand Japanese Christian women assembled to worship, praise, and study. The trip also included visits with RCA missionaries in Japan and in Hong Kong.

Dr. Beth Marcus, executive director of RCW, attended the White House Conference on the Salt II Treaty in October, reminding us that Christian women have a responsibility for study and action on issues such as disarmament, war, and peace.

At this writing, the women of the church are anticipating the Triennial celebration in Miami Beach. Jean Cook, chairperson, and her committee have worked to unite the women of the church with the theme: *God Renews and Remolds—Rejoice!.*

We express our gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Beth Marcus and national and synodical staff for their capable and creative leadership. We give special tribute to Mrs. Remi Flikkema, who retires at the time of General Synod 1980 after 19 years of dedicated, devoted service.

From the Report of the General Program Council:

EDUCATION

General Work

Calling persons to Christian discipleship, supporting them in that discipleship and equipping them for living and witnessing faithfully is a continuing educational task of the Reformed Church. The General Program Council, through its personnel and program, provides support for the ministry of education in RCA congregations.

Two partnership curriculums are recommended for use to Reformed Church congregations: Joint Educational Development's *Christian Education: Shared Approaches* and the *Bible Way Curriculum* developed by the Christian Reformed Church. Catalogs for both *CE:SA* and the *Bible Way Curriculum* are made available annually to Reformed Church congregations. In 1979, a new resource that each congregation received, a Start-Up Packet, was designed to assist congregations in beginning their Christian Education Program in September, 1979. Since 1980 is the

200th Anniversary of the Sunday school, the GPC has offered to congregations packets which assist the congregation in commemorating that anniversary and is also participating through staff in developing a focus on the Sunday school in an issue of the *Church Herald* and an issue of the *Reformed Review*. During the past several years, several persons engaged as directors of Christian education have requested consideration of a Convocation for Church Educators who work within the Reformed Church. Such a convocation is being planned for October 29-31, 1980, at Western Seminary in Holland, Michigan, entitled "Educating for a Faith-Ful Journey."

Sharing information about Christian education is another activity designed to support congregations. This is done through the "Update of Christian Education in the Reformed Church in America" sent nine times a year to every RCA congregation plus 1300 other persons and institutions. Notices in *HOTLINE* and articles in the *Church Herald* are additional means for sharing information. Each region has its own process for sharing information about Christian education in that region.

During the November, 1979, GPC meeting, budget decisions resulted in a significant decrease in funds available for GPC programs in Christian education. Major areas affected in 1980 and subsequent years are: Youth Ministries, the Family Week Packet, Regional Training Workshops and contracting with persons to do workshops and consultations in congregations. The GPC, at the March 20-21, 1980, meeting, considered alternatives for enchancing support.

Regional Activities in Christian Education:

The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Center continues to do its major work in Christian education in conjunction with the Synods of New Jersey and New York through a cooperative effort, Educational Enrichment. During 1979, this partnership provided consultation and workshops for eight congregations, assisted the Synod of New Jersey as it developed the relationship with the United Church of Christ's Resource Center for Learning Ministries, sponsored a workshop for Christian Educators at Warwick late in the Spring, and planned a Shalom Workshop designed to raise consciousness about justice, peace, and other social issues. An October EMRC Open House provided an opportunity to orient new pastors to the Christian education programs of the GPC. Classis educational contact persons were selected and trained for each classis in the Synods of New Jersey and New York. Two *Heritage and Hope* workshops were conducted.

The Northeastern Regional Center sponsored 20 teacher training, curriculum, or goal-setting workshops for congregations. Seventeen groups participated in Television Awareness Training sessions. Several new ventures met with success. Eight churches participated in the pilot project entitled, "The Church's Unique Role in Aging." The project's purpose was to test ways of resourcing congregations in ministry with older adults. The project was well received and 14 new congregations are participating in 1980. Another new venture in honor of the International Year of the Child was an intergenerational festival, "Praise God for Children of All Ages." Creative learning centers and a variety of workshops were enjoyed by all.

The Midwestern Regional Center during the past year established a Resource Center at the Grandville, Michigan, office to serve congregations desiring a place to review RCA material, Christian education curriculum and youth program materials. The office conducted classis workshops for pastors on the utilization of the *Heritage and Hope* curriculum. Center staff, in conjunction with Western Theological Sem-

inary and the Michigan Synod staff, planned and conducted two events for directors of Christian education and youth ministers in the region. Congregations continue to use the staff services provided by the center for teacher education workshops, consistory workshops and Christian education program evaluation.

Approximately ten persons were trained in the Western Regional Center to provide classical leadership for the Sunday School Advance Program in 1980. The Sunday School Advance is implemented by three visits to a local church by the Sunday School Advance associate to help the Sunday school set goals related to out-reach, in-reach, environment, motivation and promotion, teacher recruitment, leadership development and curriculum resources. Twenty churches in the region have signed contracts to be a part of this program in 1980.

In the Western Regional Center, Eastern part, a task force is at work assisting both the local church and each classis to develop a Christian Education Support System. At the present time there is discussion about the structure and purpose of Christian education in the local church and in the classis. The Task Force on Classical Christian Education has defined its purpose as follows: "The purpose of the Task Force on Classical Christian Education is to motivate classes and congregations of the six-classes-area to reaffirm the covenental theology, life and mission which undergird the distinctive view of Christian education held in the RCA."

Youth Ministries:

Over the past 18 months responsibility for youth ministry on the denominational level has been given to a team of regional youth directors, coordinated by Richard Heusinkveld. As the team began to organize priority was given to assessing the present condition and needs of youth ministry in the RCA. The following are some of the conclusions which were drawn:

1. There is a noticeable lack of purpose, unity, and identity within and among youth groups.

2. Youth ministry is not congruent with the life of the church.

3. There is a lack of resource material which can be trusted as theologically sound and appropriate for our youth.

4. There is a lack of training in the area of youth ministry among our lay leadership.

5. There is a great need to provide service opportunities for youth on a short-term basis.

6. There is a noticeable need for increased fellowship among the groups in regions and across the denomination.

After analyzing the needs, the following statement was formulated:

The purpose of youth ministry in the RCA is to:

—Equip youth as growing disciples of Jesus Christ
—Interpret the mission of the RCA for youth
—Empower youth through all the resources of the church for the life and work of the Kingdom

In order for this statement of purpose to become a reality, the following goals were outlined:

1. To develop a denominational youth ministry resource piece that will provide both leadership training and program material.

2. To broaden the participation in the Youth Benevolent Project.

3. To establish a Summer Youth in Mission Program.

4. To establish active participation in the Joint Educational Development (JED) Youth Staff in order to tap into their resources.

5. To hold a denominational youth gathering.

6. To keep before the denomination the needs and activities of youth ministry in the RCA through the *Church Herald* and *HOTLINE.*

The team is beginning to make progress. The first two issues of *PAK-SAK,* our resource magazine, are out. The plan was to publish *PAK-SAK* quarterly, but budget restrictions preclude quarterly publication.

The needs in the area of youth ministry within the RCA are great. They are needs which should receive major attention because youth are the next generation of leaders in the RCA. The Reformed Church Youth Ministry Team is capable of dealing with these needs and are well on the way to doing so as long as budget limitations are not excessive.

Heritage and Hope:

During 1979, the second focus of *Heritage and Hope, A People at Worship,* was introduced to the RCA. By the end of 1979, 119 congregations had purchased Focus Two Paks and 266 congregations had purchased Focus One Paks. Focus Three, *A People in Mission: The Surprising Harvest,* will be published during the late spring of 1980. Each Pak contains two Adult Books, an Administrator's Guide plus Planning Guides for all age groups except preschool. Focus Four which will emphasize RCA mission on the North American continent will be published in the late spring of 1982. Additional supplemental resources are being provided by *Heritage and Hope. Servants Gladly, A Training Manual for Elders, Deacons and Pastors* has been sent to every RCA congregation inviting them to order additional copies through the Distribution Center or to reproduce their own copies. Thirteen hundred copies have already been sold through the Distribution Center.

In response to a General Synod recommendation of 1976, a Baptism Folio is now being published. This folio, designed for use by the pastor and elders, has some brochures suitable for utilization by parents.

Black Christian Education:

During 1979, the staff person, Wyn Wright Potter, in the position of associate for urban education planned and implemented a ministry in Black Christian Education and other aspects of urban education. A major denominationwide strategy evolved which led to the selection, training, and utilization of eight consultants in BCE. These consultants work with eleven congregations. Alternatives for continuing leadership have been developed.

Family Life Ministries:

Ministry to families in the 80s continues to be an effective and essential ministry. Through the GPC and the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Center a workshop, *Helping Families Face the Future: A Family Life Training Event,* was held in two locations last March. Additional workshops were developed as a result. The Office of Family Life, under the direction of Del Vander Haar and in cooperation with Dr. Stanley Rock from Western Theological Seminary, recently published through the Zondervan Press *This Time Together,* a guide for pre-marital counseling. This book is designed to provide a process for working with engaged couples and couples during their first year of marriage.

Each year the Office of Family Life provides a Family Week Packet related to an annual theme and mailed to congregations requesting it via the *Plan Calendar.* Two newsletters a year, "Families in the Family," for resourcing congregational leaders are included in the General Mailing to congregations.

Marriage Enrichment and Family Enrichment weekends continue to have a high interest in the church. During 1979 approximately 14 events were held.

Continued work needs to be done in the area of additional training events to equip laity to deal with the broad spectrum of relationships involved in Family Life Ministries. A Family Life Ministry Notebook is available to help local congregations plan and do family life ministries.

Work Related to Current Denominational Priorities

The Education Program of the GPC continues to support various emphases of the RCA such as Church Growth, Urban Ministries and the concern for hunger. Staff members have made themselves available to church growth congregations and have worked with urban congregations particularly in the area of Christian education and consistory training. The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Center, the Northeastern Regional Center, and the Midwestern Regional Center have strategies to support educationally the social ministry issues which are part of denominational and congregational life. The staff have also indicated a willingness to develop educational resources for leadership development for the current study/discussion theme: "Crossing Cultural Barriers in Christ: Reaching and Receiving."

Matters Referred by the Previous General Synod

No specific referrals were made to the GPC relative to Christian education at the 1979 General Synod. However, the advisory committee on Christian education did request that research be conducted relative to the needs for basic Bible study material designed for new adult Christians. That research is now being conducted. An annotated bibliography will be provided to congregations through the General Mailing. Should the research indicate a need for an additional resource for new adult Christians, the resource will be developed by *Heritage and Hope.*

The 1976 General Synod had referred a request for assistance to congregations and families in interpreting baptism for children. This resource will be available mid-1980.

Overtures

Supply Programs for Helping Homosexuals and Lesbians

1. **The Classis of Schoharie overtures the General Synod to bring to the awareness of RCA members, congregations, classes, and synods competent programs and persons which can successfully help the practicing homosexual and lesbian, minister or layperson, overcome his or her homosexual behavior.**

   Reasons:

   1. Society and the Church have long condemned the homosexual without providing competent help to the homosexual.

   2. The purpose of the church is to bring repentance to the sinner and healing to the unhealthy.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-1.
To approve the overture. (ADOPTED)

CHRISTIAN FAITH

Report of the Theological Commission

The Theological Commission met in two regular sessions: October 29-31, 1979, at Western Theological Seminary, and February 11-13, 1980, at New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

The commission is pleased to submit the following study on the nature of ecclesiastical office and ministry. This paper gives further consideration to issues addressed in an earlier commission study, "The Nature of the Ministry," presented to the General Synod in 1968. Continuing discussions within the commission and responses from the church at large to the 1968 study have led the commission to reexamine the aspects of function and office in a Reformed understanding of the nature of the ministry.

Included in this report are responses to referrals from the General Synod in recent years concerning "call contracts," the office of deacon, the fourth office, and ministerial membership in a local congregation. The commission's response to each of these referrals is based on the theology of office articulated in the initial study, "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry." Thus, the referrals are addressed in the four excurses that follow the basic study.

This report also contains a second major study, which offers a Reformed theological perspective on the nuclear arms race. The commission is pleased to submit this paper and its recommendations for consideration by the General Synod.

Responses to the 1978 General Synod referral concerning Jewish evangelism and the 1979 referral concerning holocaust theology are being prepared. These two studies will be included in the Theological Commission report to the General Synod in 1981.

I. THE NATURE OF ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE AND MINISTRY

At the meeting of the General Synod of 1968, the Theological Commission presented to the church for study a report entitled "The Nature of Ministry." Since then a modest but persistent number of overtures and referrals have reached us asking for clarification of various aspects of that study, and indicating some measure of uneasiness in the church about the strong functionalism which emerged in that report. This has prompted your commission to undertake further studies of the function and the nature of ecclesiastical office in relation to the nature of ministry and other related issues.

1. The compatibility of office and function

During the decade of the sixties there was a noticeable trend in the American Protestant churches towards emphasizing ministry in terms of function, and often at the expense of office, resulting in a relativizing of the differences between clergy and laity, and often obliterating them altogether. On occasion appeal was made to the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as a justification for downgrading the ordained ministry. Some went so far as to say, "There is no fundamental difference between clergy and laity, in calling between an archbishop and his chauffeur, between a president and a parish minister."[1] The term "office" was deleted from the

polity books and liturgies of churches belonging to the Reformed tradition, and ministry came to be regarded as a matter of practical expediency with its authority derived from the will of the people. When the term "office" was retained, it was defined simply in terms of function and provided with no further rationale, thus creating an inherent inconsistency with this retention of the term. While the 1968 report of our church stated clearly, "We believe that the use of ecclesiastical offices is still necessary in the church-order of our day,"[2] no further defense or explanation for the retention of the term was made. The members of the present Theological Commission are fully agreed that the term "laity" is misued when employed in antithesis to the term "clergy." We fully endorse what was stated in the report of 1968, namely, that the biblical term *laos* includes all the people of God, leaders and people alike. The church has only one ministry *(diakonia),* and it comprises the ministry of clergy and laity alike. Your commission also agrees that it is a mistaken exegesis and theology which sets office and function over against each other, fostering the popular but mistaken impression that function is biblical whereas office is not. Your commission wishes to affirm the compatibility of office and function. Function is an important aspect of office, but it is not an adequate definition of office.

The commission recognizes at the outset certain difficulties inherent in the further study of the concept of office. Neither the Old nor the New Testaments provide us with any clear definition of the concept. There are many gaps in our knowledge of what went on in New Testament times, and the situation of that time is characterized by fluidity. While there is enough evidence in the New Testament to say clearly that there were certain offices, we exceed the data when we presume to define their number, status, function, and relation to other authority figures in the early church. All branches of the Christian church acknowledge that the New Testament does not provide us with one, single, clearly formulated polity, binding on all at all times.

We also recognize that the frequent reference to office in our doctrinal standards and church polity books is due in large measure to inherited usage transmitted to us by the Dutch, German, and Latin languages of our Reformed fathers. The words *ambt* (Dutch), *Amt* (German), *munus* or *officium* (Latin), at one time comprised the meanings both of function and office. Both meanings were understood when the one term was employed; it was not then the fashion as now to view office simply as status, as opposed to function. Perhaps the widespread use of the King James Version also contributed significantly at this point. This version used the word office some 30 times to translate the Hebrew verb *kahan,* along with a variety of other terms such as *ken, maamed, mishmer, mishmereth, abodah,* and *pequddah.* The word office was also used to translate in the New Testament such Greek terms as *praxis, diakonia,* and *hierateria.* But in this instance also, the term office was never used and understood apart from relationship to function. The commission is convinced that the biblical evidence does not justify either of two extremes: the one of defining office without reference to function, or the other of defining office solely in terms of function, leaving no room whatsoever for a theology of office.

2. Office and Function in the Scriptures

A. Their relationship and sanction

As the 1968 report affirmed, the prototype of all ministry is Jesus Christ himself. The New Testament, however, needs to be understood in its continuity with the Old Testament. Already in the Old Testament we encounter persons who represent

the God of the covenant, who act and speak officially for Him as over against the people of the covenant. We encounter frequent references in the Old Testament to judges and kings, prophets and priests, elders and patriarchs, and after the exile, scribes and lawyers. The partial discontinuance of some of these office-functions in the New Testament is due, no doubt, to their fulfillment in and replacement by Jesus Christ, the one true mediator between God and his people (I Tim. 2:5). Such is surely the case when Jesus is spoken of as *the* prophet (John 6:14), our great high-priest (Heb. 4:14), and our eternal king (Rev. 4:9-10). It is also clear that in establishing the new covenant of grace, God, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, created a people of the new covenant (I Pet. 2:9f.), and many of the old titles and offices once characteristic of Israel are now the common possession of the whole community of faith. Consonant with this new covenant, many new titles also appear and they are notable both for their number and variety. The Holy Spirit bestowed upon the whole body of Christ, a plethora of spiritual gifts (charismata), ministries (diakoniai), and manifestations or workings (energemata) [I Cor. 12:4ff.].

It should be noted, however, that although the whole church was charismatically gifted, this did not obviate the need for some continuing authority in the church. As one noted Reformed Church theologian has observed, "One could argue that such a fellowship might need such an official counterbalance in order not to become chaotic."[3] The New Testament makes clear that not every spiritual gift and function carries an official nature. In listing charismatic gifts common to all believers, Paul is careful to bring to the fore within the church certain specific *charismata:* "first apostles, second prophets, thirdly teachers" (I Cor. 12:28,30). In Ephesians 4:11ff., Paul is clearly concerned about authority in the church, and he enumerates in order, "apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers," whose gifts are specifically "for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry [carrying forward their own ministry], for building up the body of Christ." The gifts which stand at the head of the list are for the purpose of quickening and directing all other gifts, and are both divinely ordered and necessary. This precedence of divine ordering and necessity distinguishes what we now call office from functions and general gifts.

In Pauline theology, then, it is clear that the church lived with certain authority centers and offices, despite its being also charismatically furnished. While we encounter in the Pauline letters no special word or words for what we term offices, the reality is there. Paul speaks of "those who teach and rule" (Rom. 12:6-8), of "those who labor among you and are over you" (I Thess. 5:12), of "bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1), of a bishop (overseer) who "must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:7ff.), and he refers to the authority and work of prophets and teachers (I Cor. 12:28).

Moreover, in the Book of Acts there is frequent mention of elders *(presbyteroi)* within and outside the Jerusalem community (Acts 11:30, 15:2,4,6,22f; 20:17), and of Paul's appointment of them in churches of his missionary labors (14:23). It seems that Paul preferred the term overseers *(episkopoi),* but from the Pastoral Letters we gain the firm impression that the terms *presbyteros* and *episkopos* could be used interchangeably (Titus 1:5-7; I Tim. 3:1ff., and 5:17). From the Pastoral Letters we gain the futher impression that the office of elder was one of authority, instruction, pastoral oversight, and nurture. Far from being a peculiarity of Pauline polity, the elder is prominent in other places of the New Testament such as I Pet. 5:1,5; and James 5:14. The Letter to the Hebrews urges believers to remember their leaders, their example and precept (13:7), and to obey and submit to them (13:17). They were persons who could not be lightly accused (I Tim. 5:19), and are described as official representatives of the church (Acts 20:17,28).

While mentioned less frequently, the presence of the deacon in the churches of the New Testament is affirmed (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8-12), and that of women deacons as well (Rom. 16:1). In numerous instances, we encounter the special difficulty that *diakonia* in the New Testament refers not only to an office, but to ministry and service in general such as the ministry of angels (Mark 1;13; Heb. 1:14), of apostles (Acts 1:17; II Cor. 3:6; 6:4), of the helpfulness of Peter's wife's mother (Mark 1:13), and the women who followed Jesus during his earthly ministry (Luke 8:3). The references to Epaphras (Col. 1:7) and to Tychicus (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7) may be to Christian service in general, but we cannot be sure. In some instances, deacons are mentioned in connection with overseers for whom they may have been assistants. Their special gifts were for the service of helping, sharing, and showing mercy (I Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7b). Perhaps the group known as the Seven should be regarded as deacons, although the term is not used and their actual work is described as helping the apostles with preaching (Stephen, Acts 6:8), and teaching (Philip, Acts 8:26ff.), as well as that of serving tables (Acts 6:1ff.). The deaconate had no precedents in Jewish institutions, which shows that the church felt free under the leading of the Holy Spirit to create new offices as need for them arose. A more extensive discussion of the office of deacon has been reserved for an excursus attached to this study.

While the above offices together with that of the ministry of the Word occur in the New Testament with sufficient frequency to warrant the supposition of their general currency and sanction, we may not conclude from this that the church is hereby limited to these offices, and these alone. Elsewhere in the New Testament we read of prophets and teachers, shepherds, and evangelists, and we meet with such authority figures as James the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19; Acts 21:18), and various assistants to Paul such as Timothy, Titus, and Silvanus. The reality of office in the New Testament is as certain as anything can very well be. The number and definition of these offices is not, to be sure, as clear as could be desired. The differences in number and designation may be due to any number of factors: geographical (early Jewish or later Gentile communities), practical (the need or absence of pressing need for emphasis on certgain offices), and finally, the freedom of the Holy Spirit to endow and direct the church according to his divine wisdom. This variation in number and designation should be viewed as God's design to give the church freedom, under divine guidance, to devise the kind and number of offices needed for carrying forward its mission in the world.

B. The nature of office

Offices, then, as well as functions or services, are gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church. Offices are as functional as any other ministry, but offices have distinctive functions and other characteristics which distinguish them from the ministry which is common to the whole church.

Offices are those universally recognized and continuing ministries within the church which differ from other ministries common to the fellowship. They are divinely appointed to represent, interpret, and proclaim the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ through the generations, and in so doing, to govern the church authoritatively by his grace and according to his purposes. Divine appointment, representation, interpretation-proclamation, authority, and continuity, distinguish offices from the general ministry of the whole church.

1. Divine appointment

Offices have their origin in God's appointing and calling. To be sure, all Christians are called in the sense that they are invited or summoned by the gospel of

God's grace (Matt. 22:14). All Christians are also effectually called in the sense that God creates the spiritual ability and disposition to respond to the gospel summons, and that he effects that response (Rom. 8:28-30; II Tim. 1:9). This calling is into God's kingdom and glory (I Thess. 2:12), to salvation (II Thess. 2:13-14), to eternal Life (I Tim. 6:12), to God's marvelous light (I Pet. 2:9). All Christians are thus called and have a holy calling.

The New Testament speaks further, however, of a more specific calling, that of God's selection and summons of individuals to particular offices and functions. The familiar example is the apostle Paul (Rom. 1:1; I Cor. 1:1) who explains his self-designation as "a divinely called apostle" *(kletos apostolos)* by the additional phrase "set apart *(aphorismenos)* for the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1b; Acts 9:15). This same correlating of being "called" and "set apart" appears again at Acts 13:2 where we read: "While they (prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, and Saul) were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' " The verb *eklegomai* "to choose, select someone" is used to describe Jesus' appointment of the twelve as apostles (Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2,24), the appointment of the seven (Acts 6:5), and Peter's summons to bring the gospel to the Gentiles at Caesarea (Acts 15:7).

It is to be noted also that the New Testament does not speak of this specific call to particular office and service in inward, spiritual terms only, but locates this calling also externally and outwardly in the church. In some cases the calling body of believers is a single congregation (Acts 13:1-2), whereas in other cases it appears that groups of believers, such as elders or congregations, acted together in this capacity (Acts 14:23). On some occasions, this confirming action of the church takes the form of a solemn, visible ceremony of laying on of hands (Acts 14:23), although there is no uniformity of practice in the fluid, flexible situation of the early church.

In our own Reformed tradition, this sense of divine call, both inward by the Holy Spirit and outward by the church, has been an important requisite for all offices, and particularly the office of the ministry of the Word. In the latter case, the person's sense of divine call is prerequiste to admission to theological study, and a matter of examination by the classis, both before and at the time of ordination.

2. Representation

Offices in the New Testament are also marked out by their representative character. The offices remind us that the church lives from an authority that is over and beyond it, even Jesus Christ. Although the church is made up of those who are in faith-union with Christ, the voluntary aspect of faith is not its most biblical or important aspect. Faith-union with Jesus Christ means living in a new relationship of trust and obedience; living with, through, for, and under Christ. Paul pictures this relationship as similar to that which exists between head and body (Eph. 4:4ff.; Col. 1:18,24). Christ, as the head of his church, is in living and vital contact with the church, directing and governing it by his Word and Spirit. The offices give expression to this task of representing Christ. They are constant reminders to the church that it is more than another horizontal human society, another institution of our prevailing culture. The offices declare Christ's headship and lordship in the church, and those who speak and who serve him obtain their message and mission from him (I Cor. 4:1-4). Emphasizing this representative character of the offices, a contemporary scholar has said:

> It is Jesus who speaks when the word of the Gospel is truly preached. It is Jesus who is proffered and who blesses when the sacraments are rightly administered. It is Jesus who heals or helps when practical assistance is extended to the needy. It is Jesus who bears and endures when persecution or hardship is imposed and accepted. It is Jesus who rules when spiritual discipline is exercised . . . . It is he himself who is the true minister.[4]

3. Authority

Another distinctive mark of the offices which is dynamically related to their representative character is that of authority. The presence of the Spirit and Word in the whole church in no way precludes the need for authoritative guidance in the interpretation and proclamation of the Scriptures. In every age the church lives by and from the Word of God (Matt. 4:4; John 15:7), but this Word given by the Spirit needs to be interpreted by the Spirit so that God's people may hear what the Spirit is saying to the church here and now. While all who are in the body of Christ have the Holy Spirit and are qualified to read and interpret the Scriptures, there must be some who are authorized by the church to be its official teachers. Christ continues by his Spirit to call and qualify them. The church, in turn, by call and ordination recognizes their gifts and sets them apart for the office of ministry (Eph. 4:11ff.; II Tim. 3:6; 4:1-4). This authority of the offices is of a spiritual nature, granted by Christ through the Spirit as a gift (I Cor. 12:27-31), and has nothing to do with human importance or official status. Only *one* in the church is great, the head of the church, even Christ. Although this authority is not hierarchical and never to be exaggerated, neither is it to be minimized (John 20:23). It is the high privilege of those who bear office to be Christ's representatives doing Christ's work according to the authority and call he has given them (II Cor. 1:8).[5]

4. Continuity

Offices are also those universally recognized ministries in the church which have continuity of character. Despite the flexibility of the church situation in the New Testament period, some pattern of continuity is visible. Presbyters are succeeded by other presbyters, and deacons are followed by other deacons (I Tim. 1:3; cf. II Tim. 2:1-2), and this continuity has persisted throughout the subsequent history of the church. It must be recognized, however, that whereas certain offices have been maintained in the church from New Testament times, they have assumed various forms and have been known by different names in different periods of history. For example, the educational and evangelistic or missionary tasks of the church have not always been recognized as "offices" even though they have always been essential to the continuity and wellbeing of the church. More importantly, these offices are grounded in the command of our Lord himself. They are not incidental or optional in the life of the church. They have continuity in the history of the church because they belonged essentially and ineluctably to the ministry of Christ and so continue his ministry to and through his church.[6] At the same time there is fluidity and flexibility in the form these offices assume throughout the history of the church as was the case in the New Testament. The permanence of the offices of the church relates to their essential character, not to their historical form or particular manifestation.

The offices always stand in the service of the church and are meant to illumine and strengthen the general ministry of the congregation. The offices do this by modeling what it means to represent Christ, and so encourage and prompt the church to represent Christ before the world. The offices do this by incorporating

and nurturing believers in the body of Christ, and by equipping them for ministering to one another and to the world. It is for this reason that Paul spoke of himself and others as "imitators *(mimetai)* of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; I Thess. 1:6). His ministry provided a pattern for ministry by the whole church.

C. The Interrelationship of the Offices

The offices, moreover, stand in a complementary and necessary relation to each other. The minister of the Word proclaims the Word in sermon and sacrament. Bound to the service of Christ, the minister stands ready to interpret and proclaim the gospel to saint and sinner alike, to be active in evangelism and world mission, and to pioneer in new forms of ministry as may be needed in every generation. The elder stands alongside the minister in connection both with sermon and sacrament, and represents what has been aptly termed, the santification of the whole life. "The elder is not one who has forsaken his worldly or secular calling in order to enter into the religious calling of the church; on the contrary, in his role as the representative of sanctification around the Lord's table, he also continues his life as a grocer, a farmer, a union member, or a manufacturer. In him the sanctifying power of the body and blood of Christ is carried into every corner of the world and into every aspect of its activity.'" In similar fashion, the deacon stands alongside the minister and elder, and represents the compassion and liberation Christ once set before the world in his ministry of deliverance and healing, and which are now set before the world in deeds of brotherly love, social righteousness, the remembering of the poor, and the helping of the distressed and oppressed. When so understood, this office is fully as spiritual as any other, and carries as much sanction in the New Testament as any other. When the office of the deacon is not rightly perceived and implemented in function, the church is grievously wanting in representing Christ to the world, and is abstracting from the gospel the compassion and liberation of its Lord and Saviour. Even the teaching office, unique in our Reformed tradition and known among us as the fourth office, bears this same relational, necessary character. This may be part of the reason why it appears in the formularies of John Calvin as a second order of ministry following that of the minister of the Word, and preceding the offices of the elder and deacon. We urge upon the church renewed attention to this complementarity of the offices. No one office is sufficient in itself to represent the fulness of Christ or to communicate the fulness of the gospel of his grace. No one office stands above any other office, and by the same token, the offices should not be confused or intermingled. The deacon should not be burdened with the work of the elder, nor the elder with that of the minister, lest the full representing of Christ to the church and the mission of the church to the world, be seriously diminished.

We believe it is warranted by the Scriptures and fully consonant with our Reformed theology to affirm that there is a calling and a ministry which is characteristic and requisite of all believers. We also affirm a further calling and ministry addressed to some in the church for the equipping of the whole church. The latter, which we call offices, are distinguished in addition by the act of ordination or laying on of hands.

3. Office and Ordination

There is a "laying on of hands" for such realities as the receiving of the Spirit by a new believer (Acts 9:8,17; Acts 8:14-17; 19:5,6), the bestowal of blessing (Matt. 19:13,15) and for healing (Matt. 9:18; Mark 6:5; 7:32). "The laying on of hands" occurs also in connection with ordination to office. These two differing applications of the ceremony find previous analogies in the Old Testament where the terms *sim*

and *shith* may refer to a simple prayer for divine blessing (Gen. 48:14), and where the term *samakh* is used for setting apart a representative person with authority (the Levites, Num. 8:10; the transmission of authority from Moses to Joshua, Num. 27:15-23).

When we examine the exegesis of relevant New Testament passages, we discover scholars turning for background and pertinent analogies either to the *sim, shith* ideas or to the *samakh* idea, depending on their polity preferences. Those who view ordination simply as a prayer for divine blessing on the ordinand, tend to find their justification in the *sim, shith* ideas. Those who view ordination as the setting apart of a representative person with authority find their clue in the *samakh* concept. An example is the calling and appointment of the twelve (Mark 3:14; 6:7f.). Some interpreters are disposed to see here nothing more than a blessing bestowed by Jesus,[8] whereas others declare that here we have the beginnings in the New Testament of an official ministry.[9] The appointment of the seven (Acts 6:1-6) is occasionally treated in this same two-fold fashion, but with much less justification. In this instance the laying on of hands was clearly a formal, public act. After hearing their qualifications, the congregation set seven men apart for clearly designated duties.

Other New Testament passages show less ambiguity. The setting apart of Timothy was a corporate act of the presbytery (I Tim. 4:14) and an act by Paul (I Tim. 1:6). In addition there is Paul's charge to Timothy, "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands" (I Tim. 5:22), a charge which is not understandable unless special efficacy and significance were being associated with this action. Additional reason for this conclusion is at hand if the hymns of I Tim. 6:11-16 and II Tim. 2:11-13, may be understood as hymns celebrative of ordination.[10] These clearer references argue for like efficacy and significance in earlier instances of the setting apart of elders and deacons (Acts 6:6; 14:23). It is noteworthy that it is a contemporary Baptist New Testament scholar, and not a Calvinist, who says, "Both deacons and presbyters are clearly marked off by ordination in the New Testament."[11] and after a careful, trenchant criticism of so-called "apostolic ordination," another evangelical scholar says about Acts 14:23: "In such cases as the appointment of elders in the churches that Paul and Barnabas founded, it would be hypercritical to doubt that it was the apostles who ordained."[12] The practice of ordination is clearly present in the New Testament.

The content and meaning of it, however, is a more difficult issue. Here we face the fact that the Scriptures provide no explicit and compelling directives. As a consequence, extremely diverse viewpoints prevail. In high church circles ordination is commonly understood as an *ex opere operato* impartation of ministerial grace to the ordinand. In low church circles the laying on of hands is given little significance and is no more than a prayer for blessing on the ordinand. Still others are persuaded that the truth of the matter lies in the median between the two extremes. While rejecting forthrightly all *ex opere operato* interpretations, Reformed theologians have consistently refused to reduce ordination to a mere prayer for blessing. The Reformed fathers found I Tim. 4:14 to be instructive on this part. Specific mention is made here of a grace gift to Timothy *(charisma)* for the ministry which was given him "by prophetic utterance *(dia propheteias)* when the elders laid their hands upon you." Previously, in I Tim. 1:18, it is said that "prophetic utterances" were pointing him out as one qualified with gifts requisite for ministry. While the exegesis of "prophetic utterances" may point either to Paul or to Timothy, there is warrant for understanding these prophetic utterances as already characteristic of Timothy, and so a pointing to him as a spiritually qualified person. The latter understanding found a place in our particular exegetical tradition, and the Reformed fathers concluded that gifts for ministry originated with the Holy Spirit and not with the laying

on of hands. They also understood the imposition of hands to be a certifying by the church of the calling and gifts of the ordinand, and in expectant prayer, they continued to look to the Holy Spirit for the increase and strengthening of those gifts. Ordination, then, is an event of no small significance and solemnity. By it the church sets apart for specific duties those in whom it sees the gifts and divine calling requisite for the ministry of the gospel of grace, and the authority necessary to govern and serve God's people.

What is imparted and handed on in ordination? In the theology of office common to all Reformed churches, ordination is understood as an event of consecration and legitimation. Consecration is at the heart of the rite inasmuch as the ordinand presents himself to God as a holy, living offering in response to God's call and gifts. It is an act of consecration also because the ordinand presents himself to the Holy Spirit that he or she may continue to be filled and strengthened with gifts and grace necessary for a particular service. It is an act of consecration likewise on the part of the church, because the church presents the ordinand as one in whom are to be found the calling and the gifts needed for the service of God's people. For this reason the church is the agent through which ordination takes place.

Ordination is also an event of ecclesiastical legitimation. Reformed theology has never at any time understood ordination as creating a special or sacred caste, possessors of special rights of access to God. It simply legitimizes certain persons for specific duties in the service of Jesus Christ.[13] It authorizes and authenticates the minister of the Word as one qualified for a trustworthy proclamation of the Word, and one to whom the church may look in confidence and faith to represent to them Christ and his saving grace, together with all his blessings, promises, judgments, reproofs and warnings. It is for this reason that the Reformed churches have tied authority to administer the sacraments to the ministry of the Word. It is the proclaimed Word that authorizes and interprets the sacraments. Ordination, then, is an act both of the church and of the head and Lord of the church. In our Reformed theology ordination means that a special, insistent and enduring claim is being made, pronounced and confirmed by Christ and the church, one which is not to be lightly regarded or set aside.[14] It provides for an orderly continuance of the ministry of Christ in the offices of the church. This view is reflected in our common practice of simply reinstalling but not reordaining officeholders.

In the instance of the minister of the Word, this enduring claim of the office can present problems of considerable complexity and difficulty. Further discussion of this matter is continued in an excursus attached to this study, and comments here, therefore, will be brief. Since we have affirmed that office cannot be defined solely in terms of function and that ordination makes an enduring claim, we believe the church in its polity and practice ought not to demand immediate termination of office following any and every interim of non-function. On the other hand, since ordination is always to a particular office with specific duties and functions, any inordinately long period of non-function does require from a proper judicatory a careful consideration of and decision on the right to retain office. Responsibility for establishing guidelines and rules in all such matters rests with the classes. The classes must exercise their advisory and supervisory powers in each case in accordance with the *Book of Church Order*.

Addressing only the *theology* of office involved in such matters, the Theological Commission urges upon the church the following considerations. Given this enduring claim of the office, a minister should not be permitted to enter upon another vocation except for such sufficient and weighty reasons as shall have the approval of a classis. Even voluntary demission from the office should be allowed only for

similar weighty reasons. Because ordination has this enduring claim, and is preceded by repeated assessment of the ordinand's sense of divine calling, gifts and qualification, and by years of education, the office of ministry of the Word is presumptively for life. Nonetheless, the continued leading of the Holy Spirit in a person's life must also be respected, and some freedom allowed for vocational change. The commission believes that under the proper circumstances and under the continued leading of the Holy Spirit, it is allowable for an ordained minister to relinquish without dishonor the office for another vocation. While ordination is never to be lightly regarded or easily set aside, the leading of the Holy Spirit is sovereign and always to be respected. This leading is never capricious or contradictory; a vocational change should be for compelling reasons only. Whether these reasons are of such a nature is to be judged, not by the person himself or herself, nor by the local congregation, but by the classis. If no sufficient reasons are presented for demission, and the minister does not heed the admonition of the classis, then the classis should proceed to revoke the ordination as provided by the *Book of Church Order*.

The commission is well aware that in some cases it may be difficult to determine the compatibility of another vocation with that of the ministry. Here the *Book of Church Order* (Part II, Article 9, Section 4) provides helpful assistance, but every case must be considered and acted upon by the classis with due regard for its merits. It is not within the province of the Theological Commission to fix the boundaries of the office and the function of ordained ministers. The classes should exercise their duty of oversight and establish for themselves such guidelines and rules as are compatible with our theology of office and the *Book of Church Order*. It is conceivable that a classis may need to determine numerous guidelines to meet any number of difficult decisions coming upon them in this time of unprecedented vocational change, but this responsibility cannot be evaded without grave detriment to the needs and best interests of the whole church of Jesus Christ. Ministers, meanwhile, can strengthen good order in the church by not presenting a classis with a vocational change that is a *fait accompli,* but recognize their responsibility to request and secure from classis in advance permission to accept other work.

ENDNOTES

[1]Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, *God's Frozen People* (Westminster, 1963), 16. See also Hendrik Kraemer, *A Theology of the Laity* (Westminster, 1951) and F. K. Wentz, *The Layman's Role Today* (Doubleday, 1961).

[2]*Minutes of the General Synod* (1963), 195. This report goes on to say, however, and somewhat ambiguously, "As far as the office of minister of the Word is concerned, the New Testament knows nothing of it," 194.

[3]Hendrikus Berkhof, *Rapport over Het Ambt, aangeboden aan de generale synode Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk. Report Concerning Office:* Presented to the General Synod of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. English translation by M. E. Osterhaven, 5.

[4]G. W. Bromiley, *Christian Ministry* (Eerdmans, 1960), 17.

[5]E. Earle Ellis has said, "Paul's own authority plays a much larger role in his epistles than is usually assigned to it. A few times it is of a very much qualified nature, but for the most part it is asserted with no indication of being anything less than absolute." *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1957), 29f.

[6]G. W. Bromiley, *op. cit.*, 32.

[7]Eugene P. Heideman, *Reformed Bishops and Catholic Elders* (Eerdmans, 1970), 123f.

[8]H. F. Peacock, "Ordination in the New Testament," *Review and Expositor,* 55 (July, 1958), 262-74; and H. H. Hobbs, "Ordination-Ministry," *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists,* ed. by Norman W. Cox, (Broadman, 1958), II, 1057.

[9]Dale Moody, "The Differences in 'Clergy'—'Laity,' " *The Baptist Program* (March, 1965), 14.

[10]Ralph Martin, *Worship in the Early Church* (Eerdmans, 1974), 109.
[11]Dale Moody, *op. cit.*, footnote 6.
[12]Leon Morris, *Ministers of God* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1964), 60.
[13]J. J. von Allmen, "Ministry and Ordination According to Reformed Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 25 (1972) 75ff. See also *The Holy Ministry According to the Conviction and Will of the Reformers of the 16th Century* (Delachaux et Niestle, 1968), 47-49.
[14]Heideman speaks of a "relatively indelible character," *op. cit.,* 211f.

R-1.
To approve the study on the Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry and distribute it to every minister and consistory in the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)

The advisory committee also recommended:

R-2.
To request that the Theological Commission's 1968 report *"The Nature Of Ministry"* be distributed to the church in conjunction with this report. (ADOPTED)

Reason:

While the 1980 report develops important new material, the 1968 report is foundational, and the two reports should be studied together for continuity.

EXCURSUS ON MINISTERIAL OFFICE AND "CALL CONTRACTS"

In the Report of the President to the General Synod of 1977 a question was raised about the increased use of "call contracts" rather than official calls by consistories when seeking ministers. General Synod responded to this concern and recommended "that the Theological Commission study the implications of 'call contracts' in relation to the calling to the ministry [and] a call to a particular church (*MGS,* 1977, p. 36)."

It should be noted that the recent expression "call contract" is a confusion of terms. The *Book of Church Order* Part II, Article 7, Section 7 allows for a contract to be established between the classis and a minister or ministers for the purpose of maintaining public worship. It further allows that these contracts are not the same as a call: they must be reviewed by the classis annually; the minister under contract may or may not be a member of classis; and the minister under contract does not have a call and need not be installed in a particular ministry by the classis. Thus, to use the term "call contract" is misleading and should be discontinued. Also, it should be noted that a consistory may not issue a contract for the position "associate minister". The *Book of Church Order* Part I, Article 2, Section 3 indicates that when an additional minister is called to a congregation ". . .the word 'associate' shall be inserted before the words 'pastor' or 'minister' . . . The associate minister shall be a member of the consistory. (On the 'assistant minister', see Part II, Article 7, Section 7.)" Clearly, then, the title "associate minister" must be used when a call is issued, while the title "assistant minister" refers to individuals hired by contract.

The *Book of Church Order* does allow for contracts in place of calls in certain situations. Examples are an experimental ministry, a stated supply ministry or a

staff ministry. Each of the examples may include exigencies which make a contractual arrangement desirable.

There have been unfortunate situations, however, where a minister has been under contract for a long period of time without a call and without installation to the office of minister of the Word. This practice conflicts with the Reformed understanding of ordination and office as presented in the foregoing study and threatens the church's theological understanding of ministry.

Inasmuch as the minister without a call does not participate fully in the office of ministry, the relationship between the divine calling to ministry and the outward manifestation of the calling by the church is distorted. Likewise the representative character of the ministerial office and its authority[1] are distorted, because the functions of the office are not fully open to the minister under contract. The primary danger of the contract system is that it establishes an inequality within the ministry, whereby some ministers receive the full benefits and responsibilities of the office of minister of the Word, while others receive only partial benefits and responsibilities of the office.

In view of these theological considerations we would respectfully remind the classes of their responsibility in the supervision of ministerial contracts to uphold and maintain the integrity of the office of minister of the Word. Furthermore, we urge that ministers and consistories, after two years in contractual situations, mutually work toward an official call.

ENDNOTE

[1]The representative character and authority of the ministerial office are explained in the foregoing study, "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry."

R-3.
To concur with the "Excursus on Ministerial Office and Call Contracts" and commend it to the church. (ADOPTED)

EXCURSUS ON THE OFFICE OF DEACON

As the study, "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry," makes plain, the presence of the office of deacon in the churches of the New Testament is affirmed in the letters of Paul. It is an office without precedent in Jewish institutions and therefore distinctly Christian. It is an office whose special function is to represent Jesus' ministry of compassion and liberation through deeds of human love, social righteousness, remembering the poor, and helping the distressed and oppressed. It is an office equal to any other in spirituality and New Testament sanction. Therefore it must be rightly perceived and implemented if the church's representation of Christ to the world is to be full and complete. It is essential that the office of deacon not be confused or intermingled with any other office.

Unfortunately, in the history of the church, the office of deacon has often been confused and intermingled, particularly with the office of elder, with the result that the distinctive function of the former has been obscured or even lost. Among the many factors that may have played a part in bringing about contemporary confusion, three are especially noteworthy: (1) there has been a continuing tendency to confuse the ruling or shepherding function of the elder with the serving function of

the deacon; (2) civil authorities have created massive welfare programs for the poor, leaving deacons, seemingly, without a distinctive function; (3) the finances and facilities of the local congregation have increased steadily in both size and complexity. The deacons are frequently called upon to function as a board of trustees to administer church finances and property.

Even as these factors have moved the diaconate away from its New Testament function, conditions in contemporary society are summoning the church to a renewal and rediscovery of the office of deacon. Despite government welfare programs and modern medical technology (or perhaps even because of them in some instances), there is a need for a ministry of mercy that reaches out in loving care to the *whole* person, and does so with a redemptive intent. Here, as in the other offices, Jesus is the model. In carrying out his diaconal ministry, Jesus was not prompted by sentiment, paternalism, or even charity. He acted, says T. F. Torrance, "with the secret of the cross in his heart." In every merciful deed that Jesus did there was an element of encounter with that in humanity which resists the divine will, and with the forces of evil in the universe. There was an element of struggle and anguish in his mercy because he had already begun the sacrificial atonement. Whether he was dealing with sickness or hunger or blindness or demon possession Jesus always knew that what was really at stake behind these manifestations was the costly redemption of a child of God. The church's deacons, like Jesus himself, are called to acts of mercy "with the secret of the cross" in their heart. Their service is not to be offered out of self-interest, but in grateful response to the call and example of Christ, the first *diakonos.* A materialistic, impersonal, and selfist society has created for the church an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate through its diaconate that it is indeed one with Christ.

In order that the Reformed Church in America may move toward the recovery of the biblical and historical function of the office of deacon, the following steps are suggested:

1. The RCA needs to define clearly the function of the deacon by listing in its *Book of Church Order* the specific duties of this office.

2. With this new definition in hand, congregations need to elect to this office persons who possess the distinctive gifts, interests, and attitudes required.

3. Consistories need to restructure themselves in accordance with the new definition in order that the deacons may be relieved of those duties which confuse their office with the other offices. This will permit them to concentrate on their unique ministry. As a practical encouragement to this restructuring, we offer three models for discussion, both by the church at large and by the diaconate.

Model A: When the board of elders and the board of deacons meet in consistory, the agenda should include matters pertinent to a board of trustees function. Separate meetings of the board of elders and the board of deacons also should be held to enable them to carry out their particular responsibilities.

Model B: Consistory could delegate its board of trustees function to a subcommittee of persons who have special gifts for financial administration and building maintenance. Members of this subcommittee could be elders, deacons, or members of the congregation at large.

Model C: A new office, steward or trustee, could be created to administer the finances and properties of the church. This new office would be in harmony with the biblical emphasis on stewardship. Moreover, the creation of this office would exemplify the biblical principle of division of responsibility for effective ministry. Just as it was not right for the twelve apostles to "give up preaching the word of God to serve tables" (Acts 6:2), so it is not right for deacons to neglect their particular responsibilities because of the demands of institutional maintenance. Our Reformed tradition is not without precedent in this regard, for in Geneva Calvin divided the office of deacon into "procurators" (financial administrators) and "hospitallers" (visitors among the sick and poor)—a division suggestively parallel to that of steward and deacon.

In order to emphasize the distinctive ministry inherent in the office of deacon, we recommend:

R-4.
To direct the Committee on Church Order to prepare a revision of the *Book of Church Order* providing a comprehensive list of the duties of the office of deacon, guided by the order for this office in the *Liturgy*, by "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry" and this excursus. (ADOPTED)

R-5.
(To deny deacons voting rights in the assemblies of the church other than the consistory because such rights would add to the confusion between the ruling function of the elder and the serving function of the deacon.)

The advisory committee presented the following substitute for R-5:

To affirm the present policy of deacons holding membership in consistory but not in the other assemblies of the church. (ADOPTED AS SUBSTITUTED)*

Reason:
The advisory committee approves the Theological Commission's emphasis that each office has a focus, and that consistent with that focus, deacons ought not to hold membership in classis or synod. Our substitute motion is an attempt to present the recommendation of the Theological Commission more positively.

EXCURSUS ON THE OFFICE OF PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

In its 1978 report to The General Synod (*MGS,* pp. 151-153), the Board of Theological Education (BTE) requested a study of the office of Professor of Theology. The reason cited was that the "office . . . lacks clear definition in the light of present practice within our seminaries." Moreover, the BTE recommended that the study determine if the office should be expanded to include "all teachers in the seminaries," or whether it should be abolished. The importance of the board's recommendation required that it be considered in the context of a larger study of offices and ministry within the Reformed tradition, and therefore it is included here as an excursus to the foregoing study.

*Deletions in parentheses.
Additions in light face type.

The Teaching Office in the History of the Church

The teaching office is unique to the churches in the Reformed tradition, emerging first under Calvin in Geneva as one of four designated offices: pastor, teacher (doctor of theology), [1]elder, and deacon.[2] Calvin's *Ordinances* gave doctors of theology equal status with that of pastors and other office bearers in the Genevan church, and also gave them civic responsibility within the city. Functionally, they instructed church members in matters of faith and doctrine, taught students in the Academy, and were appointed to professorships in the university. The Genevan church also assigned some of these professors to prepare students for the gospel ministry.[3]

Doctors of theology also served as members of church judicatories in and around Geneva.[4] As such they performed somewhat parallel functions to pastors, and shared leadership in ecclesiastical assemblies and in interpreting the Scriptures. Calvin, however, distinguished the teaching office from that of the pastor by noting, "doctors neither exercise discipline, nor administer the sacraments, nor engage in admonition or exhoration, but rather interpret the scripture in order that sound and sane doctrine may prevail among the faithful."[5] Calvin gave additional emphasis to the teaching office by likening it to the prophetic office,[6] noting that doctors of theology were "believers more learned than the rest and therefore capable of exegesis and ready application of the teachings of Scripture."[7] Thus, Doctors of Theology served Geneva not only through instruction and interpretation of the Scriptures, and training of ministers of the gospel, but under the "consistorie" they also served as guarantors of "sound and sane doctrine."

The Reformed churches of the Netherlands continued the teaching office in their church orders, although late in the 16th century they began limiting the office to theological professors.[8] The Reformed Church in America has also retained the teaching office, while limiting it to professors of theology in the seminaries. This was first formalized in the "The Plan of Union" of 1792, when the American church, guided by the *Canons of Dort,* adopted the four offices into its church order.[9] Since that time the office of doctor of theology has been limited to ordained ministers of the Reformed Church teaching in our seminaries who have been nominated, elected and installed into that office by the General Synod.

Historically, therefore, Reformed ecclesiology has placed a great value on the teaching office, including it as one of the four offices of the church. Moreover, the church's traditional emphasis on an educated clergy and laity, as well as the centrality of the Word for faith and practice in Reformed theology, has made necessary the continuance of the office.

The Teaching Office in the Practice of the Church

Professors of theology[10] serve the whole church in the teaching ministry; they are nominated by the Board of Theological Education (BTE), elected and installed by the General Synod, and are responsible to the General Synod (*Book of Church Order* Part IV, Article 8). Historically, therefore, professors of theology have been responsible to the whole church and therefore to the General Synod and not to a lower judicatory. Currently the BTE as the agent of the General Synod oversees the whole program of theological education in the Reformed Church in America, including professors of theology. In principle and in practice, therefore, professors of theology serve the whole church under the BTE.

This principle and practice, however, has been complicated by several factors. In recent years the seminaries have appointed faculty members to positions which did not have traditional departmental designations, or which increased the number of persons teaching in a specific "chair" or discipline. In addition, the BTE has assumed more and more responsibility for faculty evaluation, rank, promotion, tenure and salary ranges, following the guidelines provided by the Association of Theological Schools. It is now possible, therefore, for seminary teachers to be promoted to an associate or professor rank without being nominated or elected to the teaching office by the General Synod. This alters the tradition of the teaching office in its relation to the whole church.

The problem, in short, is how to integrate administrative and academic concerns with the ecclesiastical and theological concerns. The professional effectiveness of a seminary teacher within a particular institution is the primary responsibility of the BTE; the General Synod is also concerned with a professor of theology's relation to the church as a whole.

Ecclesiastical Office and Academic Rank

In recent practice, all seminary faculty who attained the rank of professor were automatically nominated to the office of professor of theology by the BTE and then elected and installed to that office by the General Synod. In 1978, however, lack of clarity about the meaning of the ecclesiastical office as distinguished from academic rank caused the BTE to declare a moratorium on appointments to the office pending clarification (*MGS,* p. 151). The question was raised at that time, whether the teaching office should be retained.

The Theological Commission believes that there are compelling reasons for retaining this historic office. It has occupied a central place in the life and practice of our church. By it the General Synod emphasizes that its teachers are not only engaged in an academic process, but are also committed to a ministry in the church. In it the unity of the church is both symbolized and strengthened. Through it the General Synod oversees the training of ministers of the Word.

We believe, moreover, that the confusion between ecclesiastical office and academic rank is more apparent than real. By its election and installation of theological professors, the General Synod declares its commitment to the educational ministry of the church. It also preserves the unity of the church and assures continuity in the training of its ministers at the two seminaries by defining the parameters within which theological education takes place. The BTE acts as the agent of the General Synod to supervise the work and ministry of the teaching office.

The office of professor of theology furthermore maintains the principle of a teaching ministry to the whole church. This does not mean, however, that theological professors are to be concerned only with service to the larger church and unconcerned about the church at the regional and local levels. We believe that the office of professor of theology relates to the theological *and* educational concerns of the church at all levels. We believe the teaching office should not only be retained, but strengthened.

As members of the General Synod, professors of theology should be more involved in the processes of the General Synod in ways that maximize their particular gifts. Moreover, theological professors themselves should develop an increasing awareness of their prophetic role, discerning where God is a work in his world and aiding the church in defining its mission.

R-6.
To assign the BTE the administrative and evaluative supervision of professors of theology and to preserve for the General Synod the theological supervision. (ADOPTED)

R-7.
To make the presidents of our theological seminaries eligible for election to the teaching office. (ADOPTED)

R-8.
To (disassociate) allow **academic tenure** apart **from election to the teaching office and henceforth make** such **academic tenure a matter of definition and determination by the BTE.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

R-9.
To conduct a formal installation service at a regular session of the General Synod for those elected to the teaching office, such service to be the responsibility of the General Synod Executive Committee in consultation with the BTE and the seminaries. (ADOPTED)

R-10.
To ask the Commission on Worship to develop a suitable liturgy for such an installation service for a professor of theology, **this liturgy to reflect the nature and responsibilities of the teaching office.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

R-11.
To increase the number of delegates to the General Synod from each seminary to five, since the Synod is the ecclesiastical home of theological professors. (NOT ADOPTED)

Reason:
While we appreciate the contributions of the professors of theology, we do not believe they should exert a disproportionate influence on Synod. To increase the number of delegates from each seminary from two to five would give seminary professors more representatives than most classes. It would also mean that every theological professor would be a delegate nearly every year which would be both an unfair advantage and an undue burden for professors of theology. We have concluded that our current practice is adequate, particularly when we consider that General Synod has professors of theology in attendance in various capacities in addition to the official delegates from the seminaries.

The advisory committee presented the following recommendation:

R-12.
To ask the Commission on Worship to develop a suitable liturgy for an ordination service for a professor of theology, this liturgy to reflect the nature and responsibilities of the teaching office. (ADOPTED)

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

Reason:
Consistent with the recognition of the office of professor of theology as the fourth office of the church, those who occupy that office should be ordained to it, as is done with each of the other offices.

R-13.
To request that the Commission on Church Order review this study and in consultation with the BTE and representatives of the Theological Commission determine the changes in the *Book of Church Order* necessary to implement the theology of this study and the attached recommendations. (ADOPTED)

ENDNOTES

[1]Doctor of theology is the official term which Calvin used for the teaching office.
[2]R. W. Henderson, *The Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition.* Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1962, p. 57 ff.
[3]*Ibid.* pp. 32-71.
[4]*Ibid.* p. 66.
[5]*Ibid.* p. 59.
[6]*Ibid.* p. 24-31.
[7] Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, p. 36.
[8]Henderson, *Op. Cit.* pp. 99-126.
[9]Cf. "The Constitution of The Reformed Dutch Church in the U.S.A." New York, Wm. Durell, 1973, and subsequent editions of the Constitution and *Book of Church Order.*
[10]Since the Reformed Church in America has consistently used the term Professor of theology to refer to the teaching office, this term will be utilized in the remainder of this paper.

EXCURSUS ON OFFICE AND MINISTERIAL MEMBERSHIP IN A LOCAL CONGREGATION

The General Synod referred to the commission for study an overture of the Classis of Cascades (*MGS,* 1978, p. 107f.) requesting that we consider their proposed changes in the *Book of Church Order* (Ch. 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 3), changes which propose that Section 3 apply only to installed pastors, and that a new Section 4 apply to ministers of the Word without charge who are members of a congregation, and to read as follows:

> Sect. 3: The installed pastor shall be ipso facto a member of the church he serves. He shall be solely amenable to the classis.
>
> Sect. 4: 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. He shall be amenable to classis. Should he be elected as elder, he shall be entitled to all the privileges and responsibilities pertaining to that office.

The *Book of Church Order* presently reads as follows:

> Sect. 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.

It appears that the intent of this proposed change is to reaffirm that all ministers, installed or without charge, shall be amenable to the classis, but that ministers without charge who also serve as elders in a local church shall be amenable also to the consistory of which they are members. The effect of this proposal is to make a distinction between installed ministers and ministers without charge who are members of a local congregation and/or members of its consistory.

The commission reminds the church that the practice of granting membership in a local congregation to ministers of the Word is of recent date, and represents a departure from traditional Reformed Church polity, in which ministers have membership only in a classis. In keeping with our foregoing study on "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry," we believe that ministers who retain their ecclesiastical office should continue to be members only of a classis.

The Classis of Cascades is to be commended, however, for its perception of the difficulty which emerges when an emeritus minister or minister without charge and having a personal membership in a local congregation, is elected to a consistory. It is a general principle of polity that a local church has the right and duty to exercise oversight over all its members.

Two separate but related matters are involved in this proposal. First, there is the current practice of providing ministers of the Word with membership in a local church as well as in a classis. This is a recent practice which is not followed by other churches of similar polity. The practice has some merit, however, in view of the increasing number of "ministers without charge." A local church membership gives such ministers and their families a church identity and home, a place where they express their Christian faith. In any case, as long as ministers retain ecclesiastical office, they should remain solely amenable to a classis.

The second practice current among us and also of recent date is that of utilizing the experience and skills of ministers, emeritus or without charge, by electing them to an office in the consistory. As far as the commission is aware, this practice is limited. While the benefits may promote the welfare of a local church, we believe the practice should not be encouraged. It confuses the offices of the church. It increases clergy influence in the consistory. It obscures the lines of ecclesiastical authority.

R-14.
To take no action on the overture of the Classis of Cascades because it conflicts with our theology of office. (ADOPTED)

II. CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE:

A Reformed Perspective

Introduction

God is the ultimate subject of theological reflection. The nuclear arms race may well be regarded as the penultimate subject for our time. There is no greater affront to the Lord and Giver of life, no more convincing evidence of human enslavement to the dark powers of this age, and no more urgent cause for the church's prophetic witness and action.

In 1959 Karl Barth decried "the blasphemous, deadly development of atomic weapons" and the church's failure to oppose them.[1] In the early 1960s Helmut Gollwitzer declared: "The church must speak out clearly against atomic war. . . . This No to atomic war has not been arbitrarily arrived at by the church but is a command given to it by God."[2] More recently, condemnations of nuclear weapons and calls to disarmament have issued from many and diverse quarters within the church including the National Council of Churches, the Southern Baptist Convention, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern), Billy Graham, and Pope John Paul II. This emerging consensus is overdue, for the world is on the brink of another and more terrible escalation in the nuclear arms race.

The General Synod of 1979 accepted eight specific recommendations which constituted a "Call to Action" concerning the nuclear arms race and disarmament (*MGS,* 1979, pp. 95-97). We note especially the second and sixth of those recommendations:

> — to call for a full and general prohibition of: nuclear arms testing; development and deployment of new nuclear weapon systems; production and accumulation of chemical and radiological arms as well as other weapons of mass destruction.
>
> — to urge our churches in their teaching and preaching programs to emphasize the biblical vision of peace and to stress the devastating social and personal consequences of the arms race.

The Theological Commission submits this study to assist the church in acting upon the above recommendations and to offer a Reformed theological perspective on the nuclear arms race and the disarmament challenge.

The War That Cannot Be Won

Since the dawn of the nuclear era, people have noted with varying degrees of alarm that the human race has acquired the means for its own destruction. These means have been expanded to overkill proportions during this 35-year period, despite much talk about disarmament and several weak treaties. The United States, with its strategic triad of land-based intercontinental ballistic missles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers, is now able to launch at least 8500 independently targetable nuclear warheads. The Soviet Union armed with a similar triad is thought capable of delivering about 4000 nuclear warheads.[3] The

U.S. has been the leader in strategic nuclear technology from the beginning. Recently, however, advances by the Soviet Union have caused U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to assert that the two super powers have now reached a point of "essential equivalence" in nuclear weapons capability. This language is deceptively simple, for both nations possess and continue to amass weapons stockpiles far in excess of any conceivable use or threat. The Pentagon has estimated that a mere one hundred nuclear warheads descending on the Soviet Union would pose a sufficient deterrent threat, destroying a minimum of 37 million people and 59 percent of that nation's industrial capacity. While the need for 8500 existing warheads defies all logic, the U.S. continues to add to its stockpile at a rate of 3 per day.[4] This nuclear force of 8000 megatons (equivalent to 8000 million tons of (TNT) represents a destructive capability equal to 615,000 Hiroshima atom bombs and is sufficient to destroy the world's population 12 times over. The Soviet Union and other nuclear armed nations possess an additional 8,000 megatons.

The quantitative dimensions of the nuclear arms race are awesome indeed and sufficient mandate for disarmament. They are not, however, the gravest aspect of the problem. Qualitative improvements in nuclear weapons technology will render the future far more dangerous than the present or the past. The new U.S. Trident, Cruise, and MX missiles, for example, represent significant qualitative advances in strategic capability, thus posing grave threats to the existing balance of power. Their deadly accuracy and immunity to detection and verification are certain to create intense anxiety to the Soviet Union, impede further arms limitation agreements, and escalate the arms race as the Russians seek to protect themselves by developing comparable weapons.

The present situation of "essential equivalence" offers the super powers a rare, historic opportunity. From this point of parity, they could agree to a process of multilateral disarmament rather than launching another escalation in their vain quest for strategic superiority. Resistance to the SALT II treaty in the U.S. Senate, recent increases in U.S. military spending, NATO acceptance of new cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are woeful evidence that this opportunity will not be seized. Experts are predicting instead a new generation of weapons systems far exceeding present destructive potential; highly accurate guidance systems and warheads, computer equipment for limited nuclear war, new and more powerful ICBMs, lasers, and killer satellites.[5]

Particularly ominous is the shift which these new technologies make possible from a defensive strategy of deterrence to an offensive, "first strike," or "counterforce" strategy. Attempts are underway to make limited nuclear war an acceptable instrument of foreign policy.[6] The current administration in Washington has stated (as have the previous two) that the United States regards a first use of nuclear weapons to be one option for the protection of its vital interests. As recently as February, 1980, a Pentagon study raised this specter with regard to a U.S. defense of the Persian Gulf area. In light of recent developments, the defensive strategies of previous decades seem almost benign compared to the insidious technologies and aggressive policies that threaten the future.

Even if nuclear war between the super powers can be avoided, the nuclear arms race will continue to impoverish and imperil life on this planet. The health hazards of the nuclear era, for example, are enormous. Radiation in sufficient doses kills instantly. Where exposure is far more limited, it causes cancers. As lethal nuclear wastes accumulate in growing quantities, their carcinogenic and mutagenic properties jeopardize the ecosphere, the food chain, and the very genetic structure of the human species. The economic impact of the arms race is devastating. Excessive military expenditures fuel inflation, create unemployment, and consume vast sums

that could be used to alleviate human suffering, respond to pressing social needs, and reduce taxes.

As the circle of nuclear armed nations grows, so does the grave risk of a regional nuclear conflict that could quickly engulf the super powers. Largely due to the exportation of nuclear power plants, 35 nations will have the material to produce nuclear weapons within the next decade. (Pakistan recently announced its imminent deployment of "an Islamic atom bomb.")[7] This proliferation increases the probability that nuclear weapons will fall into the hands of unstable governments or terrorist groups. Not to be overlooked are the very real possibilities that nuclear war may be triggered by computer malfunction or human error. At least five such "near misses" are on record in the U.S., including one "red alert" in which hundreds of Russian planes over Canada were finally determined to be a flock of geese on the radar screen. The commander of a single U.S. Trident II nuclear submarine will have at his command the capacity to destroy 408 different cities or other targets. Common sense, to say nothing of the Christian doctrine of man, argues against the folly of placing such destructive power in the hands of one fallible human being.

There is, nevertheless, an astounding degree of public apathy toward this unprecedented threat to life posed by the nuclear arms race. Whether from suppressed fear or ignorance, the common attitude seems to be one of avoidance: "a nuclear war will never happen." The unthinkable, however, is by no means impossible. Knowledgeable scientists at Harvard and MIT, as well as the highly respected Stockholm Institutue for Peace Research, now predict that the proliferation of nuclear arms makes a nuclear war "inevitable" by 1999. Despite public apathy, there is good cause to wonder which will come first, the end of this century or the end of the world!

The extent of devastation in a nuclear war is difficult to estimate. Variables include the size of nuclear devices employed, altitude of detonation, force and direction of fallout-bearing winds, and the choice of military or civilian targets.[8] The following description of the aftermath of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union is based on studies published by the Congressional Budget Office and the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency:

> In the United States, around 120 million people are dead or dying. Seventy-five percent or more of U.S. industrial capacity is destroyed. Hundreds of cities are demolished. No significant military bases remain. In the Soviet Union, virtually all of 1300 military targets have been destroyed. About seventy per cent of Soviet industry is eliminated. From 60 million to 94 million people are dead or dying. In both countries, tens of millions more are injured. Medical care is almost non-existent and many more will die. Food and water are hard to find and the redistribution of supplies is impossible because of the destruction of all major transportation centers. Lingering radiation and damaging ultraviolet radiation from the sun (no longer screened out by an ozone layer in the atmosphere) make life for the survivors increasingly difficult and hazardous.[9]

The word "war" has become obsolete in the age of nuclear weapons. Today the accurate terms are holocaust, doomsday, apocalypse. Armageddon is no longer a figure of speech, nor the Book of Revelation a tract for other times. The biblical words of the Preacher are hauntingly relevant to the radioactive hell that follows in the wake of a nuclear confligration:

> "And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive; but better than both is he who has not yet been, and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun" (Eccl. 4:2-3).

There can be no winners in a nuclear war. The fearsome quantities and qualities of weapons on both sides guarantee the suicidal result of such a conflict. Indeed, "Mutual assured destruction" is the stated Pentagon strategy and "MAD" its singularly appropriate acronym. "Mankind must put an end to the arms race, or the arms race will put an end to man." Every U.S. president since the beginning of the nuclear age has echoed this warning of John F. Kennedy. In defiance of both faith and reason, however, the race continues and escalates with ever increasing costs and risks. We believe the exigencies of geopolitics, economics, and technology are not sufficient in themselves to explain this malevolent compulsion toward a war in which everyone will lose.

A False Religion

This theological study is written with the firm conviction that the nuclear arms race is first and foremost a false religion. It is, to be sure, also bad politics, bad economics, bad science, and bad war. It can and should be opposed on all these fronts. To confront the motivating power of the arms race, however, to cut its vital nerve, the church must come to understand it theologically. Only with a biblical discernment can we unmask this threat to life, expose its evil nature, and name its many names.

A False Security

The fundamentally religious character of the nuclear arms race is seen first in its appeal to the human longing for security or, more precisely, its manipulation of that longing. As Abraham Maslow has shown, the human need to feel safe is a powerful motivator, second only to basic physical drives. The nuclear arms race and the wide-spread support or acquiescence it enjoys are founded on the illusion that security can be guaranteed by "strategic superiority," i.e., that salvation belongs to the strong. The certain sign of a false security, a false god, is the greater insecurity which inevitably results from its religious pretensions.

While the cry "national security" is raised to justify each escalation of the arms race, our nation and our world become progressively less secure. Each advance carries us not nearer the gates of heaven, but closer to the abyss. The very concept of defense has become outmoded in a nuclear-armed world. We have, in fact, no security against a nuclear attack. The U.S. National Security Council admits that if a button is pushed in the Kremlin, the Department of Defense will be powerless to save tens of millions of Americans from death in 20 to 30 minutes. We can only be assured that comparable numbers of Russian civilians will share our fate when retaliatory strikes are launched. The demonic nature of this false security is seen further in the global insecurity which it foments. Millions of Europeans know they will be caught in the nuclear crossfire, while the rest of the world awaits the inevitable, deadly fallout. Isaiah's word of judgment against a misplaced national security merits a careful hearing today:

> Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help
> and rely on horses,
> who trust in chariots because they are many
> and in horsemen because they are very strong,
> but do not look to the Holy One of Israel
> or consult the Lord! (Isa. 31:1)

A true measure of a nation's security is the quality of life within its borders rather than its power to wage wars beyond them. While a measure of defense is necessary in a fallen world, that nation is most secure whose citizens are adequately fed, housed, educated, employed, and cared for. In the United States, at present, approximately one-half of each tax dollar is spent to pay the debt on past wars or the cost of preparing for future war. It is ironic, however, that the ire of the taxpayer is seldom directed toward the Pentagon. Military spending, expected to increase from 130 to 200 billion dollars annually during the 1980s, is itself the cause of growing insecurity in our society. Many economists warn that the procurement of military goods will continue to fuel inflation and exacerbate unemployment by creating far fewer jobs than similar expenditures in most areas of the civilian economy. Military research and development preempts one-third to one-half of the scientists and engineers in the U.S., thus inhibiting innovation in the civilian sector and giving the edge to Japan, West Germany,and other industrialized nations in the development and production of consumer goods. As the U.S. forges ahead in creating more effective instruments of death, it is falling behind in the capacity to produce the goods and services that offer a better life. "A country which, year after year, spends more than $100 billion annually to support a bureaucracy of four million people who produce nothing, and which buys hundreds of thousands of machines that make nothing is not on the road to prosperity."[10]

In a fundamental sense, security is a psychological and, even more, a spiritual quest. The Scripture warns repeatedly against the temptation to seek ultimate security in any proximate power, be it wealth, weapons, ideology, or the state. Ultimate security is not to be found in this world but in God who transcends the world while making himself known to his people in it. Security, then, is not the absence of threat. It is the presence of One who is "our only comfort in life and death," whose love casts out fear, whose power has overcome the powers of this world. "If God be for us, who is against us?" (Rom. 8:31) Paul's confident words were not penned in a fortress after a full meal, but in the midst of his life and death struggle with the opponents of the gospel he proclaimed.

In the biblical view, furthermore, security is never an end in itself or a prerequisite to the good life. It is always the result of life lived in right relationship to God and neighbor. The heart of the prophetic message of the Old Testament is that justice and righteousness, faith and obedience are the prior conditions for security in the land (Isaiah 32, cf. Ezekiel 34:27, Jeremiah 23:6 and 33:16, also Lev. 25:18, Psalm 37:3). A nation's true security is to be found in the spiritual and ethical qualities of its life, not in its many arms.

A False Morality

War has been a subject of the church's critical moral reflection in every age. The divine command against killing (Ex. 20:13) and Jesus' commands to love one's neighbor and not to resist one who is evil (Matt. 5:39-45) are a perennial challenge to Christian conscience in the midst of a fallen world. The early church espoused a pacifist position prior to the age of Constantine. While there is evidence that some Christians served in the Roman army, the ancient church fathers and other writers were unanimous in condemning Christian participation in war. Tertullian's comment, for example, is explicit: "Christ in disarming Peter ungirt every soldier."[11]

The Reformers feared anarchy more than tyranny. They upheld the right of the state to bear arms in order to deal with criminals and defend against enemy attack. Human depravity must be restrained, said Calvin, even by force if necessary. Righ-

teous kings and princes are God's ordained minister of justice. Their use of weapons to defend the law and the people of their realm must not be abrogated by naive notions of human perfectibility which threaten the social order. [12] The Reformers, nevertheless, always cautioned restraint and considered war to be an act of last resort. Calvin wrote, "If they [the magistrates] must arm themselves against the enemy. . . . let them not lightly seek occasion to do so; indeed, let them not accept the occasion when offered, unless they are driven to it by extreme necessity. . . . surely everything else ought to be tried before recourse is had to arms."[13] Luther's famous pamphlet, *Can Soldiers Be in a State of Grace?* is a witness to that Reformer's great reticence toward war and is, perhaps, a challenge to the modern church's easy conscience. One cannot appeal to human depravity or to the Reformation heritage as a sanction for indiscriminate or unrestrained warfare.

Calvin and Luther imposed careful restrictions on the conduct of war. They adhered to the "just war" theory formulated by Augustine and variously explicated during the medieval period. A just war must be a defensive response to unjustified aggression. Its goal is peace with the enemy. It must be conducted with restraint in a spirit of love rather than hate or vengeance. A just war requires careful discrimination between soldiers and non-combatants, protection of civilian populations, and humane treatment of prisoners. Wanton violence, massacre, atrocities, reprisals, or conflagration cannot be condoned. A hallmark of the just war theory is the principle of "proportionality," i.e., the good to be gained from a war must exceed the predictable evil which will result.[14] In short, war should be avoided. If unavoidable, it must be kept humane in order to preserve human society and conform to the will of God.

It is not the purpose of this paper to argue against every use of military force. One need not accept the pacifist position, however, in order to recognize the false morality inherent in any recourse to nuclear weapons. Ronald S. Wallace, a Calvin scholar, offers a noteworthy if understated speculation: "Judging by Calvin's language about war in his sermons it is possible that he might have been a pacifist in face of the possibility of modern nuclear war."[15] False religion leads to immorality as well as insecurity. Nuclear war and the preparations for it violate every code by which historic Christianity has determined a war to be just.

The simple weapons of the past could be adapted for the defense of a righteous cause, though their use was often horrible and seldom free from moral ambiguity. Nuclear arms, however, differ from those of the past not in degree but in kind. By their very nature, they make a just war impossible. The crucial moral dinstinction between combatants and non-combatants is obliterated. Nuclear warheads do not discriminate between soldiers and civilians, adults and children, guilty and innocent. Indeed, they exist to decimate an entire population. The possibility of defense which justified war in an earlier age no longer applies, while a retaliatory nuclear strike necessarily entails an act of wanton agression against the innocent and the guilty in the homeland of the enemy. In the nuclear age, deterrence is nothing more than a massive hostage system with whole populations compelled to live under the constant threat of genocide. The word "restraint", so crucial to a Christian ethic of war, can not apply when the act of war itself constitutes the ultimate lack of restraint. If massacre, atrocity, and conflagration are accepted as the very means of war, then moral choice and humane concern must surrender before the war is fought. There is no proportionality in the prospect of nuclear war. The incalculable evil which would result from such a conflict is immeasurably greater than any threat which these horrendous weapons are supposed to deter. No war can serve the interests of justice and peace if its methods in themselves are violations of God's law and crimes against humanity.

An eminent church historian has observed that "the more war has improved at the point of technology, the more it has deteriorated at the point of moral discrimination."[16] This deterioration approaches the point of moral disintegration when the citizens of a nation accept the premise that their sovereignty and security can justify the mass murder of innocents, the poisoning of the planet, the hideous mutation of the human species, and the possible destruction of all created life on earth. The church has never accepted the proposition that evil may be opposed by any possible means. Our fear of those who might kill the body must not drive us to accept the false security of weapons that jeopardize our souls.

False Gods

Concerned people outside the church protest nuclear armaments because they are a threat to humanity. We concur. The chief reason for the church's opposition, however, is that such weapons are more than dangerous. They are idolatrous—an affront to God. Reformed theology emphasizes both the majesty of God and the ever present human propensity toward idolatry. Ultimate weapons, ultimate enemies, and ultimate ends that justify any means require a false god to sanction them. "If a man's moral values are the consequence of the god he worships, he will never change them without first changing gods. Until he does, all criticism of his standards will appear to him as treason."[17]

Idolatry is the investment of ultimate trust and value in any aspect of the created order. The biblical term "idol" is used in a literal sense to condemn the Baals and other "gods made with hands." Equally significant and more relevant to our time is the figurative extension of the meaning to include inordinate valuation of any proximate power, e.g., nature, wealth, weapons, or the state. God's sovereignty has never been universally acknowledged in a fallen world. Indeed, the essence of human sin is rebellion against divine authority and the desire to set up idols in God's place. Scripture teaches, furthermore, that the revolt against God's rule is so pervasive that it extends beyond the individual and human sphere of creation. This idolatrous rebellion has a corporate and cosmic as well as a personal dimension.

> For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12).

The apostle Paul makes frequent reference in his letters to these "principalities and powers" which influence human life and are one important object of Christ's redemptive work. (Rom. 8:38f; I Cor. 2:8, 15:24f; Eph. 1:20f, 2:1f, 6:12; Col. 1:16, 2:15). Although Paul's terminology is drawn from Jewish apocalyptic writings, modern scholarship has shown that his conception of the powers is quite different. Paul did not conceive these realities to be angels, spirits, or personal beings. He focused, rather, on the nature of the powers as superhuman, transpersonal realities that condition earthly life through the corporate order, structure, organization, and domination which they impose. Hendrikus Berkhof's seminal study, *Christ and the Powers,*[18] makes clear that Paul's thought can hardly be dismissed as mythology or superstition. It is the word of God which sheds light on the complex social evils of our time!

Applying Paul's insight, Berkhof identifies several contemporary manifestations of the "principalities and powers": the state, politics, class, social struggle, national interest, public opinion, accepted morality, the ideas of decency, human-

ity, democracy, mammon, and military power.[19] A full treatment of Paul's concept of the powers is not possible here. The main lines of his thought should be noted, however, for they have direct bearing on our subject. First, it is clear that these powers are not inherently evil. The invisible structures of the universe, as well as all visible realities, were created "in, through, and for Christ" (Col. 1:15-17). The powers were created by God to give order and structure to human life, to divert chaos, and to bind humanity in fellowship with each other and with the Creator. Government, for example, is not evil in itself or a mere concession to human sin. Even in a perfect world, some political process would function by God's intent to make harmonious social life posssible.

Paul notes, secondly, that the powers are fallen. Refusing to accept their proper role in the created order, the powers claim to be divine. They act as if they are the ultimate ground of being. They demand that ultimate loyalty be given to a party, a nation, a tradition, a race, or some other collective structure within the created order. Even in revolt, these powers fulfill a part of their original purpose. They do impose a kind of order that prevents chaos and makes corporate humanity possible. By claiming to fulfill that order in themselves, however, they lure humanity away from God rather than closer to him. "When Paul writes that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, not even the powers, he presupposes that the nature of the powers would be to do just that, to separate us from love."[20] Finally, as we will consider below, the message of the gospel is that Jesus Christ, not the powers, rules the world! Through the crucifixion and resurrection, Christ not only acted to reconcile a lost humanity, he also "disarmed" the powers that oppress us (Col. 2:15).

Paul's discerning treatment of the powers sheds much light on the terrible reality of the nuclear arms race. Human fear or pride are not sufficient to account for this evil compulsion toward destruction, while mere good will and reason are clearly impotent to call a halt. We have no cause to doubt the sincerity of every U.S. President since Harry Truman. Each pledged to reduce this nation's nuclear arsenal. During the term of each, however, the stockpiles were inexorably increased. The nuclear arms race has taken on a life of its own, compelled by superhuman powers of evil that seem to defy the best human intentions. Indeed, we are not simply contending against flesh and blood. Any Christian attempt to disarm the nations must first expose these powers that dominate the so-called super powers.

We must recognize, for example, the awesome power of technology. Our age embraces a techological determinism which assumes that because a new weapons system is possible, it is therefore desirable. The Poseidon must give way to the Trident, the ICBM to the M-X—regardless of cost, actual need, or moral consequnces. If we can build it, we must. The power of technology transcends the nations and holds each captive to fear. "If we do not create the next monster weapons, the enemy will. So we must do it first and on a grander scale." This same determinism explains why the persons who manage the technology of war need not consciously intend the mass slaughter of populations, the impoverishment of society, or the destruction of the planet. Technical language is carefully crafted to obscure and avoid the human consequences. Under this god, the truth is exchanged for a seductive lie (Rom. 1:25). Advances in death-dealing weaponry are not greeted with well-deserved horror. They are hailed as "progress," while a captive human ingenuity is blind to the distinction between technologically superior and morally worse.

The power of the profit motive also must be exposed. Mammon has never lacked its legions of worshipers. The modern arms race serves its interests well. It is naive to assume that external threats alone can account for the unyielding momentum of the arms race. A continuing build-up of weapons, both conventional and nu-

clear, is immensely profitable for powerful vested-interest groups within the United States. Some economists refer to our "permanent war economy", in which millions of jobs and billions of dollars in profits are directly attributable to a growing weapons industry. The stock market has good reason to rebound when there is talk of war. In 1961 President Eisenhower warned against the growing power of the "military-industrial complex." Though largely unheeded, his words were prophetic. Today the Pentagon owns more land than the combined area of the six smallest states in this nation. It controls more wealth than the 15 largest corporations and utilities. Among Amercian corporations, there are 22,000 prime defense contractors and 100,000 subcontractors[21], each vying for a share in more than 50 billion dollars worth of military contracts awarded on a "cost plus" basis to private industry each year. The labor movement covets higher paying jobs generated by the weapons industry, while millions of individuals earn their living from the manufacture of war material. These corporate constituencies exert immense power in the political arena, investing large sums in campaign contributions and massive lobbying efforts to promote their interests in Congress. The logic of disarmament and peace is readily condemned as treason when so much profit accrues to so many through an economy of war. The military-industrial complex and its managers impel the arms race for profit. But they do not stand alone. The salaries of many Christians are paid, and many churches supported, by these same corporate revenues. Our American standard of living has come to depend on them. Thus we are all involved, however unwillingly, as the power of the bottom line edges humanity ever closer to the nuclear abyss.

Finally, we must recognize the demonic power of nationalism. "The pride of nations consists in the tendency to make unconditional claims for their conditioned values."[22] The truth of this assertion can be seen in the history of ancient Rome or Nazi Germany. It may be more difficult to recognize in the tide of current events. "National security" has become the watchword for the modern state's unconditioned claims. To justify any means including nuclear war the state must contend that its existence is to be equated with "freedom," "the future of the free world," or "western-Christian civilization." Among all the idolatrous powers, the state is particulary dangerous. Its unique power to inspire false worship is vividly portrayed in the description of the beast in Revelation 13 (especially v. 4, cf. Ex. 15:11). Individuals will not often lay down their lives for a technological improvement. Only rarely will they do so for a corporation. By millions, however, they will follow a flag into battle, especially when that flag is construed to represent not only a nation but the hope of the world. In making such idolatrous claims the state invariably oversteps the boundaries provided for it in God's order. It pretends to be God. Oscar Cullmann pronounces the biblical verdict on this national pride: "It is just this religious claim of the state that constitutes the satanic."[23]

Technology, mammon, and nationalism dominate modern life, offering false truth and a fradulent security. Clearly, the fallen powers are beyond human control. We wrestle not with the flesh and blood but with the evil powers of security through might. Where mind and will must fall, faith may still overcome.

Disarming the Powers

"When Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead, and since then wherever this saving event is proclaimed, the domination of the world powers is at an end."[24] Christ has already accomplished what humanity in general and the church in particular are powerless to do. This good news is expressed most forcefully in Paul's letter to the Colossians:

> "And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him" (Col. 2:13-15).

The two effects of Christ's redemptive work stand side by side. First, the sinner is redeemed from personal sin and guilt. Secondly, the sinner is freed from bondage to the corporate powers of this age. Three different verbs are used to describe the fate of these powers in the face of the cross. Christ "disarmed" the principalities and powers by striking down their chief weapon, the illusion of ultimacy and righteousness. The cross reveals the awful truth about the powers. There Christ "made a public example" of them, for in the crucifixion their true nature was exposed. No longer can the powers claim to be god-like. When the true Lord of the universe appeared, they did not serve him; they put him to death. Religion, morality, piety, law, the state, justice, and military power all conspired against the Son of God! Now the fallen nature of the powers is visible. Far from being god-like, they share none of God's wisdom, "for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Cor. 2:8). Finally, writes Paul, Christ has "triumphed over" the powers by his cross and resurrection. This Greek verb refers to a Roman general's victory parade leading conquered rulers in triumphal procession through the streets of Rome. In the crucifixion, the powers did their worst, but it was not enough. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the sign for all time that powers of this world are no match for the power of God.

This is not to say that if the gospel is preached, the powers will lay down their arms and submit. "In principle the victory is certain; yet the battle continues until the triumph will have become effective on all fronts and visible to all."[25] In the end Christ shall deliver the kingdom to God the Father "after dethroning every rule and every authority and power" (I Cor. 15:24). Then the powers will be reconciled to their proper function as structures which serve God's intent for humanity. For the present they continue to seek headship for themselves. In the end they will be subjected to their true Head, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10).

Thus, we live in that eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet," between "promise" and "fulfillment." Paul announces to the Colossians that Christ has disarmed the powers. He also asks them to remember his chains (Col. 4:8). The victory and the chains pose no contradiction. Those who share in Christ's triumph over the powers must also share in his struggle of suffering love against their domination. The powers have not surrendered. Indeed, their resistence intensifies now that their true nature is exposed. But for those who confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord," the power of the powers is already broken. That confession sets the limit to the powers. It de-deifies the cosmos. It declares the claims of the powers to be "un-self-evident." Free from bondage to the powers, the Christian is now able to see them in proper perspective. Berkhof writes: "we do not belong to the nation, the state, the technique, the future, the money, but all this is ours, given us by God as a means of living a worthy life before God and in fellowship with our neighbor."[26]

Paul's treatment of the powers culminates in a challenge to the church. The victory of God in Christ obligates the church to a special mission: "to make known the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:10). Against the diverse machinations of the powers, the church bears witness to God's plan to unite all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Far from withdawing from social life or politics, the church must "put on the whole armor of God" and

stand against the wiley, wicked rulers of this age. To be sure, all the weapons in this Christian panoply are defensive. Paul does not mention lance, spear, or bow and arrow (Eph. 6:10-18). The battle is Christ's not ours, and the victory is assured. This does not mean, however, that the church can give only a passive witness in the face of the evil powers. The earliest Christian confession, "Jesus is Lord", constitutes both a confession of faith and a political statement. It is an offense to the powers, and it inspires the church's peaceful offensive against them.

Christ's defeat of the powers is the source of the church's confidence in the face of social evils. It is decisive for Christian opposition to the most bizarre and threatening idolatry of our age.

> Only a Church which is alert and active in the struggle against the mortal enemy of mankind, who pretends to be a protector god, i.e., against armaments, only a Church which sincerely refuses to accept life from this mortal enemy, only such a Church is a Church of the untrimmed Gospel today![27]

A church that believes in the ultimate victory of Christ will incarnate the justice, mercy, and peace which that victory portends. Her life in community will transcend barriers of class, race, and nationalism. In the name of her Lord the church will forswear allegiance to every ideology that divides and seeks to conquer through mistrust and fear. The church will stand against both an exploitative capitalism and an aggressive communism wherever these systems oppress humanity. The church will address the human need for security with care and compassion, exposing the danger of every false security, while proclaiming the good news that no powers can separate us from God's love in Christ.

The faithful church today will stand in the power of love against the false gods of this world. She will condemn any preparation or use of nuclear force and the godless morality of security through might. Inspired by a unity already manifested in Christ, she will call the nations to forge new, non-violent security systems based not on narrow nationalisms but on the vision of global community and world order. A faithful church will resist runaway technology, rapacious profit motives, and the mad presumptions of the nations that compel the arms race.

Beyond preachments, platitudes, and position papers, the people of the churches must join in concrete acts of commitment to God's will for shalom. Rejecting the new war-winning technologies, we can encourage the contributions of science toward the new creation, such as the eradication of diseases, the alleviation of world hunger, and the harnessing of solar energy. Believing that a peaceful economy will prosper, we can work toward the conversion of the economy of war and seek ways to translate our faith into public policy. They people of God will be constant in prayer for a world in peril, interceding on behalf of the political and military leaders of powerful governments who must make the complex decisions which can lead to peace or war. Finally, the Christian will submit to the state and gratefully uphold its legitimate authority under God (Rom. 13:1). When the state oversteps its limits, however, advancing or defending idolatrous claims with ultimate weapons, the Christian must bow to the will of a higher Lord and "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Christ has disarmed the powers. There is no doubt that they will be tamed. The question is no longer *if,* but *when:* before or after a nuclear holocaust. In this apocalyptic age the church must not succumb to apocalypticism. We live in hope. "We have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come" (Heb. 6:5). Empowered by this future hope, the faithful church will not shrink from

its present witness. A clear "No!" to the nuclear arms race must be spoken. To disarm the nations we must wrestle with the powers that enslave them. To stand against these powers we must put on the whole armor of God.

R-15.
To distribute this paper to the churches of the Reformed Church in America for study and to the churches in Russia. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

R-16.
To give priority attention to the nuclear arms race through the Office of Social Ministries in consultation with the Christian Action Commission providing the churches with educational materials, suggesting specific ways in which congregations and individuals may give Christian witness, and offering counsel and encouragement to those who choose to make such witness. (ADOPTED)

The advisory committee recommended:

R-17.
To recognize that the nuclear arms race is a symptom rather than a cause of the world's dilemma, that unilateral disarmament (does not serve the cause of) may not always result in peace, and that (as in ancient Israel,) the best hope of avoiding a devastating war lies in turning from the idolatries, corruptions, and immoralities in our national life. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

ENDNOTES

[1]Karl Barth, "Statement to the European Congress for Outlawing Nuclear Weapons", *The Nuclear Challenge to Christian Conscience,* Vol. 2: *The Response of Faith* (Washington: *Sojourners Magazine*), p. 4.

[2]Helmut Gollwitzer, "The Christian in the Search for World Order and Peace," *Responsible Government in a Revolutionary Age,* ed. Z. K. Matthews (New York: Associated Press, 1966) p. 51.

[3]Frank Barnaby, "The Mounting Prospects of Nuclear War: A report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* June, 1977, p. 11.

[4]Jim Wallis, "Nuclear War by 1999?" *Sojourners,* February, 1977, p. 3.

[5]Richard J. Barnet, "Challenging the Myths of National Security", *New York Times Magazine,* April 1, 1979, p. 58.

[6]The New Nuclear Strategy", *The Defense Monitor* (Washington, D.C.; Center for Defense Information), July, 1976, p. 1.

[7]Reported by NBC News, December 27, 1979.

[8]Bernard T. Field, "The Consequences of Nuclear War," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* June, 1976, pp. 10-13.

[9]"Two Scenarios for a Nuclear War," *The Defense Monitor* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information), March, 1979, p. 4.

[10]Barnet, *op. cit., p. 60.*

[11]Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon press, 1960), p. 73.

[12]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* trans. Ford Lewis Battles, *LCC,* Vol.

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XX-XXI (Philadelphia: Westminster press, 1960), IV, XX, 10-11, pp. 1497-1500.

[13]*Ibid.*, pp. 1500f.

[14]Bainton, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-7, 234.

[15]Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), p. 174

[16]Bainton, *op. cit.*, pp. 245f.

[17]E. LaB. Cherbonnier, "Idolatry," *A Handbook of Christian Theology*, ed. Marvin Halverson, Arthur A. Cohan (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1958), p. 179.

[18]Hendrik Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, trans. John H. Yoder (Scottdale, Pa.; Herald Press, 1962, 1977).

[19]*Ibid.*, pp. 32, 49.

[20]*Ibid.*, p. 30.

[21]Sidney Lens, "Mobilizing for Survival," *Washington Watch*, Vol. 5, No. 47, December 2, 1977.

[22]Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. I: *Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 213.

[23]Oscar Cullmann, *The State in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 75.

[24]Berkhof, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[25]*Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

[26]*Ibid.*, pp. 40, 50.

[27]Helmut Gollwitzer, "Our Struggle for Peace and Disarmament," (unpublished paper read in West Berlin, September 20, 1977.)

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON CULTS

The 1979 General Synod instructed the GSEC to appoint an ad hoc committee "to study the problem of destructive cultism and to develop techniques and resources to be made available to churches and classes for combating the insidious activities of these cults" (*MGS*, 1979, p. 137). The GSEC appointed Lyle Vander Werff (Chair), David Hondorp and John Meyer. Upon recommendation of the ad hoc committee, the GSEC subsequently authorized the preparation of six articles on the subject of cults for publication in the *Church Herald*, with the understanding that the articles would be reprinted for inclusion along with fact sheets and guides for further reading on some of the more prevalent cults in a resource packet to be made available to Reformed Church congregations in early 1981.

Overtures

Study Relationship Between Offices and Spiritual Gifts

1. **The Classis of Cascades overtures the General Synod to instruct the Theological Commission to study the relationship between offices, as understood in the RCA, and spiritual gifts, and to report the results of its study to General Synod, giving priority to this study in view of the urgency of this matter in our denomination.**

   Reasons:

   1. To broaden the perspective within which our churches come to conclusions about the matter of the scriptural ministry of the women in our midst.

2. To possibly come to a new approach in this matter by dealing with such questions as:
   a. Are all spiritual gifts given to men and women alike?
   b. How are such gifts given to men and women alike?
   c. Do gift ministries require ordination; or, which of the gift ministries are to be offices within the RCA?
   d. What is ordination?

The advisory committee recommended:

R-18.
To adopt the overture. (ADOPTED)

Define Authority of Ministers of the Word

2. **The classis of Rochester overtures the General Synod of 1980 to instruct the Committee on Church Government to prepare a proposed amendment to the *Book of Church Order* concerning the office of a minister of the Word which shall define clearly and explicitly (and preferably in the language of the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse) the authority which a minister of God's Word has because it inheres in his office as such, and for the fearless exercise of which he is directly responsible to Jesus Christ the invisible Apostle and Head of the church, and which he is also duty bound to exercise on his own initiative in the performance of his duties and functions in the congregation over which our Lord has placed him; that is, apart from and over and above other authority which he may share with deacons and elders and exercise jointly with them.**

   Reasons:

   1. The provisions contained in earlier editions of the Reformed Church constitution gave responsibility to particular officers, but that the present *Book of Church Order* has submerged the authority and responsibility of the office of the minister of the Word in a defused, undefined common mass or lump of authority and responsibility.

   2. The liturgical declaration states that the minister is installed *over* the congregation, including its consistory, which is fitly in line with apostolic precepts, but which is at varience with what the present *BCO* and other parts of the revised *Liturgy* now contain.

   3. The vows of a minister of the Word, as the *Liturgy* requires him to make, are promises that he, as an individual, will preach, teach and rebuke, etc. and that he should be sustained when he acts in obedience to his vows.

   4. The installed minister of a congregation (or the moderator of it) in virtue of his office ordains and installs the elders and deacons of the congregation and their authority and function in their respective offices comes not from the people in virtue of their election, but from God through the minister of the Word of God as regulated by the classis.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-19.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
Nearly all the issues raised in this overture are dealt with in the Theological Commission report "The Nature of Ecclesiastical Office and Ministry" (p. 98). Some objections were also made to the view of the office of minister implied in the overture.

NOTES

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

Report of the Commission on History

During the past year the Commission on History invested the greatest part of its effort toward establishing the new Historical Society mandated by the General Synod at its 1979 meeting. In addition, the commission continued its work of collecting and preserving the historical records of the church and supporting further research and publication about the church's history.

FORMATION OF THE RCA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The purpose of the RCA Historical Society is to enlist broad participation of the church's membership in activities which will keep our history alive and which will help individuals and congregations evaluate themselves and form future plans in light of the past.

During the year the initial stages of a membership campaign were completed, resulting in a membership of several hundred persons and the formation of the first local chapter. Ads were placed in RCA publications, a brochure was developed and mailed, and an effort was made to contact personally a number of potential members. A membership committee, composed of persons well-known in the church and chaired by the Rev. Dr. Marion de Velder, helped give the society visibility and stature within the church and aided in recruiting members.

For society members, a newsletter was twice printed and mailed. In addition, several kinds of material were developed for the use of society members and the church at large:

—Resources for celebrating church anniversaries including a slide/tape presentation of one congregation's experience celebrating a "Dutch Day"

—Guidance on storage, preservation, and use of church records

—Guidelines for the organization of a local chapter of the Historical Society.

A constitution and bylaws were drawn up and passed by the GSEC as reported below. Funding was arranged so that the archivist could continue to devote time to building the society.

Thus, at the present, the society has a solid foundation in membership, structure, and communication networks. For the future, the membership drive must continue so that the society can fulfill its purpose, as mandated by Synod, of establishing a useful and active role within the life of individual congregations.

The formation of the Historical Society marks a significant new era in the life of the Commission on History and of the church at large. The study and evaluation of the church's past is now to be more fully shared by local congregations. The commission and the new society seek to promote not merely an antiquarian interest in which people enjoy the quaintness of historical oddities, but rather to play a significant role in helping the church evaluate its past, build upon its heritage, and achieve a sense of its own identity. All materials developed by the archivist for the society and all program plans for the society reflect that goal.

PUBLICATIONS

The commission continues its task of publishing volumes related to the life and growth of the denomination. A major effort in this area over the past decade has resulted in publication of several volumes, the latest of which is Mildred Schuppert's valuable *Digest and Index of the Minutes of General Synod,* the last part of which is nearing completion. Together with the recently published *Historical Directory of the Reformed Church in America, 1628-1978,* by Peter VandenBerge, the Schuppert volumes provide research aids which make the church's history accessible in ways not before possible.

In addition to the much-needed reference volumes, the commission in past years has sponsored the publication of historical studies, several of which continue to sell at a good rate, especially Gerald De Jong's 1978 study, *The Dutch Reformed Church in the American Colonies,* which has been very favorably reviewed. The commission hopes further to encourage church members to purchase and read this fine volume.

MANAGEMENT OF REFORMED CHURCH HISTORICAL RECORDS

The church archivist, Russell Gasero, in his first two years has made fine progress in arranging and organizing the valuable historical records stored in the Dutch Church Room of New Brunswick Seminary. Backlog has been cleared, and new arrivals processed. A major step this year has been development of a clear policy for orderly collection and storage of church records from individual congregations and from the denominational offices (see GSEC report for text of the new archival policy).

A filing and retention guide was developed and circulated to all stated clerks of classes. This guide briefly suggests a simplified filing scheme and suggested periods of retention for classical records.

A grant of $3,600 was received by the Archives from the city of Yokohama, Japan to cover the expense of microfilming the records of the RCA Japan Mission, 1859-1940. These records are of considerable importance not only for the evidence they contain regarding the RCA witness in Japan, but also for the information they provide concerning the social and cultural life in Japan.

The advisory committee presented the following recommendations:

R-1.
To commend the work of the Commission on History and its formation of the RCA Historical Society, and to encourage the participation of all RCA congregations and individuals in its membership. (ADOPTED)

R-2.
To urge all RCA congregations to appoint a local church archivist or historian and inform the RCA archivist of this appointment. (ADOPTED)

R-3.
To instruct GSEC to help the Commission on History find funds for the promotion and development of the Historical Society of the RCA. (Referred—see below)

On a motion from the floor Synod:
VOTED: To refer R-3 to the Committee of Reference.

Necrology Report

The deaths of the following ministers have come to our attention since the last meeting of the General Synod:

Name	Date of Death	Age
Harland Steele	June 6, 1979	59
Marion G. Gosselink	June 23, 1979	89
John S. Ter Louw	July 12, 1979	89
John A. Roggen	September 11, 1979	94
Charles E. Bloodgood	September 20, 1979	85
Frederick J. Van Dyk	September 24, 1979	89
Max Clement Rost	October 12, 1979	85
Peter A. De Jong	November 27, 1979	79
Esdert W. Smidt	December 5, 1979	67
E. Don Teusink	April 11, 1980	49
Benjamin De Young	May 23, 1980	94
Millard M. Gifford	June 15, 1980	73

HARLAND STEELE

Harland Steele was born in Mohawk, NY on March 7, 1920. He graduated from Hope College in 1944 and from Western Theological Seminary in 1947. He was licensed by the Classis of Montgomery in 1947 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo in the same year.

His record of service is as follows: pastor, Hopkins, Michigan, 1947-1949; radio minister, Temple Time (Words of Hope), 1949-1952; pastor, First, Grand Haven, Michigan, 1952-1957; Trinity, Holland, Michigan, 1957-1962; Hope, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962-1972; Palm Grove, Holiday, Florida, 1973-1974; Richmond, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1974-1977, when he retired for reasons of health. He was active in organizing the Marketplace Ministry in Eastbrook Mall, Grand Rapids, the Christian Guidance Center in Holland, and the Christian Guidance Bureau in Grand Rapids. He received a Masters Degree in counseling from Michigan State University in 1964.

Mr. Steele died on June 6, 1979 in Grand Rapids, at the age of 59. The funeral service was held in the Richmond Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, conducted by the Rev. James Baar, Sr. Burial was in Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens.

He is survived by his widow, Evelyn; a daughter, Nicola Detrich of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin; two sons, Mark of Phoenix, Arizona, and Terry of Manhattan, Kansas; a brother, Charles, of Carpentersville, Illinois; a sister, Mrs. Edward (Lois) Decker of Richfield Springs, NY; and three grandchildren.

MARION G. GOSSELINK

Marion Gosselink was born in Pella, Iowa, on March 2, 1890. He graduated from Hope College in 1915 and from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1918. He was licensed by the Classis of New Brunswick and ordained by the Classis of Raritan in 1918.

He served the following churches: South Branch, NJ, 1918-1922; Talmage Memorial, Philadelphia, 1922-1939; Rocky Hill, NJ, 1940-1948; Hicksville, Long Island, NY, 1948-1953; and Parkway Community, Hicksville, 1953-1960.

Dr. Gosselink also studied at the University of Pennsylvania and at Temple

University. In addition he received the Doctor of Divinity degree from Tennent College, Philadelphia, in 1936 and the Th.M. degree from Princeton Seminary in 1941. He served as president of the Particular Synod of New Jersey, 1937-1938. He was the author of seventeen books, including "Junior Story Talks" and other books of talks for children and young people.

He died on June 23, 1979, at Margaretville, NY, at the age of 89. He was a resident of Kirkside at the time of his death. A memorial service was held in the Jay Gould Memorial Reformed Church of Roxbury, conducted by the Rev. Robert Schwander. A committal service was held in Rocky Hill, NJ, conducted by the Rev. Frank J. Bahr. Burial was in Rocky Hill. He is survived by two sons, Marion G. Jr. of Valley Stream, Long Island, NY, and Frederic P. of Littleton, Colorado.

JOHN S. TER LOUW

John S. Ter Louw was born near Pella, Iowa, on November 11, 1889. He graduated from Central College in 1916 and from Western Theological Seminary in 1919. He was licensed by the Classis of Pella and ordained by the Classis of Holland in 1919.

He served the following churches: First, Hamilton, Michigan, 1919-1921; Newkirk, Hospers, Iowa, 1921-1925; First, Waupun, Wisconsin, 1925-1932; Bethany, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1932-1935; First, South Holland, Illinois, 1935-1942; First, Steen, Minnesota, 1942-1946; Bethel, Brandon, Wisconsin, 1946-1954; and Guelph, Ontario, Canada, 1954-1958. He then retired.

Dr. Ter Louw received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Central College in 1960. He was vice-president of the Particular Synod of Chicago in 1940. He also served on General Synod's Committee on the Revision of the Liturgy, and was a member of the Board of Trustees of Central College for many years. After his retirement, and until 1974 when he suddenly lost his sight, he served variously in Reformed, Christian Reformed and Presbyterian churches in the Pella vicinity.

He died in Pella on July 12, 1979, at the age of 89. The funeral was held in the Trinity Reformed Church of Pella, conducted by the Rev. John W. Ter Louw and Dr. I. John Hesselink. Burial was in Graceland Cemetery, Pella.

Dr. Ter Louw is survived by his widow, Annette; six children, the Rev. John W. Ter Louw of Tallahassee, Florida; Mrs. Henry B. (Cornelia) Poppen of Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin; Marion Ter Louw of Brandon, Wisconsin; Mrs. Andrew (Mildred) Rozeboom of Slayton, Minnesota; Mrs. I. John (Etta) Hesselink of Holland, Michigan; and Garret Ter Louw of Conroe, Texas; two brothers, Fred of Grand Junction, Colorado, and the Rev. Simon G. of Pella; two sisters, Mrs. I. G. (Anna) Roorda and Mrs. Bert (Sarah) Van Hemert, both of Pella; twenty grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren.

JOHN A. ROGGEN

John A. Roggen was born at Alton, Iowa, on October 23, 1884. He studied at Grinnell College, 1903-1904, and graduated from Hope College in 1907. He studied at the University of Michigan, 1907-1908, and graduated from Western Theological Seminary in 1911. He was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Iowa in 1911.

He served the following churches: Conrad, Montana, 1911-1917; Sandham Memorial, Monroe, SD, 1917-1922; First, Hamilton, Michigan, 1922-1936; and First, Maurice, Iowa, 1936-1951. He was assistant pastor at First, Sioux Center, Iowa, 1951-1966. After his retirement he preached occasionally in various churches.

Mr. Roggen died in Sioux City, Iowa, on September 11, 1979, at the age of 94. The funeral service was held in the First Reformed Church of Sioux Center and was conducted by the Revs. Thurman Rynbrandt and John Ornee. Burial was in Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Sioux Center.

His wife Jacqueline died in 1976. He is survived by two sons, Ivan of Saginaw, Michigan, and Leon of Orange City, Iowa; three daughters, Mrs. Earle (Ella) Tellman of Holland, Michigan, Mrs. Byron (Margaret) De Pree of Denver, Colorado, and Mrs. Arthur (Marian) McGihra of Sioux Center; twenty grandchildren, twenty-seven great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

CHARLES E. BLOODGOOD

Charles E. Bloodgood was born on September 5, 1894, in Palenville, New York. He graduated from Rutgers College in 1917 and was secretary of that class at the time of his death, having attended the 62nd Reunion in June, 1979. In 1920, he was graduated from New Brunswick Theological Seminary and, in that same year, was licensed by the Classis of Greene and ordained by the Classis of New Brunswick. Having served the Reformed Church of Spotswood, New Jersey, as a student, he then became its installed pastor until 1922.

In 1922, Mr. Bloodgood was called to the First Reformed Church of Rochelle Park, New Jersey, where he served until 1938. In 1938, he began a pastorate in the South Bushwick Reformed Church, Brooklyn, New York, that would culminate in his retiring in 1961.

In 1961, Mr. Bloodgood and his wife retired to Staten Island, New York. While living there, he became the Stated Supply Pastor of the Charleston Reformed Church from 1962 to 1970 and was also active in various local church and ecumenical organizations.

At various points in his career, Mr. Bloodgood was the stated clerk of the Classis of North Long Island, the Classis of Brooklyn, and, in his retirement, of the Classis of New York.

In 1920, Mr. Bloodgood married the former Helen Schenck Voorhees of Highland Park, New Jersey. Mrs. Bloodgood died in 1974. Following her death, Mr. Bloodgood moved to Marlton, New Jersey, where he became active in the Old Orchards United Methodist Church of Cherry Hill, teaching Adult Bible Classes and other groups until the time of his death.

He died in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, on September 20, 1979. He was buried in Van Liew Cemetery in North Brunswick, New Jersey. Memorial services were held in the Old Orchards United Methodist Church of Cherry Hill with its pastor, the Rev. John Mour, officiating, and in the Reformed Church on Staten Island, the Rev. Fred Diekman, pastor, officiating.

Mr. Bloodgood is survived by two daughters: Ruth B. Hascup (Mrs. Jack H.) of Brookville, New York, and Ann B. Rowell (Mrs. Leonard G.) of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Three grandchildren and one nephew also survive him.

FREDERICK J. VAN DYK

Frederick J. Van Dyk was born at Grand Rapids, Michigan, on December 20, 1889. He graduated from Hope College in 1912 and studied at Louisville Theological Seminary from 1913 to 1914. He graduated from Western Theological Seminary in 1915 and was ordained by the Presbytery of Grand Rapids in the same year.

He served the following churches: Immanuel Presbyterian, 1915-1917; a Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, 1917-1920; American Reformed, Hamilton, Michigan, 1920-1923; Central Park Reformed, Holland, Michigan, 1923-1942; Five Corners Union Church, Charlotte, Michigan, 1942-1946; and the Northwest Carmel Community Church, Charlotte, 1946-1977. After his retirement he substituted occasionally in different churches.

Mr. Van Dyk died in Charlotte, Michigan, on September 24, 1979, at the age of 89. A memorial service was held in the Congregational Church of Charlotte, conducted by the Rev. William Colson. Mr. Van Dyk donated his body to the Medical School at Michigan State University.

He is survived by two sons, John of Port Huron, Michigan, and Robert of Tacoma, Washington; three daughters, Mrs. Zahn B. (Rachel) Tuckey, Jr. of Battle Creek, Michigan; Mrs. Dorr (Martha) Love of Port Huron; and Mrs. William (Jane) Joyce of Port Washington, NY; three sisters, Mrs. J. M. (Anne) Yates of Charlotte, Martha Van Dyk of Chicago and Johanna Van Dyk of Grand Rapids; sixteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

MAX CLEMENT ROST

Max C. Rost was born January 6, 1894, at Friedrichreda, Germany. He graduated from Bloomfield College in 1923. He also studied at Bloomfield Theological Seminary and received a Th.B. degree from Temple University Theological School. He was licensed by the Classis of Newark on April 14, 1926, and ordained by the Presbytery of Newark in the same year.

He served the following churches: St. Paul's Reformed (RCUS), Philadelphia, 1926-1931; Emmanuel Presbyterian, Newark, NJ, 1931-1941; and the Trinity Reformed Church of Ridgewood, NY, from 1941 to 1966. He received an honorary D.D. degree from Bloomfield College in 1945. After his retirement he resided for some time in Caldwell, NJ.

Dr. Rost died at the Thomson House, Brattleboro, Vermont, on October 12, 1979, at the age of 85. His final words were a response to his son-in-law, who said to him on his deathbed, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." He responded (after having been very quiet for a day or so), "for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

The funeral service was held from the First Reformed Church of Little Falls, NJ. The Rev. Jefferson Ritchie, Associate Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Caldwell, presided, and the Rev. Daniel O. Reeverts, Pastor of the Trinity Reformed Church of Ridgewood, NY, preached the sermon. Mr. Reeverts also conducted the burial in the Bloomfield Cemetery, Bloomfield, NJ.

Dr. Rost's wife, Wilma, preceded him in death two years ago. He is survived by two daughters, Anna Rost of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Betty De Noble of Jacksonville, Vermont; three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

PETER A. DE JONG

Peter A. De Jong was born at New Sharon, Iowa, on October 6, 1900. He graduated from Central College in 1928. He also studied at Hope College and Western Theological Seminary. He received a Th.M. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1932. He was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1931 and ordained by the Classis of Passaic in 1932.

He served the following churches: People's Park, Paterson, NJ, 1932-1936; Jamestown, Michigan, 1936-1939; Third, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1939-1948; First, Sioux Center, Iowa, 1948-1954; Ebenezer, Leighton, Iowa, 1954-1957; First, Hudsonville, Michigan, 1957-1962; and First, Allendale, Michigan, 1962-1966. After his retirement in 1966, he served as minister of calling at First, Sioux Center, from 1967 to 1971. He then moved to Pella, Iowa, where he did some work in the First Reformed Church of Pella. But his main work, beginning in 1973, was as a senior pastor for the Board of Pensions to the retired ministers and widows.

Mr. De Jong died on November 27, 1979, at Pella, Iowa, at the age of 79. The funeral was held at the First Reformed Church of Pella, the Rev. Frank Shearer of-

ficiating. The Revs. Richard De Jong and William De Jong officiated at family prayer services. Burial was in Peoria Cemetery.

He is survived by his widow, Anna; three sons, Arthur of New Concord, Ohio, Peter of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Marvin of Branson, Missouri; three daughters, Mrs. Forrest (Jane) Van Oss of Pella, Mrs. Philip (Shirma) Huizenga of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Mrs. Roy (Mary) Trevisan of Farmington Hills, Michigan; four brothers, the Rev. Richard A., the Rev. William C. and Gerrit, all of Pella, and Herman of Grand Rapids, Michigan; two sisters, Mrs. Chris (Margaret) Vos of Lansing, Illinois and Mrs. John (Wilma) De Young of Pella; and his grandchildren.

ESDERT W. SMIDT

Esdert W. Smidt was born on October 5, 1912, at Titonka, Iowa. He graduated from Pleasant Prairie Academy in German Valley, Illinois. He graduated from Central College in 1941 and from Western Theological Seminary in 1944. He was licensed by the Classis of Pleasant Prairie in 1944 and ordained by the Classis of Germania in the same year.

He served the following churches: Immanuel, Willow Lake, South Dakota, 1944-1952; Dumont, Iowa, 1952-1963; First, Sibley, Iowa, 1963-1971; and Bethany, Belmond, Iowa, 1971 until his retirement from the active ministry in July, 1979.

Mr. Smidt was killed in an automobile accident near Rock Rapids, Iowa, on December 5, 1979, at the age of 67. His wife, the former Margreta Cordes, was injured in the accident. Prayer services were held at the Bethany Reformed Church of Belmond and a service was also held in the Immanuel Reformed Church of Belmond. Participants were the Revs. Edward Jurgens, William Kroon and Gordon Bloemendaal. Another service was held in the Ramsey Reformed Church of Titonka. Participants were the Revs. John Janssen, Frank Snuttjer, Raymond Denekas and Henry Bovendam. Burial was in the Ramsey Reformed Church Cemetery.

He is survived by his widow; two sons, Corwin of Grand Rapids, Michigan and Reginald of Sioux Falls, South Dakota; a daughter, Mrs. Prospero (Merrita) Tumonong of Grand Rapids; three sisters, Mrs. Fred (Jennie) Gray of Titonka; Mrs. Floyd (Grace) Huisman of Wisconsin, and Elsie, of Huron, South Dakota; four brothers, Sieman, Enko, John W. and Warner, all of Titonka; and two grandchildren.

E. DON TEUSINK

Elmer Don Teusink was born at Holland, Michigan, on November 2, 1930. He graduated from Hope College in 1953 and from Western Theological Seminary in 1958. He received a certificate in Alcohol Studies from the Pacific School of Religion in 1973 and an MSE degree from Long Island University in 1976.

He was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of Dakota in the same year.

His record of service is as follows: pastor, Aurora Reformed Church, Stickney, South Dakota, 1958-1961; Oakview, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961-1967. In the latter year he entered the United States Army as a chaplain. In 1979 he left the chaplaincy and became pastor of the North Gadsden Presbyterian Church of Gadsden, Alabama. He served this church for seven months, until his death.

Mr. Teusink died in Gadsden, Alabama, on April 11, 1980, at the age of 49. Military services were held at Fort McClellan, Alabama. A memorial service was held at the Oakview Church in Grand Rapids.

He is survived by his widow, Norma; a son, Jon Paul, of Gadsden; four daughters, Mrs. Jerry Dean of Montgomery, Alabama, and Dawn and Laura Teusink and Mrs. Linda Liford, all of Gadsden; a brother, Robert, a sister, Mrs. Harvey Brower, and his step-mother, Daisy Teusink, all of Holland, Michigan; and two grandchildren.

BENJAMIN DE YOUNG

Benjamin De Young was born on March 10, 1886, at Chicago, Illinois. He graduated from Hope College in 1907. From 1907 to 1909 he studied at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and graduated from Western Theological Seminary in 1910. He was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin on May 17, 1910, and ordained by the same classis on September 23, 1910.

From 1910 to 1915, he served as a missionary at Gray Hawk, Kentucky. He then served as pastor of the following churches: Clymer Hill, NY, 1915-1918; Arcadia, Newark, NY, 1918-1945; Tyre, NY, 1945-1957. He retired in the latter year.

Mr. De Young died on May 23, 1980 in Akron, NY, after an illness of several months; at the age of 94. His survivors include Anne De Young, an RCA missionary nurse in Oman, and a son, Benjamin De Young, Jr., of Akron, NY.

MILLARD M. GIFFORD

Millard M. Gifford was born at Old Tappan, NY, on July 5, 1906. He graduated from Rutgers University in 1929. He studied at New Brunswick Theological Seminary from 1929 to 1931 and graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1932. He also received the STM degree from Union Seminary in 1942 and studied at the New School for Social Research, 1952-1953. He was licensed and ordained by the South Classis of Long Island in 1932.

Mr. Gifford was pastor of the Cambria Heights Community (Reformed) Church, St. Albans, NY, from 1932 to 1941. While he was there, a new church was built. He next served the Old First (Acquackanonk) Reformed Church of Passaic, NJ, from 1941 to 1956. During his stay in Passaic he was instrumental in the establishment of the Children's Shelter of Passaic County. This was built at Hope Dell, Wayne, in 1954.

Next, he spent three years, 1957 to 1960, with the Protestant Council of the City of New York. The first two of these years were spent as assistant financial consultant. The third year, he was executive secretary of the Bronx Division of the Council. From 1960 to 1969 he served as pastor of the Williamsbridge Road Reformed Church, in the Bronx. Then he served the Reformed Church at Fort Miller, NY, from 1969 until his retirement in 1972.

After his retirement he lived in Germany for about two years. He served as interim pastor of the Wyantskill (NY) Reformed Church for a time in 1975. Finally he settled in Clearwater, Florida. In Clearwater, he served as minister of visitation of the Chapel By the Sea for several years.

Mr. Gifford authored four books: "Symphonic Silver" (1956); "Phoenix of the North", a history of the Fort Miller Reformed Church (1971); "Our Descent from William Gifford of Sandwich", a genealogical work (1978); and "Make It Beautiful" (1979).

He died on June 15, 1980, at North Greenbush, NY, at the age of 73. The funeral was held in the First Reformed Church of Wynantskill, conducted by the Revs. David Cooper and Russell Pater. Burial was in Riverside Cemetery, Fort Miller, NY.

Mr. Gifford is survived by his widow, the former Mildred Simpson Howard; three step-children; nine grandchildren; two brothers, C. Burdette Gifford of Housatonic, Massachusetts and Samuel Gifford of Louisville, Kentucky; and three sisters, Mrs. Dorothy Winker of Bridgewater, NJ, Mrs. Ida McMurry of Idaho Falls, Idaho and Mrs. Margaret McMurry of Walnutport, PA. His former wife Charlotte Schadler Gifford died while they were serving the Fort Miller Church.

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

CONSTITUTION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The 1979 General Synod endorsed a proposed structure for an Historical Society of the RCA and further instructed the Commission on History to implement the proposal "with urgency" (*MGS*, 1979, p. 139).

The Commission on History subsequently developed a proposed constitution for the society. Since the General Synod had already endorsed the structure and urged its implementation, the GSEC approved the constitution so that the society could begin to function.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Constitution

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the Historical Society of the Reformed Church in America.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of the society shall be to bring together those people interested in the history of the Reformed Church in America and in the preservation of the documentation and artifacts which reflect that history. Understanding our history is essential to understanding where we are today and will give us a better understanding of ourselves as a denomination.

The society's aim will be to:

1. Develop and promote interest in the history of the denomination.

2. In cooperation with other agencies, commissions and staff of the Reformed Church in America to initiate, plan, promote and administer projects dealing with the church's history.

3. Share in the support of the ongoing expenses for archival/historical activities within the denomination.

4. Facilitate the use of historically educational materials of the denomination within the congregations.

ARTICLE III

Membership

1. Membership shall be open to all persons who are in support of Articles I, II, and III of this constitution. They may be organized in chapters following the lines of the judicatories whenever it seems advisable and in accordance with the bylaws.

2. All members are entitled to vote, hold office and attend the annual meeting of the society.

ARTICLE IV

Officers and Board of Directors

1. The officers shall be a president and a vice president to be elected for a term of two years. The archivist of the Reformed Church in America shall serve as secretary and manager of the society. These officers shall comprise the executive committee.

2. The Board of Directors shall consist of the Commission on History along with the executive committee.

3. Meetings shall be held annually or as deemed necessary by two-thirds of the Board of Directors.

4. The Board of Directors shall report yearly, including an accounting of funds, to the General Synod and the members of the Historical Society.

5. A quorum shall consist of six members.

ARTICLE V

Dissolution of the Society

1. In the event of the dissolution of the society, any society funds which remain after all debts and encumbrances have been discharged, and any property which the society may otherwise own, shall be given to the Reformed Church in America.

2. The records and papers of the society shall be given to the Archives of the Reformed Church in America.

ARTICLE VI

1. All proposed amendments to this constitution shall be submitted to the Board of Directors in writing.

2. Proposed amendments shall be distributed to all members through the newsletter.

3. Voting shall be by mail and will require a two-thirds vote of those voting. Votes are to be returned by the date specified in the notice of amendment.

4. Amendments shall then be submitted to the General Synod for final approval.

ARTICLE VII

Bylaws

1. The society may adopt such bylaws as are necessary to facilitate the activities and achieve the purposes established by this constitution.

2. Any bylaw shall have been originally referred to and approved by the Board of Directors. It shall then be proposed by them to the membership at the next annual meeting. Such shall, if approved by majority vote of those members present, become immediately effective.

POLICY AND PURPOSES OF THE ARCHIVES

The Commission on History has developed a statement of the policies and purposes of the Archives of the Reformed Church in America. The statement seeks to lay the foundation for an effective archival and records management program for the RCA by providing the authority for the Archives to accomplish the task assigned to it by General Synod and also by providing the necessary guidelines for the preservation and disposition of church records. The GSEC approved the following "Statement of Policy and Purposes of the Archives."

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PURPOSES OF THE ARCHIVES

1. The Archives, under the supervision of the Commission on History, is responsible for the custody and preservation of the archives and records of the Reformed Church in America. The archives and records of the RCA include all those produced by actions of General Synod, particular synods, classes, and local churches. They include all boards, commissions, committees, and missions established by any of the above-mentioned bodies. In the event of abolition of any of these bodies, their records and archives shall be transferred to the RCA Archives for custody and preservation.

2. File series of the RCA *shall not be disposed* of without the authorization of the archivist and/or the Commission on History or their representatives.

3. The Archives shall be made available to all staff of the RCA for the conducting of church business and to scholars who have a legitimate interest in studying the history of the denomination. The hours of operation of the Archives shall be determined by the Commission on History. The commission shall endeavor to promote scholarly research concerning the RCA and to that end shall publicize these records.

4. The functions of the RCA Archives shall be to:

a. Maintain, repair and preserve the archives and non-current records of the RCA.

b. Establish an effective records management program for the denomination resulting in the mandatory transfer of non-current records deemed worthy of permanent preservation to the Archives according to satisfactory retention/disposal schedules.

c. Coordinate the storage of official records already in the custody of established repositories and authorize the storage of such records in a decentralized system.

d. Arrange, describe, and prepare suitable finding aids and guides concerning the records in custody of the Archives.

e. Inspect and appraise the records and archives in the possession of these bodies and their staff and determine suitable disposition. The archivist shall be bound to observe the confidential nature of their contents if so restricted. The Archives may request a list of the records to be made in accordance with established format.

f. Dispose of non-current records that have no further administrative, legal, historical, or other scholarly value with the agreement of the concerned bodies which produced or received the original record. The disposals shall be carried out in agreement between the Archives and these bodies. When no disposal schedules are available, disposal lists shall be prepared.

g. Encourage the deposit of archives of private individuals and organizations that are deemed to be of scholarly or historical interest and reflect some aspect of the denomination's work and action in the world.

h. Make available for use such records as are needed by RCA staff in the conduct of church business, subject to any established restrictions.

i. Promote scholarly research concerning the RCA by making available such records as will best serve this end.

Definitions

Official Records—**all documentary materials** (e.g. correspondence, publications) received or originated by the RCA and its staff in the normal course of its activities, which serve as evidence of the organization, function, policies, decisions, procedures, and operations.

Non-current Records—those which are no longer needed for daily use in the transaction of official business, but which shall be preserved on a temporary basis because of administrative or legal considerations.

Archives—those records to be permanently preserved for their administrative, legal, historical, or informational value.

Disposition—action taken with regard to non-current records following their appraisal. This includes temporary retention, transfer to the Archives, reproduction, and disposal.

Disposal—the act of the destruction of records by appropriate methods.

Non-record—documents of a transitory value not included within the definition of the word "record," e.g. library or other reference material, extra copies and duplicates preserved for convenience of reference, supply documents.

File Series—a grouping of file units arranged by subject, e.g. Hunger or Disarmament or the Ordination of Women; or according to function, e.g. Missionary correspondence, Ecumenical relations, etc.

How the Archival Policy Will Work

This policy statement does not indicate an intention of the Archives staff to travel throughout the denomination looking through file cabinets every year. Rather, it is an attempt to *focus* the *authority* for the *preservation* and *disposition* of records in that area where it is most suitably located. This policy would be put into effect most efficiently by the provision of a list of files currently held in each office of the church staff. A thorough examination of these lists would result in a filing system and retention schedule for all RCA offices. Permission would be granted to dispose of files after the list is reviewed and it is made certain that the files in question do not appear to be of any value, either historical, legal, or administrative. In this way the foundations of a records management program will be established.

In relation to item 4b, the *goal* is to *develop basic retention schedules for all files in various staff offices.* When such a schedule becomes operational, disposal or retention will be determined by checking the schedule for the type of records in question. As new series of records are created, they will be added to the schedule in an effort to keep it current.

The files would be described in appropriate series following the filing system used by the staff person. The goal is to *increase efficiency by simplifying the decision-making as to which records* to save and which to dispose and to insure the periodic transfer of permanently valuable material to the Archives. Coming at this task as a joint effort of the Archives staff and the individual staff member, we will be assured that those records are saved which have enduring value and those records are disposed which have become useless paper.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Report of the Commission on Christian Unity

> "The Church has found a melancholy number of ways to express her variety. She has found fewer ways to express her unity."

These words were spoken by an American at the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961. We have been on the ecumenical road for so long; we still have so far to go. Not only do we have far to go; our pace is slow and ponderous. A recent book reminds us, however, of the World Council that ". . . .Yet It Moves." Your Commission on Christian Unity, aware of all this, continues to work to make the path more smooth, give better and more accurate directions, and sometimes asks for help and guidance for itself.

At no time in the history of our church has more help and guidance been requested than this year of 1980. This is the year of the Ecumenical Consultation when 75 people from within and without the Reformed Church in America have come together in study, in worship, in unity, in division, in prayer, and in hope, to discuss the place of the ecumenical movement in the life and work of the Reformed Church. A report on this consultation follows below. But first, let us report on our activities since the last General Synod.

South Africa

In 1976 the CCU proposed that the RCA enter into a special relationship with the Black Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGK in A), and this recommendation was adopted by the General Synod. A sum of $10,000 was given to that denomination for use in the erection of a church center near Soweto. There would be an exchange of synodical minutes and, when possible, delegates from each church would be exchanged. We are happy to report that all of these items are being done. Working with the Black Council for help and guidance, the CCU helped to send Mrs. Sara Smith and the Rev. Earle Hall to South Africa in 1979. This year already General Synod president Edwin G. Mulder, showing our interest and concern, decided to visit South Africa, and Dr. Mulder and the Rev. Warren Henseler, chairman of General Synod's Task Force on the Nonviolent Liberation of South Africa, both made an official visit and were entertained by many friends in South Africa. Already there is interest in establishing a relationship with some of the other churches in South Africa, namely, the "Indian" segment of NGK (the Reformed Church in Africa). It may well be that this is an area to be explored as a "next step" in our expanding involvement in South Africa.

> **R-1.**
> **To instruct the CCU to explore the possibility of entering into a special relationship with the Reformed Church in Africa.** (ADOPTED)

The RCA is also in dialogue with the "White" Dutch Reformed Church (NGK). About four years ago Dr. Wissink met with two representatives of the NGK on the campus of New Brunswick Seminary. The ecumenical agent of the NGK indicated that the denomination had given serious thought and work to a statement on the policy of the NGK on race relations. Such a statement took the form of a booklet

published under the title *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture.* The 1979 General Synod instructed the CCU to draft a response to that statement. This response follows:

A RESPONSE FROM THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA TO THE NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK'S BOOKLET ENTITLED *HUMAN RELATIONS AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENE IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.*

We are grateful to God for this opportunity to talk with a denomination which is, literally, a sister church. While some Dutch crossed the Atlantic from east to west, others ventured from north to south. Not long after the establishment of New Amsterdam in North America, Capetown was founded on the southern tip of Africa. The church followed the explorers and traders to both continents and the Mother Church in the Netherlands saw her daughters go separate ways. Separated by thousands of miles, the daughters rarely met. Though relations were cordial, they could hardly be termed significant.

As race relations in the world have worsened, and both our continents and respective countries have experienced turmoil and suffering our churches have been led to begin, at long last, a dialogue which we hope will lead to reconciliation. It is in this spirit of humility, love, and confession, that we now address you.

There is much in *Human Relations and the South African Scene* that we appreciate and applaud. As partners in the Reformed tradition, we agree that the "word of God as premise and norm" (2.) is the starting point of such discussions. We agree that the problem is complex and easy answers must be avoided. (4.). We believe with you that "one must avoid the danger of allowing the 'historic situation' to function as a hermeneutic principle" and that "the Bible is not a scientific textbook" and that we must be aware "of the central theme of its preaching, i.e. proclaiming the way of salvation in Christ and the coming of the Kingdom of God to His glory." (5.). We share your concern that in this difficult matter of race relations and the church's role and function that we want neither extreme of a lack of daring nor a lack of discretion; we want neither to forfeit confidence nor act without pastoral compassion and understanding. (5. p. 11).

Even though both of our countries have been torn apart in racial violence and the records of both of our churches leave much to be desired, we affirm with you most emphatically that "the Scriptures teach and uphold the essential unity of mankind and the primordial relatedness and fundamental equality of all peoples. (8.). We share your conviction that "differentiation does not revoke the essential unity" and that races and peoples cannot be "classified in order of superiority, inferiority or difference in kind." (8.) The Black peoples of the earth have too long been falsely accused by misinformed Christians of bearing the "curse of Ham" and we happily agree with you that "there is no scriptural basis for relating the subordinate position of some present day people to the curse on Canaan." (9.2).

Still other Christians have sought to find biblical bases for racial inferiority and separation (e.g. Ex. 12:38, Lev. 24:10, Num. 11:4, Neh. 13:3, *et al.*). We agree with the several references in the report to the fact that Israel was unique in its call to be God's people The distinctions in such passages are religious, not racial. (10. p. 25).

Most importantly, whatever distinctions may have been made, Paul indicates clearly that all the distinctions between Israel and other nations are past and that now there is a new unity in Christ. (Gal. 3:28, Col. 3:11) (12.2). In the church there is unity and diversity, but the unity is primary.

Thus, we affirm with you that, like the Old Testament, so the New Testament also "maintains the unity and solidarity of the human race." (13.2)

The Reformed Church in America is a member of the World and National Councils of Churches. As such we have been deeply involved in and influenced by the social action activities of these fellow Christians. Still we can affirm your contention that there are dangers in what you call "horizontalism" for we know as well that "a church that lives by the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ cannot identify the promised salvation for the world and the coming of the kingdom of God exclusively with the structural changes in society." (43.5).

Rather than continue to identify those parts of the report with which we concur, let it suffice to say that there are many points of agreement. The sections on "The Church and Social Justice" are clear and concise statements about the church's task and responsibility to speak out on social matters and against injustice in all spheres of life (46.2 and 46.3). Even in the sensitive issue of miscegenation or "mixed marriage" we agree that biblical prohibitions have "a predominantly religious motivation and that the Bible does not literally pronounce either in favor or against such marriages." (64.1) All in all there is much in the report which can unite us in this vexing and troublesome matter of racial relationships.

But while we find much to commend, we also find parts of the document to be questionable. Here we would like to engage in scholarly dialogue about a major point that underlies the entire paper. It is a point we should like to challenge and question.

Throughout the document it is contended that the diversity of the peoples of the earth is the will of God. This is stated in various places, but most succintly in section 9:

> Ethnic diversity does not have a polyphylogenetic origin. Whether or not the differentiation process first started with Babel, or whether it was already implicit in the fact of Creation and the cultural injunction (Genesis 1:28), makes no essential difference to the conclusion that ethnic diversity is in its very origin in accordance with the will of God for this dispensation.

The report argues that out of Creation, from a common ancestor, and according to the divine command in Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill all the earth and subdue it," the various peoples of the earth grew in diversity, and that this diversity was the will of God. The saga of the Tower of Babel is used to strengthen and confirm the point. *"For the purpose of our report the question arises as to whether Genesis 11:1-9 can serve as a scriptural basis for a policy of autogenous development: Our answer is a qualified yes." (9.1 p. 18).* (Italics added.) The diversity of language is God's way of accomplishing his will that the whole earth should be inhabited.

In regard to the Babel story this is hardly the chief emphasis of the account. S. R. Driver in his *Genesis* has said that the diverstiy of language and the resultant scattering of peoples is here "the penalty for misdirected ambition." (p. 133). Moreover, "while explaining ostensibly the diversity of *languages,*" the narrative "offers no explanation of the diversity of races." (p. 133). This is in sharp contrast to the point made in the report. Such differences of race are left entirely unexplained in the story and, as Driver remarks, is a feature which Genesis "does not even leave room for." (p. 134). It is even more noteworthy that the differences of language are the result and not the cause of the diffusion of humankind over the world. The point of the

narrative is to show "how the self-exaltation of man is checked by God" and to show how the distribution of humankind into nations and diversity of language were used by God for the development and progress of humanity." (p. 134). There is no word in the story to suggest that God intended humankind to be divided into several races and nations each with its own locale and each with its own language. In the course of migration the people here settled down, not as before, innocent and unsophisticated; rather, they were interested in a strong alliance and fame. "The city arises as a sign of their valiant self-reliance, the tower as a sign of their will to fame." (G. von Rad, *Genesis,* p. 144). Such a combination of energies with the naive desire to be great, perhaps coupled with anxiety, "are the basic forces of what we call 'culture' and in them, in the penetrating judgment of the narrator, is rebellion against God." (von Rad, p. 145). "A humanity that can think only of its own confederation is at liberty . . . for every extravagance." (von Rad, p. 145). So God breaks up the unity of humankind so as to form a great number of individual nations. This is at one and the same time a punitive and a preventive measure. While some, as von Rad states, suggest two recensions of the story from which the biblical narrative is composed, (1) a recension about building a tower to make a name for itself, and (2) a recension about building a city so as not to be scattered, (von Rad, p. 146), this has been recently contested.

Whatever the origin, "the saga views such a development of power as something against God, rebellion against the Most High." (p. 147). It is a bit of cultural history "in which man's rebellion against God becomes evident and in which God's judgment takes place." (p. 147). "The multitude of nations indicates not only the manifold quality of God's creative power, but also a judgment, for the disorder in the international world, which our narrative regards as the sad conclusion, was not willed by God but is punishment for the sinful rebellion against God." (von Rad, p. 147).

It is our contention that the NGK report has misunderstood the story of the Tower of Babel. It is not an account of the people's refusal to be scattered abroad, nor is it a statement of God's will for human relations. Rather it is an account of punishment for a specific act of rebellion, that of trying to "get to heaven" by themselves.

The report also uses Acts 17:26 to argue for the point that diversity of peoples is God's will. The point that Paul is making in his sermon on Mar's Hill is not, however, that diversity of the people is God's will, but rather that all humankind is related. Paul's point is the unity of humankind.

Finally, in the biblical record such diversity of peoples and languages are brought together again by the proclamation of the Gospel at Pentecost, at which time a miracle of understanding took place so that each one understood "in his own language" the wonderful works of God. But this does not mean that it is God's will that each nation shall remain as it is and be evangelized in its own language. It rather suggests that the diversity of languages and peoples is overcome by the preaching of Christ, who, as the writer to the Ephesians says, "is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bring hostility to an end . . . so then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." (Ephesians 2:14-19).

It may appear to some that we are arguing too strenuously on this point and that it is not that important nor significant. It is our contention, however, that herein lies a

fundamental difference in our perceptions about the biblical account, and even as important, about the political situation in South Africa. The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa implies in its report that because God wills separate or autogenous development of peoples in the world, then it is permissible to condone such separate development or apartheid!

> The diversity of peoples is the will of God and thus a policy of autogenous development is a legitimate Christian stance. (9. p. 14; 9.1 pp. 17, 18).
>
> God appointed the boundaries of the nations which the Church is obliged to accept. (Cf. 26.).
>
> By the very nature of things, each ethnic group must practise its religion within the context of its own language and culture. (59. Cf. 29).
>
> Peace and order in the land and in the church take precedence over any effort toward uniformity or the granting of individual rights. (See on church membership transfer 30. and "mixed marriage" 64.2).

It would appear, then, that such arguments for separate development are in the final analysis a defense for apartheid.

By the same token one could ask the Dutch Reformed Church why the report takes such pains to point out diversity and does so little to find the scriptural stance on the *unity* of the Church! Surely what is not said can be as significant as what is said. Surely it is interesting that there is no reference to the important passage in Ephesians 4:4-6 having to do with our Lord, one faith, one baptism, etc. or Ephesians 4:14-20.

Surely the fact that in Christ the walls and barriers between warring factions have been broken down is important to the situation in the United States and South Africa and everywhere that people are pitted against one another. And what does it mean for the Church that Christ has made out of the two, one new person? Such reconciliation is for the whole Church, and each congregation, as it is able, ought to reflect the basic characteristics of the whole, the oneness of peoples, male and female, slave and free, Jew and Gentile, and we might add, Black and White and Colored and Indian.

With firmness and love, and patience and sympathy, the Reformed Church in America would ask our sister Church in South Africa whether in this whole discussion the NGK has not been speaking instead of listening to the Word of the Lord in Scripture? Several times the report stresses that diversity of peoples is the will of God. But nowhere in Scripture is this said. Rather, diversity—so understood—is a punishment, and evidence of sin, something that must be overcome by the Gospel and the Church. This is the task of the Church.

In keeping with our argument in this regard, may we also point out tht the report is too willing to separate the peoples in South Africa into "we" and "they." There is a condescending attitude toward the non-White population. In 36. it is stated that "in specific circumstances and under specific conditions the New Testament makes provision for the regulation on the basis of separate development of the co-existence of various peoples in one country." Both of our countries know the meaning of racial injustice, but we believe that the report is simply wrong when it states that

> When such a country honestly comes to the conclusion that the ethical norms for ordering social relationships, i.e., love of one's neighbor and social justice, can best be realized on the basis of parallel development, and if such a conviction is based on factual reasoning, the choice of parallel development can be justified in the light of what the Bible teaches. (p. 32).

It would seem doubtful that the non-White population would agree with such statements in the light of their situation. Similarly, all of those statements which imply that under certain situations, to keep peace and order, there must be "temporary restrictions" (always on those other than Whites) the better way of justice must be laid aside. Finally, the sections on justice and "mixed marriage" (chapters 3 and 5) continually make assumptions about non-Whites which is less than Christian. The whole matter of self-determination is not dealt with in any way and, therefore, the comments on migratory labor and Bantu homelands seem to us to be statements with little sensitivity to fellow human beings, many of whom are brothers and sisters in Christ. Does not justice demand that they be part of the decision-making process?

It is not possible to deal with all the matters that concern us in this report, but one final question must be asked and addressed to our sister church in Africa. In the many pronouncements about the task of the church in relation to the State, where is the prophetic word? Where in this report does the Church confront the State with the accusing finger, and Amos-like, speak the word of the Lord so as to right the wrong. It was Karl Marx who said that religion was the opium of the people; some of the statements in this report seem to be designed to drug a restless population into thinking the *status quo* is God's will. These ethnic peoples without any self-determination are really "no-people." The report affirms the government's right and task to preserve order and the church's obligation, as well as the members', to respect the authority of the State. Thus the State is left free to determine its policies under the blessing (or at least the silence) of the Church. According to Paul Tillich, this is precisely the attitude which led to the take over of Germany by the Nazis prior to World War II, and thus also to the Holocaust.

We live in difficult and trying times. Both of our nations wear the scars of racial enmity. Both of our nations find violence and bloodshed close to the surface and ready to break out. Neither your church nor ours can boast of our records in the past, for neither sees clearly the problems close at hand. Now, however, there is a difference. We are in dialogue; we are talking together in love. At long last we may share our understandings, our insights and our perspectives, and we may also confess our own errors and shortcomings and blindspots. Perhaps such sharings will also lead to redemptive solutions. May the God of peace and reconciliation be with us to help us.

R-2.
To send the response to *Human Relations and the South African Scene* to the stated clerk of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk as part of the continuing dialogue between our churches.
(ADOPTED)

Christian Reformed Church

In the same year we entered into that "special relationship" with the church in South Africa, the RCA also entered into that relationship with the Christian Reformed Church. Because of historic and geographic reasons, our churches in the midwest are in close contact with the CRC congregations. Our cooperative style is far reaching and youth work, missions, educational programs and materials, are all frequently conducted jointly. A subcommittee of the CCU is based in Grand Rapids and meets together with a like committee in the CRC. Out of such discussions have come the union services between and among RCA and CRC congregations.

We rejoice that after so many years of alienation and mistrust, the RCA and the CRC have begun to work together. We do not talk of merger, but we reaffirm that we must begin to do as much together as we possibly can. The matter of the publication of a new hymnbook is still under discussion, and other such projects will be explored. This is a good beginning and a proper way to manifest our unity. Each year we exchange fraternal delegates to the General Synods and this year we welcome Dr. John Bratt to our Synod, while we will be sending the Revs. Harry Buis and Richard Hine to the Christian Reformed Church Synod.

Consultation on Church Union (COCU)

For the last four years your committee has been trying to take a new look at an old organization. The Consultation on Church Union had its start almost twenty years ago. It began in controversy and then seemed to fade from view. Quietly and stubbornly denominations met and talked and worshipped. Slowly, but steadily, consensus was reached in many areas, and significant disagreements were brought into the open and debated and studied. Perhaps some of the most important theologizing about the church and ministry is going on today in the United States among the COCU members. At present there are ten denominations: African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Episcopal Church, National Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church in the United States, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Their Generating Communities and the Interim Eucharistic Fellowship are two of the most innovative ecumenical experiments anywhere in the world. Your CCU will continue to explore and evaluate participation in COCU as instructed by the General Synod of 1979 (*MGS* p. 152).

World Council Study

The World Council of Churches is one of the organizations which comes under our purview. It is an enormously complex agency, which makes it difficult to watch and observe. At the end of this report is a WCC report which gives a brief overview of its work during the last year. There is one item, however, which may be lifted up for special consideration, and that is the WCC's publication entitled FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE: ECUMENICAL PRAYER CYCLE." This book gives a brief sketch of the churches all around the world. It is an attempt to engage Christians everywhere in prayer for one another. The book may be ordered for $6.50 a year through the WCC's office at 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10115.

R-3.
To urge the RCA congregations to make use of the WCC's publication, FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE: ECUMENICAL PRAYER CYCLE. (ADOPTED)

Presbyterian Church in Canada

Two years ago a modest conversation was begun with the Presbyterian Church in Canada and RCA pastors in Canada. The talks continue, and the Synod may be interested to know that an agreement has been reached between Knox College in Toronto and New Brunswick Seminary whereby students may begin their studies at Knox and finish at New Brunswick. We think this is a fine step in the right direction.

Presbyterian Union

One of our tasks in the CCU is to monitor some events and movements. We have done this with the "charismatic movement" by sending an observer to a major rally. We also have people on important committees for the National and World Council and the Alliance of Reformed Churches. In the same manner we have an observer at the merger talks between the United Presbyterian and the Presbyterian Church, U.S. The Rev. David Risseeuw and Dr. John Piet participate in and report back about these conversations.

National Council Study

Your commission would like to recommend another piece of material for the study and guidance of local congregations. Three or four years ago a study having to do with ecumenism was initiated by the NCC. The panel worked and listened and then formulated their thoughts and made a report. The "Foundations for Ecumenical Commitment" is the result, and the report along with a study guide is now available. This could prove to be one of the most helpful exercises any church could do. The payoff would be in a new awareness of the will of God in terms of church relations across denominational lines. It raises many questions which are in minds of many pastors and elders. It raises many questions which are in minds of many pastors and elders. It deals with the same issues under discussion in the Ecumenical Consultation last April.

R-4.
To urge the RCA congregations to make use of the NCC study guide called "Foundations for Ecumenical Commitment." (ADOPTED)

Funding for the WCC and NCC

One of the most persistent and vexing issues for a small number of RCA constituents has to do with contributions to the WCC and the NCC. Almost annually the matter is before this General Synod, often in the form of overtures. Last year the issue was raised again and upon recommendation of the Committee on Christian Unity, the 1979 General Synod voted:

> To instruct the Committee on Christian Unity in consultation with the GSEC to study the funding of the World and National Councils of Churches and present a recommendation to the General Synod of 1980. (*MGS*, p. 154)

The Synod also instructed the Committee on Christian Unity to include in this study an overture from the Classis of Pella:

> To authorize the General Program Council to contribute funds to the World Council of Churches only to the extent of funds so designated by contributing churches. (*MGS,* p. 161)

The Committee on Christian Unity considered this assignment at its meeting on October 25-26, 1979, and voted:

> To direct its executive committee to study the funding of the World and National Councils of Churches for report to the General Synod, and further,
>
> to invite the participation of two representatives of the GSEC and three representatives (two members and one staff) of the GPC.

The Committee on Christian Unity Executive Committee members are: Charles J. Wissink (Chair), Howard Schipper, James Reid, David Risseeuw, Arie Brouwer. The GSEC participants were: Harry Buis and Jack Hascup. The GPC participants were: Kenneth Dykstra, Robert Bast and John Buteyn.

The committee met on January 4, 1980, at 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY. It separated its work into two parts.

First, support for the general administration of the National and World Councils of Churches.

Second, support for the programs of the National and World Councils of Churches.

Review of the 1978 financial reports of the two councils disclosed that the National Council spent approximately $25 million for all purposes. Slightly less than one million dollars of this amount was for general administration toward which the RCA contributed $13,750 through the General Synod budget as recommended by the Committee on Christian Unity. An additional $3,115 was contributed from congregations of the RCA directly to the offices of the National Council of Churches.

The WCC spent approximately ninety million Swiss francs ($57,600,000 million US dollars at the rate of exchange on the day the Committee met). Of this amount, slightly less than five million francs ($3,200,000 million US dollars) was for general administration, toward which the RCA contributed $7,920 through the General Synod budget as recommended by the Committee on Christian Unity. An additional $1,845 was contributed directly from congregations of the RCA to the offices of the WCC.

Historical Perspective

For many years prior to 1970, the Reformed Church's share of the general administrative costs of the World and National Councils of Churches was funded from General Synod assessments. In 1970 the General Synod approved an overture from the Classis of Wisconsin to make contributions to the councils a voluntary act of the churches rather than an assessment. In 1971 the General Synod again placed the Reformed Church's share of general administrative expenses for the WCC in the operational budget of the General Synod by a vote of 125-116 but declined to do so for the NCC by a vote of 117-127. In 1973 the General Synod again included the NCC by a vote of 120-109.

In response to protests received in the fall of 1972 from the Classis of Wisconsin and the Classis of North Grand Rapids, the General Synod Executive Committee took the following action which was adopted by the 1973 General Synod:

> After careful study and consideration, the GSEC ADOPTED the following:
>
> 1. That, as a responsible member denomination, the RCA must find ways and means to contribute our RCA proportionate shares of the administrative expenses of the NCC and WCC.
>
> 2. That the GSEC, in the 1974 General Synod Assessment Budget, indicate by an asterisk that under Section VI, *Participating Shares in Interchurch Bodies,* Item 38, National Council of Churches—$10,500 and Item 39, World Council of Churches—$6,000, are *not included* in the 1974 assessment on the classes.
>
> 3. That the GSEC use other sources of funds for payment of Items 38 and 39 for 1974, such as interest earned on the synodical account, endowment income, fund balances, special gifts and other possible sources.
>
> 4. That during the coming year the GSEC, in consultation with the Permanent Committee on Interchurch Relations, study appropriate ways to provide the needed RCA financial support for our proportionate share of the administrative expenses for the NCC and the WCC.
>
> 5. That the GSEC recommend to General Synod the above procedures, pending consultation between the General Synod officers, the chairman of the GSEC, and the Permanent Committee on Interchurch Relations; and further, That final approval on the procedures to be recommended to General Synod be given by the chairman of the GSEC and the officers of the General Synod.
>
> **R-11**
> **WE RECOMMEND that General Synod adopt the above procedures, pending a report on the consultation and approval as specified.** (ADOPTED) (*MSG,* p. 135f)

In 1974 the GSEC reported to the General Synod that this matter had been referred to a special committee consisting of three members of the GSEC and three members of the Committee on Inter-Church Relations (*MSG,* p. 117). In 1975 the Review Committee on Inter-Church Relations, referring to the General Synod action of 1973, "reaffirmed that WCC and NCC support remain as presently established" but did not submit this reaffirmation as a recommendation for vote by the General Synod (*MGS,* p. 231).

The General Synod of 1975 also changed the payment of classical assessments to a quarterly schedule, thus, reducing the amount of money earned from interest and consequently available for funding the councils. Moreover, the reserves of the General Synod have been depleted over the years further reducing the source of funds mentioned in the action of 1973 General Synod. These reductions in available income combined with inflation moved the Committee on Christian Unity to request the study of funding the World and National Councils of Churches approved by the General Synod of 1979.

Conclusions/Recommendations

After reviewing all this information, the Special Committee on Funding the Councils of Churches reaffirmed the opinion of the GSEC reported to the General Synod of 1973 that the Reformed Church's proportionate share of the GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES of the National and World Councils of Churches is an obligation of the General Synod and, consequently, a legitimate part of the General Synod's operational budget to be raised by an assessment upon the classes. However, the committee also recognized that many of the feelings about the Councils of Churches which led to their being placed on a voluntary basis in 1970 and which led to their being removed from the assessment for the General Synod in 1973 are still present in the church. It therefore chose not to recommend that Synod levy a direct assessment for support of the general administration of the Councils of Churches. It did, however, wish to insure adequate sources of funds for the Reformed Church's proportionate share of these expenses. It also wished to encourage the churches to contribute toward these expenses. It, therefore, developed the following recommendations re funding the Councils of Churches.

R-5.

a. To authorize the Committee on Christian Unity each year to determine the Reformed Church's share of general administrative expenses for the World and National Councils of Churches in an amount not to exceed the minimum askings of these councils by more than 25 percent, and further,

b. To instruct the GSEC each year to include the Reformed Church's share of the general administrative costs of the World and National Councils of Churches in the General Synod budget as (an asking) two separate askings, **and further,**

c. To instruct the treasurer of the General Synod to include this amount as an asking in the communication to the classes concerning assessments for the General Synod with the request that the classes convey them to their congregations in the same manner and with the understanding that these askings would be paid to the treasurer of the General Synod through the classes, and further

d. To instruct the Committee on Christian Unity in cooperation with the editor of the *Church Herald* and **the Office of Promotion and Communication to make more information about the councils readily available to members of the RCA, and further,**

e. To authorize the GSEC to continue to use "other sources of funds . . . such as interest earned on the synodical account, endowment income, fund balances, [and] special gifts" as authorized by the General Synod of 1973 and as necessary to insure payment of the Reformed Church's share of the general administrative expenses of the World and National Councils of Churches. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

The committee also reviewed the contributions of the GPC to the PROGRAM EXPENSES of the National and World Councils of Churches. Program contributions to the National Council during 1978 totalled approximately $195,000. Of this

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

amount, $175,000 was disbursed through the Division of Overseas Ministries of which $127,000 was for Church World Service expenditures.

Reformed Church contributions through the GPC to the World Council of Churches in 1978 totalled $38,200, very nearly all of which was for the work of world mission, evangelism, and service.

Most of the money contributed through the Reformed Church World Service is designated, but most of the other smaller amount is not. Needs change through the course of the year and it is not always possible to make every need of the Councils of Churches or the worldwide communities they serve known in detail to the membership of the RCA. The committee observed that it is precisely for decisions such as these that the General Synod has constituted bodies such as the GPC and it would be neither practical nor desirable to curtail such decision-making authority as requested in Overture #7 quoted at the beginning of this report.

The committee also wished to emphasized that as much as possible information about these decisions should be made available to the church at large.

R-6.
a. To instruct the GPC in cooperation with the Office of Promotion and Communication to increase the information available about programs of the World and National Councils of Churches supported by the RCA, and further,

b. To encourage the congregations of the RCA to make use of this information by responding generously to the programs they choose to support. (ADOPTED)

REPORT OF THE ECUMENICAL CONSULTATION

During the last four years, the Committee on Christian Unity has talked about a national consultation on the unity of the Church. The idea arose first when David Reisseeuw, the RCA observer of the Presbyterian merger talks, reported on a similar venture in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. Various designs for our own consultation were discussed, an enabling recommendation was made to the 1979 General Synod, and this April (1980) the consultation was held at the Maryknoll Mission Institute near Ossining, New York.

The ecumenical movement has gone through several metamorphoses during the third quarter of the twentieth century. The first stage of individual "giants" is over, and the early "heroes" are gone. Much ecumenical work is now carried on in institutions such as councils of churches from citywide to worldwide. Other cooperative ventures, joint projects, and close associations by denominational staff are taken for granted. There is an ecumenical style in almost all church work today. New ideas and styles of working continue to emerge, however, and changes take place in existing relationships. Your committee noted all of this and acknowledged the changes that had taken place in the RCA in the last two decades. It seemed good to us, therefore, to have a major consultation to talk about new directions, dreams, goals, and ventures for our denomination as we enter the 80s.

The participants in the Ecumenical Consultation were invited because of their particular involvements and responsibilities in the life of the church. Included were the entire Commission on Christian Unity, the National Council Governing Board

delegation from the RCA, five seminary professors; four RCA staff members, four synod executives, some missionaries, and some representatives of GPC and GSEC. The very nature of the task suggested that non-RCA people should be included, so about twelve such folk were present—for example, representatives from the Middle East Council of Churches, the World Council, the National Council, Evangelicals for Social Action, Sojourners, the Christian Reformed Church, the Southern Presbyterian Church, and the Consultation on Church Union. The National Association of Evangelicals and the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization were invited but, at the last minute, cancelled out. The Rev. Kenneth Gorsuch was the worship leader and did a magnificent job—at no time is unity in Christ more manifest than when God's people are at worship. Dr. Charles Wissink served as moderator of the event.

For four days, this group met to discuss and analyze theology, our current situation, where we might go, and the implications of such reflections. There were often strong differing opinions; assumptions were challenged; viewpoints from abroad were shared; horizons were expanded; visions were broadened; tradition was questioned; obedience was called for; humility was requested; God's patience and guidance were prayed for.

The first discussions centered around such issues as local churches, classes and synods, church to church relations, ecumenical organization and agencies, and non-denominational and trans-confessional movements.

Then the consultation went into depth discussions in four major areas: theology, relationships, mission, and education. Each of these four groups wrote a paper which was presented and debated in the plenary sessions of the event. An editorial committee was appointed to complete the final draft of the report, which is now presented to this General Synod for information, so that every one may see the scope of concern for the unity we seek to manifest. (Recommendations for action will come from the Commission on Christian Unity and will be presented to the Synod of 1981.)

What emerges for us now is the sense that the RCA Ecumenical Consultation of 1980 was an historic event, the first ever and not soon to be repeated. It was a brief interlude, during which the unity in Christ was the operating principle and the organizing principle of all discussion. Some regarded it as a break-through and a new beginning. Many will not be able to return home to do "business as usual," for they have caught the ecumenical vision of unity, not for unity's sake, but for the sake of God's mission on earth, "so that the world may know that the Father has sent the Son." History will be the judge.

A. The Unity of the Church and Our Confession of Faith

Now at the beginning of the 1980s, we live in a broken and frightened world in which crisis has become commonplace and disaster very possible. We exploit one another in the home, in the uses of leisure, in economics, in politics, and in international affairs. The raw materials on which life depends are used recklessly and wasted, especially by North Americans. People struggle with one another because of economic injustice and other varieties of human conditions, including differences of age, race, sex, culture, ideology, and religion.

In such a world, it is especially urgent that the Church be united in its work and witness. We must confess that the whole Church has *not* been united and

that each one of us within the Church—in one way or another—has contributed to this tragic situation. We also recognize that Christians are a minority people in the world. In many ways, the Church mirrors not what *might be*—the coming of the Kingdom—but *what is*. We have gathered together in our local congregations to join in the Lord's Supper, but we have not carried out in practice the significance of the sacrament for the whole Church and the whole world. We have come together in our churches to hear the Word, but we have not been fully obedient to that word in its demand for unity in the Church nor in its call for us to be a witness to the world, proclaiming the Gospel and bringing healing in the midst of brokenness.

In a spirit of repentance, we acknowledge our unfaithfulness and our disobedience, and we make this statement about the unity of the Church with the prayerful hope that it may be a step toward doing the will of God more fully. Our statement is given its theological structure by the Apostles' Creed, within which we have recognized the gift, task, and promise of unity in Jesus Christ.

God the Father

To believe "IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH" is to affirm God's gift of a good creation. Sin has disrupted the unity between God and each person, the unity between people, and the unity of the creation itself (Romans 8:20). As participants in God's creation, we are to work for the restoration of its created wholeness (Ephesians 1:9-10). That God is creator means that the Christian life is to be relevant to the entire created world: its social, political, economic, ecological, and ethical structures are to be brought under God's rule for the restoration of God's good creation.

"The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God" (Romans 8:19). The Kingdom of God is already here, but not yet here in its fullness. Humankind does not have the ability to bring in the Kingdom of God, least of all in the form of secular utopias. Because God is the creator, and because "those who oppress the poor insult their maker" (Proverbs 14:31), the Christian must live for the poor and work for social, economic, political, and ecological righteousness, looking forward to the full realization of the promise that "God will be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28).

God the Son

To believe "IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY" is to confess the incarnation of Jesus Christ, recognizing and receiving Jesus as God's gift for the salvation of the world. Through Christ's death and resurrection, God has reconciled the world to himself, and provided forgiveness and reconciliation in Christ's name. The cross declares God's suffering for the world and calls us to identify with our sisters and brothers in their suffering.

To confess the incarnation of Christ is to confess that the gift of life in Christ—acceptance as children of God—must be expressed through the breaking down of barriers between groups, whether national, economic, or sexual (Galations 3:22). In the gift of Jesus Christ, therefore, we have the gift of unity, for *it is* in the incarnate Christ that all dividing walls of hostility are broken down.

It is the task of the Church to proclaim this Gospel of reconciliation and to build up the Body of Christ. We cannot say too clearly that Jesus Christ is the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord. We are called to proclaim Christ to all people who have not yet heard, and to the principalities and powers that resist God's rule of justice and righteousness (Colossians 2:13-15).

The incarnate Lord Jesus is also the head of the one Body, which is the Church. Just as Christ is incarnate—revealed in the reality of human life—so now the unity of Christ's Body in the Church must be incarnate, becoming visible and real in this world. As long as we are unwilling to witness to our unity in Christ by together sharing the bread and the cup of Christ at the holy table, the judgment that stood over the divided Corinthian church stands over us, too: "Any who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink in judgment upon themselves" (1 Corinthians 11:29). Indeed, "that is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (11:30). For us as for the Christians of Corinth, our unity in Christ must embrace both differing intellectual opinions and differing economic situations.

The Spirit has promised that, in union with Christ, we are given all things: justification, sanctification, and the very oneness of the Body of Christ, for "in Christ all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17b). As we faithfully receive that promise and grow together into the fullness of Christ, then the world—seeing our love for one another—may more readily believe. Our proclamation of the resurrection may then be the more eagerly received in order that "all will confess that Jesus is Lord" (Philippians 2:11).

God the Holy Spirit

To confess belief "IN THE HOLY SPIRIT" is to acknowledge the gift of the Spirit's presence in the Church and in the world and to remember the freedom of the Spirit to be at work in every part of God's creation. The Spirit unites us with Christ and ever renews and unites the Church, teaching us how to love and serve one another. The gifts of the Spirit are for the proclaiming of the Gospel and for the building of the Body of Christ through worship, fellowship, nurture, and service.

To confess the Holy Spirit is to acknowledge our need for prayer. Divisions will be broken down as God's people pray together. For the Spirit helps us in our present weakness, "for we do not know how to pray as we ought," and the Spirit "intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

To confess the gift of the Holy Spirit is also to confess the gift of "THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH." Christians have the task of showing forth this holiness of the Church both in our personal lives and in our life together. And we demonstrate the catholicity of the Church by "having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" in Christ (Philippians 2:2). Catholicity welcomes a diversity which is surrounded by the joy of unity, "for there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:4). Our particular heritage, then, does not have to be a cause of disunity, but should rather be a contribution to the richness of the Body of Christ.

God's promise of the holy catholic Church finds its "already," its present reality, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In each celebration, the fullness of Christ and the Church is present. But we also live in the "not yet" of being

separated from other Christians. Nonetheless, let it not be our sin of schism or pride that denies other Christians a place at Christ's table.

Yet another gift of the Spirit is "THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS," that great cloud of witnesses throughout the world and throughout the centuries who—by that one Spirit—have been baptized into the one Body of Christ. The communion of saints in the one Christ means that all baptisms in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit must be honored. Such a baptism is valid because its source is the triune God and not any denomination. (Therefore, re-baptism is not an appropriate action within the holy catholic Church.)

We are called to give visible expression to the catholicity of the Church and to the communion of the saints. This task calls us to respect and to participate in Christ's sacraments as celebrated in other churches—by mutual recognition of membership in the body of Christ (that is, receiving by transfer rather than requiring a second confession of faith) and by mutual recognition of ministries (accepting clergy by examination rather than re-ordination).

The unity of the Church does not require uniformity. But when the followers of Jesus found themselves in a disagreement that threatened their unity, they gathered in council (Acts 15). During the first centuries of its life, the Church several times again sought unity through councils representing the whole Church. but now for over a thousand years, the Church has been so divided that no truly ecumenical council could be held. As we approach the beginning of the third millenium since the time of Jesus, we pray that Christ's Church—Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant—may meet together in full, ecumenical council to further our visible unity of witness and mission, which is for the sake of God's new creation (Galations 6:15).

To confess the Holy Spirit is also to confess God's gift of "THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS," to all who repent. We are to proclaim the message of forgiveness to the world, as we are to accept that gift for ourselves. We are free to be forgiven the social, racial, economic, national, geographic, and historic sins that keep us apart. We are free by the power of the Spirit, to turn away from our sins. We are free to bear the burdens of our sisters and brothers who groan under economic exploitation and political oppression.

We may accept forgiveness for sins of pride, when we have counted the glory of our particular heritage before the glory of the Cross. We may accept forgiveness for the sins of pride in our self-sufficiency in theology, polity, and piety. We may accept forgiveness for our unwillingness to share in the treasures of Christian life and witness which come from other traditions.

To confess the Holy Spirit is to confess "THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY." Because God will not let the creation go, but will restore its goodness, we must be about the works of God, growing into the fullness of Christ, confessing that Jesus is Lord and that God will be all in all, and therein is "THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN."

B. The Unity of the Church and Our Tasks in Mission

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is given to all followers of Christ. Through obedience to the Great Commission, individuals and groups are placed in relationship with all others who are obedient to the same command. As the

Reformed Church seeks ways to be obedient to the Great Commission, a primary question about every proposed RCA ministry and mission should be "Can this be done with others?"

Living with all other disciples of Christ under the Great Commission, we are always in a tension. On the one hand, we feel the urgency of the Great Commission to be going now to all the world, baptizing, preaching, teaching. On the other hand, we are aware of the danger of contradicting our essential unity through unilateral actions which may duplicate, undercut or compete with other churches. As we think about beginning or continuing our programs and ministries, we obligate ourselves to the principle of rigorously examining how we can accomplish our objectives ecumenically. We commit ourselves to serious consultation with and involvement of other Christians in programs and ministries. This does not relieve us of our responsibility to proceed alone, if necessary, in the hope that others will join us later as partners.

The suffering of our brothers and sisters in Christ in the USA and Canada and around the world makes us aware of oppression and injustice. When the Church speaks out about human rights and justice, its concern is not only for other Christians but includes all oppressed people. We recognize that when we speak, we must be sensitive to those we claim to speak for and with, and we must try to recognize and deal with any possible contradictions between our words and our deeds.

In international ministries, the RCA has long been committed to work with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, the United Church of Christ in Japan, the Church of South India, the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, and the Middle East Council of Churches. The primary responsibility for witnessing in any geographical area is that of the churches in that area. The RCA must continue to seek and find ways of working with and through these churches in order to carry out our own commitment to the Great Commission.

We recognize that in obedience to the Great Commission, *all* churches are to be both sending and receiving churches. In the Reformed Church, however, we have focused on sending and have given little thought to receiving.

> 1. We RECOMMEND that the RCA develop ways to receive effectively from partner churches. This could be done, for example: by Synod officers visiting other countries (as in the President of General Synod's 1980 visit to South Africa); by an exchange of clergy or lay leaders (as in the visit of pastors to India and the Middle East a few years ago); and by the participation of ecumenical delegates from overseas partner churches in our General Synod. Ways should also be developed to help RCA business people who are working overseas to relate in significant ways to the local churches of the country where they are stationed. Finally, we in the Reformed Church should consider receiving missionaries, sent to us by partner churches overseas, in order to help us with our own mission to the people of the United States and Canada.

It is essential that we develop new and effective ways of communicating to RCA people the vital meaning of ecumenical relationships with churches around the world. Some suggested ways are: involving Christians from other nations in deputation programs; setting up pastor exchanges with our congregations; using video tapes to create life-like awareness; raising our awareness of the numbers, strength, and gifts of the Christians in Africa and other areas now largely un-

known to us; making more intentional, strategic use of missionaries on furlough, and encouraging a realignment of Partner-In-Mission shares to help the effectiveness of furloughing missionaries; seeking assistance and counsel from partner churches in the whole task of communications.

In national ministries, we have these concerns and recommendations:

2. We RECOMMEND that in initiating new congregations and in consolidating established congregations, the Division of Church Planning and Development and the involved synod and classis consult with the denominations in that area, especially those with whom the RCA is in ecclesiastical fellowship.

3. We RECOMMEND that congregations, classes, and synods build into their development processes a routine consultation with other churches and agencies in the hope of joint action in issue-oriented, service-oriented, and relief ministries.

4. We RECOMMEND that the approval processes for program and development grants related to synodical and classical bodies hold applicants accountable for having determined whether the project might be done in cooperation with other churches.

5. We RECOMMEND that local congregations actively and consistently seek to share facilities, staff, program resources, leadership, and educational/training/growth events.

6. We RECOMMEND that local congregations actively and consistently seek to share through recognition of one baptism, through sharing of the Lord's Supper, through mutual recognition of ministries, through prayer for other churches, through exposition from common lectionaries, through sending and receiving of delegations of communicants among other local congregations, through joint liturgies (including weddings and funerals), through pulpit exchanges, and through any other means which may bind together the local expression of Christ's body in celebrating and witnessing to our unity. Because there is now a variety of practice throughout the denomination, we ask that the Reformed position in these matters be clarified.

C. The Unity of the Church and Our Ecumenical Relationships

The first task of the ecumenical movement is the visible unity of the Christian Church. In relationships of giving and receiving with other Christians, we grow together as we admonish, correct, instruct, and strengthen one another. A united church will be a sign to the whole world of the intended reconciliation of all God's creation in Christ (Ephesians 1:10). We are challenged to participate in God's promise to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven. This quest for visible unity includes working for unity within our own denomination.

Our relationships within our denomination as well as with other churches are based on what we have and believe in common—"one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." These common gifts draw us together and hold us together. But we also come together because of our differences—as the first Christians did at the

Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). Through honest and open discussion, we must try to identify and understand our differences—honoring those differences which show a rich diversity and trying to overcome those differences which separate us—that the unity Christ prayed for may become visible, so that our mission to the world may be faithfully carried out.

We wish to affirm the wide range of ways in which Christians in the RCA are already in active fellowship and ministry with other Christians from a wide variety of differing Christian traditions, denominations, and movements. RCA people are now involved, for example, in the charismatic movement, in various Christian movements for social justice, in retreat activities, in neighborhood Bible studies with both Roman Catholics and Protestants, and in many other nurture, evangelism, and outreach activities which cross denominational and doctrinal lines.

We know that many of these involvements have a profound ecumenical significance for RCA members and congregations. We believe that the call to Christian unity embraces all the ways in which Christians are led into experiences of unity with one another. We encourage the whole denomination to understand the ecumenical significance of these kinds of involvements, as well as those exploring organizational cooperation and institutional unity (for example, councils of churches, or the Reformed Church's special relationship with the Christian Reformed Church). Unless people in the pews catch the ecumenical vision and participate in it, little genuine progress can be made toward Christian unity. We therefore rejoice in the growing awareness of the importance of local ecumenical activity.

7. We RECOMMEND that the denomination find creative ways of increasing participation in such trans-denominational movements and activities in light of their significance for Christian unity.

Relationships and our Structures

We believe that the time has come for our particular synods and classes to establish Committees on Christian Unity, whose responsibility would be to keep the ecumenical task and vision before Reformed Church people within each judicatory of the church.

8. We RECOMMEND that each classis and each particular synod now appoint its own Committee on Christian Unity to make concern for other churches part of the agendas of the particular synods and classes.

9. We RECOMMEND that our policies and practices concerning ecumenical delegates be reviewed, in order to make our ecumenical relationships more visible. Specifically, we suggest: a) that denominations with whom we are in ecclesiastical fellowship always be invited to exchange delegates with us, and that such delegates be asked to stay for the entire session of the meeting, be assigned to committees, and have voice and vote on the floor; b) that other denominations be invited—according to a schedule of rotation or by special circumstance—to participate in the same manner; c) that all ecumenical delegates be asked to give us an evaluative report.

Church to Church Relationships

Since 1976, the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church have been in formal "ecclesiastical fellowship." Our two denominations are working together in more and more areas such as youth in ministry, Christian education, and joint support of institutions. There is encouragement of joint worship and of pastoral exchanges.

> 10. We RECOMMEND increased cooperative endeavors between our denominations, especially in establishing joint policies and programs in the concerns of social justice. Wherever possible, we urge the beginning of an RCA-CRC classical committee.

The Reformed Church's life and mission has been enriched and strengthened through its long association with churches in other countries.

> 11. We RECOMMEND that the Reformed Church continue to strengthen our ties with churches in other countries, so that we may stand together in the struggle for justice and worldwide Christian unity and mission.

We are pleased to know that the "Southern Presbyterians" (PCUS) and the "United Presbyterians" (UPUSA) are now talking together about the possibility of union. For several years, the Reformed Church has accepted their invitation to send observers to these talks.

> 12. We RECOMMEND that we continue our observer-relationship with this particular effort toward visible unity in Christ.

We have considered the history of the RCA's relationship to the Consultation on Church Union—conversations now involving ten Protestant denominations.

> 13. We RECOMMEND that the Reformed Church continue and broaden its observer/consultant relationship to COCU through the establishment of direct relationships between RCA and COCU commissions, which would include our participation in COCU commissions and our study and response to the working papers of the Consultation.

Relationships Through Ecumenical Bodies

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches is a "confessional family" of which we have long been a part. Coming together with those in our particular branch of the Church is a way of growing toward the unity of the whole Church. The World Alliance has been making such a contribution to the ecumenical movement: it has represented the Reformed-Presbyterian family in conversations with the Roman Catholic Church. The work of the World Alliance enhances the worldwide unity of the Church.

> 14. We RECOMMEND that the RCA affirm our continuing participation in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

The Reformed Church in America is a charter member of both the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. We affirm that heri-

tage and our conviction that such participation is a valuable and essential part of our mission and witness.

> 15. We RECOMMEND that the RCA strengthen our historical ties of membership in both the National Council of Churches of Christ and in the World Council of Churches.

Relationships Through Joint Action

Another form of ecumenical activity is joint action through coalitions which are formed around a specific mission or ministry.

> 16. We RECOMMEND that the RCA continue its participation in Joint Educational Development and in the Joint Strategy and Action Committee, and that the RCA consider participation in the United Ministries in Higher Education.

Relationships Beyond the Church

We also encourage sharing between RCA congregations and gatherings of people of other faiths, especially Jews and Muslims. Such sharing should include seeking to understand each other's tradition, having fellowship, and working together.

We are aware, however, that the consultation has not had time to deal adequately with ancient and emerging issues of our relationship to people of other religions and ideologies.

> 17. We RECOMMEND therefore that at some future date appropriate agencies of the Reformed Church explore in depth the nature and theological significance of our relationships with Jews and Muslims as well as with those of other faiths. We believe that, through such exploration, we will discover opportunities to move beyond previous attitudes of mutual antagonism and beyond syncretistic approaches which deny one's own roots.

We know that God's work is not limited to the Church, and that there are other people and groups striving for human dignity and justice. We urge that the Reformed Church and its people support and become involved in such groups that are compatible with the life and work of the Church.

D. The Unity of the Church and Our Educational Programs

Recognizing and rejoicing in the oneness of the Body of Christ and in its rich diversity, our goal is for Christians and congregations of the RCA to continue: to develop an understanding and appreciation of our Reformed Church heritage and diversity; to understand other Christians and their traditions; to accept other persons and traditions as part of the Body of Christ; to identify where the Spirit is already moving us toward unity, as well as to identify those points where barriers and brokenness exist; and to undertake faithful ecumenical activities which lead to a larger expression of our unity in Christ.

Educational Opportunities for Ordained Ministers

We urge the denomination to recognize that this cluster of goals has important implications for the formal training of seminary students and for the continuing education of our ministers. People graduating from seminary urgently need to have ecumenical knowledge and experience.

> 18. We RECOMMEND that the seminaries develop an outline of purpose for the ecumenical aspects of seminary training.

Such a plan might include: an affirmation of the ecumenical dimension of courses already being taught and an expansion of this crucial part of theological education; the development by the seminaries' administrations of at least ten opportunities in ecumenical relationships for each student during the student's three years of seminary; an offering of new courses—possibly required—in the history of the ecumenical movement and in the ecclesiology of the whole Church; the requirement by the Board of Theological Education of an examination in ecumenics for those candidates coming to us from other seminaries (in the process of seeking a dispensation from the professorial certificate); and the development of a formal program of continuing education for the ordained clergy of the Reformed Church which would foster the ecumenical movement.

> 19. We RECOMMEND that representatives of the General Synod's Committee on Christian Unity work with the Board of Theological Education, in order to explore these and other ways in which education for ecumenism may be strengthened and expanded for our ministers. We suggest, too, that these goals be shared with the departments of religion at the three RCA colleges.

Educational Opportunities for Reformed Church Members

We know that there are already significant ecumenical experiences taking place on many levels in the Reformed Church, and we want to promote, encourage, and stimulate these in all possible ways. We believe, too, that the church's leadership needs to encourage and provide ecumenical learning experiences for more members of the denomination. Therefore, we challenge the Reformed Church in America to move into a church-wide program of education for ecumenism at all levels.

> 20. We RECOMMEND specifically that ecumenical experiences be provided for people of all ages by the Christian Education programs of our local congregations, and that these experiences include cross-cultural and trans-national activities and the encouragement of covenant relationships between congregations of the Reformed Church and other churches.

> 21. We RECOMMEND as well that the Committee on Christian Unity work together with the General Program Council to implement a formal plan for ecumenical learning experiences. We urge that such a plan be as comprehensive as possible, and that it include long-term educational strategies as well as short-term education events.

Within the constraints of funds and staff time available, such a plan might include: a survey of existing ecumenical resources; the use of the 1982-83

Heritage and Hope Series to focus on Christian unity; educational events in the particular synods; educational events conducted singly or in clusters within classes; educational events in congregations; on-going church-wide promotion and interpretation; the development of special resources; scholarships for ecumenical involvements; periodic review and evaluation.

R-7.
To send the Report of the Ecumenical Consultation to the classes and appropriate RCA agencies for study and response to the Committee on Christian Unity by March 31, 1981. (ADOPTED)

The Committee on Christian Unity has received the report of the Ecumenical Consultation and wishes to consider it deliberately during the coming year in the light of responses from affected commissions, agencies, and judicatories.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM REPORTS OF ECUMENICAL AGENCIES

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches

A Challenge to the WARC

Today more than ever, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has a special responsibility and significance, with a claim upon the interest and support of all member churches in our fellowship. The last two years witnessed a greater involvement in interconfessional contact and dialogue.

We all have to become more and more aware of the reality of our *family* with 145 member churches throughout the world. When the new WARC took shape with the 1970 Uniting General Council, there were 120 member churches. In less than a decade 25 new churches joined, indicating not only a numerical development, but also a desire to be together in order the better to meet the challenge of Christian witness and mission at national and local levels. This year, three new Churches were received:

1. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Chile.

2. The Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera, Indonesia.

3. The Evangelical Congregational Church in Argentina.

Unfortunately, we have to realize that in the present world situation violations of *human rights* have become a everyday occurrence. In this perspective the Alliance examined the situation of some member churches which are especially exposed to pressure, due either to their minority situation or to political reasons. Concern was expressed and encouragement given to churches in Iran, Lithuania, Mozambique, South Africa, and Taiwan.

Facing the Challenge in the Theological Field

Integral to the work of the Department of Theology is the impossible possibility of trying to keep abreast of developments in the thinking of the member churches in 78 different countries. Here are lifted up certain salient points concerning 1979:

—Are there pointers in the Latin American scene? The new passion for social justice evidenced by the Roman Catholic church on that continent is scarcely matched by a like concern on the part of our Reformed churches in that setting. What is the relationship between the gospel and social justice?

—In North America and in Europe and in many other parts of the world there is a growing groundswell of concern, urging our churches to greater commitment in direct evangelism. Mission today? How is the gospel to be communicated?

—Many of our churches have enthusiastically taken up the theme for the 1980, Melbourne, CWME Assembly on "Your Kingdom Come", but unfortunately there is still evidence that the problem of 'the verticalists' and 'the horizontalists' is still with us. The very question takes on sharper profile, the more the churches are aware of the terrifying dimensions of certain current socio-economic-political challenges *and* of the implications for the people of God, living out their witness under the obedience of the gospel.

—In the developing world the uncertainties of the inter-faith dialogue have many worried at the point of mission and/or dialogue. While the accent on indigenisation in theology continues to gather momentum and brings with it an ever multiplying variety of interpretations of the Kingdom.

That represents only a partial segment of a random cross-cut. On the ecumenical front many churches are obviously perplexed in attempting to assess the direction and policy of the Roman Catholic church. At the same time the official world-level dialogue between the WARC and the Roman Catholic church continues. In May, 1980, we shall have the joint evaluation session of the dialogue on 'The Presence of Christ in Church and World'. In October, 1980, the mixed commission, Lutheran and Reformed/Roman Catholic on 'The Theology of Marriage and the Problems of Mixed Marriages' will assess reactions from the member churches and the Roman Catholic episcopal conferences. We should note the evaluation is being done *together* in the spirit of genuine dialogue. The pilot Anglican/Reformed consultation in 1978 has borne results with both parties officially mandated for a four-year span of conversations to start by the end of 1980. Following the first WARC world-level visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Constantinople, by a group of Reformed theologians led by the president of the WARC, July, 1979, discussions are continuing as to the subject matter and procedures for a possible Orthodox/Reformed dialogue embracing both world communions. Conversations also continue through the Moscow Patriarchate, mainly between Reformed and Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe with the third colloquium in Budapest in October, 1979. Within the common heritage of our Reformation faith the rapproachement between Lutheran and Reformed is further facilitated by a common decision last year of the executive committees of the Lutheran World Federation and the WARC to appoint within each executive committee three persons with a monitoring role to report annually on Lutheran/Reformed relations.

Considerable interest centered on two consultations in 1979. In March representatives of all ten member churches in the Republic of South Africa met under the sponsorship of the WARC Regional Committee for three days intense theological

discussion on 'The Church and Social Responsibility'. In September the two member churches in Korea hosted a consultation attended by sister churches from as far apart as Thailand and Japan with the dramatic theme, 'The Hope: God's Suffering in Man's Struggle'. Clearly the implications of these events, now under study among the churches of the respective areas, have a direct relevance for the continuing WARC study of the 'covenant' theme. Comment on the WARC 'covenant' study from other areas of the world has certainly not been lacking. A massive study program is underway in the theological committee of the North American and Caribbean Area, while the European Committee has adopted the 'covenant' theme for the European Area Council, Romania, September, 1980, 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people'.

All of this helped the Department of Theology with the executive committee to reach clarity on the WARC theme for the forthcoming General Council, Canada, 1982. The theology of the covenant and the theology of the Kingdom stand in the closest possible relationship. The concern among the churches for the mission of the Kingdom is more and more in the forefront. The thinking of our executive committee in September clearly recognised that the same emphasis, also present in the broad *oikoumene,* should be further reinforced. But to accent the Kingdom amid the appalling uncertainties of contemporary world history is to articulate forcibly the question of the Christian understanding of the theology of power. Confronted by the claims of illegitimate powers, do the Reformed still possess a specific contribution? And so the study theme for the 1982 General Council was defined: "Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory". We shall all hear more of this in the next two-and-a-half years.

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

1979 was a stable year in the life of the National Council of Churches, with continuing, solid work being done across a broad spectrum. Through careful controls, a balanced budget was effected, and staff operations and competence were strengthened.

A comprehensive energy policy statement that was the culmination of a process begun five years before was passed by the Governing Board. Policy is now being translated into program.

The Middle East was a continuing concern. The Governing Board approved a recommendation of a special panel of NCC leaders calling for a new NCC Middle East policy in 1980. Friendship Press prominently featured the Middle East in mission study materials.

Human Rights Lifted Up

Both behind the scenes and publicly, work continued for the advancement of human rights around the world, particularly regarding El Salvador, South Korea, Iran, and South Africa.

The working committee of The Churches Human Rights Program for the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act had its first meeting in Geneva. The program is co-sponsored by the NCC, Canadian Council of Churches, and Conference of European Churches.

Twice the Orthodox Church in America brought forward resolutions regarding the USSR and Eastern Europe and both times the Governing Board took action on behalf of Eastern Europeans denied their human rights.

Christian Bridgebuilding Continued

A three-day disarmment meeting was held in March in Geneva with an NCC delegation led by President M. William Howard and a delegation of church leaders from the U.S.S.R. led by Metropolitan Juvenaly, chairman of external church relations for the Russian Orthodox Church.

The statement that was jointly developed in the meeting contained a ringing call to both nations to follow the biblical injunction to "choose life." It called for the earliest possible approval of the Salt II accords, among other disarmament efforts. The statement was affirmed by the NCC Governing Board.

Another disarmament dialogue took place at Stony Point, N.Y. in September, between the NCC and leaders of the German Democratic Republic. This was a follow-up of a similar meeting in the G.D.R. the year before.

On invitation from the NCC, the first official group of Christians from the People's Republic of China to visit the U.S. in 30 years participated in discussions with church leaders in New York concerning the past, present, and future role of Christians in the People's Republic. They also traveled to several U.S. cities accompanied by NCC China program director, Dr. Franklin J. Woo.

Thirty U.S. church leaders dialogued with a three-person delegation from the Christian Confernce of Asia at Stony Point, N.Y. in April. The Asian team challenged the Americans to examine their presuppositions in their involvements with the churches in Asia.

Wide-Ranging Aid Provided

Church World Service (CWS) the relief and development agency of the NCC, launched a $5 million emergency appeal for Cambodia, set up a relief office in Phnom Penh to handle aid in cooperation with other international agencies functioning there, and formed an umbrella group of six American voluntary agencies to effect a coordinated effort.

Nicaragua was another major CWS relief recipient. CWS member communions received a $500,000 emergency appeal following the civil unrest that left a quarter of the population displaced by fighting and ultimately unseated the Somoza regime. The NCC has had a long-time concern for human rights in Nicaragua.

CWS refugee sponsorships more than tripled in 1979 to 15,500. Of these, 10,000 were Indochinese. In 1978, the total was 4,864, with 2,284 from Indochina. CWS also sponsored two regional consultations on the many sides of the refugee issue, as well as a Washington consultation on the Refugee Act of 1979.

In 1979 CWS shipped 48,701,205 net pounds of material aid valued at $14,881,420 to 55 countries. By year end, total overseas shipments since CWS was founded in 1946 were more than 4.6 billion pounds of food, clothing, medical supplies and other aid valued at more than $564 million.

Membership Trends

A seven-year decline in mainline Protestant membership appeared to be slowing down, according to the *1979 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches,* edited by the NCC's Office of Research, Evaluation, and Planning.

Christian Unity

The effect that churches' differing opinions on social issues have on Christian unity was explored by the Faith and Order Commission. Abortion and homosexuality were the two issues used as examples in the study that was widely distributed. The document does not take positions on the controversial subjects, but provides guidelines for discussion and expresses the hope that through open and honesty exchange, "Christian unity may grow and be maintained."

The World Council of Churches

For the World Council of Churches (WCC), 1979 proved in many ways to be a pathway to a new decade. Possibly the most outstanding event of the year occurred in July at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Nearly 400 scientists and theologians from all parts of the world gathered to attend the World Council's World Conference on Faith, Science, and the Future. Studying the relationship between science and religious faith, the participants grappled with the technological and ethical problems that many of us will encounter increasingly as the new decade unfolds: ecological imbalances, genetic engineering, computer technology, and perhaps most urgent, nuclear power and nuclear arms race. The resolution also calls for preparing local and national programs that will convert military research and production facilities to civilian use and the retraining and reemployment of affected personnel. Delegates to the conference cited the need for education about the realities of nuclear war and vowed "never again to allow science and technology to threaten the destruction of human life and to accept the God-given task of using science for peace."

In October, the WCC through its Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS), launched a $2.5 million appeal for the victims of the upheavals in Kampuchea. Throughout 1979, the WCC continued to support the needs of people throughout the world, most notably in Nicaragua, which is still recovering from recent civil uprisings, and in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, where massive humanitarian assistance remains an urgent need. The World Council welcomed the 1979 agreement reached at the Lancaster House Conference in London on Zimbabwe and the Independence constitution, transition plans and cease-fire. Following this agreement, the WCC urged its member communions to recognize the massive humanitarian needs related to the return of refugees, resettlement of displaced persons and the rebuilding of a wartorn country. It also called for continuing support of the Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS) as it expands its ongoing humanitarian program for people of Zimbabwe.

In May 1980, a World Conference on Mission and Evangelism will take place in Melbourne, Australia. Sponsored by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council, this Conference represents an opportunity for all member churches to come together to study and pray for the future of missionary service. The theme of the meeting, "Your Kingdom Come," reflects the multi-

dimensional task of the missionary vocation as it is pursued in a world that often makes His Kingdom a nearly inaccessible mystery.

In New York, the U.S. Conference for the World Council of Churches during 1979 maintained its close relationships to WCC member churches in the United States. The U.S. Conference is responsible for keeping American churches informed of all WCC events through frequent news releases and a newly established speakers network. One of the major projects begun in 1979 and which will continue throughout the 1980s involves a plan for follow-up studies within the American churches of the issues confronted at the MIT Conference.

The U.S. Conference also looks forward to an assembly schedule in October 1980 which will be special follow-up Conference on the Melbourne meeting. This Assembly, to be held in Madison, Wisconsin, will focus on the ways in which U.S. member churches can participate in and fulfill the needs of the evangelistic movement throughout the world.

Overtures

Withdraw from World Council of Churches

1. **The Classis of California overtures the General Synod to withdraw the Reformed Church in America from the World Council of Churches.**

Reasons:

1. The World Council of Churches seems to have lost sight of its historic purpose as a world fellowship of missional organizations, brought together to strengthen an evangelical witness to the Christian faith.

2. The commission of the World Council of Churches administering the Fund to Combat Racism has given support to some organizations which have chosen to use violence as a means of establishing changes in their society.

3. The World Council of Churches continues to give financial aid to organizations which have chosen to use violence as a means of establishing changes in their society when we, along with other member denominations, have voiced our disapporval of such aid.

The advisory committee recomended:

R-8.
To deny the overture and to instruct the Commission on Christian Unity to make available a comprehensive study paper on the subject of the RCA's involvement in the World Council of Churches to be completed by and reported to the 1981 General Synod. This study paper must answer the following two specific questions: "Who is the WCC?" and "Why should the RCA maintain its membership in the WCC?" (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

Reasons:
In response to the reasons given for the overture, the advisory committee has investigated the issues raised and in our judgment, the facts do not

*Additions in light face type.

warrant the extreme action of withdrawal. While we recognize that our membership in the World Council of Churches creates problems in certain areas of the church, it is the judgment of your advisory committee that those problems are better dealt with by involving the Reformed Church in America in the World Council of Churches and by educating our congregations than by withdrawing. We sympathize with pastors who have folk who will not join their churches because of our World Council membership, yet we affirm our need to be in contact with the Christian communities of the world. The World Council of Churches is currently the only organization which makes that contact possible.

CHURCH VOCATIONS

Report of the Board of Theological Education

Theological education plays a vital role in the life and witness of the Reformed Church in America. Therefore, we seek the sons and daughters, and the financial and prayer support of the church in order to provide leadership for the present and men and women with vision for the future.

Missiologists have pointed us to a world with a population of four billion. They talk of the 2.7 billion who are unreached for Christ. Our God has given us a responsibility toward them as well as the nurture and challenge of those who are committed to Christ. As we train persons for the work of ministry, we equip them for leading the church into greater maturity and for completing the great unfinished task of cross-cultural evangelism. In the decade of the eighties we will continue to provide quality theological education through our three-year programs at our two seminaries and continuing education for others throughout the church. Education turns back ignorance, and light dispels darkness. May the light of the knowledge in Christ light the path for many in this life and in the life to come.

FACULTIES

We are pleased to report that we are presently operating with full faculties and administrative staffs since all positions have been filled at both New Brunswick and Western Theological Seminaries. The board is satisfied with the quality of teaching in our seminaries. The dedication of the administrative personnel and faculties is to be commended. We anticipate that the graduates of our seminaries will continue to be well-equipped for the work of ministry in the life of the church. The academic excellence in training also prepares for post-graduate study in theology those who are particularly gifted and motivated. We believe this quality of education continues to be necessary for the strength and growth of the church as able pastoral leadership is given to the body of Christ.

Last fall at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, the Reverend Bert Bossenbroek began his work as director of field work, Reverend George Hunsinger as professor in theology, Reverend Fred Mold as vice-president for financial affairs, and Mildred Romero as secretary to the faculty. The instructional staff has been supplemented this year with three adjunct faculty members. Dr. Horton Davies, professor of church history in the Graduate School of Princeton University, offered a seminar in the cooperative Ph.D. program which is also open to qualified seniors. Dr. Fay Yeager, professor of speech at Douglass College, taught speech to the senior class. The Reverend Marvin McMickle, pastor of St. Paul's Baptist Church in Montclair, N.J., taught in the biblical field in the New York program.

Dr. John Piet, professor at Western Theological Seminary, underwent surgery this past winter, and we pray for his continued health. He has been granted a reduced teaching load at the seminary. Dr. Robert A. Coughenour, professor of Old Testament, experienced a very stimulating sabbatical during the fall term at St. John's University and Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. Dr. Stanley Rock, professor of pastoral counseling and director of counseling, has had a book published by Zondervan. It is entitled *This Time Together* and is a guide for premarital counseling.

We are pleased with the dedication of the faculties at both seminaries who contribute substantially to the life of the church through speaking, writing, and in the

conducting of seminars and institutes. Many have been producing scholarly articles for recognized journals.

STUDENTS

At New Brunswick Seminary for the fall term of 1979, there was a total of 22 new students in degree programs, which brings the total student enrollment on campus to 80. Sixteen of the students are women. In addition, there are 17 in the New York extension program and 14 part-time students. We are pleased with the growth in student population at New Brunswick. We also note the addition of new students at the beginning of the second semester this past January.

Western Seminary began with a fall enrollment of 124, which includes seven Th.M. candidates, 11 special students, and 15 D.min. candidates. The student full-time equivalency is 115. At the writing of this report (March), there were 18 enrolled in the M.Div. program for the fall of 1980.

In view of the projected lower student population forecasted nationwide for the next few years, our seminaries are concerned also for their enrollments. Attention is being given to the time spent and type of recruitment needed in order to maintain and even increase the number of students in training for RCA ministry. Although we are not sure of all the reasons, we are concerned for the decreasing number of students from our RCA colleges enrolled in Reformed Church seminaries. We urge pastors to challenge gifted young people with potential for ministry to think seriously about theological training.

The board is grateful to God for the quality and commitment of the students at our seminaries. We believe they are receiving a theological training which will give them the tools for a productive ministry. Continue to pray that God will challenge many to prepare for leadership roles in the life of his Church.

FACILITIES

Building has begun on the new library complex on the campus at Western Seminary. A mild winter has made it possible for construction to move steadily ahead. The building is scheduled for completion in December of 1980. Renovation and refurbishing will also take place in the present building. The entire project is expected to be complete in time for celebration at the commencement in 1981. The entire goal for this building program is $4.2 million which includes the cost of construction and a one million dollar endowment for maintenance and utilities on the facility. As of January this year we passed the $3 million mark in cash and pledges. This total has been received through a fund drive which has lasted a little less than a year. It is hoped that we will be over the top by September of this year. Pray with us for continued response and faithful giving to the seminary in this fund drive. Without the support and affirmation of the church, we cannot succeed. We are grateful for the many gifts given thus far and for the positive attitude toward the seminary.

At New Brunswick we are looking forward to the celebration of the 200th anniversary in 1984. We hope that the renovation of Gardner Sage Library will be the focus of the celebration. Such a project will give many an opportunity in the church to tangibly support the seminary with special gifts. The management committee of the board continues to study the physical needs of the rest of the campus and hopes to restore all buildings to the best possible condition.

FINANCES

New Brunswick Seminary is blessed at the present with unprecedented financial support. The Charavay Estate, the Alumni Gift Appeal and increased contributions from congregations and individuals have made the financial future brighter. Western Seminary ended the 1978-9 fiscal year on June 30 in the black. There is the continued concern for the need in general operational support in the immediate years of the building project, when individuals and churches are giving large gifts and making pledges for the expansion program. As we face inflationary times, we are grateful to the seminaries' management of their funds. But we also encourage the church to meet their giving to the seminaries equal to what they have done in the past as well as to proportionally increase gifts in the future so as to keep up with rising costs. Operations at the two seminaries represent a sizeable financial responsibility. New Brunswick operated in 1979 on a budget of $662,510 and Western on a budget of $835,954. We do believe that the monies invested in sound theological education pay rich dividends in quality trained leaders and changed lives for Jesus Christ.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Both of our seminaries are doing admirable jobs of providing continuing education for clergy and laity alike. At Western the annual Fall Institute on the Lord's Supper attracted alumni from a great distance. Many ministers and lay people were attracted from other denominations in Western Michigan. Workshops on preaching have received enthusiastic support with good attendance. The D.Min. program is providing many pastors an opportunity to increase their skills and sharpen their insights for the work of ministry. The Western D.Min. program has recently received preliminary accreditation "without notation or reservation" by the ATS. At New Brunswick a series of lectures has been held on topics relating to ministry. Dr. Robert Raines lectured on church renewal, and Dr. Seward Hiltner on pastoral psychology. A D.Min. program is on the drawing board. Some required courses will now be taught in the evening on campus, which should prove to be attractive to a greater number of people. The growing success of the New York program makes the outreach of the seminary even greater. In February the seminary co-sponsored a seminar in preaching with Dr. John Bodo of San Francisco as leader. The sessions were entitled, "Preaching on Biblical Personalities."

CERTIFICATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Since the certification of Ministers and Directors of Christian Education is relatively new, we again draw to your attention the purpose of this certification. It 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." Your present inquiries may be addressed to the Board of Theological Education, the Office of Human Resources, or to Dr. Charles Wissink who serves as chair of the Credentials Committee. Five new people have been certified as Associate Directors of Christian Education. They are Patricia Vandermeulen, Barbara Scheevil, Marilyn Danels, Evelyn Vander Meer and William Donkersloot.

REFERRALS FROM GENERAL SYNOD

The General Synod 1979 adopted the following with regard to non-RCA seminary graduates seeking dispensations:

"To ask the Board of Theological Education to continue to study the problem of the large number of non-RCA seminary graduates seeking dispensations and to consider the options available." (*MGS,* 1979, p. 209)

After very careful study and reflection on this question, the Board has reached these conclusions and we submit the following response:

1) There are no obvious faults in our seminaries, theological or otherwise, that are responsible for some RCA students going to non-RCA schools.

2) It would be unwise to take action to require RCA students to attend RCA seminaries. Of all RCA students attending seminary, 80% of them are going to our schools. That 20% go elsewhere is one of the prices of living in a culture of variety.

3) The Board of Theological Education should make a point of remaining aware of this issue. To facilitate this awareness an administrative process will be established whereby Classes notify the denominational offices of the status of students under their care annually.

The advisory committee was informed about a "Pilot Project for Supervision of Enrolled Candidates for the Ministry" developed by the Classis of Schenectady.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-1.
To instruct the Board of Theological Education to study the "Pilot Model for Supervision of Enrolled Candidates for the Ministry" and report back to the 1981 General Synod.
(ADOPTED)

Reason:
The advisory committee believes that this model speaks to some of the issues involved in the questions the Board of Theological Education addressed, as well as to the supervision of candidates for the ministry.

The General Synod 1979 adopted a directive to the Board of Theological Education and the General Program Council to work out the administrative details on a scholarship program which would enable a student exchange between our seminaries and Stellenbosch University and Stofberg Theological College in South Africa. (*MGS,* 1979, p. 85).

Our joint recommendation is made with the following considerations:

First, a proposed realistic budget for a single student in the proposed South African Student Exchange would be:

Tuition and Fees	$1,850.00
Books	200.00
Room	650.00
Living Expenses (Board, Incidentals)	1,200.00
Air Fare/Tourist from Johannesburg	1,500.00
	$5,400.00

These costs would be increased if the student were to go or come from Cape Town. Tuition costs may be somewhat less for an American student in South Africa.

Second, while there seem to be few hindrances toward bringing a Black and/or Colored student to the United States, there appear to be several difficulties standing in the way of a student or students from the United States studying in South Africa. They are:

1. There are four Dutch Reformed Seminaries in South Africa: Stellenbosch, Stofberg, Pretoria and Wellington. It may therefore be advisable not to single out Stellenbosch and Stofberg but to investigate possibilities at the other two Dutch Reformed Seminaries in South Africa.

2. In both Stellenbosch and Stofberg, instruction is in the Afrikaans language-only.

3. Given racial tensions in South Africa, there may be extreme difficulty in recruiting a Black American student to go to South Africa for study.

4. The only English-speaking seminary in South Africa is Rhodes, a federation of Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. While sending an American student to Rhodes would surmount the language barrier, we would in the process, be avoiding the Dutch Reformed Church.

It appears, therefore, more feasible to bring a Black and/or Colored student to one of the Reformed Church Seminaries in the United States.

R-2.
To invite, under the auspices of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, a Black or Colored student from South Africa to study at New Brunswick Theological Seminary for a period of one year, with the following understandings:

- **— that the student be responsible for his/her round trip fare;**
- **— that the student have been ordained in his/her own church and desire to specialize in an MA Degree which will contribute to the life in his/her church;**
- **— that New Brunswick Theological Seminary assume responsibility for the full cost of the student while s/he is a student at the seminary.** (ADOPTED)

DISPENSATIONS

The board recommends to Synod the following persons for dispensation from the professorial certificate:

The Classis Cascades requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Mr. Bernard Dykstra. Mr. Dykstra did his undergraduate work at Western Washington St. College (B.A. 1975) and has completed his seminary education at Reformed Theological Seminary, (M.Div., 1979), and both he and the classis have met all the constitutional requirements.

R-3.
To grant Mr. Bernard Dykstra a dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Chicago requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Mr. Sam Hamstra, Jr. who has completed his undergraduate work at David Lipscomb (B.S. Music, 1976) and an M.A. at Wheaton Graduate School (1979). His seminary training has been taken at McCormick Theological Seminary (M.Div. 1980). Mr. Hamstra, Jr. and the Classis have met all the necessary constitutional requirements.

R-4.
To grant Mr. Sam Hamstra, Jr. a dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Pella requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for William A. Peake, Jr. who has completed his undergraduate work at Central College (B.A. 1975) and his seminary training at Dubuque Theological Seminary (M.Div. 1980). Both he and the Classis have met all the necessary constitutional requirements.

R-5.
To grant to Mr. William A. Peake, Jr. a dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of California requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Mr. Robert A. Schuller. Mr. Schuller did his undergraduate work at Hope College (B.A. 1976) and his seminary work at Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div. 1980). Both he and the Classis have met all the necessary constitutional requirements.

R-6.
To grant to Mr. Robert A. Schuller a dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Wisconsin requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Mr. Larry J. Ten Haken. Mr. Ten Haken earned a B.S. degree in 1975 from Stout State, Wisconsin, and a M.S. from Stout State in 1966. He took his seminary training at Covenant Theological Seminary (M.Div. 1980). Mr. Ten Haken and the Classis have met all the necessary constitutional requirements.

R-7.
To grant to Mr. Ten Haken a dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Minnesota requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Mr. Phillip Mettling. He did his undergraduate work at Buena Vista College, and he completed his seminary training at Dubuque Theological Seminary (M.Div. 1979). He presently serves as a Stated Supply at Grand View Reformed Church, Armour, South Dakota. Both he and the Classis have met all the necessary constitutional requirements.

R-8.
To grant to Mr. Phillip Mettling a dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Passaic requests a dispensation from the seminary's academic requirements and the professorial certificate for Mr. Richard Kooistra who presently serves as lay pastor of the Faith Chapel, Patterson, New Jersey. He is a graduate of the Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan and has been examined by the faculty of New Brunswick. He is 50 years of age. Both he and the Classis have met all constitutional requirements.

R-9.
To grant to Mr. Richard Kooistra a dispensation from the seminary's academic requirements and the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Paramus requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate and the Hebrew language requirement for Mr. Robert Nelson. Mr. Nelson is graduating from both Yale Medical School and Yale Divinity School. With academic training in both medicine and theology he hopes to pursue a career which will use uniquely his training in both disciplines. His work at both schools has complicated his schedule so that he has been unable to take Hebrew. Both he and the Classis have met all constitutional requirements.

R-10.
To grant to Mr. Robert Nelson a dispensation for the professorial certificate and the Hebrew language requirement. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Passaic requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Mr. William Heynen, age 62. Mr. Heynen was a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church for many years and then for a time was out of the ministry. He graduated from Calvin College in 1940 and Calvin Theological Seminary in 1943. He is presently working at First Church, Passaic as a lay-pastor.

R-11.
To grant to Mr. William Heynen a dispensation from the professorial certificate. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Queens requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate and the Hebrew and Greek language requirements for Ms. Fran De Jong. Ms. De Jong graduated from Central College in 1957 with a B.A. degree. She graduated

from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1960 with a M.A. degree. Since 1977 she has served as College chaplain at Central College, Pella, Iowa. She began her work as a director of Christian education in Spring Valley Reformed Church, New York, in 1960. From 1962-1970 she served in the same capacity at Wycoff Reformed Church in New Jersey. From 1970-1977, Ms. De Jong worked as a college chaplain under United Ministries in Higher Education at Morehead State University in Kentucky and the State University in Fredonia, New York. The reasons for this request are (1) Ms. De Jong's full time position at Central makes it impossible to return to a seminary for the language requirements, (2) when she began seminary study, ordination was not open to women and at the time our seminaries were giving no degree in religious education, (3) her present work would be enhanced if she were ordained.

R-12.
To grant to Ms. Fran De Jong a dispensation from the professorial certificate and the Hebrew and Greek language requirements. (ADOPTED)

The Classis of Minnesota requests a dispensation from the professorial certificate for Mr. Virgil L. Stewart. He did his undergraduate work at Northwestern College, Iowa (B.A. 1977) and completed his seminary training at Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div. 1980). We are not recommending the granting of a dispensation at the present time, but we are encouraging him to take some further work, particularly in the area of Clinical Pastoral Education, under the guidance of the Western Theological Seminary faculty. It is our hope that he can be recommended for dispensation in the near future.

The Classis of Newark has requested a dispensation from the Seminary's academic requirements and the professorial certificate for Mr. Gabriel Gonzales and Mr. Ronald Lowry. Mr. Gonzales attended the Bible Institute in Puerto Rico. He has served as a student-pastor of the First Hispanic Reformed Church in Newark, N.J. since September of 1976. Mr. Lowry attended Pace College and has taken courses at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. He is 54 years of age and serves as a parish worker of the North Reformed Church, Newark. The Classis of Illinois has requested a dispensation from the Seminary's academic requirements and the professorial certificate for Mr. James P. Medendorp, Sr. He attended Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids and Sioux Falls College. He is 45 years of age. Since 1975 he has served as an elder-pastor of Faith Reformed Church of Lanark, Illinois. Each of these three requests have been received late by the Board, and we do not believe we have had adequate time to process them or request the faculty of one of our seminaries to examine these persons so that we could with reasonable confidence recommend them to the Synod. We are, therefore, not recommending them for dispensation at the present time.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-13.
To instruct the BTE to waive the $200 dispensation fee for Ronald Lowry, Gabriel Gonzales and James Medendorp since they applied under the old rules. (ADOPTED)

OFFICERS

The following persons have been elected as officers of the Board of Theological Education and members of the executive committee for the coming year commencing July 1, 1980:

Jon Hinkamp, Chairperson
Louis Benes, Vice-Chairperson
Everett Zabriskie, Secretary
Jerrald Redeker, Treasurer
Herman De Jong
William Waldorf
Russell Vande Bunte

CONCLUSION

We commend each person in training for ministry at our Seminaries to the blessing and guidance of our God, and we rejoice for the quality of the students engaged in theological education. We are appreciative of the dedication of our faculties, staffs and presidents as they pursue academic excellence, and as they seek for deep spiritual commitment in the lives of the students. Let us continue as a church to pray for the calling of many into the ministry of Christ so that we will have adequate leadership to guide the membership of the present as well as to open doors through pioneer work in church planting and cross-cultural evangelism. The task is yet unfinished. We have a gospel to proclaim and service for Christ to fulfill.

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 . . ." (The Constitution and Rules of the Board of Pensions.)

During the period since General Synod last met, the Board of Pensions has faithfully carried out its purposes. Enrollment in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund now stands at 1,572 persons. Retirement benefits are provided to 519, and 1,500 are enrolled in the insurance programs provided by the board. As inflation continues to create problems for older retirees on small incomes, the amount provided through the board's Assistance Department increased from $150,116 in 1978 to $280,357 in 1979. This includes supplemental benefits paid to meet the $5,000 for a single person or $7,000 for a couple which is the board's current minimum support level. The only two sources of retirement income included in these estimates are Social Security and that which comes from the Board of Pensions. In a number of instances of special need, this level of minimum support has been exceeded.

Income during the past year showed an increase in contributions from churches and individuals from $92,351 in 1978 to $93,651 in 1979. In addition, income from investments was $247,792 in 1979, compared with $249,439 in 1978, while assessment income equalled $161,637 in 1979 compared with $162,430 in 1978. The Children's Christmas Fund received $22,898 in 1979, compared with $24,426 in 1978.

Of particular interest to members of the Annuity Fund is the rate of interest credited to individual accounts. As a result of an investment contract with the Travelers In-

surance Company which guarantees a return of 9.1% interest on the initial deposit and all subsequent deposits through 1983. In 1979 8.4% was credited to member accounts, .4% was applied to removal of a small remaining deficit in the fund, and .2% was retained for the board's administrative expenses. In the remarkable interest climate of 1980, a rate of return which appeared excellent only one year ago no longer seems as good. In fact, most of the current deposits in the Annuity Fund during 1979 were invested in the Reformed Church Cash Program, where they earned a considerably higher return. The increased income from these deposits makes it possible to remove the deficit faster than had been anticipated, and will eventually result in a somewhat higher credit to member accounts within the period of the present Travelers contract. A minimal annual deposit of $500,000 continues to be made with Travelers, sufficient to protect the integrity of the contract. In addition, $2.5 million has been placed in a portfolio of United States government securities with the State Street Bank of Boston, which will mature by December 31, 1983, and produce a minimal annual return of 12%.

The RCA insurance program has been improved again this past year. General Synod of 1979 expressed concern about the medical insurance premiums which have to be paid by retirees and the board studied the issue with some care. Instead of picking up the cost of premiums for all retirees, which at the time the study was made would have exceeded $50,000 per year and now would be much higher, it was decided to adopt a revised insurance program for retirees which assures them of coverage which is equal in all respects to that enjoyed under the RCA program prior to retirement. Instead of passing on the additional cost of this program to the retirees, their premium cost has been held at $108.00 per person per year, and the additional cost is being absorbed in the cost of the other insurance programs offered by the board in order to hold the premium cost to retirees at $108 per person per year. The board regularly provides emergency assistance to retirees who incur unusual medical costs. It seems that those with greatest need can best be helped by giving attention to increasing minimum assured income levels rather than giving additional blanket assistance in the form of a total insurance subsidy to all retirees regardless of need.

Other improvements during the year include a 15% increase in life and accidental death benefits to a maximum of $75,000 for each, an increase in the minimum life and accidental death benefit for older participants, with a new minimum of $22,500 each, an increase in the maximum medical benefit from $250,000 to $500,000, and the addition of "well-baby" coverage to the maternity insurance coverage.

Death benefits paid by the Board of Pensions upon the death of a retired minister or missionary had for some years been $1,000 for those in active service and $300.00 for the retired, but only if a spouse survived. This was revised to a uniform $1,500 death benefit for both non-retired and retired, whether or not a spouse survives.

Retirees who are ordained ministers have been permitted to exclude from taxable income up to 40% of the income they receive from the Board of Pensions as a "housing allowance," provided that they actually spend that much and it does not exceed the fair rental value (plus the cost of utilities) of their principal residence. Since some retirees are able to justify a housing allowance larger than 40%, the board now permits the filing of individual housing allowance forms for those who may be able to find this an advantage.

During the past year, the board's appeal for "Homes for Retired Ministers and Missionaries" continued to be made through advertisements in the *Church Herald.* While it is not expected that large numbers will respond by bequeathing their homes

to the Board of Pensions for continued use by retirees after they themselves are no longer able to occupy them, the steady increase in the price of retirement housing makes this program an essential part of the board's long-range plan. An increasing number of RCA clergy are being permitted to own their own homes instead of having to live in parsonages, but for those who will not be so blessed, a place to live in the years of retirement may well be an overwhelming problem. The bequest of a suitable home to the "Homes for Retired Ministers and Missionaries" program will make it possible for a series of retirees to live out their lives in dignity without having to bear the cost of equity in a home.

The program of visiting each retiree at least annually on behalf of the Board of Pensions is faithfully carried out by the senior pastors of the Reformed Church in America. Albert Van Dyke in California, Henry Vermeer in Iowa, Marion Klaaren in Michigan, Robert Geddes in the Southeast, Martin Punt in New Jersey and New England, and Franklin Hinkamp, assisted by Fred Bosch in New York all provide deeply appreciated personal contact and keep the board staff alert to needs as they arise.

The 1979 General Synod approved an amendment to the Constitution of the Board of Pensions, permitting a minister to withdraw up to 10 percent of the accumulation in his/her annuity fund account during the year prior to retirement upon submitting evidence of intent to purchase a home (*MGS,* 1979, p. 215). At its January 1980 meeting, the board considered a request that a minister be permitted to make this withdrawal at any time after the age of 59½. The following reasons accompanied the request:

— This withdrawal would make possible a purchase at an age when the minister is still on full employment and full salary benefits.

— The advantages of appreciation and equity would be given at an earlier date.

— Ministers would be given all the advantages of home ownership previous to retirement.

— Government regulations allow institution of annuities without penalty at the age of 59½.

The board concluded that the proposal had merit and therefore recommends the following amendment to its Constitution.

R-14.
To approve the following amendment to the final paragraph of Section 8 in Article III of the Constitution of the Board of Pensions (additions are underlined; deletions are enclosed in parentheses):

Upon reaching the age of 59½, (Within the year prior to entry into an age retirement annuity) a member may elect to receive a lump sum payment of up to 10 percent of the accumulation credited to the member from all required payments upon the submission of evidence of the member's intent to purchase (retirement) housing. (ADOPTED)

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The Office of Human Resources provides personnel support services to professional church workers of the Reformed Church in America. While the office is responsive to shifts in priorities, certain activities have become a standard part of the OHR services. Among these are the maintaining of the Minister and Church Profile systems, the recruitment and screening of missionaries, the availability of counseling resources for personal and family needs of RCA clergy and others who work for the church, the encouragement and support of continuing education among clergy, and such other projects as may be assigned by the General Synod Executive Committee, the General Program Council, or the Board of Pensions.

Among the more significant investments of time and staff energy this past year have been attention to support for women in ministry, the completion of recommendations for improved pastoral care of ministers and their families, the preparation of a set of guidelines for use by Pastoral Relations Committees in classes, establishment of contact with RCA students at non-RCA seminaries, the screening and recommendation for appointment of five new missionaries, administration of the Minority Education Fund, the Student Loan Revolving Fund, the New Jersey Funds, and Church Growth Leadership Development grants, and continued attention to personnel policies which affect RCA staff and missionaries.

Office of Human Resources staff include among their responsibilities the administration of policies and benefits of the Board of Pensions, the Adult Voluntary Services programs, and responsibility for services to RCA military and institutional chaplains.

RELATIONSHIP OF KIRKSIDE TO THE DENOMINATION

The General Synod, its executive committee and the Board of Directors of Kirkside, Inc., have been discussing the relationship of the Kirkside retirement home to the Reformed Church in America since 1975.

The following agreement, developed at a meeting of representatives of the GSEC and the Board of Kirkside, was reported to the General Synod of 1979:

> that on or about June 1, 1980, the Board of Direction, Reformed Church in America, will sell the real property of Kirkside, Roxbury, New York, including all land, buildings, furnishings, and equipment, to Kirkside, Inc., for the sum of $76,000.
>
> that on that same date, Kirkside, Inc. will compensate General Synod, RCA, $17,716.45, representing face amounts equal to the bequests of Gertrude Reaney, Marie Fisher Righter, and Peter Crane Righter, as listed in a sheet attached to a letter dated December 22, 1978, addressed to G. Douglas Griset, Esq., from Mr. W. J. O'Shea, of the law firm of Burns, Kennedy, Schilling and O'Shea; item 'B', nos. 2, 3, and 4.
>
> that in exchange for the above sum totalling $93,716.45, the General Synod waives its right to all other assets owned by or bequeathed to Kirkside, Inc.

It was also reported that the Particular Synod of Albany had agreed to assume the oversight of Kirkside, Inc., on the condition that the board present an acceptable

five-year plan demonstrating the "feasibility of the financial success of Kirkside." (*MGS,* 1979, pp 219-221)

Since then the Board of Kirkside applied to the O'Conner Foundation for a grant to purchase the real property at Kirkside from the General Synod; however, the application was not approved. Although the foundation indicated that the board could resubmit its application for 1981, it is clear that the board would not be able to purchase the property from the General Synod by the June 1, 1980, deadline set a year ago.

Further, the board finds that it does not have the financial resources to maintain the home. The monthly fee paid by the residents ($425) does not cover staff costs. In addition, state inspectors have indicated that changes are required in the building itself, since the facility does not now meet the ever-changing state inspection requirements.

Because the Kirkside Board has been unable to develop a satisfactory five-year financial plan, the Particular Synod of Albany has not accepted ecclesiastical sponsorship.

At its meeting on March 13, 1980, the Board of Kirkside therefore took the following actions:

> That we notify the GSEC that we intend to cease the operation of Kirkside, at Roxbury, as a residential facility by October 1, 1980.
>
> That an ad hoc committee, appointed by the president meet with the representatives of the GSEC to discuss our decision with them.
>
> That the board be called to a meeting as soon as possible for further action following the meeting of the ad hoc committee with representatives of the GSEC.

A meeting of the Kirkside ad hoc committee with GSEC representatives took place on March 27, 1980. Representing Kirkside were: James Neevel (board president), Bruce Penn (chair of the personnel committee), H. Paul Morehouse and Joseph Woods (both members of the executive committee). Representing the GSEC were: Arie Brouwer (general secretary), Alvin J. Poppen (coordinator of human resources) and Marvin D. Hoff (secretary for operations/finance).

The Kirkside representatives asked that the GSEC extend the use of its property to October 1, 1980, to allow adequate time for the relocation of the Kirkside residents. The board feels obligated to relocate its residents in some other facilities. The state requires that residents be given a ninety-day notice. The state will relocate any residents the board is unable to.

The board also reported that it felt its responsibility to the present residents will end with their relocation to other facilities.

The Kirkside board will meet again on April 14 to hear a report on the meeting of its ad hoc committee and to develop a plan for informing and relocating the residents.

The GSEC received the report of its representatives at its April 9-10, 1980, meeting and took the following action:

To grant the request of the Board of Kirkside to extend the deadline for its use of the Kirkside property to October 1, 1980, or to a mutually agreeable earlier date, and further,

to instruct staff to develop a plan for the disposal of the Kirkside property to be submitted to the June 1980 meeting of the Board of Direction.

The General Synod will be kept advised of developments.

NEW BRUNSWICK CLASSIS INQUIRY CONCERNING A PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

The advisory committee has reflected on the issue placed before it by the Synod pertaining to the New Brunswick Classis inquiry concerning a professor of theology (p. 49). We affirm the action of the General Synod Executive Committee and believe that it speaks to the issue placed before it. We have one thing to add. The General Synod of 1976 adopted a statement on Authority and Conscience in the Church. We would like to remind the Synod of a portion of it for we believe that it speaks to this issue and others like it. We believe that it speaks to us both as individuals and as a church structure.

> "Two great gifts of the Gospel are freedom and love. The two must not be separated. Otherwise we may exercise our freedom to the hurt of the Body of Christ, (not to mention ourselves), or what passes as love may be either spineless sentimentality or; insincere obedience. As Christians, even though we may disagree with fellow believers on concrete, divisive issues, we are obligated to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3) and seek to be reconciled to each other as those ambassadors of Christ who have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:18-20 cf. Ephesians 2:13-16)."

From the Report of the General Program Council:

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The General Program Council offers a wide variety of programs to both clergy and laity which fall within the description "Leadership Development." The Church Growth Leadership Development Task Force sponsored "Genesis and Beyond II" during the summer of 1979 in Madison, Wisconsin, a two-week seminar for pastors of growing churches. Like a similar event in 1978, it was well received by participants. A third event in 1980 will focus on the leadership development needs of pastors of small churches.

A growing number of pastors are taking advantage of Church Growth Leadership Development grants, available for up to $200 per event or program. Applicants must indicate how the event will strengthen abilities, knowledge, or personal qualities in some way related to church growth. Evaluations of the experiences are submitted after there has been time to reflect upon them.

The regional centers support and staff a constant procession of leadership development programs. In one example, 40 pastors attended a seminar in Northwest Iowa on "Growing in the Life of the Spirit." The Midwest Regional Center organized and planned two events for Christian education directors and youth directors in the Synod of Michigan. The Eastern and Northeastern centers play a leading role in the Clergy Support Consultation, which provides an ongoing series of Leadership Development events in response to the expressed needs of clergy in the Synods of Albany, New York, and New Jersey.

Leadership Development opportunities are also provided for lay leaders of local congregations through regional centers. Some of the programs in 1979 included area workshops for youth ministry leaders; a workshop to raise consciousness and encourage action in the areas of hunger, justice, peace, and social ministry; training programs for Christian education consultants; teacher education workshops; an event for training local church committees in family ministries; and the training of Mission Support associates for the Vision in Mission programs.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-15.
To approve the following amendment to the "Form for the Call to a Minister" (*Book of Church Order,* p. 86-87) and refer it to the Editorial Committee:

In addition we promise to provide a minister a minimum of one week and *$200* annually for a study program. . .

(ADOPTED)

Reason:
In view of the rising cost of continuing education and recognizing that many classes and particular synods already have minimums that exceed the minimum amount stipulated in the Form of the Call to a Minister.

Overtures

License Directors and Associates of Christian Education

1. **The Classis of California overtures the General Synod to establish procedures for the licensing of persons who are certified as Directors or Associates of Christian Education according to the procedure developed by the Board of Theological Education and approved by the General Synod in 1977, and that licensing be conferred on those persons who have been examined by a classis in appropriate subjects; who hold a degree of Master of Christian Education from an accredited theological seminary or who are certified as Associates in Christian Education; and who are employed in the ministry of Christian Education by a local church.**

Reasons:

1. The multiple staff ministry is becoming increasingly more prominent in the Reformed Church, with more men and women giving themselves to special areas of ministry in the church, other than the pastoral or preaching ministry.

2. Since our seminaries do grant a degree of Master of Religious Education, therefore some provision should be made for a more meaningful recognition of the position of Director of Christian Education.

3. It seems reasonable that when a person prepares for a specific area of ministry within the local church that he or she should be given the status of being licensed.

4. Some Baptist Conferences, namely the Southern Baptist, Conservative Baptist, and the Baptist General Conference, do have a form of licensing which is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service.

5. Receiving the status of being licensed for a full time ministry in the field of Christian education will provide a certain tax benefit, since this will place the person in the category of "self-employed."

The advisory committee recommended:

R-16.
To instruct the Theological Commission to study the matter of the relationships of persons who are certified directors or associates of Christian Education to the judicatories of the church, and report back to the Synod of 1981. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
This is substantially the same overture which has appeared before Synod several times since 1973. The process of certifying church educators that we now have is the result of such overtures. The fact that they continue to appear indicates that the certification process does not deal with the issue. That issue, we believe, is the relationship of such individuals to the judicatories of the church. At present persons who serve as certified directors or associates in Christian education have no formal relationship to any of the judicatories of the church, unless they are ordained. The advisory committee feels that this deprives the church of some of the gifts the Spirit has provided for its welfare.

Require World Mission Course in Theological Education

2. **The Classis Cascades overtures the General Synod to require that all students in our Reformed Church seminaries, and those coming into our denomination by dispensation from other seminaries, competently complete a required course on Reformed Church world mission fields during the course of their theological education or before being received into the Reformed Church ministry and that classes be instructed to examine all candidates for ordination and professional church work in this area and that the Board of Theological Education be instructed to implement this program as soon as possible.**

Reasons:

1. To create greater sensitivity to our Reformed Church missionaries and mission fields in many areas of the world and the problems they encounter, and the challenges they face so greater understanding of them and their fields of service is promoted in our congregations.

2. Since the mission field has sparked developments in the local churches of North America, to wit: The ecumenical movement—that our future pastors and professional leadership may learn discoveries from our mission fields that may be of benefit to our local churches and ministries. It is increasingly evident today that foreign mission fields of the past around the world are beginning to look upon North America as a mission field.

3. It appears that pastors and leaders in our churches are often ignorant of our mission fields, and therefore show little enthusiasm for supporting them.

4. This course on the seminary level would encourage recruitment for our world ministries program in which our seminarians upon understanding the challenges and problems in cross-cultural evangelism and social action, might receive in the course of theological training and personal and spiritual equipment, increased vision to participate in these ministries, and be challenged to serve in them.

5. That our congregations may regularly receive insight and understanding about our mission work that is accurate and contains a historical perspective, and from which they may receive greater appreciation for our world ministries and so become more and more inclined to support these works with greater prayer and financial gifts.

6. So our pastors and local churches may begin to see our world ministries as more than a distant work towards which we contribute money from time to time, or an appendix of the church where little personal enthusiasm and commitment is necessary, but that our world ministries are fully a part of our total church witness for Christ and as much a part of the local church's concern and ministry as its own local concern.

7. To facilitate the command of our Lord Jesus to take the gospel into all the world so that the full number of the elect may soon be won to Christ and his eternal Kingdom may, as we so fervently pray in our Communion liturgy, "Come Quickly."

The advisory committee recommended:

R-17.
To urge the board of Theological Education to develop and implement means which will assure that all new Reformed Church ministers will be acquainted with the history and program of missions in the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
The advisory committee is sympathetic to the overture even though it raises issues that appear to be unrealistic and impractical.

COMMUNICATIONS

Report of the Church Herald

The *Church Herald* enjoyed serving the Reformed Church in America throughout 1979. Its successes and accomplishments included the publication of many significant articles, responsible participation in the life of the Reformed Church in America, and a continuing and growing impact on Christian journalism, generally. The continuing economic pressures of the American economy made business difficult in 1979. This has continued into early 1980. Nevertheless, for our accomplishments, we are grateful to God, and we have entered the decade of the 1980s with considerable enthusiasm and confidence.

PRODUCTION

The *Church Herald* was printed throughout 1979 by Rogers Publishing, Inc. of Ravenna, Michigan. Rogers has printed the *Church Herald* since March, 1977. The *Church Herald's* three-year contract with Rogers Publishing was the subject of discussion and negotiation in late 1979.

As a result of those discussions, we have signed a one-year contract renewal with Rogers. It involves only slight adjustments from the previous three-year contract. The reason for preferring a one-year contract at this point is that Rogers has made serious plans for expanding its plant and obtaining a higher quality press. The *Church Herald* was determined to seek a higher quality press for its production and would have had to consider other printing companies had Rogers not been in the position to take this step.

At the same time, of course, Rogers was not in a position to guarantee prices or to sign a specific contract for production on a press which has not yet been installed. This one-year contract will give both of us an opportunity to move forward together as the new press is being obtained and installed.

FEATURES

In early 1979 the *Church Herald* led the way, not only among religious publishers, but among all of America's publishers, in signalling the opening of China. Our very first issue of 1979 contained Wendell Karsen's article about the reopening of China to the West. This came out within days of President Carter's diplomatic recognition of Mainland China. The Karsen story was widely republished, including its being carried around the world by United Press International.

A number of other feature articles related to the events of the day and developments within the RCA. We produced a family life issue, an issue devoted to the 1979 General Synod, a stewardship issue in November, etc. The major religious holidays and events were observed on our pages. We also introduced a new occasional feature, "I'd Like To Say." That feature appeared several times during the last half of 1979 and is reappearing in early 1980. The *Church Herald* has also begun a monthly feature column, "On The Horizon," by General Secretary Arie Brouwer. We have also recently become more active in our reviews of both books and movies.

RCA DEVELOPMENTS

The *Church Herald* related closely to developments in the RCA during the past year. We continued our close relationship with the General Synod Executive Committee, attending most of its 1979 meetings. It was also possible for members of the *Church Herald* staff to cover meetings of the Theological Commission, Christian Action Commission, the General Program Council, the Urban Ministries Conference, and a missionary conference sponsored by Western Theological Seminary. Our publication of *Westernews,* on behalf of the Western Theological Seminary, continued during 1979. The editor made specific trips to Southern Normal School in Brewton, Alabama, to the Dallas church growth field in Dallas, Texas, and to all of the mission stations of the RCA in Chiapas, Mexico.

An action of the 1979 General Synod was to call for a consultation among the editors of RCA publications. The *Church Herald* hosted this consultation during January, 1980. The purpose of the consultation was to compare editorial purposes of the publications and to inquire about the wisdom of spending the money required for separate publications. A summary of this conference has been presented to the GSEC.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Auditor's Report for 1979 is included in the materials submitted to General Synod. It shows a deficit of $669 for the operations of the *Church Herald* during 1979.

The deficit is very small and probably should not be interpreted as a negative financial indicator for the year as a whole. This is partly because 1979 included the production of 27 issues. Occasionally (even rarely) this happens because the annual calendar is just slightly more than 52 weeks in length. The situation will not occur again for a number of years. However, the production of that 27th issue amounted to at least $9,000 in printing and postage expenses.

1979 also involved significant legal expenses. These amounted to more than $18,000. However, the *Church Herald* received the good news in late 1979 that the court had dismissed the *Church Herald* from the lawsuit of the Sam Dimas Noteholders Association. Thus, our legal expenses in the future are expected to be considerably lower.

A number of cost-saving measures did have to be taken during 1979 in order to meet those legal expenses and also to handle increasing production costs. We did enjoy our first full year of in-house typesetting. Our savings are about 40 percent of the cost of external typesetting. In round numbers, this saving amounts to about $7500 a year. We also reduced two of our summertime issues to 24 pages (the normal length is 32). This had been done also in the summer of 1978. During the summer, our advertising volume is considerably lower than during the rest of the year. This allows us to produce a shorter magazine without noticeably decreasing the amount of feature and news material for our readers.

For more than half of 1979, the *Church Herald* was printed on ground wood paper. This had been true during the last half of 1978 as well. Ground wood stock is cheaper than offset stock. (For many years the *Church Herald* and most similar publications were printed on offset stock.) The disadvantages of ground wood stock became increasingly apparent both to the readers and to the staff in early 1979, and

some criticisms began to grow. In the interest of quality appearance, a change back to offset stock was made during the third quarter of the year. This has resulted in a noticeable improvement, visually, in the magazine.

We were pleased that our advertising income very nearly accomplished its objective for 1979. It totaled nearly $81,000; we had hoped for $82,000. Subscription income also increased as the result of our increase in subscription rates. There was a small decline in subscription volume, particularly near the end of 1979, although this decrease was not large enough to make a significant impact on subscription income.

CHRISTIAN PRESS ASSOCIATIONS

The *Church Herald* continues its memberships in the Associated Church Press and the Evangelical Press Association. The editor serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the ACP and as postal affairs liaison for both of these press associations.

During 1979 these responsibilities involved presenting testimony to a House subcommittee on postal legislation, meeting with Senator John Glenn on the same matter regarding a Senate bill and several responsibilities at the ACP's "Washington Days" Conference in September.

The Evangelical Press Association has asked the editor to chair its 1982 convention. Grand Rapids will be the site for that convention. Plans are just beginning to form for it.

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

The Office of Promotion and Communication is responsible for communicating news and information concerning the RCA, and especially its mission program, to its members and the general public. Various print and electonic media are used to tell the story.

Print pieces prepared and distributed during the past year include a RCA World Mission map, a U.S. map, the 1979 *Charm and Challenge of Chiapas,* the 2nd issue of Missionary Newsletter *Intercom,* a new prayer piece, the *Chiapas Mission Messenger,* a special Highlights of 1979 *HOTLINE* edition, and an introductory outreach piece for congregations, *A Three-Minute Tour of the RCA.*

One of the year's most popular innovations was the *Profiles in Mission* bulletin covers. Sixteen are now in print. Requests for them have been overwhelming.

Orders continue to pour in for "Your GPC at Work" mission packets and for the Saturday Evening Post reprint "RCA: Older than the Nation Itself."

Both *HOTLINE* and *Mission of the Month* are reaching a steadily growing number of RCA people.

PAC has recently extended its advertising to *Pioneer* magazine. The flow of feature articles and news items for the *Church Herald* have increased dramatically since the appointment last fall of LeRoy Koopman as secretary for mission information.

A new edition of the Project Book is now in print and updated versions of the brochure "Your Dollars at Work" and "Your GPC at Work" will be ready in July.

Other items scheduled for early fall release include a photo essay piece on the RCA suitable for pastor's classes, a leaflet on mission displays for congregations, and a booklet of mission stories for children.

PAC has accepted responsibility for the preparation of materials for the Link of Love and Vision in Mission programs. Both have been produced by outside agencies previously.

A new filmstrip on the RCA Mission in the Arabian Gulf is ready for release. Work is progressing on two others, one an overview of RCA Missions, the other an overview of the RCA itself.

The PAC office also carries responsibility for the Reformed Church Growth Fund follow-up. Cash receipts surpassed $4,000,000 shortly after the New Year and indications are that by year's end the RCGF will have realized well in excess of its original goal of $5,000,000.

Four RCGF bulletin inserts, "Thanks to You and Your Gifts" each featuring a specific work funded by the Growth Fund, were provided in quantity to all churches. PAC's new associate for audiovisual resources and public relations, Donald Stark, produced a filmstrip on the Reformed Church Growth Fund which has been released for congregational use through TRAVARCA and the regional offices.

This fall PAC will began production of mission filmstrips, including some for children.

REPORT OF RCA PUBLICATIONS CONSULTATION

The General Synod of 1979 urged the GSEC to arrange a consultation among all those engaged in magazine and printed materials at denominational and particular synod levels to discuss where there is overlap in the materials produced, where consolidation could save funds, and where new materials need to be produced.

The consultation was held in the *Church Herald* offices on January 16, 1980. The participants were: John Stapert, Editor *the Church Herald;* Lois Joice, Editor *HOTLINE* and Director of PAC; Peter Yff, Editor *Pioneer;* Laura Mol, Editor *RCAgenda;* Paul Fries, Editor *THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS;* Marvin Hoff, Secretary for Operations; Hugh Gambaro, Production Coordinator; and Arie Brouwer, General Secretary (convener).

An analysis of each publication, prepared by its editor, was circulated. Factors such as nature, target audience, costs, and income were reviewed. Each publication was discussed in detail, with focus on a possible relationship to the *Church Herald.*

Figures prepared by *Church Herald* Editor John Stapert quickly revealed that no money would be saved by making *HOTLINE* part of the *Church Herald.* That move would, in fact, be more costly. Printing, paper, labor, and postage costs would be well beyond the current *HOTLINE* total budget.

The principal advantage would be the increased potential readership the *Church Herald* would offer. That would be somewhat offset by the complication of present *HOTLINE* recipients, who are not *Church Herald* subscribers. Approximately 12,000 of *HOTLINE's* 20,000 recipients do not receive the *Church Herald*. Another consideration is the loss of identity and change of character that might result from a merger.

If it would not be economically feasible to combine *HOTLINE*—the shortest of the publications—with the *Church Herald*, it would be even less so for the other, longer publications.

While financial saving was the primary issue throughout the discussion, identity was a strong factor. *Pioneer* saw it as the key issue, stressing its loss of credibility with its own public that would result from a merger with the *Church Herald*, which is perceived as a U.S. publication.

The idea of merging *RCAgenda* and *THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS* was opposed by their editors, citing loss of identity and continuity, as well as mechanical problems.

Are new publications needed within the RCA? Only one suggestion was discussed: the possibility of a minister's exclusive-type piece. After more research, a proposal will be made. (Since the consultation, a new publication has appeared: *HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS,* a publication of the Reformed Church's Historical Society.)

It was also noted that the *Church Herald* has purchased its own typesetting equipment and could provide typesetting services to other agencies and groups within the Reformed Church.

The *Church Herald* presently maintains circulation records for 72,750 subscribers and *HOTLINE* maintains a mailing list of 21,698 persons. Possibilities for sharing address changes between the *Church Herald* and the Reformed Church Information System will be explored. If address changes could be efficiently shared, there would be a cost reduction for both the *Church Herald* and the Reformed Church.

The Advisory Committee on Communications noted that the several publications reviewed each have a specific purpose and audience. While there is some duplication in the subject matter covered the differences in purpose and audience are sufficient to provide grounds for each publication's existence. The committee's observations are summarized below:

	Purpose	*Audience*
Church Herald	General magazine for RCA	RCA membership
Hotline	Current news and information in brief form	Ministers and other church leaders
RCAgenda	Study booklet on issues facing the RCA	Persons interested in discussion or study of current issues

EVANGELIZATION & CHURCH GROWTH

From the Report of the General Program Council:

EVANGELISM AND NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The Church Growth emphasis in the denomination has caused congregations to seek help, particularly in calling on the unchurched. More than 100 congregations have participated in calling workshops designed to help persons make outreach calls. In their outreach, congregations are turning increasingly to helping their members to share their own faith stories. Churches are consequently continuing to turn to the first manual of the Good News People emphasis, *Story to Tell,* to help their people get into touch with their stories and to learn how to tell them in their witnessing.

Workshops in evangelism have been held in both seminaries by the evangelism secretaries, Herm Luben and Don Jansma. More attention is being paid to adequate training in evangelism in our theological schools than in some time.

An effort to involve Reformed church people in *cursillos,* a renewal program springing out of the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, is being tested. It has already met with good success and regional events are being planned.

Based on a recommendation of the Task Force on Evangelism and Renewal, the GPC at its November, 1979, meeting, voted to authorize a Leadership Training Event to be funded from Church Growth Leadership Development funds. The Leadership Training Event, entitled "Logos 1981: How Do We Say The Word?" will focus on preaching, raising the question, "How do we communicate the gospel in today's world?" The event is scheduled to be held at the St. Benedict's Center in Madison, Wisconsin during the summer of 1981.

CHURCH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

An overview of Church Planning and Development in the Reformed Church in America may be gained by reviewing the basic steps which result in the establishment of a new RCA congregation and the erection of a church building.

When a number of individuals and families desire to establish an RCA congregation, the cluster of people make formal application to a classis and a particular synod in which the congregation is to be located. With approval from these judicatories, the "new field" requests placement in the Denominational Plan processed through the Council of Field Secretaries and approved by the General Program Council. With such approval and the formal organization of the congregation, the new congregation may wish to purchase land or build a building. Again, upon recommendation by classis, loan applications are reviewed by the Council of Field Secretaries and presented to the GPC for funding by either the Extension Foundation or the Church Building Fund, or both. The Church Building Fund currently funds loans to churches at 5% and 7% interest and the Extension Foundation provides loans to new congregations at 8½% interest. Not all new churches are funded by the GPC and many begin through particular synod funding exclusively. At the November, 1979, meeting of the GPC, the following applications were approved for placement in the Denominational Plan:

Hispanic Congregation	Hackensack, New Jersey
New Hispanic Ministry	Paramount, California
Hope Community Church	Phoenix, Arizona
Not-yet-named	Lenexa, Kansas
Not-yet-named	Ontario, California
Hope Community Reformed Church	Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
New Life Community	Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Also at the November meeting of the GPC, the following churches were approved for loans:

	CBF	RCEF
New Hope, Aurora, Colorado	$150,000	$150,000
Hemet Valley, Hemet, California	-	150,000
Elmwood, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	20,000	-
New Life, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada	58,000	-
	$228,000	$300,000

The Church Growth Fund will end in 1980. This successful campaign has not only resulted in 32 new congregations for the RCA, but has also engendered a new spirit of expansion in church growth by the denomination. It is therefore imperative that creative ways be explored in order to provide resources for the Extension Foundation and the Church Building Fund.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-1.
To instruct the General Program Council in cooperation with the Council of Field Secretaries to develop a comprehensive ten-year plan and a strategy for beginning new churches. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

To provide an overall plan for planting new congregations among geographic locations, population densities, and ethnic groups.

To set high goals for the extension of the Reformed Church in America into every part of the United States and Canada.

To take into account the long range effects of church growth funding and to meet the needs of our new growing congregations.

URBAN MINISTRIES

The General Program Council supports 31 urban ministries in the synods of the Reformed Church in America, eight overseas urban ministries, and several staff persons whose work relates to urban ministries. Many of the city ministries are congregations engaged in programs which minister to the total needs of individuals living in the community. These ministries are expressions of love in action.

As the RCA moves into the 1980s many pastors and lay leaders are prepared to undertake bold new initiatives within the urban societies of the United States and Can-

ada. In the late 70s, the Reformed Church has been seeking to clarify its understanding, refresh its commitment, and improve its efforts in the area of urban ministry. In February of 1979, the church, through its GPC, convened an Urban Ministries Consultation in Richfield, Ohio. The consultation was composed entirely of "urban stakeholders" which represented the ethnic and geographic diversity of the church as it is constituted today. This consultation developed strategies, suggested priorities for their implementation, and discussed various policy concerns in the light of the biblical mandate, and of the history of the church's urban work.

This policy, to be approved by the March, 1980, GPC suggests the importance:

1) of developing clergy and lay leadership for urban ministries;

2) of supporting urban congregations which seek revitalization in meeting human needs which are not being met by other agencies;

3) of providing assistance in urban research; and

4) of providing a denomination-wide forum for sharing urban resources and developing strategies for new initiatives in urban ministries.

URBAN MINISTRY POLICY

Introduction

Ministries in urban settings have long been a part of the total mission of the Reformed Church in America. Support for such ministries has continued through recent decades, as reflected in:

—the 1957 General Synod recommendation that projects be instituted to concentrate on the problems and challenges of the inner-city church;

—the late 1950s and early 1960s focus upon the inner-city as a context for "specialized ministries;"

—The 1960s emergency appeal for funds to strengthen the work of inner-city churches;

—the 1968 General Synod identification of urban work as a top priority for the denomination;

—the establishment of the American Indian, Black, and Hispanic Councils;

—the 1973 formation of a special General Program Council committee on Urban Advance;

—the November, 1977, General Program Council emphasis on Urban Ministry.

A critical evaluation of Reformed Church urban ministry efforts shows that the commitment to and demonstrated support for such ministries has been uneven. Urban mission has often been characterizied by an attitude that urban churches/settings are objects for "specialized" rather than regular or ongoing work; or as a series of emergency appeals; or as an effort delegated to special or temporary com-

mittees. As the RCA moves in faith and action into the 1980s, efforts of a piecemeal, ad hoc, reactive, and problem-oriented nature are less effective than a consistent long-term approach to urban ministries. In light of projections that, by the end of this century, 87 percent of the world's population will live in urban and metropolitan centers and that cities are undergoing constant change, such acknowledgement is central to any attempts to develop policies and strategies for future work in urban ministries.

In the late 1970s the RCA has been seeking to clarify its understanding, refresh its commitment, and improve its efforts in the area of urban ministry. Many pastors and lay leaders are prepared to undertake bold new initiatives within the urban societies of the United States and Canada. In February of 1979, the church, through the General Program Council, convened an Urban Ministries Consultation in Richfield, Ohio. The consultation was composed entirely of "urban stakeholders" which represented the ethnic and geographic diversity of the church as it is constituted today. The consultation developed strategies, suggested priorities for implementation, and discussed various policy concerns in the light of the biblical mandate and of the history of the church's urban work.

Subsequently, representatives from the consultation were formed into a Policy Drafting Committee. Following an interim report to the General Program Council Executive Committee, July 2-3, 1979, feedback was solicited from synods and councils. The GPC at the November 1-2, 1979, meeting reviewed the feedback and appointed a new Urban Policy Committee to resolve some of the discrepancies and finalize the Policy Statement. This committee met on February 11, 1980.

The conclusions of the committee were based upon the work of the consultation, as it looked with faith, hope and love toward the future and upon the feedback from particular synods, the Black Council and the Hispanic Council and the GPC all of which provide the basis for this Policy Statement.

Biblical Mandate

Deeply rooted in the experience and witness of Old Testament people and comprising the central theme of Jesus' preaching in the synoptic gospels, the Kingdom of God is simultaneously past history, current reality, and a vision for the future. The biblical call to the RCA is to proclaim and participate in the Kingdom of God. As participants in the Kingdom of God, the church is commissioned to work for wholeness, justice, and peace (Romans 14:17-19, NEB) in our relationship to God through Jesus Christ, within and among all persons, by transforming persons, institutions and structures which control our lives and society. This biblically-rooted understanding of mission leads us to see ourselves as a denomination called to minister in partnership with persons, communities, and institutions who actively seek wholeness, justice, and peace in urban society.

The Bible further informs our response to this calling by defining the Church as the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16). The members, individuals, and judicatories of the RCA can thus participate in urban mission through acts of proclamation, advocacy (Isaiah 58:1-12), ministries of service and mercy (Micah 6:8), and corporate sharing and support (Acts 2:44-47).

Since urban settings are contexts in which persons experience many forms of brokenness as a daily part of life, urban ministries is an urgent calling for our entire denomination (Jeremiah 29:7). Further, God has given us a vision of the future, a vis-

ion shared with us by Paul, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). We are moved to engage in urban ministries by the hope that all people may name Jesus as Savior and Lord, thereby glorifying the name of the Father in heaven who will create a new heaven and a new earth.

URBAN MINISTRIES POLICY STATEMENT

The vision of God's Kingdom and the reality of human need call the Reformed Church in America to affirm urban ministries as a continuing locale for God's gracious and liberating activity. This affirmation is born, not of despair, but of faith and of hope.

Definitions

An urban area is that area which surrounds and includes a city and shares similar characteristics.

A *metropolitan* area includes all of the city and extends out to the fringes of surrounding suburbs. This area is inhabited by persons who live in the city or are related to the city because of socio-economic interdependency, communication and transportation networks. They enjoy the socio-economic mobility and political power associated historically with the city.

A *city,* as the core of an urban area, is any geographical area designated as a city (e.g., the five boroughs of New York City).

An *inner city* is the part of the urban network often characterized by a lack of participation by the inhabitants in the social, political, and economic power structures effecting the condition and course of their lives. This reality of powerlessness results in such adverse factors as a lower standard of living, deteriorated housing, nondelivery of services, inferior education, and numerous other demeaning problems over which the poor have little or no control.

Urbanization is a process which affects virtually all inhabitants of the world as they acquire "city characteristics" and lose "rural characteristics."

The definitions are not intended to be comprehensive and all inclusive, but as guides for this Policy Statement.

Guidelines

The following guidelines will undergird the goals and strategies for the urban ministries of the RCA. These guidelines contain both present realities and future directions. They are statements of "what is" and "what is yet to be."

1. *Urban Ministry and RCA Priorities.* Urban ministries will be a continuing high priority among all ministries of the RCA in order that the entire ministry and mission be complete. Further, urban ministries will be affirmed, celebrated, and supported by the entire denomination as integral aspects of RCA mission.

2. *Urban Ministry as an Ongoing Work of the Church.* Since an ad hoc or "specialized" connotation of urban work is inadequate, such a ministry will be a normal and regular aspect of the entire church's witness.

3. *Urban Ministry and the Congregation.* The primary focus for urban ministry is the urban congregation.

4. *Urban Ministry and the Inner City.* Since great opportunities for ministry to human need exist in the inner city, the major focus of RCA urban ministries will be upon the support of inner-city congregations in the utilization of their gifts and resources.

5. *Urban Ministry and Leadership Development.* Since leadership in urban ministries is needed and crucial, the development and nurturing of both clergy and lay leadership is vital and urgent.

6. *Urban Ministry as Partnership.* All persons, congregations, and judicatories in urban settings are partners in ministry rather than objects or clients of mission.

7. *Urban Ministry and the De-paternalization of Processes.* Given urban ministry as partnership, an interdependent nature exists between natural structures, regional structures, judicatories, and local congregations and classes. Such interdependence will be practiced in planning, implementing, interpreting, evaluating, and funding.

8. *Urban Ministry as Heterogeneity.* The church can be united without being uniform. Even as there is a great variety of persons in the membership of urban congregations, so there are a great variety of urban congregations.

9. *Urban Ministry, Councils, and Ad Hoc Groups.* Minority councils are vital agents in the quest for wholeness and can provide fresh perspective and new visions to enrich the RCA. Communication and interpretation of the theological insights and practical suggestions emerging from minority groups and others engaged in urban ministry enhance the dialogue between persons in urban settings and the rest of the church. Such dialogue contributes to the continuing reform and edification of the whole church as well as to persons engaged in urban ministry.

10. *Urban Ministry and Continued Research.* Urban ministry as an opportunity for creativity and challenge mandates the need to deepen and expand the understanding of urban dynamics and experiences. Research is needed to provide data for planning, for evaluating, and for decision making. Forecasting is critical to future strategies for urban congregations anticipating or in the midst of transitional communities and for the development of new urban congregations.

11. *Urban Ministry and Public Policy.* Urban ministry is affected by policies and dynamics developed by non-church structures and agencies. Influencing such structures and agencies toward policies and programs conducive to more wholesome life and environment is a needed activity.

12. *Urban Ministry and Inter-Church Cooperation.* Systemic and massive issues, problems, and challenges will be addressed at every level in cooperation with partners from other religious bodies.

Goals

The RCA in doing urban ministry will implement the following goals:

1. *Leadership Development.* The goal is to recruit, develop and support competent and committed urban leadership, both laity and clergy.

This goal assumes adequate financial support for college and seminary preparation for urban ministries. Primary attention will be given to the recruitment and development of minority persons.

2. *Support for Existing Congregations.* The goal is vital, functional urban congregations engaged in holistic ministry.

Support will include both resource persons and funds, where warranted.

3. *Support for Community Ministries.* The goal is congregationally initiated programs which seek to promote Kingdom actions and wholeness in local communities.

Financial support will be supplemental. Such program initiatives *might* include tutorial services or recreational programs, nutrition centers, housing rehabilitation, employment counselling, criminal justice work, prison ministries, activities of advocacy, or other programs which meet human need in urban communities when such needs are not being met by other agencies or when the church can provide a unique witness through such a service. Rather than seeking to fulfill the role of government and community organizations, the Christian community would confront and/or cooperate with them in a prophetic and priestly ministry.

4. *Strategies for Urban Ministry.* The goal is short and long-range urban strategies developed by congregations, classes, synods, and denominational agencies.

Research that gathers data, analyzes, and forecasts will be integral to this goal.

5. *Influencing Public Policy.* The goal is to influence the development of public policies and actions which are conducive to the well being of urban communities.

6. *Support by the General Program Council.* The goal is continued support for urban ministry through GPC structure, processes and personnel.

Urban ministries will be related to a specific GPC division and its staff. Membership will include persons who have involvement in urban ministries and will take into account ethnic and geographic constituencies. In developing its agenda, the division will develop program and processes which will include the following functions:

(a) Assisting the total GPC and other RCA judicatories and agencies in implementing goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

(b) Serving as a forum for the interchange of ideas and information about urban diaconal ministry, congregational life, issues facing urban society, and other urban ministry concerns.

(c) Strategizing and advocating the implementation of new initiatives in urban ministries by existing congregations as they seek to remain vital.

(d) Strategizing and advocating, where feasible, the expansion of ministries in urban areas through the establishment of new urban congregations, but only after adequate support is offered for existing, viable congregations.

(e) Keeping the imperative of urban ministries and the critical issues of urban society before the entire church.

On March 21,1980, the GPC session at Yahara Center in Madison, Wisconsin, adopted the Urban Ministries Policy Statement and voted to refer the statement to the General Synod for action and subsequent referral to judicatories and to RCA educational institutions for their affirmation, and implementation.

R-2.
a. To adopt the Urban Ministries Policy as denominational policy for Urban Ministries and, further,

b. To recommend the Urban Ministries Policy Statement to the particular synods and to RCA educational institutions for their adoption, affirmation, and implementation. (ADOPTED)

THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Thousand of letters were received during 1979 from mainland China as a result of radio broadcasts directed there. This was a huge increase over the 53 letters in 1978. A call from China to the Bible Societies office in Hong Kong asked for 50 Bibles. Indications are that they are being well used.

Over 108 million Bibles, New Testaments, and portions were distributed in the U.S.A. in 1979. Two special Scriptures were produced for children and two significant new Bibles, the Good News Bible with Deuterocanonicals/Aprocrypha were published.

Special distribution projects makes Scriptures available to many who would not have had them ordinarily. For example, 250,000 Scriptures were donated by American Bible Society for distribution throughout the parks of Washington, D.C. and another 250,000 given for distribution along the parade route of Illinois, Spanish-speaking Children's Day celebration in Chicago.

A sampling of American Bible Society activity:

A recent shipment of 65,000 Tshiluba Bibles to Zaire were given out in a matter of weeks.

This past year, three Nigerian languages received New Testaments for the first time.

A shipment of 10,000 Bibles was sent to Cuba last fall with the approval of Premier Castro's government.

Last year over 17 million New Reader Scriptures were distributed in India alone.

Gifts from the Reformed Church in America totalled $21,540 in 1979. Continued financial and prayer support is imperative if the American Bible Society is to serve our Scripture needs at home and around the world.

WORLD HOME BIBLE LEAGUE

The World Home Bible League is a service organization of the church. Its director is Mr. William Ackerman, a layman who has given it wise and dynamic leadership for many years.

The year 1979 was a year of burgeoning growth in Scripture distribution for the World Home Bible League with opportunities for publication and distribution seeming to come from everywhere across the world, including areas which had previously been hostile. The Reformed constituency has contributed $198,000 toward the efforts of the Bible League for which they are deeply grateful. However, financial receipts have not kept pace with the mushrooming requests and opportunities for far greater publication and distribution of Scripture and Bible study courses, therefore many had to be refused.

A brief summary of some selected areas of activity follow.

AFRICA: The church in Africa continues to grow at a remarkable rate. It has been estimated that 100 new churches are being founded in Africa each day. The need for Bibles and Bible study materials is great. Since English is still widely used in many African countries, the Bible League was able to meet part of Africa's needs by widespread distribution of used Bibles. In addition, approximately 200,000 New Testaments were sent to Liberia for distribution to school children and some 50,000 Revised Standard Version Bibles have been sent to Nigeria for the same purpose.

SOUTH AMERICA: Over 600,000 New Testaments were placed in classrooms of South America—350,000 in Brazil, 250,000 in Bolivia and 40,000 in Peru. To date, over 2,000,000 New Testaments have been placed in the hands of students in Latin America.

ASIA: The most important venture in 1979 was the rapid and real opening of the doors of China where the World Home Bible League distributed 100,000 portions and 30,000 New Testaments to various groups of house churches in China. An additional 100,000 New Testaments are being prepared for distribution in 1980 and it is hoped the request of Christians in China for 1,000,000 New Testaments and 1,000,000 Bibles can be filled by the end of July, 1981.

The largest distribution occurred in India where nearly 1,000,000 Bible Study courses and 1,000,000 New Testaments were placed. Other major areas of distribution were Taiwan and the Philippines where over 250,000 Bible study courses were distributed and over 100,000 New Testaments and Bible portions were distributed. Malaysia received 250,000 pieces of Scripture.

CANADA: The Canadian Home Bible League is a separate entity of the World Home Bible League and has its own program of fund raising and distribution, including an international outreach. The Canadian League ministers to the needs of French-speaking and Chinese-speaking citizens of its nation by publication of filmstrips and Bibles and portions of the Bible in their own languages. More than 2,250,000 Scripture pieces have been distributed by the Canadian League and it is currently involved in a special fund raising campaign in the Netherlands to send some 200,000 New Testaments to Brazil.

LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE

The Lord's Day Alliance is 91 years old. This past year, new leagues were organized in New Hampshire and Vermont and the nucleus of another was developed in Texas.

The board has a number of new members with representation from 23 denominations.

During the year, a new color film was produced. Some 12,000 copies of the Alliance's *Sunday* magazine were published and sent to members of Congress.

Certificates of Appreciation are presented to merchants and others who closed on Sunday. Thousands of pamphlets and other literature have been distributed.

In 1979, the Reformed Church in America supported the alliance to the extent of $1,448.00.

RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE, INC.

Founded in 1949 by concerned religious communications and business leaders interested in using mass media to communicate the goals of the nation's religious institutions, Religion in American Life (RIAL) today includes 50 cooperating religious bodies.

A national media campaign, released through the Advertising Council to all mass media forms, is RIAL's major program. The past year's theme, "Children Watch What You Do, so Watch What You Do!," was the most popular in RIAL's history. RIAL's ads reach millions of homes with the message that regular worship and faithful living are vitally important for all people.

In 1979, RIAL acquired the Hotel Church Directory Company, which has placed church directory boards in hotels and motels across the country.

Also, seminars for religious and business leaders to discuss common concerns were held. Plans are underway to develop religious public relations materials for local congregations.

In 1979, the RCA contributed $2,000 for the RIAL program.

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

THE SMALL CHURCH

Since the General Synod of 1978 directed attention toward the needs of small churches, a significant effort has been made to develop a fuller understanding of the role of small membership churches in the Reformed Church in America, with a focus on their contributin as well as their problems.

In the Particular Synod of Albany, where "small churches" predominate, a representative group of pastors and lay persons have gathered periodically to explore the issues faced in their congregations, and to celebrate their unique strengths. If anything has become clear about small membership churches, it is that they have great potential for being very good for people!

The Council of Field Secretaries has also discussed the small church and the field secretaries are keenly aware of their need for attention. Also, much has been directed toward the third Church Growth Leadership Development event to be held in Madison, Wisconsin, from August 13 to 20. The Church Growth Leadership De-

velopment Task Force has adopted the concerns of the small membership congregations as the focus of this year's "Genesis and Beyond" experience, and will adapt the model of the previous two year's events to the needs of "small church" pastors. The event has been renamed as "Genesis and Beyond III: The Small Church in a Growing Denomination."

Participation in this year's Genesis experience will be limited to nine pastors from each of the six particular synods for a total of 54. Leadership will include two of the leading authorities on the small church, Carl Dudley of McCormick Theological Seminary *(Making the Small Church Effective)* and Douglas Walrath of the RCA, who is under contract with the National Council of Churches for its own focus on the small church issue.

In preparation for this year's Genesis experience, leaders of the task force have held listening sessions with pastors of small churches, gathered resources, and designed a program to address needs which have been discovered.

Since a large percentage of RCA congregations fit one or more of the definitions of a "small church," it is not to be expected that the efforts which have been started this year will adequately meet the concern which prompted Synod's call for action. However, a good beginning and a continuing commitment can be reported.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-3.
To make the focus on rural ministry a high priority of the Reformed Church in America, and that a consultation be convened by the General Program Council to explore the needs of the rural church and that the results of the consultation along with an action plan be presented to General Synod in 1982. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. A significant number of RCA congregations are in rural areas.
2. Many churches in rural America are experiencing a decline in membership.
3. The rural church often no longer serves as the primary center for the social life of the community.
4. The rural church has unique strengths which need to be identified, affirmed, and celebrated.
5. The rural church often has special needs:

    a. Uncertainty as to direction of ministry.
    b. Low self-image.
    c. A limited awareness of its significance in and of its contribution to the total RCA program.
    d. Mobility of young adults toward urban centers.
    e. Leadership development.

From the Report of the Hispanic Council:

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT IN HISPANIC COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S.

Seventy percent of all Hispanics in America live in the following areas: an estimated two million Hispanics in the Northeast, predominately Puerto Rican-American with

large numbers of Spanish, Cuban, Mexican, and other Hispanos; an estimated two million Hispanics in the Midwest, mostly Mexican-American with large numbers of new Puerto Rican and Cuban-Americans; an estimated one million Hispanics in the extreme Southeast, almost exclusively Americans of old or recent Cuban origin with significant numbers of Americans of Central and South American background; an estimated two million Hispanics in Texas-Arizona, almost exclusively Mexican-American; an estimated three million Hispanics on the West Coast, predominately Mexican-American with large numbers of other Hispanic Americans; an estimated one million Hispanics in New Mexico-Colorado, predominately Spanish-American or Spanish colonial with some Mexican and other Hispanic Americans in northern Colorado and southern New Mexico; an estimated 50,000 Hispanics in the Northwest, new colonies of mostly Mexican-Americans. The following is a statistical listing of the urban centers and respective Hispanic populations:[1]

New York/New Jersey	1,933,400	Los Angeles	1,805,300
San Antonio	675,100	San Francisco	546,300
Miami	536,300	Chicago	423,200
Albuquerque	372,300	Houston	314,100
Phoenix	259,000	Corpus Christi	227,300
Fresno	226,400	El Paso	217,296
Sacramento	189,900	Denver	186,800
Dallas/Ft. Worth	171,000	Tucson	155,400
Philadelphia	146,100	San Diego	118,600
Tampa/St. Petersburg	108,100	Salinas	99,025
McAllen/Brownsville	96,039	Washington, D.C.	89,200
Colorado Springs/Pueblo	86,600	Lubbock	86,500
Austin	73,900	Detroit	73,100
Laredo	69,591	Boston	67,400
Odessa/Midland	63,600	New Orleans	62,342

(As of 1970, there were approximately eleven million Hispanics in the U.S.)

We challenge the church to develop a comprehensive evangelistic program for these urban areas.

[1]*LA LUZ,* 1978 Special Hispanic Heritage Week Edition, Denver, Colorado.

R-4.
To direct the General Program Council in cooperation with the Hispanic Council, to develop a comprehensive (twenty-year) - ten-year **plan to begin new churches in (the thirty)** those **urban centers with (the largest)** large **Hispanic populations.**
(ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

Reasons:
1. A ten-year plan is more workable.
2. Hispanic congregations scattered over thirty new fields would suffer for lack of nearby support groups.
3. It would enhance the possibility of starting new Hispanic ministries where we have existing support groups.

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

1981 BUDGET FOR GENERAL SYNOD MISSION

The General Synod Mission Budget includes: the Trustees of the General Program Council; the Board of Pensions; 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 RCA;

(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. The actual General Synod Mission giving from 1968 through 1979 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	386,355
1977	5,825,510	(10,505)
1978	5,828,315	2,805
1979	6,113,927	285,612

	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

Schedule I on page 212 shows the designated giving received by each of the units between 1976 and 1979, the approved budget for 1980, and the 1981 request.

R-1.
To approve a 1981 General Synod Mission Budget of $7,325,000, and further
to approve the proposed allocations of the 1981 General Synod Mission Budget as attached in Schedule I. (ADOPTED)

SPECIAL APPEALS

The General Synod Executive Committee approves and monitors special appeals for solicitation in Reformed Church congregations. There are three special appeals currently in progress: The Reformed Church Growth Fund of the General Program Council, the Call to Commitment Campaign of Northwestern College, and the Expand Western Appeal of Western Theological Seminary. The General Synod Executive Committee has reviewed the December 31, 1979, reports for these appeals and presents the following summary:

Reformed Church Growth Fund

The Reformed Church Growth Fund received approval of a goal of $5,000,000, a solicitation period through December 31, 1977, and a payment period through 1980. As of December 31, 1979, the Reformed Church Growth Fund received a total of $3,941,460, of which $3,458,189 came from Reformed Church congregations.

Northwestern Call to Commitment Campaign

The GSEC approved a goal of $6,000,000 for the Northwestern Call to Commitment Campaign, with the understanding that the money would be raised during a three-year period beginning in October, 1978, and that a maximum of $500,000 would be raised from Reformed Church congregations. As of December 31, 1979, Northwestern received a total of $2,798,443 in gifts and pledges from individuals, corporations, and foundations in the public sector. Northwestern has not begun solicitation in Reformed Church congregations but is presently developing plans for that phase of the campaign.

Expand Western Appeal

After initially approving a goal of $3,500,000 for the Expand Western Appeal, the GSEC approved a revised goal of $4,200,000, with the understanding that the money would be raised before the end of 1979; that a maximum of $2,575,000 would be raised from local congregations; and that the solicitation would be primarily in the churches of the three western particular synods. As of December 31, 1979, the Expand Western Appeal received $2,996,419 in pledges, of which $2,037,530 came from Reformed Church congregations, and $597,123 in cash receipts, of which $165,631 came from Reformed Church congregations.

NATIONAL/REGIONAL COMPETITION

The 1979 General Synod asked the GSEC "to study the concern of possible competition between national and regional programs, especially with regard to fund

SCHEDULE I

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

	ACTUAL				Budget	Requested
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
General Program Council	3,621,615	3,729,772	3,772,579	3,941,387	5,100,000	4,900,000
R.C.W.S.	516,001	323,503	349,106	342,626	400,000	400,000
Total GPC	4,137,616	4,053,275	4,121,685	4,284,013	5,500,000	5,300,000
Board of Pensions	97,151	108,596	116,776	116,548	150,000	150,000
Kirkside	19,090	16,733	17,459	17,815	---	---
Board of Theological Education						
New Brunswick	161,947	242,904	183,255	220,027	175,000	185,000
Western	358,581	340,233	369,392	379,139	381,000	400,000
Colleges						
Central	164,843	179,446	192,960	179,611	300,000	300,000
Hope	415,267	374,051	351,107	408,204	419,000	448,000
Northwestern	348,507	390,171	363,753	396,590	385,000	425,000
Total - Designated	5,703,002	5,705,409	5,716,387	6,001,947	7,310,000	7,208,000
Undesignated	133,013	120,101	111,928	111,980	125,000	117,000
TOTAL	5,836,015	5,825,510	5,828,315	6,113,927	7,435,000	7,325,000

raising." This matter was discussed at the Staff Consulting Group in October. It was agreed that interested members of the group would gather prior to the March meeting of the Staff Consulting Group for further discussion. Such a meeting was arranged and convened on March 12 in Chicago.

The results of the discussion were reported on the following day to the Staff Consulting Group. While no one favored a unified approach to promotion, there was agreement that a good presentation—either in print or film—of the entire program of the Reformed Church in America would be useful. The director of Promotion and Communication reported that such a presentation is under study.

It was also agreed that more cooperation between national and regional promotion would be useful. Since the Staff Consulting Group was organized to monitor such matters, it can serve as a continuing forum for discussion of such cooperation. The effect on national/regional funding of assessing for support of the General Program Council will receive special attention during the coming year.

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF FINANCE

The Reformed Church Finance System and its staff provide all the financial services for the General Synod, the General Program Council, the Reformed Church Extension Foundation, the Board of Pensions, and the Reformed Church Women. Audited financial reports from these organizations have been presented to the General Synod. Some financial services are also provided for the colleges, the seminaries, and the particular synods.

The 1979 receipts and disbursements for the major organizations and funds were:

	1979	
	Receipts	**Disbursements**
General Synod,		
Operating Fund	$ 591,745	$ 599,900
New York Endowment Fund	224,549	194,237
New Jersey Funds	15,092	7,215
Reformed Church Investment Program	456,794	432,463
General Program Council,		
Operating Fund	5,413,902	5,165,170
Endowment and Trust	222,616	148,069
Church Building Fund	225,058	168,064
Resources	94,667	96,508
Church Growth	1,770,317	1,447,537
Board of Pensions,		
General Fund	631,854	727,910
Insurance Fund	1,430,682	1,188,356
Annuity Fund	5,331,622	1,075,531
Reformed Church Women,		
General	148,967	133,327
Triennial	1,600	13,748
TOTAL*	$16,559,465	$11,398,035

*The more than $4,000,000 excess of receipts over disbursements comes primarily from deposits in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund which are invested for future retirements of members of the Fund.

The Office of Finance report to the 1979 General Synod focused on the guidelines shaping the design of the Reformed Church Finance System and its staff, banking, and auditing. The report is found on pages 241-243 of the *1979 Minutes of General Synod*. The 1980 report will focus on: The Reformed Church Cash Program, Using the Reformed Church Cash Program for Increasing Funds to the Reformed Church Extension Foundation, the Reformed Church Investment Program, and the Reformed Church Annuity Fund.

Reformed Church Cash Program

The Reformed Church Cash Program invests the surplus funds of the organizations participating in the Reformed Church Finance System. The treasurer invests the surplus cash in Certificates of Deposit at commercial banks serving the Reformed Church in America (Bank of Nova Scotia, New York; Toronto Dominion Bank, New York; Chemical Bank, New York; Royal Bank of Canada, New York; Old Kent Bank, Grand Rapids, Michigan) and several money market funds. The presently approved money funds are: the Reserve Fund, Fidelity Daily Assets, and Dreyfus Liquid Assets. In 1979 the average earnings for the Reformed Church Cash Program were 11.05%. The comparative rates of return have been:

Quarter	1979	1978
1st	10.58	6.08
2nd	11.05	7.21
3rd	11.08	6.28
4th	13.33	10.07

Using the Reformed Church Cash Program for Increasing Funds to the Reformed Church Extension Foundation

The Reformed Church Extension Foundation has more requests for new church loans than it can meet. Since the Reformed Church Extension Foundation requires five-year investments, the Trustees of the General Program Council designed a new program to make it possible for classes, particular synods, and boards and agencies of the Reformed Church in America to invest their short-term funds in a program which provides new capital for the construction of new churches. Because of Internal Revenue Service regulations, this program must be limited to organizations within the RCA.

The new program operates on the following principles:

(1) Depositors in the Reformed Church Cash Program are assured a return of their cash within 30 days (actually cash could generally be returned on a five-day basis);

(2) The Trustees of the General Program Council invest 40% of these deposits in Reformed Church Extension Foundation notes. The balance of 60% is invested in the short-term placements of the Reformed Church Cash Program. This protects the liquidity of the investments;

(3) Each participant in this program receives its share of the interest earned from the 60% invested in short-term placements and its share earned by the 40% invested at 8.5% in the Reformed Church Extension Foundation. For the third quarter of 1979 the participants earned 10.04% and they earned 11.39% for the fourth quarter;

(4) Participants in this program are able to receive a quarterly check for their interest or have the interest credited to their account for the new quarter.

As of December 31, 1979, $718,523 was invested in this new program. The Reformed Church Extension Foundation received $278,835 from its 40%. Investments have been received from the particular Synods of Albany, Chicago, and The West; and the Classes of California, Chicago, Illiana, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Nassau-Suffolk and West Central; American Reformed Church (Primghar, Iowa), First Reformed Church (Chatham, New York), Ferry Memorial Reformed Church (Montague, Michigan), First Reformed Church of Glenville (Amsterdam, New York), Hope College (Holland, Michigan), and the *Church Herald* (Grand Rapids, Michigan).

Since January 1, new investments have been received from: Emmanuel Reformed Church (Castleton-on-Hudson, New York), and Jackson County Ministries, Annville Institute (Annville, Kentucky).

On March 31, 1980, a total of $939,524 was invested in this program and the Reformed Church Extension Foundation had received $375,809.

Reformed Church Investment Program

The RCA integrated the investment management and supervision of its permanent investments in 1968. At that time the responsibility for supervising the permanent investments was assigned to the new Committee on Administration and Finance. During the 1970s an Advisory Committee on Investments was established to supervise the permanent portfolios. Two broad and basic funds remained under the supervision of the Advisory Committee on Investments: the New York Endowment Fund of the General Synod and the commingled funds of the Trustees of the General Program Council. Rather than continue two separate funds serving a variety of participants, a new program was created to serve the various corporations and agencies of the RCA. It was called the Reformed Church Investment Program and continued most of the principles and practices established for the New York Endowment Fund of the General Synod.

Participation

The Reformed Church Investment Program is open to any organization or group related to the RCA. Investments in the program can be made at the end of a quarter. Each group which chooses to participants agrees to the principles and practices of the program. The participants on December 31, 1979, were:

	Shares December 31, 1979
General Synod	
Operating	9,915
New York Endowment Fund	3,218,771

General Program Council	
General Fund	899,152
General Endowment	1,623,675
Endowment and Trust	967,611
Church Building Fund	89,412
Classis of Newark	51,306

Style

The Reformed Church Investment Program operates like a mutual fund. Each participant receives shares in the program for its investment. The Reformed Church Investment Program maintains a record of the principal investment of its participants, the gains or losses experienced from investments, the income earned on the investments, and the distributions of earnings to participants.

Supervision

The Reformed Church Investment Program is monitored by the Subcommittee on Finance and Property of the Board of Direction. It also supervises the New York area mortgages. The Advisory Committee on Investments supervises the Old Kent Bank, the Bank of New York, and the Affiliated Mutual Fund.

Investments

The present investments of the Reformed Church Investment Program are:

(1) Mortgages in the New York area. These mortgages total $881,106. The members of the Board of Direction supervise the mortgage portfolio and the mortgages are serviced by Hanfield, Callen, Ruland & Benjamin, Inc.

(2) A fixed income portfolio at Old Kent Bank, Grand Rapids, Michigan. A total of $1,488,851 has been assigned to Old Kent for management.

(3) A balanced portfolio at Bank of New York. The Bank of New York has investment responsibility for $1,323,488 with no less than 30% to be fixed income securities.

(4) The ownership of 227,738 shares in the Affiliated Mutual Fund. The shares cost $1,855,890 and had a market value of $1,979,043 on December 31, 1979.

(5) Private or permanent investments. In addition the program has investments in Interchurch Center (475 Riverside Drive) bonds totaling $675,000 and the Reformed Church Extension Foundation totaling $397,950.

Performance

The performance of the Reformed Church Investment Program is compared to the Dow Jones Average,the Standard & Poor's 500, and Salomon Brothers' Bond Index on a quarterly basis. A copy of the December 31, 1979 performance report for the Reformed Church Investment Program follows.

Reformed Church Annuity Program

The Reformed Church Annuity Program has a group annuity contract with the Travelers Insurance Company which guarantees 9.1% net interest on the monies initially deposited in the contract and any annual deposits through 1983. Since the radical increase in interest rates, alternatives to depositing the new monies in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund were explored. Contacts were made with investment managers, bank trust departments, and the life insurance companies with the best performance records on group annuity contracts. Proposals were submitted which provided minimum guarantees ranging from 9.8% through 12%. After reviewing the various proposals presented to it, the Board of Pensions voted to utilize the "assured return concept" proposed by the State Street Bank of Boston.

The State Street Bank of Boston's "assured return concept" uses U.S. Government and federal agency bonds. The bank has developed a computer module which projects the total earnings from a portfolio of these securities. The Board of Pensions entered into this new program in order to:

(1) benefit from the current high interest rates;

(2) stagger the maturities of the Annuity Fund investments; and

(3) protect the principal invested while taking advantage of fluctuations in the interest market.

The new program with State Street Bank will yield an annual minimum of 13.93% for the years 1980-1983.

The Board of Pensions will use this increased yield to reduce the deficit in the Reformed Church Annuity Fund, which is $392,000; and increase the yield to participants in the fund after the deficit has been removed. Present projections indicate that the deficit should be removed by December 31, 1981.

Appendix A

REFORMED CHURCH INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Performance Report

December 31, 1979

	Total Shares	*Net Assets (Cost)*	*Net Assets (Market)*	*Realized Gain/(Loss) Total*	*Income From Dividends/ Interest*	*Annualized Return on Market Value*	*Annualized Return on Cost*	*Quarterly Expenses*	*Quarterly Net Income per Share*	*Market Value of Share*
July 1, 1977	6,627,014		6,627,014							1.00
Sept. 30, 1977	6,643,324		6,549,648	12,274	101,386	6.9%		7,536	.0141	.99
Dec. 31, 1977	6,674,505	6,667,979	6,459,765	(21)	122,326	7.6%	7.3%	5,738	.0175	.97
Mar. 31, 1978	6,680,399	6,755,645	6,409,499	(8,168)	100,183	5.7%	5.5%	8,841	.1137	.96
June 20, 1978	6,698,994	6,774,707	6,488,450	14,702	100,144	7.1%	6.8%	12,161	.0131	.97
Sept. 30, 1978	6,693,073	6,685,627	6,534,819	436	108,019	6.6%	6.5%	12,161	.0143	.975
Dec. 30, 1978	6,725,111	6,715,369	6,272,868	(21,022)	152,884	8.4%	7.6%	12,172	.0209	.933
March 31, 1979	6,761,662	6,749,471	6,445,714	20,333	111,147	8.2%	7.8%	11,905	.0146	.953
June 30, 1979	6,765,474	6,678,638	6,507,904	(25,736)	111,717	5.3%	5.2%	11,934	.0147	.962
Sept. 30, 1979	6,774,641	6,761,924	6,647,810	5,009	115,639	7.3%	7.1%	11,870	.0153	.981
Dec. 31, 1979	6,865,092	6,857,720	6,727,696	74,271	118,291	11.5%	11.2%	11,854	.0155	.980*

*Market value of shares is the closing value, and it is the value used for all investment activities in the next quarter.

From the Report of the General Program Council:

STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The General Program Council, which carries out the mission of the Reformed Church in America, is always a faith project, celebrates again the good news that Reformed Church congregations and individuals responded in love and sacrifice to the Reformed Church mission opportunities this past year. Total giving from congregations and individuals in 1979 to the GPC for its budgeted mission program was $4,360,780. Reformed Church World Service for emergency and needs around the world amounted to $358,482 for 1979 plus $312,944 deferred for 1980 projects. Total income, which includes legacies and investments was $5,406,796, which compares to $5,006,084 received from all funds in 1978. For all these gifts to Christ's kingdom work through the GPC, the whole church needs to celebrate and give thanks that God's goodness has made this possible.

Last year's General Synod affirmed the Vision in Mission program, providing the GPC with a challenge goal of $8,000,000 by 1983. The Vision in Mission program is designed to ask each consistory to increase it commitment to the GPC by ten percent each year during the next four years. Approximately 38 mission support associates across the denomination along with the GPC development staff and regional secretaries were trained with a Vision in Mission flip chart to make consistory visits requesting commitment to this program. Many churches have already accepted the challenge of this program; other congregations will be visited this fall. The Vision in Mission program will help the GPC expand its mission thrust in spite of the inflational spiral. Continued support from all congregations to the Vision in Mission program, along with their current commitment to funding the GPC, is necessary to meet the opportunities for mission given to the Council.

Presently, the development staff, along with the Office of Finance, is working on a more equitable system of the Partnership in Mission program. There is need to have a more limited number of churches involved in supporting a missionary and yet at the same time, help the GPC keep pace with inflation related to missionary salaries, travel, etc.

Stewardship is likely to be a major issue in our churches in the 1980s as the monetary system in our country continues to experience the pressures of inflation, recession, taxation, and a general sense of concern among people. Lifestyle questions, such as the use of energy, food, water,and soil, along with many other issues that relate to how we live the totality of life under the Lordship of Christ, need to be the concern of the whole church and the GPC. Without a high and holy sense of the stewardship of all life we will not be good servants/disciples of our Lord. The GPC continues to pledge itself to help congregations deal with these questions so that together we may be God's people in the world doing God's will.

In response to a referral by the 1979 General Synod, the following information has been provided regarding the required accounting of all funds disbursed by the GPC and development of policies for report to the 1980 General Synod.

The GPC presently has two procedures for auditing the use of its grants.

The first procedure is carried out by the staff during September and October of each year. The GPC automatically pays the first three quarters of its authorized grants, but delays the payment of the fourth quarter until the accountable staff person has

determined that previous monies have been appropriately used and the full grant is required by the project. The disbursement accountant does not release the monies until the accountable executive has authorized their release after the review.

The second procedure involves the members of the GPC. Each program within the GPC budget is reviewed every three years. The review includes a restatement of the objective of the program, an evaluation of its functioning, and a report on the significance of the program. In order to complete the review, staff members of the GPC must determine that the monies granted were used for the specific program voted by the GPC. The information shared with the members of the GPC identifies the specific usage of the money by the recipient.

In addition, the GPC has a policy for reporting budget transfers and contingency expenditures. All contingency expenditures must be reported in the Administrative Review or the Minutes of the General Program Council Executive Committee. The accountable staff person is expected to determine that the monies have been appropriately used. The policy on budget transfer requires reporting in Administrative Review or the GPCEC minutes. As with contingency expenditures, the accountable staff person is expected to monitor the use of the monies granted to other agencies.

ASSESSING FOR CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

An Historical Sketch

The restructure of the 1960s, culminating in the creation of the General Program Council, was intended, in part, to solve major funding problems. Although the problem of funding could be traced back for many decades, it is perhaps sufficient to note that the current shape of the problem began forming after the Second World War. At that time efforts were made to underwrite the program of the church on a unified and coordinated basis. Both the United Advance and the creation of the Stewardship Council were part of these efforts for unification. Nevertheless, the problem remained. The church was inclined to pick and choose the particular programs it wished to support. It showed a particular generosity toward overseas mission program and tended to pass over programs which directed themselves to ministry in the United States, particularly ministry in cities and denominational staff services.

In the 1950s an equalization formula was developed which distributed undesignated funds according to a formula approved annually by the General Synod. By the late 1960s it was apparent that this system was no longer effective since the undesignated funds were constantly diminishing. Equalization was discontinued in the mid-70s.

In spite of the best efforts of all concerned, the less popular programs continued to suffer severely. Nor did the programs of world mission escape. Being forced to "carry along" other less popular programs, they looked affluent only in comparison with other less generously supported denominational programs but hardly when compared with independent world mission programs.

The development of the GPC represented a different approach to these problems. It was hoped that a unified program and a unified effort in promotion and communications would provide a more coordinated and rational system of decision-making.

The experience of the GPC reveals that it did not solve the problem. Its largest contribution in this area is that the problem was brought into one agency, thus saving a

great deal of time previously expended in inter-agency consultation and staff negotiation concerning the distribution of funds. But the problem remains.

Funding

Funding staff costs and services through mission offerings has always been a difficult, if not impossible, task. Two methods used in recent years in an attempt to increase income for this area of the budget were a $3.00-per-member asking and promotion of partnership-in-mission shares in denominational staff—both of which received minimal response.

The council's consideration of a new structure provided an opportunity to also look at a variety of options for funding different areas of its program. The following guidelines were used as the council sought to develop a funding proposal:

> The style of funding should be appropriate to the particular task (e.g., offerings, askings, assessments.)
>
> Funding of related programs conducted by different agencies and assemblies (e.g., particular synods) should be related to funding of similar programs conducted by the national agencies.
>
> Funding for world mission should be separated from other funding so as to provide a more nearly fair competition with independent agencies.

The structure proposal called for the work of the council to be carried out under three divisions: World Mission, Church Planning and Development, and Christian Discipleship. This three-unit structure would enable the council to separate its budget and use different methods of funding for the various types of programs involved. The World Mission budget would consist of all mission programs both overseas and in North America plus an amount for promotion and administration (approximately $4,415,772 in 1980*); the Christian Discipleship budget would consist of all staff services to congregations plus an amount for promotion and administration (approximately $850,512 in 1980*); and the Church Planning and Development budget would consist of program grants plus an amound for promotion and administration (approximately $353,725 in 1980*). If the budgets for Christian Discipleship and Church Planning and Development were to be funded by assessments, the development staff would be able to devote all of its energy to securing offerings in support of World Mission, thus freeing the World Mission program from the burden of carrying the other costs.

The costs for staff services and program grants might be assessed upon the churches in keeping with one of a variety of methods already employed by the classes. Many classes use a *pro-rata* assessment per communicant member. In some cases allowances are made for small churches by exempting the first fifty members of each congregation or by using a sliding scale (e.g. from 1-200 members, $2.00 per member; from 200-500, $3.00 per member; from 500-up, $5.00 per member). Other classes use a percentage of the total amount received by the church for congregational purposes (e.g. in one classis the 1979 assessment is 7% of 1977 receipts for congregational purposes).

*The budget figure for each council includes the appropriate program elements from the 1980 Program Budget plus an amount for promotion and administration based on the percentage of the 1980 Program Budget allocated to that particular council. For example, the World Mission program elements were 79% of the 1980 Program Budget; therefore, 79% of the 1980 Administration and Promotion Budgets was included in the budget for World Mission.

Development of a Proposal

After endorsing the concept of funding the work of Christian Discipleship and Church Planning and Development by assessment, the Council considered a variety of options based on a percentage of giving for congregational purposes, including:

> An across-the-board percentage for giving for congregational purposes.
>
> An across-the-board percentage of giving for congregational purposes excluding major capital funds received for local church use.
>
> A per-member assessment based on a sliding percentage of giving for congregational purposes excluding major capital funds received for local church use.

Several formulas were tested in order to determine an assessment which would produce sufficient funds to cover the budgets of Christian Discipleship and Church Planning and Development ($1,204,237 in the 1980 Budget), while at the same time providing for a deductible to ease the burden on small churches, a minimum payment and a maximum ceiling. Through this testing process, the following formula has emerged:

> An assessment of 3% of receipts for congregational purposes reported for the previous year, exclusive of capital funds, with a deductible of .001%, a minimum payment of .0001% and a maximum payment of .01% of the denominational total of the receipts defined above.

Using the 1978 figures, the above formula produced a total of approximately $1,000,000. All churches would receive a deductible of $520; all churches would pay at least $52; and no church would be required to pay more than $5,200.

Consideration was given to phasing in the assessment over a three-year period; however, it was felt that such a phasing would have little advantage and would necessitate making arrangements for supplemental funding of the two budgets until the assessment was implemented in full.

The pros and cons inherent in the assessment proposal were listed as follows:

Pros

1. All congregations would be expected to bear their share of the responsibility.

2. Assessments tied to congregational purposes would help keep pace with inflation.

3. Assessments would assure a funding base for essential denominational services to congregations.

Cons

1. Controversial programs supported by assessments could spark a negative reaction and endanger all assessment-funded programs.

2. Because they are obligated to pay assessments for program, some congregations may expect a direct return on their investment, such as more staff services than is possible.

3. While the assessment system would provide basic support for the work of the two divisions, it may act as a limiting factor, curtailing growth and dreams.

Alternatives

An alternative assessment plan would be to cover all promotion and administration costs for all three divisions by assessments. Program monies for all three divisions would then be raised through contributions.

The advantages of this plan would be to identify the program of all divisions as mission, benefitting from voluntary gifts, and, that promotion and administration support for World Missions would be guaranteed by assessment.

The main disadvantage is that the alternative would not solve the problem of uneven voluntary support for the three divisions. It would also probably involve the three divisions in competition for support.

Alternatives to funding through assessments would include:

1. Continue present funding system accompanied by intensive educational program.

2. Continue special emphases such as the Vision-in-Mission program.

3. A re-organization of the development function to increase funding.

There was agreement that the concept of funding the divisions of Christian Discipleship and Church Planning and Development by assessment, while not a perfect solution, is the most desirable and viable of the present options.

Conversations concerning the assessment proposal over the last nine months have indicated a need for more time in which to share information and discuss the issues.

The GPC therefore voted to report to the General Synod its intention to continue the study and development of a proposal to be presented to the General Synod of 1981, that effective January 1, 1982, the work of the Division of Church Planning and Development and the Division of Christian Discipleship be funded through an assessment upon the classes computed on the basis of receipts for congregational purposes reported for the previous year exclusive of capital funds with the following understandings:

1. The assessment for the work of the Division of Christian Discipleship would be 2% of the receipts for congregational purposes reported for the previous year exclusive of capital funds.

2. The assessment for the work of Division of Church Planning and Development would be 1% of the receipts for congregational purposes reported for the previous year exclusive of capital funds.

3. The assessment would be computed to allow a deduction of .001% of the denominational total receipts defined in paragraphs one and two above with the understanding that each congregation would pay not less than .0001% and not more than .01% of the denominational total of the receipts defined above.

4. The divisions of Church Planning and Development and Christian Discipleship would be prohibited from soliciting funds for their operating budgets, and that any unsolicited funds received would be placed in the general reserves of the Trustees of the GPC.

5. No money received through these assessments will be channeled to or through the NCC or the WCC.

6. That the GPC will hold open hearings not later than March 1981, at or near the site of each regional office in order to discuss the needs of the region and the services which would be offered through the Divisions of Church Planning and Development and Christian Discipleship for report to the GPC and to the General Synod of 1981.

Overtures

Separate Assessments for GPC Program from GPC Structure

1. **The Classis of Cascades overtures the General Synod to instruct the GPC that we support in principle the proposed restructuring of GPC into three separate independent councils, namely Christian Discipleship Council, Church Planning and Development and World Mission Council, but do not support the proposed denominational assessment to fund the first two councils, therefore, to uncouple the funding formula from the proposed restructure of GPC into two separate motions.**

Reasons:

1. We believe that this funding formula may require us to financially support programs we could not in good conscience support.
2. We question whether levying assessments for benevolences violates the tradition of voluntary giving for benevolences.
3. We are concerned when GPC sets our mission agendas without local congregational imput.
4. Use of assessments further isolated the program staff from interaction with the local congregation.
5. Use of assessments further removes accountability for GPC programs from the control of the local churches.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-2.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Reason:

The proposed new structure and the proposed denominational assessment have been separated, i.e., the intent of the overture has already been accomplished.

Cease Study and Development of a Proposal on Assessments for GPC program

2. **The Classis of Chicago overtures the General Synod to direct the General Program Council to cease all study and development of a proposal to be presented to General Synod 1981 regarding assessments for the Division of Church Planning and Development and the Division of Christian Discipleship.**

Reasons:

1. It is a form of taxation totally contrary to our historic method of voluntary giving. We acknowledge the necessity for classical assessment for General Synod operational expenses, its various committees and commissions, and its staff, but to assess for programs of evangelism, Christian education, church planning and development is contrary to our system of voluntary contributions.

2. This proposed assessment will tend to weaken, if not destroy lines of accountability to the local church. A program that is meeting local needs will, by its very nature, generate funds for its support. The local church should not be coerced by a method of taxation to support causes or programs that should be supported on a voluntary basis.

3. Once this method of obtaining funds from the local church has been established, the percentage figure could escalate so that a large sum of the local budget is received mainly to meet denominational expenses. This is not the purpose of the local church.

4. It takes away from the local congregation the option to use its own monies for programs it deems best; e.g., Christian education. We have used and paid for various sevices from the Christian Reformed Church and their *Bible Way Curriculum*. We think it is far superior to anything offered by our denomination. We wish to retain the option of selecting programs from other sources without being forced to pay for our own, though we do not use them.

5. There is absolutely no guarantee that because more money is available, therefore, we will have superior services to the local church The cry for more money does not necessarily mean more quality programming.

6. We think the entire proposal is unscriptural. The Bible urges individuals and local congregations to share with other needy congregations. This sharing of persons and funds was always done on a voluntary basis.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-3.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Cease Study and Development of a Proposal on Assessments for GPC Program

3. **The Particular Synod of Chicago overtures the General Synod to direct the General Program Council to cease all study and development of a proposal to be presented to General Synod 1981 regarding assessments for the Division of Church Planning and Development and the Division of Christian Discipleship.**

Reasons:

1. It is a form of taxation totally contrary to our historic method of voluntary giving. We acknowledge the necessity for classical assessment for General Synod operational expenses, its various committees and commissions, and its staff, but to assess for programs of evangelism, Christian education, church planning and development is contrary to our system of voluntary contributions.

2. This proposed assessment will tend to weaken, if not destroy, lines of accountability to the local church. A program that is meeting local needs will, by its very nature, generate funds for its support. The local church should not be coerced by a method of taxation to support causes or programs that should be supported on a voluntary basis.

3. Once this method of obtaining funds from the local church has been established, the percentage figure could escalate so that a large share of the local budget is received mainly to meet denominational expenses. This is not the purpose of the local church.

4. It takes away from the local congregation the option to use its own monies for programs it deems best, e.g., Christian education. We have used and paid for various services from the Christian Reformed Church and its Bible Way Curriculum. We wish to retain the option of selecting programs from other sources without being forced to pay for our own, though we do not use them.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-4.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

R-5.
To urge the General Program Council, in its continued study of funding for its programs, to explore every possibility of funding in addition to assessments, and further, to urge the General Program Council to take into consideration in its study the pain that both the Classis of Chicago and the Particular Synod of Chicago (and possibly other areas of the RCA) have expressed concerning assessments for program. (ADOPTED)

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Report of the Commission on Worship

The Worship Commission met twice since the last General Synod. Among matters under consideration were the continuing formation of a Directory of Worship; a concise contemporary Order for Baptism; revised Orders for the Ordination and Installation, both for ministers and missionaries, and also for elders and deacons, as well as dismissal of the same; workshops on worship and music; placement of flags in a sanctuary; and a modern translation of the Apostles' Creed. The last two arose out of requests from within the denomination. Since they appear to reflect widespread concern, we wish to report the results of our deliberations.

Placement of Flags in a Sanctuary

It is the opinion of the commission that neither the U.S. nor Christian flags are appropriate in a place of worship. Our reason for this is that they tend to distract from the simplicity and unity of symbolism desirable in Reformed worship. We refer to the excellent discussion of the subject in Bruggink and Droppers *Christ and Architecture* (pp. 449-55). Should churches however wish to display the flags, they should be placed in the nave or sanctuary of the place of worship, rather than in the chancel or on the pulpit platform. We offer this opinion for the guidance of our churches.

Modern Translation of the Apostles' Creed

It is the view of the commission that those congregations which feel such a need should use the text prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts. This has achieved international ecumenical status and is in complete harmony with the Latin text and the more traditional version used in most churches.

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON ENGLISH TEXTS' TRANSLATION OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

R-1.
To adopt amendments to the *Liturgy*, inserting the International Consultation on English Texts' translation of the Apostles' Creed as an alternative text and to recommend it to the classes for approval. (ADOPTED)

Workshops in Worship and Music

The commission cooperated with Hope College and Western Seminary in conducting a successful event in February, 1980, in Holland, Michigan. This featured Eric Routley as the main speaker and attracted 112 pastors and church musicians. This is the second such event organized by the commission in recent years, the first being in New York State in 1977. We hope to organize similar events in other areas in the future.

Order for Ordination and Installation of Minsiters of the Word and Missionaries

A new text was adoped by the General Synod of 1979 for permissive use (*MGS*, 1979 pp. 165ff). We invited and responded to comments on this from the denomination and on the basis of these have made some minor modifications. The 1979 text as revised appears below.

ORDER FOR THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF MINISTERS OF THE WORD OR MISSIONARIES

The Book of Church Order *(Part II, Article 9, Section 5) directs the classis to appoint a time for the ordination service of candidates for the ministry and to conduct the service, in regular or special session, with proper solemnity. A sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached.*

If the candidate also is to be installed as the pastor and teacher of a congregation, the Book of Church Order *further directs (Part I, Article 2, Section 2) that, after a call has been approved by the classis and accepted by the person called, "the latter's name shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays, so that opportunity may be afforded for the raising of lawful objections." There being none, the classis shall proceed with the installation. After the sermon has been preached, the following shall take place:*

PRAYER

The presiding officer of the classis shall say:

Let us pray.
O God, the great shepherd of the Church, who through the light of your Holy Spirit has always guided your people: grant that we, by the same Spirit, may live for you, and together with all whom you call to serve within the body of Christ, may be faithful and obedient to your Word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

EXPOSITION

Beloved in the Lord, Holy Scripture teaches us that God our heavenly Father gathers to himself from among the lost children of this world a Church to life eter-

nal, and that in this work of grace he is pleased to use our ministry. The Lord Jesus himself provides us with the grace we need to serve him, as affirmed by the Apostle Paul: "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." *Ephesians 4:11-12*

INTERROGATION

The presiding officer shall ask the candidate(s) to stand before the congregation. N . . . . . ., the Classis of . . . . . has examined you and has found you to be qualified as *a* person(s) of sound learning and of Christian character, well suited to exercise the ministry of the Word within the Church of Christ. That it may appear to all here present that you are willing to accept this office and fulfill the ministry to which you have been called, you are to answer sincerely these questions:

PRESIDENT: Will you confess with us and the Church throughout all ages your faith in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

CANDIDATE: I WILL.

The presiding officer shall invite the congregation to stand:

Let us all arise and stand with N . . . . . ., confessing our Christian faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH;

AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD: WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY; SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED; HE DESCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST; THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH; THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS; THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

PRESIDENT: N . . . . . ., do you believe in your heart that you are called by God's Church, and therefore by God, to be *a* minister(s) of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

CANDIDATE: I DO SO BELIEVE.

PRESIDENT: Do you believe the books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the perfect doctrine of salvation; rejecting all doctrines contrary thereto?

CANDIDATE: I DO SO BELIEVE.

PRESIDENT: Are you willing to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; from the Word of God to instruct, admonish, comfort, and reprove, according to everyone's need; and to uphold the witness of holy Scripture against all schisms and heresies?

CANDIDATE: I AM WILLING, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

PRESIDENT: Are you willing to call upon the name of the Lord for and with the whole congregation; to administer the sacraments according to his command; and to care for the flock of Christ?

CANDIDATE: I AM WILLING, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

PRESIDENT: Are you willing to be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America, accepting its order and discipline, using all your abilities to further its Christian mission, here and throughout the world?

CANDIDATE: I AM WILLING, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

ORDINATION

The candidate(s) shall then kneel, and the members of the classis shall come forward. Those the classis shall invite may join in the laying on of hands. The presiding officer shall say:

The Lord Jesus prayed: "Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us. Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth."

John 17:11, 17-19

Almighty God, who through Jesus Christ calls from among us those who carry out the ministry of the Word, enlighten your servant(s) with your Spirit, strengthen *him/her* with your hand; and so govern *him/her* that *his/her* life and labor may be to the glory of your name and the advancement of your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Addressing the candidate(s), the presiding officer shall say:

N . . . . . ., by the authority given to his Church by our Lord Jesus Christ, we ordain you minister of the Word, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you: The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with you always. AMEN.

If there is more than one candidate, the address above shall be given to each one individually.

ORATION AND SIGNING OF THE FORM OF DECLARATION

The candidate(s), having received ordination, shall stand and read aloud the "Form of the Declaration for Ministers" after which he/she *shall sign* his/her *name in the book containing the declaration. If a symbol of the ministry (such as a Bible or pulpit robe) is to be presented, it should be given at this time. Those who participate in the laying on of hands shall extend the right hand of fellowship before returning to their places. The candidate(s) shall remain for the charge.*

CHARGE TO THE MINISTER

The person designated by the classis shall deliver the charge. The charge which follows shall be read, but an additional brief exhortation, if authorized by the classis may be made before it.

Beloved fellow servant*(s)* in Christ, be attentive to the flock whom the Holy Spirit gives you to shepherd and teach, and to all those among whom you shall labor. Love Christ, and feed his sheep. "For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Attend to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them." *I Timothy 4:1-15*

"In the presence of God who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this will be made manifest at the proper time by the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen." *I Timothy 6:13-16*

HYMN OF PRAISE

A hymn of praise to God shall be sung. The presiding officer shall say:

Let us pray.

PRAYER

If the service is one of ordination only it is concluded with the following prayer, which may be spoken by the whole congregation or by the presiding officer; the General Prayers; the Lord's Prayer, a hymn (optional); and the Benediction, which will be delivered by the newly ordained minister.

If it is also a service of installation, the following prayer shall be omitted. The classis may authorize the presiding officer or another designated person to deliver a brief EXHORTATION TO THE CONGREGATION after which the presiding officer shall call for the AFFIRMATION BY THE CONGREGATION.

MOST MERCIFUL GOD, WE THANK YOU FOR THE SERVICE YOU CALL US TO RENDER WITHIN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, AND FOR THE COMMISSION TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE WORLD. WE ASK YOU CONTINUALLY TO STRENGTHEN N . . . . . BY YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, FOR THE MINISTRY TO WHICH YOU HAVE CHOSEN AND CALLED *HIM/HER*. ENLIGHTEN *HIS/HER* UNDERSTANDING, ENDOW *HIM/HER* WITH WISDOM AND COURAGE, SPEAK TO *HIM/HER* THAT *HE/SHE* MAY BOLDLY MAKE KNOWN THE GOSPEL. GRANT *HIM/HER* PATIENCE TO BEAR THE DIFFICULTIES AND TRIALS WHICH MAY COME, THAT BEING SUSTAINED BY YOUR SPIRIT, *HE/SHE* MAY REMAIN STEADFAST, ALWAYS REJOICING IN THE WORDS OF OUR LORD, WHO PROMISED HIS DISCIPLES, "I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE CLOSE OF THE AGE." AMEN.

AFFIRMATION BY THE CONGREGATION

Will all those within the fellowship of . . . . . *(name of the church)* . . . . . rise and make their affirmation of the minister whom God has given them?

When the members of the congregation have risen, the presiding officer shall continue:

PRESIDENT: Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, do you receive in the name of the Lord, this his servant N . . . . . to be your pastor and teacher?

CONGREGATION: IN THE LORD'S NAME WE RECEIVE *HIM/HER,* AND MAKE THIS PLEDGE: TO RECEIVE WITH MEEKNESS AND LOVE, THE WORD OF TRUTH *HE/SHE* PROCLAIMS, AND TO SUBMIT WITH CONFIDENCE AND GOOD CHEER, TO THE PASTORAL CARE *HE/SHE* PROVIDES IN CHRIST'S SERVICE. WE PROMISE AND PLEDGE OUR ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAYERS, OUR PARTICIPATION AND LABOR, AS TOGETHER WE DO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH. WE PROMISE THAT WE WILL FURNISH *HIM/HER* SUCH FINANCIAL AND PERSONAL CARE AS WILL ENABLE *HIM/HER* TO DO *HIS/HER* WORK JOYFULLY AND PRODUCTIVELY, AS LONG AS OUR PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP CONTINUES.

PRESIDENT: The Lord bless you and pour out his Spirit to strengthen you, that you may keep these vows in the name of Christ and to his glory. AMEN.

DECLARATION:

The presiding officer shall then say:

In the name and by the authority of the Classis of . . . . . I now declare that the pastoral relationship between the Reverend . . . . . *(using full name)* . . . . and the *(name of church)* . . . . . is fully constituted, and that the Reverend . . . . . *(using full name)* . . . . . is the lawfully installed pastor and teacher of this church.

Let us give glory to God, and call upon him with prayer and thanksgiving. Let us pray.

PRAYER FOR GRACE

Most merciful God, we thank you for the service you called us to render within the Church of Christ and for the commission to proclaim the Gospel to all the world. We ask you to continually strengthen N . . . . . by your Holy Spirit for the ministry to which you have chosen and called *him/her.* Enlighten *his/her* understanding; endue *him/her* with wisdom and courage; speak to *him/her* that *he/she* may boldly make known the Gospel. Grant *him/her* patience to bear the difficulties and trials which may come, that being sustained by your Spirit, *he/she* may remain steadfast, always rejoicing in the words of the Lord, who promised his disciples, "I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Give your grace also to this congregation, set apart for the ministry that becomes God's people. Strengthen them as they work together in your Church; enlighten them through the proclamation of your Word so that they may be indeed what you called them to be through the Apostle Peter: "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

GENERAL PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

BENEDICTION delivered by the newly-ordained and installed minister.

R-2.
To instruct the Commission on Worship to edit and publish the revised "Order for the Ordination and Installation of Ministers of the Word or Missionaries" for permissive use until the 1981 Synod subject to approval by the GSEC. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

Reasons:
1. The questions asked of the candidates should be in conformity with the statement in the *Book of Church Order* concerning the office of the minister of the Word.
2. It is thought inappropriate to refer to this order as "an order for the ordination and installation of missionaries." Missionaries are commissioned (whether ordained or not) and persons are ordained to one of three offices, of which missionary is not one.
3. It is the opinion of this advisory committee that numerous editorial and grammatical changes need to be made before it is referred to the classes for final approval. The commission representative has in his possession those suggested changes.

Since current practice within the denomination is to ordain ministers in their home church and classis and to install ministers in the calling church and classis, the commission has prepared a separate installation service for use in such circumstances. This service is printed below. Comments on this will be appreciated.

The *Book of Church Order* requires that "The classis shall install a minister of the Word each time he enters a form of ministry appropriate to the office." (Part II, Art. 10, Sec. 2)

It is purposed that ministers who have accepted a call to serve a church should be installed according to the *Order of Reception into the Classis and Installation of a Minister of the Word as Pastor and Teacher of a Congregation.* Those entering other forms of ministry would be installed according to the directory which follows.

ORDER FOR THE RECEPTION INTO THE CLASSIS AND INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD AS PASTOR AND TEACHER OF A CONGREGATION

The Book of Church Order *(Part I, Article 2, Section 2) directs that, after a call to a minister of the Word to the pastorate of a church has been approved by the classis and accepted by the minister, the name of the person so called "shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays, so that opportunity may be afforded for the raising of lawful objections." There being none, the* Book of Church Order *further directs (Part II, Article 10, Sections 2 and 5) that the classis shall install the minister of the Word into his/her office.*

*Additions in light face type.

This order is intended for use when a minister of the Word is to be installed as pastor and teacher of a congregation. Installation into other appropriate ministries should be conduced in accordance with the DIRECTORY FOR THE RECEPTION INTO THE CLASSIS AND INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD.

After the Approach to God and a proclamation of The Word of God in Scripture reading and sermon, the presiding officer of classis shall begin:

PRAYER

Presiding Officer: Let us pray. O God, the great shepherd of the Church, who through the light of your Holy Spirit has always guided your people: grant that we, by the same Spirit, may live for you, and together with all whom you call to serve within the body of Christ, may be faithful and obedient to your Word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

EXPOSITION

Beloved in the Lord, Holy Scripture teaches us that God our heavenly Father gathers to himself from among the lost children of this world a Church to life eternal, and that in this work of grace he is pleased to use our ministry. The Lord Jesus himself provides us with the grace we need to serve him, as affirmed by the Apostle Paul: "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."

Ephesians 4:11-12

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATE

INTERROGATION

The presiding officer shall say:
Will the Reverend . . . *using full name* . . . now rise and present *him/her/self* before the congregation? *When the candidate has done so, the president continues:* N . . . . ., the Classis of . . . . . has approved the Call issued to you by the . . . . . Church of . . . . . to be their pastor and teacher. You stand before us now in order that you may be received into the membership of the classis and installed into the new ministry to which you have been called. So that it may appear to all here present that you are willing to exercise the ministry of the Word within the Church of Christ, I call upon you to reaffirm the vows made when you were ordained a minister of the Word: do you believe in your heart that you are called by God's church, and therefore by God, to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

CANDIDATE: I DO SO BELIEVE.

Presiding Officer: Do you believe the Books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the perfect doctrine of salvation; rejecting all doctrines contrary thereto?

CANDIDATE: I DO SO BELIEVE.

Presiding Officer: Will you serve as pastor, teacher and enabler of the Christians among whom you work, to build up and equip the whole church for the ministry in the world?

CANDIDATE: I WILL, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Presiding Officer: Will you preach and teach the Word of God, administer the sacraments, share responsibility for the mutual Christian growth of all members of the congregation, and exercise Christian love and discipline?

CANDIDATE: I WILL, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Presiding Officer: Will you be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America, accepting its order and discipline, using all your abilities to further its Christian mission, here and throughout the world?

CANDIDATE: I WILL, THE LORD BEING MY HELPER.

Presiding Officer: Will you, then, declare your faith publicly, and make your commitment to a Christian ministry among us?

CANDIDATE: The candidate shall respond by reading aloud the Form of the Declaration for Ministers, *after which he/she shall sign his/her name in the book containing the declaration.*

WELCOME

The president shall welcome the candidate using these words or some other suitable greeting after which the presiding officer and such other officers or members of the classis as may have been appointed may extend the right hand of fellowship to the new member.

Presiding Officer: In the name of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, we welcome you into our fellowship and pledge to you our confidence, support, and affection as you live and work among us as a fellow servant and minister of the Word of God.

The new member and other members of classis may return to their places after which the president or an elder from the calling congregation appointed by him/her may make a brief STATEMENT regarding the nature and/or heritage of the congregation so as to reveal something of the direction in which God may be calling it to go during the future, after which the president shall again ask the candidate to stand before the body and inquire:

ACCEPTANCE OF THE OFFICE

Presiding Officer: In accepting the call issued to you by the . . . . . Church of . . . . . you have already acknowledged your willingness to serve God as their pastor and teacher. Will you now affirm publicly your acceptance of that office?

CANDIDATE: I WILL. *The candidate may make a further brief statement in his/her own words, facing and addressing both classis and congregation, after which the president shall call upon the congregation to rise:*

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CANDIDATE

Presiding Officer: Will all within the fellowship of . . . . . (name of the church) rise and make your affirmation of the minister whom God has given you? *When the*

members of the congregation have risen, the president shall continue: Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, do you receive in the name of the Lord, this his servant N . . . . . to be your pastor and teacher?

CONGREGATION: IN THE LORD'S NAME WE RECEIVE *HIM/HER,* AND MAKE THIS PLEDGE: TO RECEIVE WITH MEEKNESS AND LOVE THE WORD OF TRUTH *HE/SHE* PROCLAIMS, AND TO SUBMIT WITH CONFIDENCE AND GOOD CHEER TO THE PASTORAL CARE *HE/SHE* PROVIDES IN CHRIST'S SERVICE. WE PROMISE AND PLEDGE OUR ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAYERS, OUR PARTICIPATION AND LABOR, AS TOGETHER WE DO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH. WE PROMISE THAT WE WILL FURNISH *HIM/HER* SUCH FINANCIAL AND PERSONAL SUPPORT AS WILL ENABLE *HIM/HER* TO DO *HIS/HER* WORK JOYFULLY AND PRODUCTIVELY, AS LONG AS OUR PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP CONTINUES.

Presiding Officer: The Lord bless you and pour out his Spirit to strengthen you, that you may keep these vows in the name of Christ and to his glory. AMEN.

Brief, scriptural charges may be made to the minister-elect and the congregation. The president shall then declare:

DECLARATION OF INSTALLATION

In the name and by the authority of the Classis of . . . . . I now declare that the pastoral relationship between the Reverend . . . . . *(using full name)* . . . . . and the . . . . . *(name of church)* . . . . . is fully constituted, and that the Reverend . . . . . *(using full name)* . . . . . is the lawfully installed pastor and teacher of this church.

Let us call upon the name of the Lord! Let us pray.

PRAYER FOR GRACE

Most merciful God, we thank you for the service you called us to render within the Church of Christ and for the commission to proclaim the gospel to all the world. We ask you to continually strengthen N . . . . . by your Holy Spirit for the ministry to which you have chosen and called *him/her.* Enlighten *his/her* understanding; endow *him/her* with wisdom and courage; speak to *him/her* that *he/she* may boldly make known the gospel. Grant *him/her* patience to bear the difficulties and trials which may come, that being sustained by your Spirit, *he/she* may remain steadfast, always rejoicing in the words of the Lord, who promised his disciples, "I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Give your grace also to this congregation, set apart for the ministry that becomes God's people. Strengthen them as they work together in your Church; enlighten them through the proclamation of your Word so that they may be indeed what you called them to be through the Apostle Peter: "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Then may follow the GENERAL PRAYERS *and the* LORD'S PRAYER, *unless it has been used already in the service. A* HYMN *of Thanksgiving may be sung after which the newly installed minister shall deliver the:*

BENEDICTION

DIRECTORY FOR AN ORDER FOR RECEPTION INTO THE CLASSIS AND INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD INTO A SPECIALIZED MINISTRY

The classis shall appoint a time for a service of worship during which praise and prayer shall be offered, the Word of God proclaimed, and a sermon preached, after which the Order specified below shall take place.

PRAYER: The presiding officer of classis or a person designated by the officer shall lead the congregation in a prayer asking for God's blessing upon the assembly.

EXPOSITION: The president shall give a brief exposition of the divine call to ministry, using the text Ephesians 4:11-12 or another appropriate portion of Scripture.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATE: The presiding officer shall call the candidate to stand before the congregation for the purpose of being received into the classis (if not already a member) and being installed into his/her office.

INTERROGATION: The president shall ask the candidate if he/she does reaffirm his/her ordination vows. After receiving a positive oral response, the president shall ask the candidate if he/she is willing to declare his/her faith publicly and make a renewed commitment to perform a Christian ministry as a member of the classis.

READING AND SIGNING OF THE FORM OF DECLARATION: The candidate shall reply to the president's question by reading the *Form of the Declaration for Ministers* and affixing his/her name to a book containing the declaration.

WELCOME: The president and such other officers or members of the classis as may be appointed shall welcome the candidate as a minister member of the classis with a greeting and the extending of the right hand of fellowship.

STATEMENT OF THE NATURE OF THE MINISTRY: A brief statement regarding the nature of the particular ministry and the duties pertaining to it which the minister may be called upon to perform may be read by the president, or by a person appointed to do so, after which the following affirmations shall be made.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE OFFICE BY THE CANDIDATE: The president shall ask the minister if he/she is willing to affirm publicly his/her acceptance of the office. The minister shall make a brief reply using his/her own words.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CANDIDATE: If there are persons present who will be taking an active role in this ministry, the president shall ask them to stand to affirm their willingness to accept the minister God has given them and to participate in ministry with him/her as God may lead them.

If the ministry is under the direct supervision of the classis or its committee(s), or if the classis is acting on behalf of another assembly of the Reformed Church in America, its members shall stand with, or in place of, the group present and join in the affirmation.

CHARGES: Brief, scriptural charges may be made to the minister-elect and, if present, to those participating in the ministry.

DECLARATION OF INSTALLATION: The president shall make a declaration using this form: "In the name and by the authority of the Classis of . . . . . ., I declare that the Reverend . . . . . *(using full name)* . . . . . is duly installed . . . . . *(into the particular ministry)* . . . . . .

PRAYERS: A prayer for grace may be offered and the general prayers made, concluding with the Lord's Prayer unless it has been used previously in the service.

BENEDICTION: The newly installed minister may pronounce the blessing concluding the service.

NOTE: Appropriate *HYMNS* may be sung during the Order, if desired. It is suggested that these be included before the Statement of the Nature of the Ministry and/or before the Benediction.

R-3.
(To adopt) To instruct the Commission on Worship to edit and publish **an "Order for the Reception into the Classis and Installation of a Minister of the Word as Pastor and Teacher of a Congregation" and the "Directory for an Order for Reception into the Classis and Installation of a Minister of the Word into a Specialized Ministry" for permissive use and study for one year, pending adoption by the General Synod of 1981,** subject to approval by the GSEC. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

Order for Ordination and Installation of Eders and Deacons

The commission has sought to eliminate the ponderous didactic tone of the existing order. It was our opinion that the duties of church officers should be made clear prior to their election and with this in mind have eliminated such material from the revised order. This of course shortens the order considerably, making it more suitable for use within the regular Sunday services. We have also sought to make the occasion more meaningful, eliminating mixed metaphors and ambiguous language and using more contemporary terminology throughout. It is our opinion that use of the revised order will strengthen the leadership of our churches. We invite comments on this order, which follows.

ORDER FOR THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

The respective ecclesiastical duties and powers of elders and deacons are laid down in the Book of Church Order *(Part I, Article I, Sec.'s 7 and 9). These shall be made known to the congregation prior to their election and these officers shall acquaint themselves therewith. Their civil powers vary under the laws of different states.*

The BCO *(Part I, Article 2, Sec. 10) directs that the names of elders and deacons elect shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays preceding their installation, in order that lawful objections may be considered.*

After an Approach to God and a proclamation of the Word of God, the presiding minister shall begin:

PRAYER

Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who by your Holy Spirit guided the councils of the blessed Apostles and promised, through your Son Jesus Christ, to be with your Church to the end of the world, look upon us in mercy and direct us by your Holy Spirit that what we do at this time may result in the welfare of your kingdom, the building up of your people, and the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

EXPOSITION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, you have chosen these persons before you to serve as elders and deacons in this church. Their names have been published several times and since there is no scriptural reason why they may not be inducted into their offices we shall now proceed in the name of the Lord.

Jesus Christ is the head of his church, which is made up of many members with a variety of gifts. The purpose of these gifts is that the whole church may confess that he is Lord and serve in his name. To enable all of us to do this, he gives particular gifts to some. To the pastor he gives gifts for the ministry of the word and sacraments; to elders for the ministry of government and discipline; and to deacons for the ministry of compassion and material maintenance. As these ministries are united in Christ, so they are exercised jointly in the church.

Scripture teaches that those chosen to the office of elder are called along with pastors to encourage spiritual growth among the members and help them to walk in the way of Christ. Scripture also teaches that deacons are responsible for the ministry of compassion and material maintenance, representing God's love and mercy in Christ.

By bringing together the offices of pastor, elder and deacon, the consistory continues the full ministry of Christ in our day. Everything is done decently and in order in the church when faithful persons are chosen for and responsibly carry out these offices.

PRESENTATION AND INTERROGATION

The presiding minister shall say:
This congregation has elected (full names) to fill these offices. I now ask you to stand before us. *When the candidates have done so, the presiding minister continues:* That all may know your willingness to accept these responsibilities, you will answer the following questions:

MINISTER:
Do you reaffirm the vows you made when you confessed your faith in Christ and became a communicant member of his Church?

CANDIDATES: I do.

MINISTER:
Do you feel in your heart that you are called of God's Church and therefore of God himself to your respective office?

CANDIDATES: I do.

MINISTER:
Do you believe the books of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God and the perfect doctrine of salvation and do you reject all doctrines contrary thereto?

CANDIDATES: I do.

MINISTER:
I ask you who have been elected elders, will you oversee and encourage the spiritual growth of the congregation: providing for the proclamation and hearing of God's Word, the reverent celebration of sacraments, and the loving discipline of the members?

CANDIDATES: I will, with the help of God.

MINISTER:
I ask you who have been elected deacons, will you manifest the love and care of Christ: gathering and distributing the offerings of His people, giving personal attention to the distressed, and exercising good stewardship over the goods and property of the congregation?

CANDIDATES: I will, with the help of God.

MINISTER:
Will you, elders and deacons, be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America and do your best to further her mission at home and abroad?

CANDIDATE: I will.

PRAYER

Almighty God our Heavenly Father, who called these persons to these high offices, may your Spirit enlighten them; your hand strengthen them; and your Lordship so direct them, that they may walk in your way and their service bear fruit for the glory of your name and the advancement of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ORDINATION

If any have not been previously ordained, they will kneel before the presiding minister, who shall place a hand upon each and say: (full name), by the authority given to his Church by our Lord Jesus Christ, we ordain you elder/deacon, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

INTERROGATION OF THE CONGREGATION

The presiding minister shall ask the members of the congregation to rise, and shall address them:

You, the members of this congregation, have chosen these persons to their offices. Do you now receive them as Christ's servants in this place?

CONGREGATION: We do.

MINISTER: Will you respect them for the sake of the offices they bear, and promise to walk in the way of the Lord, faithfully heading Jesus Christ and these servants who represent him?

CONGREGATION: We will.

MINISTER: The Lord bless you and multiply his grace to enable you to fulfill your promises.

CONGREGATION: Amen.

DECLARATION

The presiding minister shall address all the elders and deacons standing before the congregation.
In the name of the Lord and head of the church, I declare that you are now ordained and duly installed in your respective offices, and commend you to the grace of God which will enable you to discharge your offices.

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace.

All the congregation shall respond: Amen.

EXHORTATION

The presiding minister shall say:

Elders and deacons, I call upon you to be faithful in performing your duties, to magnify the Lord, and show zeal for his church, for which he shed his own blood.

Brothers and sisters, receive these persons as you would receive Christ. Support them in love, that their work may be productive, and together we may serve the Lord and experience his blessings. Let us pray for one another, that each may obtain whatever grace we need to fulfill our duties.

PRAYER

The following or similar prayers may be prayed at this point or incorporated in the General Prayers:

Almighty and merciful God, of whose help and guidance we always stand in need, bestow upon your servants such gifts as are necessary for them in their respective ministries. Give grace to them that they may serve you faithfully in this life and finally enter into the joy of the life to come.

Grant your grace also to your people whom they serve, so that all of us may fulfill our ministry, magnifying your name and increasing the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ; in whose name we pray.

The service will then continue in the usual manner.

R-4.
(To adopt) To instruct the Commission on Worship to edit and publish **the "Order for the Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons" for permissive use and study (for one year pending adoption by)** until **the Synod of 1981,** subject to approval by the GSEC.) (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

Order for Discharging Retiring Consistory Members from Active Service

It has seemed to us an oversight that no form exists by which this might be done. What we have prepared is an attempt to recognize the labours of such persons, publicly express the appreciation of the congregation, and generally enable them to bow out gracefully. The brief form follows.

ORDER FOR DISCHARGING RETIRING CONSISTORY MEMBERS FROM ACTIVE SERVICE

Following the Service of the Word and prior to the ordination and installation of new elders and deacons, the presiding minister shall name those whose terms have expired and address them as follows:

Brothers and Sisters, some time ago you were chosen by this congregation to be ordained as elders and deacons. You were installed in your respective offices within the consistory. Since then you have used your particular gifts in the service of Christ and his Church, by fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of those offices. We trust that through your labors you have experienced joy and growth in the Lord. As a congregation we wish to express our appreciation for your leadership. I now discharge you from active service on consistory, admit you to the great consistory of this congregation, and beseech you to remain faithful to the Lord and his Church in the days ahead.

A suitable prayer may be offered.

R-5.
To adopt the "Order for Discharging Retiring Consistory Members from Active Service" for permissive use and study for one year pending adoption by the Synod of 1981. (NOT ADOPTED)

Reason:
This seems to be an unnecessary addition to the *Liturgy* and could be suggested through the use of a rubric in the "Order for the Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons."

On a motion from the floor Synod:

VOTED: To instruct the Commission on Worship to prepare a rubric for the discharge of retiring consistory members for inclusion in the "Order for the Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons," for presentation to the 1981 General Synod.

A New Order for Baptism

The General Synod of 1979 directed the commission to develop a contemporary and concise form for baptism of infants (*MGS,* 1979, p. 163). As a first step toward this we have prepared a Directory for Baptism in which are included the major points to be included in such a celebration. We feel it is premature at this stage to provide models to fill out this directory, but wish to ascertain the mind of the church as to whether we are proceeding on the right track. The Directory for Baptism follows.

DIRECTORY FOR BAPTISM

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The board of elders shall consider requests for baptism and must approve such before the ceremony takes place. Either (a) at least one parent or guardian shall be a communicant member of the church to which the request is presented, or (b) the request shall first be submitted for approval to the governing body of the church in which the parent or guardian has membership.

The board of elders shall grant permission to conduct the sacrament to a minister of the Word or, in the absence of such a person, to an elder designated by the board of elders.

At least one of the child's parents or guardians who is a member of the church shall be present to assume the vows. If the parents or guardians request it, other family members or friends may be invited to stand with them.

Since its power lies in God's grace and since it is sufficient for a lifetime, the sacrament is not to be repeated for an individual.

The Sacrament of Baptism shall be conducted at the time and place of public worship after the Service of the Word (including Scripture and sermon). The service shall include a prayer of confession and a reciting of either the Nicene or Apostles' Creed.

INSTITUTION

We cite the scriptural warrant, including Matthew 28:18-20. This clearly establishes the command, authority, and presiding presence of Christ in what we do.

MEANING OF THE SACRAMENT

We acknowledge our need, as those who would be lost in sin were we without God, and we recognize with gratitude God's gracious movement towards us in his work of salvation. In the sacrament God strengthens our faith and we proclaim our faith to the world.

Being baptized into Christ we enter his death and resurrection that we too might enter newness of life.

VOWS

PARENTS: They reaffirm their faith in Christ and his saving power for their child(ren), promising to nurture the seed of faith which God has planted in their child(ren), training and encouraging their child(ren) by word and example toward mature faith.

CONGREGATION: Standing They, on behalf of the universal Church, reaffirm their vows of faith, and promise through training and example, to assist the parents in nurture of the child(ren) toward mature faith.

PRAYER

We thank God for the gift of life and for this reminder of God's faithfulness to all generations. Remembering our constant need, we pray for the Holy Spirit's light and power for this child, his/her parents, and all in this congregation and in the church universal.

BAPTISM

The officiant addressing each child by name, baptizes each in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *The form may be sprinkling, pouring, or immersion in water.*

DECLARATION TO THE CHILD

(addressing the child(ren) in the sight and hearing of the congregation) to this effect: "You are (the) child(ren) of God, for whom Christ died, was raised, and ascended into heaven in order that you might have life eternal in him. God has marked you as his own. Your presence and baptism today bring us joy in rememberance of the boundless goodness of the heavenly Father. You are one with us in the covenant family of God, the Body of Christ.

PRAYER

We offer a prayer for blessing on the child and for grace to fulfill the vows we have spoken, and above all ascribing glory to God for what he has done and provided.

The service will then continue to follow the order to the conclusion.

R-6.
a. To adopt the "Directory for Baptism" for permissive use and study for one year pending adoption by the Synod of 1981; and further,

b. To instruct the Commission on Worship to prepare models for implementation of the "Directory for Baptism." (Referred—See R-7)

The advisory committee recommended:

R-7.
To refer the "Directory for Baptism" to the Commission on Worship for rewriting. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:
1. The covenantal foundations of the Reformed theology for baptism are not clearly evident.
2. The "General Instructions" are limited only to instances of infant baptism, while they should include consideration of adult confession, baptism and membership.

Directory for Worship

Some further work was done on the Directory of Worship during the year, but in view of what appears to be widespread acceptance of our previous efforts, and the

urgency of other matters, we have not considered completion of the directory a priority for this year.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-8.
To instruct the Commission on Worship to prepare a statement on the distinction between a "Directory for Worship" and a liturgical form and to submit to the General Synod of 1981, a specific recommendation concerning the relationships of a "Directory for Worship" and our present and revised liturgical forms to the *Book of Church Order*. (ADOPTED)

Directory for the Celebration of a Christian Marriage

The advisory committee recommended:

R-9.
To instruct the Commission on Worship to prepare a directory for the celebration of Christian marriage, with models for its implementation in various settings and styles, including a regular service of worship. (ADOPTED)

Reception of Members on Reaffirmation of Faith

The advisory committee recommended:

R-10.
To instruct the Commission on Worship to prepare an order to be used for the reception of members on reaffirmation of faith. (ADOPTED)

Report of The Hymnbook Committee

The General Synod of 1979 charged this committee with the task of preparing and presenting to the Synod of 1980 a detailed plan for the production of a new hymnbook for the Reformed Church in America.

Your committee has met twice during the year and has investigated the question with the help of as many experts as could be found. We have been encouraged to discover at least two publishers who have indicated great interest in publishing such a hymnal once it has been put together. If this could indeed become a reality, it would be a great help because the publisher would assume all the costs of production, thus saving the Synod a large amount of money, while the denomination would receive a royalty from every copy sold.

It would be our plan that in the preparation of such a book, pilot congregations representing a wide variety of musical usages should be chosen to test the committee's selections as its work progresses. In this way the ultimate decisions would have been shared by a representative group from the entire church.

We estimate that the production of such a book would require four to five years to see the work to completion. We have discussed the possibility of securing the services of Dr. Erik Routley of Westminster Choir College as consulting editor. Dr.

Routley has expressed great interest in accepting such an invitation were it offered to him.

In these days of spiraling inflation, it is difficult to give accurate cost estimates for a project lasting four years. Building in some inflationary factors, we have come up with the following estimate:

Committee meetings, three per year for five years	$25,000
Editorial services and expenses	12,500
Survey and testing expenses	10,000
	$47,500

As stated above, we have every reason to believe that a publisher would assume all costs of publication and marketing. If the book enjoys a wide sale, the Synod could recover some of its investment through royalties. Should the project require only four years, the cost of meetings could be reduced by about $5,000. We estimate the expenses for the first year to be $8,500 made up as follows: $3,500 for committee meetings, $3,500 for editorial services, and $1,500 to begin the survey and testing program.

R-11.
a. That this Synod authorize the production of a new hymnal for the Reformed Church in America to be ready for presentation in 1984-85.

b. That a committee, consisting of one member from within each particular synod and one member at large, be appointed as an ad hoc committee on the hymnbook by this Synod to undertake such a task, it being understood that the committee may make use of consulting members from various areas of the church as the need arises.

c. That the committee be instructed to work according to the plan set forth earlier in this report, paying special attention to the testing process in pilot congregations. (ADOPTED)

The advisory committee recommended:

R-12.
To refer the appointment of the committee to the Commission on Nominations with the suggestion that the present members of the subcommittee be appointed for the duration of the project.
(ADOPTED)

CHURCH ORDER

Report of the Committee on Church Government

The Committee on Church Government is presenting to the General Synod of 1980 several amendments to the *Book of Church Order*. Each proposed amendment is presented in the following manner:

A statement of rationale for the amendment;

The present reading of the *Book of Church Order* with the proposed deletions in parentheses;

The recommended reading with the proposed additions underlined.

The committee's report will follow the order of the materials in the *Book of Church Order*.

Pastoral Care of Ministers and Their Families

At its January 1980 meeting the General Synod Executive Committee noted that the matter of pastoral care of ministers and their families has been before the GSEC several times since it was referred by the General Synod of 1977. An overture at that Synod called for an amendment to the *Book of Church Order* which would direct each classis to determine annually whether each of its enrolled ministers had entered into an agreement with another minister for the pastoral care of himself and his family. The overture was not approved, but the "basic human need" which it addressed was referred to the Office of Human Resources to "implement the content."

Since then, the OHR has tested the proposal in a cross section of RCA classes, evaluated the somewhat sparse data which resulted, requested a second year for trial and evaluation, commended the plan to all classes through correspondence with stated clerks and presidents, and requested feedback on results.

From the limited feedback received, it is apparent that the need for pastoral care of ministers is so widespread, the neglect of pastoral care so common, and the inertia which prevents arranging for pastoral care so usual that explicit requirements will be necessary if pastoral care of clergy and their families is in fact to become normative in the Reformed Church. The *Book of Church Order* in one section (Article 10, Section 13a) speaks of action which may be taken "only after classis has fulfilled its pastoral responsibility." Yet nowhere in the *Book of Church Order* is the content of such "pastoral responsibility" described or is accountability for it fixed. It was therefore proposed that the *Book of Church Order* be amended to assign responsibility for pastoral care of ministers and their families to the classis to which the minister "remains solely amenable."

The GSEC therefore proposed an amendment to the *Book of Church Order* and referred it to the Committee on Church Government.

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

Sec. 2. The classis shall install a minister of the Word each time he enters a form of ministry appropriate to the office (see Art. 9, Sec. 4 above).

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.

Sec. 4. When a minister moves from one classis to another, he shall sign the "Declaration for Ministers" of the classis which he joins.

The proposed amendment provides a new Section 2 and combines the present Section 2 with the present Section 4 to comprise a new Section 3, with the understanding that the present Section 3 would be renumbered as Section 4.

R-1.

To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter I, Part II, Article 10, Sections 2 and 3, and recommend it to the classes for approval:

***Sec. 2.* The classis shall be responsible for the pastoral care of each enrolled minister of the Word and the minister's immediate family. Pastoral care shall be exercised by such means as the classis deems appropriate, and shall be reported to the classis annually in order to assess its adequacy and effectiveness.**

***Sec. 3.* The classis shall install a minister of the Word each time there is entry into a form of ministry appropriate to the office (see Article 9, Section 4 above). When ministers move from one classis to another, they shall sign the "Declaration for Ministers" in the classis which they join.** (ADOPTED)

Membership of Particular Synods

As the Committee on Judicial Business heard several complaints against particular synods, it raised several concerns about the clarity of Part 3, Article 1, Section 1 of the *Book of Church Order*. This defines a particular synod as "an assembly consisting of ministers and elders from each of the classes within the bounds determined for it by the General Synod." (*Book of Church Order,* p. 41). If the idea of "delegate" could be inserted in the appropriate place, the definition of a particular synod would be clearer.

The *Book of Church Order* now reads:

Article 1. The Particular Synod Defined

Sec. 1. The particular synod is an assembly consisting of ministers and elders (from) each of the classes within the bounds determined for it by the General Synod (p. 41).

R-2.

To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 1, Part III, Article 1, Section 1, and recommend it to the classes for approval:

Sec. 1 **The particular synod is an assembly consisting of ministers and elders delegated by each of the classes within the bounds determined for it by the General Synod. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those ministers of the Word who are actively serving under the jurisdiction, or with the approval of, the classis.** (ADOPTED)

The Disciplinary Procedures

Because of the extensive rearrangement, it has not been feasible to show every change in precisely parallel columns. Therefore, the column on the left shows only current *Book of Church Order* references. The text shows only additions (underlined) in the proposed reading. The numbering system has been brought into conformity with Chapter 1.

The notes call attention to significant deletions and other changes. Some of the most significant, in the order in which they appear, are:

Following Part I Art. 1, Sec. 2	Administrative discipline has been removed (See also the note following Part I, Art. 3, Sec. 5.) Although the first steps of discipline are usually pastoral in nature, most discipline is defined as judicial.
Following Art. II	The exemplary list of offenses has been dropped.
Following Part I Art. IV	A judicatory's right to itself initiate discipline and try the charge is clarified.
Preceding Part II	Complaints are redefined (see also the note following Part II, Article 2, Section 1) and a uniform process is established for complaints and appeals.

R-3.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order,* Chapter 2, and recommend it to the classes for approval: (ADOPTED)

Chapter 2: The Disciplinary and Judicial Procedures

Current *Book of Church Order* References

PART I—DISCIPLINE

Article 1. The Nature of Discipline

I-1 ***Sec. 1.*** **Discipline is the exercise of the authority which the Lord Jesus Christ has given to his Church to promote its purity, to benefit the offender and vindicate the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

I-IV

Sec. 2. The exercise of discipline may take the form of admonition, suspension from church membership or from office, deposition from office, or excommunication, as the gravity of the offense in the opinion of the judiciary may warrant. Admonition is pastoral in nature and is exercised by an assembly in the ordinary course of its proceedings. All further steps of discipline—suspension, deposition, and excommunication are judicial in nature and require the formal presentation and trial of charges in a judicatory.

Legislative and administrative matters are dealt with by assemblies; judicial matters are dealt with by judicatories. Most discipline is here identified as judicial in nature and consequently requiring a trial. The administrative discipline included in the *Book of Church Order* in the late 1960s (II, III, VII, VIII) has been removed.

II-I

Article 2. The Nature of Offenses

Sec. 1. Private offenses are those which are known at most to a very few persons. They shall be dealt with first in the manner indicated by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:15-17. If this procedure fails, the matter shall be presented to the judicatory to which the offender is amenable.

II-I

Sec. 2. Public offenses are those of a notorious and scandalous nature. The responsible judicatory shall take immediate cognizance of a public offense.

I-III

Sec. 3. Those matters only shall be considered as offenses, or subject to accusation, which can be shown to be such from the Bible, or from the *Constitution of the Reformed Church in America,* or which are sins or offenses which cause their perpetrators to become dishonorable in reputation before the world.

The second sentence of I-III containing the exemplary list has been dropped. It is interesting to note that "simony" and "scandalous traffic" were dropped in the reworking into the *Book of Church Order* in 1968. No such list, moreover, was contained in the 1874 constitution or its predecessors.

Article 3. Responsibilities for Discipline

I-II; II-III

Sec. 1. Discipline of a Member

All members of a church, including those who have received the sacrament of baptism, are under the care of that church and are subject to its government and discipline, as administered by its board of elders. A member who persistently rejects admonitions of the board of elders may be suspended from the privileges of membership in the church. If a member fails to show marks of repentance after suspension, the board of elders may, with permission of the classis, proceed to excommunication. The board of elders shall publicly notify the congregation of its intention, and later, of its final action unless the board chooses to omit such public notification if, in its judgment, the omission will not im-

pair the purposes of discipline, and will best serve the spiritual welfare of the congregation. Such omission shall require a two-thirds vote of the board of elders.

II-IV *Sec. 2. Discipline of an Elder or Deacon*

The board of elders shall have jurisdiction in the case of a charge against an elder or deacon. If convicted, the elder or deacon may be suspended or deposed from office, or from the privileges of membership in the church, or from both.

Sec. 3. Discipline of a Minister of the Word

I-II **a. Ministers of the Word are under the care of the classis and are subject to its government and discipline.**

II-V **b. The consistory has the right to close the pulpit to a minister of the Word who has been charged with any public sin or gross offense which would render appearance in the pulpit inexpedient or offensive. Proceedings of the consistory in such a case are at its peril, but are undertaken to prevent scandal. This action is not to be considered a trial and must be reported immediately to the classis.**

II-V **c. The classis shall have jurisdiction in the case of a charge against a minister of the Word. If convicted, the minister of the Word may be suspended or deposed from office, or from the privileges of membership in the church, or from both.**

I-II *Sec. 4. Discipline of a Professor of Theology*

Professors of Theology are under the care of the General Synod and are subject to its government and discipline. The General Synod shall have jurisdiction in the case of a charge against a Professor of Theology. If convicted, the Professor of Theology may be suspended or deposed from office, or from the privileges of membership in the church, or from both.

II-VI *Sec. 5. Discipline of a Consistory*

Consistories are under the care of the classis and are subject to its government and discipline. A classis has the authority, after due process and trial, to suspend or depose from office a consistory accused of unfaithfulness to duty, or of disobedience to the classis, or of violation of the Constitution *of the Reformed Church in America,* or of the laws and regulations of the church. If a consistory is deposed from office, it shall be disqualified for re-election until the classis has removed the disqualification. The classis shall fulfill the duties of the consistory so deposed until a new consistory has been legally constituted.

Part II, Articles 7 and 8 concerning the administrative discipline of classes and particular synods have been omitted since the term, "administrative discipline," has been dropped.

Part II, Article 2 concerning the "Discipline of a Criminal" has also been dropped since it is a legacy of the theocratic social structure of the 16th century which presumed that civil law coincided with the law of God.

Article 4. Presentation of a Charge

Note that Article 4, Sec. 1 specifies that a judicatory may itself initiate discipline. Article 5, Sec. 1 specifies that it may also try the charge.

III-I-1,23 ***Sec. 1.*** **Persons accused of an offense may be brought for trial by individual accusation or on the initiative of the responsible judicatory. Proceedings by individual accusation must be in the name of the accuser or accusers who must come forward openly to support the charge. Individual accusations shall be admitted only if they are signed by persons subject to the jurisdiction of the judicatory.**

III-I ***Sec. 2.*** **A charge is a written accusation of offensive behavior filed with the clerk of the responsible judicatory specifying the time, place, and attendant circumstances of the alleged offensive behavior.**

Sec. 3. **The testimony of more than one witness shall be required in admitting accusations. If two or more witnesses bear testimony each to different acts of the same general nature, this shall be considered sufficient to support the accusation.**

III-I-5 ***Sec. 4.*** **The judicatory shall dismiss a written charge if the alleged offensive behavior occurred more than two years prior to the date of the charge, except when it shall appear that circumstances prevented an earlier bringing of the accusation.**

III-I-4 ***Sec. 5.*** **The judicatory shall determine whether there is sufficient merit in the charge to warrant further consideration. If there is not, the judicatory shall dismiss the charge. If there is sufficient merit, the judicatory shall proceed to try the charge.**

Article 5. Trying a Charge

III-II-1 ***Sec. 1.*** **The clerk of the judicatory shall issue a citation signed by the president and clerk, requesting the accused to appear before the judicatory at a specified time and place. The citation, and a copy of the charge, shall be given to the accused.**

III-II-2 ***Sec. 2.*** **The accused shall file a reply to the charge with the clerk within ten days of its receipt.**

III-II-3 ***Sec. 3.*** **The judicatory shall try the charge within thirty days of the filing of the reply, unless the trial is postponed to a later date by consent of the parties involved.**

III-II-4 ***Sec. 4.*** **The judicatory may try the charge, even though the accused is not present, if it is satisfied that proper notice was given.**

III-II-5 ***Sec. 5.*** **The clerk of the judicatory shall issue citations to persons who are requested to appear as witnesses for or against the accused. Persons who have not received a witness citation may be permitted to testify at the trial, if their testimony is desired by a party to the case.**

III-III-1 ***Sec. 6.*** **Neither the accuser nor the accused shall act as a member of the judicatory at any stage of the trial. Nor shall any person who is a voting member of a board of elders, consistory, classis, or particular synod, which is a party in said trial act as a member of the judicatory.**

III-III-2 ***Sec. 7.*** **Witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the accused. The accused shall be permitted to cross-examine adverse witnesses.**

III-III-3 ***Sec. 8.*** **Testimony shall be recorded, transcribed, and entered into the records of the judicatory, together with its judgment. Parties to the case shall be given reasonable access to the record.**

III-III-4 ***Sec. 9.*** **The judicatory may, at its discretion, appoint a commission to take testimony of a party or witness at a location other than that of the place of hearing, upon request of any party. Ten days notice shall be given to all parties of the appointment and membership of the commission, and of the time and place of its meeting.**

III-III-5 ***Sec. 10.*** **Only ministers or elders of the Reformed Church in America may serve as counsel. Counsel shall not be compensated for their time or efforts.**

The provision limiting counsel to "members of the judicatory in which a trial is being held" has been deleted since it might prohibit selection of counsel best qualified to argue the case.

Sec. 11. **The judicatory shall record its decision, stating at length the reasons therefor.**

III-IV-11 ***Sec. 12.*** **No member or groups of members of the Reformed Church in America shall circulate, or cause to be circulated, any written or printed arguments or briefs upon any charges before the final disposition of same, including appeals, if any.**

Article 6. Restoration and Reinstatement

III-VI-1; III-VI-2 ***Sec. 1.*** **A member who has been suspended or excommunicated may be restored to full communion upon repentance and renewal of vows of membership before the judicatory to which amenable. If public notice of the judgment of excommunication had been given, due public notice of reinstatement shall also be given the congregation.**

III-VI-3 ***Sec. 2.*** **A person who has been suspended or deposed from office may be restored to office upon repentance and rewewal of vows before the judicatory which suspended or deposed, pro-**

vided that the judicatory is satisfied that the honor of the office will not be impaired and that the welfare of the church will be served by such a restoration, and provided that the restoration is approved by a two-thirds vote of those present at the meeting of the judicatory. Restoration after deposition shall include reordination to office.

The following articles distinguish between complaints and appeals but prescribe a uniform process so as to avoid unnecessary distinctions which have led to confusion.

PART II COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Article 1. The Nature of Complaints

III-V-1 ***Sec. 1.*** **A complaint is a written statement alleging that an action or a decision of an assembly or officer of the church has violated or failed to comply with the *Book of Church Order* or other laws and regulations of the church.**

III-V-1 ***Sec. 2.*** **A complaint may be filed only with the judicatory that has immediate superintendence of the assembly or officer.**

III-V-1 ***Sec. 2.*** **A complaint may be filed only by:**

a. One or more communicant members in good and regular standing against the consistory or board of elders having superintendence over them.

III-V-1 **b. One or more members of an assembly against that assembly of which they are members.**

c. An assembly against that assembly having immediate superintendence over it.

III-V-3 ***Sec. 4.*** **Neither notice of intent to complain nor the complaint itself shall have the effect of suspending the action against which the complaint is made, unless one-third of the members of the assembly complained against who were present when the action was taken file within thirty days a request for such suspension until a decision is made in the higher judicatory.**

Article 2. The Nature of an Appeal

III-IV-1 ***Sec. 1.*** **An appeal is the transfer to a higher judicatory of a complaint, a charge, or an appeal on which judgment has been rendered in a lower judicatory. The right of appeal belongs to either of the original parties in a case. That right may be exercised when a party considers itself to be aggrieved or injured by a judgment of a judicatory.**

Note that a complaint transferred to a higher judicatory is dealt with as an appeal.

III-IV-2 ***Sec. 2.*** **The grounds of appeal include such matters as the following: irregularity in the proceedings of the lower judicatory;**

refusal of reasonable indulgence to a party on trial; receiving improper, or declining to receive proper, evidence; rendering a decision before all the testimony is taken; manifestation of bias or prejudice in the case; and manifest injustice in the judgment.

III-IV-4 *Sec. 3.* Notice of intent to appeal suspends the judgment of the lower judicatory until the appeal is finally decided. But when the judgment which is appealed from results in suspension, deposition from office, or excommunication, the person against whom the judgment has been pronounced shall be required to refrain from the sacrament of Holy Communion and from the exercise of office until the appeal is finally decided, unless exception is made in the judgment of the lower judicatory.

III-IV-6 *Sec. 4.* The particular synod shall be the final court of appeal for of all cases originally heard by a board of elders. Such an appeal may however, be heard by the General Synod if one delegate to the particular synod from each of the classes in that synod, with the exception of the classis from whose action the appeal is taken, shall give notice in writing to the clerk of the particular synod, within thirty days of its adjournment, that there is just cause for appealing a case to the General Synod.

Article 3. The Processes for Complaints and Appeals

III-IV-3; III-V-2 *Sec. 1.* Written notice of intent to complain or appeal shall be filed with the officer or with the clerk of the assembly or judicatory which took action in question. This filing shall be completed not later than twenty days after having received official notification of the action taken. In default of this requirement, the case shall not be heard.

III-IV-5; III-V-4 *Sec. 2.* The complaint or appeal and the reasons therefor shall be filed with the clerk of the higher judicatory within twenty days after the filing of notice of intent. Within this same period the clerk of the lower judicatory shall file with the clerk of the higher judicatory the original record of all the proceedings in the case, including the notice of intent, the evidence, the arguments and any other documents bearing on the case. These constitute the record of the case. In cases of appeal, the higher judicatory shall not admit or consider as evidence anything not found in this record without consent of the parties in the case. If the clerk of the lower judicatory does not deliver these papers within the specified time, the clerk may be ordered by the higher judicatory to show cause why there should not be censure for such failure.

III-V-5; III-IV-7 *Sec. 3.* The clerk of the higher judicatory shall, upon receiving the record of the case, promptly notify its judicial business committee, call a meeting of the committee at a suitable time and place, and give notice of such meeting to all the parties involved. The committee shall determine whether the case and its attendant papers are in order. The committee shall promptly advise the several parties if it finds any irregularites. A period of not more than twenty days shall be allowed to correct such irregularities. The committee may request further written response or arguments to

be submitted within the same twenty days. If less than thirty days remain before the next regular session of the judicatory to which the committee is to report and the committee determines that it is unable to prepare an acceptable report, it shall immediately record this determination and the reasons therefor with the clerk of such judicatory and request permission to delay its report until the next session. The clerk shall promptly confer with the officers of the judicatory who shall promptly rule upon the request.

The present February 1 deadline in III-IV-6 concerning appeals to General Synod has two defects:

(1) It protects only the General Synod Committee, although similar time problems may arise for other judicatories as well; and

(2) As a practical matter, it mandates a thirteen month lapse in the final decision of an appeal from a Particular Synod decision taken in regular session. The committee and the judicatory should have the option of weighing the complexity of the decision and the shortage of time against the probable damage to the peace of the church or rights of the individual which might result from a year's delay.

III-IV-8; III-V-6 *Sec. 4.* **If the case is in proper order, the committee shall then consider its merits. It shall consider the record of the case and such additional arguments as may have been submitted. It shall also hear the original parties together with such counsel as may be requested by the parties and approved by the committee as complying with Chapter II, Part I, Article 5, Section 10. If both an appellant and counsel or complainant and counsel for same fail to appear, the committee may declare the case to be defaulted.**

III-V-6; III-IV-8; III-IV-9 *Sec. 5.* **The committee shall report its findings and recommendations to its parent judicatory at the next stated meeting or at a special meeting. When the report of the committee is presented to the judicatory, the judicatory may request to hear the original parties in the case with their counsel. The report of the committee may be adopted, rejected, amended, or referred back to the committee. The judicatory may confirm or reverse, in whole or in part, the judgment of the lower judicatory, or remand the case to it with instructions.**

III-IV-10 *Sec. 6.* **Persons who have voted on a case in a lower judicatory or who have prepared or conducted that case, shall not vote upon the case in a higher judicatory.**

III-IV-11; III-V-8 *Sec. 7.* **The judicatory shall record its decision, stating at length the reasons therefor.**

III-V-1 *Sec. 8.* **No complaint or appeal can be taken against any action or decision of the General Synod.**

Eligibility for Commission/Agency Membership

Last fall the General Synod's Committee on Nominations received the nomination of a missionary (serving in North America) to serve as a classical representative

on the General Program Council. Because a missionary is an employee of the General Program Council, the Nominations Committee met by conference call to review policies on commission/agency membership and conflict of interest.

It was noted that the *Book of Church Order* some years ago included a nepotism policy which forbade the employment of anyone more closely related to a commission/agency member than by the degree of first cousinship. In 1973 this statement was removed from the *Book of Church Order* and replaced by a less inclusive nepotism policy and a conflict of interest policy in the General Program Council and General Synod Executive Committee policy handbooks.

The Committee on Nominations felt that the intent of this change was to permit relatives of denominational employees to serve on agencies and commissions of the church while at the same time guarding against conflict of interest. However, it did not feel that the change now permits a person to serve as both an employee and a member of the commission/agency to which s/he is accountable.

The committee therefore explored the possibility of an amendment to the *Book of Church Order* which would deal with this concern. The proposed bylaws (to which the 1980 General Synod will be asked to give final approval) includes the following eligibility clause for membership on agencies and commissions:

> No person shall be eligible to hold other an ex-officio membership on more than one agency or commission in each of the following groups:
>
> a. The GSEC, GPC, Board of Theological Education and the Editorial Council of the *Church Herald.*
>
> b. The commissions of the General Synod.
>
> c. Delegations to Ecumenical Organizations.
>
> (*MGS,* 1979, p. 184)

The Nominations Committee felt that the matter could be dealt with by adding as a first paragraph:

> Membership on General Synod agencies and commissions shall be open to all members of the RCA. However, no employee may hold other than ex-officio membership on the agency or commission to which s/he is accountable.

The suggested amendment was shared for information and comment with the Committee on Church Government at its December 4 meeting. Because the Articles of Incorporation of at least one RCA college provides for membership of its president and faculty on the Board of Trustees, the Committee on Church Government suggested that the second sentence be revised to read as follows:

> "Employees may not hold membership on the agency or commission to which that person is accountable unless specifically provided in the agency constitution or bylaws."

R-4.

To adopt the following amendment to the *Bylaws of the General Synod* as an addition to Article IV, Section 2, and recommend it to the General Synod of 1981 for approval:

Membership on General Synod agencies and commissions shall be open to all members of the RCA. Employees may not hold membership on the agency or commission to which that person is accountable unless specifically provided in the agency constitution or bylaws. (ADOPTED)

Responsibilities of Commission on Church Order

As the Committee on Church Government reviewed the revised bylaws of the General Synod, it felt a clarification was required for Article 5, Section 4: the Commission on Church Order. Section 4, B, III, states: "The commission shall be responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to General Synod concerning the constitutions or enabling documents of General Synod agencies" (*MGS,* 1979, page 186. The Committee on Church Government felt that its role in reviewing the enabling documents of General Synod agencies should be clarified. In order to clarify this matter the Committee on Church Government recommends:

R-5.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Bylaws of the General Synod*, Article 5, Section 4, b, 3, and recommend it to the General Synod of 1981 for approval:

3. The commission shall be responsible for reviewing proposed amendments to the constitutions or enabling documents of General Synod agencies and making recommendations to General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Commission on Evangelization

The 1979 General Synod voted to "mandate the establishment of a commission on evangelization and church growth." It also voted "to authorize the GPC and GSEC to provide a structure within the reorganized GPC to encourage and assist the work of evangelism and church growth in the US and Canada."

In its work on a new structure for program, the GPC has affirmed that evangelization is clearly an integral part of each of the three proposed divisions within the GPC: Church Planning and Development in outreach through the establishment of new churches; Christian Discipleship in outreach through existing churches; and World Mission in outreach through mission both overseas and in North America. Each division would therefore likely have its own committee on evangelization or its equivalent and could be required to constitute such a committee. It would seem important to establish a direct link between these committees and the proposed commission.

Since the General Synod has mandated a Commission on Evangelization, the GSEC favored a commission which would consist of two members from each of the divisions' committees on evangelization plus three at-large members who might be drawn either from within the membership of the divisions or from the church at large. The commission would report to the General Synod on policy matters and programs of general concern.

Although the Committee on Church Government did prepare a new bylaw for a Commission on Evangelization, it wishes to call to the attention of the General

Synod its concerns regarding the proposed commission. First, a Commission on Evangelization could be an unnecessary and unhelpful duplication of the program efforts conducted by the divisions of the General Program Council in evangelism. Second, a Commission on Evangelization could lead to competition between the General Synod's commission and the General Program Council's divisions in the area of evangelism. Third, the proposed size of the Commission on Evangelization runs counter to current attempts to reduce the size of General Synod's commissions in order to save travel and meeting costs.

R-6.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Bylaws of the General Synod* as a new Article 5, Section 5, and refer it to the Editorial Committee:

Sec. 5. **The Commission on (Evangelization)** Evangelism and Church Growth

a. Membership

The commission shall have nine members. The membership shall consist of (two members) one member **from the committees on evangelization or their equivalents in each of the divisions of World Mission, Church Planning and Development and Christian Discipleship, (to be nominated by those divisions,) plus (three)** six **members at large** who have special interest in evangelization and church growth to be nominated by the particular synods.

b. Responsibilities

The commission shall consider (and recommend to the General) Synod policy matters and programs of general concern related to (evangelization.) evangelism and church growth.

The commission shall keep before each General Synod the challenge of evangelism.

The commission shall study worldwide evangelism seeking creative insights into effective evangelism.

The commission shall monitor the rapid changes which take place throughout the world which have bearing upon the ability of the church to proclaim the gospel.

The commission shall keep before the church the imperative to evangelize in the light of its study and analysis of the current experience and the future potential for the church to proclaim the gospel to the whole of humankind. (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

Corresponding Delegates to General Synod

The General Synod Executive Committee received a request from the Board of Theological Education that the seminary presidents and the moderator of the Board of Theological Education be named corresponding delegates to the annual General Synod. Since the college presidents are corresponding delegates, it was felt that this privilege should be extended to the presidents of the seminaries as well. The GSEC asked the Committee on Church Government to prepare an amendment to the

bylaws of General Synod on this matter. The proposed bylaw would be a new section in Article 8 of the revised bylaws.

R-7.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Bylaws of the General Synod* as a new Article 8, Section 12, and recommend it to the General Synod of 1981 for approval:

***Sec. 12.* Board of Theological Education and the Seminaries.**
The moderator of the Board of Theological Education and the presidents of the seminaries shall be corresponding delegates.
(ADOPTED)

The General Synod Executive Committee also received a request from the Particular Synod of New Jersey that the Particular Synod observers be given the status of corresponding delegates. Since relationships between the particular synods and the General Synod have become increasingly important in the last decade, the General Synod Executive Committee endorsed this request and referred it to the Committee on Church Government for a new bylaw.

R-8.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Bylaws of the General Synod* as a new Article 8, Section 13, and recommend it to the General Synod of 1981 for approval:

***Sec. 13.* Particular Synods**
Each particular synod of the Reformed Church in America shall appoint a corresponding delegate. (ADOPTED)

Proposed Rules of Order on Formation and Submission of Overtures

Based on a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Church Order, the 1979 General Synod voted to "instruct the Committee on Church Government to prepare appropriate amendments to the *Book of Church Order* regarding the formation and submission of overtures for report back to the Synod of 1980 (*MGS,* 1979, p. 204)." Presently, overtures are defined and described in the manual for stated clerks of classes and particular synods. Although the manual was revised in 1979, the basic material on overtures was adopted by the General Synods of 1958, 1960 and 1964.

As the Committee on Church Government reviewed the "special rules of order for the General Synod" adopted in first reading by the 1979 General Synod, it decided that the rule of order on overtures should be a new section 7 and the present section 7 should be renumbered section 8.

R-9.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Special Rules of Order of the General Synod* as a new Article 2, Section 7 and recommend it to the 1981 General Synod for approval:

***Sec. 7.* Submission of Overtures**
The General Synod may receive overtures from a classis or a particular synod. It shall not accept overtures which deal with mat-

ters under adjudication or which make either direct or implied charges against persons. Overtures from classes shall be submitted to the General Synod office or postmarked **not later than March 31. Overtures from particular synods shall be submitted to the General Synod office** or postmarked **within ten days of the close of the annual session of the particular synod.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Additions in light face type.

From the Report of the General Program Council:

RCA STRUCTURE FOR PROGRAM

Introduction

In the context of the 1980 Budget Review process at the March, 1979, meeting of the General Program Council, the Standing Committee on Social Issues noted that only four and two-thirds percent of the GPC budget is allocated to social issues projects. It also noted that overlap frequently occurs with respect to a single funded item. The committee therefore requested that the GPC Executive Committee review the goal categories and the various projects funded to determine whether a more integrated approach might clarify the work of the GPC. (See *GPC Minutes,* March, 1979, 79-30.)

In June of 1979, the General Synod received from its president several recommendations concerning the structure and function of the GPC. On the basis of the review and recommendations of its advisory committees, the General Synod adopted the following:

> To ask the GPC in consultation with the GSEC to review its present structure of program goal areas and explore the possibility of reorganizing in terms of a few major denominational tasks to report back to the Synod of 1980. Further, that this reorganization provide for a structure within GPC which would keep before the RCA the challenge of the unfinished worldwide mission task with special focus on cross-cultural evangelism. (*MGS,* 1979, R-1, p. 252)
>
> To ask the GPC to design and implement a program that facilitates our being partners with Third World churches in their cross-cultural evangelistic efforts among unreached peoples; that the criterion for our involvement be whether or not our partnership makes an essential difference in their ability to reach effectively with the gospel people who would otherwise likely remain unreached for Christ. (*MGS,* 1979, R-2, p. 253)
>
> To declare that the Reformed Church's commitment to evangelize and grow in the United States and Canada and our enlarged commitment to a world mission which focuses on cross-cultural evangelism and church growth be seen as one primary task of highest priority. (*MGS,* 1979, R-1, p. 258)
>
> To ask the GPC to study ways of relating specific programs more closely to supporting congregations and to build into its procedures a greater measure of flexibility in initiating and discontinuing programs, reflecting interest in the churches as indicated by their financial support. A report is requested for the 1980 General Synod. (*MGS,* 1979, R-4, p. 243)

> To authorize the GPC and GSEC to provide a structure within the reorganized GPC to encourage and assist the work of evangelism and church growth in the U.S. and Canada. (*MGS*, 1979, R-6, p. 236)

A review of our denominational history will show that major new program thrusts have usually been accompanied by significant structural changes to open the way for them and facilitate their implementation. Perhaps the most significant such development took place in the mid-nineteenth century, when the denominational mission boards were first organized. Our most recent experiences with restructuring for program were during the 1960s in connection with the organization of the GSEC followed by the development of the GPC. Most delegates to General Synod in 1979 who had been at previous synods commented on the importance of the structural changes there which made possible a more deliberative Synod.

An Historical Sketch

The decade-plus of the GPC has seen a number of very creative events in the life of the Reformed Church. The implementation of some of these, notably the festivals, was greatly facilitated by the existence of a unified program structure. It should also be noted that the GPC as early as 1970 already emphasized the transitional nature of structures. The paper on "Structural Style" in the GPC handbook (1-12) states that:

> "The heart of this structural style is a highly functional view of structure which sees a particular structure being useful only to the degree that, or so long as, its function cannot better be fulfilled through some other form. Structures cannot be regarded as 'beings' with an independent existence or as ends in themselves. They must be created and discarded as needs change."

A review of the fundamental premises of the 1968 structure from the perspective of somewhat more than a decade reveals several significant unresolved problems.

A fundamental premise of the restructure was that representatives of the grass-roots should be the primary decision-makers. A corollary was that staff were to be accountable for initiative, design, and development of program. Hence, classes were made the bases for representation in the GPC, and staff accountability structures were firmly underscored.

It is worth noting that the GPC itself went through one major restructure of its committees early in its existence, which resulted in the current goal areas. A more recent but related movement has been the development of several important task forces, e.g., Evangelism and Renewal; Leadership Development; Dallas. These task forces were created primarily to design and implement programs of the GPC. Their most significant feature has been the inclusion of persons particularly gifted for the task at hand. Many of the GPC's most creative efforts have been greatly enhanced by these task forces.

The Development of a Proposal

In July of 1979, the GPC Executive Committee, meeting in executive session, engaged in a preliminary discussion on restructuring for program. At the conclusion of its discussion, the executive committee decided to continue its consideration of this matter in an expanded meeting to which former GPC members and representa-

tives of the General Synod, the GSEC and major program areas in the life of the church would be invited. The following persons joined the executive committee to constitute the expanded committee:

Kenneth Bradsell	Christian Education
Bert Bossenbroek	Church Planning and Development and General Synod Executive Committee
Edwin Mulder	President of General Synod and General Synod Executive Committee
Bruce Neckers	former GPC Chairperson
Harrison Visscher	World Mission
Carl Ver Beek	former GPC Chairperson and General Synod Executive Committee
Carol Wagner	former GPCEC member

At its first meeting on October 3, 1979, the expanded committee considered a proposal calling for three major task groupings (World Mission, Christian Discipleship, Church Planning and Development)—each to be constituted as a separate council. The primary advantages of such a structure would be to:

> Provide distinct identities to which the church at large can relate.
>
> Provide for more direct relationship between program executives and program policy bodies.
>
> Provide clear separation of budgets which would enable the use of various funding methods.

While recognizing the advantages of having three separate councils, the committee also wanted to maintain the "unity of mission" embodied in the GPC. It was therefore agreed to propose a structure which would consist of three individual units under the "umbrella" of the GPC. This "umbrella" structure would be reviewed after a period of two years (1982).

At its November, 1979, meeting, the GPC approved "the broad outline for a structure which calls for a Council on Church Planning and Development, a Council on Christian Discipleship, and a Council on World Mission under the umbrella of the GPC" and instructed its executive committee to further develop the proposals in accordance with the following guidelines for presentation to the March, 1980, General Program Council meeting:

> *Purpose and Name*
>
> Structure should focus on major tasks or task groupings. This facilitates the participation of persons with special skills in those areas and brings the key staff leadership for each of those tasks into a direct relationship to a policy group.
>
> *Membership*
>
> Present members should complete their terms of eligibility.
>
> The number of people involved should remain fairly constant.

Membership should be broadly representative.

Particular synods should be represented in those structures with which they share program concerns.

Special attention should be given to selection of persons with particular gifts for the work to be done.

Required involvement of minorities and women should be continued.

Structural Relationships

Major structures should be similarly organized to facilitate understanding and coordination.

Meetings of major structures should be coordinated and simultaneous.

Agenda documents and minutes should be shared across structural boundaries.

Committee structure should require interaction of policy and program concerns so as not to lose the policy concerns and become bogged down in administrivia on the one hand or, on the other hand, to develop policies which are detached from program.

Staff Relationships

Staff structures should require coordination and interaction.

Each staff member should have a primary assignment within one structure but should also participate in the work of other structures as appropriate.

All staff should meet simultaneously and together at least once a year.

The GPC Executive Committee met in expanded session for the second and final time on January 23, 1980. The proposals developed at that meeting were presented to the March, 1980, meeting of the GPC. A report on the plans for the new structure, as adopted by the GPC, follows.

Structure

Establishment of Divisions

Since the GPC would continue under the proposed plan, it was felt that using the word "council" for the three new program units might be confusing. Among other words considered were: board, agency, unit, and division. "Division" was preferred since, in addition to providing a different name for the three groups, the word "division" implies that each is a part of the larger whole.

The GPC therefore voted to establish within the GPC a Division of World Mission, A Division of Church Planning and a Division of Christian Discipleship.

Assignment of Division Tasks

The purpose of GPC contained in its constitution, was assigned to the three divisions as follows:

> *Purpose of Division of Christian Discipleship.* The Division of Christian Discipleship shall be the program agent of the General Synod of the RCA responsible for assisting in enabling and equiping the people of God in the Reformed Church to participate in God's mission in Jesus Christ.
>
> *Purpose of Division of Church Planning and Development.* The Division of Church Planning and Development shall be the program agent of the General Synod of the RCA responsible for coordinating the planning and development and assisting in the funding of the new Reformed Church congregations and of established congregations requiring additional funding.
>
> *Purpose of Division of World Mission.* The Division of World Mission shall be the program agent of the General Synod of the RCA responsible for carrying out or cooperating with other churches in God's mission in Jesus Christ through ministries not directly related to Reformed Church congregations or assemblies.

The GPC also approved the following generic tasks for the divisions, with the understanding that the actions of the divisions would be subject to review by the full council at each meeting:

1. Develop, review and evaluate program and policy.

2. Establish criteria for program development, review and evaluation.

3. Review and approve budgets in consultation with the other divisions through a coordinating committee.

4. Review staff implementation of progam and policy.

5. Elect officers and executive committees.

Establishment of Coordinating Committee

In order to provide for communication and coordination among the three divisions, the council approved the establishment of a coordinating committee. The membership of the committee would be comprised of the moderator of each division plus two members of the executive committee of each division, elected by those divisions for two-year terms.

The council approved the following tasks for the coordinating committee, with the understanding that the actions of the committee would be subject to review and approval as a whole by the full council at each meeting:

1. Review and act on program budget ceilings recommended by each division for recommendation to the trustees.

2. Review the administration and promotion budgets for recommendation to the trustees.

3. Monitor the membership balance of the three divisions for recommendation to the General Synod Commission on Nominations.

4. Monitor the internal structures of the three divisions.

5. Maintain consistency among the criteria and processes for program and budget development, review and evaluation employed by the three divisions.

6. Establish dates and places for the meetings of the three divisions at the same time and in the same place.

Since the divisions may be of differing size, concern was expressed that it might be possible for one large division to control a majority of the votes, to their own advantage. It was suggested that this be monitored over the two-year trial period for review by the GPC in 1982. If warranted, safeguards could be introduced at that time.

Membership

A variety of options for membership were considered. Some were based on particular synod representation; others were based on a combination of classis and particular synod representation. Some were weighted according to the membership of the nominating body; others called for equal representation. All endeavored to keep the total membership of the three councils relatively the same as the number of persons presently involved in the GPC and its several task forces.

There was consensus that membership should be task-oriented, that classis representation should be continued, and that particular synods should be represented on those councils with which they share program concerns.

The current membership of the GPC consists of one representative from each classis, one representative from each particular synod, one representative from each of the minority councils recognized by the General Synod, and nine members at large, for a total of sixty-two members.

The original membership option proposed by the expanded executive committee and endorsed by the GPC in November of 1979 for further development called for the following:

> Each particular synod to name one person to the Division of Church Planning and Development and one person to the Council of Christian Discipleship.
>
> Each classis and minority council to name one person to any one of the three divisions with an option to change units every six years (after two three-year terms).
>
> Each division have six members at large.
>
> Continuation of the current percentage requirements for membership of laymen and laywomen (25 percent in each category).

This would result in three divisions of flexible size within a total GPC of 77 persons, 15 more than the current GPC membership. It was felt that the task-oriented nature

of the divisions would reduce the need for task forces and that the money saved would cover the added costs of a larger GPC.

At its January meeting, the expanded committee reviewed the above membership option as well as a proposal that provision be made for three additional minority positions, which would bring the total membership to 80.

In light of the energy crisis and spiraling costs of travel and meeting, the committee sought to decrease rather than increase the November, 1979, membership proposal. The result was a proposal for a 65-member council, an increase in the current GPC membership of only three at-large positions. The GPC concurred in the position of the expanded committee and approved the proposal for a 65-member council, calling for the following:

> Each classis, particular synod, and minority council to name one person to any one of the three divisions with an option to change units every six years (after two three-year terms). It was understood that particular synods wanting representation on an additional division could designate one of the classical representatives from within its bounds to also serve as its liaison.
>
> Each division to have four members at large.
>
> Continuation of the current percentage requirements for membership of laywomen and laymen (25 percent in each category).

The merits of free choice by the nominating body versus prescribed geographical balance/representation were again reviewed. The proposal allowing nominating bodies to name representatives to the division of their choice was premised on the assumption that they would then be more attentive to the selection of persons with particular gifts/skills for the particular division selected. Because of some concern that balanced geographical representation in each division would be required for the development of "national" policies, consideration was given to the possibility of setting a minimum and maximum for geographical representation, e.g., no less than 20 percent nor more than 40 percent of the GPC members from one particular synod may serve on the same division.

Since these and other similar considerations would interfere with the preferences of the nominating bodies and greatly complicate the nominating process, it was thought best to monitor the process over a two-year period for review by the GPC in 1982. If warranted, changes could be made at that time.

A constitutional amendement to provide for the increase in membership will be presented to the General Synod through the report of the GSEC.

Timeline

The new structure is scheduled to begin operation on January 1, 1981.

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTIONS AND BYLAWS

1. Constitution of the General Program Council

Over the last year the General Program Council has been working on the development of a new structure for program. The plan approved by the council at its March, 1980, meeting is outlined in detail in the GPC's report to this General Synod. In order to implement the proposed membership change, the General Synod must approve an amendment to the GPC *Constitution*.

R-10.
To approve the following revision of the GPC *Constitution*, Article III, Membership (changes underlined):

1. Composition—The council shall consist of one member from each classis, one member from each particular synod, one member from each minority council recognized by the General Synod, and twelve members at large. Council membership shall include not less than twenty-five percent laywomen and twenty-five percent laymen. The general secretary shall be a member ex-officio but without vote.

3. Nomination and Election—All members of the council shall be elected by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. One member from each classis shall be elected upon nomination by that classis. One member from each particular synod shall be elected upon nomination by that particular synod. One member from each minority council recognized by the General Synod shall be elected upon nomination by that minority council. The members at large shall be elected upon nomination by the General Synod without regard to geographical distribution for the purpose of providing occupational, professional and experiential diversity in the membership of the General Program Council. Nominating bodies represented in the current membership of the council by clergy not eligible for reelection may be required to nominate laywomen or laymen in order to ensure the twenty-five percent requirement in each of the two categories. The General Program Council shall give notice to all nominating bodies including the General Synod concerning its membership needs. (ADOPTED)

2. Corporate Bylaws of New Brunswick and Western Theological Seminaries

New Brunswick and Western Seminaries are governed by both the *Constitution* and *Bylaws* for the Board of Theological Education and individual corporate bylaws, which meet their legal responsibilities within the States of New Jersey and Michigan. Following the creation of the Board of Theological Education to serve as the Board of Trustees for the two seminaries, the 1968 General Synod approved new corporate bylaws for both seminaries. Since that time, the General Synod has approved several amendments to the *Constitution* and *Bylaws* of the Board of Theo-

logical Education which must also be incorporated into the corporate bylaws of the two seminaries. The General Synod Executive Committee, acting as the agent of General Synod, has reviewed and approved the inclusion of these amendments into the bylaws.

The one major change was the addition of the following section in order to insure the General Synod's participation in any decision affecting the ownership of the main campuses of the seminaries:

"It (the board) shall not approve nor cause to be approved the mortgage, sale, or transfer of any real property owned by it or under its control, used for the instructional program and located on the main campus of the seminary without the prior approval of the General Synod."

CORPORATE BYLAWS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America needs ecclesiastical bylaws, which are contained in the *Book of Church Order,* and corporate bylaws, which meet the requirements of the not-for-profit law of the State of New York.

R-11.
To adopt the following Corporate Bylaws of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America: (ADOPTED)

CORPORATE BYLAWS of the GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

ARTICLE I
Name, Purpose and Principal Office

Section 1.01. The name of this corporation is GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

Section 1.02. The corporation is established for the folowing purposes:

i. To act as the highest ecclesiastical assembly and judicatory of the Reformed Church in America (hereinafter the "Church") and to exercise a general superintendence over the interests and concerns of the whole church and an appellate supervisory power over the acts, proceedings, and decisions of the lower assemblies of the said church.

ii. To cooperate with all religions and denominations, individuals, groups, associations, or organizations desiring to aid in the accomplishment of these objectives.

ARTICLE II
Members

Section 2.01. *Membership:* Those individuals, who, by virtue of the provisions of the Church's *Book of Church Order* are, from time to time, members of the Gen-

eral Synod of the Church, as an ecclesiastical body, shall likewise constitute the membership of the corporation.

Section 2.02. *Removal of Members:* Any individual who shall no longer be a member of the General Synod, as an ecclesiastical body, shall likewise be deemed to have terminated his membership in the corporation.

Section 2.03. *Quorum:* Except as otherwise provided herein or by statute, the presence in person of a majority of the members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 2.04. *Meetings:* The annual meeting of the corporation shall be held on the second Tuesday of June of each year at the offices of the corporation within the City of New York, or at such other time and place as the Board of Direction shall determine, and at such meeting the president and treasurer shall present an audited report prepared by the corporation's outside auditors, showing in appropriate detail, the following:

1. The assets and liabilities, including the trust funds, of the corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the annual meeting.

2. The principal changes in assets and liabilities, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report.

3. The revenue or receipts of the corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report.

4. The expenses or disbursements of the corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report.

Section 2.05. *Notice of Meetings:* Notice of all meetings shall be served personally upon or mailed to the usual address of each member not less than ten (10) days and not more than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting. Notice of a meeting need not be given to any member who submits a signed waiver of notice whether before or after the meeting, or who attends the meeting without protesting, prior thereto or at its commencement, the lack of notice to him.

Section 2.06. *Adjournment of Meetings:* A majority of the members present, whether or not a quorum is present, may adjourn any meeting to another time and place. Notice of any adjournment of a meeting of the membership to another time and place shall be given to the members who were not present at the time of the adjournment and, unless such time and place are announced at the meeting, to the other members.

ARTICLE III
Directors

Section 3.01. The property, affairs, business and concerns of the corporation shall be managed by the Board of Direction.

Section 3.02. *Number and Terms:* The Board of Direction shall consist of those individuals who by virtue of the provisions of the Church's *Book of Church Order* are elected to the General Synod's Executive Committee. There shall be no less than three members and there shall be twenty four (24) initial directors. The

number of directors may be increased or decreased by amendment of the *Book of Church Order*. They shall serve terms as defined in the *Book of Church Order*, however, no decrease in total members shall shorten the term of any incumbent director or reduce the number of directors to less than three.

Section 3.03. *Quorum:* Except as otherwise provided, the presence in person of a majority of the entire board shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 3.04. *Action by the Board:* Any action required or permitted to be taken by the board or any committee thereof may be taken without a meeting if all members of the board or the committee consent in writing to the adoption of a resolution authorizing the action. The resolution and the written consents thereto by the members of the board, or the committee, shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the board or committee.

Except as otherwise provided, the vote of a majority of the directors present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is present at such time, shall be the act of the board.

Section 3.05. *Place and Time of Meeting of the Board:* Meetings of the board may be held at any place within or without New York City. The time and place for holding meetings of the board shall be fixed by the board.

Section 3.06. *Notice of Meetings:* Notice of all meetings shall be served personally upon or mailed to the usual address of each director not less than five (5) days and not more than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting. Notice of a meeting need not be given to any director who submits a signed waiver of notice whether before or after the meeting, or who attends the meeting without protesting, prior thereto or at its commencement, the lack of notice to him.

Section 3.07. *Adjournment of Meetings:* A majority of the directors present, whether or not a quorum is present, may adjourn any meeting to another time and place. Notice of any adjournment of a meeting of the board to another time and place shall be given to the directors who were not present at the time of the adjournment and, unless such time and place are announced at the meeting, to the other directors.

ARTICLE IV

Section 4.01. *Committees:*

(a) The board, by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire board, may designate from among its members standing committees, which shall serve at the pleasure of the board, each consisting of three or more directors and each of which, to the extent provided in the resolution, shall have all the authority of the board, except that no such committee shall have authority as to the following matters; amending the Certificate of Incorporation, adopting an agreement of merger or consolidation, sale, lease or exchange of all or substantially all of the corporation's property and assets, or amending the bylaws of the corporation.

(b) The board may designate one or more directors as alternate members of any standing committee, who may replace any absent member or members at any meeting of such committee.

ARTICLE V
Officers of Corporation

Section 5.01. The members of the corporation shall, pursuant to Charter, at the annual meeting of the corporation elect a president. Thereafter the Board of Direction shall, at the annual meeting of the corporation, appoint a vice president, and a treasurer of the corporation and may elect or appoint such other officers as the needs of the corporation may from time to time require. The general secretary of the corporation shall be the general secretary of the General Synod. Officers need not be members of the board. The officers shall make such reports to the Board of Direction as may be required by the board.

Section 5.02. *President.* The president shall preside at the meetings of the board and shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Direction are carried into effect, and shall present an annual report of the board to the General Synod.

Section 5.03. *Vice-President.* The corporation shall have a vice-president who shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the president and/or the Board of Direction. The vice president shall have and exercise all the powers and duties of the president in case of his absence or inability to act, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Direction.

Section 5.04. *General Secretary.* The general secretary shall have general and active management of the daily affairs and business of the corporation and shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation. In addition, he or his designated substitute shall record all votes and the minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose. The general secretary or his designated substitute shall give or cause to be given notice of all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall affix the seal of the corporation to such papers as may require it. The said general secretary shall have charge of the corporation's seal, the minute book and such other books and papers as the Board of Directors may prescribe.

Section 5.05. *Treasurer.* The treasurer shall have the care and custody of all the funds and securities of the corporation, and shall deposit the same in the name of the corporation in such bank or banks as the Board of Direction may designate, and shall disburse the same under such rules and regulations as may be made by the Board of Direction and shall perform such other duties as the Board of Direction may from time to time prescribe. The treasurer shall keep full and accurate account of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the corporation, and shall see that all expenditures are duly authorized and are evidenced by proper receipts and vouchers.

The funds, books and vouchers in the treasurer's hands shall at all times be under the supervision of the Board of Direction and subject to its inspection and control. At the expiration date of said treasurer's term of office, said treasurer shall deliver over to said treasurer's successor all books, moneys and other property or, in the absence of the treasurer-elect, to the general secretary.

ARTICLE VI
CORPORATE FUNDS

Section 6.01. All funds of the corporation are to be deposited with such bank or trust company as the Board of Direction may select and shall be subject to withdrawal by checks signed as directed by the Board of Direction.

ARTICLE VII
Corporate Seal

Section 7.01. The *seal* of the corporation shall carry its name and such other legend as the Board of Direction may direct.

ARTICLE VIII
Fiscal Year

Section 8.01. The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE IX
Amendment of Bylaws

Section 9.01. These Bylaws may be amended or repealed by the affirmative vote of a majority of the membership of the corporation at any meeting of the membership so long as the proposed amendment to the Bylaws appears on an agenda circulated to all members not less than five (5) days nor more than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting.

ASIAN AMERICAN CONSULTATION

During the 1978 General Synod, Elder Russell Fong from Sacramento, California, requested the Synod to initiate a process for "advancing Christian work among Asian people." The Synod authorized its executive committee "to receive communication from Asian members of the RCA who are interested in discussing this matter."

A survey of existing Asian American ministries indicated six RCA Asian congregations, seven Asian congregations affiliated in some way with the RCA, several congregations which have Asian participation, two RCA Asian ministers not affiliated with RCA congregations, and opportunities in several areas for new ministries with Asian Americans.

Responding to a request for a Consultation of Asian Americans, the GSEC, in April, 1979, endorsed the request for funding of a consultation and referred it to the General Program Council for implementation and budget source.

The General Program Council convened a consultation on March 14-16, 1980, at the Star Lake Lodge Conference Center in Bloomingdale, New Jersey. Thirty-eight people attended of whom 23 were Asian Americans.

The purpose of the consultation was to explore ways for facilitating communication, for addressing concerns and for advancing Christian work of Asian people within the RCA. It adopted the following statement of rationale:

> We, the Asian American Christians within the Reformed Church in America, affirm our future believing that God is calling us to live and work here as the servants of His Kingdom. Asian American persons in North America lead a bi-cultural and "marginal" existence. Our ethnic roots and dignity as persons are often not fully appreciated. Such a life in the wilderness, however, is an opportunity for a creative service for God's Kingdom on this earth. Like Abraham, we shall obey the call to be pilgrims, people who live as the sojourners in the land in search for "the city

which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We shall cherish our ethnic heritages as God's gifts, but also welcome our life and work here in America as a sacred vocation. We shall live as Asian Americans. We shall celebrate our Asian American identity because of God's purposiveness inherent in it.

In our pilgrimage, however, we are not alone. We are joined by all other brothers and sisters of our Church who also are pilgrims in faith. Together, we shall strive to be loyal to our common Lord Jesus Christ (1) by working to foster a sense of appreciation for the value and dignity of the Asian American's ethnic roots and identity, (2) by striving to work together with all persons of all races in ministering *to each other and to the whole world* for the sake of the Gospel of our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and (3) by providing a renewed support on a priority basis for the existing and the potential Asian American congregations in all aspects of their life and ministry.

These basic imperatives of our faith can be truly achieved only as they are pursued by the entire family of our Church. Asian American persons also need to come together for a sense of community, for mutual support, as well as for the purpose of bringing our concerns to the attention of the whole Church. We organize, therefore, as the Council for Asian American Ministries. Through the work of this body, we shall strive to serve the whole Church, in cooperation with all other members of the Church, for the furtherance of God's work of reconciliation in this world.

The consultation also took action to request formal recognition by the General Synod as a minority council.

R-12.
To recognize the Council for Asian American Ministries as an entity of the RCA. (ADOPTED)

ORDINATION OF WOMEN

From June, 1979, to April, 1980, the General Synod Executive Committee received communications from 14 individuals, 11 churches and 11 classes expressing concern about the action of the 1979 General Synod on the ordination of women to the office of minister of the Word.

Six of these communications were presented as overtures but were not accepted for the agenda by the GSEC since they alleged administrative error by the General Synod of 1979 and were thus judged to be complaints which are prohibited by the *BCO* (Chapter 11, Part III, Article V, Section 1). An additional reason for not accepting five of the overtures was that they asked the Synod either directly, or in effect, to rescind the judgment of the 1979 Synod on complaints submitted to it. Although the General Synod can, in most cases, rescind its legislative actions, it is not at liberty through legislative actions to rescind its judgments on complaints.

Nevertheless, through these letters and other means, the GSEC has recognized that many RCA members are dismayed because of General Synod's action concerning the ordination of women, even as others are encouraged. The GSEC also noted that the General Synod of 1979 addressed only the question of "whether or not the *Book of Church Order* of the Reformed Church in America permits or does not permit the ordination of women to the office of minister of the Word" (*MGS,* p. 67). The question of whether or not the *BCO* requires the ordination of women to the office of minister of the Word was not before the Synod.

Because the members of the Reformed Church are not of one mind on this question and because our differing opinions are rooted in strong convictions and are accompanied by deep feelings, the following recommendation is presented to the General Synod.

R-4.

(To call for careful avoidance of pressure which might lead either one who supports or one who opposes the action permitting the ordination of women to the office of minister of the Word to offend against his or her conscience, and to urge that no member of the church be penalized for conscientious objection to, or support of, the ordination of women.)

The advisory committee presented the following "Proposal to Maintain Peace in Diversity in the RCA Concerning Women as Church Officers" as a substitute for R-13:

To approve the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* and refer it to the Editorial Committee:

(a) Amend Part I, Article 1, Section 3 (*BCO,* p. 12) by substituting "men and women" for "persons."

(b) Amend Part II, Article 2, Section 7 (*BCO,* p. 24) by adding the following:

> If individual members of the classis find that their consciences, as illuminated by Scripture, would not permit them to participate in the licensure, ordination or installation of women as ministers of the Word, they shall not be required to participate in decisions or actions contrary to their consciences, but may not obstruct the classis in fulfilling its responsibility to arrange for the care, ordination, and installation of women candidates and ministers by means mutually agreed on by such women and the classis.

(c) Amend Part II, Article 10 (*BCO,* p. 40) by adding a new section:

> Section 15. Ministers of the Word shall not be pressured in such a way as to lead either one who supports or one who opposes, on scriptural grounds, the ordination of women to church offices to offend against his or her conscience. Nor shall any church member be penalized for conscientious objection to, or support of, the ordination of women to church offices. *Nor shall any minister of the Word or church member obstruct by unconstitutional means the election, ordination, or installation of a woman to church offices.* (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

Reasons:

1. To clarify and confirm through constitutional amendments the legality of the ordination of women as ministers of the Word.
2. To protect the rights of conscience of church members and officers and protect the rights of women candidates to ordination.
3. To bring peace in diversity in the RCA over the issue of women in church offices.

On a motion from the floor Synod:

VOTED: To instruct the Advisory Committee on Church Order to send a cover letter along with this recommendation to include:

*Substitution in light face type.

(1) background information which resulted in reaching this decision;
(2) a statement to the effect that a vote by the classis in favor of this amendment is a vote recognizing who we are as a Reformed Church family—a people diverse yet united in Christ.
(3) a statement to the effect that while certain RCA members may not be in favor of women's ordination personally, they are—by passing this amendment—saying they are in favor of being a member of a denomination that allows (ordination of women) unity in diversity.*

VOTED: That the advisory committee instruct its subcommittee that drafted the substitute recommendation for R-13 to prepare the letter to be sent; that the letter be submitted to the advisory committee for approval; that the approved letter be reported to the General Synod; and that the approved letter be forwarded to the General Secretary's office for distribution.

The advisory committee presented for approval the following cover letter to be sent with the "Proposal to Maintain Pease in Diversity in the RCA Concerning Women as Church Officers" to all ministers and congregations.

TO THE REFORMED CHURCH FAMILY:

A Proposal to Maintain Peace in Diversity in the RCA Concerning Women as Church Officers

After much deliberation as a committee, we adopted without dissent the enclosed proposal which was presented to the General Synod. After thorough discussion, the Synod adopted it with scarcely any dissent, followed by applause.

We believe that our committee and the Synod, representing varied views of the ordination of women, were satisfied that this represents a workable means of achieving peace with diversity in the Reformed Church in America. Because of our feeling of the tremendous importance of this action, we have asked the Synod for permission to share this information with you.

Sincerely in Christ,

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDER

VOTED: To authorize the sending of the cover letter with the "Proposal to Maintain Peace in Diversity in the RCA Concerning Women as Church Officers" to all ministers and congregations.

*Addition in light face type.
Deletion in parentheses.

Overtures

Delay Action on Corresponding Delegates to General Synod

1. **The Classis of South Grand Rapids overtures the General Synod not to pass a declarative act giving final approval to amendments to the *Book of Church Order* deleting the sections referring to Corresponding Delegates to General Synod (*MGS,* 1979, pp. 174-6). (Amendments 6 and 7 in the "1979 Proposed Amendments to the Church Government, RCA.")**

Reasons:

1. The 1979 Synod, upon recommendation of the General Synod Executive Committee, did not give final approval to amendments to the *BCO* which would have added a number of new corresponding delegates. Instead the GSEC proposed to delete entirely the reference to corresponding delegates from the *BCO* (Amendments 6 and 7), with the plan to provide for corresponding delegates in the bylaws of General Synod, amendments which do not require classis approval. We believe the provision for corresponding delegates should be retained in the *BCO,* not the bylaws.

2. The committee report (*MGS,* 1979, p. 174) reasons that corresponding delegates should be provided for in the bylaws "Since corresponding delegates *do not exercise a policy-making function.*" We believe that is not the case, since corresponding delegates are granted the privileges of the floor at Synod. Our reasons are as follows:

   a. We realize that the present *BCO* provides for corresponding delegates from the seminaries (although each seminary has two regular delegates), the colleges, the GPC, the *Church Herald,* students from seminaries, Reformed Church Women and the general secretary (We are also aware that the editor of the *Church Herald* rarely exercises his right to speak as a corresponding delegate, because he is covering the meeting of General Synod as a press representative.) We believe that it is not to the advantage of the General Synod to add more corresponding delegates.

   b. While we realize that the General Synod does not function perfectly, we believe that adding more people who will be present for the whole meeting of Synod, perhaps have the same representatives year after year, be free to speak on any matters which they choose and not just those which affect their particular committee, does not strengthen the freedom of the General Synod delegates, (many of whom may be attending for the first time), to deliberate and make their own decisions without pressure from outside "experts".

   c. We appreciate the fact that staff members of the GPC, even though present at Synod, have been careful not to involve themselves in the deliberate process of the Synod sessions.

   d. It is hard to justify the cost of having corresponding delegates present for the entire meeting of Synod.

   e. Since there is a regular turnover of delegates at the General Synod, an unfair advantage can accrue to any corresponding delegates who be-

come more or less permanent fixtures, and can speak knowingly about what was said and done at past sessions in such a way as to discredit the contributions of those who do not attend Synod regularly.

f. While every commission must be flattered to see itself considered for inclusion during all of the sessions of Synod, we feel it must be honestly stated, without meaning to undervalue the work of any agency, that we are not convinced that every one of these groups warants a full-time corresponding delegate for the entire week of General Synod meetings each year: Christian Action Commission, Church Government Committee, Commission on History, Committee on Christian Unity, Judicial Business Committee, Nominations Committee, Committee on Worship, Theological Commission, Black Council, Hispanic Council, American Indian Council.

3. There is nothing to prevent a representative of a board or commission being present as requested at an advisory committee meeting, without being a corresponding delegate.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-14.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
Since corresponding delegates do not exercise a policy-making function, it would seem more appropriate for the provisions for corresponding delegates to be included in the Bylaws.

Allow Classes Freedom Concerning Ordination of Women as Ministers of the Word

2. **The Classis of Cascades overtures the General Synod to make a change in the *BCO* which would allow the classes freedom to proceed in the matter of the ordination and installation of women to the office of Minister of the Word, as desired by the majority of each classis—the proper wording and placing of this addition to the *BCO* to be determined by the appropriate body in the RCA.**

Reasons:

1. The widespread feeling in the RCA that last year's General Synod action re: the ordination of women was unusual, and constitutionally questionable; and that therefore this action has perpetuated the tension within the RCA on the matter of the ordination of women to the office of minister of the Word.

2. Last year's action by General Synod bypassed the classes, thus departing from the well-established procedure in dealing with significant theological or constitutional issues within the Presbyterian form of government.

3. Opposition to a change in the *BCO* allowing for ordination of women to the office of minister of the Word has come, not from a minority, but from a majority of the RCA:
   26 classes voted "yes" in 1978, representing 97,290 members.
   19 classes voted "no" in 1978, representing 118,094 members.

4. After many years of debate and voting on this issue a stalemate has been reached, which saps the church of spiritual energies, and provides for a constant source of irritation and frustration.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-15.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. Responsibility for ordination is already the prerogative of the classes.
2. The substitute recommendation for R-13 (above) attempts to address the concerns expressed in the reasons given for the overture.

Make Editorial Revisions in the Book of Church Order

3. **The Classis of Bergen overtures the General Synod to instruct the Committee on Church Government to revise the *Book of Church Order* in the following two places:**

   a. ***BCO*, page 38, Part II, Article 10, Section 6, the deletion of the commas and the word "by" in line 2.**

   Reason: The present phrasing permits "licensed candidate" to be interpreted as a candidate of the Reformed Church in America, which is not the intent of the section.

   b. ***BCO*, page 44, Part IV, Chapter 1, Article 3, the rewording of the paragraph to recognize the possibility of female chaplains.**

   Reason:

   This would make the section consistent with the rest of the *BCO*.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-16.
To refer the overture to the Commission on Church Order for report to the 1981 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

Provide for Proportional Representation of Particular Synods on General Synod Boards and Agencies

4. **The Classis of South Grand Rapids overtures the General Synod to amend the bylaws of General Synod to provide for more equitable representation of particular synods on those boards and agencies where membership has included an equal number of representatives from each of the six particular synods. Specifically, we believe the differences in membership of particular synods should be more accurately reflected on the General Synod Executive Committee, Christian Action Commission, Church Government Commission, Chris-**

tian Unity Commission, Judical Business Commission, Nominations Commission, and the Board of Theological Education.

Reasons:

1. The statistics show changes in denominational membership in particular synods:

(From 1960-1978, rounded to nearest 100 members)

Synod	*Membership*	*% of Total*	*G.S. Benevolences*	*% of Total*
PSA	27,500	12%	$ 291,000	8%
PSC	22,600	10%	523,500	14%
PSM	44,700	20%	1,058,500	28%
PSNJ	52,500	23%	602,500	16%
PSNY	42,100	19%	332,000	9%
PSW	36,500	16%	979,000	26%

Membership—

Synod	*1960*	*1963*	*1966*	*1969*	*1972*	*1975*	*1978*
PSA	27,500	26,500	26,500	25,300	24,100	22,800	21,000
PSC	22,600	23,600	24,600	24,700	25,100	26,000	26,400
PSM	44,700	48,400	50,500	51,400	53,600	53,200	54,800
PSNJ	52,500	50,700	50,100	45,600	38,600	34,800	31,700
PSNY	42,100	40,700	38,600	35,700	30,400	26,800	25,800
PSW	36,500	39,000	42,800	45,900	49,200	52,200	55,700

1978

Synod	*Membership*	*% of Total*	*G.S. Benevolences*	*% of Total*
PSA	21,000	10%	$ 394,00	5.8%
PSC	26,400	12%	1,080,700	16%
PSM	54,800	25%	2,118,500	31.4%
PSNJ	31,700	15%	640,100	9.5%
PSNY	25,800	12%	337,500	5.6%
PSW	55,700	26%	2,117,600	31.4%

2. The principle of giving equal representation to particular synods is now outmoded, and needs to be modified to remove some of the effects of under—and over—representation.

3. Obviously, equal representation is not possible, but a system can surely be found for more equitable representation than is the case presently.

4. The figures show that pastors and lay people in some synods have more than twice as much chance for participation in denominational agencies as their counterparts in other synods. Such disparities should be removed.

5. Clearly, the most under-represented synods have contributed generously to the General Synod's program, well beyond their proportion of the total membership.

6. Representation on some agencies may have to be increased. That has often been done to insure minority representation. We should be willing to do so again to ensure more equitable representation from the particular synods.

7. This process of review to obtain equitable representation should probably be done by the Synod each decade.

Provide for Proportional Representation of Particular Synods on General Synod Boards and Agencies

5. **The Particular Synod of Michigan overtures the General Synod to amend the bylaws of the General Synod to provide for more equitable representation of particular synods on those boards and agencies where membership has included an equal number of representatives from each of the six particular synods. Specifically, we believe the differences in membership of particular synods should be more accurately reflected on the General Synod Executive Committee, Christian Action Commission, Church Government Commission, Christian Unity Commission, Judical Business Commission, Nominations Commission, and the Board of Theological Education.**

Reasons:

1. The statistics show changes in denominational membership in particular synods: (From 1960-1978, rounded to nearest 100 members)

(From 1960-1978, rounded to nearest 100 members)

Synod	*Membership*	*% of Total*	*G.S. Benevolences*	*% of Total*
PSA	27,500	12%	$ 291,000	8%
PSC	22,600	10%	523,500	14%
PSM	44,700	20%	1,058,500	28%
PSNJ	52,500	23%	602,500	16%
PSNY	42,100	19%	332,000	9%
PSW	36,500	16%	979,000	26%

Membership—

Synod	*1960*	*1963*	*1966*	*1969*	*1972*	*1975*	*1978*
PSA	27,500	26,500	26,500	25,300	24,100	22,800	21,000
PSC	22,600	23,600	24,600	24,700	25,100	26,000	26,400
PSM	44,700	48,400	50,500	51,400	53,600	53,200	54,800
PSNJ	52,500	50,700	50,100	45,600	38,600	34,800	31,700
PSNY	42,100	40,700	38,600	35,700	30,400	26,800	25,800
PSW	36,500	39,000	42,800	45,900	49,200	52,200	55,700

1978

Synod	*Membership*	*% of Total*	*G.S. Benevolences*	*% of Total*
PSA	21,000	10%	$ 394,00	5.8%
PSC	26,400	12%	1,080,700	16%
PSM	54,800	25%	2,118,500	31.4%
PSNJ	31,700	15%	640,100	9.5%
PSNY	25,800	12%	337,500	5.6%
PSW	55,700	26%	2,117,600	31.4%

2. The principle of giving equal representation to particular synods is now outmoded, and needs to be modified to remove some of the effects of under—and over—representation.

3. Obviously, equal representation is not possible, but a system can surely be found for more equitable representation than is the case presently.

4. The figures show that pastors and lay people in some synods have more than twice as much chance for participation in denominational agencies as their counterparts in other synods. Such disparities should be removed.

5. Clearly, the most under-represented synods have contributed generously to the General Synod's program, well beyond their proportion of the total membership.

6. Representation on some agencies may have to be increased. That has often been done to insure minority representation. We should be willing to do so again to ensure more equitable representation from the particular synods.

7. This process of review to obtain equitable representation should probably be done by the Synod each decade.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-17.
To approve Overtures 4 and 5 in principle and refer them to the Commission on Church Government for study and drafting possible amendments for presentation to the 1981 General Synod. (Referred—see below)

On a motion from the floor Synod:

VOTED: To refer Overtures 4 and 5 to the GSEC for study in consultation with the Commission on Church Order for report to the 1981 General Synod.

Fix a Term of Office for the General Secretary

6. The Classis of South Grand Rapids overtures the General Synod to amend its bylaws to return to the former practice of electing the general secretary by the General Synod for a specific term of office, and add the requirements that: 1) the term of office be for five years, 2) the maximum term of office be two consecutive terms of service, 3) the elections be "open", that is, in addition to any recommended nominees, that other nominations be allowed from the floor, and 4) since such amendments to the bylaws, if adopted by the 1980 Synod, must be given final approval at the 1981 Synod, the General Synod Executive Committee be asked to be available to supervise such an election at the 1981 Synod, if the amendment is given final approval then, 5) the General Synod Executive Committee shall continue to approve the job description for the position and shall have the power to dismiss the general secretary at any time by a two-thirds vote.

Reasons:

1. The choice of the top executive officer of the denomination should be returned to the most representative body, the General Synod, rather than the 21 member General Synod Executive Committee.

2. Specific provisions should be adopted to prevent long executive tenures of office, which have the potential of being unproductive for the individual and the organization being served.

3. The pattern in some denominations shows that long tenures of office have contributed to the concentration of executive power at the top levels of administration.

4. Elections should be "open" to protect the denomination against "rubber stamping" choices of only a small group.

5. A change in incumbents every 10 years or less results in some loss of continuity, of course. But we are confident that there are many qualified individuals who could provide fresh insights and vision for the denomination as a result of such changes in leadership.

6. Such an election at General Synod would, hopefully, be preceded by an extensive discussion of the goals, dreams, and priorities of the candidate(s) for the office, which would enhance a more intelligent choice of candidates.

Fix a Term of Office for the General Secretary

7. **The Particular Synod of Michigan overtures the General Synod to amend its bylaws to return to the former practice of electing the General Secretary by the General Synod for a specific term of office, and add the requirements that: 1) the term of office be five years, 2) the maximum term of office be two consecutive terms of service, 3) the elections be "open", that is, in addition to any recommended nominees, that other nominations be allowed from the floor, and 4) since such amendments to the bylaws, if adopted by the 1980 Synod, must be given final approval at the 1981 Synod, the General Synod Executive Committee be asked to be available to supervise such an election at the 1981 Synod, if the amendment is given final approval then, 5) the General Synod Executive Committee shall continue to approve the job description for the position and shall have the power to dismiss the general secretary at any time by a two-thirds vote.**

Reasons:

1. The choice of the top executive officer of the denomination should be returned to the most representative body, the General Synod, rather than the 21-member General Synod Executive Committee.

2. Specific provisions should be adopted to prevent long executive tenures of office, which have the potential of being unproductive for the individual and the organization being served.

3. The pattern in some denominations shows that long tenures of office have contributed to the concentration of executive power at the top levels of administration.

4. Elections should be "open" to protect the denomination against "rubber stamping" choices of only a small group.

5. A change in incumbents every 10 years or less results in some loss of continuity, of course, but we are confident that there are many qualified individuals who could provide fresh insights and vision for the denomination as a result of such changes in leadership.

6. Such an election at General Synod would, hopefully, be preceded by an extensive discussion of the goals, dreams, and priorities of the candidate(s) for the office, which would enhance a more intelligent choice of candidates.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-18.
To deny Overtures 6 and 7. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
The present system is more effective as it allows extensive evaluation of candidates as well as annual performance review.

Include "Homosexuality" as an Offense Subject to Discipline

8. **The Classis of Wisconsin overtures the General Synod to amend the *Book of Church Order* disciplinary procedure, Chapter 2, Part I, Nature of Discipline, Art. III, page 54, to include in the disciplinary action of offenses, the offense of practicing homosexuality.**

Reasons:

1. The Bible specifically teaches both in the Old and New Testament that practicing homosexuality is a sin.

   a. See Gen. 19:5; Deut. 23:17; I Kings 14:24.

   b. See Rom. 1:26-27; I Cor. 6:9-10; I Tim. 1:10,11.

2. In the light of the increasing problem of homosexuality, it should be named for board of elders in dealing with this biblical offense in Christian discipline.

3. The Report of the Theological Commission to General Synod of 1979, pages 128-134, in a paper made available for study in our churches, homosexuality is not stated as a sin to be dealt with as dishonorable in reputation before the world.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-19.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Reason:
The proposed revision of the Disciplinary and Judicial procedures removes the list of offenses from the *Book of Church Order.* (Part 1, Article 2, Section 3).

Deny Ordination to Practicing Homosexuals and Lesbians

9. **The Classis of Schoharie overtures the General Synod to deny ordination into the ministry of the Reformed Church in America to practicing homosexuals and lesbians and to authorize the classes to demit from the ministry those who remain unrepentant of this sin.**

Reasons:

1. The report of the Theological Commission on homosexuality confirms the belief that homosexual acts are sinful.

2. We believe persons who continue in unrepented sin should not be privileged to hold the high office of minister of the Word.

3. We believe a minister holds high social status in his/her community. We believe that combining that social status with homosexual preferences might directly or indirectly encourage young people and others to view homosexual behavior as normative.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-20.
To deny the overture. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. That General Synod cannot deny ordinations; only the classis can do that.

2. The advisory committee believes that the church knows that according to the Scriptures, homosexual acts are sin. (See G. S. papers on homosexuality—[MGS, 1978, pp. 229-240 and MGS, 1979, pp. 128-135].)

3. The advisory committee believes that judicatories know their responsibilities in the exercise of discipline as prescribed in the *Book of Church Order.*

4. Because it is impossible to list all unrepented sins that would cause ordination to be revoked or denied, it is inappropriate to list only one.

Study the Guidelines Governing Ordination

10. **The Particular Synod of New Jersey overtures the General Synod to request the Commission on Church Government to study the possibility of making more explicit the generic guidelines set down in Part II, Article 9, Section 4, governing the so-called "specialized ministries."**

Reasons:

1. The increasing multiplicity and variety of these forms of ministry often stretch or exceed the coverage of these generic guidelines.

2. Must a candidate be "assigned" to a form of ministry, etc.? May the candidate not feel "called" to specific ministry without being "assigned?"

3. What happens when a "call" is received to engage in a specialized form of genuine ministry under questionable auspices?

4. Is not "Christians" in Section 4.c. too confining a concept for ministries. May not genuine ministries be carried on other than for "the edification and equipment of Christians for their ministry in the world?" If not, who defines "Christians?"

5. Classes facing some of these problems have been seeking help in fulfilling their responsibilities in these specialized areas.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-21.
To adopt the overture. (ADOPTED)

Report of the Editorial Committee

Four matters were presented to the Editorial Committee for consideration and report. All additions to the *Book of Church Order* are in light-face type; all deletions are in parentheses.

1. Increasing Monies for Continuing Education.

The Editorial Committee has reviewed the referral for increasing the annual monies for study from $100 to $200. After reviewing this proposed amendment, the committee believes a formula should be devised to make it possible to adjust this amount without amending the *BCO*. Since it is not possible to devise an appropriate formula at this time, we recommend:

R-22.
To refer the proposed amendment on the monies for continuing education in the form of the call to the Commission on Church Order for the development of an appropriate formula which would make it possible to adjust the amount of money without a constitutional amendment for report to the 1981 General Synod. (ADOPTED)

2. A Proposal to Maintain Peace in Diversity in the RCA Concerning Women as Church Officers

R-23.
To adopt the following amendment to the *BCO* and recommend it to the classes for approval:

a. Amend Part 1, Article 1, Section 3 (*BCO*, p. 12) to read:

The ministers of the Word are those (persons) MEN AND WOMEN **who have been inducted into that office by ordination in accordance with the Word of God and the order established by the church. They are equal in authority as ministers of the Word**

and as stewards of the mysteries of God. No person shall exercise that office if he has relinquished the function for which he was installed, or while he is under suspension from the ministry, or after he has been deposed from it.

b. Amend Part II, Article 2, Section 7 (*BCO,* p. 24) to read:

The classis shall examine students of theology for licensure, and licensed candidates for the ministry for ordination. If individual members of the classis find that their consciences, as illuminated by scripture, would not permit them to participate in the licensure, ordination or installation of women as ministers of the word, they shall not be required to participate in decisions or actions contrary to their consciences, but may not obstruct the classis in fulfilling its responsibility to arrange for the care, ordination, and installation of women candidates and ministers by means mutually agreed on by such women and the classis.

c. Amend Part II, Article 10 (*BCO,* p. 40) by adding the following new section:

Section 15. Ministers of the Word shall not be pressured in such a way as to lead either one who supports or one who opposes, on scriptural grounds, the ordination of women to church offices to offend against his or her conscience; nor shall any church member be penalized for conscientious objection to, or support of the ordination of women to church offices; nor shall any minister of the Word obstruct by unconstitutional means the election, ordination or installation of a woman to church offices.

d. Amend Part I, Article 5, Section 2 (*BCO,* p. 19) by adding the following new subsection:

h. They shall not penalize nor permit to be penalized any member for conscientious objection to, or support of, the ordination of women to church offices: nor shall they permit any member to obstruct by unconstitutional means the election, ordination, or installation of a woman to church offices. (ADOPTED)

3. Commission on Evangelization and Church Growth

R-24.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Bylaws of the General Synod* as a new article 5, section 5, and recommend it to the General Synod of 1981 for approval:

Sec. 5. The Commission on Evangelization and Church Growth.

a. Membership
The commission shall have nine members. Three shall be lay and three shall be ministers nominated by the respective particular synods in alternating six-year periods. There shall be one member from the committees on evangelization or their equivalents in each of the divisions of world mission, church planning and development and Christian discipleship. A special interest in evangelization and church growth shall be required of all members.

b. Responsibilities

1. The commission shall consider and recommend to the General Synod policy matters and programs of general concern related to evangelization and church growth and keep the challenge of evangelization before each General Synod.

2. It shall seek creative insights into effective evangelization through study of worldwide evangelization.

3. It shall monitor changes throughout the world which have bearing upon the ability of the church to proclaim the gospel.

4. It shall keep before the church the imperative to evangelize in the light of its study and analysis of the current experience and the future potential for the church to proclaim the gospel to the whole of humankind. (ADOPTED)

4. General Synod Agency/Commission Term of Office

R-25.
To adopt the following amendment to the *Bylaws of the General Synod*, Article IV, Section 1, and recommend it to the General Synod of 1981 for approval:

The following shall apply to all General Synod agencies and commissions, except as otherwise provided in the constitution or other enabling documents of the agency or commission:

a. The term of office for members shall be three years.
b. Members may be elected to two consecutive terms.
c. All terms shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.
d. A partial term of more than one year shall be considered a full term in determining eligibility. (ADOPTED)

WORLD MISSION

From the Report of the General Program Council:

WORLD MINISTRIES

As the Reformed Church World Mission program moves into the 80s its program and structure are being reviewed and studied in a number of significant ways. The General Program Council has asked an ad hoc committee to assist the denomination in renewing and enlarging our commitment to world mission. This committee was also instructed to consider the impact of continuing inflation and devaluation on World Mission, to be responsive to new challenges and opportunities, to be sensitive to world trends and to be aware of the concerns of sister churches and ecumenical agencies. The committee will complete its study in the fall of 1980 and report to the GPC at that time.

The 1979 General Synod made two recommendations that relate to World Ministries:

1) "that the General Synod ask the GPC to design and implement a program that facilitates our being partners with Third World Churches in their cross-cultural evangelistic efforts among unreached peoples; that the criterion for our involvement be whether or not our partnership makes an essential difference in their ability to reach effectively with the gospel, people who would otherwise likely remain unreached for Christ", and

2) "that the GPC, in consultation with the GSEC be asked to review its present structure of program goal areas and explore the possibility of reorganizing in terms of a few major denominational tasks to report back to the Synod of 1980. Further, that this reorganization provide for a structure within GPC which would keep before the RCA the challenge of the unfinished worldwide mission task with special focus on cross-cultural evangelism".

Of special interest is the forthcoming book *A Surprising Harvest—A People in Mission* by Dr. Eugene Heideman. This book, one of the *Heritage and Hope* series, will be available at the 1980 General Synod. It provides an excellent description, from an historical perspective, of the Reformed Church's understanding of mission and future directions. The publication of this book comes at a strategic time as the RCA reviews and renews its commitment to world mission in the 80s and beyond. It is hoped it will have wide use and study by Reformed Church members.

A summary of World Mission directions follows:

American Indian Ministries:

This ministry provides a cross-cultural mission opportunity for the Reformed Church in six different congregations in the U.S., composed of different tribes or nations. The work in these communities is difficult to measure in terms of numerical growth, but faithful pastors continue to share the Good News of the Gospel and train leadership to become partners in this ministry of Christ. The Indian churches are coming to a renewed understanding of their contributions to the Body of Christ, which has been developed out of their history, culture, and religious understanding.

Another part of this ministry is through a chaplaincy program in the Phoenix Indian High School and by a staff person at the Cook Christian Training School, both in Phoenix, Arizona. Presently, the First Reformed Church of Winnebago, Nebraska, is searching for a new pastor.

Africa:

RCA involvement continues to be in five countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Zambia, and Egypt. This scattered presence came about with one exception when it was necessary for missionaries to leave Ethiopia. The exception is the Vogelaars' presence in Cairo, which is part of the RCA's mission to Muslims and related to the RCA mission in the Middle East.

As 1979 came to a close, the Swarts were requested by the government of Kenya to terminate their work in Illeret. It was suggested that they work in some area other than in the Northern Province near the Kenya-Ethiopia border. This came as a surprise and disappointment since work in Illeret was progressing well and had only been initiated two years earlier. Thus far, there has been no official reason given by the government of Kenya. The African Inland church is seeking an explanation. Great though the disappointment, this is another reminder of the sudden changes in the world today.

Possibilities continue to be explored in the Sudan as well as in other parts of Africa. In each place where RCA missionaries are assigned, their commitment to Christ and the way in which they use their gifts in his service truly makes a difference. A missionary candidate is being recruited for a cassette ministry in the southern Sudan.

Asia:

India, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Philippines continue to be the areas of involvement in Asia for the RCA. It was hoped that during 1979 a new family would be sent to India. Difficulties in the visa process delayed that and it is now hoped that the new family will be able to go sometime in 1980.

The Church of South India, at its synod meeting in January, elected all new officers for the first time in several years. RCA missionaries continue to serve effectively in the places which have been home to them for many years.

In Taiwan, the Wymas and the Grevings continue their language study, even as they begin to assume work responsibilities. Two missionary families, with years of experience, continue to serve the church in a medical ministry and in theological education.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan experienced another year of struggle for human rights and justice. The church's efforts are seen by the government as an anti-government movement, although the church professes its basic support of the government. Through letters and personal contact, church leaders request the prayers of all Christians that the Taiwanese church will have wisdom, as well as the courage to speak about human rights and justice in the Name of Christ.

Responding to the unfortunate Kaohsiung incident of December 10th in Taiwan and the struggle there for human rights, the council, at its March 20-21, 1980 meeting, voted to express its unity in Christ with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan as well as communications with the secretary of state and the president of the United States. The council also encouraged the Reformed Church in America to send a representative to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

Japan remains a difficult challenge. Much of the western world sees Japan as an affluent, developed nation and therefore not in need of the gospel. However, less than 1 percent of the population is Christian. The RCA involvement ranges from new church development to coffee house ministries, classroom teaching to personal evangelism on the street. All these are part of confronting an affluent, highly secularized society with the claims of Christ.

An RCA missionary family in Hong King and one in the Philippines make significant contributions in helping the church to reach out to people. It is impossible to evaluate the effect that one family can have as it witnesses, shares, and cares for others.

Developments in China during the past year include the opening of some churches long closed, the visit of four Chinese Christians to the USA and Canada, and the visits of many westerners to China. The challenge that this great nation poses to the Christian Church continues to call for prayer for all its people and for Christians as they work and worship within the new freedom they are experiencing. Future opportunities for Christian witness in China will certainly be very different than in the past and will present new challenges. May the RCA be prepared to meet these challenges with courage and sensitivity. The GPC, at its November 1979 meeting, voted to encourage World Ministries staff to continue to explore all possiblities for involvement in mission to the people of China.

Mexico

The National Presbyterian Church of Mexico made a major decision at its 1979 General Assembly that affects the work of the RCA in Chiapas. The General Assembly adopted as policy a document that calls for a new partnership with American churches. This partnership paper gives the presbyteries of Chiapas the freedom to determine their own relationships with U.S. churches. This decision is cause for rejoicing since it is now possible for the presbyteries to plan the development of programs, and their needs for missionaries without arbitrary termination dates. This removes the 1986 termination date for RCA missionaries. Also, it opens up new areas of Mexico for mission in partnership with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico.

The mission activity of the RCA is in cooperation with the three Chiapas presbyteries of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, Chol, Tzeltal, and Chiapas, the latter Spanish-speaking. In addition, there is a ministry to the Tzotzil and Tojolabal tribes. All the Indian congregations are descendants of the Mayan Indians.

The work activities of the missionaries range from translating the Bible into the language of the people to developing leadership materials for use in Bible Institutes for pastors, lay persons, and youth. Materials include Bible studies, medical clinic manuals, music, home, and family. The Good News is proclaimed in all these diverse programs.

Highlights from the Mexico ministry this year include: A new excitement for mission to Chiapas for the 80s, a new committee of the National Church, missionaries, and presbytery leaders for development and oversight of program. Also, there is continued development of the Bible Schools and theological education by extension programs.

Among the Tzeltals, the translation of the New Testament has been completed, and work on the Old Testament is well underway. The Tzeltals look forward to having the full Bible in their own language. The Tzeltal Bible Institute continues its program of translating materials and teaching. Also, in the Chiapas Presbytery, the Spanish-speaking ministry focuses on teaching and leadership development, particularly through the training provided at the Conference Center at Tapachula.

The work among the Tzotzil Indian has now expanded from the Zincanteco tribe to leadership training for all five Tzotzil dialect groups. There is a real prospect among these tribes and a new couple is being appointed for ministry among them. The Chris Platteels began a new ministry among the Tojolabal tribe in 1979 in Santa Lucia. The Platteels are now on extended furlough in Canada because of the critical condition of their infant son.

Training programs for clinic workers continues. Through this program the workers are better equipped to prescribe medicines. Immunization clinics are also conducted to aid in control of serious diseases such as polio and small pox.

The Middle East:

1979 marked the 90th Anniversary of RCA mission in the Middle East. Contemplating 90 years of presence in this area, one is amazed that God led the RCA to this once so-neglected region of mission, yet now so strategic in world concern. World interest in the Middle East has increased dramtically in the past year. The revolutionary developments in Iran and the crisis of the imprisoned U.S. hostages, the Soviet invastion of Afghanistan, and the Western world's dependence on Middle East oil resources are all contributing factors to that focus.

These concerns have over-shadowed, for many, the Arab/Israel/Palestinian tensions which continue. It seems clear that there will be no resolution to this major problem until there is recognition of the rights of both the Palestinians and the Israelis of self-determination. Meanwhile, in Lebanon, these unresolved issues keep the nation of Lebanon, with its thousands of Palestinian refugees, teetering on the edge of survival or death.

These developments raise a new challenge to the RCA and its mission in the Middle East. Does the present concern arise out of a deep interest in the people of the area and their struggle for survival and peace? The RCA must be certain that its interest in the Middle East is not motivated by seeking to assure the continuance of the western, affluent way of life which is so dependent on oil resources of the Middle East.

The RCA mission in the Middle East is no longer as exclusively limited to the Arabian Gulf area as in the past. For several years the GPC has been seeking wider opportunities for witness in cooperation with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). This commitment was strengthened in the past year by two consultations sponsored by the MECC. The first, held in May 1979, focused on the new communities of expatriates and unskilled laborers in the Arabian Gulf. In several Gulf countries, their numbers exceed those of native citizens of Gulf States. A second gathering in October 1979 brought together representatives of seven U.S. churches engaged in mission in the Middle East, including the RCA, with church representatives of the MECC. At this meeting new ways were considered in which churches of the Middle East and from the West can join in partnership in their witness. It was also agreed that western churches should no longer limit their ministries to the traditional geographic areas of witness of the past.

The past year has seen significant developments in mission in the Middle East. Dr. Harvey and Hilda Staal were reassigned to Beirut, from the Arabian Gulf, where Mr. Staal is working with the Institute for Middle Eastern New Testament Studies of the Near East School of Theology. Here Harvey is helping to edit and translate ancient biblical texts and Christian writings, dating from the Eighth Century on to more recent times. The purpose of this task is to make these writings available and contribute to the nurture and renewal of Middle East churches. Also, the MECC became a full partner in the Family Bookshop Group which distributes quality literature, Bibles, and Christian books. This program need no longer depend primarily on leadership from outside, but will become an indigenous program of Middle East churches. This should assure the continuance of this ministry if western churches and missionaries are forced to leave the Middle East due to political developments.

The presence of missionaries and their witness in Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Egypt continues. Their work covers a wide range of ministries. Missionaries still serve in two schools and one hospital in Bahrain and Oman. Other missionaries serve in medical, agricultural, and village development programs through government ministries in these same two countries as well as Kuwait. Still others serve in expatriate congregations in the three Gulf states of Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain. Also, missionaries serve in a bookshop in Kuwait, in personal visitation and a ministry to laborers in isolated camps, and in ministry in Cairo to seminary and university students. In these and other varied ways the gospel is proclaimed and personal witness is given. To a growing degree this witness is made by missionaries who are serving in less structured programs than in the past. Missionaries are facing new challenges as they serve in this manner.

There has been a new development in southern Oman where Protestant/Anglican/Orthodox/Catholic Christians are joining in building one Christian center for their common use. This was made possible by a gift of land by the Sultan of Oman. The GPC is seeking to respond to this opportunity by providing a pastor for this truly ecumenical Christian community. The MECC has endorsed this venture and there may be some financial assistance from other U.S. churches.

In addition to these ways of witness, there is renewed effort to prepare young people of the RCA for future Middle East ministry. Several who have served as interns or volunteers now wish to return for other assignments. Thus, programs of orientation and language study are being emphasized so that these young people will have adequate preparation in the culture of the Middle East and in understanding of Islam.

Unsettled conditions in the Middle East are causing many Arab people to emigrate to the West. This is a cause of great concern to the Middle East churches, since many of the emigrants are members of their churches. This increasing presence of Arab people in the U.S. communities does provide new opportunity for understanding of Middle East perspectives, including the religious views of Muslim people.

The above report refers to the rights of both the Palestinians and the Israelis to self-determination. In the Advisory Committee on World Mission's consideration of apartheid practices in South Africa which was understood to be legalized constitutional oppression, it seemed urgent to oppose such oppression everywhere. It was brought to the committee's attention by Middle East missionaries that this oppression applies to the Palestinian minority in Israel. In this context the committee recommended:

R-1.
To refer this matter to the GPC for further study and report to the next General Synod. (ADOPTED)

U.S. Ministries in Annville and Brewton:

The ministry of the Reformed Church in Jackson County, Kentucky, is moving forward now under the new association, Jackson County Ministries. This association, with a majority of membership coming from the three Reformed Church congregations in Jackson County, is providing the leadership and initiative for the new programs of ministry in the county.

Programs already in operation or about to begin include: The Trade Store, which has provided a service to the community for many years; youth ministry and campus retreats; "Barnabas House", a ministry to a limited number of displaced youth of Jackson County; the Mobile Church, a ministry to serve persons in the remote areas of the county; and a ministry to the elderly of Jackson County.

The facilities which formerly housed the Annville Institute are being used by Jackson County Ministries, and the association continues to evaluate the use of the buildings in relation to ongoing programs.

The Southern Normal School in Brewton, Alabama, has ministered to the Black community of Brewton and of Escambia County for 69 years. The school year, 1979-80, has been a rewarding year for both the student body and the staff. The Bergen Memorial Chapel, partially destroyed by fire last year, has been repaired and is again serving the needs of both the school and the Bergen Memorial congregation. The Brewton board of trustees continues to seek ways in which to improve the educational program of the school, and to obtain the additional money that is needed to provide a good school program in these times of escalating costs.

Venezuela:

It has been almost three years since the first RCA missionary couple, the Solivans, arrived in Venezuela. This missionary ministry continues to be affirmed by our partner church, the Union Evangelica Pentecostal Veneqolana, and they have asked the Solivans to return for a second term.

In 1980-81 the Solivans will be on an educational furlough and Mr. Solivan will be studying at Union Theological Seminary. His missionary assignment continues to be the Contextual Theological Education Program for the development of pastors and lay leaders, which includes a three-month residential program. Also, with our partner church's approval, Mr. Solivan has been able to resource other denominations through theological consultations, seminars, and workshops. This included a city-wide evangelistic effort in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, in which the majority of the denominations and independent churches participated. Most of the training programs for this effort were developed by Mr. Solivan.

A new family, the Van Dixhorns, missionary agriculturists, are expected to arrive in Venezuela in March, 1980. This will be the second couple in this new field. Beginning in 1981, the church has asked also for the support of national evangelist pastors, to begin new churches. They have asked for the support of four pastors and for the continuing support of the Theological Education Program as well as some administrative program support money for the school and orphanage.

Reformed Church World Service (RCWS)

The Reformed Church responds to human need and world hunger, primarily, through programs of Reformed Church World Service. Its programs meet emergencies such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and tornados by providing bread, blankets, medicines, and other basic needs. In the past year RCWS sent supplies to tornado-devastated Lawton, Oklahoma; food to southern Lebanon; flood relief to southern Texas; food and relief assistance to Nicaragua and Uganda; tornado relief to Woodstock, Ontario; and similar aid to other areas.

This human need response climaxed at the end of the year in the overwhelming response to Cambodia relief, which in 1979 brought gifts exceeding $265,000. As a result of that response from RCA churches, income in 1979 to RCWS exceeded any previous amount ever received. At the same time, the RCWS program was giving major focus throughout the year to the sponsorship of Indochinese refugees by local RCA congregations.

Yet, Reformed Church World Service does more than bind up wounds. It contributes in a major way to the prevention of human suffering through programs of agricultural and technical training, housing development, increasing water resources, legal aid for the poor, family planning, and health education. It provides tools and building equipment and supports research and advocacy programs aimed at the root problems of poverty. It also aids the self-help efforts of the rural poor.

Events in today's world make clear the increasing incidence of what must be described as man-made disasters. The ever-growing number of refugees in the world is the best evidence of this. These thousands of people have not been made homeless by natural disasters but by discrimination, the violation of human rights, inhumane conditions and international intrigue. Christian responsibility requires that beyond the response of gifts and assistance the church must become a new voice of conscience and advocacy for the homeless and displaced peoples. This too is part of Reformed Church policy for RCWS guidelines speak of "advocacy for liberation of persons controlled by . . . . injustice which hinders realization of full humanity."

Through Reformed Church World Service the RCA is putting Christian love into deeds. Jesus Christ, Who came "to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind" ever calls his followers to this ministry.

Special Taiwan Report

by Harry E. De Bruyn

Taiwan—April 28 to May 6, 1980

The Christian community is keenly aware of the sacrificial role that Dietrich Bonhoffer played in the life of Christ's church during the 1940s as he dared to speak out against the political powers in Nazi Germany; unfortunately, he was one of very few to do so and he lost his life at the hands of the powers he was attacking. During my visit to Taiwan analogies were made by several people to the present Taiwanese situation which has resulted in the arrest and conviction of several persons, most of whom are Christians speaking out against the political powers controlling Taiwan. The analogy became clearer when, two days before my arrival in Taiwan, Dr. C. M.

Kao, the general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, was arrested and charged with seditious activities. At this writing his interrogation and investigation is taking place preliminary to his eventual trial for sedition before a military court. He has been held incommunicado since his arrest. If convicted, he could be sentenced from a minimum of ten years to the maximum of the death penalty.

Dr. Kao is the latest person to be arrested in a series of arrests starting in December, 1979, which has resulted in eight convictions and twelve cases still pending, plus the case of Dr. Kao. I was to be an observer at the trials of the twelve. As an international observer I was to report the event to those interested in it, and specifically to make an impact on the Taiwanese government to the effect that the international community is monitoring the fairness and justice aspects of the trials.

As the trials did not occur while I was in Taiwan, I spent the entire time interviewing knowledgeable people from different facets of Taiwanese life to better understand Taiwan and, hopefully, develop a plan or process that could be implemented in an attempt to solve what appears to be an insoluble problem.

Taiwan's existence is known, but unless there is an understanding of the historical, political, religious, financial, and other aspects of Taiwanese life, it is impossible to formulate a clear, concise plan to improve or, ideally, solve the problem in Taiwan. I am convinced that such data must be included in this report or the alternatives and conclusions presented will possibly be misunderstood.

As my prime interest in Taiwan is based upon spiritual/theological concerns, my report will have those areas as its main focus. However, those concerns must be dealt with in the light of several additional secular factors which impact heavily upon the spiritual/theological areas presented in the conclusion/alternative section.

Perhaps the best place to start is to discuss Taiwan from a historical perspective. Lying approximately 100 miles off the coast of mainland China and about the size of the Netherlands (13,800 square miles), Taiwan is a fertile, mountainous island that for centuries was under Chinese rule; that rule was interrupted when Caucasians arrived in the 1500s. From that time to the late 1800s Taiwan was a loosely related province of China.

Its people have a variety of backgrounds. Although primarily of Chinese origin it is the opinion of many that Polynesians came to the island centuries ago and retained their identities in tribal areas that still exist today in the higher mountain regions. This can be affirmed by the existence of several different tribal languages and from the obvious differences in facial features, etc. Regardless of where the Taiwanese people came from prior to the 1900s, the island attracted strongly individualistic people who were willing to live in a more challenging area occasioned by the isolation of the island from the mainland. This fact resulted in a strong people who capitalized on the natural resources of the island to provide more than adequate food and a standard of living that most often exceeded that on the Chinese mainland.

To this island setting came a Dr. Maxwell in 1865, in the southern area, now known as Taiwan. Dr. Maxwell was a pastor and physician from the English Presbyterian Church who came to Taiwan as the first White Christian missionary. He made great gains in his long and demanding life in attaining his goals to create a Taiwanese Christian Community; he was joined in this task in 1880 by Dr. Mackay, also a pastor and physician, from the Canadian Presbyterian Church. He did much the same work in the northern area where Taipei is today. This English/Canadian

heritage of the now united Taiwan Presbyterian Church continues to be a factor in the present situation in Taiwan.

In 1895, the Japanese forcefully occupied Taiwan and established political and military control over the island. Although they were initially harsh in their treatment of the Taiwanese, the Japanese did establish the basis for a more ordered and productive society which is apparent even today. Japanese rule continued until Japan was defeated in World War II after which Taiwan was awarded to the Chiang Kai-Shek mainland Chinese government. This was a crucial event in the life of Taiwan and, more than any other single factor in modern time, contributed to the present problem in Taiwan.

The wishes and hopes of some of the indigenous Taiwanese people to have independent status as a nation at that time were dashed by the vesting of government control in China. The U.S. must bear its share of responsibility for that act and, in my opinion, must help to repay for that injustice by becoming involved in trying to solve the present dilemma in Taiwan.

Unfortunately for the Taiwanese, after 1945 the mainland Chinese were unsuccessful in retaining control over their country. The Communists defeated Chiang's armies in 1949 and then the problem in Taiwan became more acute. However, one additional event, occurring on February 28, 1947, is of significant importance. Realizing that defeat at the hands of the Communists was probably imminent and further realizing that the Taiwanese people were being urged to assert their own political independence, the mainland Chinese brutally executed around 10,000 of the Taiwanese intellectual and political leaders, thus eradicating the core of the indigenous people who could work for the establishment of an independent nation. There was no legal reason for these executions; they occurred as a result of political convenience to the mainlanders. The Taiwanese naturally remember this tragic event. The world did not effectively interfere or intervene in this immense criminal act and is now reaping the sad results of such inaction.

Since 1949 the Nationalist Chinese have ruled in Taiwan, basing their right to do so on the fact that Taiwan was one of the provinces ruled from the mainland since 1945 and that the true government of China, not being able to function on the mainland, has moved the seat of its government to Taiwan. In fact, even to this day, the legislative branch of the government passes laws that ostensibly apply to all of the provinces of pre-1949 China, the mainland and Taiwan included together. The ludicrousness of this situation is not admitted by the Nationalist Chinese but is in fact defended on the basis that one day they will reoccupy the mainland and thereby reestablish total control of the total nation. Privately the Nationalists admit they will probably never reoccupy the mainland.

This position has also been the rationale for a constant state of emergency, or martial law, since there is an alleged concern over imminent armed conflict with the Communist Chinese. There are presently 17,000,000 people living on Taiwan, roughly 1 to 2 million mainlanders and 15 to 16 million Taiwanese. Since 1949, the Taiwanese have been governed under martial law by the Republic of China government. The analogy is obvious to the various White minority governments ruling the majority of Blacks in nations on the African continent. That analogy falls apart when pushed to the point that economic and other social opportunities are unequal, for in Taiwan there is generally equal opportunity except for the controlling government positions. The controlling government party (KMT) is also more ethically and philosophically Chinese than are the Taiwanese people, as the Taiwanese developed their own culture over the centuries with many non-Chinese influences.

Politically, the KMT ruling party has not allowed other political parties to exist in Taiwan other than token groupings that were not a threat to continued KMT rule. In a one party system there is no room for legitimate dissent especially if the country is being ruled under martial law. That combination allows for many abuses—all justified on the basis that national security requires emergency and extreme positions. There have been no island-wide general elections for the federal legislative body since 1949, all of the seats still being occupied by mainland Chinese now in advanced age.

Backing up to the late 1800s, the Presbyterians formulated themselves into a truly Presbyterian form of church government, much like our RCA structure, and admittedly Western in design and function rather than Chinese. In addition, it was a truly democratic form of church government, as is ours, a style foreign to the Chinese mind. By 1945, the church structure on Taiwan had a long history of governing itself and it was effectively the only church structure on the island. Almost all of the other church organizations on Taiwan began their work after 1949. When the ROC government moved to Taiwan in 1949, the stage was set for a confrontation of these two structures, one political and the other religious with a political-like organizational structure. One need not have a vivid imagination to predict the inevitable results of such a mix. The Presbyterians now number about 1 percent of the total population (160,000) but are the *only* organization on Taiwan other than the KMT ruling political party.

With the Western influence of the church through the presence of missionaries over the years, coupled with a functioning political-like structure, coupled with a commitment to the Christian Gospel which calls for justice and fairness, the church quite naturally developed positions which were in direct conflict with the government. The first significant conflict arose in 1971 with a written statement, the next in 1975 and the last in 1977, when the church published a statement on human rights. The government interprets all of these actions as threats to the present political structure and carries its position to the point of interpreting them as advocating the overthrow of the government. Admittedly the church was aware of that possibility and probability when it acted, but it felt constrained to take a stand on these important issues and risk the effects of such a confrontation.

As often happens, the church acts from spiritual motives, sometimes too idealistically, with an ultimate goal in mind that remains unarticulated but clearly evident. At the same time, other individuals and/or groupings, acting from non-spiritual motives, seek the same goal, often clearly articulated. Although ostensibly not intended by each, the two parties (church and others) become paired in the mind of the party being threatened by each. This is precisely what occurred in December of 1979 when a group of political activists in the southern city of Kaohsiung staged a rally that turned into a direct confrontation with the government forces resulting in injuries to some troops and the subsequent arrests of some church and non-church people on charges of sedition. In the USA the charges would at most have been civil disobedience, but in the tense martial law setting of Taiwan they become seditious activities resulting in serious sentences if found guilty. Those are the trials that have been partially completed or are still pending, including the trial of Dr. Kao.

There are those who honestly believe that the whole confrontation incident in Kaohsiung was staged by the government as an excuse for stopping the political activist individuals outside the church and the church activities of advocating human rights. That suspicion will probably never be confirmed.

With the passage of time, the KMT government feels less secure in its position as the true government of China for many reasons, such as:

1. The power people that came to Taiwan in 1949 are now either dead or in their 70s and 80s;

2. The possibility of returning to the mainland is nil;

3. The US and other major governments have all recognized Red China, leaving the ROC almost with no standing as a nation in the world community;

4. With intermarriage and gradual amalgamation, the true mainlanders are probably around one million out of a total of over 17 million;

5. As many Taiwanese as can afford it are leaving Taiwan for the US and other countries, including most of the intellectual community;

6. The mainlanders at the power and wealth level have physically left Taiwan; of the 180 odd member legislative body over 120 with their families now live in the US;

7. Most people are liquidating their assets and investing outside Taiwan in anticipation of a loss of power either to the Taiwanese or to the Communist Chinese (PRC).

In the center of all of this unrest there remains a political reality that is disastrous for the indigenous Taiwanese. Both the Peoples Republic of China and the ROC in Taiwan advocate a one China policy when considering the mainland and Taiwan. If there is ever a military confrontation or if there is a sellout, the Taiwanese lose, as either victor (PRC or ROC) will continue to rule Taiwan as a province of China. Evidence exists that the sellout is more than a remote possibility; the reasons are stated above. Those reasons must be coupled with the fact that there have been many secret meetings and agreements between representatives of the PRC and the ROC the content of which is unknown, but the reality of which can be clearly documented. Many Taiwanese fear that they will go to bed one night under ROC rule and awaken the following morning to PRC rule.

The crimes which Dr. Kao and the other defendants have been charged with are of either advocating sedition, harboring a seditious criminal, conspiring to commit sedition, or conspiring to hide a seditious person. One of the first eight defendants, Shih Ming Teh, was the editor of *Formosa* magazine and has been given a life sentence for advocating sedition. The other seven defendants were given 12 or 10-year sentences. The remaining trials are yet to occur. Because of the alleged crime of sedition the trials are to be held in military courts where the sentences are more severe. Under the ROC laws or practice the trial process is as follows:

1. The accused is arrested for interrogation;

2. If the charge is a serious crime, bail will usually not be granted;

3. Up to four months is allowed the prosecution to develop a case, during which time the prisoner can be held incommunicado;

4. Contrary to law, torture is used;

5. Confessions are usually extracted;

6. The public indictment is read in court after the interrogation is concluded, usually accompanied by a confession;

7. The lawyers for the defense see the charges only one to three days prior to the public indictment in court;

8. The lawyers are not permitted private consultations with their clients at any time and are only granted brief witnessed consultations after the charges are given to the lawyers;

9. The lawyer attempts a defense at the trial, which is usually within a few days after the public indictment is read;

10. In the previous trials the defense arguments were summarily dismissed, including the defense of extracting the confessions by torture, and the court proceeded with the severe sentencing.

It is apparent to anyone with a basic sense of fairness that the above procedure is unjust and immoral. Unfortunately this is the situation facing Dr. Kao and the other defendants. It is also unfortunate that there is little that can be done by either Taiwanese or others to minimize or lessen the anticipated results. Some possible courses of action will be suggested at the end of this report.

The lawyers for Dr. Kao are very pessimistic at this time. Although they have not seen the formal indictment, word has leaked to them that Dr. Kao has confessed to some involvement in the hiding of Shih Ming Teh. They do not know if the confession does exist, and if it does, if it is truthful, or if it was made to lessen the sentencing of other co-defendants, or if it was extracted by torture. If the confession does exist it will be used as the basis of a sentence of not less than 10 years imprisonment; all of the Presbyterians I talked to anticipate that kind of sentence. The appeal process will not be effective in overturning such a sentence unless there is a radical departure from previous experiences. The lawyers indicated that there has never been a reversal on appeal from a conviction of seditious activity. The lawyers for the first eight defendants who have appealed do not expect a reversal of the convictions of those eight and the lawyers for Dr. Kao would not expect any different result. The impact of this turn of events on the life of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan cannot be known at this time, but it appears to this writer that these events will have a significant effect upon the life and work of that church in the immediate future.

An interesting observation was made in one of the interviews. One of the interviewees stated when advised of the fact that the arrests were made, "Why complain; if the government is charging them they are no doubt guilty; the government must be obeyed." In the next exchange the question was asked if the Chinese have used torture over the years in legal matters to which the interviewee responded affirmatively. When reminded that the confession of guilt may have been extracted by torture thus rendering the confession invalid, the interviewee responded to the effect that such a possibility never occurred to him but no doubt is a part of the present trial process. Until that point in time that person saw no reason to be concerned or involved.

It seems abundantly clear that the Taiwan situation is truly complicated and defies solution. It also seems equally clear that the only effective method of attempting a solution is for interested persons and organizations, such as the RCA, to contact high level federal legislative officials to initiate studies and investigations that would produce data that could then be used by the US and other governments to which the ROC is linked, to develop a solution regarding Taiwan that would allow for a truly independent Taiwanese nation that would have equal status in the

community of nations. That independent nation would include the present total population of Taiwan, both the indigenous Taiwanese and the mainlanders, and would provide for a truly democratic society governed by those chosen in open, free elections. Such a solution will take time and, during that time, appropriate pressure should be exerted at the same high government levels to keep the present status quo, absent the harrassment of the Presbyterian Church people. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan would, in my opinion, bide its time if appropriate progress was being made to bring about such a result. Telegrams from the RCA and other interested organizations by themselves will not solve the problem for they are looked upon by the ROC as merely the interference of outside parties in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation.

Time is of the essence. This type of activity must begin at once. Good men like Dr. Kao must not be forced to assume a martyr's role because outside persons have not become involved in doing all in their power to find a solution.

After receiving the "Special Taiwan Report" by Harry E. De Bruyn and reviewing its recommendations, the General Program Council Executive Committee calls upon the General Synod

R-2.

a. To call its people to earnest prayer for the persons either convicted, awaiting trial, or serving time for alleged seditious crimes;

b. To call its people to earnest prayer for the ROC leaders to have a more tolerant and just spirit;

c. To communicate these matters to sister Christian churches so that prayers may be offered for those individuals and the church involved in this situation;

d. To communicate the facts and concerns to appropriate high US government officials for initiation of investigation and study;

e. To communicate the same data to other governments through sister churches throughout the free world;

f. To communicate our concern and interest on behalf of the Taiwan Presbyterian Church (directly) to the ROC officials in Taiwan;

g. To convey to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and to Dr. Kao and his family **our profound respect for the faithfulness and patience with which it has worked for human rights in Taiwan, our commitment to stand with them to a hopefully successful solution, and our affirmation of their Christian stance in these matters.** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

Missionary Personnel

Appointments:

Ralph and Barbara Van Dixhorn to the Evangelical Pentacostal Union of Venezuela, in agriculture.

Allen and Sue Schreuder to work with Tzotzil Language Group in Chiapas, Mexico.

Norine Katsma as teacher in the Bahrain School, whose husband, Thomas, serves as seminary intern at the English language congregation in Bahrain.

William and Mary Hoffman to the Scudder Memorial Hospital in Ranipet, South India.

Persons serving as interns with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan as English teachers for 1979-80.

Mr. Carl Barrows, St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Des Moines, Iowa

Ms. Leanne DeVos, First Reformed Church, Hull, Iowa

Ms. Joy Hoffman, University Reformed Church, East Lansing, Michigan

Ms. Jeanette Koolhaas, Bethany Reformed Church, Redlands, California

Ms. Carlois Korver, Alton Reformed Church, Alton, Iowa

Ms. Amy Nickolson, First Congregational Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Ms. Carol Rummler, First Reformed Church, Grand Haven, Michigan

Mr. Thomas Schalow, Monona Lutheran Church, Monona, Wisconsin

Mr. Russell Tenpas, Hope Reformed Church, Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Reassignment and recruitment for new and vacant positions:

Robert and Morrell Swart from Ileret, Kenya, exploring reassignment in the southern Sudan.

John and Caryl Busman, from Meru, Kenya, exploring reassignment in southern Sudan.

Replacement being sought for Dr. Alfred G. Pennings, as chief medical officer at the Bahrain Hospital.

Replacement being sought for Paul and Dorothy Hostetter to work with the Chol Language Group in Chiapas, Mexico.

A new missionary family being sought for position of Cassette/Tape Ministry in southern Sudan

Deaths:

Mrs. Anna Moore died on April 4, 1979, in Los Angeles. Mrs. Moore, and her husband, Rev. Boude C. Moore, served in Japan from 1924 to 1940, and after World War II from 1950 till retirement in 1962.

Rev. Dr. Gerrit D. Van Peursem died on March 16, 1979, in Spring Valley, N.Y., at the age of 99. Mr. Van Peursem, with his wife, Josephine, who preceded him in death, had served in the Arabian Gulf from 1910 to 1946.

Miss Evelyn Oltman died on December 9, 1979, at Claremont, California. Miss Oltman had served in Japan from 1914 to 1933.

Dr. Harold W. Storm, M.D., died on February 10, 1980, in Perth, Australia. Dr. Storm, with his wife, Ida, who preceded him in death, had served in the Arabian Gulf from 1927 to 1966.

Rev. Leonard A. Sibley, Sr. died on February 18, 1979, in Norristown, Pa. Mr. Sibley served as eastern field secretary for the former Board of World Missions, from 1955 till his retirement in 1962.

Mr. John Bode died on January 19, 1980. John, an agriculturalist, and his wife Mildred served in Chiapas from 1966 to 1968.

Mrs. Everdene De Jong died February 22 in Tucson, Arizona. Mrs. De Jong and her husband, the Rev. Garrett E. De Jong, served as missionaries in the Arabian Gulf from 1926 to 1964.

Mr. Excel C. Hendrieth died on December 9, 1979 in Brewton, Alabama. Mr. Hendrieth served on the staff of Southern Normal School in Brewton, Alabama from 1937 to 1959.

Mrs. Amelia Ter Borg died on December 29, 1979 in Denver, Colorado. Mrs. Ter Borg, and her husband the Rev. John Ter Borg, served as missionaries in Japan from 1922 to 1944.

Mrs. Pearl Veldman died on March 6, 1980 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mrs. Veldman, and her husband, Dr. Harold E. Veldman, served as missionaries in China from 1926 to 1930.

From the Report of the General Synod Executive Committee:

THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON NONVIOLENT LIBERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The 1979 General Synod adopted the following:

> To affirm and support the liberation of South Africa by calling upon a Task Force which would include representation from the Christian Action Commission, the General Synod Executive Committee, the General Program Council and the minority councils that would be interested to assist in a nonviolent liberation struggle and to make recommendations to the appropriate body of the church for action.
>
> (*MGS,* 1979, p. 92)

The above action of last year's General Synod was the most recent in a series taken by the Reformed Church in America to record its concern about the racial situation in South Africa. The basic position was taken by the 1967 General Synod when it voted that "the Reformed Church in America register its disapproval . . . of the policies within South Africa which deny basic rights and freedoms to the vast majority of people in that country" (*MGS,* 1967, p. 211). Subsequent Synods initiated correspondence with the Dutch Reformed Church (*MGS,* 1968, pg. 221), recommended an exchange of seminary students (*MGS,* 1972, 1973, 1978, 1979), encouraged negotiations with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Black) (*MGS,* 1976, p. 214-215, 229), and sent a letter to the government of South Africa urging them ". . . to enter into negotiations with the Black leadership in South Africa on an equal basis in order to work for reconciliation and thus avoid further bloodshed" (*MGS,* 1976, p. 257).

These and other actions have made the position of the Reformed Church in America clear: apartheid is an unjust system based on race that is contrary to the Scriptures. Confessing its own shortcomings in the matter of race relations, the Reformed Church in America has shared its views with both the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA) while expressing its concern for them in these days of conflict (*MGS,* 1977, p. 252, 269) and, in 1978, urging our own churches "to join in continuing prayers for an equitable resolution of the problems and tensions among the peoples of South Africa" (*MGS,* 1978, p. 199).

The 1979 action called upon a task force to recommend specific steps that the Reformed Church in America could take to support liberation. The bodies mentioned in the action appointed the following representatives:

E. Wayne Antworth (CAC)	Warren J. Henseler (GSEC), chair.
Vernon L. Boersma (GPC)	Alice E. Nash (GPC)
Virginia Bowman (GSEC)	Hector Seda (Hispanic Council)
Earle N. S. Hall (Black Council)	Charles J. Wissink (CCU)

The task force began its work and papers were prepared in the following areas:

1. Reformed Church in America relations with churches in South Africa.

2. Reformed Church in America support of liberation movements in South Africa.

3. The financial investments of churches and Christians in South Africa and the effect of those investments on the liberation movement.

4. United States government policies that thwart liberation in South Africa.

5. Developing systems to inform the Reformed Church in America of events in South Africa.

As a result of those studies, the task force makes the following recommendations:

Relations With South African Churches

Correspondence with the Dutch Reformed Church began when the action of the 1967 General Synod was conveyed to them. Actions of the 1977 and 1978 General Synods encouraged a continuation of that dialogue. At the same time, the 1976 General Synod initiated negotiations with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. The task force believes that the contacts begun with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should be encouraged and expanded to include the other "daughter" churches of the Dutch Reformed Church, namely, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NG Sendingkerk) and the Reformed Church in Africa, so that there may be fellowship and support for Reformed churches and Christians of all races in South Africa.

R-3.
To contact, through the Commission on Christian Unity, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Black), the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (Colored/Mixed Race), and the Reformed Church in Africa (Indian/Asian) requesting a direct ecumenical relationship. (ADOPTED)

The Ministers Fraternal (Broederkring) is an association of ministers of the various Reformed Churches in South Africa committed to church unity among the Reformed churches and to justice in race relations. The task force believes that its stand for nonviolent change within the church and society is in keeping with the various actions of the General Synod and the policies of the Reformed Church in America and should be supported.

R-4.
(To request the Black Council, on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, to establish a direct and formal relationship with the Ministers Fraternal in order to encourage exchange visits and to recommend to the General Program Council financial support of programs suggested by the Ministers Fraternal.)

The advisory committee presented the following substitution for R-4:

To develop through the General Program Council, in consultation with the Black Council, the establishment of a direct and formal relationship with the ministers fraternal in order to encourage exchange visits and to recommend that the General Program Council consider the possibility of requests for financial assistance from the ministers fraternal. (ADOPTED AS SUBSTITUTED)

*Additions in light face type.
Deletions in parentheses.

Reason:
To avoid the implication which might be apparent, that we are concerned only for Blacks in the RCA to communicate with Blacks in South Africa.

From 1972 through 1979, General Synods have recommended that scholarships be provided South African theological students so they might attend our seminaries. The task force believes that this program should be expanded so that majority ministers will have an opportunity to study not only theology but other subjects that will equip them to better serve their people and churches.

R-5.
To develop through the General Program Council in consultation with the Black Council a program to enable ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Reformed Church in Africa to study in the United States on an ongoing basis. (ADOPTED)

Support Of Liberation Movements

In addition to authorizing the task force "to affirm and support the liberation of South Africa," the 1979 General Synod acknowledged the "biblical call of the church to solidarity with people suffering from racial injustice in all its forms, and particularly at this time with the oppressed people of southern Africa and the call to give support to people and groups who struggle for justice, freedom and peace with special affirmation for the use of nonviolent means" (*MGS,* 1979, p. 106). That action has special meaning in South Africa just because it was taken by the "Dutch" Reformed Church in America. It is a word of hope and encouragement to those suffering injustice in that part of the world.

If the actions of General Synod are to be seen as more than empty rhetoric by those in South Africa who are, in fact, struggling for justice, freedom and peace, some specific support must be given by our church. The task force believes that humanitarian aid should be given to meet the needs of those involved in the struggle for liberation. Such aid is one tangible way of demonstrating our presence as a church in that struggle.

R-6.
To provide, through the General Program Council, ongoing financial support through church agencies **for programs in health, education** and **welfare** in South Africa **(and international diplomacy to those liberation movements of South Africa recognized by the organization of African Unity and the United Nations.)** (ADOPTED AS AMENDED)*

Investments in South Africa

United States-based corporations which do business in South Africa have been unable to alter the apartheid system, which is the base for the injustices with which the majority of South African people must live. Indeed, the presence of those businesses in South Africa strengthens the apartheid system, postpones liberation, and identifies the United States with the white minority. The benefit to the majority of

*Additions in light type face.
Deletions in parentheses.

the people is minimal, while all the people suffer under the system those businesses sustain.

The 1978 General Synod requested that a study be made to determine which Reformed Church in America investments might be contributing to apartheid (*MGS,* 1978, p. 200). The report made to the 1979 General Synod indicated that as of December 31, 1978, our church held stocks and bonds in 13 companies and banks with investments in South Africa. Six of those companies and two banks, the report indicated, "have made significant industrial and financial contributions which have helped to stabilize and support the apartheid regime in South Africa" (*MGS,* 1979, p. 97).

The task force believes that the Reformed Church in America should encourage those businesses in which it holds investments to end their participation in the economy of South Africa. If those businesses in which we participate refuse to end their activities in South Africa, the Reformed Church in America, as an act of conscience and witness, should withdraw its investments.

R-7.
To establish a denominational policy of not holding investments in banks or corporations that do business in South Africa. (ADOPTED)

In order to implement the recommendation, it is suggested that specific steps be taken to enable the corporations involved to act.

R-8.
a. To direct denominational agencies to write to each corporation that does business in South Africa and in which they have invested, encouraging it to withdraw its operations from the Republic of South Africa and informing it that, if after a reasonable period of time, it refuses to withdraw, the Reformed Church in America will begin a prudent divestiture from their corporation. (ADOPTED)

b. To direct denominational agencies to strive to make sure that their money market investments be in banks and brokerages which do not grant or renew loans to the Republic of South Africa or sem-governmental corporations. (ADOPTED)

Government Policies and Liberation

The government of the United States has taken a number of policy positions intended to put pressure on the South African government to end apartheid. A church concerned about justice can and should support and encourage such policies.

R-9.
To endorse such United States policies as the arms embargo, the prohibition of sales of any kind to the South African military or police, the refusal to recognize the "homelands" as independent nations, the prohibition of direct loans through the Export-Import Bank to American exporters doing business with South Africa, etc., and to encourage speedy prosecution of those who violate those policies. (ADOPTED)

In addition, it is the task force's view that further measures could be taken by the United States that would encourage freedom and peace in South Africa. The economic measures taken against Rhodesia and Iran can and should be taken against South Africa.

R-10.
To encourage the United States government to support economic sanctions against South Africa through the United Nations and other appropriate international instrumentalities. (ADOPTED)

Informing the RCA

The need to inform the Reformed Church in America of the human price being paid for apartheid and the role of the churches in supporting or changing that system is essential if the church is to know how to be obedient to its biblical mandate in South Africa and recognize the special responsibilities of our church in that area of the world.

R-11.
a. To foster person-to-person contacts by encouraging congregations to make use of representatives from Black South African churches and those members of our church who have visited South Africa.

b. To hold South Africa before the church as a matter of high priority by reporting developments in that country through *Hotline, RCAgenda, Pioneer,* and the *Church Herald.*

c. To sponsor a representative(s) from the Black Reformed churches in South Africa to our General Synod in 1981.
(ADOPTED)

New Business

RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA

The Reformed Church in America and the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa share common theological and ecclesiastical roots in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

As a member of the "Dutch Reformed Family," and as an active participant in the worldwide ecumenical movement, the Reformed Church in America has corresponded with the Nederduitse Geformeerde Kerk for many years. The Reformed Church has repeatedly made clear its opposition to South Africa's system of racial separation called apartheid. In 1976, it entered into formal relationship with the predominantly Black Nederduitse Geformeerde Kerk in Africa. This 1976 development was part of the Reformed Church's search for more effective ways to stand with the churches in South Africa as they opposed the policies of South Africa's racist government and was under consideration on the very day that hundreds were dying in Soweto, June 16, 1976—exactly four years ago today. In 1979 and in 1980, official delegations from the Reformed Church in America were hosted in South Africa by the non-White Dutch Reformed Churches.

Of grave concern to this Synod is that on May 26 of this year, 53 church leaders were arrested in Johannesburg as they protested the detention of a fellow churchman, the Reverend John Thorne. Reverend Thorne, a "coloured" minister, had given public support to a student boycott of Fort Hare University. The church leaders are due to appear in court on July 1st to answer charges under the Riotous Assemblies Act, a prohibition against certain outdoor gatherings which was imposed after the 1976 revolt. They deserve our support.

R-12.
To communicate to the church leaders in South Africa who are standing against apartheid our continuing support and affirmation as they seek to act in faithfulness to the biblical tradition and the teachings of our Lord and Savior who calls us to stand with him among the poor and proclaim their liberation. (ADOPTED)

R-13.
To call upon the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk to renounce apartheid in any and all forms and to join with the worldwide Christian community in seeking freedom for all peoples in South Africa. (ADOPTED)

R-14.
To express to the South African government our conviction that apartheid, not those who revolt against it, is the real cause of violence in South Africa. (ADOPTED)

R-15.
To urge members of the Reformed Church in America to seek lasting peace by supporting in every possible way the witness of the church against apartheid and for justice in South Africa. (ADOPTED)

From the Report of the President:

R-1 (p. 33) was referred to the Advisory Committee on World Mission.

The advisory committee recommended:

R-16.
To request the General Program Council to provide $12,500 annually, for five years, to underwrite the position of administrative secretary in the Nederduitse Gereformeede Kerk in Africa. (ADOPTED)

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON NOMINATIONS

The Commission on Nominations submits for consideration and election the following names:

NOTE: *Indicates that this would be a second term.
#Indicates this is an official nomination from the body listed.

GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Class of 1983

*David Alford	PS Albany #
Robert Vander Ploeg	PS Michigan #
William Bouwer	PS Chicago #
John R. Young	PS New York #
*Carl Ver Beek	At-Large
*Efrain Negron	At-Large
*Edwin G. Mulder	Past President General Synod

Class of 1985

Jack Hascup	Vice President General Synod

BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Class of 1983

*Chester Evers	PS Chicago #
*Jonathan Hinkamp	PS New York #
*William Waldorf	PS New York #
Friedhelm Radandt	PS West #
*Everett Zabriskie III	PS New Jersey #
Paul Swets	PS Chicago #
Arnold Punt	PS Michigan #
John Jacobson	PS Albany #
*Jerrald Redeker	At-Large

EDITORIAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH HERALD

Class of 1983

*Robert Dykstra
*Jack Hoffman
Timothy Visser
Leonard Kalkwarf
Renze Hoeksema
George W. Crumley

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

Class of 1983

Ray De Does	California #
Jack Cooper	Albany #
*John Ekema	West Sioux #
*Ruth Kranzler	Queens #
Darrell W. De Boer	Dakota #
Robert J. Block	Pella #
John Zwyghuisen	Kalamazoo #
Charlotte McAfee	Raritan #
Walter A. Miller III	Bergen #
Barbara Bosch	Illinois #
Peggy Page	Schenectady #
Barbara Pedersen	Orange #
Fred Algera	Ontario #
*Henry Poppen	Wisconsin #
*Paul Vande Hoef	PS Michigan #
Barbara Hathaway	PS New York #
*Frank Spitters	At-Large
*Victor Valdes	At-Large

Class of 1981

Richard Lake	Montgomery #

Class of 1982

Harold Korver	PS West #

CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION

Class of 1983

Virgil Dykstra	PS West #
*Karl Carey	PS Albany #
Elridge Hurks	At-Large
Dennis Wilcox	At-Large
Pedro Windsor	At-Large

Class of 1981

Patricia Lamper	PS Michigan #
Albert Vander Meer	PS Chicago #

Class of 1982

Harold Lay	PS New Jersey #

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

Class of 1983

*Peter De Jong	PS Michigan #
*Mary Lemmenes	PS New York #
*James Reid	At-Large
David Taylor	At-Large Ecumenical

Class of 1982

Juan Carmona	At-Large

COMMISSION ON WORSHIP

Class of 1983

*Lawrence Van Wyk
James Esther
Donald Bruggink

COMMISSION ON CHURCH ORDER

Class of 1983

*Clarence Vande Zande
*Arnold van Lummel

Class of 1982

Andrea Van Beek

THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

Class of 1983

*Robert White
Wilbur Washington
David Anglada

COMMISSION ON HISTORY

Class of 1983

*Barbara Fassler
Barbara Frierson

COMMISSION ON WOMEN

Class of 1983

Bruce Menning
Clara Woodson
Nancy Phillips

Class of 1982

Joyce de Velder
Fran De Jong
Lenore Ridder

Class of 1981

Shirley Borgman
Ruth Dickson
James Stackpole

JUDICIAL BUSINESS COMMISSION

Class of 1983

Victor Bergstrom	PS Michigan #
*Richard Lake	PS Albany #

Class of 1981

Leroy Suess	PS New York #

COMMISSION ON NOMINATIONS

Class of 1983

*Henry Kleinheksel	PS Michigan #
Louis Lotz	PS Albany #
Elizabeth Boerman	Reformed Church Women #

Class of 1982

Paul Darby	Black Council #

Class of 1981

Wilfredo Laboy	Hispanic Council #
Edwin G. Mulder	Past President General Synod

WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

Class of 1983

Dorothy James	Committee on Christian Unity #
Peter De Jong	Committee on Christian Unity #

EXTENSION FOUNDATION

Class of 1983

*John Sanford	Extension Foundation/GPC #
*Roland Simmelink	Extension Foundation/GPC #
*Clifford White	Extension Foundation/GPC #

HOPE COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Class of 1986

Robert Hoeksema
James Van Hoeven

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Class of 1982	**Class of 1984**
Karl Deavers	J. David Muyskens

CENTRAL COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Class of 1986

John Sikkink
Leroy Timmer

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE HYMNBOOK

Howard Hageman
Robert DeYoung
Roger Rietberg
Norman Kansfield
Gloria Norton
Lawrence Van Wyk
Merwin Van Doornik

R-1.
To elect the above nominees to the respective General Synod agencies and commissions as listed. (ADOPTED)

R-2.
To elect Albertus G. Bossenbroek as moderator of the Commission on Nominations for the 1980-1981 term. (ADOPTED)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE

Referrals from the 1980 General Synod

The following recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Christian Action (p. 62) was referred to the Committee of Reference:

> To encourage adults and especially young people to major in "special education" and consider this an opportunity for Christian ministry, and that RCA colleges offers such majors if they do not already do so.

Through consultation with representatives of the colleges, it was learned that all three already offer majors in special education. The Committee of Reference therefore recommends:

> **R-1.**
> **To encourage adults and especially young people to major in "special education" and consider this an opportunity for Christian ministry, and to commend the RCA colleges for offering such majors.** (ADOPTED)

The following recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Christian Heritage (p. 134) was referred to the Committee of Reference:

> To instruct the GSEC to help the Commission on History find funds for the promotion and development of the Historical Society of the RCA.

Following consultation with representatives of the Commission on History, the Committee of Reference recommended:

> **R-2.**
> **To encourage the General Synod Executive Committee to offer its assistance and experience to the Commission on History in its search for funds for the promotion and development of the Historical Society of the RCA.** (ADOPTED)

Resolutions

> **R-3.**
> **That the General Synod declare its appreciation to the administration and staff of Union College for the gracious use of the college facilities throughout the week. We take particular note of President John Morris' inspirational welcome, the effort needed to receive us within hours after commencement, the comfort and convenience of the college's meeting rooms, and the beauty of the grounds with the Jackson Rose Garden.** (ADOPTED)

> **R-4.**
> **That the General Synod congratulate the First Reformed Church of Schenectady on the occasion of its tercentenary celebration and thank God for its three hundred years of Christian witness in this community. We recognize the special contributions of the Rev. J. Dean Dykstra, the Rev. David Risseeuw, Mr. and Mrs. John Blake, Mr. Kenneth Walendar and innumerable others from the church and the Schenectady classis. We will remember**

for some time the kindness that the members of the church have shown us and the efforts they have made for our comfort, convenience and entertainment. We extend God's benediction for the next one hundred years. (ADOPTED)

R-5.
That the General Synod express its thanks to the worship team of the Rev. Dr. Donner Atwood, preacher, the Rev. Robert DeYoung, liturgist, and Mrs. Carol DeYoung, organist, for their leadership in the worship celebrations of the Synod theme, "Thy Kingdom Come." (ADOPTED)

R-6.
That the General Synod commend the Rev. Dr. Edwin Mulder for his intense personal involvement in the life and ministry of the denomination during this year as president. We appreciate his positive affirmation of denominational life, his passionate expression of the need for human dignity, and his deep concern for the unity of Christian people. (ADOPTED)

R-7.
That the General Synod extend thanks to the Rev. Harry Buis for the faithful discharge of his vice-presidential duties and declare our prayerful support for his presidency in the year ahead. (ADOPTED)

R-8.
That the General Synod communicate its thanks to Mr. Ned Spain, president of Melody Manor, and Mr. Robert Pearce, vice-president of Allen Organ Co. in Allentown, PA., for the gratuitous use of the Allen Digital Computer Organ at our worship services. (ADOPTED)

R-9.
That the General Synod state its appreciation to Noel Reddinger Johnson for the original art work used on the daily worship service folder. (ADOPTED)

R-10.
That the General Synod convey its thanks to George Schneider, Una Ratmeyer and the members of the Brighton Heights Reformed Church, Staten Island, for the thematic banner which has served as our visual focus. (ADOPTED)

R-11.
That the General Synod thank the choirs, directors and organists of the First Reformed Church, Schenectady, and the Christ Community Reformed Church, Clifton Park, for their musical contributions. (ADOPTED)

R-12.
That the General Synod acclaim the rich fellowship experienced with some fifty plus churches in the eastern New York state area. The Synod is indebted to the Rev. Herman Luben and the many hosts and hostesses. (ADOPTED)

R-13.
That the General Synod express its sincere appreciation to all the members of its committees, commissions and councils who completed their terms of service this year. God has blessed the Reformed Church in America with dedicated and capable leaders representing the geographic and cultural diversity of the church. (ADOPTED)

The following people have completed their service during the past year:

GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Cornelius Ausema
Rodger Dalman
Raymond Rewerts

BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

William Wing
Paul DeVries
Ronald Geschwendt
Wendell Hallenbeck
Franklyn Vogel

COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

Charles J. Wissink
David Risseeuw

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Roger Rietberg
Arlen Salthouse
Harold Leestma

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Lucas De Koster

GENERAL PROGRAM COUNCIL

Thomas Bos
Karl Carey
Anna Mae De Graaf
Joyce de Velder
John Van Sloten
Kenneth Dykstra
William Dick
Tom Harris
Alfred Paolini
George Poppen
Jean Proper
James Vincent
Richard Westra

John Meyer
Mildred Van Egmond
Lorna Henkel
David Ter Beest
Harris Verkaik
Arlene Tenckinck

CHURCH HERALD EDITORIAL COUNCIL

LaVerne Boss
Max De Pree
Herman Rosenberg
Howard Schipper

CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION

Robert Huibregtse
Charles Suttle
Jacob Hoogendorhn
Wayne Antworth
Douglas Fromm
Luther Ratmeyer

THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

John Hesselink
Marilyn Kunz

COMMISSION ON HISTORY

Sharon Scholten

JUDICIAL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Richard Kloote
Donald McCabe

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

Earl Van Leeuwen

WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

William Brownson
Cecil Martens

EXTENSION FOUNDATION

David Blauvelt
Mildred Van Egmond

HOPE COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Russell Vande Bunte
Herbert Van Wyk

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Marinus Spierenburg
Robert Johnson

R-14.
That the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America express its deep appreciation to the Rev. Dr. John R. Walchenbach for his service as the executive secretary for program in the denomination for the period 1977-1980;

For your willingness to accept the call and challenge to lead the General Program Council;

For your gifts of caring for persons whether they be staff members, clergy or lay;

For your skill in directing the various regional, national, and international mission programs under the umbrella of the General Program Council;

For your commitment to the task of guiding the staff and Council through the transitional period of restructuring for mission in the 1980s;

For sharing your life, talents, and time as a servant of Christ;

We give you our sincere thanks and pray God's continuing blessing for you, your wife, and your children as you begin anew in ministry at Orlando, Florida.

God be with you all the days of your life. (ADOPTED)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Reverend Harry Buis, pastor of the Hudsonville Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan, was elected president. Reverend Jack H. Hascup, pastor of the Brookville Reformed Church, Glenhead, New York, was elected vice-president.

III. CLOSE OF GENERAL SYNOD

CLOSE AND ADJOURNMENT

President Edwin G. Mulder presented President-Elect Harry Buis with the traditional bell and gavel and the presidential cross.

The 174th General Synod concluded its business and adjourned at 9:15 p.m. EDT, on Friday, June 20, 1980, to meet in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, between Monday, June 8, and Friday, June 12, 1981.

Edwin G. Mulder, President
Harry Buis, Vice-President
Arie R. Brouwer, General Secretary